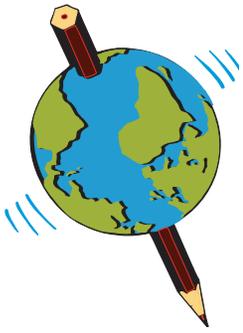


Uncle Wiggly Wings

The story of Gail Halvorsen, the Candy Bomber





Uncle Wiggly Wings was a pilot.
His real name was Colonel Gail Halvorsen.
He liked to fly airplanes.
He flew a Douglas C-54 airplane.
He was also called the Candy Bomber. Read on to find out why.



After World War II, Germany was divided among the countries that won the war against Germany. The Soviet Union (now known as Russia) took control of the eastern half of Germany and the western half was divided among the Allied Forces of the USA, Great Britain, and France.

Beginning June 1948, Russia built blockades and would not let food and supplies reach the city of Berlin, Germany. More than two million people were hungry.

The United States sent pilots to help fly food and supplies into Berlin.

Your grandparents were young when Uncle Wiggly Wings flew food and supplies to Berlin.

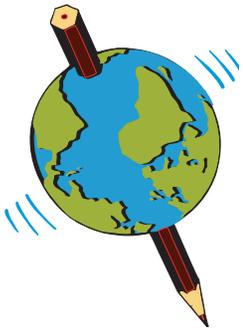
How many years ago did he fly the supplies to Berlin?

Today is 20__
Year Flown 1948

My answer is _____

Vocabulary:

Allied Forces
blockade



How many pieces can you tear your gum into?

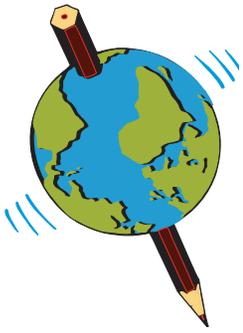
My answer is _____

Vocabulary:

runway

One day while he was in Berlin, Col Halvorsen saw a group of young children at the end of the runway. They were watching planes landing and taking off.

The children were hungry, but they did not complain nor beg for anything. Uncle Wiggly Wings (Col Halvorsen) reached in his pocket and found he had two sticks of gum. "How do you share two sticks of gum with all these children?" he asked himself.



Gail Halvorsen in Berlin (18 Sep 77)
USAF Museum Photo Archives

How would you let the children know that your airplane was the one that would drop candy and gum to the children?

My answer is _____

Vocabulary:

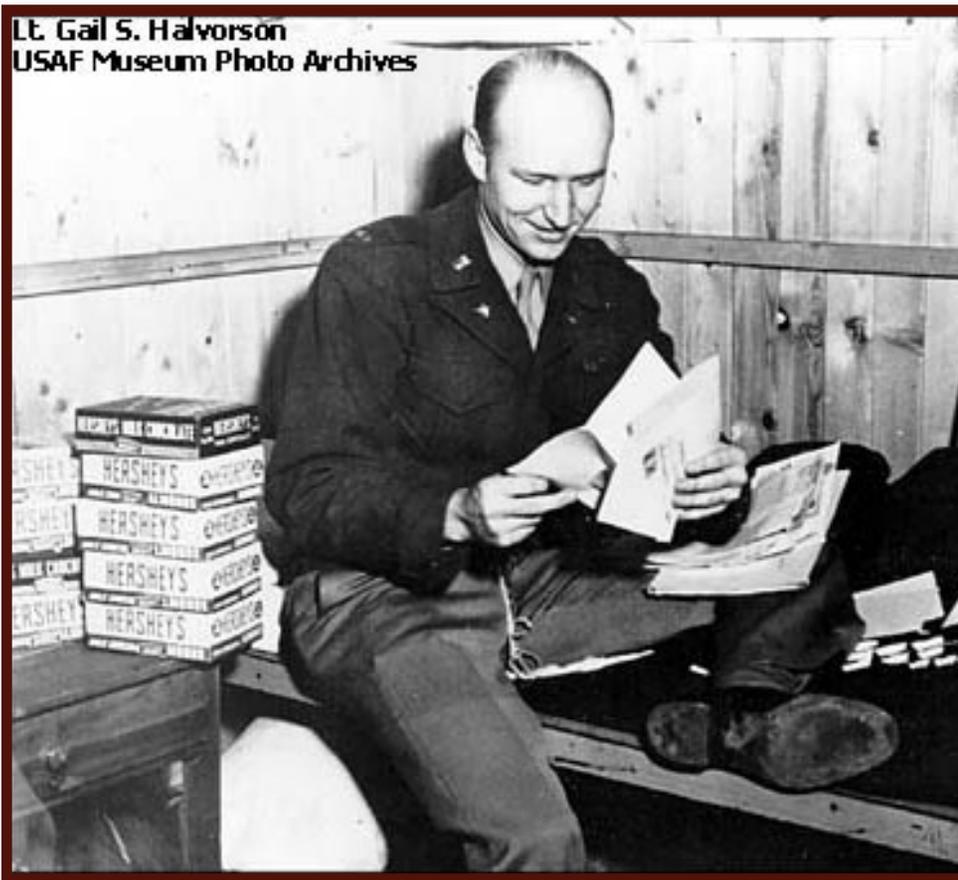
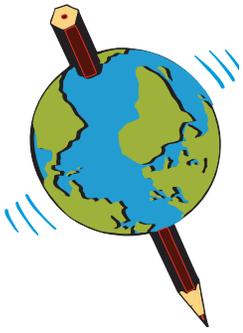
savor

