



A lot of interesting people have been part of the Air Force during its first 50 years. Here are some of them.

Faces From the First

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1 Capt. James Jabara became the world's first jet ace on May 20, 1951, shooting down his fifth and sixth North Korean MiGs.

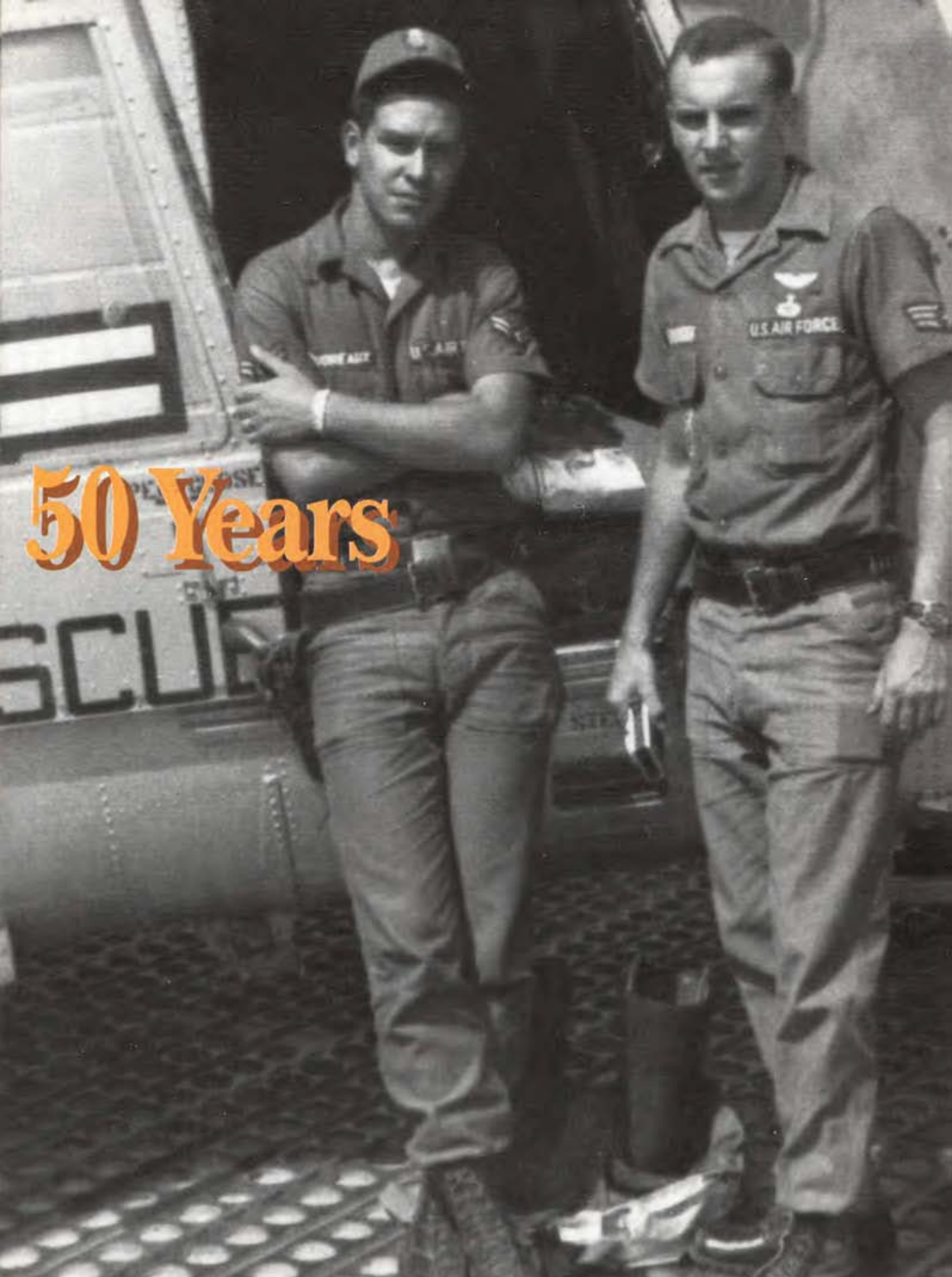
2 Lt. Gen. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., the first black general officer in the Air Force (and son of the first black general officer in the Army).

