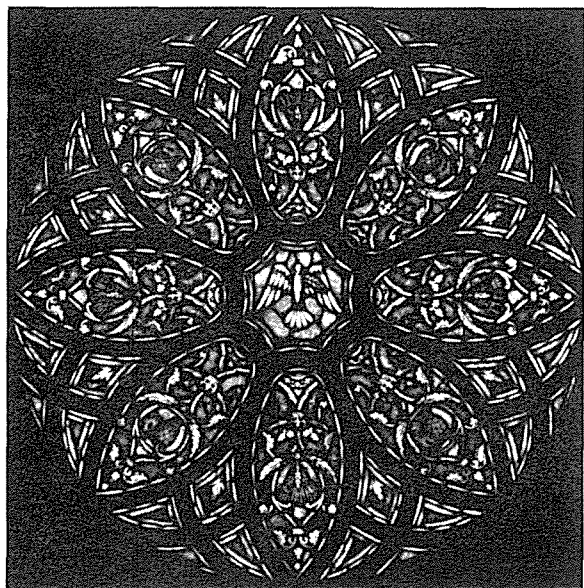


in memory ...



MARCH AFB MEMORIAL

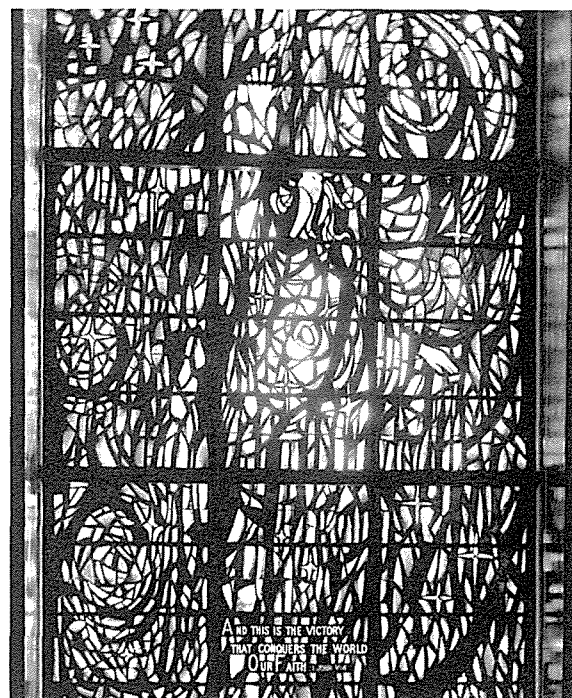
The central circle which encompasses the dove is a figure without beginning or ending, representing God as both eternal and one: 'Who was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.'

The dove with the olive branch is a symbol of peace. The basic theme of the Strategic Air Command since its inception in 1946 has been 'Peace is our Profession.'

There are four symbols comprised of the stems or bundle of wheat and four symbols of a branch or vine with grapes. The wheat is symbolic of God's provisions for life. Moses saw the promised land as a land capable of growing wheat. The wheat also reminds one of the manna from heaven and of Jesus' statement that he was the Bread of Life. The grapes and branch or vine symbolize the unity of the church. The Seder service and the Communion service express one's hope and faith in God.

The blue and red in the stained glass will provide the warmth and beauty to properly adorn this most attractive chapel. The blue will symbolize truth, faithfulness, loyalty, and charity. The red will symbolize love, zeal, youth, and martyrdom.

WINTER 1970



EDWARDS AFB MEMORIAL

Spirals direct attention to the central figure with right hand ever extended upward toward the unexplored, the unconquered. Spirals also suggest an expanding universe constantly challenging those who dare the unknown. The circle has been universally accepted as the symbol of eternity, of never ending existence. As the monogram of God, it represents not only the perfection of God but also the Everlasting God, *Who was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.*

Red flames from a spacecraft color the dark distance above the figure, signifying the illuminating results of future test flights. Pale blues, almost indistinct, form the downward reaching right hand of God, the Creator, as suggested in the Air Force hymn, *Lord, Guard and Guide the Men Who Fly*. The hand, emerging from a cloud is the most common symbol used by the ancients to depict the Creation and the loving protection of the Lord. Four-point stars symbolize a whole universe of other unknown worlds.

The spirit of the Test Pilot Memorial Window is best revealed by the scripture verse, *And this is the victory that conquers the world, our Faith.* 1 John V:4.

MEMORIAL WINDOW, MARCH AFB CHAPEL

By. Dr. R. BRUCE HARLEY

On January 17, 1968, dawn came to Minot AFB, North Dakota, but no day. Only the essence of light crept through the overcast sky and ground fog to the snow. Drab gray and white and black buildings loomed in the fog, snatched to life by lights and bundled people, people who came to work expecting a routine day like any other — except for the fog.

