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## SPACE MEDICINE BRANCH REPORT

### Activities of the History Committee During 1993–94

The Space Medicine Branch is now 43 years "young." As is characteristic of many innovative ventures, those who were active in its formation and its early growth, first as an independent group and later as a part of the parent organization, the Aerospace Medical Association (AsMA), were more interested in getting the job done. This was considered more important than keeping records of the process of evolution of the Branch. Even though the records of this formative period were sparse, they also were lost in the late 1970's.

This was followed by a decade where there was little interest in the history of the Branch. The one exception was the excellent summary of the "early days" prepared by Dr. Paul Campbell, one of the founders. The members of the Branch were now fully engaged with the execution of the manned space missions and hearing about the results from these flights. There was little time left for history. Of equal importance, the parent AsMA had warmed to this new operational vista and its scientific programs and Journal were filled with reports of the results from spaceflight.

However, as the decade of the 80's came to a close, some of the older members of the Branch increasingly reminded the rest of us that we were ignoring the "lessons learned" during the formative years, and that perhaps we could avoid embarrassing ourselves if we were to re-read what had been our rich heritage. This made our lost founding members and the lost records a real tragedy. In response to this embarrassment and important void, the History Committee has engaged in a campaign to recapture the essence of the lost files and history of the founding and the early evolution of the Branch during the past 3 years. A summary (1) of the early history of the Branch was reported 3 years ago. More importantly, one of the few remaining founders presented a paper (2) at our 1992 annual meeting on his recollections of the initial years of what has become the Branch. Both of these papers have appeared on this page in the Journal. Hopefully these papers along with the report by Dr. Paul Campbell (3) will serve as a

reference for those interested in the future. The History Committee has also asked that similar papers on the early steps in space medicine be prepared by senior members of the Branch from Europe and Japan. A parallel paper on the evolution of space medicine research from our Russian colleagues would be most appropriate.

The History Committee has been concerned about the loss of the early records and equally fearful that it might happen again if the records are allowed to move about with each shift of officers. Therefore, the Committee has now obtained agreement with the Fordham Library at Wright State University, Dayton, OH, to establish a permanent repository for the important documents related to the Branch. By this arrangement, the records of the Space Medicine Branch now join those of the parent AsMA, The International Academy of Aviation and Space Medicine, and the McFarland collection of papers and manuscripts at a single place for use by future scholars.

If any member of the AsMA or the Branch feels he/she has an important item that should be in this collection, please contact the Branch Historian and let us get it evaluated and transferred to this collection.

Stanley C. White, M.D.  
Space Medicine Branch Historian

#### REFERENCES

1. White SC. The history of the Branch is one of change. *Aviat. Space Environ. Med.* 1991; 62:918.
2. Marbarger JP. A snapshot of the early history of the Space Medicine Branch. *Aviat. Space Environ. Med.* 1992; 63:1138–9.
3. Campbell PA. The history of the Space Medicine Branch of the Aerospace Medical Association Section From Concept to Sputnik 1, 1950–1957.