

The USAF Dietetics Archive Project

By Corinne McNamee



Ninety-Nine Boxes of Stuff to Sort....

It wasn't quite ninety-nine boxes but it was close! That is how the USAF Dietetics Archive project started. After Cols Jean Chambers and Marilyn Walker finished work on the **50 Years of Air Force Dietetics 1949 – 1999** history book, the RAFDA Board of Directors (BOD) and other senior RAFDA members had many discussions concerning the appropriate final disposition of the historical documents preserved by our Associate Chiefs over the years. No one wanted to throw out all that work! Yet, with hospitals and air bases downsizing, the pressure was on to clear the boxes out of closets and warehouses. The logical disposition, we thought, was to give our historical documents to the AF Medical Museum. Where is that?? In your dreams! The AF does not have a medical museum. We were told the AF has no claim or use for our collection. Now what? Ultimately, the BOD decided to establish a USAF Dietetics Archive at a University library where it would be available to graduate and undergraduate nutrition students. The search for a University to house our archive began.

After much work and many discussions, the RAFDA BOD gave approval to pursue a promising lead at the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) in San Antonio, TX. In the summer of 2004 a verbal agreement was reached with the UIW Director of Libraries to establish our archive at UIW. UIW is considered a good choice, first, because UIW has the space to house our collection and they are very interested in preserving the unique contributions of AF dietetics to the advancement of the dietetics profession. UIW's Nutrition Department Chairman considers our collection a highly specialized resource that will be of great value to UIW's dietetic interns and nutrition students, as well as the Military Internship Consortium dietetic interns in San Antonio.

Col Bonnie Johnson began the arduous task of locating and bringing all the Associate Chief materials together. Boxes of documents, slides, pictures, etc. were found in various offices, closets, and storerooms in buildings and/or warehouses on Travis, Lackland, and Andrews AFBs. Many of the boxes were so dilapidated they could not be shipped. Col Johnson repacked the boxes and cataloged the contents before shipping everything to Wilford Hall. Finally, in May 2006 the total collection (four pallets of boxes) was in one spot, the nutrition department storeroom at Wilford Hall.

We immediately began the hard work of deciding what to save. Col Johnson, May O'Hara Awe, Barbara Whaley, Sharon Hunter, and I spent many days sorting, recycling, organizing, and shredding. By February 2007 we had reduced the original four pallets of boxes down to one pallet. At that point we knew we needed to call in an expert so we called Col Jean Chambers to guide us in making the final cut. Cols Jean Chambers, Paula Tsufis, and Sandy Mathews graciously agreed to come to San Antonio for a week of work in March 2007 to do the final sorting. Lt Cols Craig Olson and Tammy Lindberg and the entire WHMC nutrition staff was very supportive and allowed us to use the Internship Classroom for the entire week. To add a little more stress and a bit of excitement to the week, JCAHO was inspecting at WHMC that same week. All's well that ends well. The JCAHO inspection went well and we finished on time!



Corinne May Barbara Jean
Work.....Work.....endless work.....



Sandy and Paula
We know exactly where everything is....



Documents are archived in protective boxes and stored in file cabinets or on bookshelves. The UIW library has archived collections of historical documents stored in both ways.



Every document is labeled and cataloged inside the protective boxes.



Books, pictures, slides, and other artifacts are stored and protected in various ways.



Pack it up....We're done here...Where are we going to eat tonight??