



The Archives
at the
Air Force Historical Research Agency

Mary Dixie Dysart

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World War I Historical Records

In February 1918, the War Department formed a Historical Branch of the General Staff to document the course of World War I. The following May, Brigadier General Mason M. Patrick took over as Chief of the Air Service, American Expeditionary Forces in France. He appointed Captain Ernest L. Jones, Chief of the Information Section, to perform the additional duty of Air Service Historian. After the Armistice, General Patrick directed the creation of a record of all Air Service activities in Europe in order to form a foundation for the development of military aviation. On 4 December 1918, he appointed Colonel Edgar S. Gorrell as Assistant Chief of Staff of the Air Service to direct the collection and compilation of that record. The Air Service approved the 280 draft volumes of unit commander reports, narratives, orders, operations reports, digests, statistics, photographs, and miscellaneous items provided by the units and a two-volume index completed under Gorrell's direction two months later.¹ As directed by General Patrick, Gorrell submitted a "Final Report," consisting of 252 pages of photographs, tables and charts, three maps, and narratives, for General John J. Pershing, Commander in Chief of the American Expeditionary Force. The "Final Report," which included "The Achievement of the Air Service, AEF," from a separate "Tactical History" prepared from the collected documents, was published in a 1921 *Air Service Information Circular*.²

Implementation of the Army Historical Branch's plan to publish documents and monographs concerning World War I, however, was first delayed by an acute paper shortage and then by a lack of funds. In June 1922, the congressional Joint Committee on Printing directed that the printing of World War I materials cease until they were all ready to be published. Consequently, *Gorrell's History of the Air Service, AEF*, was not issued until 1948.³ Moreover, the Air Service historical program languished after the end of

the war, in part because the 1929 version of Army Regulation 345-105, *Historical Records and Histories of Organizations*, was tailored to the organization and functions of ground units rather than air operations.⁴ The Historical Section of the Army War College, designated by the regulation as custodian of historical materials, maintained the few documents produced by the armed services between the two World Wars.⁵ In fact, in September 1947, when the Army delivered the Army Air Forces (AAF) documents submitted to it pursuant to the 1929 regulation to the newly-independent Air Force, they consisted primarily of activation and inactivation orders and orders redesignating units, which filled only eight four-drawer filing cabinets.⁶

The Inception of the AAF Historical Division

In the spring of 1942, U.S. officials undertook an examination of World War I records to see if they could provide insights applicable to the current conflict. They found that many of those records were missing, and the ones that existed often failed to document the reasons particular actions had been taken or decisions made. The *AAF Historical Officers' Manual* described the fate of some World War I documents:

At the end of the last war huge piles of valuable records were destroyed; others were haphazardly baled and dumped into the lap of The Adjutant General or upon the doorstep of an inadequate and understaffed Historical Section of the Army War College. Still other World War records were allowed to remain on posts and in time became lost or scattered. More than one collection was burned. Still another is said to have suffered an ignominious fate somewhat as follows: (1) baled and sent to Washington; (2) stored in a fire-proof building; (3) removed to a warehouse; (4) removed to a railroad shed; (5) removed to an open siding, placed upon cross-ties, and covered with tarpaulins until someone needed the tarpaulins. Its subsequent fate is unknown ...⁷

Recognizing the significant impact the dearth of historical information from the preceding conflict had on the planning and conduct of the extant one, on 4 March 1942 President Franklin D. Roosevelt instructed the Director of the Bureau of the Budget to establish the Committee on Records of War Administration to “[preserve] for those who come after us an accurate and

objective account of our present experience.”⁸ The Adjutant General, Major General J. A. Ulio, then promulgated AG letter 210.31 on 15 July 1942 instructing each of the commanders of the Army’s three major commands—Army Ground Forces, Army Air Forces, and Services of Supply—to appoint historical officers and supply them with the necessary staff to “record the administrative activities of their respective headquarters during the current war.”⁹ The organization of a history function within the AAF had begun. Four days later, Brigadier General Lawrence S. Kuter, Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, directed the AAF Director of Organizational Planning to initiate action immediately “to establish within the Air Staff an Historical Section capable of writing an accurate military history of the Army Air Force.”¹⁰ A 25 June 1942 memo from Major General M. F. Harmon called for the creation of a Historical Branch in the Headquarters US Army Air Forces Office of the Assistant Chief of Air Staff, A-2 (Intelligence). Its duties included overseeing the preparation of histories of AAF units, making those histories available for AAF use and, subject to release restrictions, offering access to other government entities, scholars, and the general public.¹¹ On 19 July 1943, AAF Regulation 20-8 established the Historical Division in accordance with AG 210.31 and under the supervision and control of the Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Intelligence.¹²

The AAF assigned its historical officers first to air forces based in the United States; to the various staff offices directorates, and commands; and, after the issuance of AG letter 320.21 on 15 November 1943, to deployed forces abroad. They wrote the histories of their units’ operations and collected the supporting documents that described how assigned personnel performed the unit’s mission, provided evidence of critical decisions and the details of the decision-making process, explained the unit’s purpose and function within the AAF, and specified how the organization carried out its assignments. Initially, Colonel Edgar P. Sorensen, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, A-2, supervised the Air Forces Historical Division, and Captain Clanton W. Williams, a professor of history on military leave from the University of Alabama, served as Acting Chief of the Historical Division and Chief of the Historical Development Section.¹³

Colonel Clarence B. Lober served as the first Chief of the Historical Division of the Army Air Forces from October 1942 to January 1944. Colonel Lober was the military commander of the unit, and Captain Williams carried out day-to-day operations.¹⁴ Captain Williams was designated as Acting Chief of the Historical Division on 26 September 1942.¹⁵ Williams, who attained the rank of colonel in 1945, served as Executive to Colonel Lober from October 1942 to November 1943, Acting Chief of the Historical Division from November 1943 until March 1944, and Chief from March 1944 until February 1945.¹⁶

Selecting AAF Historians

As Lieutenant Colonel Williams, observed in 1943, "... [the Germans] and the British and others think of history as an exact science. They profited by having made a scientific examination of the results of the last war. Those results they fully appreciated when this war began."¹⁷ The U.S. military leadership sought the same result. Determined not to fall short again, they concentrated on building a first-class historical program.

From the outset, AAF wanted qualified historians. In a 1943 meeting between Lieutenant Colonel Williams, then Executive to the Director of the Historical Division, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (AC/AS), Intelligence, and attendees at an A-2 conference in the Pentagon, Williams argued that the Army Air Forces deserved to have a decent record kept of the events of World War II. He opined, "You cannot expect to sit around and wait for some long-haired historian in the future to try to dig back and write a decent history. It can't be done. It wasn't done after the last war and it can't be done this time unless qualified men are brought together – men with training who know how to do the job."¹⁸ Later in the discussion, when someone asked Williams about placing a particular person in a unit, he responded:

That is fine. I don't know where we can find anybody more qualified, than such an experienced officer who also holds the Ph.D. degree in history. ... You can rest assured I am going to do my dead level best to see that each air force gets a first rate historian. ... General [Carl A.] Spaatz wired in that the British have their boys writing the actual history as it is taking place, and he wanted to know why we didn't, and to send immediately a group of historians of the caliber of

Douglas Freeman.¹⁹ Well, that brand is hard to find, but highly qualified young Ph.D.'s do exist in the AAF and my list of such is growing. I am interviewing each man selected not only to see that he is academically qualified, but that he also has the personality necessary to the job.²⁰

After the cessation of hostilities, Colonel Williams continued to maintain high standards for historians: "Of all the responsibilities none was of greater import than that of selecting the individuals who were to do this historical work. Against the ideas of some superiors that journalists, 'writers,' intelligence officers, or returning combat pilots were per se qualified, the AAF Historian insisted that there should be maintained at least as the point of departure the Ph.D. standard for selection of qualified 'historians.'"²¹ Among the preflight schools in the Eastern, Central, and Western Flying Training Commands, Williams found forty to fifty men with PhDs in history or one of the social sciences. The history program was reaching full strength just as ground school enrollment was decreasing; therefore, many of the men identified were selected to become historians.²²

AAF Letter 20-5, "Maintenance of Historical Program," dated 17 May 1946, called for major command history offices to be staffed by "professionally trained historians."²³ It defined the major purpose of historical offices as being "research and historical analysis of an objective and critical nature to facilitate the improvement of staff procedures and administrative methods as well as technical and tactical activities throughout the service."²⁴

Colonel Williams continued to maintain that trained historians were the backbone of an effective history program. In his retirement memorandum, he recommended that when war was anticipated, the Historical Office should prepare lists of young college professors and graduate students and encourage them to join the Reserve Corps so they would be ready to be called to active duty. He also proposed that a similar list be made for people holding M.A. degrees in history, political science, or other social sciences to serve as a pool of historical technicians.²⁵

