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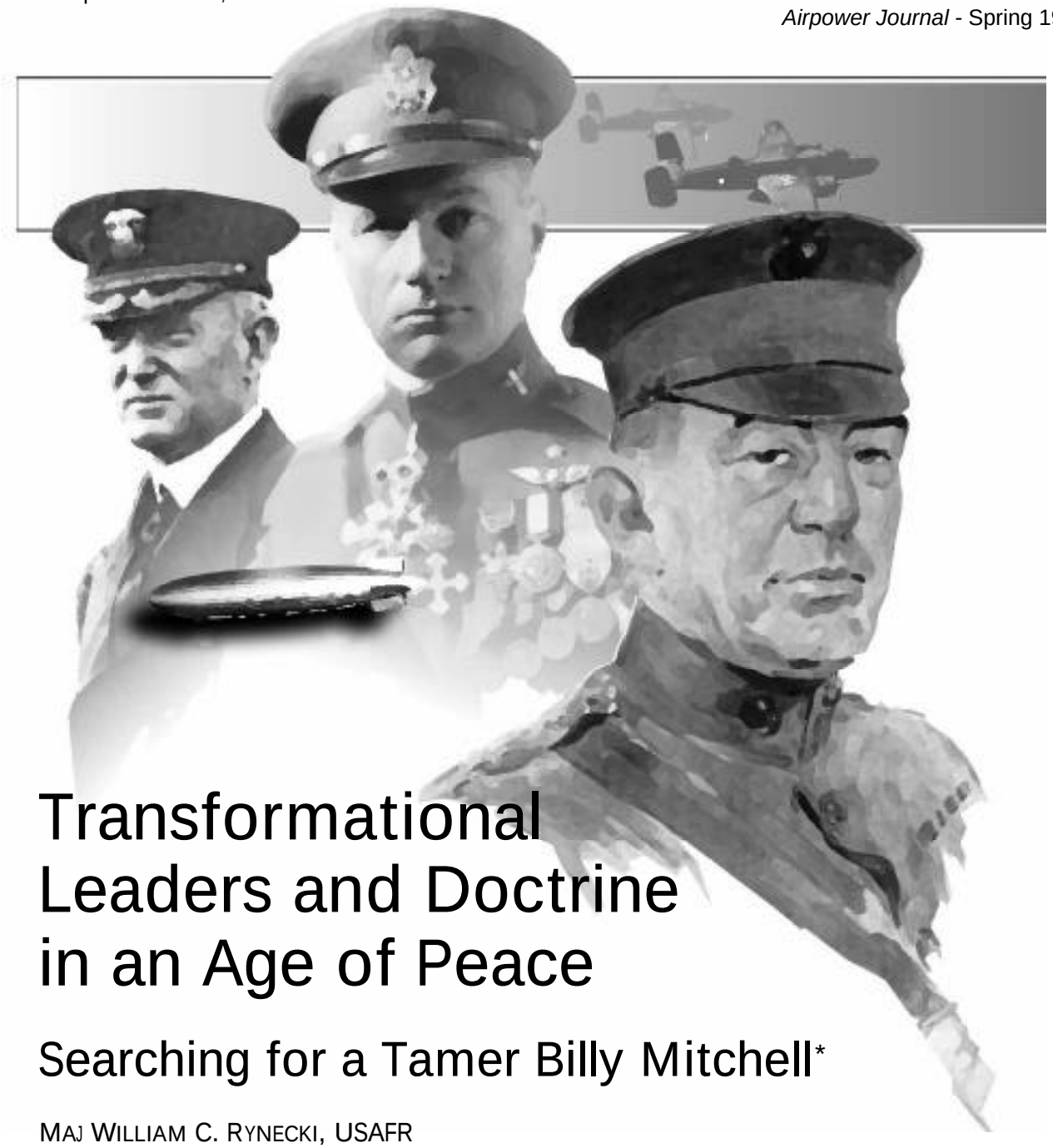

Transformational Leaders and Doctrine in an Age of Peace

Searching for a Tamer Billy Mitchell*

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THIS ARTICLE IS about three interwar transformational American military leaders: Maj Gen John A. Lejeune, Marine Corps commandant; Adm William A. Moffett; and William "Billy" Mitchell. This 20-year interlude between the world wars marked a time of great social, economic, political, and technological change in the developed world. During that "age of peace," these men individually and collectively saved, changed, and created military institutions and fundamentally redefined the air doctrine of the US Marine Corps, Navy, and Army Air Corps.[1] The doctrinal seeds were

*I would like to thank Maj John Reese for his invaluable guidance on Adm William A. Moffett, Mr. Budd Jones for allowing me to change course relatively late in the academic year and giving me great sources and encouragement to carry on, and Captain Tomislav of the Croation Air Force for his invaluable technical assistance.

Upon the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that, upon other fields, on other days will bear the fruits of victory.

—Douglas MacArthur

planted in response to the force-on-force carnage of World War I, the ideas germinated in the rough growing season of the interwar period, and the blooming of doctrine during World War II with its actual employment on the battlefields and oceans of the world.

These men are still important and relevant today because they influenced two important areas. The first area is doctrine—how their service should best go about doing its mission when defending the United States. The second area is their influence on organization, training, allocation of resources, force structure, and personnel. These issues are very much a part of the "jointness" debate, particularly the doctrinal debate within the Air Force today.

The fundamental question this article attempts to answer is, In times of great change, how do successful transformational military leaders guide or attempt to guide their services through these periods? To answer this question as the Air Force turns 50 and prepares for a new century, the article follows these three extraordinary leaders from their early years during the interwar period, examines their doctrinal legacy, and parlays their experience into lessons learned.

