We’re Modernizing!

With much thanks to our generous supporters, renovation has begun. Located in the historic Ford Building in Balboa Park, the San Diego Air & Space Museum Library & Archives houses one of the most significant collections of aviation related research material in the world. This collection is recognized as the third largest collection of its kind in the United States. Improved storage and preservation of these valuable resources has been a priority for the past few years, and significant improvements are now being realized, guaranteeing the preservation of our unique research collection for future generations.

The Museum’s archival and special collections, including significant San Diego-based company collections, have continued to grow dramatically. Unique archival records must now be stored in five remote rooms within the main Museum site and at two off-site locations, all with limited environmental controls. To ensure preservation of our expanded collection, the Library & Archives developed a space-saving plan for all of its storage areas. As part of this plan, customized and mechanically operated shelving is currently being installed in the Film Archives. This project is funded by Las Patronas and the Parker Foundation, two local philanthropic organizations. In the Archival Collection Room, also known as the Caged-in Area, a portion of the linked fencing has been replaced with permanent walls, and two mobile storage systems have just been installed. Additional funding is sought to complete the enclosure and installation of environmental controls.

With these storage systems in place, the relocation of collections has begun, which will consolidate like materials. For example, the blueprint and drawings collection has been merged from four separate locations to a single area in the Archival Collection Room, and archival files were moved there from the Main Library. In addition, the technical manual collection at the Low Speed Wind Tunnel, housed in four separate locations, is now consolidated into a single space; it is currently being inventoried, preserved, and cataloged.

The Library & Archives also developed a comprehensive preservation plan based on recommendations from preservation, engineering, and facilities management consultants. As a result, installation began on a much needed heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system in six of its collection storage areas. In 2010, with the generous support of the Ryan Family Charitable Foundation, and a large number of individual contributions, the Museum successfully raised $90,000 to complete the HVAC project, expected to be operational by June 2011. This system will maintain temperature and humidity at levels suitable for long term survival of these priceless resources. In addition to protecting archival materials storage areas, it will also protect the curatorial collection storage rooms which house other important artifacts.

Preservation of these important collections is a monumental, on-going challenge. As this precious resource expands, so does the need for facilities used for proper preservation, both for current researchers and those of future generations. This preservation challenge is significantly compounded by the fact that the Ford Building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This designation requires special approvals be solicited before significant modifications can be initiated, such as the installation of an additional HVAC system. The round shape of the building also poses a challenge; the linear design of the shelves needs to conform to this unique shape.

The Museum is currently embarking on a fundraising campaign to finance additional renovation projects in order to improve all of the Museum’s collection storage areas. Upgrading these areas will not only improve the physical spaces, but it will allow for better organization and retrieval of the Library & Archives’ valuable materials, particularly as it continues to catalog and digitize many of its important collections. These efforts are expected to improve space utilization efficiency by over 200 percent. The continuing digitization projects, along with the online catalog (AeroCat), are providing the public with access to more and more of these important assets.
Drawings & Files in Archival Collection Room (ACR), Before

Archival Collection Room, Before

New Mobile Shelving in Archival Collection Room

Drawings in Archival Collection Room, After

Films Archives, After

Files in Archival Collection Room, After

Films Archives, After
Digitizing Project: An Update

The digitization of the photographic collection continues at an incredible pace. Over 115,000 images have now been digitized and placed on the Museum’s Flickr site: http://www.flickr.com/photos/sdasmarchives. Thus far, these images have received well over 2 million views. The Museum has also been asked to contribute to a site known as Flickr Commons (http://www.flickr.com/commons/institutions), where such prestigious institutions as the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian highlight their collections. By having these images included in the Commons, the Museum expects to receive even more views and comments.

Digitization of the films and videos also received a big boost. With the aid of generous Library & Archives patrons and the Balboa Park Online Collaborative, the Museum recently purchased equipment which can digitize its vast collection of videos and 16 mm films. These rare films are being digitized and placed on the Museum’s YouTube channel: http://www.youtube.com/user/sdasmarchives. In a few short months, several hundred films and videos will be available to the public on the Museum’s YouTube site.

Volunteer Spotlight

The Library & Archives has many wonderful volunteers who provide valuable services in support of the mission of the Library & Archives. One of these knowledgeable volunteers, whose assistance has been invaluable, is Dave Barnett. Dave has been a volunteer in the Library & Archives since 2006.

Dave, a third generation Californian, grew up in Temecula, California. He attended college at Fresno State University, earning a B.S. in Industrial Engineering.

Commissioned a 2nd lieutenant, Dave is a 22-year veteran of the United States Air Force. He was an F-100 pilot serving in Florida, South Carolina, England, Italy, and Turkey. During the Vietnam conflict, he served two year-long tours in Thailand in support of the air war against North Vietnam. After 12 years of flying service, he served in management positions supporting development of new weapons systems for the Air Force. His last assignment was in the Office of the Inspector General at Norton APB. He retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

After retiring from the Air Force, Dave worked 19 years with L-3 communications in San Diego. He managed military defense programs related to space telemetry systems for missile and space applications until retiring in 2003.

With his wife Paula, Dave has traveled all over the world, including Europe, Japan, Brazil, and Israel. Dave has participated in local and national handball tournaments, enjoys golfing, and is a member of the Daedalians Flight 13 in San Diego.

Dave has recently been involved in the production of the Museum’s upcoming guidebook. For over 5 years, Dave has played a major role in researching and writing text for this publication. The Library & Archive staff appreciates all his hard work and his commitment to seeing this important project through.

Museum Guidebook Coming Soon

An illustrated guide documenting the history of the Museum and its priceless collections will soon be published to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the San Diego Air & Space Museum. The Museum offers a dazzling collection of historic aircraft and aviation memorabilia, bringing to life significant events associated with flight and space exploration. Showcasing a part of this exciting collection, the book will be organized into six major sections: Dawn of Flight, World War I, Golden Age, World War II, Jet Age, and Space Exploration. Each section will bring to life, through stories and photos, events which represent these periods in the history of aviation.

The book, which retails for $20.00, is due for release in October 2011. To reserve your copy, please contact the Library & Archives at 619-234-8291 x123.
Stay Connected

Are you following us on Facebook? We are posting regularly with news, photos of the week, and special articles. Facebook is just one way the Library & Archives is sharing its collections with the community.

By becoming a fan and following our blog, you can stay up to date with the latest news, volunteer information, publications, and photos of the Library & Archives. Join us and stay connected at facebook.com/SDASMLA.

 Recommend us to all your family and friends, and help spread the word about our mission to “Collect...Preserve...and Make Available” Aerospace history.

Open for Research

The SDASM Library & Archives collection is accessible for research. Staff and/or volunteers are available for assistance. Appointments should be made in advance by calling 619-234-8291, x125, or emailing nchase@sdasm.org, prior to your visit. Information can often be pulled prior to your visit if we are aware of your research request. Contact the Library & Archives staff for research rules and regulations.

SDASM Library & Archives
Hours of Operation

Tuesday to Friday, 10:00am – 4:00p.m.
(Closed on Mondays, weekends, federal holidays, and for some special Museum functions)