Col Halvorsen gave the two sticks of gum to the group of children. And, amazingly, the children tore the gum into enough pieces for every child to have a small taste or smell. There was no arguing or fighting. There were only smiles of joy at having even a small piece to savor.

Seeing how thrilled the children were over the gum, Uncle Wiggly Wings promised to bring them candy the next time he came. He said he would drop it to them from his plane. There were many airplanes that passed over their city carrying supplies every day.

"How will we know your plane?" asked a young girl.

"I will wiggle my wings," replied Uncle Wiggly Wings.



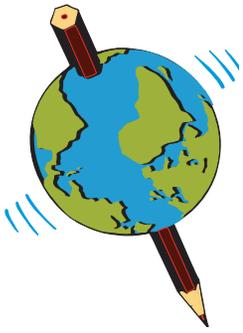
Why do you think the name
"Operation Little Vittles" was used?
My answer is _____

Vocabulary:

parachute
operation
vittles

The next day as Col Halvorsen flew over Berlin he wiggled the wings of his plane to let the children know that he was going to drop candy to them. Then, he dropped many small parachutes made from handkerchiefs, each bearing sweet treats.

Soon letters addressed to "Uncle Wiggly Wings" began to arrive with children requesting candy drops in other areas of the city. "Operation Little Vittles" had begun.



Gail Halvorson reenacting the 'Candy Drop' in 1969 at Templehof Airport, Berlin
USAF Museum Photo Archives



What have you done that shows your love and concern for others?

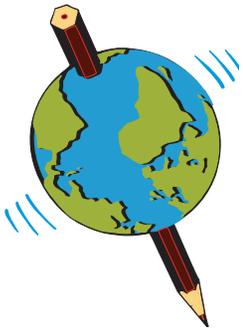
Vocabulary:

humanitarian
boxcar

To help Uncle Wiggly Wings with "Operation Little Vittles," candy was shared by fellow airmen and sent by schoolchildren from across America. Candy manufacturers also donated candy by the boxcar load.

In May of 1949, the highway blockade ended, and the airlift delivering supplies ended in September.

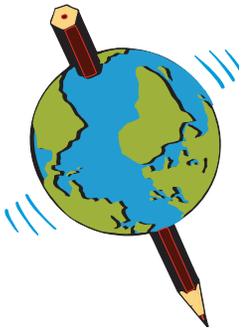
The efforts of Uncle Wiggly Wings will be remembered because of his love and concern for others. He had a true humanitarian spirit.



What Has Col Halvorsen Been Doing Since Berlin?

