Unit Chapters

CHAPTER 4
The Early Air Force

CHAPTER 5
Commercial Flight

CHAPTER 6
The Modern Air Force
C-47 Skytrain transport plane
The United States
Strategic Bombing Survey, 1945

"Allied air power was decisive in the war in Western Europe....In the air, its victory was complete. At sea, its contribution, combined with naval power, brought an end to the enemy's greatest naval threat—the U-boat; on land, it helped turn the tide overwhelmingly in favor of Allied ground forces."

Chapter Outline

LESSON 1
The Army Air Corps

LESSON 2
Air Power in World War II

The United States
Strategic Bombing Survey, 1945
After World War I Brig Gen William “Billy” Mitchell wanted to find a way to get military leaders and the US Congress to pay attention to his calls for an independent air service. He’d seen how air power helped turn the war in the Allies’ favor. This included the major role of aircraft in the Battle of Saint Mihiel in 1918.

Air power was emerging as an offensive weapon and a powerful defensive tool. Mitchell thought the Army Air Service ought to be under its own command. But the Army, Navy, and Congress saw things differently. To them, air power was auxiliary—functioning as a branch of another military organization—to the Army’s ground forces. In their view, aircraft played secondary roles. For example, they thought the role of aircraft was to provide reconnaissance and ground-troop support, not to lead attacks.
In 1920 Mitchell proposed a test to challenge prevailing notions about the country's defense. He suggested that his Airmen sink ships. (At that time the Navy's battle fleet was America's first line of defense.) The test would show how planes could defend the country against an attack from the sea.

In 1921 the Navy reluctantly agreed to the test. It provided several German vessels captured during World War I. One of the ships was the “unsinkable” battleship Ostfriesland.

On 13 July Mitchell’s pilots sank a destroyer off the coast of Virginia with light bombs. On 18 July they hit a cruiser. It went under, too. They tried to sink the Ostfriesland, but even 1,000-pound bombs couldn’t do the job. So on 21 July the pilots dropped 2,000-pound bombs. The “unsinkable” battleship rolled over and sank in about 20 minutes. But the Army and Congress still weren’t convinced. They didn’t believe an independent air service could help the armed forces. Navy admirals disagreed, however. They immediately ordered that aircraft carriers be built. The United States had its first aircraft carrier within eight months of the Ostfriesland’s sinking.

**The sinking of the Ostfriesland**

Using 2,000-pound bombs, Mitchell’s pilots sank the Ostfriesland on 21 July 1921.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress
The Predecessors of the US Air Force

Most changes come in small steps. So air power in the United States went through a number of makeovers. The major changes occurred between 1907 and 1947, a stormy period that saw the flowering of aviation and two world wars.

Even before the US government bought the Wright Flyer in 1909, it had set up the Aeronautical Division within the US Army Signal Corps. The Signal Corps started with balloons, and then added planes. The division existed from 1907 to 1914. Many consider its creation the birth of the US Air Force.

Next came the Aviation Section, US Army Signal Corps (1914 to 1918). It was up and running during World War I. The number of pilots grew to 10,000 by the end of the war. These pilots took on many roles. They went on reconnaissance missions after the United States joined the war in 1917. By 1918 they were taking part in dogfights and bombing runs.

The Creation of the Army Air Service

One of the first major steps toward an independent air service took place around the time the Great War ended. President Woodrow Wilson used his executive powers to create the Army Air Service in May 1918. Under this order, the Air Service became a combat arm of the Army. The Army Air Service existed between 1918 and 1926. Although it was still part of the Army, it was a step closer to separate-but-equal footing with the Army and Navy.

With the Army Reorganization Act of 1920, Congress wrote the change into law. The Army Air Service was no longer auxiliary to the ground forces. It was its own branch within the Army. This change gave the Air Service more control. But it still answered to the Army.

