

# ACC HQ named in memory of Lt. Gen. Andrews

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Today, the renovated headquarters building of Air Combat Command is being named in memory of Lt. Gen. Frank M. Andrews.

March 1 marked the 68th anniversary of the War Department's activation at Langley Field of "General Headquarters Air Force (GHQ-AF)," which centralized command nationwide over all Air Corps combat units under a single air officer — Frank M. Andrews.

Andrews had graduated from the Air Corps Tactical School at Langley in 1928, and was immediate past commander of the historic 1st Pursuit Group, forerunner of the 1st Fighter Wing. In the reorganization, Andrews was advanced to general officer level and the Air Corps' four bombardment, three attack and two pursuit groups (including the 1st) were allocated among three GHQ Air Force composite wings, headquartered on the Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific coasts.

Prior to this, higher command of Army air combat units in the United States had been fragmented among the commanding generals of the various Corps Areas. This dramatic change was the first step to a separate postwar Air Force.

During four pivotal pre war years at the helm of America's Air Force, Andrews initiated sweeping and fundamental changes to the organization, training, deployment and equipping of air combat units — often in the face of formidable opposition from the War Department. Andrews' strong emphasis on proficiency in flying, shooting and bombing helped to create the foundation for combat air forces.

In March 1939, after Andrews completed his command tour in Virginia, he reverted briefly to his permanent grade of colonel because of the War Department's displeasure with his advocacy of the four-engine bomber. But in July 1939, on the eve of the outbreak of war in Europe, a new Army Chief of Staff, Gen. George C. Marshall, restored him to general officer rank and brought him to Washington to serve in



**Portrait of Maj. Gen. Frank M. Andrews in his Langley years as the GHQ Air Force commander.**

the General Staff of the Army, overseeing operations and training. Andrews was the first airman to head one of the five War Department General Staff Divisions.

In fall 1940 President Roosevelt suggested that Marshall send Andrews to the Canal Zone to organize and lead the air defenses of the Panama Canal. His Caribbean Air Force (later Sixth Air Force) became the model for numbered air forces in overseas theaters of operations.

In September 1941, as tensions with Japan grew more ominous, Marshall advanced Andrews to lieutenant general and placed him in charge of the Caribbean Defense Command. Andrews was the first airman to head a joint forces command overseas. Caribbean Defense Command became the model for war fighting commands in overseas theaters of operations.

Late in 1942, Marshall sent Andrews to Cairo as theater commander for U.S. Forces in the Middle East. There, he established the Ninth Air Force that routed Rommel's Africa Corps in the Western Desert.

By early 1943, as the result of high-level decisions at the Casablanca Conference, Andrews was named overall commander of the European Theater of Operations. There he was responsible for direction of the American strategic air campaign against Germany and



**Maj. Gen. Frank M. Andrews, commanding general of GHQ Air Force, and his staff, pose in front of their headquarters building, now the headquarters of Air Combat Command, at Langley Field March 1, 1939, just before Andrews' reassignment.**

planning the invasion of Europe.

Three months later, Andrews was killed in the crash of a B-24 Liberator bomber on a mountaintop in Iceland. His untimely death on May 3, 1943 was viewed as a loss of immense proportions. Marshall himself ranked Andrews as one of the nation's "few great captains."

In 1945, General Henry "Hap" Arnold caused Camp Springs Army Airfield, near Washington, D.C., to be named Andrews Field, later becoming Andrews AFB, the "gateway to the capital."

Andrews' significance lies in the crucial role he had in the evolution of the Army air arm into a separate service. The early postwar combat commands of the Army Air Forces — Strategic Air Command, Tactical Air Command and Air Defense Command — were based on the wartime numbered air forces that had originated in GHQ Air Force representing bombardment, attack and fighter missions.

When a separate Air Force was established two years after the end of the war, the National Security Act of 1947 transferred the statutory functions

of the old GHQ Air Force to the Chief of Staff of the new United States Air Force. That transfer represented Andrews' legacy to the postwar Air Force whose birth he did not live to see.

More than 40 years later, after the Cold War, command and control doctrine for air combat forces came full circle as distinctions between strategic and tactical missions blurred. The result was a reemergence of the prewar concept of a single command for air combat forces.

In June 1992, the Air Force replaced its two remaining CONUS-based combat commands with the new Air Combat Command, which once again centralized control nationwide of all domestic air combat units—bombardment, attack, fighter—under a single air officer at Langley.

Directed from the same historic building that GHQ Air Force used, the Air Combat Command of 1992 had striking conceptual similarities to the prototype major air command Andrews established at Langley in 1935.

That parallel serves as an ongoing reminder of the role Andrews played as a founding father of the Air Force.



Courtesy photo

**Newly advanced to general officer, Frank M. Andrews and his staff stand on the flightline at Langley Field on March 6, 1935 watching an aerial review commemorating the activation on March 1, 1935, of GHQ Air Force, the War Department's prototype air combat command, which, for the first time ever, centralized command nationwide over all Air Corps combat units by a single air officer.**

## Lt. Gen. Frank Maxwell Andrews

1884-1943

⇒ Organized and led the prewar GHQ Air Force, the first major step on the road to the postwar U.S. Air Force (1935-39)

⇒ First airman to head a War Department General Staff Division (1939-40)

⇒ First airman to command a joint forces theater command overseas, creating the model for later theater commands in the Middle East and Europe (1941-42)

⇒ Directed the American strategic air campaign against Germany and the invasion planning, as Commander of the European Theater of Operations (1943)

## The Ceremony

The renovated Air Combat Command headquarters building, originally designed in 1917, is scheduled to be formally dedicated as the Andrews Headquarters Building in a ceremony at 10 a.m. today at 205 Dodd Boulevard.

Gen. Hal Hornburg, commander of ACC, will officiate the ceremony, which will be attended by Lt. Gen. Frank Andrews' son, Allen Andrews, and his youngest daughter, Jean Andrews Peterson, and their families and friends. Among others scheduled to attend is one of the original members of GHQ Air Force.

Music will be provided by the ACC Heritage of America Band with Jay Welsh providing opening remarks. A plaque commemorating the event and Lt. Gen. Andrews will also be unveiled.