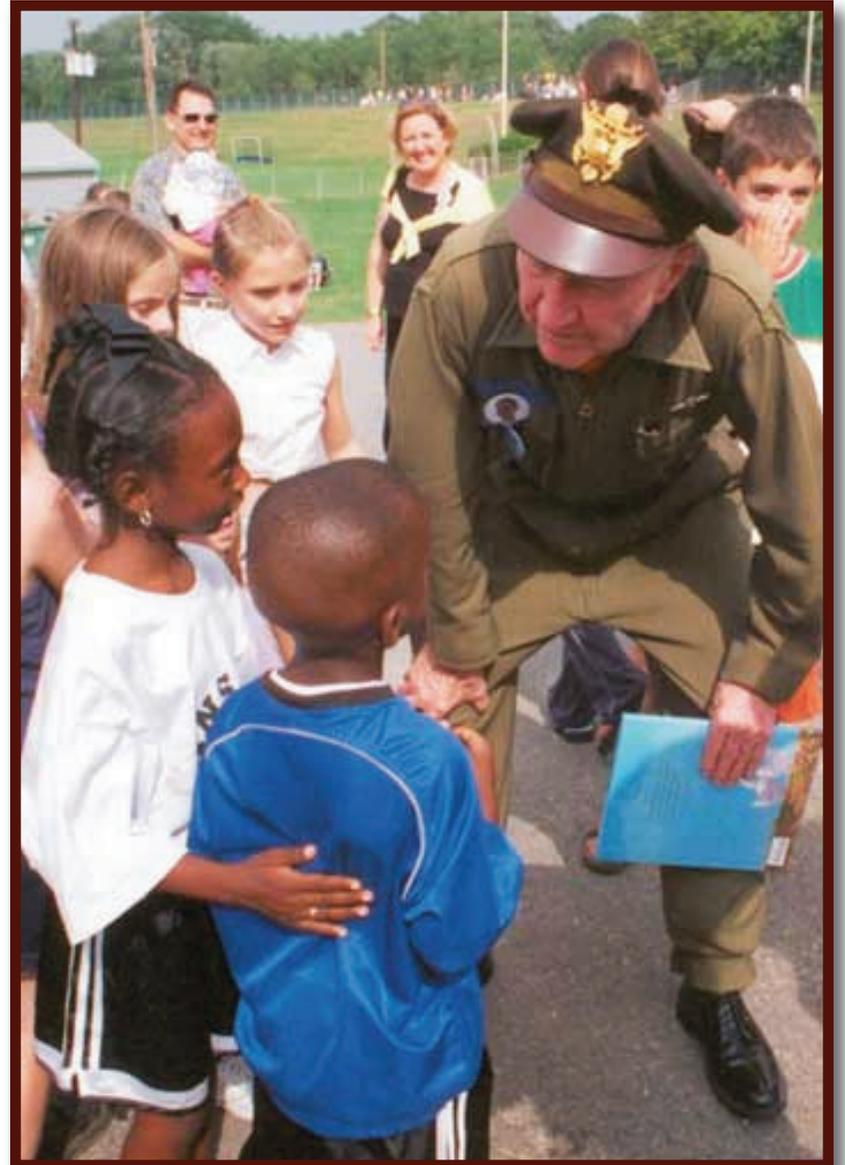
Retired Col Halvorsen has been recreating the spirit of his Berlin candy story in other countries such as in Tirana, Albania in 1999 where he delivered school supplies, toys and candy to Albanian children there.

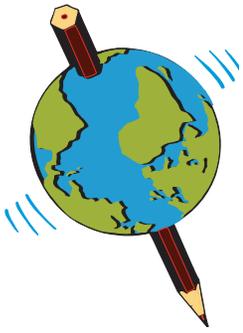




And...

Uncle Wiggly Wings also offered his special gift to the victims of hurricane Katrina in south Mississippi in 2005.





Col Halvorsen Has Also Visited Many Schools...

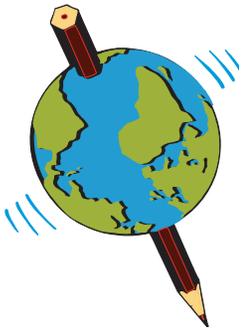
School children, educators, and many other groups have enjoyed the story of Uncle Wiggly Wings.





Writing to the Candy Bomber...

Write a letter as if you were a child in East Berlin during the Berlin Airlift. How would you ask Col Halvorsen to drop his candy parachutes in your neighborhood? Remember, the children of Berlin did not beg for anything, as their personal pride would not allow that. So, write your letter of request without begging, but with self respect.



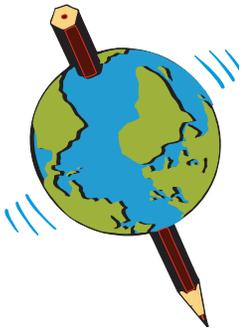
Where in the World...

- Locate and color the following places on a map and talk about why each location is important in the life of Col Halversen:

- Berlin, Germany - (where the blockade and candy drop happened)
Use the map of Europe from your teacher and color the country of Germany green.
- Tirana, Albania - (where Col Halvorsen also gave children hope)
Use the map of Europe from your teacher and color the country of Albania blue.
- Utah, United States of America (where Col Halvorsen was born) -
Use the map of the United States and color Utah orange.
- Mississippi, United States of America (where Col Halvorsen shared his humanitarian spirit to victims of Hurricane Katrina) - Use the map of the United States and color Mississippi red.



- Find out one fact about each of these locations to put on a postcard from each location with a message on the back as if you are living in that location at this time in history.

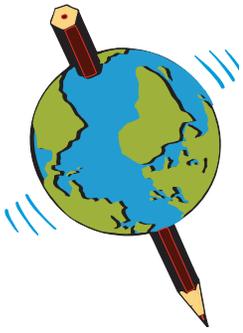


Col Halvorsen - Service Before Self

- The candy dropped by Col Halvorsen did not just represent a sweet treat, it provided hope for the children of East Berlin. It also showed that someone cared enough to bring a little joy to them. The children explained to Uncle Wiggly Wings (Halvorsen) that they could go without enough food for a bit, but if they lost their freedom they may never get it back. So, using a handkerchief parachute with candy attached, Col Halvorsen provided the children with a bit of hope of freedom they needed to survive. This effort represented the optimism of a brighter future ahead.



