German Life
Culture • History • Travel

June/July 1998

1945 to 1948:
America's Long Road to the Federal Republic of Germany (West)

By Robert A. Selig

The December 1948 report by General Lucius D. Clay, commanding officer in the American Zone of Occupation in Germany, to U.S. President Harry S. Truman was full of optimism. "I think in looking back on 1948 we can look back on it as a year of material progress, and I think we can take considerable satisfaction in the state of affairs." Clay thought that 1948 had "brought back a real hope for the future among the 40-odd million people" in the American and British zones. This progress and hope, however, had only been possible because by the winter of 1947/48, American policy vis-à-vis Germany had undergone a complete reversal since the unconditional surrender of the Wehrmacht (Armed Forces) in May 1945.

With surrender came the time for retribution. In the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Directive 1067 of April 1945, General Dwight D. Eisenhower was instructed to occupy Germany "not...for the purpose of liberation but as a defeated enemy nation." Allied occupation was to bring "home to the Germans that Germany's ruthless warfare and the fanatical Nazi resistance have destroyed the German economy and made chaos and suffering inevitable and that the Germans cannot escape responsibility for what they have brought upon themselves."

In Potsdam in July, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin, and Truman set their common goals—the four Ds—for Germany: democratization, denazification, demilitarization, and decartellization (the break-up of trusts and industrial conglomerates). Germany was also to pay reparations for war damages; a total benchmark figure of $20 billion in cash and in kind was discussed, with $10 billion going to the Soviet Union. Because most of Germany's industrial capacity lay in the Ruhr Valley and thus outside the Soviet Zone, the Allies agreed that for reparation purposes Germany, considered within its 1937 boundaries (minus territories ceded to Poland and the Soviet Union), was to be treated as an economic unit with central administrative organs for the four zones. Reparations in kind—the dismantling of factories and compulsory export of manufactured goods and foodstuffs—fit the stated purpose of JCS 1067 as well as the overall Allied policy of punishment and retribution for postwar Germany. This agreement was fraught with pitfalls, but in the summer of 1945, few Americans worried about the long-term political and socioeconomic consequences of such a policy toward Germany nor how western concepts of democracy and free enterprise might co-exist with the Soviet-style one-party rule and a state-run economy.

The Soviet Union derived its raison d'être from the ideology of Marxism-Leninism; Stalin's world was a bipolar one of antagonistic and mutually exclusive ideologies and their ancillary political and economic systems. The antagonism would eventually be overcome through world-revolutionary violence, which made Stalin's regime expansionist by definition. Even before the war with Nazi Germany was over, Stalin had already accepted the possibility of a future conflict of ideologies with the west. In April 1945 he told Yugoslav communist Milovan Djilas: "This is not a war as in the past: Whoever occupies a territory will also determine its societal system. Everyone introduces his own system as far as his own army can advance. It can't be any other way."

Documents discovered in former East German archives (following the fall of the Wall) have confirmed Djilas's account. Stalin's plan for postwar Europe was

simple: to hold on to what the Red Army had conquered in Eastern Europe. That included the Soviet Zone of Occupation, and Stalin assumed that the west would do the same. Following a meeting in the Kremlin on June 4, 1945, the day before the Allies assumed governmental powers in Germany, East German Communist Party Chief Wilhelm Pieck recorded in his diary Stalin's decision: "There will be two Germanys—despite all solidarity of the Allies."

The Soviets wasted little time to impose their "societal system" in their zone: Nationalization of industries and land reform efforts laid the foundation for a Soviet-style economy as early as the fall of 1945. Following the forced merger of the Social Democrats (SPD) with the Communist Party (KPD) into the Socialist Unity Party (SED) in April 1946, there could be little doubt left about Stalin's intentions. Predictably enough, the struggle between anti-Communists—such as U. S. Ambassador to Moscow W. Averell Harriman and Admiral William D. Leahy—and cooperation-minded liberals—such as U.S. Secretary of Commerce Henry A. Wallace and presidential adviser Harry Hopkins—heated up again in the United States.

