

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

VOL.' 1 NO. 4

November, 1990

GOOD NEWS FROM BOETTCHER FOUNDATION

This Spring, the Executive Committee submitted a fully-documented proposal to the Boettcher Foundation of Denver, Colorado requesting a grant of \$38,891.24. The funds were to be used to complete the initial phases of the plan to preserve and conserve the Gimbel Collection in the Academy Library.

Mr. William Douglas, president and Executive Director of the Foundation, and Mr. Frederick Trask, Assistant Executive Director, visited the Library, viewed the Gimbel Collection and discussed the request with the Executive Committee and with Don Barrett and Duane Reed of the Library Staff. The Boettcher representatives endorsed the project as being a worthy cause but quite candidly stated they had little hope of "selling it" to their Board. They pointed out that though the Friends had listed preservation of the collection as our number one priority, we had not contributed any of our own funds to accomplish that goal. We were using all of our funds to support the on-going needs of the Library for which no federal funds were available.

To improve chances of receiving a grant, the Board of the Friends directed that \$15,000 be committed as needed to complete the task of preservation and conservation. Mr. Douglas was advised of the Board's decision.

Following an exchange of clarifying correspondence between Mr. Trask and our President, General Moorman, the latter was advised that the Foundation had approved a grant of \$23,000. On October 23 the check arrived and was deposited in the Air Academy National Bank.



Col. Richard Gimbel

ANNUAL MEETING

The 1990 Annual Meeting was held on July 25 at the Academy Officers Club. Sixty members attended the luncheon. Honored guests included the Superintendent of the Academy, Lt Gen Charles Hamm; the Commandant of Cadets, Brigadier General Joseph Redden; the Chief of Staff, Colonel S.F. Ramsey; and retired Admiral John E. and Mrs. Kirkpatrick of Oklahoma City, OK who have been among the staunchest supporters of the Friends. Colonel D.J. Murray represented the Dean of the Faculty, Brigadier General Erlind Royer, who was on leave. President Moorman presided. General Clark and Colonel Fagan gave brief reports. General Clark highlighted the various projects which the Friends accomplished during the 1989-90 year. Colonel Fagan presented the Financial Statement as well as the status of the El Pomar grant.

George Fagan was the featured speaker and gave a biographical sketch of Richard Gimbel and told how he amassed his famous aeronautical collection. From 1956 to 1969, Colonel Fagan served as Director of the Academy Library and negotiated with Colonel Gimbel during this entire period.

THE MAN BEHIND THE GIMBEL COLLECTION

(A summary of Col Fagan's presentation)

Richard Gimbel was the grandson of Adam Gimbel who, in 1842, opened his first department store. Richard's father, Ellis, was one of the Gimbel Brothers who established a nation-wide chain of 28 stores. Ellis Gimbel, in 1894, established the Philadelphia store. In 1920, Richard Gimbel joined the family business as a junior executive. He progressed to Vice President and then succeeded his father as President. In 1927, Richard Gimbel was responsible for building a \$10 million Philadelphia Gimbel store which employed 500 people. He also served as Vice President of the Gimbel Brothers Corporation.

In 1935, during a proxy battle with his cousin, Bernard Gimbel, President of the Corporation, Richard Gimbel was fired. Richard wanted to keep management in the hands of the Gimbel family while Bernard wanted to bring in outsiders to run the business. In light of the bankruptcy of the Gimbel Corporation in the late 1970s, it appears that Richard's contention was justified. In 1937, Richard Gimbel established his own chain of department stores throughout the Southern United States. Since he could not use the Gimbel name, he called his stores Richard's Department Stores. Richard became one of the early investors in IBM stock as well as the radio broadcasting industry.

Richard Gimbel became fascinated with aeronautics when he saw his first air meet in Europe in 1910 when he was 12 years old. After leaving Gimbel's, Richard turned his attention to flying.

continued on page 2

THE MAN BEHIND THE GIMBEL COLLECTION

continued from page 1

He bought a Fairchild plane and flew it all around the country. He also flew in balloons and helicopters.

Richard Gimbel had a distinguished military career. He interrupted his studies at Yale University to serve as a 2nd lieutenant in the Field Artillery during World War I. He graduated from Yale in 1920 and continued to serve in the Field Artillery Reserve until 1940. In that year he came on active duty as a lieutenant colonel in the Air Corps with a rating of Service Pilot. During World War II, Richard served with the Eighth Air Force in England. On June 22, 1943, he participated in the first daylight bombing of the Ruhr Valley. Later, in 1943, Colonel Gimbel was reassigned to the United States to serve as Special Project Officer for the Air Service Command which was charged with the awesome task of procuring supplies and equipment for the war effort. Following the war, Gimbel served as a pilot in the 13th and 20th Air Forces in the Pacific and in the 10th Air Force at Selfridge Air Force Base. In 1951, Colonel Gimbel was assigned to Yale University as Professor of Air Science. He retired in 1953 after 27 years of active and reserve duty.