3 A1C William H. Pitsenbarger, first enlisted man to be awarded the Air Force Cross (posthumously). Here, Pitsenbarger (right) poses in Vietnam in 1966 with a fellow pararescueman, A2C Roy A. Boudreaux.



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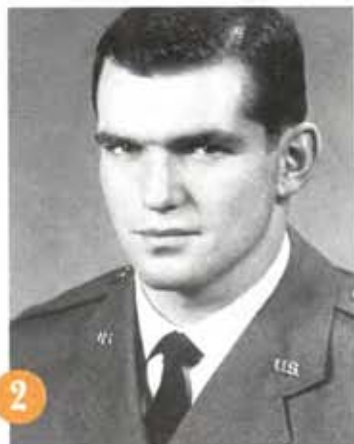


50 Years

SCUE

U.S. AIR FORCE

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- 1 Lt. Gen. Charles A. Horner, air boss of the Persian Gulf War, whose leadership was instrumental in the stunning coalition victory.
- 2 Capt. Lance P. Sijan, who received the Medal of Honor (posthumously) for valor in Vietnam. Under severe torture, he refused to tell his North Vietnamese captors what they wanted to know.
- 3 Sgt. Duane D. Hackney received the Air Force Cross for bravery in the rescue of an Air Force pilot in Vietnam. He was the first living enlisted man to receive the award.
- 4 Lt. Gail S. Halvorsen, the "candy bomber," dropped candy and chewing gum by handkerchief parachutes to German children during the Berlin Airlift.
- 5 Col. Robin Olds, leader of the "MiG Sweep" and the first USAF ace with victories in both World War II and Vietnam.
- 6 CMSgt. Daisy L. Jackson is primarily a manager now, but is best known as one of the most popular vocalists ever to star with the Air Force Band.

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1 Gen. Jerome F. O'Malley, charismatic commander of Tactical Air Command—and almost universally seen as headed for greater things—when he was killed in a CT-39 crash in 1985.

2 Capt. Virgil I. Grissom, first USAF astronaut into space. He attained an altitude of 118 miles on the second Mercury mission in 1961. He was killed in a flash fire that destroyed the Apollo 1 command module during a ground test in 1967.

3 Maj. George A. Davis, Jr., received the Medal of Honor (posthumously) for valor in Korea. He repeatedly attacked a large formation of MiG-15s to protect US aircraft operating deep in enemy territory.

4 Capt. Connie J. Engel, one of the first women (in 1976) to graduate from USAF pilot training and the first female instructor pilot in the Air Force.

