

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY
Office of the Superintendent
COLORADO

19 November 1959

Dear Parents:

Before coming to the Academy I noticed, as you must have noticed, that time after time during the past few years someone has declared that the "Air Force Academy has come of age." The statement each time has been related to some significant step credited to the Academy: admission of a new class, a surprisingly successful football game, the move to the permanent site, almost any public event here. I have no doubts about the maturity of our program. The Academy has graduates who are now serving the Air Force and the Nation. The community of institutions of higher education has now formally recognized the capability of the Academy to prepare a young man adequately for a college degree. Appointment to the Academy now represents a highly prized and sought after objective for American youth.

I can afford to acclaim because it is a compliment for the work of others: Lieutenant General Hubert Reilly Harmon, the first Superintendent, now deceased and honored publicly by this administration building known as Harmon Hall; and Lieutenant General James E. Briggs, the Superintendent whom so many of you came to know so well during the past three years. This institution represents the great vision and the plan of General Harmon; the realization is due to the aggressive leadership and effort of General Briggs. General Briggs gave full credit to his staff, the faculty, and the cadets. I am gratified and proud to be associated with that staff, faculty, and cadet effort.

After three years of site development, only the cadet chapel and the hospital remain unfinished among the buildings in the original plan. The chapel contract was awarded on 28 August and construction started immediately. The chapel should be completed for graduation week of 1961.

You may have heard comment about the "unorthodox" conception of the Academy Chapel with 17 aluminum spires rising 150 feet from a terrace above the campus level. It will not be traditional, but it is not unorthodox unless many other chapels now in existence across the Nation are also so classified. The New York International Airport Chapel is

similar to the Academy Chapel in what architects are now calling "ageless" design. So is the Chapel of Saint James the Fisherman at Wellfleet, Massachusetts, and the Concordia Lutheran Church, Conover, North Carolina; the Synagogue for Congregation Beth El in South Orange, New Jersey; the Valparaiso University Memorial Chapel in Valparaiso, Indiana; the Brentwood Methodist Church, Denver, Colorado; and the Interdenominational St. Bernard's Chapel, Seattle, Washington.

The Academy Chapel will provide interior areas for all faiths. The Protestant nave will occupy the upper level to seat 900 cadets during services. A Catholic chapel area seating 500 and a Jewish Chapel area for 100 will be located in the building at the terrace level, all with exterior window lighting through opalescent glass inserts. Main entrances will be on the south facing away from the campus plain and never in the building's shadow.

The cadets will have waited an unreasonably long time for a chapel by June of 1961. Be assured, however, that there is and will be no lack of religious services because of the lack of a building dedicated to that function. Protestant services are held in Arnold Hall. An auditorium in Fairchild Hall is fitted with an altar for daily Catholic Mass. Jewish services are provided in Colorado Springs.

Construction of the Academy Hospital is past the halfway mark and will be ready next fall. With 135 beds and expandable to 200 beds, it will provide complete medical and surgical facilities and in-patient care for cadets and other military personnel and dependents. We have been inconvenienced, but no cadet's health has been endangered by lack of medical facilities. The dispensary in Fairchild Hall has provided facilities for emergency treatment and beds for recuperation from minor ills. Fitzsimons Army Hospital in Denver has provided the best of surgical attention and care by specialists whenever necessary. But we could not impose an extra load on Fitzsimons Hospital forever. A hospital on the site will enable better handling of instruction for hospitalized cadets so that only a minimum of class instruction time need be lost.

I started this letter by agreeing that the Air Force Academy has come of age as an acknowledged and fully accepted institution of higher learning. It is and should be more than that. It is leading other educational institutions into new fields of technological education, just as did the United States Military Academy when it became the first to initiate an engineering curriculum over a century ago. The establishment of an

Astronautics Department here last year was only the beginning of an unprecedented emphasis in applied sciences which will be developed here and followed elsewhere. Your son has an opportunity to be the first to concentrate in a new dimension of technological study. Like the West Point graduates of a century ago whose engineering knowledge planned and built the railroads which opened the West, your son will have no small part in developing and directing the means for occupying the new frontiers above the earth for the benefit of all.

There is support for these thoughts from the many distinguished visitors who inspect us week after week. Up to this writing, during this month, there has been an average of one official group of visitors each day: university groups, civic groups, military groups, congressional committee representatives, and a number of guests from other nations.

Early next month we shall again have a visit by the General Officer Advisory Committee for the Air Force Academy. Commanders of almost every major Air Force command will make up the Committee, including General Frank F. Everest, Commander of Tactical Air Command, Lieutenant General Walter E. Todd, Commander of Air University, and Lieutenant General Francis H. Griswold, Vice Commander of Strategic Air Command. Lieutenant General Briggs will also be a member of the Advisory Committee in his capacity as Commander of Air Training Command. These officers will examine the Academy program in detail. They will not be particularly interested in what the graduates of next June can accomplish in the Air Force of 1960. They will be much more concerned for our capability to produce graduates of next June who can handle the responsibilities expected 10 and 20 years from now. I am confident they will agree that the Academy effort has been projected far beyond the Air Force of June Week 1960.

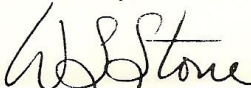
Parents will be the most numerous of the visitors in December, I trust. Cadets of the upper classes will, of course, be home for Christmas. But as is customary, the cadets of the Fourth Class will celebrate the holidays together here. They and I hope that as many parents as possible will help in the celebrating.

Classes will end at noon on Saturday, 19 December. Upperclassmen who are not obliged to remain for turnout examinations will have leave until Sunday evening, 3 January. The holiday schedule for the Fourth Class will include social functions for parents and other guests: formal and informal dances, luncheons, receptions, and other events. Mrs. McComas, the Cadet Wing Hostess, will send parents of Fourth Classmen

a letter shortly to outline the holiday schedule and provide complete information on accommodations, transportation, and the details which will be needed in planning the trip.

This letter is but a poor substitute for meeting and speaking with you personally. I shall anticipate the chance to see many parents, perhaps you, next month. If not, please accept the best wishes of Mrs. Stone and myself for your very Merry Christmas and our earnest hope to meet you at some future time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "W. S. Stone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "S".

W. S. STONE
Major General, USAF
Superintendent