Establishing the AAF Archives

By February 1943, the Historical Division Archives had begun to collect, classify, and catalog material.²⁶ Change No. 3 to Army Regulation (AR) 345-105, dated 9 March 1943, directed that AAF units forward their historical documents to the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces, directed to the attention of the Historical Officer, on a monthly schedule. That regulation resulted in a dramatic increase in the flow of documents, since it called for the preparation of unit histories (including the histories of AAF units), and the submission of the AAF historical data to the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces for later transmission to The Adjutant General.²⁷ A second document, AAF Regulation No. 20-8 dated 19 July 1943, mandated that the Historical Division “collect, assimilate, organize, document, and interpret contemporary and historical information concerning the growth, the administration, and outstanding personnel, and the operations of the Army Air Forces.”²⁸ The requirement to manage those materials provided the rationale for founding an archive of AAF documents. The AAF Historical Division was thus organized in four branches, with the Archives being “established as the official depository of documents pertaining to the activity of units serving with the AAF.”²⁹ The second branch was responsible for Administrative history, the third for operational history, and the fourth collected biographical data on AAF personnel.³⁰ By the end of 1943, the Historical Division consisted of the office of the Chief, his Executive, and four branches: the Administrative History Branch, the Biographical Branch, the Operational History Branch, and the Source and Editorial Branch, which comprised the Chronology and Reference Section, the Art and Production Section, and the Archives Section. The Archives Section held and maintained “all Army Air Forces historical data except such as go to other established agencies.”³¹ In a paper he presented at the 30 December 1943 meeting of the American Historical Association, Lieutenant Colonel Williams predicted that the Archives “bids fair to be the longest-lived unit of the entire historical program.”³²

Classification of Archival Holdings

The Historical Division's first table of organization, dated 1 September 1942, established the position of Archivist-Librarian. That person's duties included maintaining the collection of historical materials, developing a conservation and protection program for the documents, assisting the historical section in identifying new materials, devising a system to classify the materials received, and cataloging the archives' holdings.³³ In September 1943, Dr. Fulmer Mood, formerly of the University of California at Berkeley, was selected as Chief of the Archives Section. After developing an alphabetical system for classifying documents that used abbreviations representing the wings, groups, squadrons, battalions, companies, and detachments that originated documents, he left the Archives in the spring of 1944.³⁴ The Mood system proved inadequate to manage the multifarious documents generated by large organizations. Early in 1946, Dr. Martin P. Claussen, a member of the Administrative History Branch of the AAF Historical Division who had previously served on the staff of the National Archives, began a study of the Mood system. He recommended that it be replaced with a decimal system of call numbers based primarily on geographical and organizational factors. He began renumbering certain categories of documents before his return to the National Archives in October 1946. After his departure, Dr. Claussen's system was modified and simplified by Miss Marguerite E. Kennedy and Miss Marguerita McDonald of the Archives staff, and Mr. Frank C. Myers further revised it beginning in 1951.³⁵ To distinguish between two major time periods, The Archives' holdings are further divided into two parts: documents created before and after 1 July 1950, the date the 374th Troop Carrier Wing transported the first US ground combat troops to Pusan after the North Korean forces crossed the 38th parallel, invading South Korea. The latter documents' call numbers are preceded by the letter "K" to signify they bear dates after the beginning of the Korean War. Each K or non-K document in the collection is assigned either a decimal system or a Mood system call number.

Developing and Defending the Archives

By 1944, the Archives Section had acquired a substantial number of documents: “Its work is steadily increasing as materials arrive at an accelerating volume. Despite the fact that there are no duplicate holdings nor duplication of work done elsewhere in the War Department, and despite and continuous effort to have materials in the field culled to include only copies of the most important data, the rate of Archival receipts is increasing as unit histories and their supporting documents and other valuable data move up through channels... .”³⁶ The Archives Section would provide the key to preventing a recurrence of the deplorable situation extant at the beginning of World War II. Acting Chief of the Historical Division, Lieutenant Colonel Clanton W. Williams, noted in a 1943 address to the American Historical Association, that

... after the last war, when men were in a rush to return to their homes, vast quantities of military papers were boxed or baled in the most haphazard manner imaginable. They were never all assembled. There simply was no system of historiography. The confusion attendant thereto was so great, the lack of appreciation so wide, the inability to understand the basic problems of the historians so vast, that the simple truth is that there was no scientifically compiled record of experiences upon which the Army Air Forces might build for World War II.³⁷

The establishment of an archive dedicated to receiving, organizing, maintaining, preserving, and making accessible documentation concerning the development and employment of U.S. military aviation during World War II supported the subsequent reference and research that laid the foundation for the evolution of American airpower.

The AAF Management Control Directorate, the organization that supervised administrative services, personnel matters, statistical control, and organizational planning, performed its first investigation of the Historical Division in January 1944. Its report on the Archives Section advised that accessions to the Archives should be restricted and that measures should be taken to prevent its “undue expansion” beyond being a “temporary gathering

point” for unit histories and supporting documents.³⁸ The report called for severely restricting the material the Archives received since the Archives was “not a permanent record repository—and that it is not its function to preserve records simply because, without its interposition, such records would be destroyed.”³⁹ It further recommended that the name of the Archives Section be changed to the Historical File Section because some unnamed persons “outside the Historical Division” objected to the existence of an Archives Section.⁴⁰ Colonel William responded that the Archives was “appropriately named for what it is” and that the mandate to minimally service the documents that were collected ran contrary to the Archives Section’s mission of making the material available to those who had a need for it.⁴¹ In fact, he later declared that “an active post-war program aimed directly at the utilization of this accumulated information in the improvement of the Service should pay off many times the wartime investment.”⁴² The Archives Section continued to accept materials it received as a result of mandates in AR 345-105, AAF Regulation 20-8, and other directives, and prepared to hold them until they were no longer needed by its historians or other patrons. Should such a time arrive, they were then to be “handed over to their legal owner, The Adjutant General.”⁴³ As of January 1945, the Archives’ holdings comprised approximately 900 filing cabinets containing 300,000 documents.

In February 1945, a committee of three civilian historians, Dr. Guy Stanton Ford, Executive Secretary of the American Historical Association; Dr. Joseph R. Strayer of Princeton University; and Dr. John Allen Krout of Columbia University, comprising the Historical Advisory Board, assessed the holdings of the Archives Section and concluded that they should be dramatically reduced and that the plan to write a seven-volume history of the Army Air Forces in World War II using material from the Archives as source documents should be abandoned. Instead, they recommended that Air Force personnel write a series of studies of individual air forces. Opining that “[h]istorians may wish that more sources had survived about the Third Crusade in 1190, but this does not justify the accumulation of unmanageable

archives today,” they suggested that no AAF histories should be written for units below the wing level.⁴⁴ Colonel Williams, then serving as the AAF Historian, noted that the Air Force had already eliminated the lowest echelon histories and that the committee had vastly overestimated the Archives’ holdings. In his response to the Board’s criticism, he contended that

The AAF Historian has been equally conscious too that in the assembly of these Archives he has run the greatest personal political danger. It was here that he has had to fight hardest for adequate personnel and it is always the easiest of conclusions to reach that the very bulk of these records must indicate inefficiency somewhere. Every cursory examination of this problem by outsiders has begun with an assumption that the archival receipts must be cut. It has been a relief that where more than cursory examination has been made the initial impression has been dismissed as false. Certainly, any statement that the Archives present an unmanageable problem for the historians is simply not true. ...

Reasons for jumping to this initial assumption lie in several factors, chief being an impossibility for the average mind to visualize the bulk of the materials of which these Archives are the cream—cream separated by professionally trained men. ...

There existed in AAF files throughout the world on 31 December 1944, according to a survey made by the Records Administrator of Management Control, three million cubic feet of records. If brought together under one roof and filed in four drawer cabinets these data would require half the office floor space of the Pentagon, and if the war lasts two years longer would require all of it. Of this bulk of 3,000,000 cubic feet, the Archives’ holding of “supporting documents” of unit histories, numbered about 500 cubic feet. This represents a selection of one document out of every six thousand extant.

There are, as of this date, approximately 1,000 linear feet of Archival holdings—350 feet of unit histories, 500 feet of “supporting documents,” and 150 feet of other prime materials “cables, etc.” Admittedly to the casual observer the two hundred wooden file cabinets all in one large room may present an awesome spectacle. Should he open the drawers, though, he would note that they are half empty. This is purposely the case, in order to allow internal expansion in the simplified “Unit of Origin” filing

system. These files will, no doubt, eventually be filled. In fact, it is quite likely that the Archives may eventually be several times their current size.

It must not be assumed that the Archivist retains all his receipts. The fact is that there is a weekly burning ceremony. There is a continuing refining process which has been greatly increased since in January 1945 an adequate archival staff was at last procured.

