



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 22 – 28 June 2015



26 June 1948 **Berlin Airlift.** USAF aircraft made their first humanitarian flights supporting the Allied response to a Soviet blockade of rail and road lines into West Berlin. The Military Air Transport Service (MATS) deployed aircraft and personnel from all over the world including the Pacific theater. The operation delivered 2.3 million tons of cargo to West Berlin over the next year and became the largest humanitarian airlift in history. This extremely high-paced airlift operation was amazingly safe, but there were 12 crashes and 30 deaths among supporting U.S. servicemembers. The photos below are from Berlin's Tempelhof Airport in August, 1948. For more photos, videos and information see the DoD [webpage](#) and the USAF [Fact Sheet](#).



26 June 1948 The USAF received its first operational [B-36 Peacemaker](#) heavy bomber. With a length of 160 feet and a 230-foot wing span, the Peacemaker was the world's largest warplane and is still the largest bomber ever built. The six-engine bomber was designed in 1941 amid fears that England might fall to Germany and the U.S. would need a trans-Atlantic bomber in a war against the Nazis. (Below, an early B-36 next to a B-29. Four jet engines were later added to the B-36's six piston engines, dramatically improving its takeoff performance and top speed.)





U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 22 – 28 June 2015



25 June 1950 **The Korean War.** At 0400 hours, North Korea launched an all-out attack against the Republic of Korea. A Hickam-based C-54G parked at Kimpo Airport (just west of Seoul) was destroyed by North Korean fighters – the first American aircraft lost in the Korean conflict. The UN Security Council called for the withdrawal of North Korean forces from South Korea. Headquarters Far East Air Forces (FEAF) and Fifth Air Force began airlifting U.S.



F-80 attack on North Korean invaders

citizens out of Seoul, the South Korean capital. Fifth Air Force C-54, C-47, and C-46 transport aircraft airlifted hundreds of evacuees from Seoul and Suwon Airfields to Japan. They were escorted by F-82 and F-80 jet fighters and B-26 light bombers. On 27 June, six USAF pilots shot down enemy airplanes. An F-82 pilot, 1st Lt. William G. Hudson, earned the first aerial victory credit of the Korean War when he shot down a North Korean Yak-11 that was attacking a South Korean airfield near Seoul.

28 June 1950 **Korean War.** North Korean forces occupied Seoul and nearby Kimpo Airfield. FEAF launched its first successful airstrike as more than twenty B-26s from the 3rd Bomb Group attacked enemy rail and road traffic north of Seoul. One B-26 was lost to enemy fire.

23-24 June 1952 In coordinated attacks, aircraft of the U.S. Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps destroyed virtually all the **hydroelectric power plants of North Korea**. The two-day operation, involving over 1,200 sorties, was the largest single air effort since World War II. (At right, the bombing of a North Korean dam during the war.) This bombing campaign was designed to apply political pressure against the Communists at a time of stalemate in both the ground war and the truce talks.



28 June 1957 The first production [KC-135 Stratotanker](#) arrived at Castle AFB, California. Previously, B-52 jet bombers had to fly at close to their aerodynamic stall speed when refueling from piston-engined tankers. But this new jet tanker could fly as fast as jet bombers. The photo at left is from *This Day in Aviation*. As of July 2014, the KC-135A in the photo was still flying as a re-engined KC-135R.



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History **22 – 28 June 2015**



26 June 1972 **The Air Force unveiled the [F-15 Eagle](#) air superiority fighter** in ceremonies at the McDonnell Douglas facility in St. Louis, Missouri. Arguably the world's most successful fighter program, the F-15 has excellent radar and supporting avionics, a very reliable airframe and superb maneuverability. The F-15 may have been the first aircraft with “hands-on-throttle-and-stick” (HOTAS), a human-machine interface concept which puts key controls on the throttle



and control stick – immediately accessible to the pilots' fingers. The combination of HOTAS and heads-up display (HUD) allowed the pilot to focus outside the cockpit while operating weapons and other systems. In the photo at left, an F-15 intercepts a Russian Tu-95 bomber near Alaska.

25 June 1996 **Khobar Towers.** Terrorists detonated a truck bomb outside a fence surrounding a housing facility near King Abdul-Aziz Air Base, Saudi Arabia. The blast killed 19 U.S. Air Force personnel and injured 300 others.

Force protection measures at the facility were primarily concerned that terrorist bombers might penetrate the building, as happened at the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983. Concrete barriers surrounded the fence around the Khobar Towers, but there were few lights. No surveillance cameras, sensors, or alarms were in use. USAF Security Police watching the perimeter from the roof saw the truck being parked and alerted building occupants to the threat. However, the evacuation was still in progress when the bomb detonated. The perpetrators escaped. The photo at right shows the bomb crater and the damage to the housing facility.



As a result of the bombing, most USAF personnel in Saudi Arabia were moved to remote sites that were easier to defend.

Your comments on *This Week in USAF and PACAF History* are valued and appreciated.
[Please click here to make a comment.](#)

OPR: PACAF/HO