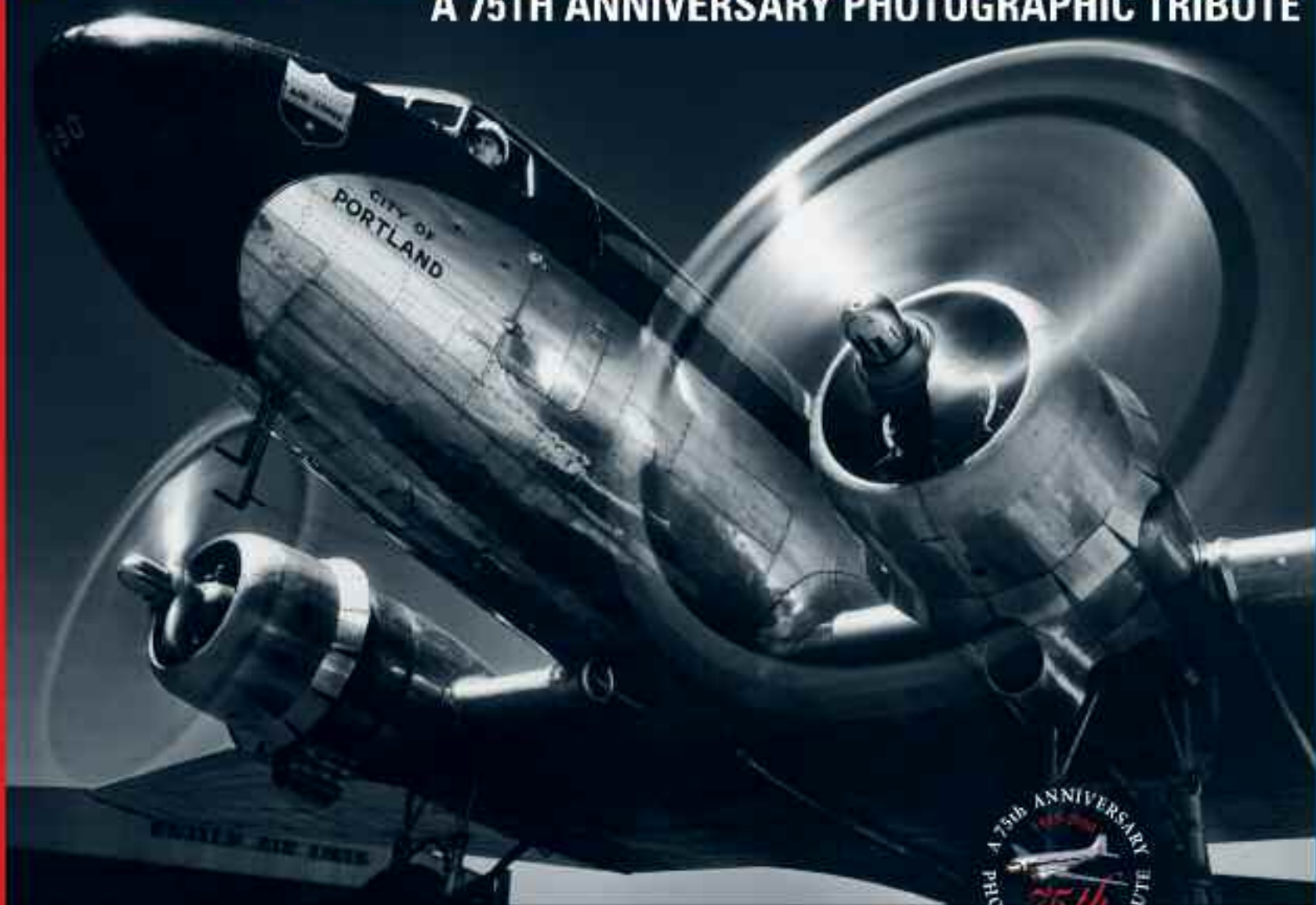


DC-3

A LEGEND IN HER TIME

A 75TH ANNIVERSARY PHOTOGRAPHIC TRIBUTE



BRUCE McALLISTER





CHAPTER 3

The Golden Age of Air Travel



This American Airlines magazine ad depicts DC-3 night flights. AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

In 1936 orders for the DC-3 started to back up at the Douglas plant in Santa Monica, California. American Airlines, TWA, Eastern, and United were in a major race to get trans-continental routes going and they all had different ideas about how to do it.