- What simple act of kindness can you and your classmates do for others?



Col Halvorsen Timeline...

Cut out the pictures below and put them in order from the beginning of the Uncle Wiggly Wings story to now.



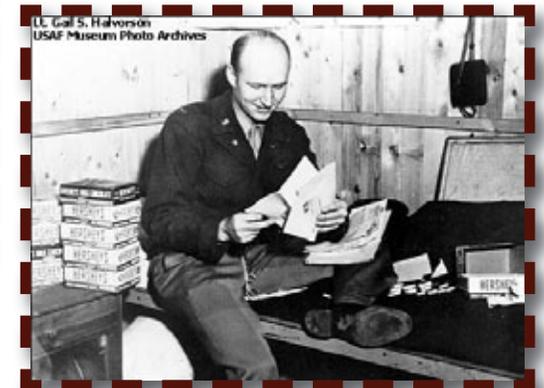
Dropping candy parachutes in Berlin



Receiving a thank you from a German child after the Berlin airlift



Receiving a thank you from an American child after Hurricane Katrina

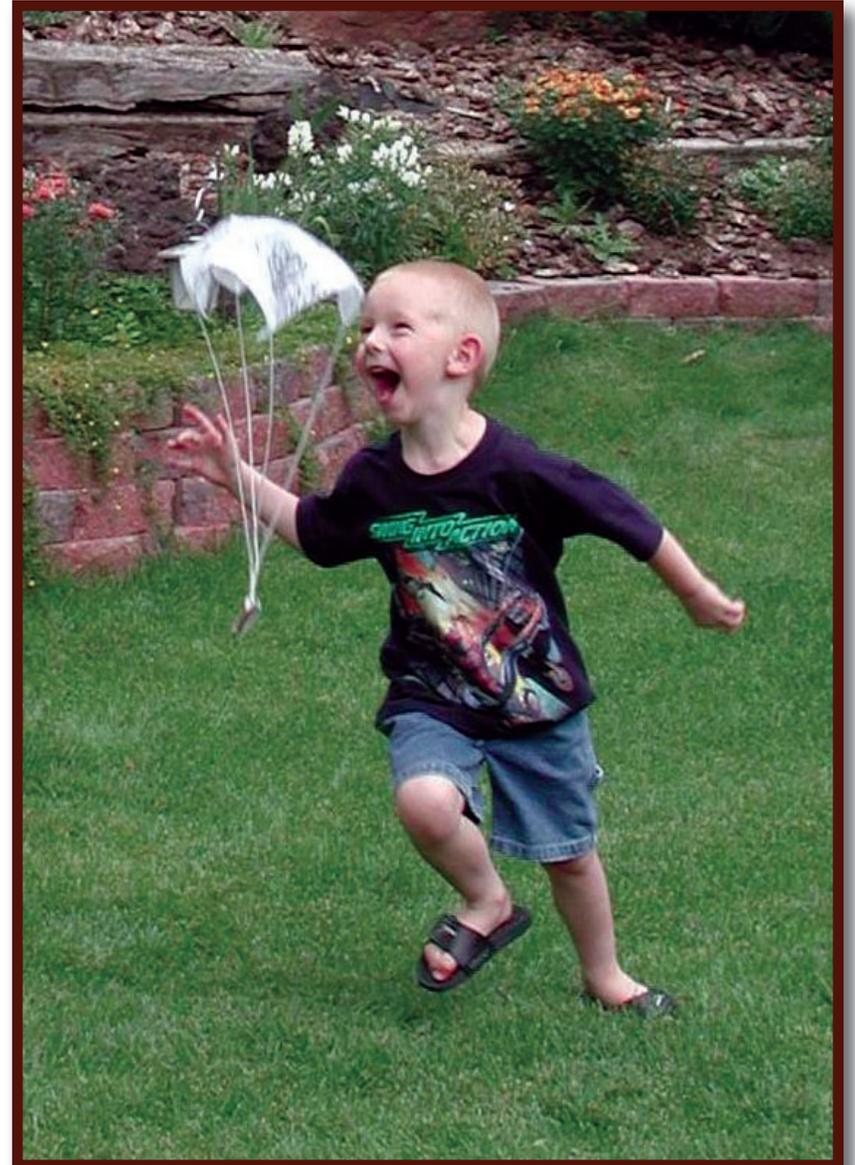


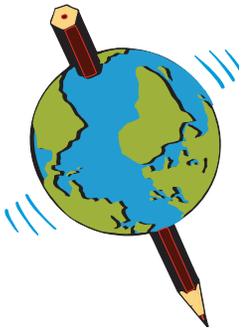
Reading letters from children throughout Berlin



Make a Candy Bomber Parachute...

