



ALL EARS!!

*The Litchfield Fund
Weekly Newsletter*

“We just don’t hear it on the street, we have our ears spread across all the fields!!!!”



Litchfield

Men have always dreamed of flying! Since prehistoric times humans have envied birds & tried conquering the skies & heavens. That desire of the ancients & even Da Vinci to soar remains, despite Pilatre de Rozier, the Wright Brothers or even Neil Armstrong planting the USA flag on the moon! Today reaching Mars is the objective! In the early 20th century, airplanes moved from experimental to entertainment, racing, transport & travel; but the debate over its military use lasted decades. That seems so strange today in a world of global threats & unrest, when a USA aircraft carrier is the greatest *weapon for peace* on the planet!

Air Power: As our regular readers know, on Memorial Day & Veterans Day, we honor those who wear the uniform, for a very important reason. We live in a country whose citizens have rights that are *not* granted to us by our government! Instead, our Founding Fathers recognized these rights as *self-evident, indisputable, inalienable & endowed upon us by our Creator*. They produced the *Declaration of Independence, the Constitution & the Federalist Papers*; creating the only nation that placed all the power with the people, ensure our leaders serve us & limit government’s ability to infringe upon our lives! As such, we are free! Free to choose where & how we live, what we say, what we believe & how we worship! So, we honor those who protect these rights; who enter harm’s way & *sacrifice everything!* As we have said before, singling out any story of our American heroes seems disrespectful to all those who serve. But each story illustrates how ordinary men & women serve, protect & lead extraordinary, *exceptional* lives!

William & Merian were contemporaries, born a little more than a decade apart. Both came from well-to-do families. William’s father was a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin; Merian’s father, a lawyer in Jacksonville, FL. William was well-educated, enlisting in the Army as a private during the Spanish American War. Merian too was among the best, winning a prestigious appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy. William made a career in the Army, rose quickly through the ranks. He served in the Philippine conflict, saw the battlefields of the Russo-Japanese War, felt war with Japan was inevitable & that air power would be decisive in future wars. When WWI started in Europe, William was the youngest member of the Army’s general staff. Merian, always an adventurer, advocated along with many other midshipmen for the development of Naval air power. For his views, Merian was drummed out of the academy! He then joined the fight against Pancho Villa. He was working odd jobs as a newspaper reporter when America was called to war.

In WWI, both men were flyers. By the war’s end, William commanded the entire U.S. Army Air Corps in Europe. Merian learned to fly, had a head injury & had to relearn to fly. Eventually, his plane was shot down; his hands terribly burned. He was captured & sent to a prison hospital. After the war, William became an advocate for air power, still predicting another world war was

inevitable & rose to General. He demonstrated the uses of the airplane at war. In one test he organized, planes were used to sink an old unmanned battleship at sea. Later, a West Virginia union war arose, involving 13K armed coal miners & 3K paid mine owner mercenaries, who dropped bombs & gas on the miners from the air! William, by order of the President, brought his planes on to the scene & both sides ended hostilities. William proved air power could be a deterrent to war. But William's push for air power antagonized both Army & Navy leadership. He was stripped of rank & in 1926 he was court-martialed. He resigned & for the rest of his life advocated for investment in air power, to those who would listen. He died in 1936. Merian stayed in the service after the war, joining a volunteer American squadron that was supporting Poland in its on-going war with the Soviets. He rose to command the squadron, was shot down & captured. He escaped from the Soviets & received Poland's highest military award! Upon returning to America he became a journalist, joined expeditions exploring the world, wrote of his adventures for Hollywood & in 1926 became an initial founder & board member of *PanAm*. Putting aside his successful career, in 1942 he joined the U.S. Army Air Corps, commissioned as a colonel. He worked on planning the *Doolittle Raid*, set up "*The Hump*," the treacherous route over the Himalayas to supply Burma & China in the fight against the Japanese, served as General Chennault's chief of staff & as a Brigadier General, stood aboard the *USS Missouri* when the treaty with Japan was signed. He returned to work in Hollywood.

Both these men lived their values, serving & protecting their country. They led truly *exceptional* American lives. William's foresight became recognized as WWII progressed. In 1941, the *North American B-25 Mitchell Bomber* was named in his honor. His rank was restored to Maj. General & in 1947, Maj. General William 'Billy' Mitchell was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. Merian's Hollywood career was stellar. He worked on producing such Tinsel Town classics as *Morning Glory*, *Flying Down to Rio*, *Fort Apache*, *3 Godfathers*, *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, *Rio Grande*, *The Quiet Man* & *The Searchers*. But it was in 1933, as producer, writer, director & based in part on his own adventurous life, Merian C. Cooper brought us *King Kong*.

To those who serve, whether as a soldier, sailor, flyer, policeman, fireman or first responder, we owe an *unpayable* debt of gratitude. They protect this *sacred, fragile, precious freedom*; placing themselves between us & the forces trying to destroy our way of life. This sense of duty certainly ran deep in the Mitchell Family. Billy's brother died in WWI & his son John died during WWII. His first cousin was Chief of Staff of the Royal Canadian Air Corps during WWII. And Billy's sister Ruth joined the Chetniks in Yugoslavia fighting the Nazi's & was captured by the Gestapo!

Market News: Markets jumped mid-week as investors saw the mid-term election results as positive, insuring the administration's low tax, less regulation growth policy will continue.

Seeds, Sprouts, Grow, Harvest!

The Litchfield Fund – *Tom Malenka*

V5issue21.11.10.18