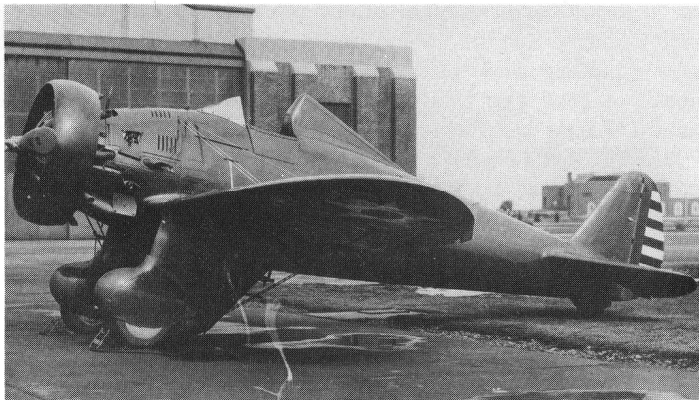


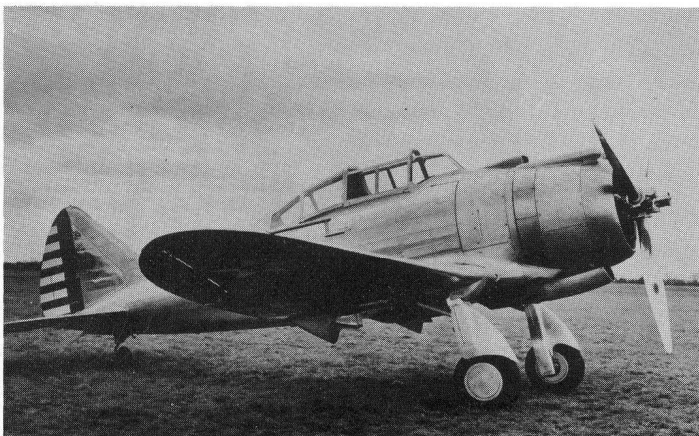
The B-10 figured prominently in the news in 1934, when Lt Col H H Arnold, with a group of 30 officers and men, flew a reconnaissance mission of ten of these aircraft to Alaska in July. The primary purpose of the trip was to determine the practicability of defending Alaska by air in an emergency. Setting up a base at Fairbanks on July 24, the mission spent three weeks photographing approximately 20,000 square miles of Alaska territory. On August 17 the group departed from Juneau, flew non stop to Seattle, then returned to Washington on the 20th.



A Boeing P-26C (Marv Mayo photo)

On March 1, 1935, General Headquarters Air Force was established under Brigadier General Frank M Andrews. This new organization was not merely a change in designation for the Air Corps, but a new unit within the Army. GHQ as it was called, was on the same level with the Office of the Chief of the Air Corps. GHQ was the operational air arm, while the Air Corps would continue to handle supply and training.

GHQ Headquarters was located at Langley Field, Virginia. The organization consisted of three combat wings, one located at Langley, the other was at various fields in California and at Barksdale Field, Louisiana. The main reason for the activation of this new unit was to provide a combat air force capable of both strategic bombing and cooperation with ground troops.

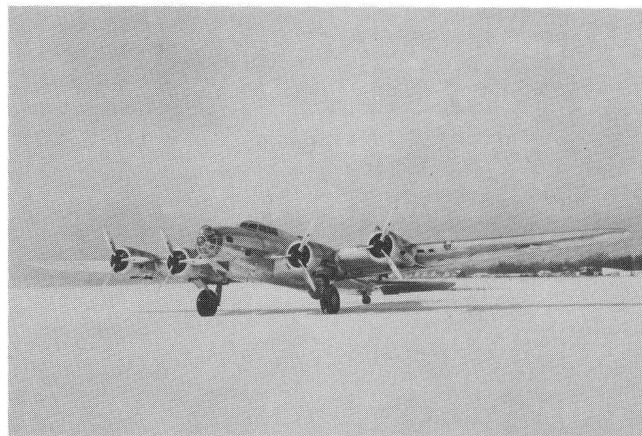


Seversky P-35 (AF photo)

The Air Corps made a contribution to scientific knowledge of the upper atmosphere on November 11, 1935, when Captain Albert W Stevens and Captain Orvil A Anderson ascended to an

altitude of 72,395 feet in the largest balloon ever built, the Explorer II. The ascension was made from Rapid City, South Dakota, and lasted more than eight hours. during which the balloon drifted some 225 miles. Capt Stevens and Anderson were enclosed by a nine foot, airtight gondola which protected them from the extreme cold at that altitude, changes in air pressure, and lack of oxygen. For their valuable scientific discoveries, which included new knowledge of cosmic rays, the sun's spectrum, and electrical conductivity of the air, the two Air Corps balloonists were awarded the Hubbard medal by the National Geographic Society.

February, 1936 saw the debut of the plane which later was to become the "guts and backbone" of the Army Air Forces, the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress. The B-17 had grown out of the desire of Major General B D Foulois, Chief of the Air Corps, in 1933 to produce a new, large, general purpose bomber, capable of high speed, long range, and high altitude operation. The Boeing Airplane Company submitted a design for a streamlined, four engine plane that captured the fancy of the Air Corps engineers, and a contract was awarded to Boeing for the development of what was to become the famous "Fortress."



Boeing Y1B-17

The first B-17 was delivered to GHQ at Langley Field, on March 1, 1937, where the Second Bombardment Group had been sent to to train pilots and crews for Fortress operation. However only 13 of these planes were delivered up to the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939.

The Fortresses, in an attempt to prove the practicability of long distance flights, made a good will flight to Argentina, leaving Miami, Florida, on February 17, 1938. A group of six B-17s' led by Lt/Col Robert Olds, then commanding officer of the GHQ's Second Bombardment Group, made the 5,225 miles to Buenos Aires in 33 1/2 hours' flying time, with one intermediate stop at Lima, Peru. At the Argentine capital, the 49 members of the mission took part in an aerial review and attended the inauguration of Argentina's new president , Robert Ortiz. On February 27, the Good Will Flight returned to Langley Field, completing a round trip of over 11,000 miles.

The Air Corps dropped out of lighter-than-air work in 1937, when it turned over to the Navy the last of its non-rigid training airships. the TC-13, and the TC-14. The TC-13 a 200 foot non-rigid, largest of its type, had been an especially interesting