



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Month in USAF and PACAF History August



1 August 1960 The USAF accepted the **first operational B-58 Hustler** medium bomber. The first U.S. supersonic bomber, the delta-wing aircraft could fly at twice the speed of sound and could be refueled in flight. However, the B-58 was expensive, difficult to fly and had limited range and payload. Advanced surface-to-air missiles forced SAC planners to adopt low altitude tactics reduced. By the 1970s, the B-58 was replaced by the FB-111.



3 August 1944 The **Far East Air Forces (FEAF)**, predecessor of PACAF, was **officially activated** at Brisbane, Australia. **Lt. Gen. George C. Kenney** was the first FEAF Commander.

3 August 1950 **Korean War.** The 5th Air Force got orders to interdict all enemy transportation and destroy key transportation facilities between the 37th and 38th parallels.



4 August 1955 Crew members of a special operations RB-29 called **Stardust 40** were released by China. Shot down and captured on 13 January 1953 during a night leaflet drop mission, they were held longer than any other prisoners of war in the Korean conflict.

5 August 1950 Major Louis J. Seville, flying on a combat mission in the Korean War, earned the **first Medal of Honor awarded to a member of the Air Force**. Seville had flown 68 combat missions in World War II as a B-26 bomber pilot. In the fall of 1948, he took command of the 67th Squadron, 18th Fighter-Bomber Group. When the Korean War began, his squadron was one of the first sent to Japan. Seville's Medal of Honor citation includes this excerpt:



During an attack on a camouflaged area containing a concentration of enemy troops, artillery, and armored vehicles, Major Seville's F-51 aircraft was severely damaged by antiaircraft fire. Although fully cognizant of the short period he could remain airborne, he deliberately ignored the possibility of survival by abandoning the aircraft or by crash landing, and continued his attack against the enemy forces threatening the security of friendly ground troops. In his determination to inflict maximum damage upon the enemy, Major Seville again exposed himself to the intense fire of enemy gun batteries and dived on the target to his death.



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6 August 1945 A B-29 crew flying the “Enola Gay” from the Marianas island of Tinian made the **first atomic bomb attack in history**. Hiroshima, Japan was struck with a single bomb



called “Little Boy.” Three days later, a B-29 crew flying “Bock’s Car” bombed Nagasaki in the second and **last atomic bomb attack**. The weapon, named “Fat Man” destroyed the city. The atomic bombs were the primary reason Japan surrendered and an Allied invasion of Japan was never launched. At left, the Enola Gay at Tinian in the Marianas Islands.

6 August 1993 Dr. Sheila E. Widnall became the **first female Secretary of the Air Force** and the first woman to head any of the military services.

7 August 1990 **Operation DESERT SHIELD**. In response to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait five days earlier, the U.S. military initiated deployment actions to protect Saudi Arabia from Iraqi aggression. The 71st Tactical Fighter Squadron deployed 24 F-15C Eagles from Langley AFB, Virginia to Saudi Arabia. The mission was a non-stop, 15-hour, 8,000-mile flight with multiple in-flight refuelings.



7 August 2009 **The USAF stood up Air Force Global Strike Command** – its first completely new major air command in 27 years. AFGSC’s mission is to “develop and provide combat-ready forces for nuclear deterrence and global strike operations.” The Command provides a single organization responsible for the oversight of two-thirds of U.S. nuclear capabilities through two Numbered Air Forces: 20th Air Force with responsibility over the United States’ three intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) wings, and 8th Air Force with responsibility over America’s two B-52 bomber wings and the nation’s only B-2 bomber wing.



8 August 1913 **The first military airplane flight in Hawaii** was piloted by Lt. Harold Geiger from Fort Kamehameha. The aircraft, a Curtiss E two-seater, soared over Pearl Harbor.



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8 August 1964 The **Royal Australian Air Force involvement in Vietnam** began with the arrival of three DHC-4 Caribou aircraft of the RAAF Transport Flight Vietnam at Vung Tau, South Vietnam (pictured at left). The flight would later be renamed the No. 35 Squadron. The RAAF flight had originally been activated in 1942 for action around Australia, New Guinea, and the Netherlands East Indies.

8 August 1988 **Burma's pro-democracy "8888 Uprising."** By the year 1988, Burma had been ruled by the so-called Burma Socialist Programme Party as a one-party state for 26 years. Despite the military government's warnings outlawing political protests, on the morning of 8 August 1988 thousands of protesters – students, workers, housewives, professionals and Buddhist



monks – took to the streets of Rangoon, marched to the city center and took control of the city. The military violently re-took control of Rangoon in September 1988, with outside estimates of the civilian death toll in the thousands. The uprising launched the political activist career of charismatic leader **Aung San Suu Kyi** (pictured left), daughter of one of modern Burma's founding father, Aung San.

