



Man's Flight

Through Life Is

Sustained By The

Power Of His

Knowledge

NEWSLETTER

The Friends of the Air Force Academy Library

P.O. Box 188

U.S. Air Force Academy, CO 80840-0188

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OCTOBER, 1996

GIMBEL PROJECT

Since 1990, the members of the Executive Committee have been engaged in the monumental task of creating an illustrated, annotated bibliography of selected items as reflected in the Colonel Richard Gimbel Collection. Each phase of the complex project presented challenges which had to be overcome. For example, since the Collection consists of more than 20,000 items, selection of what the committee believed were the most significant items in each category involved countless days of study and deliberation. Our goal was to achieve a balanced selection in each category of materials. This process involved photocopying selected items along with bibliographic data and compiling the materials into sample volumes. An expert had to be chosen to refine the selection, to annotate and discuss the historical importance of each item in a specific category. In November and December of 1995, the experts came to the Academy to examine and study the materials in their assigned category. Paul Maravelas of Minnesota worked on balloon prints; Professor Clive Hart of the University of Essex in England examined rare books published before 1850; Dr. Tom Crouch of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. covered aeronautical books published between 1850 and 1914; Dr. Dominick Pisano of the Smithsonian Institution examined and described "Other Categories" including handbills, cartoons, postage stamps and a myriad of items inspired by aerial flight; Edward C. Rochette of Colorado Springs selected and described the most significant of the 200 medallions relating to aeronautics contained in the Gimbel

continued on page 2

DON BARRETT RETIRES



Don Barrett

On September 1, 1996, Donald J. Barrett, Assistant Director of the Academy Libraries, retired after forty-one years of service at the Academy. He is a native of St. Paul, Minnesota and a graduate of St. Thomas College. He was awarded his Master of Arts in Library Science by the University of Minnesota. He was the second librarian hired by the Academy Library and reported for duty a week before the Class of 1959 reported in July 11, 1955. In his long career, Don served as Chief of Reference, Chief of the Public Services Division and since 1969 as

Assistant Director for Public Services Division.

In 1971, as an additional duty, Don was also named as Curator of the newly acquired Colonel Richard Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection. In addition to his extensive knowledge and understanding of aeronautical history, Don soon became an authority on balloons and ballooning. In fact, his own private collection of balloon materials would fill a museum. As Curator of the Gimbel Collection, Don became an invaluable resource person for The Friends in their various projects such as the preservation and conservation efforts and in the long-range task which, hopefully, will result in the publication of the selective, annotated, illustrated catalogue of the Gimbel Collection. The Friends presented Don with a framed copy of a certificate which will be included in the Honor Book.

Don and his wife, June, are avid sports enthusiasts. Don has been a season ticket holder for football, basketball and hockey for over four decades. The first football game of the 1996 season marked Don's 275th attendance. Don served as Academy track official for his entire 41 years.

At his retirement, Don received all kinds of honors and awards including a testimonial dinner and he was included in a pass-in-review parade by the Cadet Wing. The Friends wish Don and June every success in their well-deserved retirement.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

When: December 5, 1996

Time: 9:30 AM

Where: AOG Conference Room

Doolittle Hall

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I wish to share the following letter I have received from Don Barrett.

"Thanks to the Executive Board for the presentation acknowledging my service at the time of my retirement.

My sincere thanks to The Friends for all you have done for the Library, and especially for the many benefits received for the Gimbel Collection and Special Collections. The preservation and conservation projects you funded have been of great value in preserving the unique items in the Gimbel Collections. The progress toward a published catalogue, which one day will give us a valuable resource for use by aeronautic scholars and historians worldwide, is an effort in which you can take great pride. I look forward to it as a milestone accomplishment for The Friends."

