

THE AIR FORCE BOOK PROGRAM

by

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The mission of the U. S. Air Force Book Program is to encourage and support the writing and publication of book literature of airpower and spacepower with the ultimate aim of increasing professional reading and thought among Air Force personnel. As anyone who tries it can tell you, writing is hard work, and takes lots of encouragement. Hence the Program approaches the problem on many fronts.

The Book Program is operated by the Office of Information Services under the Secretary of the Air Force. Although the U. S. Air Force is the only segment of the total aviation market to which the Program can officially address its promotion effort, the entire American air-minded audience is benefitted, including private and commercial pilots, aircraft owners and operators, the air traveller, and the airline industry from laborer to executive official.

Getting a book into print involves writing and preparation of the manuscript, gaining the interest of a publisher, the printing, and finally the marketing. Every means at its disposal is used by the Program to gain the attention of the potential audience. Writers and publishers are encouraged to notify the Program early in the planning stage. Actually, if so desired, author and publisher can be brought together and, for integration into the Program's promotion and marketing activities, the manuscript, first galley or advance copy should be submitted to the Chief, USAF Book Program for review for approved listing. This review may also include a check of its factual accuracy and security clearance if requested by the author. Whether this is done or not, if approved for listing, the book is promoted through a wide range of outlets.

Promotion includes publication notice and official review in (a) USAF Base Newspapers (approx. 500); (b) the Office of Information Services Newsletter (distributed world-wide to P.I.O.'s and Commanders); (c) the Retired Personnel Newsletter (about 30,000); (d) announcements on 16 Air Force television stations, and (e) the dissemination of books and accompanying reviews to all USAF education media (schools, ROTC, official Command periodicals, etc.).

Marketing is handled through the Air University Book Department for book store and mail orders, through Base Exchanges and Air Force libraries, and through the Airpower Book Club. The Airpower Book Club, sponsored and managed by the Air Force Association, sends to its members a new book each quarter, selected by a distinguished committee of civilian and military authorities. The selections are generally current publications but occasionally a classic of the past may be reprinted. A quarterly review of the books offered by the Club is "The Airman's Bookshelf".

Types of books range from the scholarly and academic to air fiction. They include technical, reference, text, photo, and the normal "trade" books. The subject matter must be aviation (civil or military), airpower, space, astronautics, the USAF, or topics related thereto. Exceptions made are escape and evasion and POW topics as well as select volumes in the scientific or professional military fields. Increasing numbers of books are appearing from all quarters. This is an extremely encouraging trend indicative of the publishers' recognition of the current need for a wide, diversified air and space age book literature.

Editor's Note: One of the major purposes of the AAHS is the preservation of the recorded history of aviation. Prior to preserving it however, history must be recorded.