

= Harold L. George =

Not to be confused with Harold Huston George for whom George Air Force Base was named
Harold Lee George (July 19 , 1893 ? February 24 , 1986) was an American aviation pioneer who helped shape and promote the concept of daylight precision bombing . An outspoken proponent of the industrial web theory , George taught at the Air Corps Tactical School and influenced a significant group of airmen passing through the school , ones who had powerful influence during and after World War II . He has been described as the leader of the so @-@ called " Bomber Mafia " , the men who advocated an independent military arm composed of heavy bombers . George helped shape America 's bomber strategy for the war by assisting Air War Plans Division with the development of a complete aircraft production and bombing strategy .

In 1934 , George helped institute the Order of Daedalians , and served as that organization 's first Wing Commander .

During World War II , George led the Air Transport Command , taking it from 130 obsolescent aircraft to 3 @,@ 000 modern transports , operated by 300 @,@ 000 airmen . Following the war , he helped Hughes Aircraft become a very profitable company , and was twice elected mayor of Beverly Hills , California .

= = Early career = =

George was born July 19 , 1893 in Somerville , Massachusetts , to Horace and Susan E. George . He attended George Washington University , but decided to interrupt his studies when the United States became directly involved in World War I. George joined the United States Army and on May 21 , 1917 , received his commission as second lieutenant in the Cavalry as a reserve officer . A month later , he went on active duty with the Cavalry at Fort Myer , Virginia , and married Anna Virginia Helms on August 10 . In October George resigned his reserve commission to become a flying cadet with the Aviation Section , U.S. Signal Corps .

George attended the ASSC School of Military Aeronautics (an eight @-@ week ground school) set up on the campus of Princeton University and learned to fly at Love Field , Texas , receiving his rating of Reserve Military Aviator and a new commission on March 28 , 1918 . George went to France that September with an initial assignment to the 7th Aviation Instruction Center (bombardment) at Clermont @-@ Ferrand . Two months later he was posted to Ourches @-@ sur @-@ Meuse with the 163rd Aero Squadron , one of two DH @-@ 4B day bomber squadrons of the new 2nd Day Bombardment Group , Second Army Air Service . In the week in which it saw action in November 1918 , just prior to the armistice , the 163d flew 69 sorties in support of the Meuse @-@ Argonne Offensive . George observed that massed bombers , flying in formation , swamped enemy defenses and so reduced the attacker 's casualties .

= = Bombing advocate = =

In France , George met William " Billy " Mitchell and became convinced that Mitchell 's vision of an independent Air Force was the best future direction for the American military .

After the war , George was assigned to the 49th Bombardment Squadron at Kelly Field , Texas . On July 1 , 1920 , when the Air Service became a combat arm of the line , he transferred to it in the permanent grade of 1st lieutenant . He next served with the 14th Bombardment Squadron at Langley Field , Virginia , and with the Aberdeen Proving Ground , Maryland from 1921 to 1925 . There George assisted Mitchell in his bombing demonstration against old battleships , and helped develop air @-@ to @-@ ship tactics . In August 1925 , George went to Washington as chief of the Bombardment Section in the Operations Division of the Office of the Chief of Air Service . Later that year , still at the rank of first lieutenant , he was one of several young air officers to testify at Mitchell 's court @-@ martial .

In July 1929 , George was ordered to Hawaii for two years with the 5th Composite Group at Luke Field . In September , 1931 , he went to Maxwell Field , Alabama , to study at the Air Corps Tactical

School (ACTS) where he helped refine the precision daylight bomber doctrine taught there . He was promoted to captain during the assignment , on December 1 , 1931 . Following graduation , George became an instructor at ACTS , teaching air tactics and precision bombing doctrine , and became de facto leader of the influential " Bomber Mafia " . With Haywood S. Hansell , Laurence S. Kuter and Donald Wilson , George researched , debated and codified what the men believed would be a war @-@ winning strategy that Wilson termed " industrial web theory " . In 1934 , George was made director of the Department of Air Tactics and Strategy , and vigorously promoted the doctrine of precision bombing in which massed air fleets of heavy bombers would be commanded independently of naval or ground warfare needs .

George was promoted to the temporary rank of major in July 1936 . He graduated from the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth , Kansas , the following year and returned to Langley as commanding officer of the 96th Bombardment Squadron . George flew to South America as a part of Air Corps goodwill flights in February 1938 and November 1939 , and received for his participation the Order of the Southern Cross (Knight) , from the government of Brazil . In 1940 , George took command of the 2d Bombardment Group , which in 1937 had become the first unit equipped with the B @-@ 17 Flying Fortress bomber . Promoted to the temporary rank of lieutenant colonel on December 30 , 1940 , he also filled the position of Executive Officer of the 2nd Bombardment Wing from January 1941 .