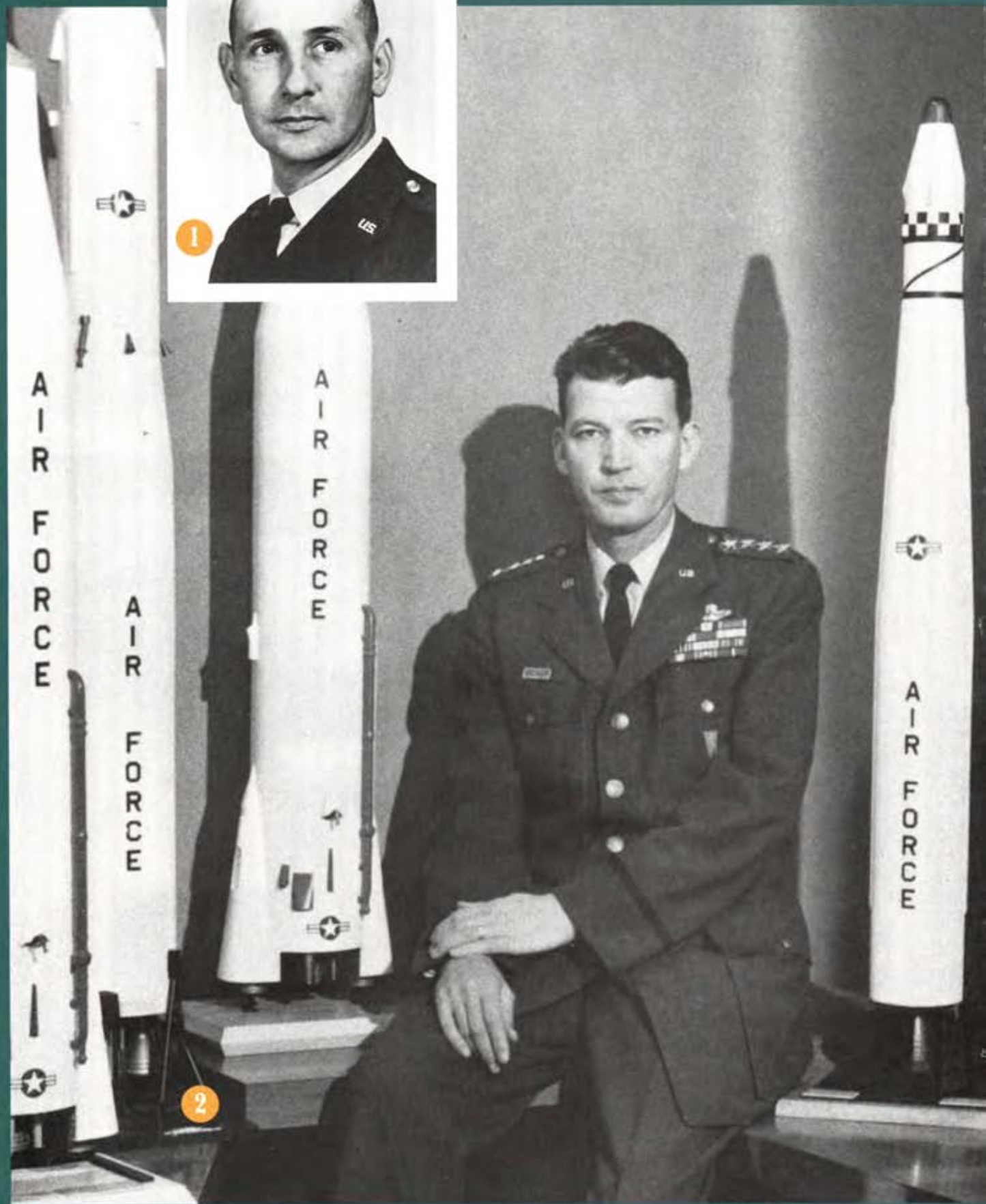
5 Col. Guion S. Bluford, Jr., F-4 combat pilot in Vietnam and the first black American astronaut in space.

6 Capt. Steven L. Bennett, received the Medal of Honor (posthumously) for valor in Vietnam. To save his back-seater, he crash-landed his OV-10 in the sea, knowing his own chances of surviving were nil.

7 Lt. Regina Aune, flight nurse, received the Cheney Award in 1975 for valor in rescuing children from the crash of a C-5 at Saigon during Operation Babylift.

8 TSgt. Timothy A. Wilkinson, pararescueman, awarded the Air Force Cross for bravery in rescuing, under fire, Army Rangers shot down in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993.







1 Capt. Hilliard A. Wilbanks received the Medal of Honor (posthumously) for valor in Vietnam. At mortal risk to himself, he diverted enemy fire with his unarmed aircraft, allowing a South Vietnamese Army Ranger force to escape.

