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EYES
OF
NATO

WORLD OF WORDS — EIGHT-MILE PLUNGE TO GLORY — BURN UP THE SKY

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ALTHOUGH the preying falcon has become symbolic of the Air Force Academy, there is an eagle that stands in silent scrutiny of the Air Force officers of the future.

Perched high on a 12-foot marble-fronted pedestal, the eagle statue—a fierce, maternal glint in her eyes—is poised protectively over two proud eaglets. One almost gets the impression that she is guarding America's fledgling flyers and astronauts as they go about their daily regimen in the academic complex around the central Air Garden.

The statue, which is inscribed with the words, "Man's flight through life is sustained by the power of his knowledge," was a gift to the academy from personnel of Air Training Command. It was unveiled and accepted by Air Force and academy officials in 1958. Appropriately present that cold December day was the eagle's creator, sculptor Carl C. Mose, in whose imagination the creature was born and by whose skilled hands was given form.

The story of the academy's eagle is also the story of the sculptor. They are inseparable, for the eagle is entirely the product of Mose's imagination, research, and artistic ability.

"There are eagles and more eagles," explains Mose. "You find their likeness on the coins in your pocket, on military buttons, on hat insignia, in the great seal of America, on simply hundreds of medallions and symbolisms adopted by man. The eagle I modeled for the academy is *my* bird, I guess, for she is a little bit of every eagle I have ever seen or read about."

Mose looked at a lot of eagles after ATC contracted for his services in 1956. For two years he read and studied everything he could find in print to learn as much as he could about their habits, their body build, attitude of stance, movement of wings, glint of eyes, and the nature and appearance of their young. "I don't know how many times I stood in the St. Louis Zoo just studying them and their every movement," he commented. "The way we looked at each other, day after day, I imagine those birds thought I was the one in the cage."

Mose's work reflects the modern idiom in design. The attitude of the eagle is truly representative of the mother bird on her nest, warding off danger in protecting her brood. "I took artistic license, though, in creating the grandeur of the king of North American birds. Because of this, the eagle I fashioned shows no feathering on the wings or tail. The surface is smooth and angular, as one can note on studying the leading edge of the wings or where the 'feathers' end over the toes."

From the time ATC gave him a sketch of an eagle copied from a library book, till the memorable day the statue was unveiled over two years later, the bird became his preoccupation. Mose recalls that, "there were years of study, work, and some tears I must confess." The tears were shed just four days before Generals LeMay, Smith, and Harmon, and a host of other dignitaries, were to present the statue to the academy.

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"I remember it was a cold, blustery day. I had been notified that the statue had arrived from Mexico City where it had been cast in bronze. 'However, Mr. Mose,' a shipping agent informed me, 'it arrived here cracked.' I was downhearted at first, but reassured on inspection, when I realized the damage was not too extensive and the fissure could be welded in a local shop."

"A crane was secured to hoist the two-ton eagle to her perch," Mose continued. "The crane operator must have been in a hurry to go home, because he hastily lifted the statue off-balance. When it reached a height of about eight feet, something gave way and the eagle crashed before me on the hard cement. More damage was done to the portion already cracked. All I can say in retrospect is—I was sick. It's not easy to see one's work of two years almost destroyed before his eyes by a careless movement of another individual."

"Things went okay after that. Mrs. Mose was to have the honor of unveiling the statue on dedication day. We stood together during the ceremony, and when the speaker announced her name and asked that she step forward, I gave her coat sleeve a tug and whispered, 'Dear, take it real easy. Don't pull so hard you'll pull the darned bird down.' I guess I had a complex by then. Ruth did a magnificent job, though, and now the eagle is firmly emplaced. Even the strong winds off the Rampart Range won't blow it down."

Today the statue stands as a tribute to our future airmen, and a tribute to a great and honored artist whose works can be seen in art galleries, on public monuments, in city parks, on college campuses, and private buildings in dozens of places across the land. The eagle stands in the beautiful Air Garden immediately north of the cadet dining hall. Saplings surround the statue, and behind it is an attractive fountain and pond. Nestled there, between the inspiring buildings of the academy and against the majesty of Colorado's Rampart Range, the eagle is rapidly becoming more ensconced in the tradition of the nation's newest service academy.

GUARDIAN EAGLE

by Capt. WIRT D. GRIGGS
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