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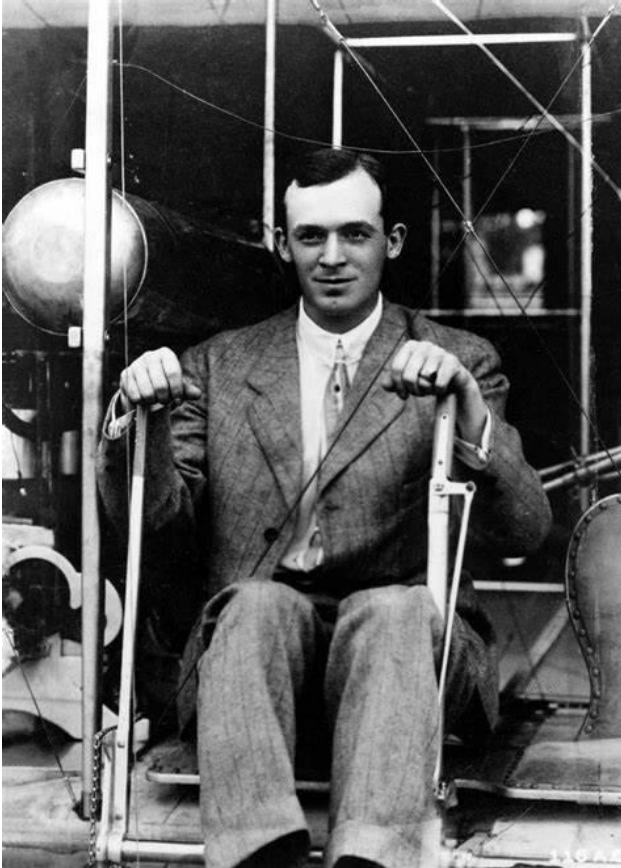
General Henry “Hap” Arnold



Henry “Hap” Arnold was the Chief of Staff of the United States Army Air Force (USAAF) during World War II. Under his leadership the Army Air Force expanded from 1,800 aircraft in 1938 to a high of 72,700 aircraft in 1944. The Army Air Force eventually destroyed the enemies’ industrial production capability with a strategic bombing campaign. Arnold became one of only nine 5-star officers in U.S. military history.

Arnold was born in 1886 in Gladwyne, PA, northwest of Philadelphia. His grandfather served in the Pennsylvania militia during the Civil War and his father, a doctor, served as a surgeon during the Spanish-American War. Arnold was accepted to attend West Point in 1903 and graduated in 1907. He wanted to join the horse cavalry, but due to an average class ranking, he settled for the infantry. His first assignment was in the Philippines.

In 1907, the Army Signal Corps formed an Aeronautical Branch, to manage the development and acquisition of aircraft for the Army. At the end of his tour in the Philippines in 1911, Arnold was assigned to the Signal Corps and sent to Dayton, OH for flight training. During his training, he developed a close relationship with Orville and Wilbur Wright. Arnold earned his pilot's certificate in July 1911. In October 1912 he became the first recipient of the annual Mackay Trophy. This trophy is awarded for the "meritorious flight of the year", sometimes based on a competition. Arnold won the competition for a meritorious reconnaissance flight.



Arnold was assigned to the Army Aviation Section in Washington when the U.S. declared war on Germany in April 1917. He helped to manage the expansion of the pilot ranks from 26 to over 2,000 by the end of the war. During the 1920's Arnold developed a relationship with Colonel Billy Mitchell, which helped to form his philosophy about how an air force should fit into the army organization and how an air force should be used in time of war. Mitchell advocated for an independent air force and also developed the concept of strategic bombing of an enemy's industrial base.

presented with the Collier Trophy for his outstanding contributions to aviation over the previous year. The trophy was presented by Orville Wright on the 40th anniversary of the first In 1931 Arnold was assigned as base commander of March Field near Los Angeles. His orders were to convert the field from a training site into an air base to provide air defense for the coast. While in search for a practice bombing range, Arnold and his staff discovered and purchased the site that we now know of as Edwards Air Force Base. He received his second Mackey Trophy in 1934. The award was for leading a flight of ten Martin B-10 bombers on a flight from Bolling Field near Washington D.C. to Fairbanks, Alaska in July and back to Bolling Field in

August. This was a demonstration of the capabilities of new aircraft technology. In early 1935 he was promoted to Brigadier General and given command of all air bases on the entire west coast.

