

— NEWSLETTER —

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Dr. Joel Hebert Joins McDermott Library as Chief of Clark Special Collections

The Friends of the Air Force Academy Library offers a warm welcome to Clark Special Collections' new leader, Dr. Joel Hebert. We look forward to working closely with him to further the missions of both the Academy and The Friends. The Anchorage, Alaska, native comes to the Academy from the Naval History and Heritage Command in Washington D.C., where he served as a historian in the Public History and Education Section and was a faculty fellow in the Department of History at American University. Prior to that, he worked at the Army's Center of Military History on Fort McNair, Washington D.C.

Dr. Hebert earned his MA and PhD at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, both in History. The focus

of his doctoral work was the history of 20th century Britain and the British Empire. He did his undergraduate work at the University of Alaska Anchorage, where he majored in International Studies and History.

He has experience researching in archives in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. He was a Fulbright scholar in Canada, where he studied the history of Indigenous political activism. Dr. Hebert has extensive writing and speaking experience. Among his many ongoing projects, he is working on a book manuscript entitled *The Sun Never Sets: Late Imperial Crisis in Thatcher's Britain*.

U.S. Air Force Platinum Anniversary

September 18th marks the 75th anniversary of the United States Air Force as an independent branch of the U.S. armed forces. The efforts of men like Brigadier General Billy Mitchell and Major General Benjamin Foulois lit the flame of independence. The torch was then passed to the next group – those who planned and fought in World War II. These men included Generals Hap Arnold, Jimmy Doolittle, Carl “Tooe” Spaatz, Curtis LeMay, and Ira Eaker; Lieutenant General Frank Andrews; Major Generals Robert Olds and Hugh Knerr; and Lieutenant Colonel Horace Hickam.

The Clark Special Collections at the USAFA McDermott Library is a repository of oral histories, manuscript collections, photos, and other information on these pioneers. From the transcripts of the well-known court-martial of Billy Mitchell and the movie, *30 Seconds Over Tokyo*, depicting the raid led by Jimmy Doolittle, to the little-known films of Curtis LeMay's auto racing life during his time in Strategic Air Command, the library holds a wealth of first-hand information

on the trailblazers of the service we hold so dear.

In addition to the men who fought for independence, the Special Collections houses a wealth of primary source material of those who built and shaped the Air Force. Men like Major General John F. Curry, who served with Gen. John J. Pershing in the Mexican Punitive Expedition and was the first Commander of the Civil Air Patrol; and Lieutenant General Albert P. Clark, POW at Stalag Luft III, where he was also the manager of accumulation and hiding of supplies used in the famous *Great Escape*, sixth Superintendent of the Air Force Academy, and as one of the founders of The Friends of the Air Force Academy Library initiated the library's outstanding POW collection.

More information on these men and their efforts in building or shaping the Air Force is available in the Clark Special Collections in the McDermott Library.

Processing Donated Collections

One of the Friends' primary functions is to assist the Academy's McDermott Library in acquiring materials relating to the heritage of the US Air Force, the Air Force Academy, and the development of air and space power. We assist individuals in making donations and completing the work of preserving and processing their materials to make them accessible to cadets, faculty, and other researchers. We solicit donations such as books, documents, photographs, and multimedia materials. One of the formalities of accepting donations is that we require a transmittal of ownership from the donor to The Friends of the Library. We, in turn, transfer ownership to the Air Force Academy along with the products of our efforts (abstracts, finding aids, etc.).

The Friends have one full-time

certified archivist and another part-time worker under contract to process donations. When a donation is received it is evaluated immediately to determine its physical condition, its historical value, and its applicability to the current informational needs of cadets and faculty. The materials are rehoused into protective containers and a detailed finding aid is produced that describes the various documents in the collection and where to find them. This is not a trivial endeavor. For a recent seven-box collection of documents, the finding aid we produced was 130 typed pages. Once created, the finding aid is uploaded for use on the library's website, which is easily searchable online and available to researchers around the world. This high degree of detail allows users to search for relevant material and locate it quickly

when they come to the library or request a copy of a document. Our primary goal is to catalog the items in our collections and make them available upon request. We are working hard to improve digital access to our most significant materials, but we do not scan every document in every collection. However, whether scanned or not, the original documents are always preserved.

