



# NEWSLETTER

## The Friends of the Air Force Academy Library

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VOL. III NO. 11

SPRING 2007

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It seems hardly possible that The Friends will celebrate its 20th anniversary at the annual luncheon in May. Incorporated on February 19, 1987, The Friends' organization has experienced extraordinary success in accomplishing its mission to enhance the Academy Library as a cultural, scientific, and educational institution.

As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, The Friends are producing a 20th anniversary commemorative brochure that will chronicle the myriad of projects, exhibits, and publications which The Friends have developed in support of the Library. The brochure will inform our membership and the Academy community about our many activities during the past two decades.

One of those activities is our oral history interview program, initiated in 2003. The interviews are conducted by Col. Jim Gaston, USAF (Ret) of Word One, Inc. with individuals who have made significant contributions to the Academy. In the future, The Friends plan to expand this vital program to preserve important aspects of Academy history.

With respect to one of our recent initiatives, I am pleased to report that Dr. Phillip Meilinger has begun research in conjunction with his biography of the Academy's first Superintendent, Lt. Gen. Hubert R. Harmon. Scheduled for publication in 2009, this important biography will augment the institutional history and heritage of the Academy. We are looking forward to Dr. Meilinger's talk on General Harmon's life and military career at the annual luncheon.

I am extremely proud as The Friends continue to provide services and pursue projects for the Academy Library that meet real needs. With your help, we can continue to do so in the coming years.

### FRIENDS' TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY: ANNUAL BOARD MEETING AND LUNCHEON



*Dr. Phillip Meilinger, Colonel, USAF (Ret) will discuss his work on the biography of Lt. Gen. Hubert R. Harmon at this year's annual luncheon.*

On May 15, The Friends will have its annual Board of Directors' meeting and luncheon. The board meeting will begin at 9:30 in Doolittle Hall. The luncheon will be held at the Academy Officers' Club with a social hour beginning at 11:30 and lunch at 12:00. Our speaker for the occasion is Dr. Phillip Meilinger, a retired Air Force colonel, who has contracted with The Friends to write a biography of Lt. Gen. Hubert R. Harmon. A 1970 graduate of the Air Force Academy, Dr. Meilinger holds an MA from the University of Colorado and a PhD from the University of Michigan. He had a long and distinguished Air Force career as both a C-130 pilot and as a renowned scholar. He served in the history department at the Air Force Academy, as well as on the faculty of the Naval War College and as Dean of the School of Advanced Air Power Studies at the Air University. After retirement he served as a Senior Analyst in

Northrop Grumman's Analysis Center. He has lectured on airpower subjects both in the United States and abroad. His biography of Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Vandenberg: The Life of a General, was published by Indiana University Press. Dr. Meilinger's luncheon talk will focus on his research on General Harmon and promises to be interesting and informative. We urge you to come and learn more about the "Father of the Air Force Academy."

Last year we had a large turnout for the luncheon and we hope that we can have record attendance this year. The gathering is always a great place to meet friends and learn more about The Friends' activities. Reservation forms are enclosed in this newsletter; the deadline for reservations is May 4th. As of this writing visitors can enter the Academy through both the North and South gates without any special access requirements. We hope to see you at the luncheon.

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## 20TH ANNIVERSARY BROCHURE

For some time, The Friends' has been considering new ways to present its message. For the first time in the twenty years the organization has existed, we have gone "outside" for help in this area. Enlisting the expertise of an advertising agency, The Friends now has a brisk and exciting presentation of

who we are and what we do.

We present our new image in a 20th anniversary brochure that will tell our supporters and potential donors about The Friends' past accomplishments and future plans. The brochure is in the traditional "handout" design and in a

mailer format. We believe it expresses the depth and vitality of our commitment to the Academy and to the McDermott Library and portrays that message in an imaginative way. We hope you will agree!

## POTENTIAL ACQUISITIONS ALERT

It is important for all of our members to be alert to the possibility of acquiring materials to add to The Academy Library's collections. If you have, or know someone who has artifacts, manuscripts, pictures, diaries, books, or other materials appropriate for the Library's collections, please let The Friends know.

We have been dismayed to see unique items that would have made significant additions to the Library's

collections being auctioned on internet sites. Recently, for example, WASP (Women Airforce Service Pilots) log books, patches, pins, photographs, and related documents and artifacts were sold on the internet. They have probably been lost forever as historical and research materials. All would have been welcome and valuable additions to the Library's Pat Pateman WASP Collection.

Needless to say, we would prefer

that such materials be donated to the Friends and placed in the Academy Library where the donor would be assured they would not only be cared for properly, but would also be readily accessible to cadets and the public for generations to come.

As an additional inducement to donate appropriate materials to The Friends, remember that such donations may qualify as an income tax deduction for the donor.