The Different Stages of the US Air Arm From 1907 to Present

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aeronautical Division, US Army Signal Corps</td>
<td>1 August 1907 – 18 July 1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aviation Section, US Army Signal Corps</td>
<td>18 July 1914 – 20 May 1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of Military Aeronautics, Secretary of War</td>
<td>20 May 1918 – 24 May 1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Air Service</td>
<td>24 May 1918 – 2 July 1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Air Corps</td>
<td>2 July 1926 – 17 September 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• General HQ Air Force</td>
<td>1 March 1935 – 1 March 1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Army Air Forces</td>
<td>20 June 1941 – 17 September 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Air Force</td>
<td>18 September 1947 – Present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The National Defense Act, also passed in 1920, established the number of men and ranks in the Air Service. The service could have 16,000 enlisted men. But Congress had cut back on defense spending after World War I. So the Air Service didn’t have enough funds to enlist 16,000 men. Today’s Air Force still uses the grades—ranks—authorized under that act.

**The Creation of the Army Air Corps**

Funds were in short supply after the war. Congress no longer emphasized national defense. It was more concerned with needs at home. As a result, the Army was tightfisted in how much it passed along to its air arm. This only increased the Air Service’s desire for separate-but-equal footing with the Army and Navy.

Brig Gen Billy Mitchell believed that air power would be crucial to winning any future wars or to defending American soil. He believed it would be easier to direct air power if the Air Service were equal in stature to the Army and Navy. An independent service would also get a larger share of government money.

The US Department of War disagreed with Mitchell. It believed in a three-pronged national defense based on:

1. the Navy’s battle fleet
2. the Navy’s coastal defenses
3. the Army’s coastal defenses.

But based on what he’d seen in Europe during 1917 and 1918, Mitchell believed air power was a necessary tool. First, casualties from trench warfare would decrease if bombers could cross enemy lines to hit supply routes and factories. Soldiers would no longer be stuck in one place. They would no longer die in waves of assaults. Second, as the Battle of Saint Mihiel showed, a mass of aircraft could overwhelm the enemy and bring the battle to him. Finally, planes could now carry heavier loads and fly greater distances. Before long, the Atlantic and Pacific oceans would no longer guarantee safety for the US coasts. Mitchell thought US air power could thwart an enemy arriving by sea better than sea power could. So he launched a major public relations campaign for an air force independent of the Army and Navy.
Demonstrations to Gain Independence

Mitchell’s biggest, splashiest campaign maneuver was the sinking of the German battleship Ostfriesland in 1921. Although that event convinced the Navy to build aircraft carriers, not much else happened after that. So Mitchell tried new tactics. His goal was to draw the public’s attention to the wonders of flight. If he got the public eye, he thought, people might ask their congressmen to support air power.

In 1922 Mitchell arranged for two pilots, 1st Lt Oakley Kelly and 1st Lt John Macready to fly nonstop across the United States. Their first two tries didn’t succeed. They finally made it on the third try, in 1923. Kelly and Macready flew from New York to San Diego in 26 hours and 50 minutes. The flight was 2,520 miles long. Their Fokker T-2 aircraft had a 400-horsepower engine. They took advantage of a tailwind during the flight. Plus, they hoped having little fuel left by the end of their voyage, and therefore less weight, would help them cross the Rocky Mountains.

In 1924 Mitchell tried an even bigger stunt—an around-the-world trip. He started out with four airplanes. Two of them—the Chicago and the New Orleans—finished the 26,345-mile journey. The trip took 175 days. The pilots visited cities around the globe, starting and finishing in Seattle, Washington. Also in 1924, Mitchell sent 1st Lt Russell Maughan in a Curtiss PW-8 from New York to San Francisco. To people’s astonishment, Maughan finished the trip in a single day. This showed that if the country were attacked, airplanes could fly in one day to defend the area under attack.

Around the World

One of the Douglas Aircraft that completed Mitchell’s around-the-world trip in 1924

Courtesy of E. Bacon/Topical Press Agency/Getty Images
In 1923 Mitchell conducted a second series of bombing tests against ships. This time, the Navy let him use two World War I battleships, the USS New Jersey and the USS Virginia. Ten of Mitchell’s 11 bombers missed the New Jersey. But one pilot, Sgt Ulysses S. Nero, had two hits. Mitchell wouldn’t let Nero continue, because the pilot hadn’t followed instructions. But when the other pilots couldn’t sink the ships, Mitchell gave him another chance.