- Take a paper napkin and open it up completely.
- Take kite string and cut 4 pieces (each about 18 inches long).
- Take four stickers (or sticky dots) and attach one end of each string to a sticker.
- Place each sticker in a corner of the napkin.
- Gather the strings together and tape a miniature candy bar to them so that they all hang straight down.
- Toss the parachute and candy up in the air and watch what happens!

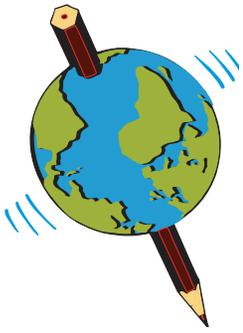




What if...

- You made your parachute the same size but with a different material such as plastic, paper bag, tissue paper, etc.?
- You used a lighter weight than the candy bar to tape to the strings?
- You used longer strings?
- You used a larger piece of material for the parachute?
- * Choose one of these ideas or one of your own and test it to see what the difference is compared to your original parachute.





Uncle Wiggly Wings Wants to Know...

1. Why did the candy Uncle Wiggly Wings dropped land safely?
2. What is a parachute?
3. How are parachutes used?
4. What is gravity?
5. What would happen to a person or an object if a parachute was not used to get the object from the plane to the ground?



Try this:

Hold your parachute in one hand and a Popsicle stick in the other hand.

Drop both at the same time.

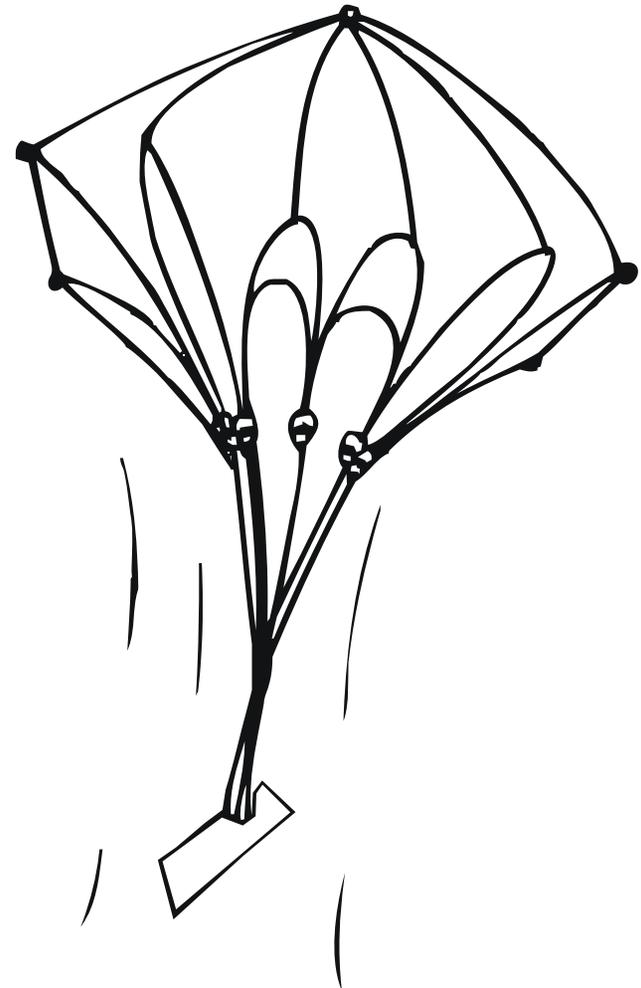
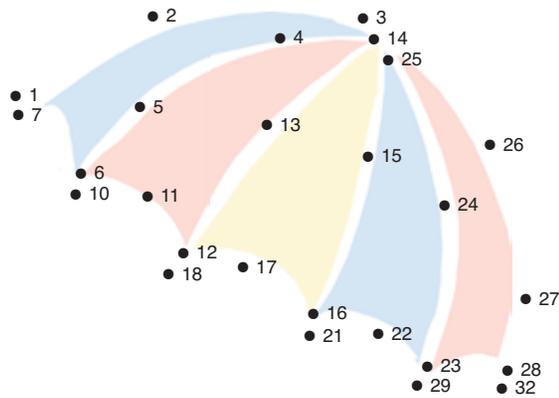
Which one will land on the floor first?