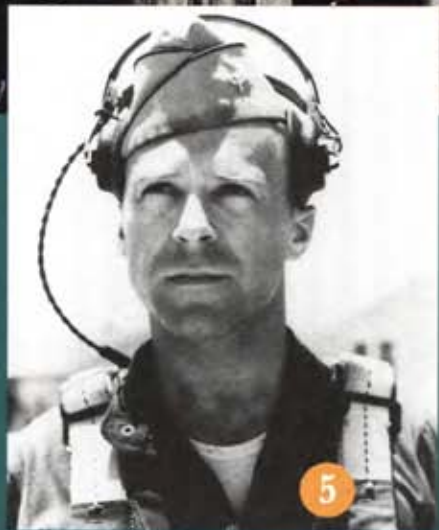
2 Gen. Bernard A. Schriever, the architect and driving force behind the US ballistic missile program from primitive beginnings to Minuteman.

3 Maj. Charles J. Loring, Jr., received the Medal of Honor (posthumously) for valor in Korea. He dived his F-80 aircraft directly into the midst of enemy gun emplacements to protect UN ground forces.

4 Capt. Alonzo Babers, Air Force pilot and Olympic gold medalist (400 meters and 1,600-meter relay), at the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984.

5 Maj. Louis J. Sebill received the Medal of Honor (posthumously) for valor in Korea. Despite battle damage to his F-51 fighter, he continued the attack on the enemy, ultimately diving into a North Korean gun battery.

6 Maj. Merlyn H. Dethlefsen received the Medal of Honor for valor in Vietnam. He flew repeatedly into the teeth of SAMs, AAA, and MiG interceptors to suppress enemy fire on a US strike force.