On June 25, 1936 American Airlines became the first air carrier to use the DC-3, inaugurating its 'American Eagle' service between Chicago's Midway Airport and Newark. Tickets for the four-hour flight cost

OPPOSITE PAGE: A Trans World Airlines early model DC-3 loads passengers. TWA was a key supporter in the development of the Douglas DC series aircraft. It owned the only DC-1 ever produced and eventually bought many DC-2s. SAN DIEGO AEROSPACE MUSEUM



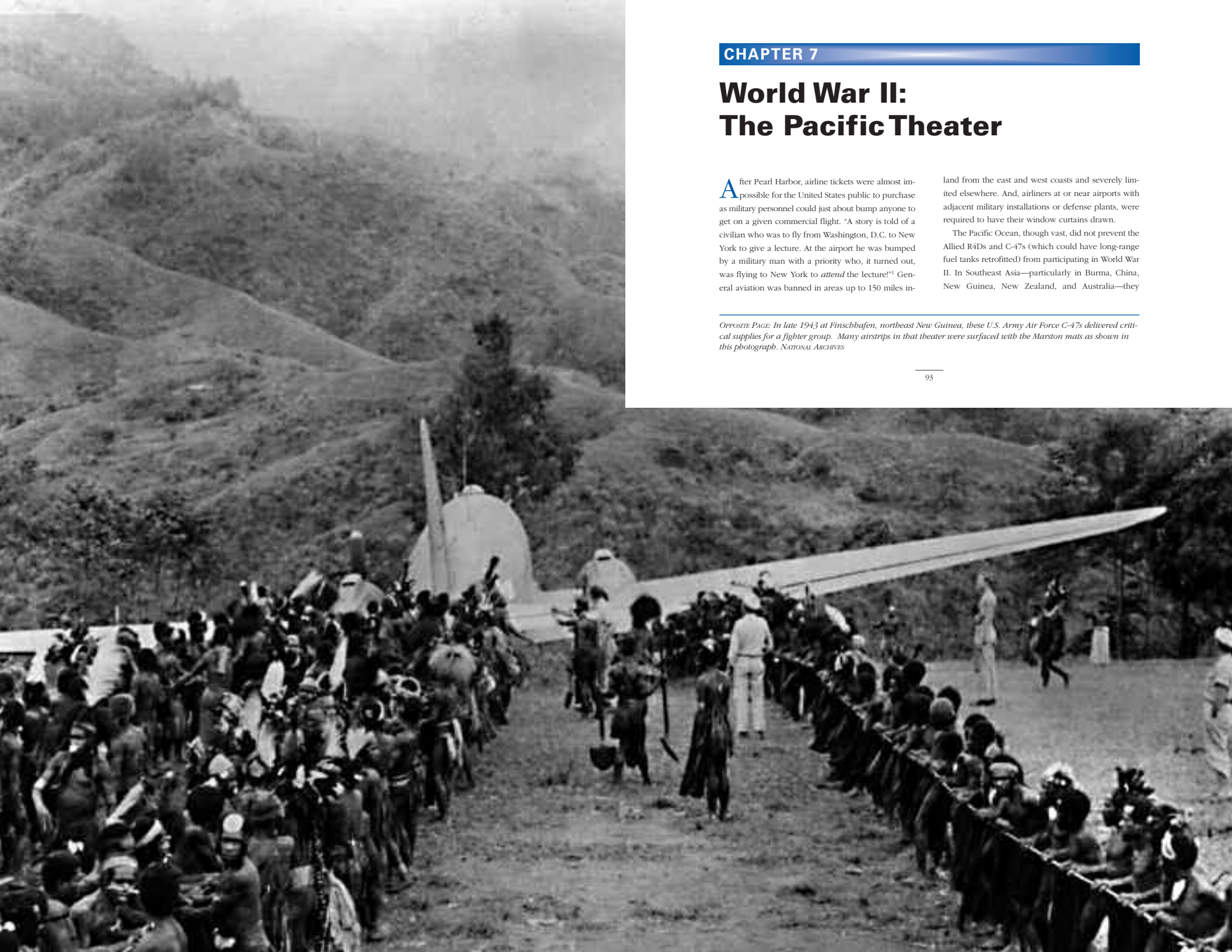
World War II: The Pacific Theater

After Pearl Harbor, airline tickets were almost impossible for the United States public to purchase as military personnel could just about bump anyone to get on a given commercial flight. “A story is told of a civilian who was to fly from Washington, D.C. to New York to give a lecture. At the airport he was bumped by a military man with a priority who, it turned out, was flying to New York to attend the lecture!”¹ General aviation was banned in areas up to 150 miles in-

land from the east and west coasts and severely limited elsewhere. And, airliners at or near airports with adjacent military installations or defense plants, were required to have their window curtains drawn.