While not as famous (or infamous) as some "great captains" in military history, John Archer Lejeune, William Moffett, and Billy Mitchell compare favorably with history's great contributors to military theory and doctrine. They were contemporaries and made their mark by influencing future service organization and doctrine during their lifetime. Also, their influence on service doctrine and organization did not manifest itself in combat effectiveness or institutional recognition until after all three were long retired or deceased.

During the 1920s, General Lejeune led the Marine Corps through the institutional equivalent of wintering at Valley Forge. He fostered a climate in which the Marine Corps redefined itself to adopt amphibious assault and maneuver warfare doctrine, ultimately saving the corps. Admiral Moffett walked softly but carried a big institutional stick in mastering the Washington political scene as head of the Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics—a venue that allowed him a secure institutional forum to champion the airplane's role in revolutionizing naval warfare. And, finally, General Mitchell campaigned relentlessly to heighten what he considered to be institutional neglect of airpower's potential in warfare. He argued vehemently for an independent air force to effectively manage this new dimension in military technology. But, like many of history's forward thinkers, Mitchell did not live to see his dream realized.

The journey with these remarkable men begins with John Archer Lejeune. Of the three, Lejeune is the most revered of the trio due to his lasting impact on the daily life of the corps, including the emphasis on extemporaneous speaking by its officers, the establishment of the first professional military journal (the *Marine Corps Gazette*), and the initiation of the tradition of formally celebrating the corps's birthday on 10 November anywhere in the world where two or more marines gather.

In the final analysis the size of the Marine Corps will be determined by the American people. We must consider, therefore, how we can retain and if possible increase the affection and esteem in which the Marine Corps is now held by the American people.

—John A. Lejeune

"Somewhere in their history," writes Tom Clancy, "the members of the [Marine] Corps seem to have gotten a reputation for being simple-minded jarheads," when in fact they "have been among the most innovative of the world's military forces."[2] The man most responsible for initiating that doctrinal innovation and sustaining a measure of intellectual rigor in the service was General Lejeune, the 13th commandant of the Marine Corps.

Although Lejeune grew up poor in post–Civil War Louisiana, he retained happy childhood memories of gathering honey and hunting small game with his dad. In 1881 Lejeune became a military cadet at Louisiana State University. Three years later, he entered the US Naval Academy, Class of 1888. Following graduation, his mandatory cruise, and another set of rigorous exams, Lejeune found that he "nurtured a growing dislike for life at sea and the Navy in particular."[3] So he fought hard, showing shrewd political skills that he would employ throughout his career, to secure a commission in the Marine Corps. This was a career decision newly opened to his year group, but it was highly unusual by Navy standards. Lejeune personally made his case to the Bureau of Navigation chief, who ultimately allowed Lejeune to transfer services but told the persistent cadet, "You have too many brains to be lost in the Marine Corps."[4]

Early assignments took Lejeune to the western United States, the Caribbean and Cuba during the Spanish-American War, and Mexico at the beginning of the Mexican Revolution. Several years later, he impressed many by his performance at Army War College. At the time, he was one of the few marines to attend senior service school. From 1915 to 1917, Lejeune served as assistant to the commandant, where he learned the intricacies of Washington political life. Prior to US involvement in World War I, Lejeune commanded the Overseas Depot at Quantico.[5]

Brigadier General Lejeune arrived in France in June 1918 and quickly made an impact. The American Expeditionary Force (AEF) commander, Gen John Pershing, resisted attempts by the Marine Corps leadership, including Lejeune, to employ the corps in an amphibious role in the Baltic or Adriatic Sea. Pershing argued that "our land forces must be homogeneous in every respect" and advised against their use as a separate division.[6] Lejeune's reputation among the AEF senior staff, many of whom he knew from Army War College, was impeccable. In Europe, Lejeune commanded the Army's 64th Infantry Brigade and the 4th Marine Brigade before earning his second star and assuming command of the 2d Marine Infantry Division on 28 July 1918.[7] Even though he would later serve nine years as Marine Corps commandant, Lejeune considered this the pinnacle of his military career. The 2d Division conducted sustained ground operations with distinction in France. Unlike Pershing's style of intimidating subordinates, Lejeune chose to lead by gaining the "loyalty and devotion of his men."[8] From the Armistice to the middle of 1919, Lejeune's division occupied an area around the bridgehead at Coblenz on the Rhine. He returned from Europe later that year. After meeting with President Woodrow Wilson and the man he would soon replace as Marine Corps commandant, Maj Gen George Barnett, Lejeune returned to Virginia and

assumed command of the new Marine training center at Quantico.[9]

It is said that successful military officers, in addition to being extremely capable, have mentors who help them along. In Lejeune's case, his relationship to Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels was key. Daniels had admired Lejeune's straightforward and professional style when Lejeune served as assistant to the commandant from 1914–17. In addition, Lejeune had an impressive war record, a great mind, and the leadership skills necessary to run the corps. Daniels had never supported General Barnett as commandant. In fact, Barnett had gotten the job over Daniels's objections. In the summer of 1920, when it appeared that a Republican would capture the White House, Daniels ousted Barnett and replaced him with Lejeune, whom the Democrats supported.