9 August 1990 The **Alaskan Air Command** was redesignated as the **Eleventh Air Force** and concurrently changed its status from a USAF major command to a subordinate command of Pacific Air Forces.



9 August 2000 Andersen AFB, Guam, became the **first installation outside the continental United States to store conventional air-launched cruise missiles (CALCM)**. The



3,150-pound CALCM was capable of flying 600 miles to strike targets while keeping the launch aircraft and crew out of harm's way. The storage of CALCMs at Andersen was part of a continuing effort to build up the base's role as a bomber forward operating location. (Boeing photo of an AGM-86B cruise missile at left.)

10 August 1961 An F-105 lifted the **largest load ever carried aloft by a single-engine aircraft**, dropping over seven tons of bombs on a target. At left, an F-105 with a full bomb load.





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11-12 August 1958 **Rescue in Japan.** Torrential rain over northern Honshu, Japan, raised the Iwaki-Gawa River over its banks and flooded the city of Hirosaki. Fierce currents prevented the use of rescue boats, so city officials asked the 6139th Air Base Group at Misawa AB for help. USAF H-19 helicopters from the 6139th saved 133 passengers, airlifting stranded flood victims by cable from roofs, bridges, vehicles, trees, and islands of higher ground and taking them to relief centers. (Right, UH-19B at the NMUSAF)



12 August 1946 President Truman signed a bill authorizing an appropriation of \$50,000 to establish a National Air Museum in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. The small museum became the [National Air and Space Museum](#) - the most visited museum in the nation.

14 August 1945 The 20th Air Force conducted the **final B-29 combat mission against Japan.**



This mission included a record number of effective aircraft: 754 B-29s and 169 fighters. One phase of the mission, against the Nippon Oil Refinery at Tsuchizaka, produced the longest nonstop mission of the war from the Marianas – 3,650 miles. (Photos of B-29s over Japan.)



14 August 1973 The **Bellows Air Force Station beach area** (right) was entered into the National Register of Historic Places because of significant archaeological findings, which determined it to be **one of the oldest places of human habitation in the Hawaiian Islands.** Scientific studies suggest that Bellows' beach area was occupied around A.D. 800 to 1000.





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15 August 1943 The **Aleutian Campaign of World War II ended** with the reoccupation of Kiska. Japan had occupied the Aleutians to secure the northern flank of their Pacific empire, and the U.S. feared that the islands could be used as bases for air attacks on the American west coast.



In May 1943, American forces seized Attu, and by July the U.S. Army Air Forces began using it as a base for raids against the Kurile Islands. When U.S. troops landed on Kiska, they found the enemy had already evacuated the outpost. Primarily an air war, the Aleutian Campaign was the only World War II campaign fought on North American soil. At left, a Japanese ship burns in Kiska harbor after an Eleventh AF raid.

15 August 1945 **Cease-Fire in the Pacific.** After atomic bombs struck Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese government announced it would surrender "unconditionally," subject to an Allied agreement to maintain the monarchy. The U.S. declared a cease-fire immediately.

15 August 1957 **General Nathan F. Twining became the first USAF officer to serve as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS).** During World War II, General Twining was the Commander of Thirteenth Air Force, Chief of Staff of Allied Air Forces in the South Pacific and Commander of Twentieth Air Force in the strategic bombing campaign against Japan, including the atomic bomb missions. In 1947, he became Commander of Alaskan Air Command. General Twining was the Chief of Staff of the Air Force prior to being appointed CJCS. Twining was known for his belief in strategic bombing, his common sense and his ability to work well with other officers across the DoD. Click [here](#) for Gen Twining's biography



15 August 1972 **Operation SAKLOLO concluded.** In this disaster relief operation to aid flood victims in the Philippines, PACAF C-130s, H-3 helicopters and H-43 helicopters airlifted more than 2,000 tons of food, medical supplies, clothing, fuel, and other relief to Luzon.

16 August 1950 **Massed bomber mission in Korea.** In the largest employment of air power in direct support of ground forces since the Normandy invasion of World War II, 98 B-29s dropped more than 800 tons of 500-pound bombs on a 27-square-mile area near Waegwan, where large numbers of enemy troops were suspected to be massing for an attack on Taegu.



