



GENERAL HENRY H. ARNOLD EDUCATION GRANT

in honor of

GENERAL GEORGE CHURCHILL KENNEY



General George Churchill Kenney was an innovative, colorful, dramatic and industrious officer. During World War II, George Kenney was sent to the Southwest Pacific to command allied forces. His service elicited the comment by General Douglas MacArthur that no air commander of World War II surpassed him as a combat leader. He brought his bold, brilliant leadership style to the command of Pacific Air Command, Strategic Air Command and Air University.

George Kenney was born on August 6, 1889 in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. He grew up in Brookline, Massachusetts and attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology for three years. In 1917 he entered the Army and took flying training. He was a rebel from the beginning. His flying instructor was appalled that his first three landings were "dead stick". Kenney said, "Any fool can land if the motor is running. I just wanted to see what would happen in case the motor quit."

During World War I, George Kenney served in France flying 75 combat missions and downing two German planes. Brigadier General William "Billy" Mitchell directed Kenney to fly "special missions" searching for American troops that were lost. Kenney, flying at treetop, was inspired with the idea of low level attack aviation. The planes would be less exposed to ground fire. Kenney had another breakthrough idea, that of mounting machine guns on wings instead of on the engine cowling.

When Brigadier General Frank Andrews was named commander of the newly created General Headquarters Air Force, Captain Kenney was Chief of Operations and Training. Although, not a separate Air Force, General Headquarters Air Force was a significant step in the right direction. General "Hap" Arnold viewed George Kenney as a troubleshooter and was never disappointed.

George Kenney is best summed up with a quote by General MacArthur. "Of all the brilliant commanders of the war, none surpassed him in those three great essentials of combat leadership: aggressive vision, mastery of air tactics and strategy, and the ability to exact a maximum in fighting qualities from both men and equipment." After retirement General Kenney wrote several books. He lived to be eighty-eight years old.