Lejeune's change of command was as unceremonious as it was brief. Before noon on 30 June 1920, Lejeune reported to Barnett's office. Barnett asked him why he failed to inform him of Daniels's plot. Lejeune replied that his hands were tied. Barnett ordered Lejeune to stand at attention in front of his desk. The outgoing commandant charged his subordinate with disloyalty, unprofessional conduct, and being a false friend. At twelve o'clock, Barnett ordered an aide-de-camp to remove one star from his (Barnett's shoulders) and marched out of the office without so much as a handshake with Lejeune.[10]

After Warren Harding's election in November, the Senate set aside Lejeune's confirmation until the new president took office. On 4 March 1921, Lejeune, still unsure of his future, headed to the Capitol to attend Harding's swearing-in ceremony. As the crowds gathered, Navy Secretary-designate Edwin Denby approached Lejeune. Denby came right to the point: "General Lejeune, would you serve as Commandant of the Marine Corps during my administration?"[11] Meanwhile, across town at the Navy Department, Adm William Moffett was preparing to take over as head of the newly created Bureau of Aeronautics.

Naval aviation's striking power, versatility, and mobility are essential for controlling the seas and littoral areas while defending the fleet and other friendly forces in assigned operating areas against all enemy threats.

—AU-16, *Employment of Navy and Marine Forces*

Like Lejeune, William Moffett grew up in the South and graduated from the Naval Academy when Capt Alfred Thayer Mahan was still on the faculty. Following graduation in 1892, Moffett followed the typical career path of mostly sea duty interrupted with the occasional shore assignment. He made a name for himself in this "Battleship Navy" when he first became aware of the potential of naval aviation for fleet defense as commandant of the Great Lakes Naval Training Center for naval aviators and mechanics. At Great Lakes, Moffett earned a reputation as a brilliant administrator during the naval aviation buildup for World War I. He became good friends with chewing-gum magnate William Wrigley Jr. and aviation trainee Joseph Pulitzer, editor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Both would later help Moffett keep his job as head of the Bureau of Aeronautics. By early 1918, some two thousand aviation students were in training.[12]

After the war, Moffett gained a key assignment as commander of the battleship *Mississippi*. While skipper of the *Mississippi*, he witnessed the battleship *Texas* operating with "flying-off platforms" that enabled small aircraft to be flown off the ship. But the wheeled planes could not recover on the platforms, having to either land ashore or ditch alongside the ship after completing their missions. Not to be outdone, Moffett had his men build

flying-off platforms on his ship. The *Mississippi* operated with a pair of Sopwith Camels while in Guantánamo, Cuba.[13] The dual experience at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center and the aircraft tests off the battleship inspired Moffett, who was slowly becoming a naval airpower enthusiast.

In early 1919, Lt Comdr Jerome Hunsaker returned from Europe aboard the same ship as Army general and airpower advocate Billy Mitchell. Hunsaker warned his superiors that Mitchell meant business. In early April that year, Mitchell appeared before the Navy's General Board and testified that warships could not effectively defend themselves from air attack and that land-based aircraft could defend the nation's coastlines out as far as one hundred miles.[14] That claim rankled the stodgy naval leadership. But more alarming to naval aviators were Mitchell's calls that "they [the Navy] and their airplanes . . . be incorporated into an independent air force."[15] For Moffett, Mitchell's assertions represented an institutional slap in the face regarding the Navy's institutional prerogatives to defend the fleet with its organic, land-based air arm and the evolving aircraft carrier.

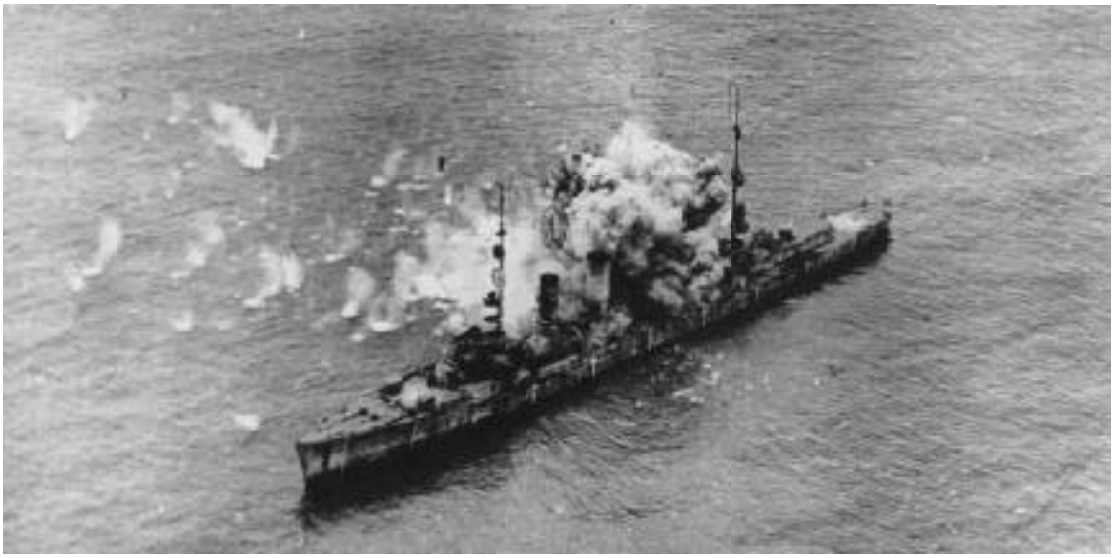
After he relinquished command of the *Mi*ssissippi in December 1920, Moffett was selected by Adm Robert Coontz, chief of naval operations, to be director of naval aviation. The job carried little administrative authority as part of the all-powerful Bureau of Navigation. That soon changed. Mitchell's calls for a separate air arm, combined with congressional will to focus on the development of military aviation, brought the issue front and center in Washington. The new Harding administration supported congressional efforts to establish a "centralized Bureau of Aeronautics in the Navy Department." Edwin Denby, the new secretary of the Navy, considered the bureau a vital necessity. By April 1921, Moffett, who came into the job somewhat ambivalent about airpower, was soon a true believer in naval aviation and testified before Congress in support of the separate bureau. An opponent of Mitchell, Sen. Miles Poindexter (R-Wash.) made an impassioned speech on the Senate floor supporting the bureau. In mid-July, both houses passed the bill, and President Harding signed the law that created and established in the Department of the Navy a Bureau of Aeronautics headed by a chief and appointed by the president for a four-year term. After Harding appointed Moffett to his first term, Presidents Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover reappointed him.[16]

