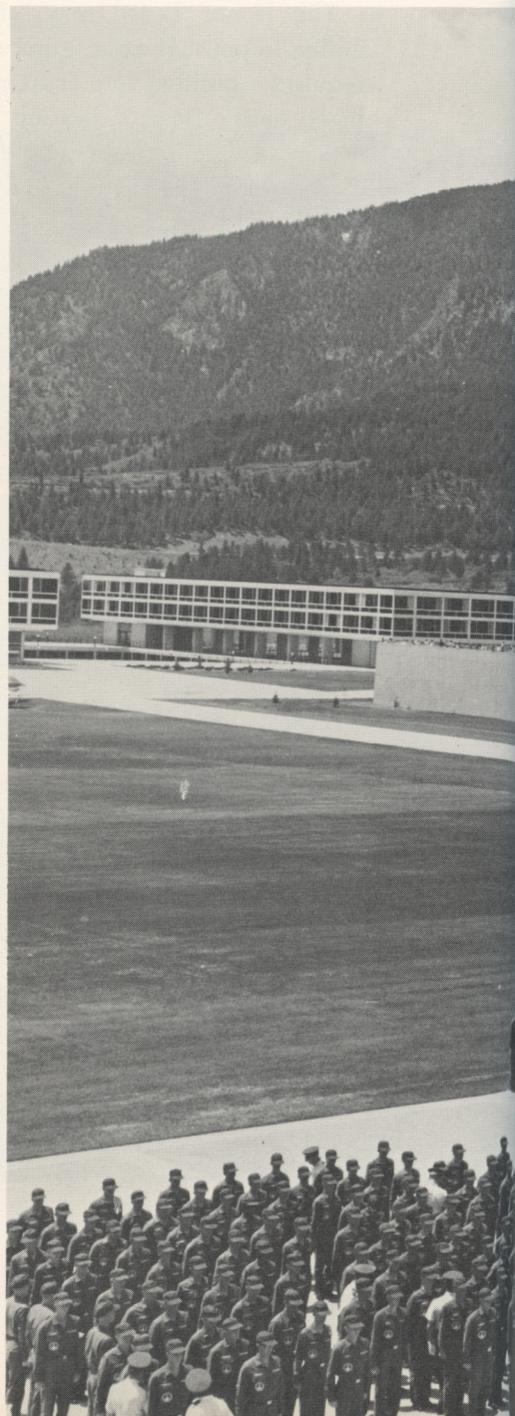


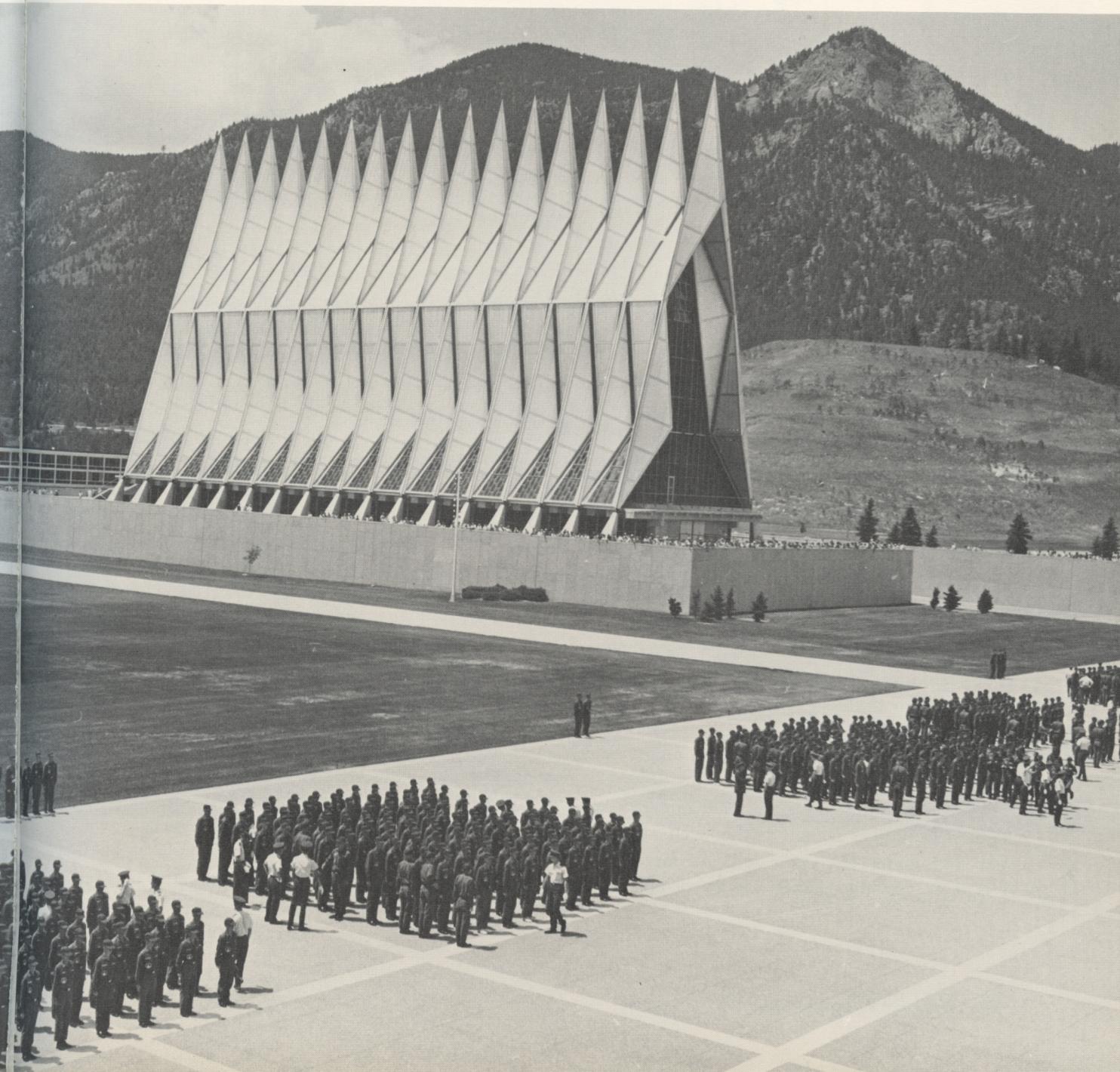
*“Make me an effective instrument of Thy peace in the
defense of the skies that canopy free nations.
So guide me daily in each thought, word and deed
that I may fulfill Thy will.
May these graces abide with me, my loved ones
and all who share my country’s trust. Amen.”*

