

**OUR AIR FORCE.
THE KEYSTONE OF
NATIONAL DEFENSE**

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Our Air Force. The Keystone of National Defense by William Mitchell

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WILLIAM MITCHELL

**OUR AIR FORCE.
THE KEYSTONE OF
NATIONAL DEFENSE**



Interior of the Chart Room of a Balloon Company, Installed in a Temporary Barrack. The Chart Room Contains a Relief Map of all of the Ground that can be seen from the Balloon's Position, and a Perfect Representation of the Hills, Woods, Houses, Streams, Railroad Lines and Roads

OUR AIR FORCE

The Keystone of National Defense

BY

WILLIAM MITCHELL

BRIGADIER GENERAL, AIR SERVICE



UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

NEW YORK

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681 FIFTH AVENUE

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70 MMU
ABSCPLAO

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY OF MY BROTHER
Lieut. JOHN LENDRUM MITCHELL, Jr.
PILOT, UNITED STATES AIR SERVICE,
WHO WAS KILLED IN FRANCE
IN THE SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY
ON MAY 26, 1918

438449

EDITOR'S NOTE

BRIGADIER GENERAL WM. MITCHELL, the author of this book, enlisted as a private in the Volunteer Infantry at the outbreak of the war with Spain in 1898; and after serving in the ranks for twenty days, he was made an officer at the age of eighteen. He was the youngest officer in the army during the Spanish War. He later served in the Philippine Insurrection; again in Cuba in 1906 and 1907; and along the Mexican Border. General Mitchell has traveled widely in Asia, India and Europe, studying the military systems in the armies of the various countries. He is a Distinguished graduate of the Army School of the Line, a graduate of the Army Staff College, and he served as a member of our General Staff before the entrance of the United States into the World War. General Mitchell studied Aviation for a great many years; learned to fly at the first opportunity, and has kept it up ever since. He was the first American officer under German fire in Europe, where he was serving as a military observer when the War opened, and was the first American flying officer to cross the Lines in the European War, on April 22, 1917, where he laid

the basis for the tactical Air Service in Europe before the coming of the American Expeditionary Forces. General Mitchell later commanded the Air Service of the First Army Corps, the Air Service of the First Army, the Air Service of the Group of Armies, and, when the Group of Armies was discontinued, at the time of the Armistice, he took the Aviation of the Army of Occupation into Germany, and established it along the Rhine River. Since returning to the United States, in the Spring of 1919, General Mitchell has been in charge of the training and operations of our own Air Service, which has been completely reorganized and re-equipped.

General Mitchell was granted the Distinguished Service Cross, with citation as follows:

“GENERAL HEADQUARTERS,
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF AIR SERVICE
M.M.P.
A.S.

France, 7 November 1918.

From: Chief of Air Service, A.E.F.

To: Brigadier General William Mitchell,
A.S., U.S.A.

Subject: Award of Distinguished Service Cross.

1. The Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces in the name of the Presi-

dent has awarded you the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism in action, the official citation being as follows:—

“For repeated acts of extraordinary heroism in action at Noyon, France, 26 March 1918, near the Marne River, France during July 1918, and in the St. Mihiel Salient, France, 12-16 September 1918.

For displaying bravery far beyond that required by his position as Chief of Air Service, 1st Army, American Expeditionary Forces, setting a personal example to the U.S. Aviation by piloting his airplane over the battle lines since the entry of the United States into the war. Some instances being a flight in a monoplane over the battle of Noyon on March 26, 1918 and the back areas, seeing and reporting upon the action of both air and ground troops, which led to a change in our aviation's tactical methods. A flight in a monoplane over the bridges which the Germans had laid across the Marne during July 1918, which led to the first definite reports of the location of these bridges and the subsequent attack upon the German troops by our air forces. Daily reconnaissances over the lines during the battle of St. Mihiel salient, September 12th to 16th, securing valuable information of the enemy troops in the air and on the ground, which led to the excellent combined action by the allied air services and ground troops particularly in this battle.”

2. I take great pleasure in handing you this decoration, so well deserved, and wish to add my