From 6,900 feet in the air at 85 miles per hour, Nero released his first ordnance through the New Jersey’s smokestack. Ordnance is military supply such as weapons, ammunition, combat vehicles, and equipment. The ship sank. Next he dropped a bomb on the deck of the Virginia. It, too, sank to the bottom of North Carolina’s coastal waters.

Mitchell pushed in other ways for an independent air force. He gave talks. He wrote articles. Meanwhile, the US House of Representatives and the Army General Staff formed committees to study possible directions for the Army Air Service.

In 1925 President Calvin Coolidge instructed a group of experts to find the “best means of developing and applying aircraft in national defense.” This group, the Morrow Board, made three proposals:

1. Rename the Army Air Service the Army Air Corps
2. Give the Army Air Corps a seat on the Army General Staff
3. Appoint an assistant secretary of war for air power.

Congress adopted these recommendations. The Air Corps Act became law on 2 July 1926.
Brig Gen Billy Mitchell's Stamp on Air Power

Brig Gen William “Billy” Mitchell (1879–1936) was a controversial figure in US air power. He played a vital role in the creation of the US Air Force. He believed the bomber should be a key weapon of warfare. He thought it could bring the battle to the enemy and shorten wars.

Mitchell got off to a great start in life. He was the son of a US senator from Wisconsin. In 1895 he entered George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He was only 16 and the youngest student at that time to enter that school. By age 18, he was a second lieutenant in the Wisconsin Volunteers. At 19, he was promoted to first lieutenant. By 23, he was a captain in the US Army.

Mitchell graduated from the Army Staff College in 1909. At age 32 he was assigned to the Army General Staff. The General Staff oversees the Army and makes any decisions on major policy changes. Mitchell was the youngest person ever posted to it.

During World War I Mitchell was chief of the Air Service for American forces in Europe. Experiencing battlefield action helped persuade him of the great possibilities of air power. The battles also convinced him that the air arm needed its independence.

After World War I Mitchell was named deputy chief of the Air Service. During those years, he conducted bombing tests such as the one against the Ostfriesland. He also spoke publicly and wrote about the need for a separate air force.
But in 1925 Mitchell got into trouble. He harshly criticized senior officers in the military. A Navy plane had recently disappeared during a flight to Hawaii. And a Navy dirigible had crashed, killing 13 crew members. Referring to these events, Mitchell said, “The high command of both the Army and the Navy are guilty of incompetency, criminal negligence, and almost treasonable administration of the national defense.” Someone who is incompetent is lacking the qualities needed for effective action. A treasonable act is one that involves a violation of allegiance towards one’s country.

Because he so openly criticized military officers, Mitchell was court-martialed for insubordination under the 96th Article of War. This article forbids “all conduct of a nature to bring discredit upon the military service.” Insubordination is a refusal to submit to authority.

Mitchell was convicted. Rather than face a five-year suspension, he resigned from service in 1926. But he continued to speak for an independent air force. Unfortunately, Mitchell died in 1936. He never got to see the advent of powerful bombers such as the B-17 that played crucial roles in World War II.

In 1946, 10 years after Mitchell’s death, Congress awarded him the Medal of Honor. The award recognized his insightful air-power theories.

Mitchell and Pearl Harbor

Some people are not only smart. They’re also imaginative. They can put what they know in a new perspective. Brig Gen Mitchell was such a person. He predicted, as early as 1924, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Mitchell visited Japan in 1924. He noticed the country seemed bent on expanding its territories. He wasn’t sure when that would be. But he figured if Japan went to war to expand its influence in the Pacific, it would attack US bases in Hawaii and the Philippines from the air and sea. He wrote:

   Attack will be launched as follows:
   Bombardment, attack to be made on Ford Island [at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii]
   at 7:30 a.m. . . . Attack to be made on Clark Field [in the Philippines] at 10:40 a.m.

Seventeen years later, on 7 December 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. They struck Ford Island at 7:55 a.m. They hit Clark Field at 12:35 p.m.
Col Ulysses S. Nero: Bombardier, Inventor, Engineer

Col Ulysses S. Nero (1898–1980) spent most of his career in the US military. He was an intelligent, confident, yet modest, man. His family sent him to work in a shipyard when he was 14. He completed high school at age 15 by taking night classes.

