

Cadets at 148 colleges and universities make the Arnold Air Society a going concern.

# THE ARNIES

BY MAJ. RONALD FUCHS

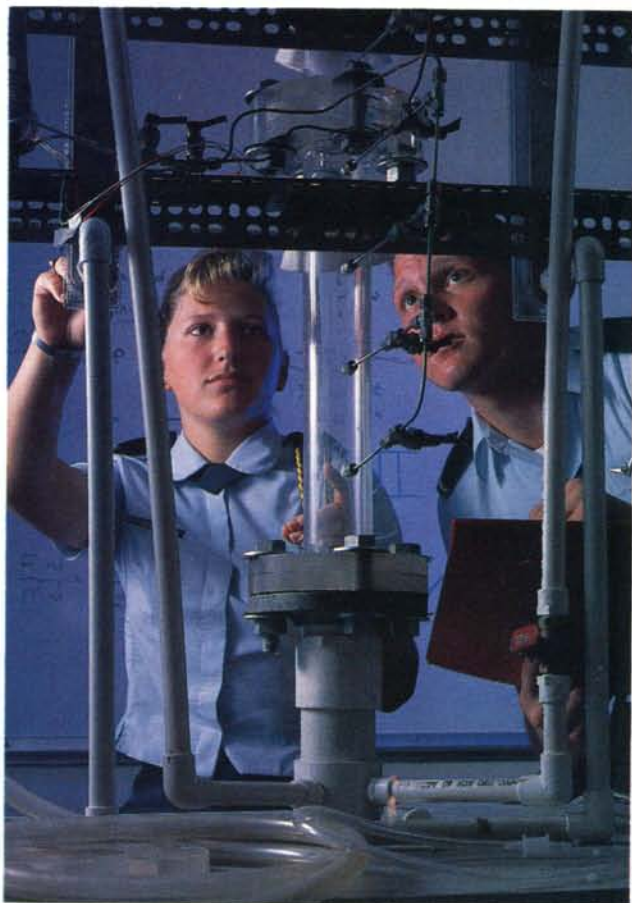
**G**ENERAL H. H. Arnold, patriarch of the United States Air Force, helped foster another organization, which proudly bears his name. The Arnold Air Society, an AFA affiliate, is an academic society of cadets selected from the nation's leading colleges and universities.

Since its birth in 1947 during an AFROTC summer encampment, the Arnold Air Society has done its spiritual parent proud. More than 5,200 cadets currently wear the Society's distinctive gold and blue fourragères on their AFROTC and Air Force Academy uniforms. These cadets—also known as Arnies—are spread around the country at some 148 universities and colleges.

While these statistics may be noteworthy, they don't measure the spirit behind the Society. The Arnold Air Society provides tomorrow's blue-suit leaders the opportunity to improve their communication skills and develop their management and leadership talents today.

The Society's executive administrator, retired Air Force command

*The Arnold Air Society, an AFA affiliate, gives its AFROTC members at colleges and universities across the country an opportunity to sharpen their leadership skills while they exercise their academic skills. At the University of Central Florida in Orlando, Cadets Katherine Lesman and Bob E. Smith, Jr., go over a lab experiment.*



—Photo by SMSgt. Bob Wickley

pilot William G. Morley, believes the Arnold Air Society has one mission: "to help enhance the Air Force officer candidate recruiting and training program in the American university system. If we want good Ph.D.-level physicists, we can hire them already qualified. If we want good leaders, we have to start with bright, young people and sharpen their skills over a period of time."

Colonel Morley and his wife Elise—Society staff leadership is a two-person job—are only the second team to head the group in its history. The first was Lt. Col. Louis J. "Chick" Ciccoli and his wife Sara. Colonel Ciccoli died in 1971, and Mrs. Ciccoli ran the Society until 1973, when Colonel Morley took over.

The Society's newly elected cadet commander, Arnold Air Society Brig. Gen. Laree K. Mikel, explains that the Society is much more than a fraternity or sorority. "The AAS provides us a training ground beyond the parameters of ROTC," she says. "As future officers, we need the latitude to develop and try out leadership styles, even if it means making mistakes. The Arnold Air Society gives us the extra dimension to do that."

Arnies can command local squadrons and hold regional offices corresponding to those they might hold once commissioned. For some, there are national positions that include serving at the Society's cadet leadership headquarters or organizing the \$100,000 annual national conclave. Lessons learned include long-range planning, financial management, team work, and protocol procedures.

Arnold Air Society's auxiliary association is the Angel Flight/Silver Wings organization. Its women and men are college students who, while not primarily interested in pursuing a military career, are interested in learning about the Air Force.

Arnies and Angels also serve their campuses and communities through a variety of projects. These range from raising thousands of dollars for the handicapped and underprivileged to holding events aimed at raising the public's awareness of the POW/MIA issue.

"Each of these community projects requires tremendous planning and communication skills," says



Photo by SMSgt. Bob Wickley

**Col. Robert E. Ceruti, AFROTC Detachment Commander and Professor of Aerospace Studies at the University of Central Florida, instructs Arnies (clockwise from Colonel Ceruti) April Lubliner, Buddy Hosier III, Pat Doubleday, and Keith Sherrer.**

Colonel Morley. "It's all part of our mission—to build leaders for the Air Force and the nation."

Newly commissioned 2d Lt. Alan Jagolinzer, the Society's former national public-affairs officer, says that the Arnie and Angel projects go beyond building stronger citizen-soldiers.

"By helping to refurbish a summer camp for disabled children or leading a sing-along at a nursing home, we also show that we are caring members of the society we're volunteering to defend," he says. "That can go a long way toward giving us credibility with taxpayers. It helps them to see us as participants in the community experience."

A key factor in the Arnie and Angel experience is their relationship with AFA. "It's crucial," says Cadet Mikel. "As prominent figures who support our country, AFA members serve as role models to the cadets. This helps us better understand and appreciate the civilian role needed in the aerospace power equation."

AFA is "the alumni organization for Arnies," explains Morley.

The Society's year-round efforts culminate in an annual national conclave, commonly called Natcon. This year's Natcon was held at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs. The event was packed with business meetings and working

seminars and included a tour of the Air Force Academy and a speech by retired brigadier general and flying ace Robin Olds.

AFA President Jack C. Price and AFA Board Chairman Sam E. Keith, Jr., also attended the 1989 Natcon. So, too, did several senior officers, a fact that underscores the Air Force's recognition of the Arnold Air Society and Angel Flight. They included AFROTC Commandant Brig. Gen. Jeffrey T. Ellis, AFLC Commander Gen. Alfred G. Hansen, and USSPACECOM Commander in Chief Gen. John L. Pitotrowski.

In addition, the outgoing and incoming honorary national commanders of the AAS spoke. The 1987-89 honorary commander, Air Force Comptroller Lt. Gen. Claudius E. Watts III, told the conclave: "My association with the Arnold Air Society has rejuvenated and reinvigorated me. It is most important for the Air Force to recruit, train, and retain the highest quality people—people like you."

The incoming honorary national commander, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Larry D. Welch, also had some insights for members. "We don't expect blind obedience," said General Welch. "What we do expect from you is hard work and personal accountability." ■

*Maj. Ronald Fuchs, USAF, is stationed in Los Angeles, Calif. This is his first article for AIR FORCE Magazine.*