

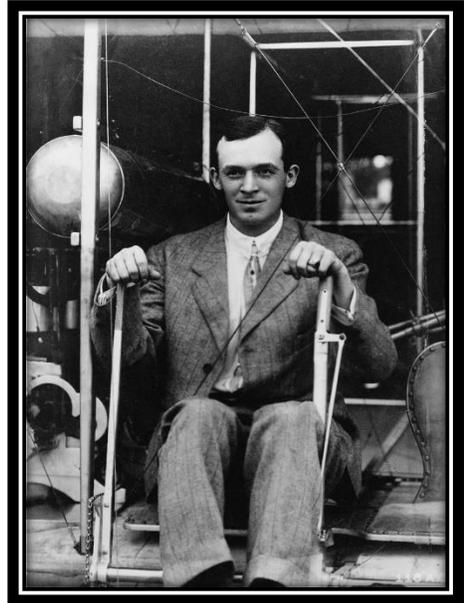
General Henry “Hap” Arnold

25 Jun 1886 – 15 Jan 1950

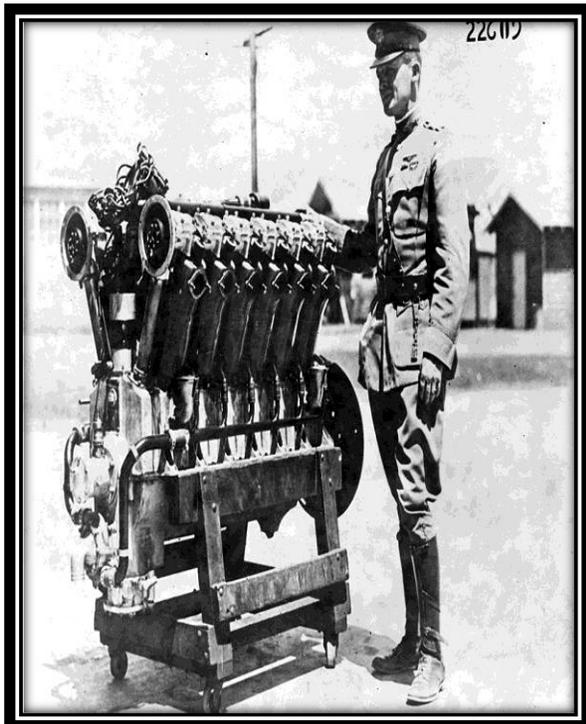
Henry “Hap” Arnold was born in Gladwyn, Pennsylvania. Following graduation from the United States Military Academy at West Point, he was appointed a second lieutenant of infantry on 14 June 1907. In 1911 he entered aviation and became a flyer. He was detailed to the Signal Corps in April 1911, piloting the Wright Bi-Plane. He was one of the first flyers taught by the Wright Brothers.

In June 1912, Arnold established a new altitude record when he piloted a Burgess-Wright airplane to a height of 6,540 feet. He participated in the Regular Army and National Guard Movements in the states of New York and Connecticut and established several aeronautical records. On 9 October 1912, Arnold won the first Mackay Trophy to be awarded for his flight demonstrations.

He progressed rapidly through the ranks, and by 11 February 1935 he had received the temporary rank of brigadier general. This rank was made permanent on 2 December 1940. He was awarded the permanent rank of major general and became Chief of the Army Air Forces in 1941. In March 1942, General Arnold became Commanding General of the Army Air Force.



He retired from the service on 30 June 1946 with the ratings of Command Pilot and Combat Observer. His many accomplishments, of both personal and national significance, gained him the distinction of becoming the first five-star general of the United States Air Force on 7 May 1949 by an act of Congress.



Between 1943 and 1945 General Arnold experienced four heart attacks severe enough to require hospitalization. In addition to being by nature intensely impatient, General Arnold considered that his personal presence was required wherever a crisis might be, and as a result he traveled extensively and for long hours under great stress during World War II, aggravating what may have been a pre-existing coronary condition. General Arnold passed away on 15 January 1950 of a cardiac condition. He is interred in Section 34 of the Arlington National Cemetery.

For his service, he received the Distinguished Flying Cross in November 1936 and the Distinguished Service Medal in October 1942. General Arnold was awarded the Air Medal in March 1943, and in September 1945 he received the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Service Medal. In October 1945, he was awarded a second Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Service Medal. His other awards included: The World War II Victory Medal; American Defense Medal; American Theater Ribbon; Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon; European-African Middle Eastern Theater Ribbon, 1942-1943; U.S. Military Badge No. 1; Morocco's Grand Cross, Grand Officer of the Commander (Ouissam Alaouite); Yugoslavia's Sun in the degree of

Grand Aztec Eagle; Mexico's Order of Military Merit; and England's Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath.

The H. H. Arnold Award was established in honor of General Arnold by the Air Force Association in 1948. It is presented for the "most outstanding contributions toward the peace and the security of the United States in the field of aviation."

All three of General Arnold's surviving sons were graduates of West Point (Henry Harley Jr., 1939; William Bruce, 1943; and David Lee, 1949) and reached the grade of colonel. The two youngest served in the United States Air Force and are interred near their father's burial site at Arlington National Cemetery.

General Arnold's most widely used nickname, "Hap," was short for "Happy," attributed variously to work associates when he moonlighted as a silent film stunt pilot in October 1911, or to his wife, who began using the nickname in her correspondence in 1931 following the death of his mother. He was called "Harley" by his family during his youth, and "Sunny" by both his mother and wife. General Arnold was known by his West Point classmates as "Pewt" or "Benny." By his immediate subordinates and headquarters staff he was referred to as "The Chief."

General Arnold had but one theme:

"It's got to be done and done quickly, so let's get it done."