Over a fifty-year period, Richard Gimbel developed four extensive collections of books and related literary materials. The focus of three of his collections was on individuals all associated in one way or another with Philadelphia. Thomas Paine, the eminent pamphleteer and propagandist for the American and French Revolutions had been brought to Philadelphia by Benjamin Franklin. Edgar Allen Poe, after being expelled from West Point, lived in Philadelphia for the next nine years. Charles Dickens spent some time in Philadelphia during his celebrated American tour in 1842. The fourth collection was the most extensive and included over 25,000 items illustrating flight over a five thousand-year period.

The genesis of Gimbel's aeronautical collection began in 1942 when he visited a bombed-out store in London and bought a trunk full of aviation materials. Over the remainder of his tour of duty in England, Richard Gimbel informed his contacts among leading London book dealers of his new interest in aeronautical materials. He scoured book

stores all over England and the United States seeking additional material on flight. Since he was a seasoned collector of long standing, Richard thoroughly understood the complex workings of the book world. Consequently, he was plugged into an international network of dealers. When Richard put out the word that he was interested in obtaining historical aeronautical materials as well as Paine, Poe and Dickens, the dealers responded promptly. They knew that Gimbel, as a very wealthy man, could afford to pay their prices, or at least he was in a favorable position to bargain with them. Thus, Richard Gimbel, in less than a quarter of a century, was able to develop one of the world's most famous aeronautical collections including many unique items,

Richard Gimbel died on May 19, 1970 in Munich, Germany. In his will he bequeathed his aeronautical collection to the Air Force Academy. He left his Dickens Collection to Yale University. His Poe Collection was given to the City of Philadelphia. The American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia received the Thomas Paine Collection. In donating his collections to the scholarly world, Richard Gimbel was following the tradition set by American philanthropists and book collectors like Widner, Huntington, Folger, Morgan and others. Unlike those donors, however, Richard Gimbel did not establish an endowment fund for the maintenance of his collections and their continuing development. This essential task is now being undertaken by the Friends of the Air Force Academy Library.

THE NORMAN LAWSON COLLECTION

In May, 1990, retired Colonel Robert S. Lawson, one of the original Academy Liaison Officers and a Silver Falcon Association member, donated a one-thousand volume collection to the Friends. His brother, Norman Lawson, over a 50-year period, collected books and other materials relating to Franklin D. Roosevelt and his era. The Collection is considered one of the foremost of its kind in the world and the Air Force Academy Library is fortunate to have such a unique collection covering a critical era in American history. Like all materials in the Academy Library, the Lawson Collection will be available for use by cadets and local users as well as through Inter-Library loan by scholars and researchers world-wide.

PROGRESS ON EL POMAR GRANT

The conservation and preservation project funded by the \$25,000 El Pomar grant is progressing on schedule. During 1990, \$10,500 has been expended on materials and for the hiring of a trained library technician to perform, under the supervision of Duane Reed, Head of Special Collections, the exacting tasks required. Security labels were posted in over 5,000 books contained in the Gimbel Collection. Because the wood pulp and acid method was introduced into the paper-making industry at the close of the 19th century, paper and paper products have been affected by the high acid content. The presence of humidity, plus other elements in the environment, causes rapid deterioration of the paper. Steps have to be taken to arrest this deterioration. Special acid-free Mylar envelopes were used to encapsulate thousands of individual items. Among these items were: letters, newspapers, newspaper clippings, post cards, tickets, handbills, programs, and paperback books such as dime novels of the 1880s and 1890s. All of these items were then transferred into acid-free folders, boxes, and other storage enclosures which meet archival standards.

The next major task was preparing 1,000 selected aeronautical prints for microfilming and for the creation of microfiche. Don Barrett, the Curator of the Collection, worked out a master schedule so that each print and its bibliographic data would be filmed so that each specific frame could be retrieved whenever needed for a library patron. We are fortunate that one of the two color microimaging companies in the United States, capable of such exacting reproduction work, is located in Colorado Springs. When this film project is completed, cadets and other users will no longer have to handle the original prints. With the aid of a reading machine, library users will be able to examine specific prints on microfiche without any fear of doing damage to the rare originals. If necessary, reproductions of the film may be made inexpensively and furnished to the user or through inter-library loan to a scholar anywhere in the world. The completion of this exciting and innovative print project will enable the Academy Library and its Gimbel Aeronautical

continued on page 3

PROGRESS ON EL POMAR GRANT

continued from page 2

Collection to advance to the leading edge of archival technology.