Nero enlisted in the US Army in 1917 as a private. He retired in 1952 as a colonel. In between, he served in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. His contributions to the military were extraordinary. They included 12 patents for military equipment.

Nero’s adventure in the military began in the Army’s 13th Cavalry. His unit performed the US military’s last horse-cavalry mission. It pushed Mexican bandit Pancho Villa back to his homeland. (In late 1917 artillery units replaced horse cavalry.)

Nero then transferred to the US Army Signal Corps. He served in France in the Great War. He joined the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps in 1918, the same year it became the Army Air Service. In 1919, he returned to civilian life. But he felt he could do better in the military. So he reenlisted in 1921.

Nero became an expert bombardier. He made two important advances during his early years with the Air Service. In 1922 he invented a wireless means for pilots and ground crews to communicate. This brought him to the attention of Brig Gen Mitchell. Second, Nero invented a bombsight—a device that helps determine when to drop a bomb—that let bombardiers place their loads more accurately. He dropped nearly 10,000 bombs while running tests at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland.

In 1923 Nero sank the USS New Jersey and the USS Virginia during tests arranged by Mitchell. This led Mitchell to promote him. The two men became good friends.

Over the next 30 years or so, Nero developed more inventions. For example, he designed bomb fuses. He entered World War II as a master sergeant and became well known not only for his combat skills but also for his ability to maintain aircraft. During the Korean War, he was the first to overhaul a jet engine. To overhaul is to go over carefully and make needed repairs.

Many people today call Nero the “father of US Air Force precision bombing.”
How the Army Air Corps Developed

Changing the name of the Army Air Service to Army Air Corps was significant. It boosted the idea that the air arm was no longer only in “service” to ground troops. The corps could conduct independent missions. A corps is a branch or department of the armed forces having a specialized function.

The Army Air Corps wouldn’t gain full independence for another 21 years. It got off to a slow start for several reasons. First, many people felt that World War I was the “war to end all wars.” They thought the world would never again fight such an all-out battle. As a result, Congress drastically reduced defense spending. Most Airmen returned to civilian life. Furthermore, when the Great Depression hit in 1929, neither people nor countries had cash to spare.

But important changes would soon take place. By the late 1930s many people feared that war was about to break out in Europe. This helped lead to a growth spurt in the Air Corps. In addition, the years between World War I and World War II saw major advances in bombers and pursuit aircraft, or fighter planes.

The Growth of the Army Air Corps

The fear of war was well founded. War shadows grew in Europe during 1938. Germany annexed Austria that year. To annex is to incorporate territory into an existing political unit such as a country. Austria didn’t resist when German troops marched across its borders. Meanwhile, Italy waged war in Africa, and Japan had invaded China.

On 12 January 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke to Congress about the need to rebuild the US military. US forces, he said, were “utterly inadequate.” Three months later, Congress approved increasing the number of Army Air Corps pilot officers from 1,200 to 3,203.

Civilian Flight Schools

Meanwhile, the chief of the Air Corps, Maj Gen Henry “Hap” Arnold, knew the corps didn’t have the facilities to train more than 550 pilots a year. If a second world war broke out, the United States would need to train thousands of pilots a year—far more than the 3,203 pilots authorized by Congress.

Arnold had a great idea. Why not train military pilots in civilian schools? He asked Congress for the funding, but lawmakers turned down his request.

Arnold went ahead with his plan anyway. He approached eight World War I and civilian pilots. He asked them if they would train pilots for the Army. Although he offered no guarantee of pay, all eight agreed to do it. Congress finally authorized contracts for civilian flight schools in July 1939.
Under this plan, volunteers would check in with the Army for a physical and a psychological test. If they passed, they’d attend a civilian flight school close to home. Once a volunteer graduated, a military pilot would take him for a “check ride.” If it went well, the volunteer would report for combat training at an Army base.

Arnold’s idea eventually produced some 110,000 pilots per year. But more were needed.

**Civilian Reserve Pilots**

In 1939 the Air Corps tried another idea: the Civilian Pilot Training Program. Under this program, civilians could volunteer to train as civilian pilots. This reserve of civilian pilots would be available in case of a national emergency. Congress set aside $7 million a year for the program. In 1942 the name was changed to the Civil Aeronautics Authority War Training Service. About 300,000 reserve pilots earned their private-pilot certificates by the time the program ended in 1944.

