

INFORMATION OFFICE
1501st AIR TRANSPORT WING (H) (MATS)
TRAVIS AFB, CALIFORNIA 94535
707-437-2211, EXT 2014

RELEASE NR 435

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
20 April 1965

TRAVIS AFB, Calif (WIO) - Mrs. Mary Enos, a spry grandmother of 70 affectionately called "The Mother of Travis Air Force Base," is going for her first airplane ride next Friday.

It will be quite an occasion. Along with prominent California figures, mayors and other dignitaries, she will be the first lady to set foot aboard the C-141 StarLifter after it is assigned to Travis AFB. Bellwether aircraft of the nation's first operational StarLifter squadron, the C-141 will arrive at Travis Friday to be turned over, amid formal ceremonies, to the 1501st Air Transport Wing here.

Honor guests, including Mrs. Enos, will then receive an orientation flight over the Northern California and Bay area surrounding Travis.

She is excited and thrilled about the prospect. Since moving here from Massachusetts 41 years ago, she has never been farther than San Francisco or Sacramento from the modest ranch house just outside the Travis north gate.

Though she watches planes land and take off on the nearby runway every day, she says she has never wanted to fly before. Recently, relatives in Massachusetts and Florida have written repeatedly for her to take a plane and visit them.

"I don't want to go that far," she told an interviewer. "This is where I have spent my life, and where I want to be. Why, think of it - I'll be back the same afternoon."

California and Travis Air Force Base have been good to her throughout the years. "It's been a wonderful, wonderful life," she declared earnestly. "There have been bad times, of course, but I wouldn't have wanted to change it."

-more-

Born Mary Rose Marcell in Fall River, Mass., she grew up and married Joseph Enos, a young farmer from nearby Somerset. It was hard going for the young couple, and when Joseph's brother Manuel invited them to come live with him on a tract of land he had purchased between Fairfield and Vacaville, California, they packed up and came west.

Like the other ranchers of the area, they grazed sheep and cows and raised chickens. Manuel was a bachelor, so Mary kept house for the family. She had one son, Joseph Anthony.

Then came World War II. The Enos land was among the first parcels of the 6,000 acres that became Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Field in 1942.

During construction, the contractors made their headquarters near a grove of eucalyptus trees from the Enos ranch. At first this area, now the center of officer housing and some administrative buildings, came to be known as Camp Enos.

"We helped each other," Mrs. Enos recalled. "When they wanted to cross our land with the pipe lines and the power lines, we let them. Being so close, they let us connect on, so our place had electricity long before the others around here.

"The airmen even helped drive our sheep right through the middle of the base, so we could get them to market. I took all our fresh eggs to people on the base and got to know their families."

In time she came to be what she calls "the champion baby sitter of Travis." At one time or another she took care of the children of the various base commanders and staff officers.

She recalls Brig. Gen. Robert F. Travis, for whom the base was named after his plane crashed in 1950, with pride and affection.

-more-

"He was a stern man, a true military man, but he always had a pleasant word for me."

When President Truman paid a visit to the base in 1952, secret service men took over the quarters of the ranking commander, Brig. Gen. Joe W. Kelly, for the President's stay. Displaced by the presidential party, the Kelly children made their home in the Enos farm house.

Her own son became an underwater demolition expert during World War II, won high combat decorations on the European battle front, and now lives in Fairfield with his wife and daughter. Mary's husband, Joseph, died several years ago.

When he was taken ill, she accompanied him to the hospital. Families from the base milked her cows and took care of the place till she returned. Though she has no cows or chickens any more, they still come to call on the sprightly old lady who lives alone with "only my dogs" in the old ranch house.

Some, like Frank J. Mullane of Vacaville, keep in touch even though no longer at the base. A retired lieutenant colonel, he is a former Travis provost marshal, who was visiting during the Easter week end.

"I drop in every now and then," he said. "She took care of my kids, too."

He mentioned that when the town of Vacaville was organizing a community little league, she donated some property near the California Medical Facility here, which helped to make it one of the area's outstanding youth organizations.

Mullane gestured toward a stack of cards and letters on a corner table in the big, old fashioned Enos kitchen.

"That is her Easter mail," he said. "Almost all of them are from people like me who have moved away but haven't forgotten her."