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17 August 1990 **Operation DESERT SHIELD/STORM.** President George H. W. Bush activated the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) for the first time since it was established in 1952. CRAF aircraft transported 709,613 passengers and 126,309 tons of cargo for the campaign



18 August 1948 **Wing Activations.** During World War II, U.S. Army Air Forces wings were a mix of combat groups and support organizations. Subordinate units were not permanently assigned to the wings nor did they have the wings' numerical designations. During 1947 and 1948, the newly independent Air Force tested a "wing-base" plan (sometimes called the *Hobson Plan* for General Kenneth Hobson) which brought important changes in the organization of Air Force field units. Each combat wing in the test had a combat group, a maintenance and supply group, an airdrome (later, air base) group to operate base facilities and services, and a medical group. The groups all had the wing numerical designation. This wing-base test standardized the functions of the wing elements and permanently aligned the support organizations with the parent wings. Wing-base organizational plans were implemented in all USAF combat commands in the summer of 1948 (and ultimately in USAF support commands as well). As a result, **the 3rd Bombardment Wing (Light) and the 8th, 18th, 35th and 51st Fighter Wings were all activated** on or about 18 August, 1948. The current wing emblems are shown below.



18 August 2005 **JASSM IOC.** The Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM) achieved initial operational capability (IOC). The JASSM is an all-weather, low observable, standoff cruise missile capable of destroying heavily defended, high-priority targets deep behind enemy lines. The JASSM-Extended Range variant has about two-and-a-half times the range of the original JASSM.





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23 August 1958 **The Second Taiwan Strait Crisis.** Republic of China (ROC) forces on Quemoy Island were shelled and threatened with invasion by the Chinese Communists. PACAF asked for part of the TAC Composite Air Strike Force (CASF). During Operation QUICK KICK on 29 August, the 16th Fighter Interceptor Squadron (FIS) at Naha Air Base launched six F-86Ds within 27 minutes of notification and the rest of its 22 F-86Ds within four hours. These aircraft



F-86D at the National Museum of the USAF

flew to Tainan Air Base on Taiwan, replacing the 25th FIS which had deployed to Chia-Yi on 4 June. The Joint Chiefs of Staff also directed the 388th Tactical Fighter Squadron, with 16 F-100s, to fly to Clark Air Base. President Eisenhower also authorized the delivery of the new Sidewinder air-to-air missile to the Republic of China F-86 Sabres, giving them an advantage over their MiG opponents. The invasion never took place and a ceasefire between the two Chinas was called on 6 Oct 1958.

25-29 August 1952 **Operation HAJJI BABA or MAGIC CARPET.** U.S. Air Force C-54s airlifted 3,763 Muslim pilgrims to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca). Mideast airlines had overbooked flights from Beirut to Saudi Arabia, stranding thousands of travelers in Beirut, Lebanon and other locations. The USAF airlift averted a disaster at Beirut Airport, enabled faithful Muslims to fulfill the Hajj, and helped restore America's standing in the Middle East after U.S. support for the establishment of Israel in 1948.



26 August 1967 The North Vietnamese captured **Major George E. "Bud" Day**, USAF, after downing his F-100 Super Sabre. Severely wounded, he was taken to a prison camp for interrogation and torture. Despite his crippling injuries, Major Day escaped and evaded the enemy for two weeks. He had crossed the demilitarized zone and was

within two miles of a Marine Corps base when he was shot and recaptured. Back in prison and in poor health, he continued to resist his captors until he was released in 1973. For his bravery, he earned the **Medal of Honor**.



26 August 1976 The first two groups of **USAF female pilot candidates** began flight screening.



First women pilot graduates

On 29 September, the women entered USAF undergraduate pilot training (UPT) at Williams AFB, Arizona. The 77-08 class included Captains Susan Rogers, Connie Engle and Mary Donahue (at left) and also Captains Kathy La Sauce and Christine Schott; 1st Lts Sandra Scott and Victoria Crawford; and 2nd Lts Mary Livingston, Carol Scherer and Kathleen Rambo. These first female USAF pilots graduated and got their wings on 2 September 1977.



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26 August to 11 September 1980 The **first deployment of the F-15 / E-3A team to the Southwest Pacific** occurred during Exercise PACIFIC CONSORT in Australia. Exercises in Australia and New Zealand, like other Asia exercises, had been severely curtailed during the war in Southeast Asia.

At right, Kadena F-15s fly with Mirages of the Royal Australian Air Force in Exercise PACIFIC CONSORT.



26 August 1992 The United States launched **Operation SOUTHERN WATCH** in support of United Nations sanctions against Iraq. USAF aircraft began patrolling a no-fly zone south of 32 degrees north latitude in southern Iraq to provide protection to Shiite Muslims living there and to deter any new Iraqi military activity against Kuwait or Saudi Arabia. At left, an F-15 Eagle takes off from Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia during Operation SOUTHERN WATCH.



27 August 1945 B-29s of the Twentieth Air Force flew their **first supply-drop mission to Allied prisoners of war (POWs)** at a camp near Beijing, China. When the Pacific war ended, it was estimated that evacuation of the POW camps would take 30 days. Starvation and disease were common among POWs, so rapid supply of these camps would save many lives. In all, 154 camps with 63,500 prisoners in Japan, China, and Korea got food, medical supplies, and clothing. In the photo at left, a POW camp has “P-W” marked on the roofs. The camps were often located next to Allied bombing targets.