## THE GRADUATE WAR MEMORIAL HERITAGE PROJECT



*The Graduate War Memorial Wall*

For more than a year The Friends of the Academy Library has been deeply involved in a historic Air Force Academy heritage project. The goal of the multi-year project is to gather all available material located in various offices at the Academy dealing with the lives of the 168 Air Force Academy graduates whose names are inscribed on the Academy's Graduate War Memorial Wall and to consolidate all of that information in one place where it would be more readily accessible.

The War Memorial Wall contains the names of Academy graduates killed as a result of hostile action during a state of military conflict. The Association of

Graduates (AOG) spear-headed the fund-raising efforts for the memorial and presented it to the Cadet Wing during Homecoming on October 10, 1970. It stands in the cadet area on the north end of the Air Gardens, facing the American flag. A smaller replica of the War Memorial Wall, a gift from the Class of 1970, is located adjacent to the AOG building, Doolittle Hall.

Both the War Memorial Wall and its smaller replica are visible reminders to all who see them of the ultimate sacrifice graduates have made in service to their country. The simple inscription on the memorial "In memory of our fellow graduates who have fallen in battle ..."

reminds everyone of the devotion to duty and courage required of those called upon to serve their country.

It is very appropriate that The Friends' volunteer team members who are working this project are all Academy graduates: Jock Schwank, '60 (Friends' Treasurer); Andi Biancur, '60; Dick Sexton, '60; and, Dick Coppock, '61. Their goal is to finish the collection and electronic storage of all of the material located at the AOG by this summer. The team will then move its operation to the McDermott Library where they will begin to sort through the extensive materials in the Clark Special Collections Branch.

## DR. SCOTT GIVES LIBRARY STATUS REPORT TO THE FRIENDS' EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

On January 11, 2007 Dr. Ed. Scott, Director of the Academy's McDermott Library, joined The Friends' Executive Committee to bring the group up to date on Library issues. As usual, Dr. Scott gave a very informative summary of his concerns as well as ideas for future projects that might be underwritten by The Friends.

Dr. Scott reported that for the third time in the past four years, the Library ranked among the top 10 (of more than 360) academic libraries in the United States. We were pleased to learn of the Library's well deserved recognition. Dr. Scott pointed out that the Air Force Academy Library is not nearly as well funded or staffed as is West Point's and

he fears this may result in problems over the long run. There are, for example, several construction and improvement projects that are pending but lack funding at the present time.

The bulk of Dr. Scott's report focused on potential Friends' projects for the Library. The list was comprehensive, and, while many suggestions must wait future funding, some are presently under consideration for 2007 and subsequent years. The proposed projects include publication of several brochures designed to highlight Library holdings such as the Clark Rifle Collection and the POW materials housed in the Clark Special Collections Branch. There are also a

number of conservation and cataloging projects that need to be accomplished; some of which may be future Friends' projects. Over the years The Friends has purchased many rare or out of print materials for the Library. The Executive Committee is working with the Library to ensure that we continue to contribute in this area. This is only a brief summary of some of the potential projects Dr. Scott emphasized in his comprehensive report. More information on the needs of the Library can be obtained either from a member of The Friends' Executive Committee or by contacting the Academy Archivist, Dr. Mary Elizabeth Ruwell.

## THE FRIENDS' HONOR BOOK PROGRAM

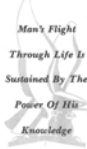
For those wishing to honor someone in a very special manner in a location readily accessible to cadets and McDermott Library visitors, The Friends offers a unique commemorative program. For a donation of at least \$50 a handsome certificate will be placed in The Friends' Honor Book that is displayed in the Clark Special Collections Branch of the Library.

This is an ideal way to give special, perpetual recognition to classmates, fellow crew members, a friend, a team,

or an organization of special importance to you. The honoree(s) need not be military or deceased to be commemorated with a certificate. To date, well over 1,000 individuals, units and organizations have been commemorated. Among the honorees are veterans who have served their country in the nation's wars; individuals who have served the nation, the Air Force, or the Academy in other ways, Academy cadets, graduates, and family members; and Academy faculty and staff and members of their families.

Two examples of certificates are shown below. Specific details on this unique Academy program and other examples of Honor Book Certificates are available on The Friends' website, [www.friends.usafalibrary.com](http://www.friends.usafalibrary.com). Specifics can also be obtained by contacting The Friends using the form enclosed in the newsletter.

We encourage you to give serious consideration to participating in our Honor Book Program.




