

Remarks to the Arnold Air Society April 2009

Good Afternoon.

First let me say what an honor it is to be invited here today and to be with you all. My family enjoyed attending these events over the years, but this the first time I've had the opportunity of being with all of you outstanding people.

For the history folks among you here's a virtual org chart to explain how I fit into the family scheme of things.

My grandparents, Hap and Bea Arnold had 4 children who lived to be adults. They also had a fifth child, John, who died at age two.

The three sons were Henry Jr, known as Hank, William Bruce, my father known as Bruce, and David. They were all West Point Graduates. Hank retired as Colonel US Army; Bruce as Colonel USAF and David, Colonel USAF. Lois, their sister, married a, now, NO BOOS please, a Navy Aviator, who retired as an Admiral.

My mother, Barbara, was the only daughter of aviation designer Donald Douglas, Sr., the founder of the Douglas Aircraft Company, then the world's greatest aircraft manufacturer.

So, my perspective on aviation history is, perhaps, a bit different then most.

My father was named William after Hap Arnold's hero and mentor, Billy Mitchell. But Pop was known as Bruce starting at an early age. That's an interesting story.

Every boy born in the Air Corps at that moment seemed to be named Billy after Billy Mitchell. This proved a problem on Post when at Dinner Time, all those mothers would lean out the kitchen door and call, "Billy, it's time for dinner." So in my Pop's case, all the moms got together and drew cards for William, Bill, Billy, Willie, Will and so on. Grandmother did not draw well and my Pop was known as Bruce.

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Speaking of nicknames, they all had them didn't they: Billy, Jimmy, Ira, Tooe, Andy and Hap. And everyone knew who they were. And still do today.

I learned from my father and he learned from his that you never, ever wear another man's rank.

So let me just say that they couldn't make it here today and I was in the neighborhood and could stand in for them.

I'm a winemaker from California with red wine stains on his hands. But I can share with you a bit of what I know and what I learned "around the campfire" as they say.

My subject today is Airpower and what Hap Arnold meant when he talked about it.

But what did Hap Arnold mean when he said Air Power?

It meant more than just Air - Force . the striking Power. Though in 1941, Hap and Ira Eaker wrote in their book, *Winged Warfare*, quote:

When diplomacy breaks down, when international negotiation has failed, when war comes, it is inevitable that the first units to be joined in battle will be the air units.

The air force phase will be the first phase in modern warfare. Unquote.

But Airpower meant more to him. Air Power makes air force possible. Hap Arnold learned about aviation in a small place. He learned about it inside the Wright Brothers' establishment in Dayton, Ohio starting in 1911. It was a small operation.

Tiny factory, tiny training center, tiny business headquarters.

Truly a small business but with all the components of modern airpower because the Wrights did everything themselves: research and engineering,

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wind tunnels, design, manufacturing, training, marketing, press relations, government relations. Even endless legal issues that make the current Air Force Tanker drama looks simple and on and on and on.

And Hap Arnold was right there in 1911. He was sent to be one of the first two Army flyers trained by the Wrights under the original contract. And the Army had shrewdly negotiated meals with the Wrights as part of the contract. So Hap and his friend Tommy Milling ate with the Wright family at the house.

Hap saw the whole scope up close and personal. And it wasn't magic. The Wrights were real folks and real middle class Americans. With singular imagination, stubbornness and drive they solved the impossible that the greats of history such as Leonardo di Vinci could not.

And he thought about it all. Later he would write books about it. He would go the Army Industrial College and learn about manufacturing and logistics. Early on, he would become close friends with engineers and scientists. He would write magazine articles, he would give speeches about it.

If you ran a civilian flying school, you knew Hap Arnold personally. If you had an idea about weather forecasting or arctic survival he knew you. If you published a magazine or books, he wrote articles and eventually about a dozen books. If he could convince kids, they would become the flyers and leaders of tomorrow. So he wrote children's books about the adventure of flight.

He saw the need for media support of aviation and forged close, personal relations with Hollywood and the press starting almost immediately.

If you made movies and needed an Army airplane, Hap might help.

When Jean Harlow needed to be photographed with handsome Army flyers and airplanes, Hap Arnold made it happen.

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If you were a famous Caltech scientist and need to get to high altitude for an experiment, Hap was right there. Every time you hear about the Jet Propulsion Lab at Caltech,

Remember, Hap Arnold. He was involved in its creation.