**Black Pilots**

Black men were not permitted in the Army Air Corps or in the Civilian Pilot Training Program. But two African-American pilots—Dale White and Chauncy Spencer—refused to accept this. They wanted to draw attention to the exclusion of black pilots from the military. So they made a 3,000-mile flight across the United States in May 1939 that brought them through Washington, D.C. While in D.C., they met Senator Harry Truman of Missouri. They told him about their mission. He was impressed and got Congress involved. On 22 March 1941 the all-black 99th Pursuit Squadron of Tuskegee, Alabama, was born. It was made part of the Civilian Pilot Training Program.

**The Tuskegee Airmen**

Courtesy of AP Photo/USAAF
All three of these steps—civilian flight schools, civilian reserve pilots, and acceptance of black pilots—greatly increased the number of pilots available to the Army Air Corps and helped the United States prepare for war.

**Significant Missions Conducted by the Army Air Corps**

In the 1930s Army Air Corps officers focused on aircraft development. They believed that if they could get the aviation industry to build a powerful, fast aircraft that could travel long distances, they could fulfill Billy Mitchell’s dream of a long-range bomber.

Airplane manufacturers at that time were focusing on commercial aircraft—because that’s where the money was. To get the manufacturers’ attention, the Army Air Corps held a design competition for a multiengine bomber.

As you read in the previous lesson, Douglas Aircraft came out with two commercial aircraft, the DC-2 (1934) and the DC-3 (1936) about this same time. These aircraft put Boeing’s commercial 247 out of date. Army officers gave Boeing a suggestion for its entry in the design competition. Instead of using a typical two-engine plane, they said, why not design a four-engine aircraft? Boeing did just that—building the Boeing 299.

Boeing’s 299 flew to the contest site at Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio, in July 1935. It won the Army competition easily. The aircraft had speed, range, and altitude. The Air Corps ordered 13 of them. It renamed the plane the B-17. The corps could now finally fly long-range strategic bombing missions using one of the most important aircraft of this era.
The B-17 was faster than any pursuit aircraft in the United States. This made the Army realize that it now needed better pursuit planes. It signed contracts for the Curtiss P-36 and the Seversky P-35. (The “P” stands for “pursuit.”) These aircraft could guard American bombers and attack enemy bombers. It developed other important pursuit aircraft, as well. When the United States entered World War II, it had Lockheed P-38s, Bell P-39s, and Curtiss P-40s in its pursuit arsenal.

One more important invention took place during these years. The Army borrowed the Norden Mark XV bombsight from the Navy to use in B-17s. This allowed the Air Corps to conduct precision daylight bombing by just a few aircraft in a tight formation instead of raids by a large number of planes saturating a wide area.

The Air Force’s Path Toward Independence

The Army Air Corps officially became the Army Air Forces on 20 June 1941. The new Air Force remained under the command of the Army. But it could now oversee its own functions in combat, training, and maintenance. Maj Gen “Hap” Arnold took command of the Army Air Forces.

The Rationale of Advocates for an Independent Air Force

After Brig Gen Mitchell’s resignation in 1926, others carried his ideas forward. The foundation of his air-power theory was the long-range bomber. Once Boeing built the B-17, long-range bombing missions could become a reality. Here was a concrete reason for an independent air service. Air power was an offensive weapon. It could strike at military bases and factories in enemy lands. It could do much more than protect ground troops. And it didn’t need to be under the command of Army officers.

As long as air power was a part of the Army, air advocates believed it would remain underfunded and underdeveloped. They were right—air power was suffering. As late as 1928, the Army placed greater emphasis on observation aircraft than on bombers.

In 1934, air power faced another setback. President Roosevelt turned over airmail delivery to the corps. Within short order, nine fatal crashes occurred. The crashes were not entirely the corps’ fault. It didn’t have enough money, for one thing. Its aircraft weren’t outfitted with night instrument panels and other equipment. Pilots weren’t well trained for night flight. These things made it clear to such people as Mitchell that air power needed to go its own path to grow.
The Rationale of Objectors to an Independent Air Force

The Army General Staff was the biggest proponent of keeping the Air Corps in the Army. The Army was, after all, steeped in history. Ground forces had been a part of war for thousands of years. Many in the Army saw air power as no more than long-range artillery. They wanted the Army to keep total control of its air arm, just as the Navy controlled its own air arm. But major advances in technology such as the B-17 would make the old ways more difficult to maintain.

