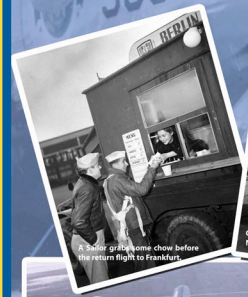
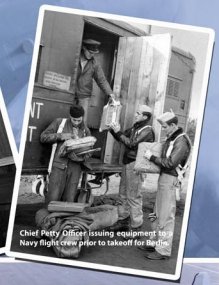
Berlin Airlift 1948-49

The Navy Occupation Service Medal with the Berlin airlift device was authorized for naval personnel serving 90 days or more on the Berlin airlift.



A Sailor grabs some chow before the return flight to Frankfurt.



Chief Petty Officer issuing equipment to a Navy flight crew prior to takeoff for Berlin.

Navy R5D "Skymaster" transports at the Naval Air Transport Terminal Hickham Field

Two Navy Air Transport Squadrons Fly Record Loads into Berlin

In June 1948, the Russians blocked all land routes to the city of Berlin. As a result, the Berlin Airlift, officially called Operation Vittles, was implemented by the U.S. Air Force. The Air Force flew C-54 cargo planes from Frankfurt, Germany to Berlin. The mammoth task involved the air delivery everything from food to fuel to medicine.

In November 1948, Navy Air Transport Squadrons VR-6 and VR-8 transferred from the Pacific to Germany to assist with the airlift. VR-6 and VR-8 flew R5D aircraft that were the Navy version of the Air Force C-54. Another Navy Air Transport Squadron, VR-3, provided transatlantic lift of cargo from the United States to Europe.

The Navy and Air Force squadrons were evaluated monthly on their efficiency. VR-8 became the most efficient squadron of the 15 Navy and Air Force squadrons delivering supplies to Berlin. VR-8 remained the top squadron, over the other USAF squadrons, throughout the remainder of the Berlin Airlift. VR-6 was often in second place. The Soviet blockade ended in September 1949.

http://www.history.navy.mil/branches/org4-10.htm

NAVAL HISTORY & HERITAGE COMMAND