



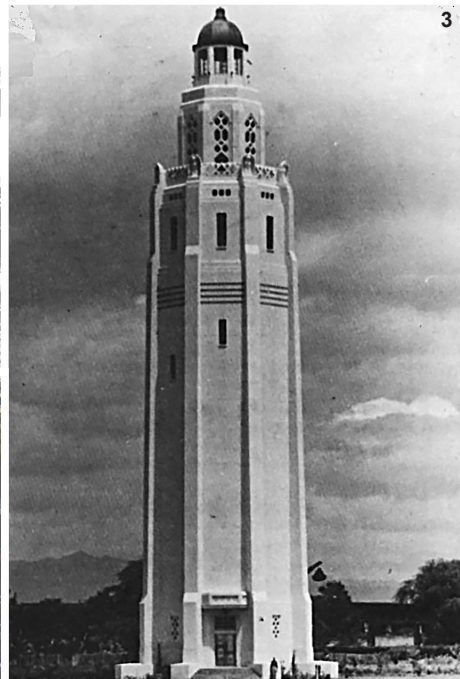
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USAF Photo by Sgt. Shane A. Clomo



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HICKAM

The Cavalry Convert

West Point star. ... Cavalryman in America and the Philippine Islands. ... Decorated hero of the US "Punitive Expedition" into Mexico. ... University professor. ... First historian of the US Air Service. ... Pioneer airpower advocate. ... Aviator killed in the line of duty.

Each term applies to Lt. Col. Horace Meek Hickam, the air officer for whom the US named a huge air base in Hawaii. It was an apt tribute to a Renaissance man of aviation's early years.

Hickam, at West Point, was an academic star and three-sport letterman. Commissioned in 1908, he served in cavalry units in Vermont, Georgia, and Texas. While in Texas in 1911, he volunteered to take aviation training at Fort Sam Houston, where he flew airplanes in his spare time. That was the start.

Hickam spent several years in the Philippines. In 1915, Hickam returned to Arizona, and joined the Gen. John J. "Black Jack" Pershing expedition into Mexico to capture Pancho Villa. It was here that Hickam first saw combat. He received a Silver Star for bravery in the April 22, 1916, battle at Tomochic.

Hickam was promoted and posted to the University of Maine as professor of military science but his academic career was cut short by US entry into World War I. In August 1917, Hickam sought and was granted a transfer to the Air Service and reported to Rockwell Field, Calif., for flight training.

Though Hickam got his wings, the Great War ended before he could get to it. Hickam

soon went to Washington, D.C., where he served as chief of information. He launched the influential Air Service Newsletter and wrote the air arm's first history.

Hickam in the 1920s became a potent force for airpower and an independent air service, taking on soldiers who viewed the airplane as a mere auxiliary of land forces. "I am confident that no general thinks he can command the Navy, and no admiral thinks he can operate an Army," Hickam once wrote, "but some of them think they can operate an air force."

In 1932, Hickam—now a lieutenant colonel—was sent to Fort Crockett, Texas (near Galveston) and given command of Third Attack Group. Disaster awaited. On Nov. 5, 1934, Hickam was practicing night landings on an unlighted runway when his A-12 Shrike struck an embankment and flipped over. He was killed instantly.

The War Department soon named its new Hawaiian base Hickam Field in his honor. In Japan's Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, Hickam took major damage and casualties, but was soon back in operation and playing a pivotal role in the Pacific War.

The newly formed US Air Force in 1948 renamed the field Hickam Air Force Base. In 2010, the Pentagon merged Hickam with the Navy's Pearl Harbor complex to produce JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam. It is home to Active Duty C-17s, F-22s of the Hawaii ANG, and Pacific Air Forces headquarters.

HORACE MEEK HICKAM

Born: Aug. 14, 1885, Spencer, Ind.

Died: Nov. 5, 1934, Galveston, Texas

College: University of Indiana, US Military Academy, Air Corps Tactical School, Command and General Staff School, Army War College

Service: US Army, Cavalry, Air Service/Corps

Era: World War I, Interwar

Years Active: 1908-34

Combat: Mexican Punitive Expedition

Final Grade: Lieutenant Colonel

Honors: Silver Star

Occupation: US military officer officer

Famous Friends: Billy Mitchell, Alexander de Seversky

HICKAM AIR FORCE BASE

State: Hawaii

Nearest City: Honolulu

Area: 4.4 sq mi / 2,850 acres

Status: Open, renamed

Opened: (by Air Corps) Sept. 15, 1938

Original Name: Flying Field Tracts A/B (April 3, 1935)

Renamed: Hickam Field (May 21, 1935)

Renamed: Army AB APO 953 (May 16, 1942)

Renamed: Hickam Field (June 1, 1946)

Renamed: Hickam AFB (March 26, 1948)

Closed: (by USAF) Sept. 30, 2010

Reopened: (Joint Force) Oct. 1, 2010

Renamed: JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam

Home Of: Hq PACAF; 15th Wing

USAF Presence: USAF, Hawaii ANG

1. Horace Hickam, circa 1918. 2. Hickam as a major at Bolling Field, D.C., in 1920. 3. Hickam Field's iconic 171-foot Moorish-style tower. 4. A C-17, jointly operated by PACAF and the Hawaii Air National Guard, flies over JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam.