

"Seems like only Yesterday"--

Fifth Air Force Officer Assigned to Arnold Returns

by Mark Fearing

This month marks the 39th anniversary of the official dedication of Arnold Engineering Development Center. AEDC owes its humble beginning to hundreds of people. One of these people Col. Harry Livingston, USAF Ret., who was the fifth Air Force officer to be assigned at AEDC. Livingston recently returned to Middle Tennessee and toured the Center.

Livingston recalled that on June 4, 1951 General Carroll, first commander of AEDC, received word that President Harry S. Truman accepted the invitation to preside over the dedication ceremonies on June 25, the day that would have been Hap Arnold's 65th birthday. The acceptance of this invitation put the wheels in motion for an elaborate project.

AEDC was a tremendous undertaking from the beginning. And people like Colonel Livingston were here when the first pieces of equipment arrived in Tullahoma. Livingston was assigned to Northern Field in Tullahoma.

During the Center's dedication President Harry S. Truman unveiled the plaque, which is now in the front of the A&E building, Livingston said "I remember the day the Center opened, just like it was yesterday."

"We dedicated the Center on June 25, 1951 over in that warehouse and I had designed that cover for that rock (dedication plaque) for Mrs. Arnold to unveil. The day before it did not

work! But luckily on that day it worked when it should.," said Livingston.

Livingston was amazed at how much AEDC had grown in 40 years. Walking through the Engine Test Facility, and looking into the engine test cell T-2, which was part of the original equipment from Germany, Livingston recalled, "I remember the excavation of ETF and how much dirt that had to be removed."

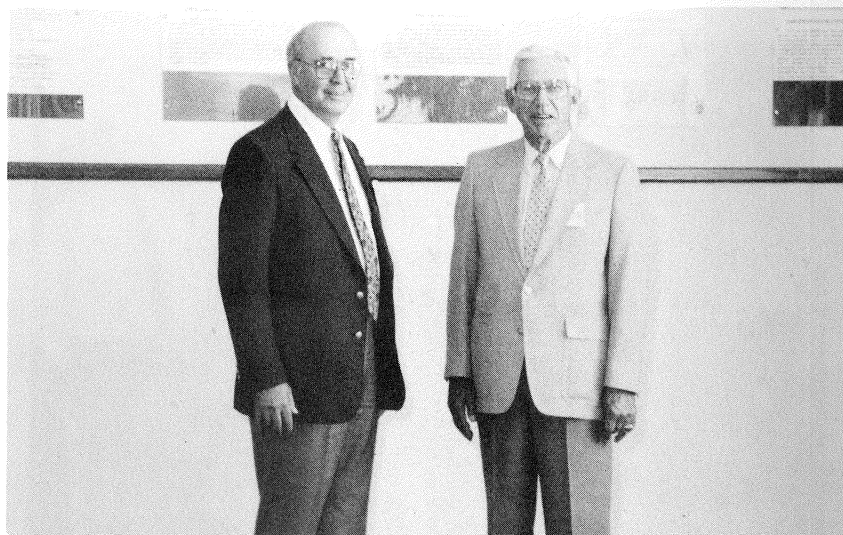
"All the equipment used to construct AEDC in the early days came from Germany at the end of World War II. The complete Bavarian Motor Works (BMW) plant, together with parts intended for expansion, was allocated to the Army Air Forces by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and shipped to the United States and stored until AEDC was approved," said Livingston.

The equipment was stored in many locations across the United States, from Calif. to Ala. "We

had so many boxes," Livingston said. "Over 38 railroad cars full of this equipment. We had to place chalk marks on the floor of the hangar at Northern field, to locate and organize the incoming shipments," he said.

Much has changed at AEDC in over 40 years. One thing that has not changed is the vision of the founding fathers of AEDC. "I am proud of the time I spent at AEDC, and even more proud at what the Center has accomplished over the past 40 years," Livingston said.

Construction of new facilities and modifications on the old has proceeded almost continuously since the first spade of dirt was turned on the old Camp Forrest reservation. While new facilities came on line, AEDC engineers and craftsmen continued to strive for more efficient testing techniques, resulting in the foremost testing center in the nation.



Col. Harry Livingston, right, and Olin W. Bryant, General Manager of Paducah Power System, Kentucky toured AEDC recently.