Most important, though, in appraising the archival holdings are considerations of quality of content and efficiency of service. It is of paramount importance that the researchers of the Historical Division are extremely pleased with both, and outside patrons have often expressed amazement that they have found exactly what they needed—and quickly, more quickly than service obtained in the Library of Congress, The Adjutant General's Central Files, or the National Archives.⁴⁵

Two attempts by outside agencies bent on gaining control of material held in the AAF Archives were fended off in February 1945: one by the Collection Division, Assistant Chief to the Air Staff (AC/AS) Intelligence, which recommended the transfer of the materials to the collection division, and one from Assistant Chief of Staff (AC/S) G-2, General Clayton L. Bissell, who recommended that The Adjutant General create a central depository for all War Department historical materials. Both those proposals were rejected in a memorandum written by Colonel Wilfred. J. Paul, who was assigned in March 1945 as the Historical Division's military Professional Executive, then Chief of the Historical Division, and finally as AAF Historian.⁴⁶ He argued against incorporating the Archives' holdings into the mass of current intelligence data, averring that "[t]he Archives is a place where historical records and documents are preserved as evidence of facts and are utilized for historical research by historical personnel."⁴⁷ He went on to say that "[t]he system of arrangement used in the Archives has been coordinated with and approved by personnel of the National Archives; War Department Adjutant General and War Department Historical Division," and that "the present procedures in Archives Section are

well adapted to the purpose for this which collection is being prepared.”⁴⁸ He further noted that “in the screening and cataloging of incoming historical papers, important historical information is abstracted and a careful scrutiny is made of the product of field historians. This can be done only by historians and should not be delegated to a Librarian.”⁴⁹ He concluded that “[t]he professional historian is best equipped by background and training to arrange and service historical data for research purposes.”⁵⁰

As World War II drew to a close, the Historical Division and its Archives continued to grow and evolve. In an 8 June 1945 Memorandum for Record, Colonel Paul, as Chief of the Historical Division, set out the objectives of the Division. They included providing “a clearing house of information comprised of the AAF Historical Studies, unit histories with their accompanying supporting documents, and other documents of high significance.”⁵¹ In the same document, Colonel Paul predicted that the archives would be of lasting value in the future. On 23 August 1945, a new iteration of AAF Regulation No. 20-8 redesignated the Historical Division of AC/AS, Intelligence as the AAF Historical Office and transferred it from A2 to the office of the Secretary of the Air Staff.⁵² On 1 September 1946, Dr. Albert F. Simpson succeeded Clanton W. Williams as Air Historian.⁵³

The Advisory Historical Committee that had been created as a result of the report of the Historical Advisory Board issued a forceful recommendation against combining the Archives with any other collection.⁵⁴ The 20 February 1946 “Historical Officers’ Circular No. 6” reported that the Archives, “a rich and skillfully selected collection of military documents,” had been recognized by staff and field personnel and the public as a “collection ... of extreme value.”⁵⁵ It noted that “an increasing work-load is being imposed on the staff of the Sources and Editorial Branch. The Army-Navy Staff College, the Command and General Staff School, the War Department General Staff offices, the Strategic Bombing Survey, the various Air Staff Agencies, the Air Forces Center, and the new AAF School are all drawing heavily upon this source of information.”⁵⁶ After his retirement, Clanton W. Williams continued to promote

the collection, describing the state of the Archives as “currently most active, providing widely varying data not only to historians but also to many military agencies.”⁵⁷

The AAF had established Overseas Organizational History Branch in Baltimore, Maryland, in August 1945 to complete the histories that historians assigned to units stationed abroad were unable to finalize before they returned to the United States. It eliminated the Branch on 30 June 1946, before that task had been completed.⁵⁸ After the Overseas Organizational History Branch was discontinued, its documents were incorporated into the Historical Division’s Archives, increasing the number of documents it held to 400,000, occupying 8,000 linear feet and representing “one of the largest [archives] in the world entirely devoted to the history of military aviation.”⁵⁹

The 1 May 1946 revision of AR 345-105 mandated that Army Air Forces material, unit journals, and supporting documents compiled in troop units should be marked “Historical Data” and submitted to the Commanding General, Army Air Forces, for transmission to the Historical Records Section, War Department Records Branch, The Adjutant General’s office—thus ensuring that historical documents would continue to enter the Archives. AAF Letter 20-5, published on 17 May 1946, required the annual submission of historical data only from major commands, which reduced the flow of materials from subordinate units and diminished the intake of lower-echelon records into the Archives.⁶⁰ Under the provisions of the National Security Act of 1947, the United States Air Force became a separate service on 18 September 1947. Air Force Regulation 210-3, *Historical Program and Procedure*, dated 14 December 1948, replaced AR 345-106 for Air Force activities and superseded AAF Regulation 20-8 and AAF Letter 20-5. It directed commands, numbered air forces, and similar organizations to prepare detailed narrative histories and supporting documents for submission to the Air Historical Group, Air University (AU), which was charged with preparing Air Force histories and “assembling and maintaining an Air Force historical archives.”⁶¹

Moving the Archives to Maxwell AFB

The FY 1947 and FY 1948 federal budgets effected post-war cuts and necessitated reductions in the number of personnel assigned to the Washington, DC, area. Therefore, AAF Regulation No. 20-22, 13 August 1947, called for the reassignment of the Air Historical Office to Air University and its redesignation as an AU liaison office. At an August 1947 meeting held in the offices of the Deputy Chief of Staff, General C. C. Chauncey, made it clear that the transfer was “purely a budgetary expedient” to cut the number of civilians on the Air Historical Office staff, and that the Historical Office would “continue to function as an integral part of the Headquarters representing the Air Force in all historical matters.”⁶² Nonetheless, AAF Regulation 20-23, dated 17 September 1947, which returned four other activities transferred under Regulation 20-22 to their former parent organizations, failed to assign the Air Historical Office to Headquarters, USAF.

In a 15 December 1947 memo, Colonel Wilfred J. Paul, Chief of the Air Historical Office, argued that the Air Historical Office needed to remain on the same level as the Army Historical Division and the Office of Naval History, both of which functioned as departments of their assigned headquarters. He submitted a draft regulation establishing the Air Historical Division within Headquarters, USAF, but that regulation was not approved. The Air Historical Office remained assigned to Air University.⁶³ Colonel Paul and the Deputy Chief of the Air Staff discussed returning the Historical Group to the Air Staff as soon as the budgetary problems were resolved; but despite the fact that the Air Historical Office remained in Washington, it continued under the control of AU.

General Muir S. Fairchild, AU’s commanding general, lobbied relentlessly for the relocation of the Air Historical Group to Maxwell AFB, Alabama. His argument that the records held by the Group should be available for research at Air University and that its operations could best be carried out in the “scholarly atmosphere of the Air University” finally succeeded in August 1948.⁶⁴ The Historical Division had originally been located in the AAF Annex

#1 at Gravelly Point, Virginia, but it moved in October 1946 to the Pentagon. Pressure for space led to its relocation in July 1948, to Temporary Building “R” at 4th and Jefferson Drive, SW. The following October, it moved to Temporary Building “U” at 12th and Constitution, NW.⁶⁵ Less than a year later, the organization prepared to relocate to Alabama.

The Air Force established the Air University Historical Liaison Office in Washington, DC, by a letter dated 8 August 1949. It operated from the Temporary “U” Building at 12th Street and Constitution Avenue until the Secretary of the Air Force requested its relocation to the Pentagon to eliminate the time spent in trips back and forth between the two buildings.⁶⁶ The liaison office facilitated the transfer of materials to Maxwell and coordinated support of the Army Air Forces seven-volume history of World War II. ⁶⁷ The Air Historical Office and the Archives moved from Washington, DC, to Maxwell AFB from 12 to 26 September 1949, and the Air Historical Group occupied Building 910, a 12,950 square foot stucco structure.⁶⁸



Ceremony Marking Publication of *The Army Air Forces in World War II* held in the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, the Hon. James H. Douglas, Jr., 30 October 1958. (Left to Right, - General Thomas D. White, Chief of Staff, USAF; Chancellor Lawrence A. Kimpton, University of Chicago; W. F. Craven, Princeton University; Mr. Douglas; J. L. Cate, University of Chicago; Colonel G. C. Cobb, Director, Research Studies Institute, Air University; Albert F. Simpson, Chief, USAF History Division) (USAF Photo).

On 16 August 1949, the Air University Library was redesignated the Department of the Air Force Library, perhaps to underscore the fact that the library was a U.S. Government Record Depository. The Air Historical Group was incorporated into the Library, and the Library was then reorganized. A merger of the Library's Documentary Research Section and the Air Historical Group created the Historical Division. The new Division comprised the Studies and Research Branch, made up of the Air Historical Group's Studies and Editorial Branch and the AU Library's Documentary Research Division, and the Archives Branch, which combined the Archives Branch of the Air Historical Group and the Archives Unit of the Library. The Department of the Air Force Library established an Administrative Section, and the Library Division was organized into six branches according to function. A number of meetings were held about combining of the documents of the Library Division and the Historical Division. Discussions of those points continued as the Archives Division moved from Building 910 to building 914.⁶⁹

