CIVIL AIR PATROL

United States Air Force Auxiliary

BRIGADIER GENERAL BILLY MITCHELL AWARD

FACT SHEET

Suitable for reading aloud to the audience as part of an award ceremony

The Brigadier General Billy Mitchell Award honors a fearless pilot whose patriotism, foresight, and tenacity surpassed the ridicule he faced.

The "Father of the Independent Air Force," Billy Mitchell led an aerial bombing demonstration resulting in the sinking of the surplus German battleship *Ostfriesland* in 1921. The Navy had said such a feat would be impossible, and the Army remained skeptical toward airpower. Mitchell continued his all-out public campaign for airpower, even facing court-martial for his persistence. He knew that in the new "aeronautical era," military airpower, operating independently of ground and sea forces, needed to be the first line of defense. Not until World War II did the full U.S. military establishment realize how right he was. After the Allied victory, and by a special act of Congress, Mitchell was posthumously awarded a gold medal. With General Mitchell as their role model, cadet officers know that speaking truth to power is a moral duty.

The Mitchell Award marks completion of Phase II of the CAP Cadet Program, recognizing sustained excellence in all four areas of cadet life: leadership, aerospace, fitness, and character. Further, Mitchell cadets must have passed comprehensive examinations on leadership and aerospace topics and have completed a week long encampment immersing them in a challenging Core Values and Stem environment.

The U.S. Air Force respects Mitchell Award recipients' accomplishments. Mitchell cadets who enlist in the Air Force enter the service at the advanced grade of E-3, Airman First Class. The service also looks favorably upon Mitchell cadets when evaluating AFROTC and Academy applicants.

To further illustrate the significance of this accomplishment, as of _____ only _____ Mitchell Awards have been presented, since the award's inception in 1964.

Once a cadet earns the Mitchell Award, he or she becomes a cadet officer, is promoted to the grade of cadet second lieutenant, and is challenged to lead and serve junior-ranking cadets, while continuing to develop into a "dynamic American and aerospace leader."