Visitors are welcome in the McDermott Library and there are areas in Special Collections for visitors to examine documents. Special Collections Staff and The Friends of the Library personnel can escort donors and researchers into the building and help them find the materials they seek. No donor should have any problem arranging a visit to see their donations.

The Henry H. "Hap" Arnold Collection

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of the USAF, we introduce the Arnold Collection, one of several early air power pioneer collections found at the Academy. Hap Arnold (1886–1950) was a pioneer airman. Trained in 1911 by the Wright brothers, Arnold rose to become Chief of the Army Air Corps, Commanding General of the United States Army Air Forces, and the only officer to hold a five-star rank in two different U.S. military services. Arnold took command of the Army Air Forces immediately prior to America's entry into World War II and directed its rapid expansion from an organization of little more than 20,000 men and 800 combat aircraft into the largest and

most powerful air force in the world. See: <https://tinyurl.com/hap-arnold>

As valuable as he was to his country, he was even more important to his family. Hap Arnold was a dedicated family man who wrote to his loved ones, especially his wife, Eleanor, almost daily over the course of his illustrious career. Dating from 1912 to 1946, these letters were kept in excellent condition as they were passed down to his children and eventually his grandson, Robert. Robert Arnold began donating these letters to Clark Special Collections in 2007, and has sent new letters regularly ever since, allowing the collection to grow year by year.

The Friends contractors recently

reorganized the Henry H. Arnold Collection (SMS 322) to include the latest additions, and to make a comprehensive finding aid available on the McDermott Library's website. The collection currently includes over 75 letters, sent from the Philippines, Panama, Germany, Alaska, Hawaii, and locations across the continental US. They provide details of Arnold's personal and professional life as he moved from one assignment to the next. The collection also includes unique photographs, transcripts of speeches, and artifacts that document the life and legacy of one of America's most distinguished military leaders.

The Friends Annual Luncheon will be held on 11 May. Use the enclosed RSVP form or visit EventBrite:

friends-usafalibrary.eventbrite.com

President's Message

The Friends held their annual 2021 Board meeting virtually on May 11th. Notable actions were the re-election of officers and the election of long-term Board member Lt. General Skip Scott to Honorary Director in recognition of his long service on the Board. The Friends took advantage of relaxed COVID-19 restrictions to hold our delayed annual luncheon on September 16th. There were approximately 52 people in attendance to hear our featured speaker the Dean of the Faculty, Brig. Gen. Linell Letendre, speak about the academic program.

In 2021 the Friends of the Air Force Academy Library provided one full-time and two part-time contractors to work in Clark Special Collections. The Friends' contractors played a key role in Special Collections by documenting procedures and guidelines to maintain high standards of archival preservation and improve digital access to research materials through an integrated framework of online tools. In 2021 our contractors accessioned and processed 50 new donated collections, completed processing of 40 older manuscript collections, updated and uploaded for online access nearly 200 finding aids, cataloged 1,797 audiovisual items, and digitized 120 films. To provide this additional margin of excellence for the McDermott Library Special Collections, your continued support helped us

provide nearly 4,000 hours of effort with a value over \$85,000.

After many hours of skilled, dedicated work by Board member, Bill Estelle, The Friends have a new website, completely redesigned with a fresh interface, which provides a richer experience for our guests. The site substantially expands the presentation of Our Work, now organized into six primary areas: The Graduate Heritage Projects, featuring databases developed by The Friends in recent years; Collections, highlighted by the Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection; Books; Videos; Oral Histories; and Other Projects, the RAF Eagle Squadron Exhibit being just one example. Also included are very interesting new content produced by Clark-Yudkin Research Fellows and The Friends Honor Book Program. An active project, we will be updating and adding content and featuring a celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the United States Air Force. Please visit often and tell us what you think. <http://www.friends.usafalibrary.com/>

The Friends welcomed a new Director of the Special Collections Branch, Dr. Joel Hebert, when we met with him shortly after his arrival in February 2022. We share his goals and are looking forward to improving Special Collections resources and expanding their use by cadets and faculty.

The Friends also bid farewell to

Honorary Director Lt. Gen. Skip Scott, who died in March. General Scott, our longest serving Board member, actively served from 1987 until 2020.

Looking ahead, The Friends will continue our independent contractors' excellent work that will include the first comprehensive inventory of the entire ensemble of collections to allow better access and prioritization of our work. We have a Clark-Yudkin Fellow conducting research in Special Collections this summer and are soliciting additional participants for this program. Fellows have recently produced several valuable additions to air power scholarship.