Suddenly, out of the gray world, a silver aircraft began a takeoff roll along the runway. It became airborne but soon fell to earth and burst into flame. It was a KC-135 tanker. All 13 of the occupants received fatal injuries, including Major General Charles M. Eisenhart, the deputy commander of Fifteenth Air Force. These men met death on an ordinary flight, one of many on a routine series of Headquarters 15th Air Force staff assistance visits from March AFB.¹ It was the second worst crash in the history of that base and was the only one involving a general officer.

Within a month the idea of a Memorial Window in the to-be-constructed new base chapel was conceived by Mrs. William H. Davidson, whose husband, Colonel Davidson, had perished in the tragedy. A base memorial fund committee was accordingly established at March to collect money for the window and to provide guidance for memorializing other Marchmen lost in the past while serving their country.²

As donations poured in for the window, thinking changed regarding the second project. At first it was thought a large plaque could be placed in the narthex to which nameplates of persons to be memorialized could be attached on a continuing basis. Preliminary research indicated a list of several dozen names of those killed over the previous five decades. Consequently, thinking changed to a memorial book, enclosed in a glass case in the narthex. One page of names could be turned each Sunday throughout the year. This book would contain the names of all March Fielders who gave their lives while engaged in aerial flight since 18 September 1947 (the USAF Era).³ When research had been completed on the period from World War I to the establishment of USAF, a similar book could be inscribed for the 1918-1947 period.

The design of the window was approved by USAF on 22 July 1969.⁴ By this time too it had been concluded that the memorial would not only be for those who gave their lives in the Eisenhart crash but also in remembrance of all March personnel who had made the supreme sacrifice and would also include all those who might in the future make that sacrifice.⁵

The chapel construction was completed in October 1969, and after the furnishings were installed, services began on 11 January 1970. A month later the official dedication of the structure and its window was held on 8 February. The principal speaker was Chaplain (Brig. Gen.) Roy M. Terry, USAF deputy chief of chaplains.⁶

Meanwhile, the 15th Air Force Office of History, which had done the research for the names of those losing their lives while assigned to March in the USAF era, continued its efforts for the preceding three decades to complete the record. Results of this project can be summarized with the following highlights.

March Field was founded on 1 March 1918, and had no air fatalities prior to Armistice Day.⁷ The first accident occurred on 19 February 1919, and seven more lives were snuffed out before flying operations ceased in the summer of 1921.⁸

During the second training period at the base, eight cadets and officers were killed, 1927-1931.⁹ Six were honored by having streets in the base housing area named for them. For the next decade March was a tactical base; some 69 additional casualties were experienced before Pearl Harbor.

With the World War II period the tactical units had left the base by 1943; B-24 and later B-29 training was the main endeavor. Fatal accidents with large crews made for a large wartime total of 142. An even hundred of these occurred in 1944 alone. Between the end of the war and the establishment of USAF, six more were added to the roll, 1946-1947.¹⁰

For the USAF era since September 1947 to date, 95 names have been placed in the memorial book.¹¹ The worst accident in the history of the base occurred on 7 December 1951, when 16 perished in a B-29 crash near the Azores Islands while returning from England. There have been two combat crashes. On 19 October 1950 nine personnel lost their lives when a B-29 went down off Okinawa early in the Korean War. On 7 July 1967, two crew members of a B-52 which collided with another Stratofortress, were lost off the Philippines, for the only Vietnam War casualties to date.

Thus, the memorial window honors over 300 persons who gave their lives while engaged in aerial flight as a crew member or passenger while assigned to March. Under this rule for the memorial book one WAF is listed; she was killed in the crash of a C-118 near Norwalk, California. The list does not include names of those killed in ground accidents nor those killed in aerial accidents at March but assigned to another base. The memory of those listed is now perpetuated in a beautiful and meaningful way. It has been a satisfying historical project to complete after two years of effort.

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4. Letter, USAF to SAC, 22 Jul 1969.
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7. Harley, R. Bruce, *The March Field Story, 1918-1968*. Riverside: Armed Services Publishing Co., 1969, p.20.
8. Based on files of the March Field *Flyleaf*, 1918-1921.
9. Based on files of Riverside Press, 1927-1941.
10. *History of 1st Fighter Wing*, 1946-1947.
11. *History of 22nd BW*, 1949-1969.

Chaplain LtCol Kenneth Israel displays USAF period memorial book.

