



**U.S. AIR FORCE**



## **This Week in USAF and PACAF History** 14 – 20 January 2008

18 Jan 1778 Captain James Cook sighted the Hawaiian Islands for the first time. He named them the Sandwich Islands after his friend and patron, the Earl of Sandwich.

14 Jan 1913 A fleet of Army transports arrived from San Francisco, carrying men, dependents, and equipment for an infantry regiment, a cavalry regiment, and three companies of coastal artillery. Two of the coast artillery companies — the 68th and the 75th — were stationed at Fort Kamehameha.

15 Jan 1914 The Signal Corps Aviation School issued the first Army aviation safety regulation. It required pilots to wear helmets and leather coats for overland flights, and unsinkable coats for over water flights.

17 Jan 1932 After a severe snowstorm, seven aircraft from the 11th Bomb Squadron (BMS) flew missions for four days to deliver supplies to snow-bound Navajo and Hopi Indians near Winslow, Arizona. Lt Charles H. Howard received the MacKay Trophy for this effort. The 11<sup>th</sup> BS was stationed in a dozen locations throughout the Pacific in WWII.

14 Jan 1938 Construction of the Water Tower at Hickam Field was completed. Built with a Moorish design under the direction of Captain Howard B. Nurse of the US Army Quartermaster Corps, the 171-foot tall tower cost \$43,146 and contained a 500,000 gallon tank.



14 Jan 1942 The Thirteenth Air Force was established on this date, and activated nearly a year later (13 Jan 1943) on New Caledonia Island. 13th Air Force began operations as an organization composed of many widely separated and independent units scattered throughout the Pacific. From 1943-1945, 13 AF staged out of tropical jungles on more than 40 remote islands, thus earning the nickname, "The Jungle Air Force." Initially in a defensive stance against advancing enemy forces, 13AF later took the offensive and traveled northeast from the Solomons to the Admiralty Islands, New Guinea, Morotai and the Philippines.



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15 Jan 1942 The Alaskan Air Force is activated at Elmendorf Field, Alaska, replacing the Air Force, Alaskan Defense Command that had been established 17 October 1941. Less than a month later, the Alaskan AF is redesignated as the "11th Air Force," and later in 1942 it is redesignated once again, as the "Eleventh Air Force."



17 Jan 1945 Ninety-one B-29s flew the last Superfortress mission from Chengtu, China, against the enemy airfield at Shinchiku, Formosa.

14 Jan 1958 A WB-50 weather reconnaissance aircraft disappeared on 14 January while observing Typhoon Ophelia in the western Caroline Islands. Surface winds of the storm reached 200 knots.

20 Jan 1960 **Soviet Missile Testing.** Early in January, the Soviet Union announced planned testing of more powerful rockets. The first test flights would impact within a 44,800-sq. mi. area in the Pacific, located only 1,000 miles southwest of the Hawaiian Islands. Under Project Big Arm, PACAF and Pacific Fleet (PACFLT) cooperated to observe these Soviet missile tests. On 20 and 22 January, PACAF employed KC-135, C-130, and RB-69 (P2V-7) aircraft to accomplish very successful observation and data-gathering missions. (See photo of USAF RB-69, at right).



20 Jan 1972 The last of Hickam's "Gooney Birds," C-47 aircraft No. 404, departed for Taiwan after a 14-1/2 year stay at Hickam AFB. Upon arrival at Taiwan, the aircraft was to be modified, overhauled, and turned over to the Government of Indonesia as part of the Military Assistance Program.

15 Jan 1985 The 6594th Test Group, an Air Force Systems Command unit based at Hickam AFB, lost seven personnel when their HH-53 helicopter crashed on the ship *Asian Beauty* while attempting a rescue mission. In the 1960's and early 1970's, the top secret mission of the Hickam-based 6594TG was to recover film capsules from the CORONA spy satellites. The declassified program is discussed in detail at the National Reconnaissance Office website @ <http://www.nro.gov/corona/facts.html>.



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16 Jan 1991 **Operation DESERT STORM.** The 2d Bomb Wing launched B-52Gs at 0636 hours local time from Barksdale AFB, La., to the Iraqi combat zone, where they launched 35 cruise missiles on 17 January against targets in Iraq and returned to Barksdale. This flight was the longest bombing mission in history to date. The war against Iraq started.



16 Jan 1998 After a devastating earthquake hit China's Northern Hebei Province, a C-17 left Kadena AB, Japan, for Beijing with 40 tons of relief supplies, consisting of blankets, sleeping bags, medical supplies, rations, and cold-weather clothing.