Hard-liners in Washington received support from Britain's wartime Prime Minister. On March 5, 1946, in Fulton, Churchill expressed his outrage at developments in Eastern Europe. "This is certainly not the liberated Europe we fought to build up.... A shadow has fallen upon the scenes so lately lighted by the Allied victory.... From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an iron curtain has descended across the continent." Behind that iron curtain Stalin was bankrolling communist parties and engineering communist takeovers. Churchill urged military preparedness and economic recovery as a means to stop communism. "There is nothing for which they (i.e., the Soviets) have less respect than for weakness."

But the war had emptied the coffers of the Exchequer: Recovery remained impossible as long as the United States withheld its resources from Western Europe—including Germany. Such a shift in policy from retribution to rebuilding, from collective guilt to assistance, also meant a renunciation of reparations and of the dismantling of factories: Draining financial and industrial resources from Germany was hardly beneficial to its economic recovery. In early 1946, less than a year after V-E Day, this was a hard pill to swallow for most Americans. But Truman agreed with Churchill, and on May 25, Truman halted all reparations from the U.S. Zone. The punitive Reparations and Level of Industry Plan for the four zones—agreed upon only after months of haggling on March 27, 1946—was quietly scuttled.

Three months later, on September 6, during a speech in Stuttgart, U.S. Secretary of State James F. Byrnes informed America's European allies that the United States would live up to its leadership role in the western world—which America acquired by default. He also assured the Germans that "Germany is a part of Europe." Unlike the U.S. disengagement after World War I, the United States would stay this time to help with the recovery in Europe. And Byrnes held out the promise of more economic assistance to the former enemy when he indicated that such a recovery would "be slow indeed if Germany...is turned into a poorhouse." The economic vacuum in Central Europe not only retarded the recovery of Europe; it was a heavy burden on the American taxpayer and created fertile ground for communist propaganda as well. As a step toward recovery, in the fall of 1946 the Unites States suggested that the Allies join their zones economically. But only Britain took up the offer: On January 1, 1947, the U.S. and British zones merged to form the Bi-Zone.

When the foreign ministers of the four Allies met for their fourth conference in Moscow in March 1947, the new U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall bluntly informed Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov of U.S. intentions to help Germany back on its feet. "The United States is opposed to policies which will continue Germany as a congested slum or an economic poorhouse in the center of Europe." On March 21 Marshall announced: "The time has now come to authorize the Germans to establish a provisional government to deal with matters of a nation-wide concern." But Marshall was beating a dead horse. Truman's announcement on March 12—that from now on the United States would come to the aid of any country fighting communism, coupled with his promise of $400,000,000 in aid to Greece and Turkey—made a Four-Power agreement on Germany highly unlikely.

With the Soviet and the U.S. position on Germany clearly spelled out, Marshall next used the opportunity to address Harvard's class of 1947 to announce America's plan for the economic reconstruction of Europe. On June 5, he announced the

European Recovery Program (ERP), better known as the Marshall Plan. Because its goal was to "help start the European world on its way to recovery," participation was open to all countries. Yet no one expected the Soviet Union or its satellite countries to participate. Diplomats like George Kennan were under no illusion as to what the shift in policy meant for Germany. In a speech at the Air War College on April 10, 1947, he told his audience: "I think it may mean the partition of Germany, and we all admit that is undesirable.... I hope we won't shrink from carrying out that partition rather than giving the Russians the chance to dominate the whole country."

The Russians would not get the chance. By the summer of 1947 the United States had decided to bring about the creation of a democratic, capitalist, pro-western German state. On July 11, 1947, new policies were announced. Replacing the vindictive JCS 1067, occupation directive JCS 1779 unequivocally declared that "an orderly and prosperous Europe requires the economic contributions of a stable and productive Germany." The fifth conference of foreign ministers in London from November 25 to December 15, 1947, saw the final parting of ways with the Soviet Union. Marshall stated the obvious when he informed Molotov that America considered the "economic principles and political organization in Germany [to be] inseparable subjects." Because the allies could not "agree on common principles in Germany," the country "remains divided. This situation has been created by the Allies themselves and it is their responsibility to resolve it." Marshall's solution was "the establishment of a provisional (German) government at the earliest possible moment"—preferably without Soviet participation.

