

SCHOLARSHIP IN HONOR OF

**MAJOR GENERAL
OLIVER P. ECHOLS**

U.S. ARMY AIR FORCES

Major General Oliver P. Echols

Major General Oliver P. Echols was the Air Force's Chief Materiel Officer throughout World War II. More than any other man under the Commanding General of the Army Air Force, General Echols was responsible for the development, procurement and supply of aircraft and aeronautical equipment, which decisively defeated the Air Forces of Germany and Japan and critically damaged the industrial potential of these two countries.

Never, before nor since, has our Nation been required to bring into being such large numbers of military aircraft. Between July 1940 and August 1945 the Air Force handled the procurement of 230,287 aircraft. The real impetus to aircraft production came in May 1940 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt went to Congress with a call for a program of no less than 50,000 "military and naval" aircraft per year for the Nation's defense. A year and a half later, on 7 December 1941, the airframe weight of U. S. aircraft production had increased six-fold. By November 1942 the production rate had tripled again and 50,000 aircraft were being manufactured yearly. In the following year and a half there was still another tripling of production and much of the credit for this production miracle should be given to the quiet industry and leadership of General Echols.

While still a lieutenant colonel, General Echols participated in staff action which prescribed the military requirements around which the B-29 was to be built. Under his leadership as Commanding General of the Materiel Command and as Assistant Chief of Staff for Materiel, the first production model of the B-29 was completed in July of 1943, and eleven months later, the B-29's were bombing Japan. While at Wright Field and in Washington, General Echols was known in his profession as the

man chiefly responsible for the long, hard process of bringing a plane into being - planes such as the B-24 and the Advanced B-17, the P-47 and P-51, the B-29, B-50 and the B-36. He helped with the initial planning that led to the B-47 and B-52 and the early jet fighter aircraft.

Oliver Echols was unusual among the military airmen of his time in two important respects. He was perhaps our best aeronautical engineer and certainly the ablest logistician available to Army Aviation for nearly three decades. There may have been others who had his equivalent education and engineering and logistic experience, but there was no other who had the qualities of personality and character to give them the influence in the decision making process which was frequently and universally accorded Oliver Echols. He was quiet, reserved and never given to personal animosities or extremes of position. He truly had the judicial temperament. This, plus his fine mind and studious habits gave him an influence in the Air Force procurement and materiel area which was truly unique. He was invaluable because everyone trusted him completely. Integrity was his trademark.

These qualities of character and leadership made it possible for General Echols to continue his contributions to the development of our Nation's air power potential after his retirement from the Air Force in 1947. As President of the Aircraft Industries Association from 1947 to 1949, his reputation for integrity, vision, decisiveness and good humor became even more widely appreciated by both the aircraft industry and the Air Force which he formerly served.

He joined Northrop Corporation in 1949 as Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Of-

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ficer. Under his direction Northrop's work force increased from 8,000 to 24,000 employees, and the company's backlog of orders advanced from \$70,000,000 to \$557,000,000 at the time of his death on 15 May 1954.

Oliver Patton Echols was born in Charlottesville, Virginia on 4 March 1892. He attended Virginia Polytechnic Institute and the University of Virginia.

He served as a pilot with the U. S. Air Service, A.E.F., from August 1917 to April 1919, participating in the battles of Champagne-Marne, Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel and Meues-Argonne.

His educational and military preparation for his later specialization included attendance at the Army Industrial College, Command and General Staff School, Army War College, and Air Corps Tactical School. He served in the Air Corps Experimental Engineering Section and the Procurement

Section before becoming the Chief Engineer of the Air Corps' Materiel Division in 1934.

This tribute was paid to General Echols in May 1945 by Gen. "Hap" Arnold, AAF Commanding General:

"No one knows better than you the terrific problems we have faced in the development and perfection of our equipment and in obtaining the necessary production. I know of no one who could have carried the Air Force's responsibilities in these fields as you have. The task could never have been done had not the AAF been represented in these matters by an officer having the full confidence of the Congress, the Departments and Civilian Agencies of government, industry and labor. This trust, as well as my own, has been yours and deservedly. The Country, the Army Air Forces and I, personally, owe you a real debt of gratitude."

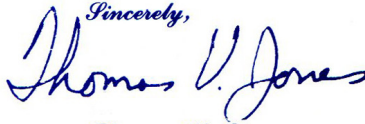
Dear General Smith:

As long as men remember the American victories in the skies over Europe and Asia in World War II, they will remember the might of air weapons that made those victories possible. They will remember, too, that it was General Oliver P. Echols who organized and led the Air Force 1 Industry team that developed and produced those weapons.

General Echols' professional attainments were coupled with towering character and integrity and a warmth of human understanding.

We create the Oliver P. Echols scholarship as a memorial to this outstanding officer so that his great personal qualities and high achievements may serve as an inspiration for the young men of our country who plan to make a career in the United States Air Force.

Sincerely,



*Thomas V. Jones
President and Chairman
Northrop Corporation*



The Falcon Foundation is a 501(c)(3), non-profit foundation. Its purpose is to provide scholarships to College or Preparatory Schools for motivated young people seeking admission to USAFA and a career in the Air Force.

Although it is a separate organization, the Falcon Foundation works closely with USAFA.