My answer is:

_____ landed on the floor first because _____



Dot-to-Dot and Color





Uncle Wiggly Wings Crossword

Down

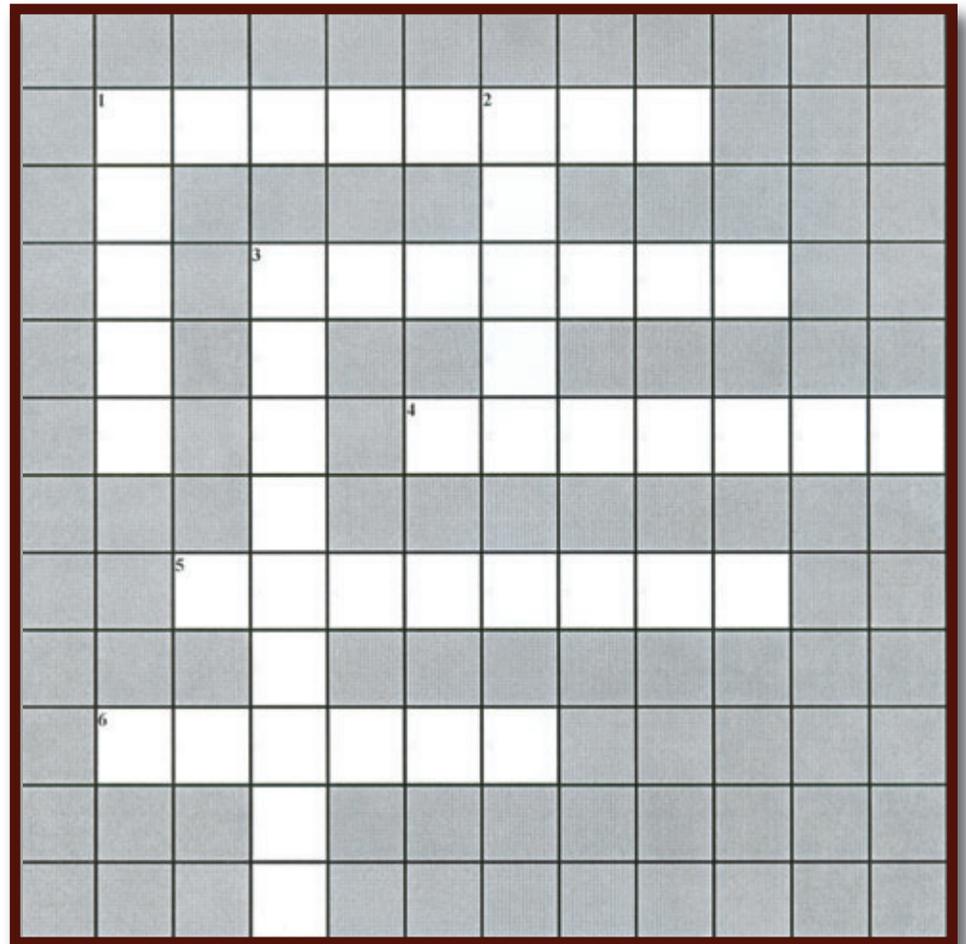
1. Uncle Wiggly Wings was a _____.
2. The children of Berlin tried to _____ the two sticks of gum.
3. Uncle Wiggly Wings liked to fly _____.

Across

1. Uncle Wiggly Wings _____ to bring the children candy.
3. In 1999, Col Halvorsen recreated the spirit of Berlin in _____.
4. Russia would not let food and supplies into Berlin, _____.
5. The highway _____ ended in May, 1949.
6. The children of Berlin were _____.

Word Bank:

hungry promised Germany pilot
Albania airplanes share blockade

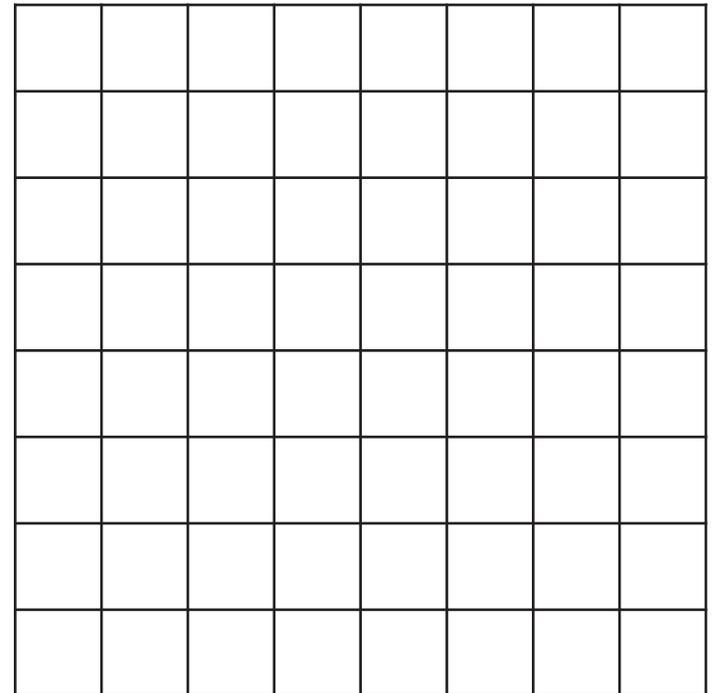
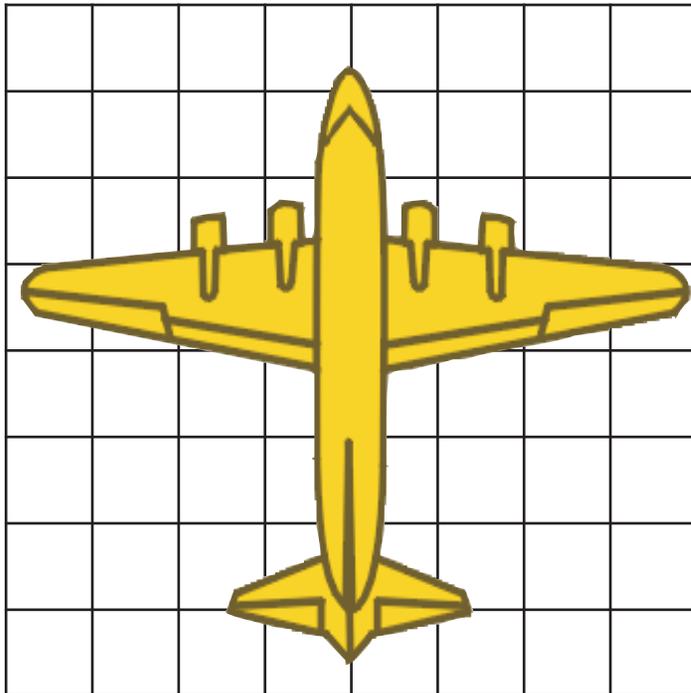




Douglas C-54

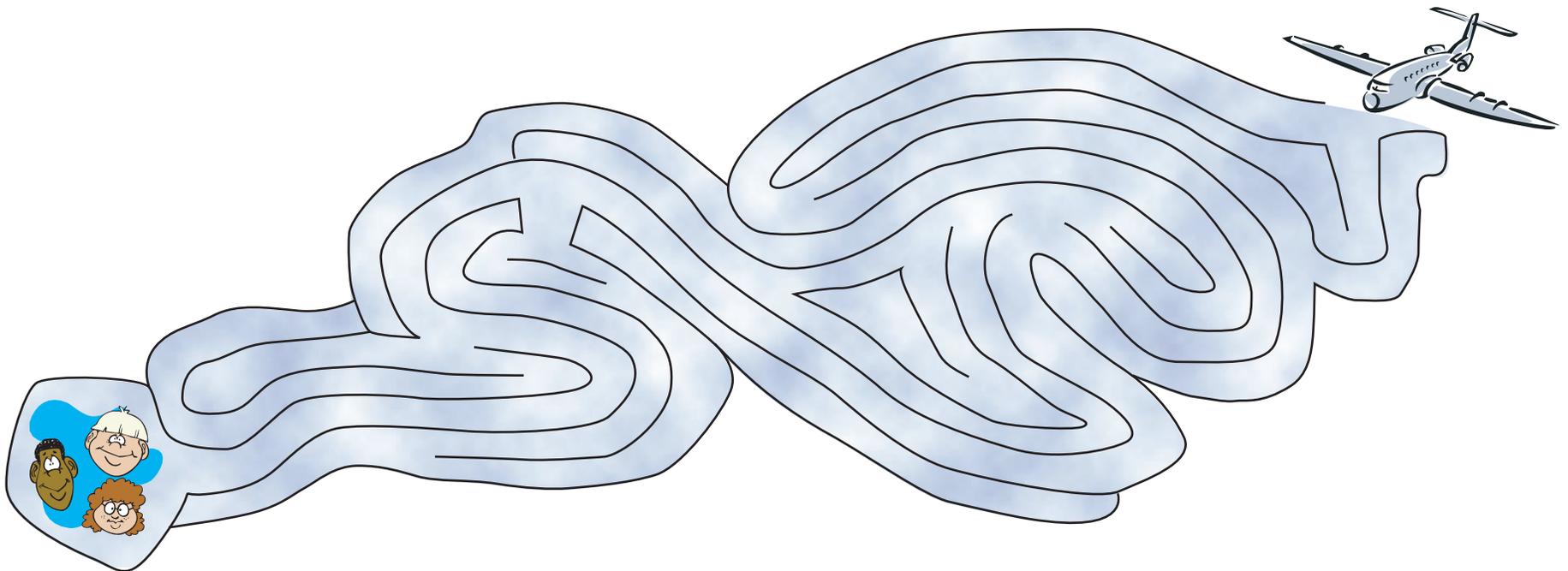
The "C" in the C-54 name stands for cargo. A cargo airplane is like a big truck. It transports all types of materials inside the big plane. Some cargo planes are big enough to transport cars and trucks from one place to another!