Records Management and the Archives

The records created by the Army (and the Army Air Corps) during World War II were subject to records management regulations set out in War Department Technical Manual 12-259, *Records Administration: Disposition of Records*, dated July 1945 and its later revisions. Special Regulation 345-920-1, dated 15 March 1949, called for the transfer of all War Department and Army agency records meriting permanent or long-term retention to one of several Army record depositories by 30 June 1949, but it did not apply to Air Force records.⁷⁰ Army Regulation 345-911/Air Force Regulation 181-5, *Records and Reports: Administration by Department of the Army of Noncurrent Records of Department of the Air Force*, mandated that "Army records centers will continue to maintain, service, and effect disposition of noncurrent records of the Department of the Air Force, both headquarters and field activities, with the exception of certain classes of noncurrent records which have previously been designated by the Secretary of the Air Force to be centralized and administered by Air Force records depositories"⁷¹ Those depositories

included The Air Force Contract Records Depository; the Air Force Materiel Engineering, Research, and Development Records Depository; and the Air Force Motion Picture Film Depository, located at Wright Field, Ohio; the Air Force Weather Records Depository, in New Orleans, Louisiana; and the Air Force Still Photography Depository and the Air Force Aeronautical Charts Depository, located in Washington, DC.⁷² The 13 January 1950 revision of AFR 210-3 gave the Air University Command responsibility for maintaining the Air Force Historical Program (including sustaining the Air Force historical archives as the repository for historical records); required the production of semi-annual narrative histories and supporting documents by major commands, numbered air forces, and comparable organizations; and mandated the collection of historical materials by echelons below the numbered air force level.⁷³

A 18 March 1950 letter from Colonel John J. Donovan, the commanding officer of the Records Administration Center, concerning missing records for Army organizations—particularly Air Force organization files—contended that “Air University, Historical Division, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama may have in its custody [*sic*] organization records which are necessary for the administration of both the Army and Air Force AG [Adjutant General] functions” and recommended that all records other than “actual histories” be transferred to the Kansas City Records Center, with any material necessary for the preparation of histories being returned on loan to the Air Historical program.⁷⁴ The letter was forwarded to the Commanding General, Air University, on 12 April 1950 for his comments.⁷⁵ On 28 September 1950, Colonel L. L. Judge, the Air Adjutant General, wrote to the Commander, Air University, informing him that the Department of the Army had inquired about records held by the Historical Division of Air University. Referring to the regulation directing the storage of all noncurrent Air Force records, he maintained that its intent was “to make all [emphasis in original] records accumulated by Air Force activities readily available to all [emphasis in original] Air Force, military and other Federal Government activities the public

in general, to the extent they are entitled to them.”⁷⁶ Colonel Judge noted that the Department of the Army and the Air Adjutant General’s office received numerous inquiries relating to current mission needs and planning concerns, but records from which to respond to those inquiries were unavailable. He averred that the problem had arisen because in some instances historians collected the record copies of documents to use as sources for their histories and later included the same record copies as supporting documents to the narrative. Judge acknowledged that the “temporary custody” of Air Force records for historical research or use by Air University students was acceptable, but argued that

... the use or custody of such records by any Air Force activity or other agency, in a manner which will: preclude their use by other interested activities; unduly hamper the Department of the Army in servicing Air Force Records; destroy the integrity and administrative origin of records accumulated by Air Force activities; result in the loss of control over the whereabouts of Air Force records; or defeat the purpose or objectives of directives, policies and instructions designed to carry out the statutory and moral responsibilities of the Secretary of the Air Force, with respect to the preservation or disposition of Air Force records must be prohibited.⁷⁷

He directed that Air University create an inventory of all supporting documents, that the materials identified be segregated to allow inquiries to be answered, that they be readied for shipment to “appropriate records depositories” as the events they described were covered in the seven-volume set of the Air Force history of World War II aviation being written at that time. He also mandated that a revision of paragraph 5 of Air Force Regulation 210-3 be prepared requiring supporting documents to be “extra copies” rather than record copies of documents.⁷⁸ In order to ensure the proper management of the record copies of Air Force documents, Air Force Regulation Change 210-3B, *Historical Data Program and Procedure*, was issued on 12 December 1950. It stipulated that supporting documents would consist of extra copies only, not original or record copies of documents.⁷⁹

Colonel Wilfred J. Paul, the former Chief of the Air Historical Office and current Director of the Air University Library, wrote to Colonel (later Major General) Richard A. Grussendorf,⁸⁰ executive officer to Chief of Staff of the Air Force General Hoyt Vandenberg, regarding the records question. He noted that the documents held by the Archives had been gathered under the provisions of Army Regulation 345-108 and subsequently under Air Force Regulation 210-3.⁸¹ These regulations covered historical documents, and did not deal with records management regulations for the record copies of documents. In fact, Historical Officers Circular No. 2, *Instructions for Air Force Historical Officers of Staffs, Offices, and Commands*, dated 26 May 1943, specifically referred to including “copies” of supporting documents with the unit histories.⁸² It mandated that supporting documents such as letters, telegrams, and memorandums, be “certified as true copies.” It further stipulated that “[i]f original documents are still in current use or are earmarked for agencies other than the Army Air Forces Historical Division, or if there are no carbon copies available, exact transcripts should be made, and the disposition made of the originals should be indicated.”⁸³ Historical Officers Circular No. 5, *Form for Unit Histories*, however, was inconsistent with Circular No. 2. It instructed the field historian to be sure supporting documents were “originals or true copies.”⁸⁴

Colonel Paul presented a brief overview of the circumstances that led to the location of the Archives at Air University in his letter to Colonel Grussendorf, informing him that “General Arnold, General Eaker, and General Fairchild considered it of tremendous importance to the Air Force.”⁸⁵ He declared that relocating the archival holdings was not in the best interest of the Air Force or other users of the material: “Placing this material in a depository at Kansas City or St. Louis will not only put it out of the direct custody of the Air Force but will also deny its use to Air Historians, researchers, and Air Force Officers at Maxwell. Unless conditions have changed radically at the St. Louis depository valuable Air Force historical documents would become so integrated with morning reports, duty rosters, etc. that our documents would be the

needle in the haystack.”⁸⁶ Colonel Paul opined that Colonel Judge was being “misled by his civilian Records Administrator who for five years has tried to take our Historical Archives, but who has no understanding of their value to the USAF in their present location and use.”⁸⁷ Colonel Paul also wrote “Correspondence re: ‘Location of Records,’” dated 5 October 1950, which set out a rationale for not complying with the mandate to catalog the Archives’ holdings and deliver them to a federal records depository. He contended that the Historical Division had insufficient personnel to catalog each of the 700,000 documents, making it impossible to create a descriptive inventory. He estimated that such a project would require twenty man-years. He requested ten additional civilian employees to accomplish the task, which he estimated would take two years to complete. Colonel Paul then averred that the materials in the Archives were sufficiently organized to allow for prompt responses to inquiries. He included the requested draft change to AFR 210-3 with the correspondence.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the Historical Division of the Air University Library maintained that it had turned over all its organizational records to the Air University Records Administrator for shipment to the appropriate federal records center in February 1950.⁸⁹ The materials held in the Historical Division’s Archives remained in its keeping, and the collection continued to grow. By 1951, National Archives personnel had concluded that the Air Historical Group retained about 8,000 feet of wartime records.⁹⁰

AFR 210-3, *Historical Data*, dated 11 March 1955, designated the Archives as the Office of Record for Air Force histories.⁹¹ It directed each major air command, numbered air force (NAF) or comparable organization, wing and independent unit below the NAF level, and joint and combined operation and headquarters for which the Air Force had primary responsibility to compile a semiannual narrative history with supporting documents and submit it to the USAF Historical Division at Maxwell AFB. There they were to be held in the Air Force historical archives and permanently preserved.⁹²

During an August 1955 meeting, Miss Marguerite Kennedy, Chief of the Archives Branch, and Mr. Albert J. Petroski, Kansas City Records Center,

reached an agreement to transfer all Air Force unit histories and supporting documents from that facility to the Archives.⁹³ The transfer took place between 1956 and 1960. The materials were shipped in 1,072 footlockers⁹⁴ (or the equivalent). Archives Branch personnel incorporated approximately 35 percent of the material, comprising 929 cubic feet, into the collection by 26 July 1961, and destroyed the remaining 65 percent (1,846 cubic feet), which was duplicative or which Archives personnel determined to be of marginal value.⁹⁵ The Archives Branch received one additional box of documents from the Kansas City Records Center in August 1961 and was slated to receive additional material from time to time as the Records Center proceeded with its inventory.⁹⁶



Archives Stacks in 1956, (Left to Right) George Pugh and Airman Lewis (USAF Photo).