In July 1941 , George was appointed assistant chief of staff for Air War Plans Division , a unit of the newly created USAAF Air Staff in Washington . In that capacity he assembled a small group of " bomber mafia " members (including Hansell , Kuter , and Kenneth N. Walker) to prepare AWPDP ? 1 , an estimate of air resources needed in the event of war that became the plan for the air war against Germany . He was promoted to colonel on January 2 , 1942 , and to brigadier general on April 19 , 1942 when he took command of the Air Corps Ferrying Command (ACFC) .

= = Air transport = =

In June 1942 , ACFC was redesignated Air Transport Command and tasked to become not just a delivery service of aircraft from factory to the field , but a worldwide cargo and personnel air transportation service . George led it brilliantly throughout World War II , with the able assistance of many staff officers including his deputy , General C. R. Smith , peacetime president of American Airlines .

New organizations were formed and new cross ocean routes were established in the face of the enemy and under difficult conditions . George took the ferrying command from 130 obsolescent aircraft to 3 @, @ 000 modern military transports , and expanded the personnel from 11 @, @ 000 to 300 @, @ 000 . For this major contribution to his country , George received the Distinguished Service Medal , Legion of Merit , Distinguished Flying Cross , and Air Medal , as well as decorations from Great Britain , France , Brazil , Peru and China .

After the war he served for a while as director of information for the USAAF and as senior Air Force representative of the military staff of the United Nations . He retired from active duty December 31 , 1946 , with rank of lieutenant general dating back to March 1945 .

= = Post @-@ war activity = =

George accepted a position at Hughes Aircraft to work for Howard Hughes , along with fellow bomber advocate Ira C. Eaker . Eaker and George transformed Hughes Aircraft into a very profitable military contractor , reaching \$ 100M in sales in 1948 . George expanded the company beyond the manufacture of aircraft to focus on the new field of military electronics , primarily by bringing together expert electronics designer Dean Wooldridge and engineer @-@ businessman Simon Ramo , both hired by George in 1946 . In August 1953 , Ramo and Wooldridge resigned . George followed a few months later to help form the Ramo @-@ Wooldridge Corporation , competing directly with Hughes by developing ballistic missile defenses . In 1958 , Ramo @-@ Wooldridge would merge with Thompson Products , to become Thompson Ramo Wooldridge , which was shortened to TRW in

1965 .

After moving there in 1948 , George was elected to the City Council of Beverly Hills , California , in 1952 , and in 1954 he was elected mayor , a one @-@ year term . He served a second term in 1959 . During his second term , George established an annual award to honor outstanding Beverly Hills police officers , given in the name of Clinton H. Anderson , the city 's police chief .

In 1955 , George was recalled to active duty in the United States Air Force for eight months as special consultant to the Air Force Chief of Staff . George was relieved from active duty November 4 , 1955 .

By 1984 , George was living in Laguna Hills , California . That year , he collected and donated more than \$ 21 @,@ 000 to various Republican Party candidates and conservative causes including the Jesse Helms @-@ founded National Congressional Club and the " Helms for Senate " campaign . On February 24 , 1986 , George died in Laguna Hills . He was survived by his wife Violette , three daughters and one son .

= = Legacy = =

In his directorship of ACTS , George is known today as the unofficial leader of the men in the Army Air Corps who closed ranks and pushed exclusively toward the concept of daylight precision bombing as a strategic , war @-@ winning doctrine . Though he played a fundamental role in the development of U.S. air power strategy , he is perhaps better known as the first commander of Air Transport Command ? the man who guided and expanded that organization throughout World War II .

The Order of Daedalians has , since 1956 , awarded the " Lieutenant General Harold L. George Civilian Airmanship Award " , a trophy " presented annually to the pilot , copilot and / or crew of a United States certified commercial airline selected by a Federal Aviation committee to have demonstrated ability , judgment and / or heroism above and beyond normal operational requirements . " The Air Force Aid Society bestows the " Lieutenant General Harold Lee George Educational Grant Award . "

= = Recognition = =

George was awarded :

Distinguished Service Medal

Legion of Merit

Distinguished Flying Cross

Air Medal

1939 - Knight of the Order of the Southern Cross (Brazil)

= = Effective dates of promotion = =

Second Lieutenant - May 21 , 1917

First Lieutenant - April 1921

Captain - December 31 , 1931

Major - July 1936

Lieutenant Colonel - February 1941

Colonel - January 1942

Brigadier General - April 1942

Major General - June 1942

Lieutenant General - March 16 , 1945 .