28 August 1945 **FEAF arrives in Japan.** An advance team of communications specialists flew to Atsugi Airfield, 16 miles southwest of Tokyo – the first American personnel to begin the occupation of Japan. Among them was **Colonel Gordon Blake** (right) former Base Operations officer in charge of Hickam Field. Blake was on duty at Hickam during the attack of 7 December 1941.

Protected only by units of the Japanese Imperial Army, Col. Blake and this stalwart band set up the control tower and communication equipment necessary for airfield operations. Two days later, U.S. occupation forces began landing in Japan. Through 12 September, hundreds of C-54s, B-24s and other aircraft were used to airlift the initial Air Transport Command detachment, two U.S. Army divisions, and advance headquarters echelons for General MacArthur, Eighth Army and Far East Air Forces. Nearly 40,000 occupation troops and more than 8,000 tons of supplies were flown from a staging area in Okinawa to mainland Japan.





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28 August 1972 **Capt. Richard S. “Steve” Ritchie**, with his backseater Capt. Charles D. DeBellevue, shot down his fifth MiG-21 near Hanoi. (At right, Ritchie and DeBellevue in their F-4.) This made Ritchie the **first USAF ace of the Vietnam War**. Ritchie shared the 1972 Mackay Trophy with the other USAF aces in the Vietnam War – DeBellevue and Capt. Jeffrey S. Feinstein.



29 August 1990 The Lockheed/Boeing/General Dynamics team unveiled the **YF-22A Fighter** in ceremonies at Lockheed Plant 10 in Palmdale, California.

The F-22 was the result of the 1980s **Advanced Tactical Fighter (ATF) program** to develop and field the next-generation air superiority fighter. The program objective was to counter emerging threats such as the Su-27 Flanker and the MiG-29 Fulcrum. These potential rivals were forecast to have *supermaneuverability* – maneuver capabilities that are impossible by traditional airflow control surfaces such as ailerons, elevators, flaps, air brakes and rudder. Supermaneuverability is achieved through innovations such as thrust-vectoring engine nozzles.

The **F-22 Raptor** was the first operational aircraft to combine supermaneuverability with *supercruise* (sustained supersonic flight without the exorbitant fuel consumption of afterburner), internal weapons (drastically reducing aerodynamic drag) and stealth. The F-22 can intercept targets that are too fast for a subsonic fighter and too far away for an afterburning fighter. Additional F-22 capabilities in sensor fusion and air battle management greatly enhance the air superiority of any air component led by Raptors. Below, F-22s based in Hawaii and Alaska.



30 August 1983 Lt Col Guion S. Bluford, Jr., USAF, a veteran of 144 combat missions in the F-4C in Vietnam, became the **first African-American astronaut** to journey into space. Lt Col Bluford (left) was a mission specialist aboard *Challenger* on the eighth space shuttle mission, the first of four space flights. Bluford completed four space missions, logging in over 688 hours in space.



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30 August 1995 NATO launched **Operation DELIBERATE FORCE**, a precision air campaign against Serbian targets in Bosnia, accompanied by a Bosnian-Croatian ground offensive.

On 14 September, the Serbs agreed to peace terms; the peace agreements were signed in December.

At right, an F-16 Fighting Falcon returns to Aviano Air Base, Italy from a mission during Operation DELIBERATE FORCE.



31 August 1921 In June 1921, King George V of Great Britain approved the prefix "Royal" for the Australian Air Force. With Royal Assent given by the monarch, the **establishment of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)** became effective on this day. According to its website, the RAAF is the second oldest independent Air Force in the world (after Britain's RAF).

31 August – 3 September 1996 **Operation DESERT STRIKE**. Iraq attacked Kurds and seized the city of Irbil in a zone protected by the United States. In response, U.S. forces struck military targets in Iraq posing a threat to coalition aircraft in the no-fly-zone. B-52s of Air Expeditionary Force IV in Southeast Asia left Andersen AFB, Guam on 2 September and flew non-stop for 34 hours and 13,600 miles, launching 13 conventional air launched cruise missiles (CALCMs) against targets in Iraq. Nine KC-10s and fourteen KC-135s flew air refueling missions to support the raid. In the photo at right, a B-52 launches a CALCM.

Andersen AFB also began hosting more than 6,600 Kurdish evacuees as a part of **Joint Task Force – Operation Pacific Haven**. This eight-month humanitarian assistance mission lasted from September, 1996 to April, 1997.



Your comments on *This Week in USAF and PACAF History* are valued and appreciated.
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