Arnold was sent to Washington in 1935 as Assistant to the Chief of Staff of the Army Air Corps. In September 1938 he became the Chief of Staff of the Army Air Corps upon the death of Major General Oscar Westover in a plane crash. During that same month, the British and Germans were concluding fateful negotiations in Munich. Arnold took on the responsibility to lead the expansion of the Army Air Corps to support the Allies when it became necessary. His internal battle was with the traditional Army leadership which saw the Army Air Corps as a tactical support for ground combat. Arnold would continue to advocate the Billy Mitchell vision of an independent air force, serving a strategic bombing role. Strategic bombing targets the industrial centers of an enemy, in order to eliminate the enemy's ability to wage war. Arnold had the support of President Roosevelt.

After the successful North Africa landings, Roosevelt and Churchill met in Casablanca in January 1943 to plan the next operations. Arnold was in attendance and used the opportunity to meet with his British counterparts. He was able to settle a dispute about the long-range bombing of Germany. The British favored night bombing to evade enemy fighters and depended on a large volume of bombs rather than accuracy. The Americans preferred daytime bombing, while using the new Norden bombsights to achieve accuracy. It was decided to let the British and Americans continue with their preferred methods.

After the Casablanca Conference, President Roosevelt sent Arnold to China for talks with Chiang Kai-shek who was leading the Chinese fight against the Japanese occupation of China. Arnold committed the Army Air Corps to supply the Chinese military by flying transport aircraft over the Himalayas from India ("over the Hump"). The Japanese occupation of southeast Asia blocked overland routes of supply.

In the spring of 1943 Arnold suffered two heart attacks. Before he returned to duty, he was promoted to 4-star general. In December 17, 1943, Arnold was heavier-than-air flight. Orville was also one of Arnold's flight instructors in 1911.



In 1944 Arnold led the air operations to prepare for the D-Day landings in June 1944. By the end of 1944 the U.S. Army Air Forces had grown to include over 72,000 aircraft of all types. In 1944 the Air Transport Command carried 1.2 million passengers and more than 400,000 tons of cargo. In December 1944, Arnold was promoted to 5-star rank, along with Generals Eisenhower, MacArthur, and Marshall, and Admirals Leahy, King, and Nimitz. The promotions were prompted by British promotions which left the American leaders

outranked by their British counterparts. Arnold was one of only nine military officers to ever achieve the 5-star rank. The 5-star Army rank was called General of the Army.

On January 25, 1945 Arnold suffered his fourth heart attack during the war. After his recovery, he spent 5 weeks touring the European theatre of operations. Following that tour, he spent 5 weeks touring the Pacific theatre. The strategic bombing campaign over Japan was in full operation, using the B-29 bombers that Arnold had supported as a necessary weapon to defeat the Japanese military. Upon his return, Arnold attended the closing ceremonies of the United Nations Charter Conference with President Truman in San Francisco, in June.

After the German and Japanese surrenders, Arnold took on the task of demobilizing the Army Air Force. This involved returning military personnel, including those wounded, from overseas and scrapping a majority of the aircraft. Additionally, he reorganized the Army Air Force into its post-war structure: Air Defense Command, Tactical Air Command, and Strategic Air Command. Arnold retired from the Army Air Force in February 1946.

His dream of an independent air force became reality in 1947. The Department of Defense was established and included an Air Force independent of the Army. In 1949, Arnold was given the rank of General of the Air Force, the only person to ever hold that rank. He passed away in January 1950, as a result of his fifth heart attack. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.