

promising a pardon if Congress ever convicted him. After the month no more military equipment, by law of the newly created Walsh Act, would be allowed to go overseas without the navy's certification that it would not be detrimental to the national defense. Most of America knew this; it was no secret.

Nineteen forty was the year that defense spending jumped dramatically, and with small exceptions would continue jumping thereafter until the year 1991—but, to resume after 9-11. In mid-July of 1940, U.S. Congress overwhelmingly voted \$4 billion to create a two-ocean navy—though by no practical means was it spent in the fiscal year. This whopping undertaking took time. Nevertheless this does not mean that before 1940 defense spending was nonexistent. In 1938, \$1 billion was spent on defenses; one and one half in 1939; in 1941 it was 6.3 billion dollars, meaning that more Americans found themselves working in defense industries and on related equipment.

Usually during the lean thirties, what was the New Dealer's meat was the Army and Navy's poison, and vice-versa. But, the year Europe fell, America could ill afford to be another France, even though the U.S. kept to neutrality. Defense spending, also called military spending, supported by the will of the American people through Congress, reached new heights. But, all these dazzling *remarkabilities* were still peanuts in comparison to Hitler's programs. Between 1933 and 1939 alone Hitler's programs of rearmament cost \$80 billion. And Germany claimed to be an "economically have-not country."

Critics, nonetheless, in and out of U.S. government attacked the expenditures of the four billion dollar national defense program. Its related topics, openly discussed were varied indeed:

Expenditures on airplanes was at an all time high; too high, many said. The Garand rifles were paper-equipment.

The army's recruiting drive was a big flop (this was a popular idea expressed then), and its officer promotion system was described as moss-grown. The navy had its bureaucratic system called feudalistic, the destroyers were top heavy, and the admirals were all jealous of each other.

About the only thing relatively free of attack and mud-spattering were the training of pilots, which started numerically expanding in the late thirties— especially after the remarkable solo flights of Amelia Erbhert and Douglas Corrigan. There was no government push. In 1938, 21,000 pilots were nonmilitary certified pilots. By 1940, it had escalated to 40,000, or in other words, the United States nearly doubled her pilot capacity from the time Hitler strolled into Austria to the time he walked all over Europe.

The average flier was taught in the colleges and universities and in one of the 403 private schools across the U.S.A. When the Selective Service Act was passed, most shifted to military aviation schools which were in the process of being built. Many of the older pilots served as the instructors for the younger generation. The instructors and teachers became the unsung heroes who are often forgotten today, especially when the U.S.A. gave it all it had in the war years 1942-45! At the start of 1941, there were 101,227 graduate pilots. But after Pearl Harbor the training schools would not be able to keep up with the available inflow; in 1942 there were some 350,000 pilots, in 1943, 1,597,049, and by 1944 there existed two million overall.

The air force had a pretty unusual birth when considering its actual importance played in defense and winning the war. Back in the nineteen twenties and thirties most military appropriations went to the battleship navy [ed. note: a substantial sum of money was spent on subs, carriers, for example, yet most went for battleships] while the air corps

received *crumbs*. In the early forties the U.S. Air Force was officially called the Army Air Corps until June 20, 1941, when it became the U.S. Army Air Force. Not until after the war was it an independent branch.

One man however had an amazing foresight. This is the story of Brigadier General William (Billy) Mitchell, who in his futile attempt to convince people that the airplane could do what Germany in 1940 was proving could be done, was court-martialled from the U.S. Army for his troubles.

Billy Mitchell after WWI believed that aircraft could render the warship obsolete. Admirals laughed at him.

Mitchell's attempts began in 1921 when he and his army air staff gave the nation a war rehearsal by actually sinking a submarine and a destroyer in view of the noses of the WWI-era admirals. The top brass scoffed at him. Afterwards he took his case "to the people" and instructed his pilots to sink two huge battleships. They did. The reply came in the form of "if they had guns and people firing back, no way." All this produced ill feelings and a huge controversy resulting in the general becoming a colonel. Later he was arrested, court martialled, convicted and subsequently dismissed from service. In 1936, the man died never to know he was right—and at the time the battleship was still the big wig, internationally as well as stateside. Not until nineteen forty were fighting battleships sunk by the airplane, when British "biplanes" struck modern Italian battleships at anchor, proving their obsolescence.

On a general topic of war, which was influencing the United States during the summer, defense-building policy took effect on a grand commercial scale. Through a newly created agency, the Advisory Commission (occasionally called the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense but, technically not so because the Council was no longer in existence by then, yet the Advisory Commission was), America began slowly constructing defense production facilities and expanding the nation's preparedness, to defend—the ultra-