—The Cadet Prayer



RELIGION AND MORALITY

12. The Aluminum Monastery



PERHAPS the difference between this book and any book written about the Russian Academy for air officers would be that in Russia (or China or any Communist country) this chapter would be missing.

Also missing as a focal point of such a campus would be a chapel like the "Tetrahedral Cathedral," a great loss if only from an aesthetic consideration (and certainly there is more to a chapel than that!), for the Air Force Academy chapel "makes" the whole complex artistically, being by far the most eye-catching item architecturally on the property. The "Aluminum Regatta," as it has been called, is an unusual, inspiring building that soars. The spit-and-polish brightwork skin of the tetrahedron is striated aluminum. The north and south triangular walls of the Protestant chapel (on the main floor) are of tinted, laminated architectural glass (11,000 square feet of this glass). Stained-glass strip windows form ribbons of color between the tetrahedrons. The great triangular tinted window behind the altar gives a look almost of infinity, changing prism-like as the cloud-back-drop alters.

There is no arcane symbolism in the number of spires on the space-age one hundred fifty-foot high structure. Originally, the design called for nineteen spires but when the first bids were rejected as being too costly, the change to seventeen was made purely for economy.

The grey-white terrazzo floor of the Protestant chapel is lowered and nearly sound-proofed so that services upstairs won't interfere with those being held simultaneously downstairs. The chapel is built to withstand wind pressures of fifty pounds per square inch (not a bad idea, considering!).

The design of the pews and altar smacks of wind tunnels and blue yonder aerodynamics. The great cross above the main altar has almost a sailplane wing for a transept; the American walnut and African mahogany pews harmonize with a walnut batten wall at the rear and under the choir loft. As large as it is, however, the chapel has a "sociopetal"

look ("that space which brings people together," according to psychologist Humphrey Osmond).

The great organ in the Protestant chapel is, itself, a thing of striking beauty and almost suggests a family gathering of space vehicles at Cape Kennedy.

All of the faceted glass dalles (slabs) were made by the Judson Studios (California) which, since 1897, has been creating artistic stained glass windows for churches, chapels and outstanding buildings throughout the world (including the window in the nation's Capitol "prayer room").

The chapel's architect, Walter Netsch of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, worked with Horace T. Judson in resolving the color palate of twenty-four colors. Some 82,500 lbs. of glass were required to complete nearly 25,000 dalles. Judson craftsmen chipped approximately one-third of the surfaces to produce the jewel-like facets. The glass was mixed and cast by the Blenko Glass Company of Milton, Massachusetts.

The finished dalles were installed in 2,240 aluminum frames for installation in the sixty-four windows. Weatherban and ribbon sealers were used to weatherproof the dalles, an effort that wasn't too successful at first; the "leak" problem now, however, is fixed.