In 1963, the Air Force Historian initiated a request to microfilm the rapidly deteriorating documents held by the USAF Historical Division.⁹⁷ Recordak Corporation personnel surveyed the collection in recommended that it be microfilmed.⁹⁸ HQ USAF approved the proposal in February 1967, and funds to begin the project became available in FY 1969. Due to problems obtaining security clearances for the contractors, the Historical Research Center made little progress in microfilming that year; but it expended the funds

in FY 1970 to microfilm 2.2 million pages.⁹⁹ The Center wished to keep the original documents to support Air Force, Department of Defense, and other requests for information rather than eventually retiring them to the National Archives and Records Service (NARS). On 18 September 1970, H. G. Geiger, Acting Chief of the Department of the Air Force's Documentation Systems Division, Directorate of Information, wrote to James B. Rhoads, the Archivist of the United States, concerning the Office of Air Force History's draft policy guidance and specifications for microfilming historical documents. Paragraph 8a of that draft stipulated that "when documents of permanent value are microfilmed, the camera master silver negative and the positive silver print made from it will be retired to the National Archives after they have been inspected and found to be adequate substitutes for the original documents. Original documents would not be retired."¹⁰⁰ Mr. Rhoads, replied to Mr. Geiger's letter on 5 October 1970, stating that "[t]he policy guidelines and specifications set forth in your letter of September 18 meet with our approval."¹⁰¹ Mr. Rhoads added that NARS would publish regulations in early 1971 concerning the storage and processing of microfilm.¹⁰² A subsequent 1971 agreement between NARS and the Air Force Historical Research Center (AFHRC) allowed AFHRC to fulfill its records management obligations by providing microfilm instead of hard copy records to NARS.¹⁰³

On 3 December 1970, Mr. Geiger wrote to the Air Force Chief Historian recommending that Air Force Manual (AFM) 12-50, table 201-1, *Disposition of Air Force Documentation*, be changed to read as follows:

- a. retire original documents as permanent if they have not or will not be microfilmed.
- b. destroy original documents after 1 year or when no longer needed, whichever is later, provided microfilm has been inspected and found acceptable.
- c. retire original camera master silver negative and first positive silver print therefrom, to the National Archives 6 months after microfilm has been accepted.¹⁰⁴

The Air Force's Directorate of Administration submitted a request for authority to dispose of records to NARS on 12 July 1971 containing the above provisions. NARS approved that request on 6 October 1971.¹⁰⁵ That disposition authority was subsequently reflected in Air Force Manual (AFM) 12-50, Table 201-1, *Disposition of Air Force Documentation*, and Air Force Regulation 12-40, *Documentation Storage and Retrieval (DS&R) Systems*, which required that when documents having a permanent retention were microfilmed, "the camera master silver negative and the positive silver print made from it" be retired to the National Archives or other appropriate records center.¹⁰⁶ NARS published its rule expanding the General Services Administration's rules on micrographics on 15 March 1979. It addressed microfilming requirements for "[a]gencies proposing to retain the original records in accordance with the approved records disposition schedule."¹⁰⁷

To comply with 1971 agreement, the Air Force expended over \$1 million microfilming AFHRC's holdings and shipping those rolls to NARS. By 1979, only 5,000 rolls of film remained to be forwarded to the National Archives.¹⁰⁸ In response to an April 1979 notification that the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center (AFSHRC)¹⁰⁹ was ready to ship additional microfilm, NARS informed Center personnel that it would not accept the microfilm because it wished to change the 1971 agreement.¹¹⁰ On 3 December 1979, after some correspondence within Air Force channels and between the Air Force and the National Archives, James E. O'Neill, Acting Archivist of the United States, wrote to Colonel Van L. Crawford, Jr., the Air Force's Director of Administration, maintaining that NARS would like to suspend that agreement due to security issues. Although only 2 percent of the 10,141 pre-1950 microfilm rolls sent to NARS were classified, National Archives personnel feared that problems could arise in the future with records dated after 1950 and records exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Nonetheless, due to the amount of money the Air Force had spent on providing NARS and Air Force agencies with microfilm copies of the documents and NARS's "initial concurrence in accepting the microfilm copies," Mr. O'Neill agreed to accession

and service the pre-1950 microfilm that AFSHRC had submitted to NARS for a two-year trial period.¹¹¹ During that time, NARS planned to assess the personnel and money requirements involved in reviewing the microfilm for security purposes and supervising researchers using those rolls. Mr. O'Neill stated that NARS would make a decision as to whether it should continue to accept microfilm instead of paper documents during that time, but he had "no objection" to continuing to accept the negative and positive microfilm rolls dated after 1950 that AFSHRC was submitting and "providing courtesy storage" for them without accessioning them into NARS's holdings.¹¹² He further requested that AFSHRC suspend the disposition authority that gave it the right to destroy the original documents after acceptable microfilm copies had been made and one year had elapsed, although AFSHRC was not currently exercising that right.¹¹³ Accordingly, Mr. Lloyd Cornett, the Director of AFSHRC, directed Center personnel to begin shipping negative and positive microfilm rolls to NARS on 17 December 1979.¹¹⁴ NARA declined to accept further shipments of the original negative and duplicate positive microfilm rolls in 2003.¹¹⁵

The records disposition instructions for the Air Force Historical Research Agency's (AFHRA) holdings currently in force remain the same as those set out in 1971. When the Air Force revised the Air Force Records Information Management System (AFRIMS) table and rule covering those documents on 13 April 2011, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)¹¹⁶ Appraiser Rich Noble determined that the correct disposition of the documents in question was the one last approved in the 1 March 1996 version of AFMAN 37-139. That publication called for them to be "retired as permanent upon inactivation if they have not or will not be microfilmed," and, if they were microfilmed, to "destroy paper records after 1 year or when no longer needed, whichever is later, provided microfilm has been inspected and found acceptable" and to "[r]etire original camera master silver negative, and first positive silver print therefrom, to the National Archives ... 6 months after microfilm has been accepted."¹¹⁷

Conclusion

AFHRA has thus remained the custodian of the hard copy documents entrusted to its predecessor organizations in the aftermath of World War II and of the histories and other materials subsequently added to its holdings. These documents are necessary to supplement AFHRA's microfilm records and serve as source materials for the Agency historians and archivists who provide historical services to Air Force organizations around the world and answer requests for information from the Air Force, government agencies, and the general public. They serve as a resource for scholars and other researchers and support professional military education programs at Air University. In their present location, they can be most readily available and expeditiously used to provide the background material to inform the decision-making process at the highest levels of government, to support veterans, and to illuminate the actions and decisions of the air arm for ordinary citizens. The vision of pioneers in the Air Force history program for the creation and maintenance of a centralized repository for Air Force historical documents came to fruition at the Air Force Historical Research Agency.

Today the Air Force Historical Research Agency is the repository for the collection of Air Force historical papers begun in 1942. Its holdings comprise more than 70,000,000 pages representing the world's largest and most valuable organized collection of documents concerning US military aviation. AFHRA's holdings are readily accessible. Approximately 350 veterans, scholars, and members of the general public visit the Agency's reading rooms each year, and over 4,400 documents are available on AFHRA's public web page. AFHRA employees answer an average of over 3,500 requests for information annually from Air Force personnel, the Department of Defense and other government agencies, Congress, veterans, and individuals from around the world. Documents held by AFHRA are microfilmed or digitized and uncontrolled unclassified copies are available for sale to the public.

The majority of AFHRA's holdings consist of unit histories that chronicle US air forces' operations and activities in war and peace from WWI to the

present day. These materials provide the data and historical perspective that support the planning and decision-making process throughout the Air Force. These records are in constant use, and they often contain the answer to complex problems. For example, records and publications from the inactivated Strategic Air Command provided information vital to the stand-up of Air Force Global Strike Command, and researchers use World War II mission reports to determine the location of unexploded ordnance before initiating construction in Germany. AFHRA also maintains the organizational history of Air Force units and establishments, determines their lineage and honors, and administers Air Force organizational emblems. These records inform Air Force-wide organizational decisions and promote esprit de corps and knowledge of their heritage among Airmen.

AFHRA houses a wide variety of specialized collections. Its 786 groupings of personal papers include those of pioneers in flight, significant Air Force leaders and policymakers, and others who contributed to the evolution of American military aviation. In addition the Agency maintains approximately 100 Air Force Persons of Exceptional Prominence (PEP) Records Collections. It comprises more than 2,600 oral history interviews concerning matters of importance to the air forces dating from the 1920s, the Vietnam War, and the development and acquisition of Air Force weapons systems. Interviewees include individuals who led the Army Air Forces in the years before and during World War II and, beginning in 1976, all former Secretaries of the Air Force, Chiefs of Staff, Major Command Commanders and Commanders-in-Chief, and the Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force. The collection also contains interviews with personnel involved in Air Force operations abroad conducted by deployed historians, and it includes a large number of interviews concerning U.S. military operations carried out in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks.

The extensive aircraft records held at AFHRA contain abundant information about the history of individual aircraft and the circumstances under which they were retired from the Air Force inventory. The Agency's

holdings include individual aircraft record cards, aircraft accident reports dated prior to 1956, and World War II missing air crew and escape and evasion reports. A treasure trove for hobbyists, authors, and historians, these records, in combination with the corresponding unit histories, are used today by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command to locate and recover human remains from prior conflicts.

AFHRA's leadership and staff continuously seek new opportunities to preserve Air Force history and to make more resources available to their customers. The Agency has collaborated with Air Combat Command Cultural Resources to establish and maintain a unique collection of architectural drawings for Air Force facilities of high historical mission importance or those that represent notable architectural and engineering achievement. When completed, the collection will comprise from 25,000 to 28,000 drawings dated primarily from 1938 through 1972 and include very rare or significant structures of the Army Air Corps and the Army Air Forces. This collection will be of great benefit to engineers and architectural historians.

