



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 21-27 January 2008



21 Jan 1911 Lt Paul W. Beck sent the **first radio message from a plane to ground station** at Selfridge Field, Mich., 1.5 miles away. He designed a transmitter to send telegraph signals and used Phillip O. Parmalee's Wright plane flying at 100 feet for this demonstration. The Wright Flyer is pictured at right.



24 Jan 1944 **D-DAY AT ANZIO.** The Allied air campaign in Italy leading up to the Anzio landings had destroyed German airfields, aircraft and lines of communication, and feinted an Allied landing site different than Anzio. On 24 January, the allied assault forces landed at Anzio and Nettuno with minimal resistance. Twelfth Air Force provided air cover for the landings and played a major role in defending the beachhead.



The Germans counterattacked with the intention of trapping and destroying the allied forces. From D-Day until 15 February, allied air forces flew 27,204 sorties, dropped 13,035 tons of bombs, and destroyed 326 enemy planes at a cost of 96 allied bombers and 133 fighters, lost mostly to German anti-aircraft artillery. 12th AF maintained air cover over the beachhead, supplied convoys and naval vessels and provided close air support to the assault forces. To enhance cooperation between the ground and air commanders, Fifth Army and 12th AF personnel met nightly to review the day's operations and plan the next day's attacks. The air-land team also developed the "call targets" system, consisting of telephone calls from Fifth Army to 12th AF when emergency air support was needed. 12th AF then directly assigned the "call targets" to air units standing by for attack.

The Allied effort in the Mediterranean drained German combat power that could have been used on other fronts, enhanced the re-supply of Allied forces throughout the Mediterranean theater, deprived German forces of critical resources, and led to the allied invasion of southern France in August, 1944.

24 Jan 1951 **OPERATION THUNDERBOLT.** Close air support for United Nations (UN) ground troops remained a priority mission for FEAF in the Korean conflict. In a late January Eighth Army campaign designed to reach the Han River, T-6 Mosquito controllers patrolled ahead of friendly ground forces, notified ground forces of enemy strong spots, and called in air strikes by US fighter-bombers. Generals Matthew B. Ridgway and Earl E. Partridge personally reconnoitered the front lines in a T-6 prior to the 25 January dawn attack on Red Chinese forces.





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27 Jan 1951 NY Times announces *“Turkish Woman to Serve as Fighter Pilot in Korea. A woman fighter pilot is going to Korea to serve with the United Nations Air Force. She is Major Sabiha Gokcen, 36-year-old adopted daughter of Kemal Ataturk, and possibly the world’s first woman warbird.”* In fact, Maj. Gokcen was indeed the world’s first female combat pilot. Born in 1913, Gokcen began glider training at the age of 22 and earned her military pilot’s license two years later in 1937. That same year, Sabiha Gokcen participated in the Turkish campaign against the Kurds in Dersim, a province of Turkey (most likely flying a Vultee-V bomber). Her participation in the “Dersim Operation” as pilot and observer earned her recognition as the world’s first female combat pilot. During her flying career, she flew over 21 different types of aircraft, earned a

Gold Medal from the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (1992), and was guest of honor at Air University’s Gathering of Eagles in 1996. (More information at Air University @ http://www.au.af.mil/au/goe/eagle_bios/1996/gokcen_1996.html).

21 Jan 1961 **HIANG Conversion Completed.** The first flight of a TF-102A of the Hawaii Air National Guard's 199th Fighter- Interceptor Squadron occurred on 21 January. The new aircraft replaced the old F86s on alert status in May. (See photo of HIANG F-102s, right).



23 Jan 1966 Military Airlift Command completes **Operation Blue Light**, the airlift of the Army’s 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, from Hickam AFB to Pleiku, South Vietnam, to offset the buildup of Communist forces there. The airlift begins on Dec. 23, 1965, and its 231 C-141 sorties move approximately 3,000 troops and 4,700 tons of equipment. At the time, Blue Light counted as the largest combat zone airlift in history.



21 Jan 1968 **SIEGE OF KHE SANH.** Communist forces began an extended siege of three Marine battalions at Khe Sanh, Vietnam. In early January 1968, some 15,000 Communist troops had cut off all ground supply to the base. On 16 January, C-130s had moved another Marine infantry battalion to Khe Sanh to give the base a total of 6,000 defenders. The siege began on 21 January and lasted into March, prompting an extensive airlift. USAF tactical transports made 447 landings (below, right) and 576 airdrops



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(below, left) under very hostile conditions. The airlift reinforced Khe Sanh with another battalion and delivered 12,430 tons of cargo, giving the defenders a 30-day supply of food, fuel, and ammunition. Enemy fire destroyed three aircraft and damaged 18 others (images above & below).



27 Jan 1968 **Operation COMBAT FOX.** After North Korea seized the S. S. Pueblo on 23 January, MAC supported USAF and Army deployments from the U.S., Pacific, and SEA to South Korea and Japan. During the next three weeks, MAC moved 7,996 passengers and nearly 13,700 tons of cargo in over 800 missions to the region.

27 Jan 1973 **VIETNAM PEACE ACCORDS.** After the 11-day Linebacker II bombing campaign against Hanoi and Haiphong, North Vietnam signed a peace accord, and a cease-fire was declared.



21 Jan 1991 **AIR FORCE CROSS.** Capt Paul T. Johnson was awarded the Air Force Cross for his action on this date in Desert Storm. An excerpt from the citation: “Captain Johnson was the flight lead on Sandy 57, a two-ship of A-10s tasked for search and rescue alert at a forward operating location. While en route, he received tasking to look for an F-14 crew that had been shot down the night before. During the next six hours he would lead his flight through three aerial refuelings, one attack on a possible SCUD missile site, and three hours of intensive searching deeper inside enemy territory than any A-10 had ever been. He risked his life as he had to fly at a mere 500 feet in order to pinpoint the survivor's location. When an enemy truck appeared to be heading toward his survivor, Captain Johnson directed his flight to destroy it, thus securing the rescue.”





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22 Jan 1991 **DESERT STORM.** "Smart bomb" attacks began against hardened aircraft shelters at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq. The attacks were so successful that Iraqi fighters started flying to Iran to escape destruction.

27 Jan 1991 **DESERT STORM.** F-111 Aardvarks delivered guided bombs on the Al Ahmadi oil refinery to close oil manifolds opened by the Iraqis. This attack stopped the flow of the biggest deliberate oil spill in history.

24 Jan 2006 The **Hawaii Air National Guard flew its last C-130 mission.** Former members of the 6594th Test Group -- Lt Col James "Jim" Yuki, Lt Col Gerald "Gerry" Mansell, and Lt Col Kevin Garcia -- were part of the crew, which participated in the final mission of the last member of the HIANG's fleet of five C-130H Hercules cargo planes. The Guard's C-130, dubbed "Koea Kea," would be sent to the Idaho Air National Guard, as the HIANG geared up to fly Hickam-based C-17s beginning February 2006. (Honolulu Star-Bulletin photo shows Lt Col James Yuki on final approach).



20 January 2007 Members of **Operation Deep Freeze** participated in events to commemorate the base's 50th anniversary Jan. 20 at Scott Base on Ross Island in Antarctica. The National Science Foundation, as manager of the U.S. Antarctic Program, hosted the U.S. contingent, known as Joint Task Force, Support Forces Antarctica, Operation Deep Freeze. JTF SFA is the U.S. Air Force-led joint task force conducting Operation Deep Freeze, a mission that has supported the National Science Foundation and U.S. Antarctic Program since 1955. (AF photo of C-17 starting-up at Pegasus White Ice Runway, Antarctica, 2007).

