



## Dr. Frank Wattendorf

the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG), formed to study America's needs in the aerodynamic field. He was to report on German advances in gas turbine propulsion, wind tunnels and propulsion facilities.

In 1945, while detailed to postwar Germany to study its advancements in aeronautical and aerodynamic research, Wattendorf was notified of his father's death. He crossed the Atlantic in a combat-painted C-54 transport plane, where he poured through highly-classified notes and papers that lead him to pen the now famous *Trans-Atlantic Memo* to Brig. Gen. Franklin O. Carroll, chief of the Army Air Forces Engineering Division at Wright Field, Ohio, and later AEDC's first commander.

"I returned on emergency leave aboard a MATS (Materiel Air Transport Service) plane; one of those old bucket seat C-54s," Wattendorf said. "I was on this plane with nothing to do for a long period of time so I started putting my thoughts together and just started writing them out. That was on June 19, 1945. I recommended to the Air Force that they consider a new center geared to the coming jet age."

His memo became the first recommendation for AEDC, stating the need for facilities to develop and test supersonic aircraft and missiles. It later became a large part of von Kármán's *Toward New Horizons*, the blueprint for Air Force research and development.

Wattendorf was appointed civilian chairman of the AEDC Planning Group and was awarded the Medal of Freedom in 1946 for his overseas surveys and his recommendation for the new testing complex. Among his recommendations was shipping parts of large German facilities to the U.S. for eventual use in the new test center.

Approval was quickly and easily obtained through the Allied Command in Europe; shipping began in 1945. He was a founding member of the NATO Advisory



Gen. Carroll, R. M. Williams, Dr. Wattendorf, Gen. Schriever and Gen. Gossick pause in front of the supersonic wind tunnel during a tour in 1965.



General Carl Spaatz, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, presents Dr. Frank Wattendorf an award while Dr. Theodore von Kármán (center) looks on.

Group for Aeronautical Research and Development (AGARD), the von Kármán Institute for Fluid Dynamics, and the International Council for the Aeronautical Sciences. Dr. Wattendorf retired in 1968 and was awarded the U. S. Air Force (USAF) Medal for Exceptional Civilian Service.

For nearly 15 years, he assisted in the strategic planning and development of new test facilities and in the improvement of existing facilities.

In 1980, the American Institute of

Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) presented him with the Ground Testing Award for achievements in the development and operation of advanced aerodynamic and propulsion test facilities.

Frank Wattendorf died in 1986.

In 1987, his widow, Glenn, and son, Roger, attended ceremonies that named the base access highway in his memory.

In 2006, Wattendorf was recognized for his contributions to the center as an Honorary AEDC Fellow.

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