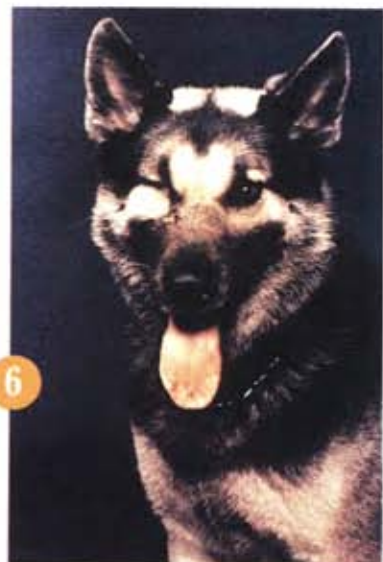




GLAMOROUS GLENNIS



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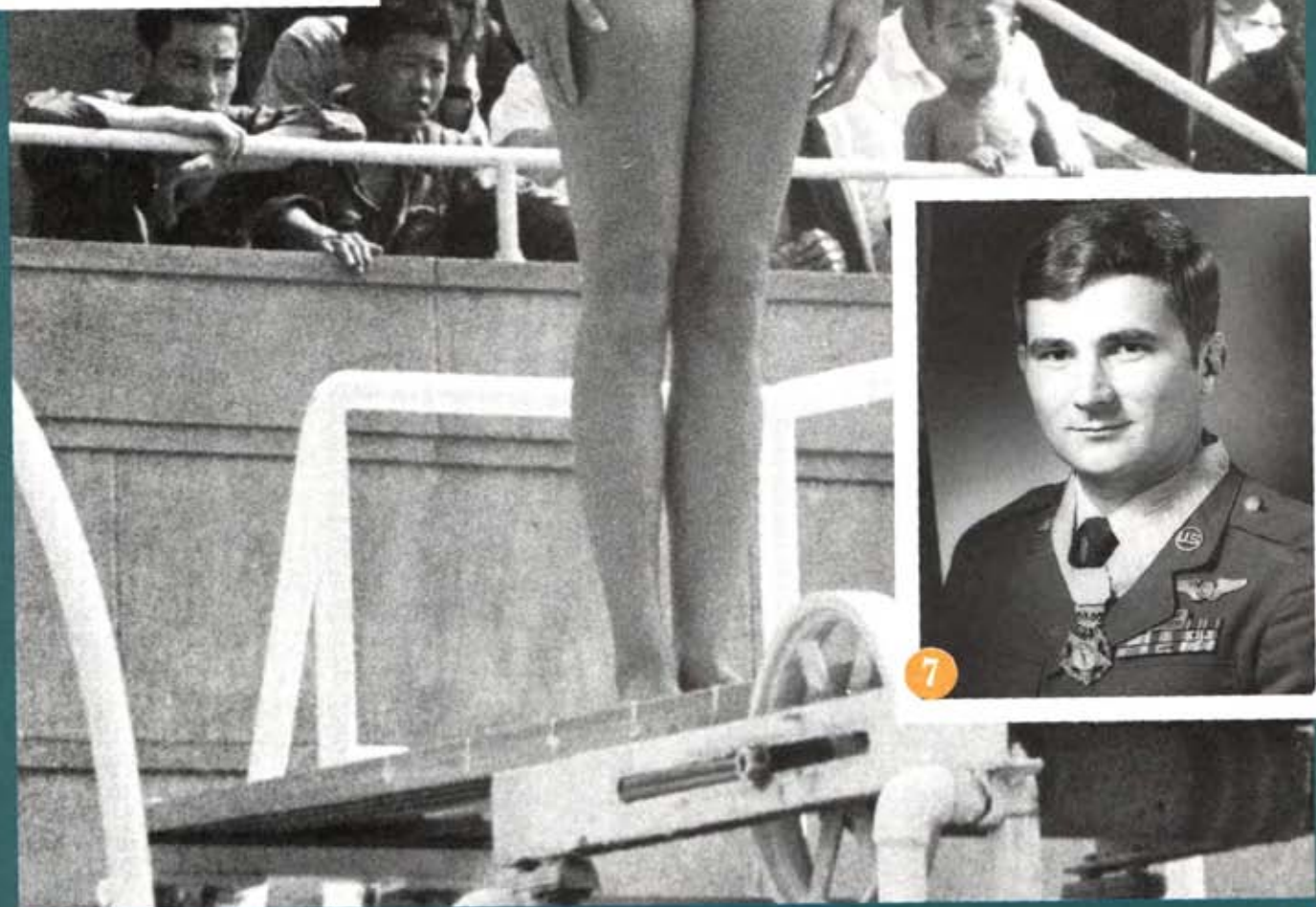
- 1 Lt. Col. John Paul Stapp, flight surgeon, rode rocket sleds at awesome speeds to learn if safe ejection was possible in supersonic flight.
- 2 Capt. Charles E. "Chuck" Yeager. First man to fly faster than the speed of sound, October 14, 1947, in the Bell X-1.
- 3 Lt. Col. Joe M. Jackson received the Medal of Honor for valor in Vietnam. He landed his C-123 amid intense enemy fire to rescue an Air Force Combat Control Team.
- 4 Virginia N. Foster. In her fifty-second year of federal service, now with the USAF Legislative Liaison, earning her an AFA Presidential Citation.
- 5 Sam Johnson, fighter pilot, Air Force Thunderbird, POW in Vietnam, and now a member of Congress from Texas.
- 6 Nemo, the hero USAF sentry dog from Vietnam. On patrol at Tan Son Nhut in 1966, he detected four Viet Cong infiltrators who opened fire and hit both Nemo and his handler. Despite a head wound, the powerful German shepherd charged and killed two of the intruders.



- 1 Paul W. Airey became the first Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force on April 3, 1967. He traveled more than 500,000 miles in the job.
- 2 Jeanne M. Holm was the Air Force's first female general officer. She put on the stars of a brigadier general on July 16, 1971.
- 3 1st Lt. James P. Fleming received the Medal of Honor for valor in Vietnam. Low on fuel and under fire, he put his UH-1F helicopter in an exposed position to rescue a Special Forces patrol.
- 4 Capt. John S. Walmsley, Jr., received the Medal of Honor (posthumously) for valor in Korea. He attacked a critical enemy supply train until his ammunition ran out, then exposed his B-26 to deadly fire to guide other aircraft onto the target.
- 5 Capt. Maxine J. "Micki" King, Air Force Special Services officer, won a gold medal in the three-meter springboard diving competition at the Munich Olympics in 1972.
- 6 Lt. Col. Leo K. Thorsness received the Medal of Honor for valor in Vietnam. On a single mission, he destroyed two SAM sites, shot down a MiG-17, scattered another MiG formation, and lingered in the area on low fuel to cover downed aircrews and rescue forces.
- 7 A1C John L. Levitow, loadmaster of an AC-47 gunship and the only USAF enlisted man to receive the Medal of Honor in the Vietnam War.