Maj Gen Benjamin Foulois: From Army’s First Pilot to Air Chief

Benjamin Foulois (1879–1967) started his military career as an enlistee. He spent the last four years of his career as chief of the Air Corps—quite a leap. Like Brig Gen Billy Mitchell, he spoke out for an independent air force.

Foulois was only 5 feet, 6 inches, tall. But he loved adventure. And he loved to fly. Even when he was chief of the Air Corps, he spent more time in the air than many of his junior officers.

Even in his early years of service, Foulois achieved several milestones. He became the Army Signal Corps’ first pilot when he flew Dirigible No. 1 in 1908. He rode with Orville Wright in 1909. With the Wrights’ help, he learned to pilot a plane while stationed at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Foulois served in World War I at home and abroad. After the war, he testified before the Senate Military Affairs Committee. He suggested that the committee sponsor a bill to create an air department.

Foulois held strong opinions, which helped and hurt him throughout his career. In oral and written statements, he criticized the Army and Navy for failing to support an independent air force. Nonetheless, he ended up as chief of the Air Corps from 1931 to 1935. He resigned in 1935 when he came under attack for the Air Corps’ mishandling of the airmail mission.
Creation of a Separate Air Corps Headquarters

When two sides can’t agree, a compromise is often necessary. In 1933, Maj Gen Hugh Drum headed an Army board that explored possible changes in the structure of the Air Corps. The board recommended that the War Department form a General Headquarters Air Force (GHQ). The GHQ would command the aerial combat arm. The Air Corps would retain training and logistical duties. Logistics is the aspect of military operations that deals with the procurement, distribution, maintenance, and replacement of materiel and personnel. Secretary of War George H. Dern endorsed the plan. But nothing happened for a few years.

In 1934, the War Department set up another board. Former Secretary of War Newton Baker chaired this group. It, too, proposed a combat group separate from training and logistical duties.

The recommendations of the Drum and Baker boards were implemented in March 1935, when the GHQ set up camp at Langley Field, Virginia. GHQ remained within the Air Corps and answered to the Army. Brig Gen Frank Andrews was senior officer of GHQ. In the past, Air Corps commanders had shared responsibility for tactical units. Now all combat aircraft would fall under Andrews’s command. During peacetime, Andrews would answer to the Army chief of staff. In war, he’d report to a regional combat commander.

With the formation of the Army Air Forces in June 1941, the Air Corps and GHQ now fell under unified control. Maj Gen Arnold was in charge of the Air Forces. Under him was Maj Gen George Brett, who was chief of the Air Corps. Lt Gen Delos C. Emmons headed the new Air Force Combat Command (formerly known as the GHQ).

This last change came not a moment too soon. By the end of the year, the United States would find itself fully engaged in war in both Europe and the Pacific. The experiences gained during that war, and the performance of the Army Air Forces, would finally lead to complete autonomy—indepen-dence—of the US Air Force with the passage of the National Security Act of 1947.
CHECKPOINTS

Lesson 1 Review

Using complete sentences, answer the following questions on a sheet of paper.

1. What was the name of the captured German battleship that was supposed to be unsinkable?
2. Which American president established the Army Air Service in May 1918?
3. What is the name of the Army air branch that Congress created in 1926?
4. What happened to Brig Gen Billy Mitchell when he criticized senior officers in the Army and Navy?
5. What is Col Ulysses Nero considered the father of?
6. Why did President Roosevelt ask Congress in 1939 to increase the number of officers in the Army Air Corps?
7. When the Army Air Corps didn’t have enough facilities to train pilots, what was one of the programs the corps set up?
8. What was one of the most important aircraft the Army Air Corps ordered during the 1930s?

Applying Your Learning

9. Why do you think it took so many years to convince Congress that the Air Force should be independent, rather than a branch of the Army?