Once the United States decided to act, things moved quickly. On February 23, 1948, America, Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg met in London for the first session of the Six-Power Conference. Their communiqué of March 8 affirmed "the necessity of ensuring the economic reconstruction of western Europe including Germany, and of establishing a basis for the participation of a democratic Germany in the community of free peoples." On March 17 the five West-European powers met in Brussels to sign the West-Union, a military alliance that became the forerunner of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) of 1949. The Soviets responded to the creation of the West-Union by walking out of the Allied Control Council on March 20.

On April 3 the Economic Cooperation Act of 1948 (the Marshall Plan) became law. Two weeks later 16 European nations and the zonal commanders of the three western zones formed the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) to dispense ERP funds. On May 14 Clay and General Brian Robertson, commanding officer in the British Zone, announced the participation of their zones in the ERP. At the second meeting in London from April to June 1948, the six western powers formalized their decision for a western solution to the "German problem." Announced on June 7, the Londoner Empfehlungen, or London Recommendations, called for the creation of a Parlamentarischer Rat, or a council charged with drafting a constitution for a separate pro-Western German state. The French finally came on board on June 17, when the Assemblée Nationale approved the London Recommendations with the narrowest of margins: 300 votes for, 286 against the establishment of the council.

On June 21, the Währungsreform (currency reform) introduced the new deutsche mark as a means of exchange. Every German received 40 deutsche marks Kopfgeld, or head money, the equivalent of $10. Ludwig Erhard, German director of the Bi-Zonal economic administration had unilaterally and without Allied permission lifted practically all wage and price controls as well. The introduction of "real" money had the desired effect: Almost overnight goods not seen in years appeared in stores. In response to the currency reform the Soviet Union, which had already walked out of the Allied Kommandantura in Berlin on the 16th, stepped up harassment of traffic to the city. On June 23, when the Western Allies introduced the deutsche mark in Berlin as well, the Soviets closed all access routes to the city at midnight of June 23/24. The Berlin crisis was Stalin's final attempt to prevent the creation of a separate western state. But it was too late. (See pp. 32-37) On July 1, the three western zonal commanders handed the London Recommendations to the heads of the 11 West German states (including the mayor of Hamburg and the president of the Bremen senate), telling them in effect to create a "Germany."

Stalin's prediction turned out to be correct: There would be "two Germanys." He had never hoped to be able to dominate all of Germany politically. By insisting on

treating Germany as an economic unit he had simply tried to get his hands on Germany's industrial resources in the Ruhr River Valley. Emboldened by western disunity and floundering U.S. policy, Stalin later expanded on his plan. Once U.S. resistance stiffened, the Soviets opposed—had to oppose—the creation of central German political authorities: The White House insisted on free elections, which Stalin knew he could not win. By going back to his original plan of two Germanys, the Kremlin lost nothing.

The genuine bewilderment in the United States over the introduction of Stalin's "own system as far as his own army had advanced" likely surprised the Soviet leader. Did the Americans really think that he would risk what the Red Army had bought so dearly with millions of lives because of some bourgeois notion of free elections? Did the White House not realize that by demanding free elections, multi-party states, and free enterprise in Eastern Europe America, too, was trying to introduce its "own system" even farther than its "own army had advanced?"

Soviet refusal in 1945 to play by Washington's rules initiated a learning process, which in 1946 led to a reassessment of U.S. policy in Europe and the role Germany would or might have to play in it. By 1947 America had accepted the rules of this 20th-century cuius regio, eius religio (whose rule, whose religion) philosophy and decided to create a separate West German state. In 1948 the decision was implemented. As Stalin had predicted, it could "not be any other way."

Clay's assessment of the situation in December 1948 contained more than a grain of truth. Marshall Plan funds and currency reform had brought "material progress" to millions, no matter how small. Germany would not be Europe's poorhouse forever. The London Recommendations and the Parliamentary Council provided real hope for a rebirth of Germany in some shape or form. Finally, the Brussels West-Union and even more so the U.S.-led Berlin Airlift convinced the Germans that the western powers, under U.S. leadership, were prepared to stand up to the Soviets—even in defense of German interests.