Moffett realized relatively late the significance of airpower in both its offensive role and as a weapon for fleet defense. In fact, many historians argue that Billy Mitchell was responsible for making Moffett and the Navy what Mitchell's biographer Alfred Hurley calls being "airconscious." No matter the real reason for his conversion, Moffett, armed with his newfound authority, was more than ready for the battle with Mitchell to decide institutional control over this emerging technology.

A man might be a flyer and still be an egregious ass. In fact, I think there have recently been some instances of that kind.

—Sen. Miles Poindexter

Mitchell, born in France in 1879, came into a world of some comfort. His grandfather was a self-made millionaire and his father a United States senator—circumstances Mitchell would later call a "fair foundation" upon which he built his aviation career.[17] Searching for an active life, Mitchell found his niche in the Army during the Spanish-American War and gained a commission in the First Wisconsin Volunteer Signal Company in the Signal Corps, the Army branch that would soon oversee the evolving airplane. Unlike Moffett and Lejeune, who



General Mitchell's bombing tests. Many historians argue that Billy Mitchell was responsible for making [Admiral] Moffett and the Navy "air conscious."

earned their commissions at the prestigious and rigorous Naval Academy, Mitchell obtained his commission with relative ease. "Influence," he once wrote, "cuts a larger figure in this war than merit."[18] So from his earliest experiences, born into a family of wealth and receiving a commission through influence, one can trace the roots of Mitchell's proclivity for getting his way and having a lack of respect for institutional prerogatives.

Mitchell earned his wings at his own expense in early 1917. But it soon paid dividends. Either through merit, extraordinary luck, or his family's political influence, the War Department sent him to Europe as an aeronautical observer. He arrived in France just two weeks before the United States declared war on Germany. During the war, Mitchell commanded an Army engineer regiment in General Lejeune's 2d Division and headed the Army Air Service in France. He was less interested in regular Army command of troops, focusing instead on learning more about the application of airpower in war. He also became somewhat of an Anglophile. "In questions ranging from their grooming of horses to their worldview, Mitchell believed the British to be vastly superior."[19] The impressionable Major Mitchell flattered Maj Gen Hugh Trenchard, commander of the Royal Flying Corps in France, into revealing his views on the role of the air weapon of the present and of the future. Mitchell even took on some of Trenchard's blunt personality traits.

Alfred Hurley writes that the British general believed intensely, and influenced Mitchell's belief, in the air offensive and that command of the air over the battlefield was possible only through "relentless and incessant offensive."[20] Other early theorists also influenced Mitchell. Giulio Douhet and Basil H. Liddell Hart claimed strategic airpower was "the only solution to the grisly indecisiveness of ground warfare."[21] After the Royal Air Force (RAF) was created in 1918, Winston Churchill, minister for war and air, declared that "the first duty of the RAF is to garrison the British Empire."[22] The RAF was initially created to hold down costs of maintaining order in the British Empire, although another principal employment doctrine the RAF developed between the wars stressed independent air operations against the enemy's material

and moral resources. Heavily influenced by Trenchard, Douhet, Liddell Hart, and by RAF operations during the war and after, Mitchell began to form ideas on how air power applied to defending the United States.

Mitchell drew many of his ideas from Trenchard, especially the fundamental conclusion that airpower was primarily an instrument for offensive, not defensive, employment. Mitchell embraced Trenchard's concepts on air supremacy and demonstrated them as chief of the Air Service, 1st Brigade. By the time of the Saint-Mihiel offensive of September 1918, Mitchell was chief of the Air Service, First Army, American Expeditionary Force.[23]

During the war and shortly after, four fundamental points (while not defined as such at the time) became clear in Mitchell's mind and would guide his zealous advocacy in the years to come. First and second, he was convinced the airplane represented a military technology revolution which would, in turn, prompt a revolution in military affairs. Third, this new technology must be used offensively to gain command of the air. And finally, an independent air force would be necessary to consolidate the revolutions and theory into sound employment doctrine. Armed with this revelation, Mitchell returned home from the war like an evangelist who had seen the light and was more than ready to preach the faith to the ignorant.

Mitchell kept his brigadier general rank after the war. But regardless of Mitchell's success, the War Department considered him a loose cannon and placed him under the supervision of a nonflyer, Maj Gen Charles Menoher, the new director of the Air Service.

Disaster and Technology: The Roots of Doctrine after the Great War

This war has marked us for generations. It has left its imprint upon our souls. All those inflamed nights of Verdun we shall rediscover one day in the eyes of our children.

—Artillery Lieutenant de Mazenod

The human suffering and physical devastation personally witnessed by Mitchell and Lejeune in Europe, and watched closely by Moffett at Great Lakes, impacted them as much, if not more, than the European political and military leaders who had so badly miscalculated. The three men were determined that if another world war came, their service would not repeat such carnage. Therefore, the theoretical approach to war and ways to incorporate emerging land and air technology had to be explored. The climate for seriously exploring these issues existed in the interwar period due to the rare convergence of disaster and technology—a convergence that would profoundly impact Marine Corps amphibious doctrine as well as Army and naval aviation doctrine.

