UNITED STATES
AIR FORCE ACADEMY

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Clark Special Collections Branch

Recognizing the accomplishments of
Lt Gen Albert P. Clark, USAF
Academy Superintendent
President, Friends of the Library

Lt Gen Albert P. Clark, USAF, Retired

Lt Gen Clark graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1936 and was sent to Randolph Field, Texas, for pilot training. In 1937, he married Carolyn Wilbourn, and the couple was sent to Selfridge Field, Michigan, where he was stationed at the outbreak of World War II. He was sent to England in June of 1942 as the Deputy Commander of the 31st Fighter Group, the first American fighter unit in the European Theater of Operations. He was shot down flying a Spitfire in July 1942 and remained a prisoner of the Germans in Stalag Luft III until April 1945. After World War II, he progressed through key staff assignments with Tactical Air Command, Continental Air Command, Air Defense Command and Headquarters, U.S. Air Force. Following assignments as Chief of Staff for U.S. Air Forces, Europe and Chief of the U.S. Training Mission to Saudi Arabia, Lt Gen Clark served as Director of Military Personnel, Commander of the 313th Air Division in Okinawa, Vice Commander of Tactical Air Command, and Commander of Air University preceded his assignment in August 1970 as the 6th Superintendent of the United States Air Force Academy.

Lt Gen Clark's interest in and devotion to the Academy Library was very evident during his tenure as the Academy Superintendent. In 1973, he donated his personal collection of 32 firearms, which were issued to the U.S. military from the American Revolution to the war in Vietnam. This magnificent collection of long arms is permanently displayed along the spiral staircase in the Library. Following his retirement from active duty in 1974, Lt Gen Clark continued his interest in the Library. His initial voluntary work was developing and shaping the rich history of Stalag Luft III, the German prisoner of war camp made famous by the "Great Escape" of World War II, by assembling and donating an archival collection of Stalag Luft III materials. Lt Gen Clark was a prisoner of war at Stalag Luft III from 1942 to 1945. The Stalag Luft III Collection has become the centerpiece of the prisoners of war holdings of the Special Collections Branch and ranks among the finest in the world. In addition, Lt Gen Clark routinely participates in oral history interviews with cadets

researching the history of the American airman's prisoner of war experience during World War II.

In February 1987, Lt Gen Clark worked with the Director of Academy Libraries and Academy Superintendent, Lt Gen Winfield W. Scott, to establish *The Friends of the Air Force Academy Library. The Friends* organization was chartered as a tax-exempt charitable foundation dedicated to enhancing the quality of the Academy Library. Serving as the Secretary and subsequently as the President, Lt Gen Clark has led *The Friends* organization in the accomplishment of a myriad of projects that have enhanced the quality of the Library. Under Lt Gen Clark's leadership, *The Friends*' membership has increased to over 1,000 members, and the organization has provided approximately $500,000 in gifts and services to the Library Through his extraordinary efforts to host and brief prospective donors, *The Friends* have arranged for the donation of a number of historically significant collections of organizational records and personal papers that reflect the evolution of American military airpower. Among these are the personal papers and records of members of the Eagle Squadron Association, the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders, the Women Airforce Service Pilots and the former Prisoner of War, Stalag Luft III Association. In coordination with the Falcon Foundation, *The Friends* assisted in acquiring the "Hap" Arnold-Murray Green Collection which chronicles the life and military career of General H. H. Arnold. *The Friends* also actively supported the Library's acquisition of a major archive of materials related to the experience of American prisoners of war in Southeast Asia.

In 1989, under Lt Gen Clark's leadership, *The Friends* initiated an archival conservation project to ensure the preservation of the rich holdings of the Colonel Richard Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection. The Gimbel Collection is the pre-eminent aeronautical collection on the pre-history of flight in the world. Lt Gen Clark also led *The Friends*' fund raising effort, which resulted in the microfilming

of over 1,000 selected aeronautical prints and the encapsulation of thousands of items within the collection. At Lt Gen Clark's suggestion, since mid-1992, *The Friends* have sponsored an attractive commemoration program, which memorializes military personnel and civilians alike. Over 1,000 individuals or organizations are now remembered in perpetuity because of his initiative.

In 1994, *The Friends* began the task of producing an annotated bibliography to selected holdings within the Gimbel Collection. Lt Gen Clark wrote the prospectus for the project, and internationally recognized bibliographers were engaged to select and write historical annotations to specific categories of material within the Collection. The University of Washington Press agreed to co-publish the catalogue with *The Friends.* Lt Gen Clark led the funding effort and through personal solicitation secured funding for the $250,000 project. The catalogue, The Genesis of Flight: The Aeronautical History Collection of Colonel Richard Gimbel, was published in October 2000 and has received glowing reviews from scholars of the history of aeronautics world-wide.

Over the past 30 years, the Academy Library has benefited immeasurably from Lt Gen Clark's tireless efforts and his devoted and inspired leadership. It is therefore both fitting and proper that the Special Collections Branch of the Air Force Academy Cadet Library be named in honor of Lt Gen Albert P. Clark, USAF, Retired. The results of his efforts will impact Air Force Academy cadets for generations to come.