From the end of WWII until the spring of 1948 the Germans had been merely commodities of the Cold War. Their actual opinions had been neither sought nor heeded. When the Parliamentary Council held its first meeting in Bonn on September 1, 1948, the Germans for the first time since the end of the war had a chance to express their ideas and beliefs, or more importantly, their wishes.

Contributing editor and historian Robert A. Selig writes from Holland, Michigan.

Cincinnati, Ohio: Celebrating the Queen City

By Angela T. Koenig

In a small Cincinnati city park, an Ohio Historical Marker stands in remembrance of the persecution Cincinnati German-Americans endured at the time of the anti-German sentiments prevalent during WWI. Erected in 1993, the marker is known to relatively few people, including most Cincinnatians. In contrast, on September 19 and 20, at least 500,000 revelers are expected to converge on Cincinnati's city center, Fountain Square, to participate in the 22nd annual Oktoberfest Zinzinnati—the largest Oktoberfest in the United States and second-largest in the world, after Munich's. The dichotomy between the obscure marker and the high-profile Fest is not as vast as it initially seems. Both the marker and the Oktoberfest exemplify Cincinnati's German-American heritage, which dates from the late 1700s.

In 1998 Cincinnati's German-American community expects to open the nation's first German-American Pioneer History Museum, which will chronicle how Cincinnati came to be the first corner of the famed German Triangle, the other two corners being represented by St. Louis and Milwaukee; (since the mid-19th century, these cities have been the three urban areas with the strongest concentration of German Americans.) This year also marks the 150th anniversary of the Cincinnati Central Turners (gymnast club)—the oldest existing German-American society in the city and the oldest Turner society in the nation. Moreover, by the year 2000, Cincinnati will have completed a $10 million dollar renovation of Findlay Market, a historic, German-style, open-air market located in Over-the-Rhine, a district that was the heartbeat of the city's German-American community in the 19th century.

"We now have a community that is proud of its German-American heritage and is willing to maintain and promote it," says Dr. Don Heinrich

Tolzmann, who is director of the University of Cincinnati's German-American Studies Program, a leader in the German-American community, and author of numerous publications on the topic.

Keeping this heritage alive, Tolzmann asserts, "requires a heart and soul effort," especially because of the lingering stigma of two world wars on all things German. It has taken 25 years, what Tolzmann calls a "period of rebirth," to catapult Cincinnati's German-American heritage from an aside—a quaint feature in a modern metropolis—to a place of prominence once again.

Located along the banks of the Ohio River, Cincinnati was a frontier destination after the American Revolution. German immigrants, though few in number, had arrived there by 1788, when Cincinnati became a town. Among its early visitors was John Heckewelder, a German-Moravian missionary, who, in 1792, wrote the first of many glowing accounts of the Ohio River Valley.

At a spot near the Cincinnati town limits, Heckewelder told of a place where "wild turkeys and geese swam in large crowds upon the shore." These reports of abundant game, lush, rolling hillsides, and a seasonal climate were subsequently published and widely read in Germany; and they attracted the attention of prospective German immigrants who wished to flee two decades of warfare brought about by Napoleonic France. By 1802, Cincinnati incorporated as a city and elected its first mayor, Heidelberg native Major David Ziegler, a veteran of the American Revolutionary War, who served with George Washington at Valley Forge.

Over the next two decades Cincinnati's German-born population gradually increased, comprising five percent of the city's 9,600 citizens by 1820. The growth is attributed mostly to the efforts of Martin Baum, a wealthy Cincinnati banker, merchant, and developer, who invited German immigrants to the city by staging recruiting agents at port cities.

As Cincinnati continued to gain notoriety—in the 1830s it was the first major city west of the Allegheny Mountains and was later called the "The Queen City of the West" by poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow—its population grew rapidly, as did that of the German-American community. By 1850, 31,000 of the city's 115,000 citizens were German-born. The majority of these "foreigners"—so called by their Anglo peers—concentrated in the Over-the-Rhine district; the area got its name because crossing over the Miami Erie Canal (since covered) was reminiscent of crossing the Rhine River.