We also have an opportunity to position Clark Special Collections as a world-class Vietnam War-Era research facility, based on our extensive Southeast Asia holdings and the relationships we are building with Vietnam veterans in our own community and across the country.

With your continued support, The Friends look forward to increasing the McDermott Library's capabilities for original source research and greatly improving cadet, faculty, and researcher digital access to the wonderful collections. If you are interested in becoming involved in this effort at any level, or if you have items to donate, please contact us.

Significant 2021 Acquisitions

In 2021, The Friends facilitated the acquisition of several important collections that span the Air Force's 75-year history. Two notable ones are those of John F. Curry and Barbara Powers Wyatt, which were donated to The Friends who then gifted them to the McDermott Library.

SMS 1134-Curry, John F.: Major General John Francis Curry (April 22,

1886 – March 4, 1973) became the first National Commander of the Civil Air Patrol in December 1941. The CAP played a key role in coastal defense during WW II. He graduated from West Point in 1908, and advanced through the ranks to Major General by 1940. Though much of his service predates the US Air Force itself, General Curry was instrumental in developing

US air power. He developed a mobile training concept that greatly improved training during WW II. His studies of altitude and flying as well as the incidences of respiratory diseases at military installations in Colorado were invaluable to Air Force authorities wrestling with the site selection process for the Air Force Academy.

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Update From the McDermott Library's Director by Ms. Diane Klare

Since the Spring 2021 newsletter, the McDermott Library has continued to move forward to provide the best services to cadets and faculty. Throughout this academic year, we have been able to maintain normal hours and assist the USAFA community and external researchers with their resource needs both online and in person.

Our new Chief of Special Collections, Dr. Joel Hebert, arrived in February. Dr. Hebert is adept at archival research and excited to work with cadets and faculty to show how the materials in Special Collections are very relevant to today's coursework at the Academy.

The library also welcomed a new research librarian, Karna Younger, to support information literacy initiatives in the Humanities and work with cadets and faculty on scholarly communications issues. We are in the process of hiring the library's first data services librarian to support data initiatives and act as the subject liaison for the Basic Sciences.

The library is also deeply engaged in a very exciting project to imagine how the McDermott Library might look in the next five years. Working with design and architecture teams, we have proposed updates to support 21st century cadet learning. A main feature of the emerging design is an expanded Special Collections area with improved access to archives and increased workspace for staff and visitors. We are hopeful this project will be funded in the 2024 Federal budget.

Acquisitions (con't from previous page)

The John F. Curry collection was assembled and donated by Civil Air Patrol Captain, Smithsonian Fellow, and Civil Air Patrol Senior Historian Edward O'Brien in 2021. Among the donated items are five diaries that were written by General Curry between 1915 and 1935. During this period General Curry was the Commandant, Air Corps Tactical School, Maxwell AFB and was involved in a number of high-profile events such as the "Bomber Mafia Debates" and the court martial of Billy Mitchell.

MS 0073-Wyatt, Barbara: Barbara Powers Wyatt edited and published the book *We Came Home: POWs of Vietnam in 1977*. She reached out to hundreds of former prisoners of war, accumulating materials and producing 470 files that each contain valuable first-hand accounts of the POW experience. Each file includes letters, photographs, and narratives written by/about each individual and their experiences as soldiers and prisoners.

SMS 1569-Thompson, William L.: William L. "T" Thompson (born 1951), USAFA Class of 1973, was the President and CEO of the USAFA Association of Graduates from 2008 to 2017. A native of Orangeburg, South Carolina, he was the first African American from that state appointed to the USAFA. As a cadet, Thompson participated in activities aimed at improving racial understanding among his fellow cadets and Academy staff, including his key role in organizing the Festival of Black Culture held at the Academy in January 1972. The Festival was the first event of its kind ever held at a US service academy.

Thompson's collection consists primarily of articles about his accomplishments and the experience of African Americans at the Air Force Academy in the early 1970s. Other items include articles written by Thompson himself along with some of his colleagues and a copy of *Ebony* magazine from 1972 that includes a feature about Thompson and his fellow cadets. Thompson donated his collection of Air Force Academy materials to the McDermott Library in March 2021.

Visit our revised website at:
Friends.usafalibrary.com