Copy the picture of the C-54 that Uncle Wiggly Wings flew on your own grid on right:





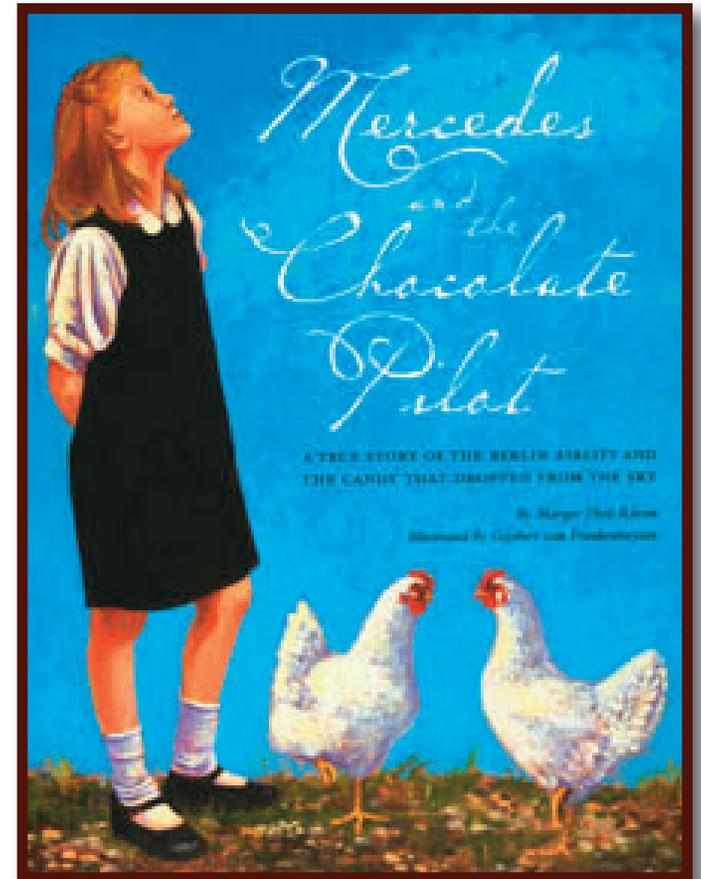
Help Uncle Wiggly Wings
Fly His Airplane to
the Children of Berlin...





Reading More About Col Halvorsen...

Read or Listen to *Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot* by Margot Theis Raven.
Answer the questions on following page after reading the book.





Answer the Following Questions...

1. What animals did Mercedes and her family keep in the small courtyard garden behind her apartment building? _____
2. What did everyone in Mercedes's town call the supply airplanes that brought supplies to them? _____
3. How many pieces of gum did Col Halversen divide among the children he talked to at the fence? _____
4. How did Uncle Wiggly Wings answer Peter Zimmerman's request for candy? _____

5. When did Col Halversen finally leave Berlin and return home to America? _____





2009 Marked the 60th Anniversary of the End of the Berlin Airlift...

- Even though Col Halversen has gained fame from his simple act of kindness and offer of hope to the children of Berlin, he does not take the credit for this himself.
- In a discussion about the airlift's 60th anniversary, Col Halversen stated, "In my books, the real heroes were the aircraft maintainers and the airfield operations personnel, who worked tirelessly and often in extremely difficult conditions to accomplish the mission. The Berliners were also heroes because despite the most difficult of circumstances, they never gave up."





Final Thoughts...

"Everyone needs hope today as much as the West Berliners needed it then. Hope is a universal need. Transport aircraft, and the airlift they provide, deliver hope to the unfortunate around the world who are oppressed by man or nature.

My experience on the airlift taught me that gratitude, hope, and service before self can bring happiness to the soul when the opposite brings despair. Not one of 30 children begged for chocolate, but thousands of children in Berlin received over 20 tons of chocolate, gum and other goodies delivered on the ground or dropped from C-54 Skymaster aircraft over a 14-month period. It all came from other aircraft and other crews in addition to myself."

— Taken from IMPRESSIONS OF A BERLIN AIRLIFT PILOT
Gail S. Halvorsen, Col USAF (Ret)



Uncle Wiggly Wings



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