Now an inner-city area of about 200 acres, Over-the-Rhine was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. Having once sustained itself on labor, the district suffered the consequences first of industrialization and later suburban flight. Since 1990 it has made a dramatic comeback. Many of the homes and businesses built by German Americans in the late 19th century have been refurbished with the help of both public and private funds. Visitors to Over-the-Rhine today can enjoy the vast selection of regional and imported foods available in Findlay Market or else visit the nearby Main Street entertainment district, which is home to over 20 bars, eight restaurants, and an assortment of specialty shops and art galleries, such as the Marta Hewett Gallery, owned and operated by Hewett, a third-generation German American. In addition, bands play nightly in the entertainment district, and fests and parades are held throughout the year.

One of the best examples of resplendent, 19th-century German-American architecture found in Over-the-Rhine is Old St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church. Originally called St. Marienskirche, Old St. Mary's was designed in the 1840s by architect Franz Ignatz Erd, a German immigrant. It is said that female parishioners helped to build the church by baking bricks in their kitchens. The Greek revival style structure, with its ornate wood carvings and spectacular murals, was the first German Catholic church in Cincinnati and is now the city's oldest existing church building. A weekly Mass is still said there in German.

For the most part (notwithstanding the difficulties during the Know-Nothing Movement—a political campaign in the United States during the 1850s that was antagonistic toward recent immigrants and Roman Catholics), Cincinnati's German-American community gained from growth and stability, flourishing from the mid-1800s to the onset of WWI. Immigrants like Christian Morelein, of beer-brewing fame, and Dietrich Gruen, the renowned watchmaker, were among the many prominent names. Numerous German-American business organizations and scores

of political, philanthropic, and social clubs were founded. The Cincinnati Turnverein was established in 1848, and the German-American Citizens' League of Greater Cincinnati was formed in 1895 as an umbrella for the Turners and close to one hundred other societies.

Among the League's original founders was Heinrich A. Rattermann, a wealthy businessman, author, and historian. In 1895 he organized the first annual German Day celebration. A German Day had actually been celebrated since as early as 1883—called the Pastorius Celebration, in honor of Franz Daniel Pastorius, founder of Germantown, Pennsylvania—but it was not held on an annual basis until the League began its sponsorship. The German-American Citizens' League of Greater Cincinnati today serves as an umbrella for 18 societies with a total membership of more than 25,000; the largest societies are Kolping, Donauschwaben, and Germania. In 1995 the League celebrated its 100th anniversary in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of German Day.

German Americans made up 57.4 percent of Cincinnati's 300,000 residents in 1890. Besides the clubs and singing societies, the German-American community benefited from a German language theater, more than 30 German-language publications, 48 churches and synagogues, two orphanages, a home for elderly men and another for widows, six cemeteries, and building and loan associations.

Nevertheless, the sizable number and formidable force of Cincinnati's German Americans were no match for the anti-German sentiments that arose during WWI. To avoid unwanted negative attention, German-American citizens and businesses Americanized their names. For example, the German National Bank became the Lincoln National Bank. Moreover, public mandates banned all German-language books from the public library and ceased German-language instruction in public schools. The names of 13 streets were changed from German to English throughout the city. The celebration of German Day was canceled in 1917.

Tensions surrounding German-related matters slowly eased in Cincinnati following the end of WWI—in 1926 German Day was reintroduced; in 1938 it drew as many as 40,000 attendees. Yet the onset of WWII caused the culture to submerge again.

It wasn't until about 1955 that Cincinnati's German Americans began, although slowly, to celebrate their heritage publicly once again. New societies formed, such as the Donauschwaben and Germania Society, and summer festivals followed. In 1974 the Cincinnati public-school system reintroduced a German bilingual school, the Fairview School, and that same year discussions began about holding a downtown Oktoberfest to celebrate the American Bicentennial in 1976. The event, which initially drew a crowd of 25,000, led to the establishment of "the Downtown Council," which specifically plans the Oktoberfest, as well as other events. Today it takes 2,000 people to prepare for the Fest.