Seventy years ago, Brigadier General Lawrence S. Kuter charged the AAF director of Organizational Planning to establish an Air Staff Historical Section to record the service's history "*while it is hot.*"¹¹⁸ Those histories, crafted in the heat of battle, formed the basis for the Archives' collection. Only a few years later, Colonel Clanton W. Williams reported that the Archives contained "the cream of AAF records,"¹¹⁹ carefully selected by professionals dedicated to preserving a permanent history of the Army Air Forces. The AAF Historical Division and its successor organizations embraced those standards, maintaining the Air Force's institutional memory and enabling it to prevail in current operations and plan for future ones. That legacy now belongs to the Air Force Historical Research Agency, which continues to collect, preserve, and make available those unparalleled documents.

Endnotes

¹Art (U), Lloyd H. Cornett, Jr., “United States Air Force Historical Collection,” in Catherine D. Scott, ed., *Aeronautics and Space Flight Collections* (New York: Hayworth Press, ca. 1985), 98.

²Book (U), Maurer Maurer, *The U.S. Air Service in World War I*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1978), 1-14, 167. The unit histories incorporated in *Gorrell’s History* are recorded on 58 reels of microfilm that are included in the AFHRA collection. For an overview of the collection and preservation of documents relating to U.S. air operations in World War I, see the “Introduction” to Maurer Maurer’s *The U.S. Air Service in World War I*, volume I.

³Art (U), Stetson Conn, *Historical Work in the United States Army 1862-1954*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center for Military History, 1980) n. p., available at http://warchronicle.com/us/general/historicalwkptone.htm#*15* (25 May 2012).

⁴Art (U), Lloyd H. Cornett, Jr., “United States Air Force Historical Collection,” in Catherine D. Scott, ed., *Aeronautics and Space Flight Collections*. (New York: Hayworth Press, ca. 1985), 98, available at http://books.google.com/books?id=j8wj0kv_NVgC&pg=PA106&lpg=PA106&dq=%22dr.+fulmer+mood%22&source=bl&ots=5le8IY-tkj&sig=0XFkd065Zmbie0ION7YycRZxfE&hl=en&sa=X&ei=XKKyT-nmO4306AGvt7mQCQ&ved=0CEIQ6AEwBQ#v=onepage&q=%22dr.%20fulmer%20mood%22&f=false (23 April 2012).

⁵Paper (U), Chauncey E. Saunders, “History of the Archives Historical Division Air University Library 1942 through 1949,” n. d., 1, IRIS # 122717.

⁶Art (U), Marguerite K. Kennedy, “The Archives of the Historical Division, USAF,” in *American Archivist*, 17, no. 2 (April 1954), 126-27, available at <http://archivists.metapress.com/content/42897783;13787744/> (7 Feb 2012).

⁷Draft (U), *AAF Historical Officers’ Manual*, 1943, 2. IRIS #00116405.

⁸Art (U), William C. Binkley, "Two World Wars and American Historical Scholarship," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 33, no. 1 (Jun 1946), 18, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1896733> (20 Oct 2011).

⁹AG letter (U), MG J. A. Ulio, The Adjutant General," to Commanding Generals Army Ground Forces, Army Air Forces, and Services of Supply, "Appointment of Historical Officers," 15 July 1942, IRIS #116436.

¹⁰Directive (U), Brig Gen Lawrence S. Kuter, Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, [Army Air Force Historical Program], 19 July 1942, quoted in Article (U), Lt. Col. Clanton W. Williams, Acting Chief, Historical Division, AC/AS, Intelligence, "Army Air Force Historical Program," n. d., IRIS #116419.

¹¹Paper (U), Dr. Chauncey E. Sanders, "History of the Archives Historical Division, Air University Library 1942-1949," n. d., IRIS # 1143907; Paper (U), "USAF Historical Archives 1942-1953," 2, n. d., IRIS #1143907.

¹²Reg (U), AAF Regulation No. 20-8, *Organization: AAF Historical Division*, 19 Jul 1943, IRIS #116429.

¹³Msg (U), Colonel Edgar P. Sorensen, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, A-2, to Historical Division, A-2, "Army Air Forces Historical Division," 26 Sep 1942, IRIS #00116409; Book (U), Richard H. Kohn, "Forward to the New Imprint," to *Plans and Early Operations, January 1939 to August 1942*, Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds., vol. 1, *The Army Air Forces in World War II* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1983), ix.

¹⁴Art (U), Karl L. Trever, "News Notes," *American Archivist*, 6, no. 2 (April 1943), 135, available at <http://archivists.metapress.com/content/3x284626q417t000/> (20 Oct 2011); Art. (U), Bell I. Wiley, *Historical Program of the U.S. Army 1939 to Present [1945]*, 13, available at <http://www.history.army.mil/reference/History/wiley-fm.htm> (20 Oct 2011).

¹⁵Msg (U), Colonel Edgar P. Sorensen, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, A-2, to Historical Division, A-2, "Army Air Forces Historical Division," 26 Sept 1942, IRIS #00116409.

¹⁶Paper (U), "History of the Historical Division (July-Dec 1949)," IRIS #00913622.

¹⁷Paper (U), "Colonel Williams – Historical Division, AC/AS, Intelligence," ca. 1943, 6, IRIS #00122670

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Douglas Southall Freeman (1886-1953) earned a PhD in history from Johns Hopkins University. His publications included Pulitzer Prize-winning, multivolume biographies of Robert E. Lee and George Washington, and he served as the editor of *The Richmond News Leader*.

²⁰Paper (U), "Colonel Williams – Historical Division, AC/AS, Intelligence," ca. 1943, 3-4, IRIS #00122670.

²¹Paper (U), Clanton W. Williams, "AAF Historical Program," n.d., 7, IRIS #00122670.

²²Ibid.

²³Ltr (U), AAF Letter 20-5, "Maintenance of Historical Program," 17 May 1946.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Memo (U), Colonel Clanton W. Williams, AAF Historian, to Chief, AAF Historical Office, "Final Report of the Retiring AAF Historian," 1 Sep 1946, IRIS #00122670.

²⁶Paper (U), Dr. Chauncey E. Saunders, "History of the Archives Historical Division, Air University Library 1942-1949," n. d., IRIS # 1143907; Paper (U), "USAF Historical Archives 1942-1953," 2, n. d., IRIS #1143907.

²⁷Reg (U), AR 345-105, Change No. 3, *Historical Records and Histories of Organizations*, 9 March 1943. Maintaining the noncurrent records of the War Department was one of the duties of The Adjutant General.

²⁸Paper (U), Maj. Thad S. Strange, USAFR, "Development of the USAF Historical Program," March 1951, IRIS # 00913623; AAF Regulation No. 20-8, "Organization: AAF Historical Division," 19 Jul 1943, IRIS #01105702

²⁹Circular (U), Overseas Historical Officers Circular No. 1, "Instructions

for Air Force Historical Officers in Theaters of Operations,” 19 Nov 1943, IRIS #00069620. .

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Paper (U), Lt. Col. Clanton W. Williams, Acting Chief Historical Division, AC/AS, Intelligence, “Army Air Forces Historical Program,” 30 Dec 1943, IRIS #00116419.

³²Paper (U), Lt Col Clanton W. Williams, “Army Air Forces Historical Program,” (Paper, American Historical Association, New York, New York, 30 December 1943), IRIS #00122674.

³³Art (U), Marguerite K. Kennedy, “The Archives of the Historical Division, USAF,” in *American Archivist*, 17, no. 2 (April 1954), 126-27, available at <http://archivists.metapress.com/content/42897783;13787744/> (7 Feb 2012).

³⁴Doc (U), “USAF Historical Archives 1942 – 1958,” 10, unaccessioned AFHRA material, “History of History.” For example, the Mood call number for documents originated by the 11th Fighter Wing is WG-FI-11, and those originated by the 66th Bombardment Squadron are assigned Mood call number SQ-BOMB-66. Other abbreviations may be added to the call number to differentiate between types of documents. For example, HI following a call number indicated that the document was a history, and SU designated a supporting document. Other abbreviations, such as PH for photographs, might be added to further describe individual documents. The Air Force Historical Research Agency and its predecessor organizations produced various iterations of a classification manual to guide accessioners in assigning Mood and decimal call numbers to documents added to the collection.

³⁵Doc (U), “USAF Historical Archives 1942 – 1958,” 10-11, unaccessioned AFHRA material, “History of History.”

³⁶Paper (U), “The AAF Historical Program,” ca. 1944, 4, IRIS #00122670.

³⁷Paper (U), Lt Col Clanton W. Williams, Acting Chief Historical Division, AC/AS, Intelligence, “Army Air Forces Historical Program,” 30 Dec 1943, 10-11, IRIS #00116419.

³⁸Paper (U), "History of the Archives, Historical Division, AU Library 1942 through 1949," n. d., 10, 11, IRIS #01143907.

³⁹Fragment (U), "Report of Management Control on Historical Division," 14 Jan 1944, in AFSHO files, IRIS #00122673.

⁴⁰Paper (U), "History of the Archives, Historical Division, AU Library 1942 through 1949," n. d., 11, IRIS #01143907.

⁴¹Ibid., 12.

⁴²Memo (U), Colonel Clanton W. Williams, AAF Historian, to Chief, AAF Historical Office, "Final Report of the Retiring AAF Historian," 1 Sep 1946, IRIS #00116424.

⁴³Paper (U), "History of the Archives, Historical Division, AU Library 1942 through 1949," n. d., 15-16, IRIS #01143907.