It seemed like a good idea to the European powers when they jumped naked into the "briar patch" in 1914. But the human and material costs of the war were staggering. Considering all those killed or wounded in action and civilian deaths resulting from disease, famine, privation, and wartime birth defects—the final casualty list for the war and beyond might have been as much as 60 million people. Some economists have calculated the war cost the world economy $260 billion, which "represented about six-and-a-half times the sum of all the national debt accumulated in the world from the end of the eighteenth century up to the eve of the First World War."[24] The reverberations of that war were felt most strongly in Europe, where leaders pledged it would never happen again. The war had also profoundly changed America. The nation was now a reluctant world power.

For some, the Great War represented a chasm between the simple nineteenth-century world of their youth and the industrialized postwar "Roaring Twenties" America. Writers like Willa Cather and F. Scott Fitzgerald lamented the loss of their uncomplicated world. Cather expressed that feeling best in her Pulitzer-prize-winning novel *One of Ours*, about Nebraskan farm boy Claude Wheeler. "The army, the war, and France," she wrote, "combined to give Claude the youth he had

never had." When he had had it, he might die. In deed, Willa Cather in sists it was best he should. When he is killed in the fall of 1918, it was "believing his own country is better than it is, and France better than any country can ever be. These beliefs would have perished had he seen the postwar world."[25] Postwar America was a place of extraordinary social, economic, and technological change. It was "an age of peace."

Billy Mitchell hardly la mented the pass ing of the stuffy nineteenth century. He celebrated the new age of high tech nol ogy and all of its possibilities. Mitchell was a realist who believed the war to end all wars did not live up to its name and that the so-called peace treaties that ended it did not herald a return to world peace. His experience in the war convinced him that in the next world war, which was inevitable, airpower would prevent the 1914–18 carnage from reoccurring.

"During the 1920s, the most sensational episodes in American aviation were Mitchell's demonstration in 1921 of how bomb ers could sink bat tle ships and Char les Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic in May 1927."[26] In discussing Billy Mitchell's impact during the volatile postwar era, historian Michael Sherry asked, "How could individualism persist in the wake of mass war and in the midst of mass culture?"[27] In general, he says, the American public came to accept the bomber as an instrument of warfare due in part to the heroics of Mitchell and Lindbergh. Although the concept of fu ture aer ial war was purely ab stract for most Americans, they felt a sense of security in airpower, and their attraction to it deepened during the 1920s.[28]

"Almost from the beginning," writes Isaac Don Levine, another Mitchell biographer, "Mitchell's struggle for air power took on the char ac ter of a chal lenge to sea power . . . es pecially the battleship."[29] Here lies the crux of the institutional battles for control of whether the Army and Navy would maintain separate air arms or whether airpower would be controlled by an independent air force. Presi dent Harding en cour aged the mili tary to

In short, the Air Force needs a tamer Billy Mitchell.

plan new strategies and move into new weapons development, especially after limits on capital ship development were agreed to by the world naval powers participating in the Wash ing ton Na val Con fer ence, which his administra tion had spon sored. Harding be came a strong advocate of airpower and was intrigued by Mitchell's ideas.[30] Al ready the line was being drawn all over the world between the two schools of thought on the issue of capi tal ships. Mitchell's vi sion of na tional defense deep ened the line, and his drive to demonstrate that the battleship was a weapon of the past was cal cu lated to bring the con flict to a head.[31]

Mitchell's public campaign for government-sponsored bombing tests on Navy battleships finally paid dividends in early 1921. The *New York Times* editorialized that the nation could not afford to ignore Mitchell's claims.[32] Mitchell won this battle with the Navy but would lose the ensuing bu reau cratic war. In ad di tion, Mitchell's de-

mands for bombing tests woke up the Navy to the significance of aviation—to what Alfred Hurley calls the Navy's "aviation consciousness." In pursuing this new consciousness, the Navy had the clear advantage in institutional and bureaucratic infrastructure to successfully battle Mitchell. In July 1921, Congress authorized the Bureau of Aeronautics to be headed by Admiral Moffett, who proved to be a shrewder campaigner than Mitchell and one of his most formidable antagonists.[33] While the airplane fascinated Mitchell and most Americans, it heightened Navy awareness to the implications of airpower to fleet defense and caused huge fissures within the Navy bureaucracy. Moffett's biographer, William Trimble, argues that as chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, Moffett's considerable political skills enabled him to successfully wage a three-front campaign to make Washington more conscious of naval air.[34]

Mitchell's battles with Moffett and the Navy and his public airpower advocacy eventually led the Army to successfully marginalize his influence within the institution by trying him for insubordination.

He had first to confront some of the lower-ranking true believers like Henry Mustin and Kenneth Whiting, both naval aviators and "ardent converts to aviation and unswerving in their certainty that the airplane would revolutionize naval warfare."[35] Some of them advocated establishing a separate aviation corps within the Navy, which Moffett opposed. He felt separation would prevent the full integration of aviation into the fleet. Then there were the "battleship admirals" who scorned naval aviation and ran the all-powerful Bureau of Navigation, which had a virtual stranglehold on personnel selection, assignment, and promotion. Finally, on the third front was Billy Mitchell. Mitchell argued that the airplane and the airship brought an entirely new dimension to warfare and that aviation alone could fight and win the nation's wars. He believed that long-range bombers had such enormous destructive capacity that neither navies or armies could resist it. Mitchell believed strongly that to fully realize airpower's military potential, it was necessary to have a separate air force "supplied with the most up-to-date equipment, flown by trained air personnel, and led by officers who were unencumbered by ties to either the Army or the Navy."[36]

During the tumultuous 1920s, Moffett deftly choreographed the growing airpower debate in the Navy's favor by simultaneously succoring his naval aviation colleagues, soothing the admirals who were battleship curmudgeons, and bureaucratically outmaneuvering Billy Mitchell.