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1 Gen. Daniel "Chappie" James, Jr., first black officer to achieve four-star rank. He was a combat leader in Southeast Asia.

2 Terrie Ann McLaughlin, the first woman (in 1986) to be named the Air Force Academy's outstanding cadet.

3 Capt. Joseph C. McConnell, Jr., leading USAF jet ace of the Korean War with 16 victories.

4 Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft was an Air Force pilot and acting head of the US Air Force Academy's Political Science Department before achieving fame as deputy to Henry Kissinger and then National Security Advisor in the Ford and Bush Administrations.

5 CMSgt. Dick Red, who logged 40 years of service, was mobilized along with his Air National Guard unit for three wars. AFA's ANG Aerospace Maintenance Award is named for him.

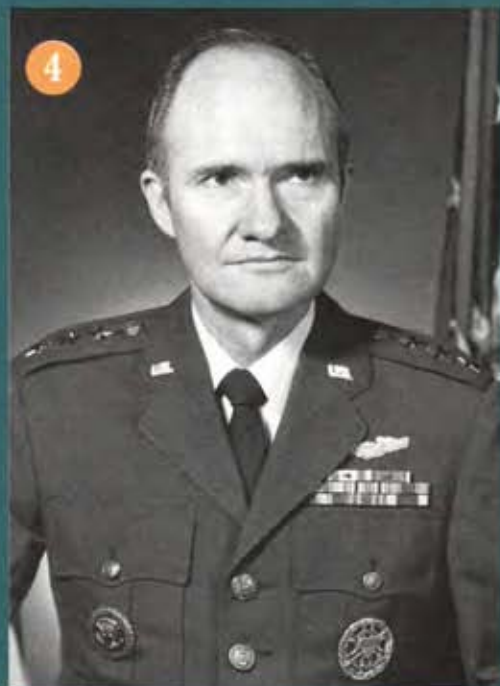
6 Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, legendary commander of Strategic Air Command (from 1948 to 1957) and probably the most famous airman of the postwar period.

7 Robinson Risner, Korean War fighter ace and leader among the American POWs in Vietnam. He spent seven and a half years in Hanoi's prisons.

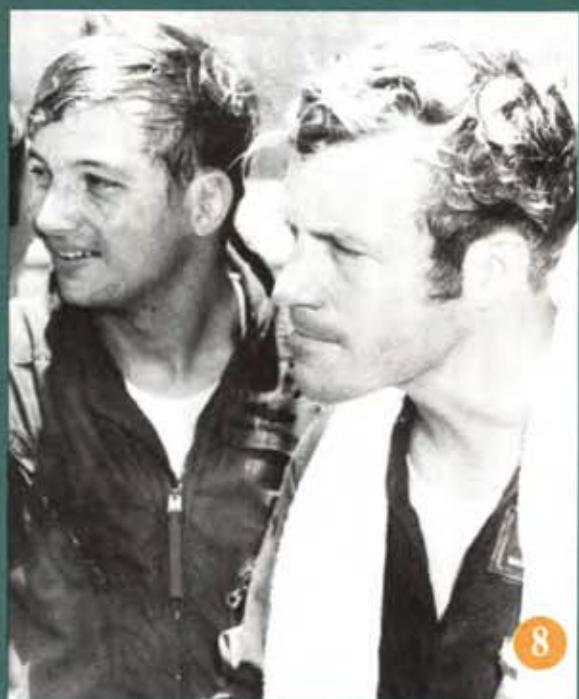
8 Capt. Richard S. "Steve" Ritchie (right) became USAF's first Vietnam ace on August 28, 1972. All five of his victories were against MiG-21s. Capt. Charles B. DeBellevue (left), F-4 weapon systems officer and top US Vietnam War ace. His six victories came between May and September 1972.