A host of celebratory and intellectual pursuits now exist to preserve and promote Cincinnati's rich German-American heritage. In addition to the many German-American fests, parades, and concerts that take place year round, the Queen City is now a sister city to Munich, the location for the headquarters of the Society for German-American Studies, and home to the University of Cincinnati's Max Kade Center (a German language and culture center). And an entire month, from mid-September through mid-October, is designated German-American Heritage Month. Related activities abound for the German-American visitor and for the 45 percent of Greater Cincinnati's 1.5 million citizens who claim German descent.

Angela T. Koenig writes from Cincinnati.

Calendar of Events

June 6: The 103rd German Day, sponsored by the German-American Citizens' League of Greater Cincinnati at Germania Park
July 18–19: Kolping Society Schützenfest, at Kolping Grove
August 1: The 150th Anniversary Celebration of the Cincinnati Turnverein
August 16: Donauschwaben Day
August 28–30: Germania Society Oktoberfest, at Germania Park
August 12–13: Cincinnati Turners Festival
September 19–20: Oktoberfest Zinzinnati, in downtown Cincinnati: www.oktober-zinzinnati.com

INFORMATION

Greater Cincinnati Convention and Visitors' Bureau:
Tel.: (800) 543–2513

German-American Citizens' League of Greater Cincinnati:
Don-Heinrich Tolzmann, Tel.: (513) 556–1955
Jane Grossheim, Tel.: (513) 621–0550

Frankfurt Celebrates the Berlin Airlift

By Regine Wosnitza

Against the backdrop of a bombed-out city, a German soldier on crutches and a little girl pulling her belongings on a handcart walk down a street, while an African-American GI looks on from nearby.

This is the kind of opening scenario John Provan conjured up for viewers at "The Berlin Airlift" exhibition at the Frankfurt Historical Museum, which began May 27, 1998. Three months before the exhibition's opening, Provan noted, "If everything goes well I will have the recording of "Hier spricht die Wehrmacht, der Krieg ist vorbei." (This is the Armed Forces speaking. The war is over.)

By the end of February, however, a dummy GI lay half-naked, waiting to be dressed, on a worktable in Building 341, RM A.B., Historical Exhibit, at the Rhine-Main Air Base in Frankfurt am Main. The handcart still held the contents of a CARE package, and Provan was about to leave for Tucson, Arizona, to arrange the transport of a 1943 Willies "Follow Me" jeep to Frankfurt.

By concentrating on Frankfurt, the exhibit looks at an often neglected aspect of the numerous events commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift. It was from the Frankfurt Air Base that about 50 percent of all goods were flown into Berlin in the first place. And it was from there that U.S. Air Force Major-General William H. Tunner—Provan's personal hero—managed the operations.

"The man who made the Airlift work was General Tunner," Provan said as he strode through the 478-square-foot museum-storage-workshop building, made available for the exhibit by the Rhine-Main base commander. "Clay always gets the credit for being the one who saved Berlin, but he was an Army guy. He did not know how to fly an airplane, and he sure did not know how to organize an airlift."

Provan launched enthusiastically into the rest of the story—how the Airlift started out more or less like a "cowboy operation" with everybody just hopping in their airplanes and flying into Berlin; and how those in charge quickly realized the need for organization if 2 million people were to receive supplies over a longer period of time.

On August 1, 1948, General Tunner and his crew set up headquarters in the nearby city of Wiesbaden. By then the Air Base—four red-brick buildings, consisting of offices and maintenance facilities—had been converted into a fully operational base. To make the Airlift work, General Tunner insisted upon regular maintenance of the aircrafts, instrument-flying capability, radar-assisted approaches, careful safety measures, a steady rhythm, and competition between units.

The latter was not difficult to achieve, says Provan, because the presence of both Air Force and Navy units in Frankfurt naturally increased an already competitive spirit. Each crew would stuff as many bags as possible—within safety limits—onto the planes to try to get the upper hand in transported tonnage.

