

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BERLIN, GERMANY



Public Affairs

October 11, 2011

Förderverein Rosinenbomber e. V.
c/o Air Service Berlin CFH GmbH
Attn. Mr. Frank Hellberg, President
Flughafen Schönefeld
12529 Schönefeld

Dear Friends of the Candybombers,

The 1948-1949 Berlin Blockade was the Soviet Union's attempt to force the western powers to allow the Soviets to start supplying Berlin with food and fuel, thereby giving the Soviets control over the entire city. In response, the Western Allies organized the Berlin Airlift to carry supplies to the people of West Berlin. The United Kingdom's Royal Air Force and the United States Air Force, assisted by aircrews from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa, flew over 200,000 flights in one year, providing up to 4700 tons of daily necessities such as fuel and food to the Berliners. After 11 months, the tonnage of supplies flown into the city exceeded that previously brought by rail, the Berlin Airlift appeared able to operate indefinitely, and the Soviet Union soon ended the Blockade.

Gail Halvorsen was one of the many pilots engaged in the Airlift. One day, on his time off, he walked over to a crowd of children watching the aircraft from the end of the runway at Tempelhof. As he talked to them and answered their questions about the aircraft and the flights, he gave them the two sticks of Wrigley's Doublemint Gum that he had on him and promised that he would drop off more. He said that he would wiggle his wings so they would know it was his plane.

The next day, on his approach to Berlin, he rocked his aircraft and dropped some chocolate bars to the children waiting below. As the number of children waiting for him increased each day, other pilots joined in and American children and candy manufacturers began sending candy for the "Candy Bombers." By the end of the Berlin Blockade, over three tons of candy had been dropped on Berlin. Many Berliners tell me they still remember the excitement of receiving chocolates, gum, and other candy from the skies.

Berliners no longer need to receive sweets from us, but the story of the Candy Bombers is an important one. We are pleased that the Förderverein Rosinenbomber e.V. is restoring the one remaining air-worthy aircraft so that it can again fly over the city of Berlin and teach people about the history of the Berlin Blockade and the Berlin Airlift. We will be following the reconstruction closely and we hope that you will follow it on our website and Facebook pages.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Corwin'.

Elizabeth Corwin
Cultural Attaché