As he told his friend, writer Corey Ford, airpower requires a big foundation: A foundation as wide as the whole country from sea to sea.

When George Marshall and Hap Arnold finally convinced President Roosevelt to commit to large scale aircraft production, Hap in the same meeting said: and a huge training establishment; because he knew that building airplanes was not enough. Hap Arnold's vision was bigger than that and he knew, he really knew, about all of it. FDR reluctantly went along with Arnold and General Marshall, who had been well tutored by Hap Arnold and General Frank Andrews.

Many do not know that by 1945, the Army Air Force would become the largest single educational organization ever seen in the Western World.

They created training schools not just for pilots, aircrews and maintenance crews. Nope. They had Air Force schools for cooks, clerks and just about anything the Air Force had people do. And they had training films and materials made for each school. This all happened from scratch. Pretty amazing in retrospect. Along the way, Hap Arnold convinced General Marshall that the Air Force needed all the color movie film made in the US for the war effort. And for many years they got away with it. Sadly, most of the color strike films have disappeared over the years, but at the time, every bomber mission had multiple cameras recording it all in glorious full color.

One little note. Hap Arnold also convinced his friend George Marshall that the Air Force needed all the better people as well. As a result he siphoned off from the US Army the statistically better physical specimens and those who had higher intelligence test scores. Right down the the guys mowing the

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lawns at headquarters. Some say the regular Army has never forgiven him for that. And it may explain why the Air Force Culture is different than some other services.

Key to all of this was what Hap Arnold knew made the engine of airpower go.

No, not the high octane aviation gas. Though he knew all about that early on from his friend Jimmy Doolittle, no it was broad and deep public support. Something that gets a bit taken for granted today, doesn't it? That is until you turn around and find you don't have it.

In Hap's last report to the Secretary of War in 1945 there is a whole section titled "Public Understanding of Airpower." Worth reading sometime.

One quote is inscribed on a wall at the Air Force Memorial:

Our Air Force belongs to those who come from ranks of labor, management, the farms, the stores, the professions and colleges and legislative halls..air power will always be the business of every American Citizen.

Unquote.

I fear we mostly take that for granted inside the airpower community. Hap knew that what could be won could also be lost and spent much of his life nurturing support and then using it to build the largest air force the world will ever see.

Again, airpower in Hap Arnold's mind was the whole enterprise: scientists in universities, engineers, factory workers, Military pilots, crews, trainers, transportation, weathermen, writers, chemical companies, the civilian airline companies and infrastructure. You name it.

And at the front of the line: the folks who pay for it all, the public.

Because they influence the members of congress who approve it. Without the whole bunch, he knew there was no airpower.

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The events of recent days bring this to mind. Does anyone here really believe that if this country was sold on airpower that the F-22 would have been cancelled?

This is why real airpower mattered in Hap Arnold's view. It's a big subject and much more than a smart bomb on target or the latest pod hung on an F-16 or a pretty picture with a slogan on the back of a magazine cover.

George Marshall once asked Hap Arnold why Hap was spending some of his precious time with a bunch of quirky scientists and theoreticians. Hap explained he was always looking to the future and these folks were the ones to point the way for the pathway of airpower. Over 60 years later, this is called the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board. He created it.

Today, expensive technology commitments are still a tough sell. Spend today for tomorrow's challenges that on the other side of the horizon. Every airman knows that all technology becomes obsolete the moment it is deployed. Others do not.

Some say that the Air Force of today is in as bad shape, politically, as the Air Service of 1929. Some say it is even worse. Some say there is no case to be made for the future of airpower; that the future for you folks is flying transport in a handful of aging aircraft and not much else.

That is the atmosphere in which we live today. This is dangerous, not just for the Air Force but for the other services and the Nation. Somehow the case for Airpower must be made new again. It may be up to all of you in this room. This is bigger than just a 2 or 3 year assignment. It is a career and then a lifetime mission. Hap Arnold counted on those who followed him to continue on. You stand on the shoulders of generations of Army and Air Force men and women. Do not fail this trust.

In 1946 Hap Arnold wrote an essay in a book called Air Force Diary.

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These are his words:

There is a lesson which you may be sure a future aggressor will take to heart. The greatest danger that any nation with a scheme for world domination faces is the United States.

If nations of the world find they cannot act in concert, our possession of power will be our only resource. Therefore, we must at all costs, maintain it.

All of this expensive, of course, but it is one expense that we must not now, or ever, skimp or stint. It is the price of security and the price of peace.

Thank you.