"Tunner was a graduate from West Point, class of 1928. That's why I also have the Westpoint uniform," Provan stated in concluding the history lesson.

Instead of extensive text panels, Provan uses original artifacts and reconstructed scenes to send both German and American visitors down memory lane. One particular memory aid is Hershey's chocolate, flown in from the States, to commemorate operation Little Vittels by "Candy Bomber" Gail Halvorsen (See Profile, pp. 10-12). Provan predicts, "The moment visitors see Hershey's their mouths will water."

Plans for a specific Berlin Airlift exhibit were hatched after Provan created a successful display on humanitarian airlifts at the Frankfurt International Airport in 1994. Having moved with his father, CM Sergeant John Provan, Sr., from airbase to airbase as a child, John Provan, Jr., naturally developed a strong interest in air traffic. After writing his thesis on "German Airships in World War I," Provan, Jr., graduated with a Bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland and returned to Frankfurt, where he had spent a major part of his childhood. He is currently studying for a Ph.D. at Darmstadt Technical University with a concentration on German aircraft hangars.

An exhibition designer, model constructor, photographer, and historian in one, Provan also expanded the role of museum curator by embarking on creative searches to enhance his Airlift collection. At a Wiesbaden fleamarket, for example, he stumbled across an authentic CARE package dated March 1948, which contained all 29 pounds of its original contents.

Nearly all exhibit visitors will be familiar with CARE packages, but not many will recognize the importance of the rusty and battered pierced-steel planking, or Marston mats, on display.

During the Airlift these planks—each about 2.2 yards long and connectable on all sides—covered miles of runways that otherwise would not have withstood the heavy Allied aircrafts. Any bent plank had to be immediately replaced, which proved to be especially dramatic at Berlin Tempelhof airport, where planes landed only three minutes apart. About 1,400 times a day a crew would rush out after a landing, exchange the 55-pound Marston mat, throw dirt onto it for leveling, and run for cover from the next plane that was already bearing down on them.

General Tunner insisted that rhythm in an airlift was essential. As long as a beat was established and maintained, the Berlin effort would succeed. Early on, though —on August 13, 1947—hazardous weather conditions and inexperienced radio control broke the tempo, and four pilots crashed in quick succession. General Tunner ordered everybody home to their bases. And several days after the events of Black Friday—with a revised flight pattern and a new dispatch of experienced U.S. traffic controllers—the tempo returned and accelerated. Eight months later, on April 16, 1949, the "Easter Parade" (See Feature, pp. 32-37) was only two planes short from a one-minute rhythm, and the Soviets were forced to accept that their tactics had failed.

In the years following the Airlift close cooperation continued between the U.S. Rhine-Main Air Base and the Frankfurt International Airport. Military and civilians have consistently shared the same runways, and the close co-existence has aided more than 170 further humanitarian airlifts.

Today, following military cuts, only some 1,500 airmen and civilians remain stationed at the contingency base. This makes Provan even more determined to preserve memory of their influence. Because the Rhine-Main Historical Exhibit is not easily accessible to German visitors, it could possibly move to later quarters at "Hessen Park"—an open-air museum near Frankfurt.

"There have been at least seven million GIs stationed in Germany in the last 50 years, and we have left our cultural imprint upon German culture," Provan declares. "I am trying to put together what we left the Germans. The Berlin Airlift is one facet of this."

Regine Wosnitza writes from Berlin.

INFORMATION

From May 27 to October 11, 1998, the Airlift Exhibition will be at:
Historisches Museum Frankfurt am Main
Saalgasse 19
60311 Frankfurt am Main
Germany
Tel.: 011.49.69.21235599

When Enemies Become Allies

By Carroll Brown

My oldest brother, 1st Lt. (later Colonel) Francis O. Brown, flew in the Berlin Airlift. The experience was a defining moment in his life and one that echoed back across the Atlantic and into millions of American homes.