The cost of the microfilming and microfiche project will be approximately \$10,000 plus the cost of labor for the Library Technician.

SILVER FALCON ASSOCIATION

The Friends wish to acknowledge the outstanding financial support received from the Silver Falcon Association composed of former Liaison Officers who play such an important role in the recruitment of future Academy cadets. The 1990 Silver Falcon reunion was held at the Academy on September 5 to 7. Colonel **Fagan** was the speaker at the September 6 banquet. Silver Falcon Association President, Colonel Gil Barker, presented Colonel **Fagan** with a check for \$1,000 for the Friends. Last year, the Silver Falcon Association also contributed \$1,000 to the Friends.

14TH ARMORED DIVISION ASSOCIATION

On April 29, 1945, the 14th Division liberated many U.S. airmen from Stalag Luft III, the German POW Camp at Moosberg. The rich history of the Division is part of the POW story preserved at the Academy Library. General Clark, who was a POW in Stalag Luft III and liberated by the 14th, served as the featured speaker at the Division's 1990 reunion held in St. Louis on September 8. On behalf of the 14th Division, Colonel Bill Thompson presented General Clark with a check for \$500, earmarked for the Friends.

FALCONRY BOOK PROJECT

A book on the history of the Academy Falconry Program is in process. When completed it will be offered for sale by the Friends to support the Library.

DIRECT SUPPORT TO THE ACADEMY LIBRARY IN 1990

During the past ten months of 1990, the Friends have provided substantial support, both financial and material.

Bennett Memorial Fund . \$1,000.00
Baraldi Memorial Fund . \$2,580.00
Other Memorial Funds . \$ 250.00
Friends General
B o o k F u n d . . . \$3,000.00

Direct purchase of specialized
Books for the Chemistry
and Foreign Languages
Departments \$ 455.00
Total . \$7,285.00

Expenditures from
El Pomar Grant . . . \$10,433.00
Grand Total . . \$17,718.00

The \$5000.00 Auction Fund which enables the Academy Library, for the first time, to compete in national auctions of rare aeronautical materials remains undepleted.

With the assistance of the Friends, the Library acquired books, documents and photographs from 23 donors (including the 1,000 volume Norman Lawson Collection discussed elsewhere in this Newsletter).

The largest body of materials obtained in 1990 was the Eagle Squadrons' historical collection of ram books, manuscripts and photographs. (The Eagle Squadrons consisted of American flyers serving in the Royal Air Force prior to Pearl Harbor.)

With funds provided by the Friends, the Library purchased over 150 specialized, out-of-print military-related books, averaging about \$35.00 per title.

BOARD MEMBERS

The Board recently invited Mrs. John M. Bennett to serve on the Board and she has accepted. All will recall her late husband who served so devotedly on our Board for several years. The Board also recently established staggered terms of service for our Board members so that their terms will not all expire at the same time.

Congratulations to Board Member, General W.S. Scott, Jr on his new position as Superintendent of the New Mexico Military Institute at **Roswell**.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President - Thomas S. **Moorman**
Lt Gen, USAF (Ret)
1st Vice T. R. Milton
President General, USAF (Ret)
2nd Vice - Gordon P. Culver
President Lt Col USAF (Ret)
Secretary - A. P. Clark
Lt Gen, USAF (Ret)
Treasurer - George V. **Fagan**
Colonel, USAF (Ret)
Members - Mrs. John M. Bennett
- Marcos E. **Kinevan**
Brig Gen, USAF (Ret)
Harold U. **Littrell**
Pres, Air Academy
National Bank
- Robert M. **Lee**
General, USAF (Ret)
- William J. **Mahon**
Colonel, USAF (Ret)
- James J. Parks, M.D.
- Winfield W. Scott, Jr
Lt Gen, USAF (Ret)
- Lynda Hare Scribante

ADVISORS

- R. H. **Schaeffer**
Lt Col, USAF
Director of Academy
Libraries
- Jock C. H. Schwank
Colonel, USAF (Ret)
Association of Graduates
- James R. Woody
Colonel, USAF
Professor and Head,
Dept. of Management

NEED FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

The Executive Committee works two mornings a week without compensation but operational funds are required for minimal clerical assistance and for the urgent needs of the Library. We will continue to solicit grants from foundations as additional major projects are identified and clearly defined, but we learned one valuable lesson from the **Boettcher** representatives. Invariably, before acting on a request for foundation funds, Board members will ask the question "What in-house financial actions have been, or will be, taken to satisfy this need"?

Though the Friends have no official "dues," annual voluntary renewal contributions are necessary for survival. If you have not yet sent in your 1991 renewal contribution, please consider it today. Your check need not match your original gift. Contributions will be appreciated and will be used in direct support of the Library

