

RBFAA Alumni Event Report

Chicago Blues Airlift

Berlin, 02 November 2018, Sponsored by the RBFAA

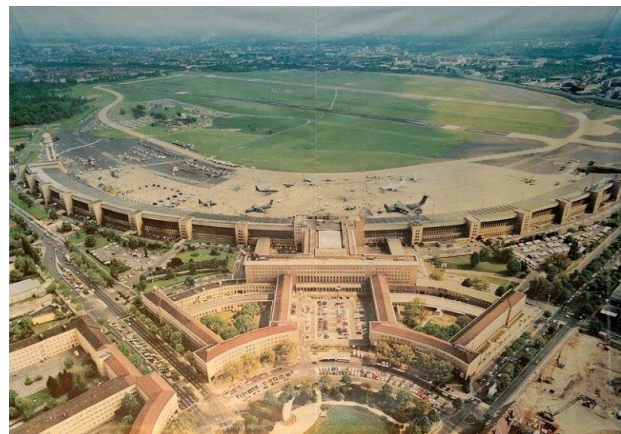


The Chicago Blues Airlift 2018 invited US and International Bosch alumni and current fellows to recognize the 70th Anniversary of the Berlin Airlift with both an afternoon visit to a newly opened exhibition on the History of Tempelhofer Feld and a blues-music-filled evening reception at the private home of alumnus Benjamin Lorch (Bosch XXIII). Between these two events attendees also stopped to pay their respects to those who lost their lives in the Airlift at the Airlift Memorial site located at Platz der Luftbrücke -- the so-called *Hungerharke*.

Ein Weites Feld - Der Flughafen Tempelhof und seine Geschichte is an exhibition curated by the Topography of Terror Foundation on site at the former Tempelhof Airport. The exhibit recalls and displays how Tempelhof Field has been used since the 19th century to test aviation machines and undertake early attempts at flight. The first airport opened on the grounds in 1923, connecting Berlin with many cities in Europe. Later during the Nazi era Tempelhof Field became a stage for large propaganda events. The SS ran one of the first concentration camps on the edge of the grounds and in 1936, construction began on a new airport building, one of the largest in the world. During World War II, fighter aircraft were produced and repaired at Tempelhof with women and men from all over Europe performing forced labor.



The second portion of the exhibit recalled how during the Cold War, Tempelhof Airport served as a U.S. air force base and was West Berlin's "gate to the free world." Lastly the exhibit showed how Tempelhof has a popular recreational area, attracting visitors from all over the world and that was evidenced by the spectacular view over the tarmac and airfield which could be taken in from the exhibition hall itself. There were lively conversations and a good exchange of knowledge and ideas between those in attendance which included a range of people among them professional historian Keith Allen and two native Berliners. All were linked the Bosch Foundation through their work, scholarship or fellowships.





Following the exhibition visit our group visited the Airlift Memorial located at Platz der Luftbrücke and paid homage to the those who died in accidents on the field during the 322-day blockade of West Berlin. A total of 101 fatalities were recorded as a result of the Air Lift operations, which included 40 Britons and 31 Americans. Seventeen American and eight British aircraft crashed during the operation causing most of the deaths.

42 individuals registered themselves for one or both of the Chicago Blues Airlift events via an eventbrite web site. 14 people (not all pictured) attended the exhibition and approximately 40 people attended the reception.

The day was brought to a close with a lively reception featuring professional blues musician and Delmark recording artist Rockin' Johnny Burgin. Johnny was joined by three other musicians, a harmonica player, a drummer and a bass player. People in attendance talked, danced and enjoyed themselves. This musical reception began at 17:30 and concluded at 22:00 to respect the neighbors.



See:

<https://www.thf-berlin.de/aktuelles/veranstaltungen/ausstellung-ein-weites-feld/>

<http://rockinjohnnyburgin.com/bio/>



Benjamin Lorch

09 November 2018