My brother's attitude toward Germany was initially formed by World War II, during which he was called upon to wreak utmost destruction on the Third Reich. He flew 50 missions over cities such as Frankfurt, Berlin, Hamburg, and Munich and in the process earned the Distinguished Flying Cross and several Air Medals. He was not a vengeful man, and he was certainly not blood-thirsty. But like so many airmen in the war, his ambition was simply to drop a maximum load of munitions on the enemy and to come home as soon as possible. In letters to his family, he showed no remorse over his role in the doubtless death of many civilians, and he drew no distinction between Nazi Party members and ordinary Germans. After returning to civilian life he took pride in his limited role in bringing about the defeat of Germany. As a teenaged younger brother, I shared in his pride.

All this changed with the Berlin Airlift. My brother was recalled to active duty (and spent the rest of his working life as an Air Force Officer). He was sent to Rhine Main Air Base as part of the 54th Troop Carrier Squadron in June 1948. In a letter to our mother, just before leaving the United States, he wrote:

"I have some rather startling news to tell you. I'm leaving in a few hours for Wiesbaden, Germany. The whole squadron is alerted to go there for about 45 days for the express purpose of flying food and supplies to the people of Berlin. As you know, the Russians have blockaded Berlin, and the people there are in danger of starvation.

Upon arriving at Rhine Main, he recalled laconically, "I made four trips to this place to bomb it during the war."

In a letter dated July 28, he wrote, "I wouldn't worry too much about the war scare if I were you. The people over here are not nearly as concerned as the folks at home."

Once the daily flights from Frankfurt to Berlin began, he commented on the still-evident war destruction of both cities. In an unpublished bit of fiction, he described the daily grind as follows: "...he came to realize that the things he dreaded most—the narrowness of the corridor, the weather, and the recklessness shown by some of his fellow pilots—was not the most exhausting feature of this operation. Instead, it was the steady monotony of the same things over and over again. Two trips tonight, sleep, eat, then two trips more, trips in which he flew eight hours and spent six in waiting. Waiting for a load, waiting to unload, waiting for gas, waiting for oil. Never was 'hurry up and wait' practiced more than in this operation."

In a letter of October 14, 1948, my brother described the German countryside: "I flew over all this during the war and came close to being shot down.... Certainly doesn't look very fierce and war-like now. Peaceful forests and farms, people digging potatoes, fields of turnips and other crops as if there had never been a war at all. I only hope that it can remain this way always."

In mid-December, he wrote: I plan to spend Christmas with a German family. They have two boys, one 10, the other 4, and I will be Santa to them."

In February 1949 my brother's family was allowed to join him. He wrote to our mother: "I think they will like it over here too. It will be an experience that none of us will be able to forget."

He later recalled his increasing admiration for the courage and steadfastness of the Germans in coping with their difficult living conditions, and, with the passage of time, their appreciation for the determination of the Americans, British, and French in preventing the strangulation of Berlin.

He referred often to the foodstuffs, machinery, and coal he and his fellow crewmen were bringing in to keep Berlin alive. He even talked about the legendary Candy Bomber and his own contribution to this novel form of aerial delivery. But what

stands out in my memory is the evolution of my brother's thinking about Germans and Germany. By the time he came home from the deployment, his attitude had taken a 180-degree turn. The foes he had taken pride in defeating in WWII had become stalwart Allies in the Cold War.

I am convinced that such an evolution in thinking was experienced in some form by millions of other Americans, including myself. And there was a German counterpart. As President Truman wrote in his memoirs, "The longer the blockade continued, the more the technical efficiency of the airlift improved and the more people of Germany looked toward the West to strengthen them in their determination to remain free. Berlin had become a symbol of America's and the West's...dedication to the cause of freedom." The historian Terrence Pritie added, "The Berliners were brave, loyal, and humorous; their epic feat of endurance won them the admiration of their conquerors who, for the first time since the war, began to visualize the possibility of treating Germans as friends and allies."

Carroll Brown is president of the American Council on Germany, a private organization engaged in the promotion of German-American relations, which was founded in 1953 by, among others, General Lucius D. Clay, commanding officer in the American Zone of Occupation in Germany and who oversaw the Berlin Airlift.

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