



U.S. AIR FORCE

## This Week in PACAF and USAF History 31 August – 6 September 2009



3 September 1909 Orville Wright began flight tests of the Wright Flyer at Fort Myer, Virginia.

3 September 1925 The Navy dirigible **USS *Shenandoah*** is destroyed during a storm over Ohio, killing 14 of 43 passengers, including the commander Lt Cmdr Zachary Lansdowne. The event compelled Brig Gen William “Billy” Mitchell to charge the War and Navy Departments with incompetency and “almost treasonable administration of the national defense.” In response to that charge, **President Calvin Coolidge ordered General Mitchell’s court-martial.**

Found guilty of insubordination, Gen Mitchell resigned in February 1926. (See painting, “Billy Mitchell Court Marshall,” by Bob Schaar, Air Force Art # 1972.195, currently hanging in HQ PACAF I-Wing, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor).



2 September 1945 **V-J Day -- Japan Surrenders.** In ceremonies onboard the battleship *USS Missouri* in Tokyo Bay, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, formally received the Japanese envoys who signed the instrument of surrender, ending World War II.

At the same time (on 1 September), the Territory of Hawaii began a three-day holiday celebrating Japan's surrender. Back in Washington, D.C., President Harry Truman gave orders to “let the people do anything within reason, and keep property damage down.” In Washington, soldiers formed a human ring around the White House gates as the crowd repeatedly shouted, “We want Harry.” Truman finally came out and acknowledged them, saying, “This is a great day for democracy.” (See photo of B-29s flying over the ceremonies aboard the *Missouri*).



OPR: PACAF/HO



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1 September 1951 **Australia, New Zealand, and the United States (ANZUS)** sign a **Security Treaty**. Article IV of the Treaty states, “Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on any of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.” In 1984, the ANZUS Treaty began to unravel when New Zealand declared its country a nuclear-free zone and refused to allow U.S. nuclear-powered submarines to visit its ports. Two years later, the U.S. and Australia concluded a series of bilateral talks confirming their countries would continue to honor their obligations to one another under the ANZUS Treaty, in spite of the fact that the trilateral aspects of the Treaty had been halted.



1 September 1966 Tactical Air Command activated the **Tactical Fighter Weapons Center, forerunner of today’s USAF Warfare Center**, at Nellis AFB. The Center was activated during the Vietnam War to improve tactical air operations in conventional war and contingencies. At the time, the Center conducted special fighter training in F-100s, F-105s, and F-4s.

1 September 1968 **MEDAL OF HONOR**. Lt Col William A. Jones led a flight of four A-1H Skyraider aircraft on an escort mission to rescue an F-4 pilot down near Dong Hoi. Spotting the downed flier, Jones repeatedly attacked an enemy gun position, sustaining heavy damage to his aircraft and severe burns to himself. Discovering his radios to be broken, Jones returned to base, where he reported the downed pilot’s location while on the operating table. The F-4 pilot was rescued later that day.



1 September 1982 The Air Force activated **Space Command**. This organization was redesignated Air Force Space Command on November 15, 1985 following the activation of United States Space Command at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado.

31 Aug 1983 On August 31, **Korean Air Lines Flight 007**, a Boeing 747 airliner, left New York en route to Seoul. After refueling in Anchorage, Alaska, the jumbo jet headed across the Pacific Ocean and strayed over Soviet territory, including the Kamchatka peninsula and southern Sakhalin Island. Before dawn on September 1, a Soviet SU-15 interceptor shot down the airliner as it was about to reenter international airspace. KAL Flight 007 disappeared over the Sea of Japan with 269 people aboard, including many U.S. citizens. Among them was Congressman Larry McDonald from Georgia. Three HC-130 aircraft from the 33d RQS at Kadena AB



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deployed at Yokota AB for the search. An HC-130, flown by Capt. Mark Leuthold and his crew, was the first U.S. aircraft over the search area. Despite all efforts, searchers found no survivors.

5 September 1983 **Mackay Trophy**. Capt Robert J. Goodman and his SAC KC-135 crew (Capt Michael R. Clover, 1Lt Karol R. Wojcikowski and SSgt Douglas D. Simmons) refueled a group of F-4Es crossing the North Atlantic. One of the F-4s lost power in an engine and had to divert to Gander, Newfoundland.

Goodman's crew took up escort duty. Later, the F-4 pilot had to shut down the engine, reduce power in the other engine and jettison his centerline tank. Despite these measures, the F-4 continued to lose altitude and airspeed. Through four interrupted refuelings and



extreme peril as the fighter dropped to 2,000 feet, the KC-135 escorted the fighter to Gander, at times towing the fighter on the refueling boom. For this meritorious flight, the KC-135 crew received the Mackay Trophy.

1 September 1995 **The SR-71 returned to active service**. The Air Force had retired its fleet of SR-71s on 26 January 1990 because of a decreasing defense budget and high costs of operation. The aircraft was retired again in 1998.

6 September 2000 While attending the UN's Millennium Summit in New York, **Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong met US President Bill Clinton** and invited him to visit Vietnam. Two months later, on 17 November 2000, President Bill Clinton and Mrs. Clinton began a four-day state visit to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the first by an American president to Vietnam since the end of the Vietnam War.

31 August 2006 **Super Typhoon Ioke** passed almost directly over Wake Island, with winds approaching 160 mph. Ioke was the first Category 5 storm to develop in the Pacific since record keeping began in the early 1960s. Ioke demolished buildings, toppled satellite dishes, and ripped out communication links. Three days earlier, C-17s from the 15<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing and HIANG 154<sup>th</sup> Wing had evacuated 188 personnel from Wake Island.

4-8 September 2006 The **Pacific Rim (PACRIM) Airpower Symposium** (formerly known as the PACRIM Director of Operations Conference) was co-hosted by 13 AF Commander Major General A. Edward Rice and Indonesian Air Force Vice Marshall Edy Harjoko, in Indonesia. Forty-nine participants from 19 countries attended, the largest number in the history of this venue since its beginning in 1995. The large number of active participants indicated regional friends and partners find the forum to be a very valuable venue to discuss maritime security, HA/DR lessons learned, and multilateral exercises among many topics.