



The lessons learned from the Berlin Airlift were applied to USAF aircraft development, refining of airlift techniques, and ultimately into formation of the Military Airlift Command (USAF photo)

give the pilot the latest word in that department. The third jeep to arrive was fitted out like a snack bar, literally stocked with such items as hot coffee, hot dogs and doughnuts, and equipped with a canopy that could be extended in case of rain." Other jeeps brought out other items of use to the aircrews. (52)

Turner also put his staff to work on ground crews. Motion study experts analyzed every aspect of the unloading method with stopwatches and statistical charts to streamline the process. They were successful. For instance, they implemented procedures which allowed one crew of 12 men to load ten tons of bagged coal into a C-54 within six minutes. On the other side, unloading techniques were instituted which allowed crews to complete tasks in five minutes which previously had required 17. Additionally, refueling time was cut from 33 to eight minutes using the procedures of Turner's staff. All of these efforts paid off; the airlift turnaround time at Berlin was reduced from an hour to 30 minutes. (53)

Germany's harsh winter weather constituted the greatest single threat to the airlift's transports. As summer 1948 turned to winter, the Airlift Task Force had to take many actions to ensure that tonnage and safety rates remained at the levels desired. For instance, the complement of weather personnel in the region grew from 308 to 570 by the end of the year to support the increased operations. These individuals undertook several programs designed to achieve forecasting precision as the dreary winter months approached. They brought into use new types of measuring equipment. On some occasions weather observers were posted at the approach of the runway to count and report the number of runway lights that could be seen when visibility dropped to less than a mile. Weather reconnaissance flights were also stepped up to increase forecasting knowledge. For a time, every seventh C-54 was required to have its radio operator report weather conditions at four points along the air corridors. A weather officer also served on Turner's staff in an effort to bring to bear as much weather information as possible to the airlift planning process. The weather officer held daily telephone conferences with weather personnel at other sites and produced a composite forecast for the airlift managers.

Although the winter of 1948-1949 was one of the worst on record, the airlift was able to overcome it sufficiently to keep a reasonable amount of tonnage flying into Berlin. (54) Turner sounded his support of the Air Weather Service's opera-

tions, noting that its "forecasts were as good as possible, being limited only by the current status of progress of the science of weather forecasting. More certainly could not have been expected." (55)

With total instrument flying and poor weather conditions the standard in Berlin Airlift operations, excellent air traffic control (ATC) was a requirement for any hope of relieving the blockade with an airlift. Unfortunately, the experience level, the quality of equipment, and the ATC personnel strengths were insufficient at first to meet the demands of the massive operation. Turner complained about this problem to the MATS commander, writing on 21 August 1948: "One fact that their operations have brought out very forcibly is that there appear to be no traffic controllers in the Air Force. We had some during the War in the ICHD, but they have apparently all got out and are now with the airlines or CAA. MATS has developed Flight Advisory Centers over here in Europe, but they are traffic followers rather than controllers. The magnitude of this operation and the tight schedules which we must maintain with split-minute timing have showed how critical this lack is. I think you would do well to have your people study the problem and then start training a specialist corps of traffic controllers. I foresee great difficulty if we are not furnished with some competent traffic controllers soon." (56) Turner equated many of the operation's difficulties at that stage of the airlift to inadequate ATC and believed the situation would only get worse once winter set in.

Airlift power, represented here by a line of C-54s, kept Berlin alive and broke the Soviet blockade. In the process, Berlin became a symbol of resistance to Soviet expansion.

Action was forthcoming. Turner noted that the Army Airways and Air Communications Service (AACS) commander on the scene was "aware of the inadequacies of some of the GCA [ground control approach] controllers, and he now has some people coming over from the States who should be better trained." (57) Kuter also informed Turner on 2 September 1948 that additional GCA personnel would be available soon: "Another good example of the type of cooperation that we are getting is that USAF, acting on our request, has recalled to active duty for 90 days twenty CAA traffic controllers.... Their papers are now being hand processed and the first contingent will leave here for Rhein-Main today, 2 September, on Priority One. This group of experienced personnel should be of real assistance to you." (58) So fast did one of these controllers re-enter active service that he was notified on a Saturday of the