

# Throwback Thursday

2nd Lt Craig A. Johnson

**"Your limits are somewhere up there, waiting for you to reach beyond infinity"**  
**(General of the Air Force, Henry H. Arnold)**

One might hear Gladwyne, Pennsylvania, and like this writer, think that it is a typical coal mining town in the hills of Pennsylvania and not the sixth richest zip-code in the United States. Surrounded by mansions throughout the town, General of the Air Force, and pioneer of Civil Air Patrol (CAP) Henry H. Arnold was born to Dr. Herbert A. Arnold and his wife Louise Anna Johnson Arnold on June 25th, 1886.

General Arnold graduated from West Point Military Academy, due to the fact the Air Force was not created yet, in 1907. It was during his tenure at West Point he received his nickname "Hap" because of the constant smile on his face. In later years, officers under his command, stated that this was far from the truth and said that he was short tempered and angered easily.

General Arnold was taught to fly by the famous Wright Brothers and on June 1st, 1912, he established a new altitude record of 6,540 feet in a Burgess-Wright Airplane. During World War II (WWII), he directed air activities for the nation's global war against Germany and Japan. Under him, the air arm grew from 22,000 officers and men with 3,900 planes, to nearly 2,500,000 men and 75,000 aircraft.

Due to a heart attack in 1945, General Arnold decided to retire from service on June 30, 1946. During his career he received many awards. These awards consist of three Distinguish Crosses, Distinguish Flying Cross, Air Medals and decorations from Morocco, Brazil, Yugoslavia, Peru, France, Mexico and Great Britain. Though retired General Arnold was not finished being recognized. On May 7, 1949, he was promoted to the first General of the Air Force (Five-star General). This honor however was short lived because on January 15th, 1950, General of the Air Force Henry H. Arnold passed away at his ranch home, Valley of the Moon, near Sonoma, California. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

(Source: [HENRY. H. ARNOLD > Air Force > BiographyDisplay \(af.mil\)](#))



*General of the Air Force Henry H. Arnold (Hap)*

Though CAP was around before World War II, it wasn't until a meeting with First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, that General Arnold got the program some Congressional awareness. July 1st, 1946, Congress passed Public Law 476, incorporating CAP as a nonprofit organization and CAP members would never again participate in direct combat operations. ([historynet.com](#))

Video link to the above story - [General Henry "Hap" Arnold - First Air Force General - YouTube](#)



*Burgess-Wright Model H Bi-Wing Plane*

