By Minnie Jones

Fort Sam Houston, one of the oldest military installations in the United States, has been the home to many famous figures over the years. Construction began in 1876 and since its establishment, Fort Sam has played an integral part in American military history.

Fort Sam has seen the likes of many famous generals, from the time of the Spanish-American War, to WWII, to Vietnam. One of these generals was Brig. Gen. William Mitchell.

Ft. Worth Star-Telegram

William ‘Billy’ Mitchell

‘The Father of the United States Air Force’ once lived on Fort Sam

By Minnie Jones

He lived on Fort Sam and roosted in Quarters 14 for 29 years. Brig. Gen. William Mitchell was on staff as the Post Reservist. His office was in the Quadrangle. Mitchell was an advocate for the United States Air Service, and was a vocal supporter of the integration of military aviation into the American military. He was a major proponent of the creation of an independent Air Force and his ideas were ahead of their time. Mitchell's ideas were so ahead of their time that he was court-martialed for insubordination and his case became one of the most controversial military trials in U.S. History. He was eventually convicted and sentenced to five years in prison, but his ideas and his advocacy for an independent Air Force continue to influence American military aviation to this day.

By Minnie Jones

Brig. Gen. William ‘Billy’ Mitchell (left) and General of the Army Henry H. Arnold (right). Mitchell, who served as the first Air Corps Commander, is known as the ‘Father of the United States Air Force’.”

The San Antonio Express-News

WILLIAM ‘BILLY’ MITCHELL

By Minnie Jones

Brig. Gen. William ‘Billy’ Mitchell was born in Nice, France, on December 29, 1879. His family moved to the United States when he was six years old, and he grew up in Wisconsin. Mitchell joined the Army in 1896 and served in Cuba, the Philippines, Alaska, and in Europe.

During the Spanish-American War, Mitchell was part of a reconnaissance group and saw the value of aerial reconnaissance. He was instrumental in bringing the need for air power to the forefront of military strategy.

Mitchell became increasingly vocal in his support for the creation of an independent Air Force. He advocated for the production of military aircraft, and was a vocal proponent of the need to strengthen air power. His ideas were ahead of their time, and he was court-martialed for insubordination.

Mitchell's ideas and his advocacy for an independent Air Force continue to influence American military aviation to this day.

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