



SCHOLARSHIP IN HONOR OF

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**GENERAL  
BENJAMIN W. CHIDLAW**

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U.S. AIR FORCE

# General Benjamin W. Chidlaw

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General Benjamin W. Chidlaw, the first commander of the Nation's Continental Air Defense Command, helped lay the foundation for today's unified aerospace defense of the United States.

He is remembered also as the Air Force engineer who directed the first development of the jet engine and jet aircraft in this Country.

General Chidlaw took over the Air Defense Command (ADC) in July 1951, less than two years after the Soviets detonated their first atomic device and a year after the Soviet-equipped North Koreans attacked the South. Headquartered at Colorado Springs, Colo., ADC had in 1951 only recently been redesignated a major command - air defense having been given a relatively low priority in the six years following World War II.

The actions and capabilities of the USSR posed a new threat to our continent. Under Chidlaw's leadership from mid-1951 to 1955, ADC developed an all-weather fighter force operating around the clock, and the foundation for a sophisticated detection network.

A Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line of radar stations positioned for 3,000 miles within the Arctic Circle; Texas Tower radar islands off the East Coast; RC-121 aircraft flying constant detection flights off each coast; a semi-automatic ground environment (SAGE) system to process air surveillance information with high-speed digital computers - all these were instituted or developed during General Chidlaw's years as National Air Defense Commander.

When he became commander of the new Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD) on Sep-

tember 1, 1954, General Chidlaw exercised operational control over Air Force, Army anti-aircraft and Navy forces as allocated.

Chidlaw had worked closely with the Army before. He was Deputy Commander of the 12th Tactical Air Command in the Mediterranean Theatre in April 1944. After the invasion of southern France he organized and commanded the 22nd Tactical Air Command, which supported the Fifth Army's drive up the Italian Peninsula. In March 1945 he took command of the Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Forces, composed of the American 12th Air Force, the British Desert Air Force and associated service elements.

General Chidlaw, then a major general, was assigned next to Wright-Patterson Field, Ohio, as Deputy Commanding General for operations of what became Air Materiel Command. He became Deputy Commanding General of the Command in October 1947, with grade of lieutenant general, and full commander in September 1949.

While at Air Materiel Command, General Chidlaw played a key role in the reorganization of the Air Force's research, development, procurement and supply functions, resulting in establishment of the office of Deputy Chief of Staff, Development, in Headquarters USAF in 1950, and the Air Research and Development Command in 1951. Meanwhile, he was faced with managing some gigantic logistic problems of our first months in the Korean War.

Chidlaw was born December 18, 1900 in Cleves, Ohio, a suburb of Cincinnati. He was graduated from the United States Military Academy in June 1922 and appointed a Second Lieutenant of Air Service. After completing his flight training at

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Brooks and Kelly Fields in Texas, he remained on as a flight instructor until June 1924. After tours in the Philippines and at Brooks Field, he attended the Air Corps Engineering School at Wright-Patterson Field, Ohio, and for the next five years he was assigned there in the Air Corps Materiel Division.

In early 1934 he spent three months helping the Air Corps inaugurate its flying of the air mail.

When he was transferred to Air Force Headquarters in Washington, he was assigned by Gen. H. H. (Hap) Arnold to direct the development of the first jet engine and jet airplane. Before the war

ended Air Force pilots were flying the F-59, our first experimental jet, followed soon by the F-80 fighter and B-45 bomber.

Chidlaw participated both as an experimental engineer and test pilot in several aeronautical innovations and airplane development projects which were of decisive importance for U.S. aircraft superiority in World War II. Among these experimental and development projects were the turbo supercharger, the retractable landing gear, the controllable pitch propeller. He was also a member of the team which worked closely with the Boeing Company in the development of the B-17 Flying Fortress Bomber.

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*Dear General Smith:*

*The brilliant military and business career of General Benjamin W. Chidlaw is one equalled by few men. General Chidlaw grew up with the Air Force from its infancy and for more than thirty years performed outstanding service to his country in times of war and peace.*

*JRW is proud to create the Benjamin W. Chidlaw Scholarship, and it is our hope that his career accomplishments will serve as an inspiration to those young recipients who will follow his footsteps into the United States Air Force.*

*H. Shepard*

*Horace A. Shepard  
Chairman of the Board &  
Chief Executive Officer  
J R W Inc.*

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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.