⁴⁴Fragment (U), "Report of Historical Advisory Board (Drs. Guy Stanton Ford, Joseph R. Strayer, and John Allen Krout), to MG James P. Hodges, AC/AS, Intelligence, 16 Feb 1945, 3-5," n. d., IRIS #00122673.

⁴⁵Fragment (U), "Longhand Draft of a History of the Historical Division by Col. C. W. Williams, 39-41, in AFSHO Files," n. d., IRIS #00122673.

⁴⁶Bio (U), "Colonel Wilfred J. Paul," n. d., IRIS #482028; Book (U), Richard H. Kohn, "Forward to the New Imprint," to *Plans and Early Operations, January 1939 to August 1942*, Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds., vol. 1, *The Army Air Forces in World War II* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1983), ix. Col Paul subsequently served as Director of the Air University Library.

⁴⁷Paper (U), "History of the Archives, Historical Division, AU Library 1942 through 1949," n. d., 20, IRIS #01143907.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Memo (U), Col W. J. Paul, Chief, Historical Division, "Objectives of AAF Historical Division," 2 Jun 1945, IRIS #00122672.

⁵²Reg (U), AAF Regulation No. 10-8, "AAF Historical Office," 23 Aug 1945.

⁵³Paper (U), "History of the Historical Division (July-Dec 1949), IRIS #00913622; Doc (U), "Employee's Position Description," 1 Nov 1946, IRIS #1155292. Administrative supervision of the Air Historian was provided by the Chief of the Air Historical Office, but the Air Historian was free to act independently in most matters.

⁵⁴Paper (U), "History of the Archives, Historical Division, AU Library 1942 through 1949," n. d., 21, IRIS #01143907.

⁵⁵Ibid., 23.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Paper (U), Clanton W. Williams, "AF Historical Program," ca. 1946, IRIS #00116423.

⁵⁸Art (U), Lloyd H. Cornett, Jr., "United States Air Force Historical Collection," in Catherine D. Scott, ed., *Aeronautics and Space Flight Collections*. (New York: Hayworth Press, ca. 1985), 98.

⁵⁹Paper (U), Maj. Thad S. Strange, ACSC, "Development of the USAF Historical Program," Mar 1951, 23, IRIS #009133623.

⁶⁰Paper (U), "History of the Archives, Historical Division, AU Library 1942 through 1949," n. d., 26, IRIS #01143907.

⁶¹Reg (U), Air Force Regulation 210-3, *Historical Program and Procedures*, 14 Dec 1948.

⁶²Msg (U), Col W. J. Paul, Chief, Air Historical Office to AFCAG, and others, "Reestablishment of Air Historical Office Within Headquarters USAF," 15 Dec 1947, IRIS #00122672.

⁶³Msg (U), Col W. J. Paul, Chief, Air Historical Office to AFCAG, and others, "Reestablishment of Air Historical Office Within Headquarters USAF," 15 Dec 1947, IRIS #00122672; Draft AF Regulation No. 20-xx, "Establishment of the Air Historical Office Within Headquarters, USAF," n. d., IRIS #00122672.

⁶⁴Paper (U), "History of the Historical Division (July-Dec 1949), IRIS #00913622.

⁶⁵Hist (U), Bea M. Estep, "History of USAF Historical Archives, July – December 1958," 5-6, unaccessioned AFHRA material, "History of History."

⁶⁶Paper (U), "History of the Historical Division (July-Dec 1949), IRIS #00913622.

⁶⁷The Air University Historical Liaison Office supported production of the multivolume work, Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, 7 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953).

⁶⁸Paper (U), "History of the Historical Division (July-Dec 1949), IRIS #00913622.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Art (U), General Services Administration, National Archives and Records Service, "Federal Records of World War II, Volume II, Military Records, Part Two, The War Department and the Army," (The National Archives, Washington, D.C.: 1951), 62, available at <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/ATO/FRWW2-II/FRWW2-2.html> (9 Nov 2011).

⁷¹Reg (U), Army Regulation 345-911/Air Force Regulation 181-5, "Records and Reports: Administration by Department of the Army of Noncurrent Records of Department of the Air Force," 14 Jul 1950.

⁷²Book (U), General Services Administration, National Archives and Records Service, "Federal Records of World War II, Volume II, Military Records, Part Two, The War Department and the Army," (The National Archives, Washington, D.C.: 1951), 152, available at <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/ATO/FRWW2-II/FRWW2-2.html> (9 Nov 2011).

⁷³Reg (U), Air Force Regulation Change 210-3B, *Historical Data Program and Procedure*, 12 Dec 1950.

⁷⁴Ltr (U), Col John J. Donovan, AGD, Commanding, to Chief, Management Staff Division, AGO, 28 Mar 1950, IRIS #00913629.

⁷⁵Ltr (U), Lt Col F. A. Dunphy, Executive, Air Adjutant, to Commanding General, Air University, "Location of Records," 12 Apr 1950, IRIS #00913629.

⁷⁶Ltr (U), Col L. L. Judge, USAF, Air Adjutant General, to Commanding General, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, [Air Force Records], 28 Sep 1950, IRIS #00913629.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Reg (U), Air Force Regulation Change 210-3B, *Historical Data Program and Procedure*, 12 Dec 1950.

⁸⁰Bio (U), Maj Gen Richard A. Grussendorf, available at <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=5644> (10 Nov 2011). Major General Grussendorf retired from active duty in July 1960 but was recalled in January 1969 to serve as Chief, Office of Air Force History, a position from which he retired on 16 July 1971.

⁸¹Ltr (U), Col W. J. Paul, USAF, Director, to Col Richard A. Grussendorf, HQ, USAF, [Archives at Air University], 9 Oct 1950, IRIS #00913629.

⁸²Circular (U), HQ Army Air Forces, Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Intelligence, Historical Division, "Historical Officers Circular No. 2, "Instructions for Air Force Historical Officers of Staffs, Offices, and Commands," 26 May 1943, in Administrative History Branch, Historical Division, AC/AS, Intelligence, "Manual of Instructions," ca. 1943, IRIS #00116436.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Circular (U), HQ Army Air Forces, Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Intelligence, Historical Division, "Historical Officers Circular No. 5, *Form for Unit Histories*," 16 August 1943 in Administrative History Branch, Historical Division, AC/AS, Intelligence, "Manual of Instructions," ca. 1943, IRIS #00116436.

⁸⁵Ltr (U), Col W. J. Paul, USAF, Director, to Col Richard A. Grussendorf, HQ, USAF, [Archives at Air University], 9 Oct 1950, IRIS #00913629.

⁸⁶Ltr (U), Col W. J. Paul, USAF, Director, to Col Richard A. Grussendorf, HQ, USAF, [Archives at Air University], 9 Oct 1950, IRIS #00913629.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Doc (U), Col W. J. Paul, Director Air University Library, to [AG?], "Correspondence re: 'Location of Records,'" 5 Oct 1950, IRIS #00913629.

⁸⁹Doc (U), HQ, Air University to Air Adjutant General, HQ, USAF, "Location of Records, 12 Apr 50," 24 Apr 1950, IRIS #00913629.

⁹⁰Book (U), General Services Administration, National Archives and Records Service, "Federal Records of World War II, Volume II, Military Records, Part Two, The War Department and the Army," (The National Archives, Washington, D.C.: 1951), 154, available at <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/ATO/FRWW2-II/FRWW2-2.html> (9 Nov 2011).

⁹¹Hist (U), "History of Archives Branch USAF Historical Division, ASI, 1 July 1966 – 30 June 1967," 91, unaccessioned AFHRA material, "History of History."

⁹²Reg (U), AFR (U), Air Force Regulation 210-3, *Historical Data*, 11 Mar 1955.

⁹³Hist (U), Bea M. Estep, "History of the Archives Branch, USAF Historical Division, Research Studies Institute, 1 January – 30 June 1956," Unaccessioned AFHRA material, "History of History;" Bea M. Estep, "History of the Archives Branch, USAF Historical Division, July-December 1961," 11, unaccessioned AFHRA material, "History of History."

⁹⁴According to the USAF Historical Archives Semiannual Report, January – June 1959, a footlocker held approximately two cubic feet of documents (unaccessioned AFHRA material, “History of History”).

⁹⁵Rpt (U), Marguerite K. Kennedy, Chief, Archives Branch, “Final Report of Disposition of Kansas City Records Center Material,” 26 July 1961, unaccessioned AFHRA material, “History of History.”

⁹⁶Hist (U), Bea M. Estep, “History of the Archives Branch, USAF Historical Division, July-December 1961,” 11-12, unaccessioned AFHRA material, “History of History.”

