



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 3 – 9 September 2012



5 Sep 1923 The Navy was still unconvinced on the vulnerabilities of capital ships to air attack even after the sinking of the Ostfriesland and other ships by air forces directed by Billy Mitchell during 13-21 July 1921. Two years later, the Navy turned over two obsolete battleships for



further testing – the USS New Jersey and the USS Virginia. Sgt Ulysses Nero (left), piloting a Martin-Curtiss NBS-1, approached the New Jersey at 85 MPH at 6,900 feet and dropped a 600-pound bomb down the smokestack sinking it in just over 3 minutes. He put his second 600-pound bomb on the Virginia deck finishing it off as well. Gen Mitchell promoted Nero during the next cycle. [Video](#) of the action includes Mitchell supervising the bomb loading on the NBS-1.



3 September 1925 The Navy dirigible **USS *Shenandoah*** was 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. (The image at left was the subject of the painting “Billy Mitchell Court Martial,” by Bob Schaar, currently in the PACAF/A4 Conference Room.)

9 September 1967 Sgt. Duane D. Hackney, a pararescue-man in the Vietnam conflict who put his own parachute on a rescued pilot after their helicopter was hit by enemy fire, received the **Air**



Force Cross for bravery. Hackney became the first living enlisted man to receive the award, second only to the Medal of Honor. Hackney was the youngest person and the fourth enlisted member to receive the medal. During the Vietnam conflict, his helicopter was shot down five times; he earned four Distinguished Flying Crosses and 18 Air Medals for single acts of heroism. Hackney continued his distinguished Air Force career until his retirement in 1991 as a chief master sergeant.



Hackney was [the most decorated airman in Air Force history](#).



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9 September 1972 Capt. Charles B. DeBellevue (right), flying as weapon system officer in the backseat of an F-4, earned his fifth and sixth aerial victories, becoming the **leading ace of the Vietnam War and the first non-pilot ace in the United States Air Force**. For this feat, DeBellevue shared the 1972 Mackay Trophy with his pilot, Captain Richard S. Ritchie and with Captain Jeffrey S. Feinstein, the other two Air Force aces of the Vietnam War. DeBellevue was also awarded the Air Force Cross for his actions in Southeast Asia and he retired in January 1998 after 30 years of service.



Artwork depicting these three aces and Vietnam-era fighters can be viewed in the PACAF Headquarters second floor hallway approaching the Command Briefing Room (go to the south end of G-wing and turn right).



5 September 1983 **Mackay Trophy**. Capt Robert Goodman and his KC-135 tanker crew (Capt Michael Clover, 1Lt Karol Wojcikowski and SSgt Douglas Simmons) refueled a group of F-4Es crossing the Atlantic. One of the F-4s had engine trouble and had to divert to Newfoundland. Goodman's crew took up escort duty. The F-4 pilot had to shut down one 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 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.

8 Sep 1986 The **Seventh Air Force** was reactivated and assigned to Pacific Air Forces at Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea.



Seventh Air Force (7AF) is the U.S. Air Force's oldest numbered air force. First activated on 1 November 1940 as the Hawaiian Air Force, it was rebuilt after the 7 Dec 1941 attack on Oahu and fought throughout the Pacific campaign. Ultimately, 7AF units participated in attacks on Japan from Iwo Jima and Okinawa.



After a short reactivation in Hawaii in the late 1950s, Seventh Air Force was designated the Air Component Command of Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. From April 1966 through 1973, the command assumed responsibility for most Air Force operations in Vietnam and shared responsibility with Thirteenth Air Force for operations from Thailand. In March, 1973 the command transferred to Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand, and accepted dual responsibility as 7AF and the US Support Activities Group, controlling air assets and operations in Thailand until June 1975.



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On 8 September 1986, Seventh Air Force re-activated at Osan and assumed the mission previously performed by the 314th Air Division of maintaining the fragile armistice on the Korean peninsula. Since then, as the USAF component of both the US-ROK Combined Forces Command and U.S. Forces Korea, Seventh Air Force has a critical role in deterring aggression from North Korea.



8 September 1990 [Marcelite Jordan Harris](#) became the **first black woman to hold the grade of Brigadier General in the Air Force**. At the time, she was the Vice Commander, Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center at Tinker AFB, and she went on to be the Director of Maintenance at Headquarters, Air Force. The General achieved many "firsts" for women in the Air Force.

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 Edward A. 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 found the forum to be a very valuable venue to discuss important topics such as maritime security, HA/DR lessons learned, and multilateral exercises.

In the photo at right from PACRIM 2010, General Hawk Carlisle, (Commander of 13th Air Force at the time), welcomes delegations from 24 Asia-Pacific nations to the annual symposium encouraging relationship-building and enhanced security cooperation among the air forces of Asia-Pacific nations. (Courtesy photo by Joshua Lok, Singapore Air Force)