There was no professional love lost between Moffett and Mitchell. Their most public confrontation came during the Washington Naval Conference when they both served on a special subcommittee to consider the quantitative and qualitative limitations of aircraft. As Moffett recalled, "When Mitchell breezed in with a secretary, all ready to take the chair, I inquired by what authority he pretended to assume the chairmanship. He mumbled something about rank. 'Since when,' I demanded, 'does a one-star brigadier rate a two-star admiral?' That stopped him."[37] To keep him out of more mischief, Mitchell was whisked off to Europe on an inspection tour of military aviation facilities. Maj Gen Mason Patrick represented Army aviation for the balance of the conference.[38]

The Doctrine Articulated

> *The history of warfare is the history of doctrine. . . .* We have a doctrine for landing on beaches, a doctrine for bombing, a doctrine for AirLand Battle. . . . What is missing . . . is a doctrine for information.
>
> —Paul Strassmann

Few doubt Mitchell's genuine belief in the efficacy of strategic airpower to strike enemy vital centers and the need for an independent air force to most effectively employ the newest weapon the military instrument possessed. Nonetheless, Mitchell's battles with Moffett and the Navy and his public airpower advocacy eventually led the Army to successfully marginalize his influence within the institution by trying him for insubordination. Mitchell knew that his public statements left the Army little choice but to act. He calculated that the publicity of a trial and beyond, although leaving him virtually irrelevant within the institution, would further his goals for airpower and allow him the freedom to speak his mind through the media and organizations such as the American Legion and what we know today as the Air Force Association. At the same time, Lejeune and Moffett, while equally frustrated by the bureaucratic tangling over their attempts to shape and influence service doctrine regarding amphibious warfare and naval aviation, successfully made their case within institutional boundaries.

As Sir Michael Howard points out in his brilliant Chesney Memorial Gold Medal Lecture in 1973, "The military profession is, like other professions, also a bureaucracy, and bureaucracies accommodate themselves with great difficulty to outstanding original thinkers. Such people tend to be difficult colleagues, bad organization men."[39] Mitchell was well ahead of his time in advocating strategic bombing, in warning of the threat from Japan, in recommending a department of national defense, and in encouraging jointness. While none of these ends were evidence of original thinking, much of what he advocated had considerable merit and was worth serious consideration. But his means in advocating and publicizing his views were fundamentally flawed.

As late as 1928, the Army General Staff viewed airpower as essentially an auxiliary function and gave observation planes priority over bombers at budget time. Mitchell saw it quite differently. Influenced as he was by Giulio Douhet and Hugh Trenchard, Mitchell did not deny the usefulness of observation, pursuit, and short-range bombardment, but believed that military aviation's greatest potential lay in its offensive capability. The outcome of a war could be decided by long-range bombers.[40]

His brash style when advocating airpower while on active duty continued afterward in a series of articles, speeches, and radio broadcasts. Mitchell argued that "the air force has ceased to remain a mere auxiliary service for the purpose of assisting an army or navy in the execution of its task."[41] In two articles in *Collier's* magazine, he made an impassioned case for an air force to deny enemy air attacks and used New York to illustrate his vital centers theory. Mitchell pointed out that attacks on civilian populations would have enormous impact on the outcome of a conflict and should be considered a key center of gravity.[42]

Even with Mitchell officially out of the Air Service, students and faculty at the Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) at Maxwell Field, Alabama, agreed with Mitchell's assertions of striking the enemy's vital centers instead of undertaking massive battles of attrition. ACTS theorists argued that the key to victory in modern warfare relied upon destruction and/or paralysis of a country's supporting infrastructure. The most suitable objectives for this purpose were the hostile air force, troops, supplies, lines of communication, and industrial and transportation centers. ACTS integrated the theories of Douhet, Trenchard, and Mitchell and added a rigorous system analysis of an adversary's ability to conduct and sustain war, thus ultimately creating its strategic bombardment theory.[43]

Because Mitchell could no longer directly influence airpower theory after leaving the Army, ACTS became the key link that translated his and other early airpower theorists' ideas into doctrine. The four ACTS instructors who wrote Air War Planning Document-1 (AWPD-1) in just nine days in 1941 made their own theoretical contributions to the document but relied heavily on the ideas of Mitchell and others to flesh out their recommendations. The plan, however flawed, became the blueprint for the generally success-

ful employment of airpower in World War II.[44]

Mitchell's efforts to impact airpower theory as a uniformed officer, while unorthodox, undoubtedly generated much-needed debate on the subject among the sometimes moribund War and Navy Department bureaucracy. This is best illustrated by a cartoon in Mitchell's *Winged Defense*. It shows War and Navy Department bureaucrats in bed together fast asleep, oblivious to the sun rising outside their window announcing "the flying age" as hundreds of airplanes zoom overhead.[45] His dream of an independent air force would not come true until 11 years after his death on 17 February 1936. "Those who saw him in his last days," Hurley concludes, "reported that he remained adamant to the end."[46]

As adamant as Mitchell remained in calling for the creation of an independent air force, Marine Corps commandant Lejeune dedicated all his energies to saving the Marine Corps from the cutting-room floor, thanks in large part to Maj Earl H. "Pete" Ellis, "a brilliant but behaviorally erratic strategist."[47]