The Pacific Ocean, though vast, did not prevent the Allied R4Ds and C-47s (which could have long-range fuel tanks retrofitted) from participating in World War II. In Southeast Asia—particularly in Burma, China, New Guinea, New Zealand, and Australia—they

OPPOSITE PAGE: In late 1943 at Finschhafen, northeast New Guinea, these U.S. Army Air Force C-47s delivered critical supplies for a fighter group. Many airstrips in that theater were surfaced with the Marston mats as shown in this photograph. NATIONAL ARCHIVES





The Berlin Airlift

In June 1948 the Soviet Union suddenly, and without any warning, cut off all land access to West Berlin, Germany. The Western Allies—in order to protect the French, British, and United States' sectors in the city—reacted swiftly to this tremendous logistical challenge by marshalling all available transport aircraft in Europe, and even from as far as the U.S., to start what became known as the Berlin Airlift. The C-47 was the only aircraft immediately available to trans-

port vital supplies—such as coal, food, and milk—to the city. Moreover, there were only two airfields available to the supply aircraft—Tempelhof in the U.S. sector and Gatow (later renamed Tegel) in the British sector.

The U.S. was especially swift to react to the Russian blockade. On June 26, 1948 32 U. S. Air Force C-47s from West Germany delivered some 80 tons of food and coal to Tempelhof Air Base near the center

OPPOSITE PAGE: A group of Berliners standing in the ruins of building at the edge of Tempelhof Airfield, looking up at a U.S. Air Force C-47 bringing them food during the Berlin Airlift. © WALTER SANDERS/TIME LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES



Vietnam

From 1959 to 1975 the Vietnam Conflict, as it came to be known, erupted, spreading into Cambodia and Laos. Once again, hostilities served to splinter support between the East and West: communist countries backed North Vietnam, whereas the United States and western countries supported South Vietnam.

The Vietcong, a South Vietnamese communist force, waged guerrilla-style warfare against friendly forces in the region. The North Vietnamese Army, on the other hand, conducted a more conventional war,

committing more and better-organized forces into battle. The U.S. and South Vietnamese forces relied on air superiority and overwhelming firepower to counter the Communist threat.

Again, the C-47 found a key niche in this long drawn-out conflict. By chance the C-47 was about to become an aerial gunship. As Vietnam hostilities were intensifying a U. S. Air Force test pilot, Captain Ron Terry, authored a proposal "for hamlet and fort defense that won approval from the ASD Limited Warfare

OPPOSITE PAGE: Crew of U.S. Air Force AC-47 aircraft firing 7.62 mm General Electric mini guns during a night mission in Vietnam. © LARRY BURROWS/TIME MAGAZINE/TIME-LIFE PHOTO/GETTY IMAGES





CHAPTER 16

Turboprop DC-3s

Following World War II two British companies—Armstrong-Siddeley and Rolls Royce—used DC-3s as test beds for a revolutionary new engine plant, the gas turbine (often called turbojet). What resulted was a turbine/propeller combination that became known as the “turboprop.” The fuel of choice for this new package was kerosene.

The British used these conversions as “flying test beds for new engines, *not* attempts to improve the

DC-3s.”⁷¹ Because the turboprop engines were considerably lighter than the Twin Wasp engines, they had to be mounted ahead of the wings to maintain correct longitudinal balance for the aircraft.

In January 1968 John M. Conroy made a serious attempt to improve DC-3 performance using turboprops. He had strong credentials, having developed Boeing Stratocruiser fuselage modifications, as well as the Pregnant Guppy cargo carrier.

OPPOSITE PAGE: The U.S. Forest Service utilizes this Basler BT-67, N142Z, for fire fighting and bases it in Missoula, Montana. It is shown here landing on a backcountry airstrip, Indian Creek, approximately 40 miles due east of McCall, Idaho. COURTESY U.S. FOREST SERVICE



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