The altar, "free standing and curvilinear," also carries along an obvious aerospace motif. The fourteen-foot wall (reredos) behind the altar is curved and encrusted with semi-precious Colorado stones. Lumen Martin Winter, famed painter-sculptor (who designed and executed "The Conversion of St. Paul" for the façade of the Church of St. Paul the Apostle in New York City), was the artist commissioned to do the altar wall.

The terrace level Catholic chapel also has an organ (both Catholic and Protestant organs were designed by the late Walter Holtkamp of Cleveland and built by M. P. Moller, Inc., Hagerstown, Maryland). The chapel seats five hundred persons and has a seventy-five-seat choir.

Panels of amber glass alternating with strip



windows of multi-colored, stained, cast glass form the sidewalls. The windows, of irregular random sizes and shapes are set in precast concrete. The strip windows were designed by John W. Wintercen and Associates, and the Blenko firm cast the stained glass.

Sculptor Winter also did the reredos, a glass mosaic abstract mural portraying the firmament in shades of grey, rose, turquoise and blue tessera. Standing out distinctly from the mural are ten-foot-tall marble figures of the Blessed Mother (represented as "Our Lady of the Skies") and a Guardian Angel. Suspended above and between the figures is a dove, done in marble (symbolic of the Holy Ghost). Winter also did the fourteen Stations of the Cross, which were carved from slabs of marble four inches thick.

The altar is a long, oval polished-marble surface mounted on a cone-shaped pedestal. Dominating it is a sculptured nickel-silver crucifix six feet high. The altar furnishings are also nickel-silver.

The pews and kneelers are of American walnut trimmed in satin-finished stainless steel. At the rear of the nave are located two confessionals. On one side of the nave is the Baptistery, on the other the room where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. Both rooms have walls studded with semi-precious Colorado stones and marble chips.

The Jewish chapel is the first constructed on a military base especially for Jewish services. Designed by Ludwig Wolpert, of New York's Jewish Museum, the synagogue is, architecturally, a circle within a square (the circular design symbolizing the Air Force's world-wide mission). The foyer formed by the square is paved with Jerusalem stone. The outside walls are purple stained glass panels in a counterpoint with blue and green stained accent windows. Stanchions of cypress alternate with panels of translucent glass on the inner, circular walls.

The Holy Ark, which shelters the Scroll of the Torah, called the Aron-ha-Kodesh, is the central point of Jewish worship. To the right of the Ark hangs the Eternal Light. "Nested

in the three Stars of David, it symbolizes everlasting, unquenchable faith."

Interior furnishings were financed by the National Jewish Welfare Board and valued at approximately \$50,000 for design, accoutrements and liturgical objects. Some sixteen hundred pieces of Jerusalem stone for the synagogue's foyer were donated by the Israeli Defense Forces.

The chapel seats one hundred persons in individual chairs.

An "All-Faith" worship room in the lower chapel building contains the essential religious items needed for cadets of other faiths (Buddhist, Moslem, Hindu, etc.) to conduct their services. For holy days, priests or ministers of their religions are brought to the Academy from near-by cities.

There were enrolled in the Academy at the time of writing, 2,822 cadets who listed themselves as Protestant (68%); 1,208 Catholic (29%), 31 Jewish (2%), with a few professing other faiths or agnosticism. None listed himself as an atheist.

As testimony that the Academy is growing up, it has now as a chaplain Major Robert Browning, Class of 1959, the only graduate who is a chaplain. He resigned his commission to enter the seminary and then came back into the service, regaining his commission through a Board. After graduation from the Academy and before entering the ministry, he was a navigator in the Strategic Air Command.

"An important objective of the Academy religious program is the development of moral and ethical sensitivities that emerge from critical reflection of those values, without which a man is not prepared to distinguish these important values."

The chaplains of the various faiths provide a program that includes, first of all, formal worship, but also Bible studies, spiritual retreats, religious discussion groups, and diverse humanitarian projects.

Cadet Councils—separate ones for each of the three major persuasions—composed of

members from each class, keep the chaplains apprised of cadets' spiritual problems. The councils use a meeting room on the terrazzo level of the chapel.

Church attendance is obligatory for all cadets except First Classmen, although they may attend services either in the Cadet Chapel or in Colorado Springs at a church of their choice.

One chaplain said, "The outstanding cadets that I know here, both academically and by way of military training, are also outstanding in religious programs. I think the dedication to God and country kind of go hand-in-hand,

and I find that the boys who are dedicated to their military calling here are very religious guys.

"The basic mission of the Air Force Academy is to develop career officers, and so we are really obligated to instill the proper goals, or a proper image of a career officer, to show the contribution which he can make and enhance this particular profession, as a career for an eligible young man, one who can identify and understand these objectives.

"Of course, as chaplains, our concern is the moral integrity and ethical foundation upon which this man hopefully will build and develop."