Ellis's 1921 paper, *Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia*, advocated amphibious attacks to secure advanced naval bases. It shocked the conventional world. Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr. offers this analysis:

> [Ellis] argued that the Marine Corps' future did not rest upon its ability to conduct sustained ground operations, as it had done with distinction in France during World War I. Nor did it lie in earlier missions, such as the *defense* (his italics) of advanced bases for the Navy. Rather, Ellis argued that in the future the Marines would confront fundamentally new and different kinds of strategic and operational challenges. Principally, he was concerned about the potential threat the Japanese Empire posed to American interests in the Far East. In a conflict with Japan, the Marines' mission would be to assault heavily defended Japanese bases and capture them, thereby permitting the United States to project its power across the Pacific.[48]

Coming just six years after the British debacle at Gallipoli, Ellis's vision "might have appeared more akin to madness."[49] Far from scrapping Ellis's ideas, Lejeune was intrigued by the possibilities of amphibious warfare and, upon taking over as commandant, created the Expeditionary Force in 1921, based at Quantico, Virginia. For the next three years, the Expeditionary Force maneuvers were an annual social and military event.

The 1922 exercise took place at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and was observed by President Warren G. Harding, Gen John J. Pershing, and Assistant Navy Secretary Franklin D. Roosevelt. At Gettysburg and other Civil War sites, Marines carefully reenacted the Civil War action, and then demonstrated how the battle would be fought with modern weapons. A year earlier, the Expeditionary Force set out from Quantico for the Civil War site of the Battle of the Wilderness. During the so-called Wilderness Maneuvers, Marines delighted the crowds with an occasional aerial or tank attack. Capt John H. Craige, writing in the *Marine Corps Gazette*, summed up the corps's feeling after the Wilderness Maneuvers: "Considered from many viewpoints the manoeuvres [sic] proved completely successful, and the highest value not only to the force at Quantico, but to the Corps as a whole. In the first place, the exercises furnished a sensational demonstration of the fitness of the Marine Corps and its readiness to take the field in any emergency, conducted under the very eyes of the President, his Cabinet and of Congress."[50]

Even though the corps would be unable to continue annual training of the Expeditionary Force concept due to its requirement to support operations ranging from chasing Nicaraguan guerrillas to garrisoning forces in China, the Marines by late 1924 had essentially sold Lejeune's Expeditionary Force to the Coolidge administration and a stingy Congress.[51]

Lejeune espoused the concept of amphibious attacks to secure advanced naval bases and made it "the cornerstone of the Corps' operational concept for the future."[52] The current commandant, Gen Charles C. Krulak,

says that from the combined efforts of Lejeune and the Fleet Marines "came the foundation of the seminal document, *The Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*, from which the Marine Corps developed the doctrine, tactics, and equipment requirements that allowed the Marine Corps and the US Army to successfully project amphibious power in every theater of World War II."[53] Fleet Marine Forces Manual (FMFM) 1, *Warfighting*, codifies Krulak's comments into clear doctrine: "The Marine concept of winning . . . is a doctrine based on rapid, flexible, and opportunistic maneuver." Maneuver "shatters the enemy's cohesion through a series of rapid, violent, and unexpected actions which create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which he cannot cope."[54]

Finally, the contributions of Adm William Moffett to the Navy's overall doctrine of fleet defense and force projection rank with the contributions of Mitchell and Lejeune. Moffett led the Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics for 12 years as its chief proponent for fleet aviation and "maintained the delicate balance of personal and organizational priorities better than any other military officer of his generation."[55] From his early battles with Mitchell, the Washington Naval Conference, the construction of the carriers *Langley*, *Saratoga*, and *Lexington* through the depression years and into the first days of the Roosevelt administration, Moffett operated adroitly around the civilian and military bureaucracy in Washington and knew how to get what he wanted.

In September 1925, two incidents shook naval aviation. The crash of the airship *Shenandoah* killed most of its crew, and a PN-9 en route to Hawaii went missing for a few days. Billy Mitchell, who had been exiled to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, reacted to the incidents by unleashing his pent-up frustration. Mitchell said the crashes demonstrated "the incompetence, criminal negligence and almost treasonable administration of our national defense by the Navy and War Departments." Two weeks later, in stark contrast to Mitchell, Moffett appeared before the Navy's General Board. In his soft Carolina Low Country style, he reiterated the fundamental soundness of his long-term plans for naval aviation and assured the board that lessons had been learned from these accidents. It represented a setback, not the end of naval aviation. These comments soothed the board's anxieties during a difficult period in naval aviation when the public spotlight shown brightly on the growing pains of military aviation generally.[56]

At that same hearing, Moffett discussed how he planned to equip the *Saratoga* and *Lexington*.[57] "He wanted the ships to carry significant numbers of strike aircraft organized into two bomber squadrons for each carrier."[58] Moffett believed that the *Lexington* in particular embodied the principle of the offensive in naval warfare. "I am convinced," he said, "that a bombing attack launched from such carriers from an unknown point, at an unknown instant, with an unknown objective, cannot be warded off" by any conventional defensive measures.[59] It became clear as the *Lexington* and *Saratoga* entered service in 1927 that there was an offensive role for the carrier beyond only supporting battleships in fleet engagement. In their November 1927 report, the General Board formally acknowledged as much, concluding that "the aircraft carrier, operating fighters and bombers well in advance of the battle fleet, was likely to play a major role in future naval actions."[60]

Moffett's ideas are still applicable today in discussing employment of naval air. "Carrier or Amphibious Ready Group–based aircraft may well be the first, and perhaps the only, tactical aircraft suitable and available for employment in an emergency situation arising in a remote area of the world."[61]

All three men had differing styles and approaches to essentially the same problem: redefining how their service would employ forces or weapon systems in the next war that all three men knew was inevitable. But it was probably Billy Mitchell, the most recalcitrant of the trio, who was thinking way out-front. While he espoused a separate air arm, he was also thinking jointness. Among all his rhetoric are some jewels like warning of a Japanese air attack on Hawaii and recommending a na-

tional department of defense rather than separate services each with a cabinet-level secretary. Mitchell might have approved of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, which further weakened the power of the service secretaries and chiefs of staff in favor of empowering regional war-fighting commanders. As the new century approaches, where does the Air Force stand in what is truly becoming what Mitchell envisioned, a joint US national defense force?