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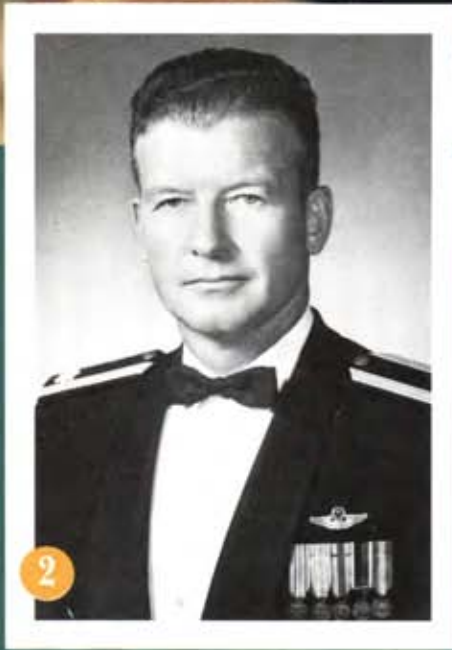
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Steve Eilers, Air Force Times



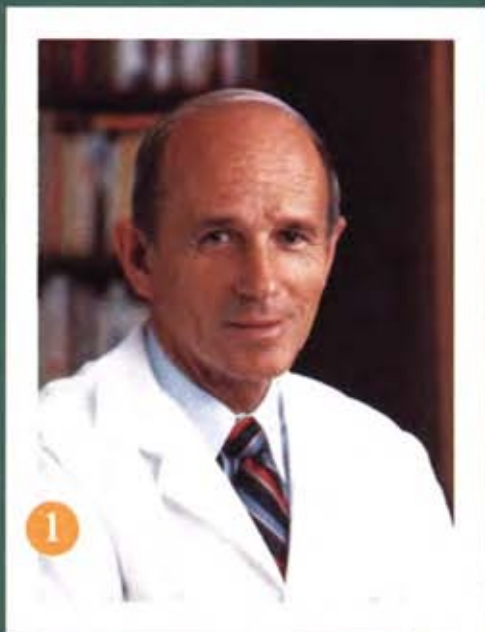
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- 1 Marcelite Jordan Harris, first female aircraft maintenance officer, first black woman to achieve star rank in USAF, eventually retired as a major general.
- 2 Col. William A. Jones III, received the Medal of Honor for valor in Vietnam. Unable to transmit by radio, he flew his crippled and burning A-1H back to base to report information critical to the rescue of a downed pilot.
- 3 Col. Richard Moody Suter created and designed Red Flag, the Air Force's premier fighter training program, conducted at Nellis AFB, Nev.
- 4 Maj. Bernard F. Fisher (left), A-1E Skyraider pilot and first Air Force officer awarded the Medal of Honor in the Vietnam War. He landed his A-1E amid fire and explosions on the airstrip at A Shau to bring out a fellow pilot.
- 5 Capt. Gerald O. Young received the Medal of Honor for valor in Vietnam. Disregarding serious burns and personal risk after his helicopter was shot down, he warned rescue forces of entrapment by enemy fire and refused rescue himself until the approach was safe.
- 6 Col. John A. Warden III, initial planner of the air campaign for the Persian Gulf War, based on concepts stated in his 1989 book, *The Air Campaign*.





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- 1 Lt. Col. Kenneth H. Cooper was an Air Force flight surgeon when his 1968 book, *Aerobics*, started a revolution in physical fitness.
- 2 Gen. William H. Tunner, commander of the Berlin Airlift.
- 3 Col. Francis S. "Gabby" Gabreski, whose 28 victories in World War II, combined with 6.5 during the Korean War, make him USAF's leading living ace.
- 4 Col. George E. Day received the Medal of Honor for valor in Vietnam. After escaping from the enemy, he gave his captors false information and demonstrated personal bravery in the face of enemy pressure. ■



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