⁹⁷On 1 May 1951, AU General Order (GO) 20, dated 30 April 1951, combined the USAF Historical Division; the Arctic, Desert, Tropic Information Center; and the Documentary Research Section of the AU Library to form the 3870th Special Activities Group. Effective 25 May 1951, AU GO 24, dated 22 May 1951, redesignated the 3870th Special Activities Group the Research Studies Institute. On 15 January 1969, direction of the USAF Historical Program was transferred from Air University’s Historical Division to HQ USAF. At that time, the Office of Air Force History was established under the Office of the Chief of Staff, USAF, with Dr. Albert F. Simpson serving as Senior Historian. On 9 June, 1969, the USAF Historical Division was redesignated the Historical Research Center and assigned to Air University’s 3825th Support Group (Academic), which was redesignated the 3825 Academic Services Group (AU), effective 1 January 1973. The Historical Research Center was redesignated the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center (AFSHRC) on 15 May 1972. When the Air Force inactivated the 3825th Academic Services Group on 1 July 1977, it reassigned the AFSHRC to the 3800th Air Base Wing. In 1978, the Air Force inactivated Air University as a separate command and assigned the AFSHRC to Air Training Command, headquartered at Randolph AFB, Texas. The Air Force constituted Headquarters, Albert F. Simpson Research Center, a direct reporting unit assigned to the USAF for activation, on 25 May 1979. Effective 1 July 1979, the Air Force inactivated the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, a named activity, and activated Headquarters, Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, a direct reporting unit assigned to the United States Air Force. On 1 December 1983, the Air Force redesignated Headquarters, Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center as Headquarters, United States Air Force Historical Research Center. On 5 February 1991, the Historical Research Center’s status was changed from Direct Reporting Unit to Field Operating Agency, and on 1 September 1991, it was redesignated Headquarters, Air Force Historical Research Agency.

⁹⁸Hist (U), “Archives Branch History July – December 1964,” 80, unaccessioned AFHRA material, “History of History.”

⁹⁹Background Paper (U), "Background of Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center Microfilm Project," n. d., Folder 16A, "Background," unaccessioned AFSHRC material.

¹⁰⁰Ltr w/1 Atch. (U), H. G. Geiger, Acting Chief, Documentation Systems Division, Directorate of Administration, DAF, to Archivist of the United States, "Proposed Policy and Specifications for Microfilming Historical Materials," 18 Sep 1970; Atch. 1, Paper (U), "USAF Historical Program Microfilm Project," n. d., IRIS #01143906.

¹⁰¹Ltr (U), James B. Rhoads, Archivist of the United States, to Herbert G. Geiger, Acting Chief, Documentation Systems Division, Directorate of Administration, DAF, [USAF Proposal Regarding Microfilming Historical Materials], 8 Oct 1970, IRIS #01143906.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Doc (U), "Draft for Letter from General Houston to DA on Microfilm to National Archives," n. d., IRIS #01143906.

¹⁰⁴Ltr (U), Herbert G. Geiger, Chief, Documentation Systems Division, Directorate of Administration, to AF/CHO, "Disposition of Historical Program Records," 3 Dec 1970, IRIS #01143906.

¹⁰⁵Form (U), Standard Form 115, "Request for Authority to Dispose of Records," Department of the Air Force to Directorate of Administration, Document Systems Division," 12 July 1971; IRIS #01143906; Report (U), "Appraisal Report: Disposal Job No. NN-172-5," 6 Oct 1971, IRIS #01143906.

¹⁰⁶Reg (U), AFR 12-40, "Documentation Storage and Retrieval (DS&R) Systems," 8 Mar 1971.

¹⁰⁷Federal Register (U), Title 41, Chapter 101, Part 101-11, "Records Management," 44 Fed. Reg. 15718 (15 Mar 1979).

¹⁰⁸Ltr (U), Col. Van L. Crawford, Jr., USAF, Director of Administration to Archivist of the United States, "Returning Air Force Historical Program Microfilm to National Archives," 3 Dec 1979, IRIS #01143906.

¹⁰⁹After Dr. Simpson's death on 21 April 1971, the Air Force Historical Research Center was redesignated as the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center (AFSHRC) on 15 May 1972. On 1 December 1983, the AFSHRC was redesignated Headquarters, United States Air Force Historical Research Center. On 1 September 1991, the Center was redesignated Headquarters, Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA).

¹¹⁰Ltr (U), Col. Van L. Crawford, Jr., USAF, Director of Administration to Archivist of the United States, "Returning Air Force Historical Program Microfilm to national Archives," 3 Dec 1979, IRIS #01143906.

¹¹¹Ltr (U), James E. O'Neill, Acting Archivist of the United States, to Col. Van L. Crawford, Jr., USAF, Director of Administration, HQ/USAF, [AFHRC Microfilm], 3 Dec 1979, IRIS #11043906.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Ltr (U), Maj Gen John W. Huston, USAF, Chief, Office of Air Force History to DAA (S), "Retirement of Microfilm Historical Material to National Archives and Records Service (NARS)," 28 Dec 1979, IRIS #11043906.

¹¹⁵Notes (U), Thomas Rehome, [Microfilm Shipments], n.d.; E-mail (U), Thomas Rehome, AFHRA/ACD, to Mary Dixie Dysart, AFHRA/RS, "NARA Microfilm—Returned to AFHRA Storage," 15 Jun 12. The Documents Shipping Log maintained by Sam Shearin showed that the last shipment accepted by NARA comprised HRA-03-018R through HRA-03-021R. It was shipped to NARA in 2003. AFHRA's holdings include no original negative copy of microfilm roll #43000 or the preceding rolls in the 40,000 series but they do include original negative rolls numbered from #43001 forward, indicating that shipments to NARA ended with microfilm roll #43000.

¹¹⁶The NARS, formerly under the General Services Administration, became an independent agency renamed the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and reporting to the President as a result of legislation signed by President Ronald Reagan on 19 October 1984, effective 1 April 1985.

¹¹⁷Rule (U), AFRIMS, Series 84, Table 01, Rule 01.00, as of 29 Feb 2012; AFM (U), Air Force Manual 37-139, *Records Disposition Schedule*, 1 Mar 1996, Table 84-1, "Historical Program Records," Rule 1.

¹¹⁸Directive (U), Brig Gen Lawrence S. Kuter, Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, [Army Air Force Historical Program], 19 July 1942, quoted in Article (U), Lt. Col. Clanton W. Williams, Acting Chief, Historical Division, AC/AS, Intelligence, "Army Air Force Historical Program," n. d., IRIS #116419.

¹¹⁹Fragment (U), "Longhand Draft of a History of the Historical Division by Col. C. W. Williams, 39, in AFSHO Files," n. d., IRIS #00122673.

Appendix
HQ Air Force Historical Research Agency
and
Its Antecedents

On 19 July 1943, AAF Regulation 20-8 established the Historical Division in accordance with AG 210.31 and under the supervision and control of the Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Intelligence.

On 23 August 1945, AAF Regulation 20-8 redesignated the Historical Division the AAF Historical Office and established it under, but not in, the office of the Secretary of the Air Staff.

AAF Regulation No. 20-22, dated 13 August 1947, called for the reassignment of the Air Historical Office to Air University and its redesignation as an AU liaison office.

Air Force Regulation 210-3, dated 14 December 1948, set out the objectives of the Air Force historical program and defined the organization and duties of the Air Historical Group, Air University, as being to “prepare the official history of the Army air component to 18 September 1947 and of the Air Force thereafter; and maintain an Air Force historical archives; coordinate and supervise all historical activity undertaken by Air Force organizations; and assist Air Force organizations to maintain professionally qualified historical agencies.”

On 1 May 1951, AU General Order (GO) 20, dated 30 April 1951, combined the USAF Historical Division; the Arctic, Desert, Tropic Information Center; and the Documentary Research Section of the AU Library to form the 3870th Special Activities Group.

Effective 25 May 1951, AU GO 24, dated 22 May 1951, redesignated the 3870th Special Activities Group the Research Studies Institute.

On 15 January 1969, direction of the USAF Historical Program was transferred from Air University’s Historical Division to HQ USAF. At that time, the Office of Air Force History was established under the Office of the Chief of Staff, USAF, with Dr. Albert F. Simpson serving as Senior Historian.

On 9 June, 1969, the USAF Historical Division was redesignated the Historical Research Center and assigned to Air University's 3825th Support Group (Academic), which was redesignated the 3825 Academic Services Group (AU), effective 1 January 1973.

The Historical Research Center was redesignated the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center (AFSHRC) on 15 May 1972.

When the Air Force inactivated the 3825th Academic Services Group on 1 July 1977, it reassigned the AFSHRC to the 3800th Air Base Wing.

In 1978, the Air Force inactivated Air University as a separate command and assigned the AFSHRC to Air Training Command, headquartered at Randolph AFB, Texas.

The Air Force constituted Headquarters, Albert F. Simpson Research Center, a direct reporting unit assigned to the USAF for activation, on 25 May 1979.

Effective 1 July 1979, the Air Force inactivated the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, a named activity, and activated Headquarters, Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, a direct reporting unit assigned to the United States Air Force.

On 1 December 1983, the Air Force redesignated Headquarters, Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center as Headquarters, United States Air Force Historical Research Center.

On 5 February 1991, the Air Force changed the Historical Research Center's from Direct Reporting Unit to Field Operating Agency, and on 1 September 1991, it was redesignated Headquarters, Air Force Historical Research Agency.



(Back cover illustration) U.S. flag at the site of the former Tuskegee Army Airfield, Alabama. (USAF Photo/Samuel C. Shearin)