Future Projects … item for Newsletter Spring 2017

The Academy’s McDermott Library continues to improve by virtue of gifts of unique collections of documents, manuscripts, photographs, and memorabilia which add immeasurably to the Library’s ability to support cadets, faculty, graduates, and others for study, teaching, and research. The Friends role is to help solicit and enable the acquisition of such gifts and once received to help ensure their accessibility. An example is the recent gift of the papers of General Ronald R. Fogleman, USAF chief of staff from October 1994 through August 1997. The extensive collection of papers covers an important period in Air Force history, and will be most useful when it is fully inventoried, indexed, and digitized. The Friends will undertake this project in stages with the aim of making the material available online. The McDermott Library also has recently acquired several important collections relating to Special Operations: the Air Force Escape and Evasion Society records, the Cortez Enloe collection, and the Special Operations collections donated by Lt. Col. “Brad” Bradbury. The Friends will also support the organizing, digitizing, and posting of these materials online.

In addition to supporting work on these collections, the Friends will assist in boosting cadet and patron interest in and access to the Library’s resources by helping to develop interactive kiosks. These attractive centers are envisioned to have 3-5 minutes of content, which would lead the user directly into the digitized special collections. In yet another initiative, The Friends are laying the foundation for an extensive archival database of material on unmanned aerial systems; our pilot program is well underway gathering documents and developing the overarching policy agreements necessary to work in this rapidly expanding field. Then, of course, we plan to continue our efforts to build and maintain accessible databases of special interest to the Academy, such as biographical information on the Jabara Award winners and the graduates enshrined on the War Memorial Wall.

Each of these projects is labor intensive, requiring special expertise and extensive work. Some of the work could be done by Library staff, but current staffing is not adequate to make much progress. The Friends goal is to advance the work by using trained volunteers and by contracting with individuals who have the requisite skills and experience. Of course, the pace of the work is governed by available funding. We depend on and greatly appreciate the generous support of our patrons for this and the rest of The Friends Projects.