DISBURSEMENTS TO THE LIBRARY

1995

General Book Fund . . .	\$1,000.00
Memorial Funds	4,161.00
Other Services	
& Support	21,666.00
Grand Total	\$26,827.00

1996 to October 1

Memorial Funds	\$2,000.00
Other Services	
& Support	14,235.00
Grand Total	\$16,235.00

SPRING EXHIBIT PLANNED

The Friends annual Springs exhibit will depict the history of Stalag Luft III, the Nazi prisoner of war camp which was made famous by its escape activity including the so-called "The Great Escape" of World War II. The Friends will open the exhibit on Friday evening 25 April 1997. Historian, Arthur Durand, author of Stalag Luft III: The Secret Story will present a talk on the Stalag Luft III experience and its place in the Allied prisoner of war history during World War II. In addition to members of The Friends, cadets and Academy faculty and staff, and a number of "ex-Kriegies" or former prisoners of war of Stalag Luft III will attend the opening. The exhibit will be open to the public until 15 May 1997.

MAJOR RESEARCH COLLECTION ACQUIRED

The Friends recently received a major research collection which spans the history of the evolution of American military air power from 1907 to the end of World War II. The collection consists of a series of official correspondence and reports, oral histories, photographs and printed matter which will augment cadet research on the history of American air power to a significant degree. The material was gathered in conjunction with the publication of two books by historian Dewitt S. Copp. The titles are: A Few Great Captains: The Men and Events That Shaped the Development of U.S. Air Power and Forged In Fire, Strategy and Decisions in the Air War Over Europe, 1940-45. Following archival description and arrangement by the staff of the Library's Special Collections Branch, the Copp Collection will be placed on microfilm for dissemination to scholars throughout the United States and abroad. By prior arrangement, the original materials will be sent to the archives of the Air Force Historical Foundation in Washington, D.C.

STALAG LUFT III FUNDS

On September 9, 1996, Mr. Robert L. Weinberg, President of the Association of Former Prisoners of Stalag Luft III, presented The Friends with a check for \$11,393.22. These funds are restricted to be used only for the maintenance and preservation of the Stalag Luft III Historical Collection at the Academy Library. Lt. General A. P. Clark is to designate the use of the funds. At a recent meeting of the Board of the Association the members voted to disband in 1997 and in addition to donate the remaining funds to The Friends of the Air Force Academy Library.

MEMORIAL PROGRAM

The Honor Book, which is on display in the Air Force Academy Library, contains memorials in the form of parchment certificates which honor various individuals, aircraft crews and organization. The honorees are approaching 200 entries in the Honor Book with completion of the third volume.

GIMBEL PROJECT

continued from page 1

Collection; Professor Holly Pittman of the University of Pennsylvania studied the ancient seals dating back to 2500 B.C. By June 1996, all of the experts had submitted their manuscripts, in both disc and hard copy format. In August, The Friends were fortunate to engage a skilled professional editor, Alice Levine of Editorial Services, in Boulder, Colorado. The editor will make a critical analysis of every aspect of the manuscript with meticulous attention to detail. She will attempt to unify and harmonize the work of individual authors. When her demanding task is completed, the editor will return the manuscript to The Friends so that they may forward it to a publisher who will produce the long-awaited book.

CADET RESEARCH

Recently, the Academy printed a book entitled [A Postcard Glimpse Into the Life of Georg Sporrer](#). This book resulted from a research project conducted by five cadets enrolled in a Foreign Language 499 Research Course. 499 courses are honor level independent study courses and may be pursued over several semesters. In this case, all the cadets were advanced German language students and several belonged to German-speaking families. The focus of the cadet research was upon 82 postcards written by a German soldier during World War II.

In 1994, a former prisoner of war, Lester Vihon, donated the 82 postcards to the Academy Library. Mr. Vihon stated that he had gotten possession of the postcards following his liberation at Moosberg, Germany. Mr. Vihon felt that the cards would be a good addition to the Library's collection of prisoner of war materials. Duane Reed, Head of the Special Collections, asked the members of the German section of the Academy's Department of Foreign Languages, to preview the postcards which were written in old fashioned German script. The postcards reflected the wartime service of Sergeant Georg Sporrer, Jr. who served in the German Army from 1939 until his death in 1944. The Professor of German decided to initiate a cadet honors project in which the cadets would use the postcards to learn more about Sergeant Sporrer's career and life as a German sol-

