



U.S. AIR FORCE

## This Week in USAF and PACAF History 5 – 11 November 2012



5-13 November 1912 The **Army used aircraft for artillery adjustment for the first time** at Fort Riley, Kansas. Capt. Frederick B. Hennessy, Lt. Henry H. Arnold, and Lt. Thomas DeWitt Milling signaled the ground using radiotelegraphy, drop cards, and smoke signals.



1 November 1915 **First genuine National Guard aviation unit.** Capt. Raynal C. Bolling organized and took command of an aviation unit in the New York National Guard, but a lack of funding convinced Bolling that military aviation could only be developed within the regular Army. Bolling, a famed corporate lawyer, had written a Congressional bill on aircraft manufacturing and led a commission to Europe to evaluate aircraft production. He became an Air Service officer in World War I and was the first high-ranking U.S. officer to be killed in combat in that war. While scouting potential fields for U.S. Army Air Service aircraft during the second Somme offensive, Colonel Bolling and his driver were ambushed by German troops near the front lines. Bolling Air Force Base is named in his honor.

7 November 1917 Eugene Bullard, **the world's first black military pilot,**



**Bullard as a Spad pilot**

became the **first black pilot to claim an aerial victory.** Bullard had stowed away on a ship to get to Europe. At the outbreak of World War I, he joined the French Foreign Legion. Fighting in some of the war's major battles, Bullard was severely wounded and received the *Croix de Guerre* for heroism. After convalescing, he completed flight training in the French Air Service and eventually flew 20 missions. A national hero in France, Bullard was denied entry into the U.S. Army Aviation Section due to his race.



**Bullard in the French Army**

In 1994, Eugene Bullard was posthumously commissioned as an officer in the United States Air Force.

Read more in this article from the [Air & Space Power Journal](#).

11 Nov 1918 **The Armistice ending the fighting in World War I** was signed at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. During the war, the U.S. Army Air Service dropped 138 tons of bombs and was credited with shooting down 765 enemy aircraft and 76 balloons.

Congress changed "Armistice Day" to "Veteran's Day" in 1954 to honor all military veterans.

11 Nov 1922 **Wheeler Field was dedicated** and named in memory of Major Sheldon H. Wheeler, the former Commander of Luke Field on Ford Island. Major Wheeler died in a plane crash at Luke Field on 13 July 1921. The base is now known as Wheeler Army Airfield.

5 November 1934 **Lt Col Horace Meek Hickam**, a distinguished aviation pioneer, died when his A-12 struck an obstruction during night landing practice on the unlighted field at Fort Crockett, Texas. Six months later, **Hickam Field in Hawaii was dedicated in his honor.**



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As a young officer, Hickam took flying lessons in his spare time. After earning the Silver Star in the Mexican Punitive Expedition, Hickam joined the Signal Corps' Aviation Section and trained as a pursuit pilot. He was chief of the Air Service's Information Division and then assistant commandant of the Advanced Flying School at Kelly Field, Texas. In November, 1925 he testified on behalf of airpower and a separate Air Force, stating "*I am confident that no general thinks he can command the navy, and no admiral thinks he can operate an army, but some of them think they can operate an air force.*"



After attending the Air Corps Tactical School, Air War College and other military courses, Hickam was assigned to the War Plans Division of the General Staff. Hickam was promoted to lieutenant colonel on March 1, 1932, and given command of the 3rd Attack Group at Fort Crockett. During the 1934 Air Mail operation, he commanded mail delivery operations in the U.S. Central Zone. Hickam often battled with the old soldiers of that era who classified the airplane as merely an auxiliary to ground troops. "*During the World War,*" he said in 1934, "*the airplane was considered as a weapon of the ground troops, but that day has passed just as has the concept of naval vessels as transports for soldiers. The Air Force has come into its own right, and like the Navy it has come to stay.*" Portraits of Hickam are on display in the Hickam PME Center auditorium, 15th Wing Headquarters and the AMC Passenger Terminal stairway.

8 November 1950 General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Air Force Chief of Staff, agreed to send an **F-84E wing and an F-86A wing to the Far East Air Forces (FEAF)**. These forces arrived in early December. Also on 8 November, seventy B-29 Superfortresses conducted the **largest incendiary raid of the Korean War**, dropping 580 tons of firebombs on Sinuiju, North Korea.

11 Nov 1962 **Typhoon Karen struck Guam** with winds of 175 mph. The storm ruined 90 percent of the island's buildings and left 45,000 people homeless. Some 50 USAF cargo aircraft from PACAF and MATS delivered more than 1,000 tons of equipment and supplies to Guam.

9 Nov 1967 **MEDAL OF HONOR. Capt. Gerald Young** and his HH-53 crew (Capt Ralph Bower, SSgt Eugene L Clay, and Sgt Larry W. Maysey) flew into an area near Khe Sanh to rescue a U.S.-Vietnamese reconnaissance team. His helicopter was hit at point-blank range and destroyed. Wounded with second and third degree burns over one-fourth of his body, Capt. Young helped



HH-53 gunner and aircraft in Vietnam

one of the other crew members to escape. Young then spent 17 hours luring the pursuing North Vietnamese troops away from the crash site and other survivors. After losing his pursuers, Capt. Young called for rescue and was picked up six miles from the crash site. For his heroism, Capt. Young received the Medal of Honor. Read more of Capt. Young's story in this AF Magazine [article](#).



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9 Nov 1967 **MEDAL OF HONOR.** Ejecting from his F-4C over North Vietnam, **Capt. Lance P. Sijan** evaded capture for more than six weeks. Severely weakened and injured, Sijan was captured but then escaped. After being recaptured, Sijan was tortured, contracted pneumonia and died. The story of Sijan's Medal of Honor actions is in this AF Magazine [article](#).

5 November 1981 The **first operational EF-111A defense-suppression aircraft** was delivered to the 388th Electronic Combat Squadron at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho.

The EF-111A Raven (right) would eventually replace EB-66 and EB-57 aircraft as the U.S. Air Force's primary electronic warfare jamming aircraft. The EF-111A usually provided protection from a stand-off jamming orbit, but it could also escort attacking forces with its high-performance and night and terrain-following capabilities.



EF-111s were involved in every U.S. conflict from Eldorado Canyon in Libya to Desert Storm, where an EF-111 was credited with one of the first kills of the conflict. A maneuvering Raven caused a pursuing Iraqi Mirage to crash.



10 Nov 1988 The Pentagon **announced the existence of the Lockheed F-117A** stealth fighter. The **Nighthawk** had first flown on 18 June 1981 and reached IOC October 1983. The F-117 could evade most radar detection with its radical shape and radar-absorbent surfaces. At left, an F-117 flying over the Persian Gulf in 2003.

9 November 2006 The U.S. Air Force activated the **first MQ-9 Reaper unit** – the 42nd Attack Squadron at Creech AFB. The single-engine, propeller-driven Reaper (at right; formerly the Predator B) could carry 3,000 pounds of bombs and missiles, while remaining airborne for 24 hours. The smaller MQ-1 Predator carried 500 pounds of weaponry.