**TO HONOR**

**THE CREW MEMBERS OF B-17F/G "BASTARDS BUNGALOW II", "THE HARD WAY CREW"**

2 <sup>nd</sup> LT ROBERT J. HORN - PILOT	2 <sup>nd</sup> LT CHARLES E. CONNER - BOMBARDIER
2 <sup>nd</sup> LT BART E. MAHONEY - CO-PILOT	SGT RUSSELL A. PRIESTER - BOTTOM TURRET GUN
SSGT VICTOR T. SAABYE - RIGHT WAIST GUN	SGT ALBERT J. SHUBAK - FLIGHT ENGINEER/TOP TURRET GUN
SGT AUBREY SLIMM, JR. - LEFT WAIST GUN	SGT WILLIAM E. GRASER - TAIL GUN
2 <sup>nd</sup> LT WILLIAM A. NEWELL - NAVIGATOR	
SGT KENNETH H. MUELLER - RADIO OPERATOR	

Bastards Bungalow II was shot down during an attack on the rail yards in Munich, Germany on 18 March 1944. All members of "The Hard way Crew" survived bailout and became prisoners-of-war. Each member displayed bravery, dedication, and steadfastness of purpose, were skilled in their MOS, faithful to their country, and victors over severe hardship and deprivation. All were POW survivors.

*Only Honor Country*  
By: Charles E. Conner



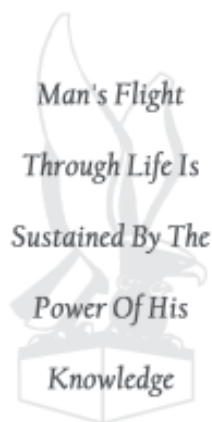
**TO HONOR**

**ROBERT JAMES WIDMER, SR.**  
CAPTAIN, UNITED STATES ARMY AIR FORCES

Mr. Robert J. Widmer, Sr. earned his pilot's wings and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the US Army Air Forces in May 1943. He subsequently was assigned to the 454<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Heavy) based in San Giovanni, Italy. While flying his thirteenth mission on 13 April 1944, his B-24 was shot down over Budapest, Hungary. He spent the remainder of the war in Stalag Luft 111, the Luftwaffe prisoner of war camp in eastern Germany. Following repatriation at the end of the war, he pursued a highly successful thirty-eight year career in sales and management with Lederle Laboratories. Very active in veterans' affairs, he was a founding member of the 454<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group Association and a member of several other leading veterans' organizations. Mr. Widmer died on 1 May 2006. He is survived by his wife of sixty-two years, Janet Clark Widmer, four children, and five grandchildren.

BY: HIS FAMILY AND MANY FRIENDS

## UPDATE FROM THE McDERMOTT LIBRARY



The McDermott Library has changed its hours to reflect the new cadet schedule and is again open 7:00am-10:30pm Monday through Thursday, 7:00am-5:00pm on Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm on Saturday, and 2:00pm-10:30pm on Sunday. The Library will be closed for cadet events, spring break, and holidays. The Medical Library, which shares cataloguing and subscriptions with the McDermott Library, has been terminated by higher authority, and is permanently closing on August 1, 2007. Although some items will go to the cadet library, most of the holdings will be sent to Fort Carson for disposal.

The Library has upgraded to a new server and is planning to put more materials on the internet. You can access the Library's website from The Friends' website or directly at <http://www.usafa.af.mil/df/dflib>.

The Clark Special Collections branch has been busy with visitors to the Gimbel Room and with researchers, both cadets and historians working with donated holdings. The Smithsonian Air and Space Museum requested a loan extension of the Wright Brothers' artifacts from the Gimbel collection. You can see them in the Centennial of Flight exhibit if you happen to be in Washington, D.C. We are also lending items to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum which is doing a temporary exhibit on Capt. Lance P. Sijan.

## VISITING THE CADET AREA AND McDERMOTT LIBRARY

Although visitors are now allowed free entry at both the North and South Gates, visitors to the cadet area are still restricted. **DoD cardholding visitors** who are not assigned to an agency within the cadet area will be issued a 1-day badge and 1-day parking pass in exchange for a driver's license at the cadet entry gates near Sijan Hall and the Tennis Courts [Fieldhouse]. These visitors will be asked the nature of their business and issued either a V (Visitor) badge for making a delivery, dental appointment, or other business not requiring building access, or a T (Temporary) badge for cadet area access including the Library. DoD cardholders may not escort non-DoD cardholding visitors.

**Non-DoD cardholding visitors** must be sponsored into the cadet area by Academy staff. Library staff regrets the difficulty of access, but is always delighted to escort a Friend of the Library or non-DoD cardholding visitors. Please call ahead to Mary Elizabeth Ruwell at (719) 333-4674 or Ed Scott at (719) 333-2590. They can meet visitors at the North Gate parking lot, the Visitors Center, or the Officers Club. Because of security concerns, groups larger than five must make arrangements at least two weeks in advance of their visit.

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\*Former Superintendent  
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## THE FRIENDS' WEBSITE IS UP AND RUNNING

Easier to navigate and explore.  
Updated with the latest information.

Come visit us online to see what is happening with The Friends of the  
Air Force Academy Library.

[www.friends.usafalibrary.com](http://www.friends.usafalibrary.com)