In 1947 the newly independent Air Force won the battle for hearts and minds but lost the doctrine war.

Doctrine in the New Century

Any Air Force which does not keep its doctrine ahead of its equipment, and its vision far into the future, can only delude the nation into a false sense of security.

—Hap Arnold

General Arnold's comments more than a half century ago still ring true today. What can be learned from studying how other leaders in other times in other services faced doctrinal challenges in similar transformational times? A great deal. The end of World War I and the end of the cold war have many similarities worth noting. American taxpayers are demanding value for money in the ser-vices they pay for and, in an "age of peace," defense expenditures are closely scrutinized. As Carl Builder has pointed out, the Department of Defense is no longer in a seller's market where a bill for the high cost of defense is simply presented to the American taxpayer for payment. It is now a buyer's market, where more frugal taxpayers have set a limit as to how much they will pay for defense in a post-cold-war world.[62] Today's Air Force must be cognizant of this paradigm shift in taxpayer attitudes.

The United States is moving from a manufacturing base to an information-based economy, and, as in the interwar period, the militaries must be able to adapt to warfare and tactics unknown in the twentieth century. To make this transition with as little disruption as possible, all services, particularly the Air Force, must embrace technological change but at the same time anticipate what Samuel P. Huntington predicts. He says, "Cultural communities are replacing Cold War blocs and the fault lines between civilizations are becoming central lines of conflict in global politics."[63] That means future wars, perhaps internecine struggles within nation or blocs, will not necessarily be solved by technology.

After World War II, the newly independent Air Force broke into two camps, the Strategic Air Command and the Tactical Air Command, straying away from theory and doctrine toward an allegiance to the weapon system or "career field." In 1947 the newly independent Air Force won the battle for hearts and minds but lost the doctrine war. The efforts of Lejeune, Moffett, and Mitchell can be useful in the Air Force's attempt to reconcile its service doctrine with the logical and statutory requirements that it be a joint capability. In that sense, it should be simpler than the bureaucratic wrangling that occurred in the 1920s and 1930s. But it is not that simple. The very definition of doctrine is debatable, and doctrine as a topic in the Air Force is often an uncomfortable conversation.

I. B. Holley's best definition of doctrine in his voluminous writing on the subject is simply "that mode of approach which repeated experience has shown *usually* works best" (emphasis in the original).[64] Gen Ronald Fogleman, in an address last year to the Air Force Air and Space Doctrine Symposium, took Holley's writings on airpower doctrine a step further into the joint arena. "Air Force doctrine," argued Fogleman, "should provide an integrating framework to tie together the various elements of the Air Force team, to show how these elements work together, and provide a basis for integrating airpower with

other forms of combat power in joint operations."[65] This is a tall order for a uniformed service with few leadership development opportunities and a corporateness more enamored with technology than relevance.

The United States Air Force of the late twentieth century faces a challenge for its very survival as an independent service. Richard Szafranski and Martin Libicki argue that "tomorrow's Air Force must posture itself to command the 'high ground' . . . the 'infosphere.'"[66] They go on to say that "central to a redefinition of the Air Force is [a clear understanding of] what it means to be an airman."[67] This basic redefinition must be addressed before an "infosphere" Air Force can be achieved.

To survive, the institution must pursue two seemingly incompatible objectives simultaneously: become a lean and traditional military organization operated like an innovative, profit-making private corporation. In order to meet that challenge and sustain the necessary changes, the Air Force needs transformational leaders to take the organization where it would not otherwise go on its own. The ser-vice must author and publish a widely accepted, thoroughly credible, easily understandable, and user-friendly joint airpower doctrine that can be articulated clearly and convincingly by everyone in the organization. Military doctrine watchers have argued that doctrine "gives commanders standards for a common, effective approach to warfare."[68] But, more importantly, its worth corresponds directly with how well it is known and understood.

Perhaps the Air Force as an institution, as presently organized and constituted, is incapable of producing such transformational leaders or joint doctrine to guide it. If so, the organization must change. It must dramatically change and cultivate leaders to develop, shape, and institutionalize airpower doctrine to a point where its discussion comes as natural to everyone in the Air Force as executives at American Express talk about the credit card industry. The leaders of the twenty-first century must articulate Air Force core competencies to its three core constituencies: shareholders (the American people); board members (the administration and Congress); and employees (the officers, NCOs, and civilians). Air Force leaders must be cultivated with a sound joint doctrinal foundation because personalities and doctrine matter in shaping an organization's success or failure, particularly during this transformational post-cold-war period.

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Only strong, transformational leadership with the necessary political skills to navigate the institutional minefields that lay ahead can convince the war fighter, the administration, and Congress of airpower's doctrinal soundness in the joint arena. They, in turn, must convince the taxpayers of airpower's intrinsic value to the nation's defense. In short, the Air Force needs a tamer Billy Mitchell. ◻

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Mediocrity knows nothing higher than itself; but talent instantly recognizes genius.

—Arthur Conan Doyle