



GENERAL HENRY H. ARNOLD EDUCATION GRANT

in honor of

BRIGADIER GENERAL FREDERICK W. CASTLE



Brigadier General Frederick W. Castle was a World War II hero who lost his life Christmas Eve, 1944, leading his B-17 crews on a mission against German airfields and communications centers. For his heroism, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously and an Air Force strategic bomber base, Castle AFB, California, was subsequently named in his honor.

Fred Castle graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1930 and after pilot training and a tour flying pursuits at Selfridge Field, Michigan, he realized that the financially starved Air Corps of Depression days offered little opportunity for either flying or advancement. In 1934, he transferred to the Reserves and embarked on a highly successful career with Sperry Gyroscope.

A month after Pearl Harbor, General Ira Eaker had Fred Castle recalled to active duty to help him set up United Kingdom bases and a supply depot structure. In June 1943, he was rewarded with command of the newly committed 94th Bombardment Group which had suffered heavy losses in its early missions. Having a new Colonel with a supply background as commander, 94th Group officers were slow to accept Fred Castle. However, a month into his command, he led a dangerous B-17 attack that proved he was wise and courageous and morale of the 94th soared. He then moved to command the Fourth Combat Wing of the Eighth Air Force in 1944 as a new Brigadier General.

General Castle was killed leading a huge airstrike against Germany. When his B-17 was hit and barely controllable at 22,000 feet over Belgium, he ordered the crew to bail out. Six men left the doomed bomber while the General took over the controls to give the pilot time to retrieve his parachute. It was too late. The right wing tank exploded and General Castle and the pilot were killed as the bomber spun in from 12,000 feet.

It is fitting that members of the 94th Bomb Group Memorial Association contributed the funds to create this perpetual grant in honor of their former commander, a heroic, unselfish American who died for his country.