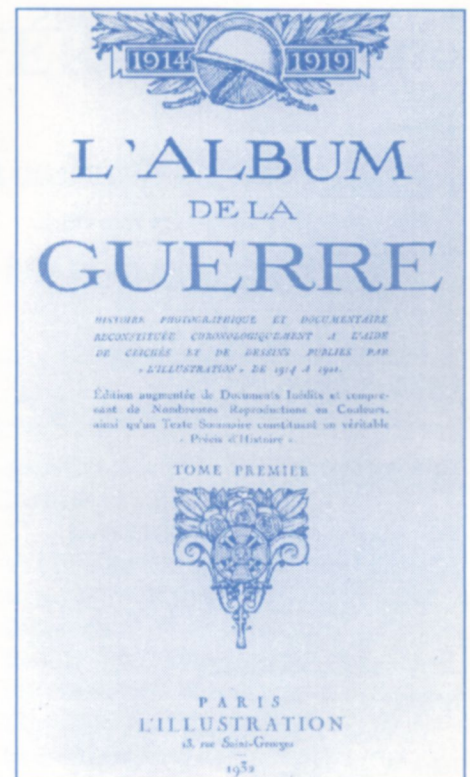
dier. The team of five cadets — highly motivated and full of intellectual curiosity — spent the next year and a half seeking answers.

Deciphering the handwriting was the most difficult part of the translation. Assistance had to be sought from elderly German-speaking relatives and by contacting key people in Germany. The cadet team created a map of Sporrer's movements by using postmarks and the pictures on the cards. One cadet spent part of her summer vacation in Germany talking with a journalist in Munich and another in Dresden. The Munich contact located Sporrer's relatives living in that city. The Dresden contact obtained information about Sporrer's regiments, assignments and movements in the postcards with his assignment. Using books on military history and the German Army during World War II, the research team tried to piece together what Sporrer's time in the military might have been like.

Since the cadet team members were scheduled to graduate from the Academy in May 1996, they had to bring their research to an end and submit their findings to the Department of Foreign Languages. The cadet team felt a sense of frustration because many questions remained unanswered. They were consoled, however, when informed by their professor that another group of cadets would complete the research in the near future.

NEW ADVISOR

Colonel David A. Wagie, Vice Dean of the Faculty, recently was appointed an Advisor to the Board of Directors. Colonel Wagie is a member of the Academy's Class of 1972 and has served as a pilot. Prior to becoming Vice Dean, Colonel Wagie served as Director of the Character Development Commission and as Permanent Professor of Military Arts and Science.



RARE FRENCH VOLUMES DONATED

Major General R. A. Yudkin, USAF (Ret) recently donated a two-volume set of *L'Album De La Guerre* to The Friends. The exceedingly rare volumes on the history of World War I will be added to the holdings of the Library's Special Collections Branch. In addition to their historical significance, the pictorial volumes will be important for study by cadets enrolled in upper division French language courses.

MAILING ADDRESS

New United States Postal Service regulations went into effect on October 6, 1996 for all non-profit organizations holding bulk mailing permits. Special attention must be made to correct street address, city, state and accurate zip codes and, if available, the additional four digits on all items placed in the mail. It is very important that The Friends maintain an accurate, current mailing list of its members. Please assist us by providing all the proper data in all future correspondence with The Friends. Example: The Friends, P. O. Box 188, USAF Academy, CO 80840-0188

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REPRESENTATIVE OF BRITISH ROYAL MINT VISITS THE LIBRARY



On 15 August, Mr. Michael Sedgwick, the North American representative of the British Royal Mint, presented Lt. General A. P. Clark, USAF (Ret) with a commemorative medal which was struck by the British Royal Mint to celebrate the birth of R. J. Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell was the designer of the legendary Spitfire aircraft. The medal will be housed within the Special Collections Branch where it will be made available for research and review by cadets and scholars.

A Friendly Reminder

Please search your personal libraries and papers and notify us of materials you may wish to donate.

We need your continued gifts of rare books, books dealing with military aviation and unit histories as well as documentary materials and collections of personal papers dealing with airpower themes and air leaders.

We also need your assistance in expanding the Academy Library's holdings on the American Airmen prisoners of war experience in all wars.

Please consider participating in our Memorial Program. Check the attached for details.

Most of all, we need your continued financial support. If you have already made a contribution in 1996, we sincerely thank you. If you have not made a 1996 contribution, please fill out the attached form and send your check today in the self-addressed envelope.