



U.S. AIR FORCE



This Week in USAF and PACAF History 25 February – 2 March 2008

1 March 1913 **INCOME TAX.** The 16th amendment took effect initiating U.S. federal income tax. On the following day, flying pay was first authorized for military aviators, who received a 35 percent bonus over base pay.

1-4 Mar 1943 **BATTLE OF THE BISMARCK SEA.** Crews of the Fifth Air Force and the Royal Australian Air Force flying out of Port Moresby, New Guinea attacked a Japanese convoy aimed at relieving their forces in New Guinea.

Modified B-25s used low-level skip bombing for the first time. These heavily armed B-25s, with forward- and side-firing .50-caliber guns, wreaked havoc on the Japanese convoy of eight troop transports, eight destroyers, and two cruisers. Out of 6,900 Japanese troops who were badly needed in New Guinea, only about 800 made it to Lae. This ended the enemy's effort to reinforce Lae.

As General Kenney later reported: "In the space of twelve minutes, we had destroyed or damaged

114,000 tons of Japanese shipping, shot down or destroyed on the ground eighty-five airplanes." (See AAC photo of 3d Bomb Group attacking Japanese shipping, March 1943).



26 Feb 1949 **MACKAY TROPHY.** Through 2 March, an Air Force crew led by Capt James Gallagher flew a B-50 on the first nonstop around-the-world flight. Starting and ending at Carswell AFB, the flight covered 23,452 miles in 94 hours 1 minute, with four KB-29 air refuelings over the Azores, Arabia, the Philippines, and Hawaii. The aircrew received several awards including the first Mackay Trophy (later renamed the Hoyt S. Vandenberg Trophy).



1 March 1950 Boeing turned over the first production B-47A Stratojet bomber to the Air Force. (B-47 photo at left.) The B-47 program originally came from a World War II requirement for a jet bomber and reconnaissance aircraft that could reach Nazi Germany in the event that Great Britain fell. The eventual design of the aircraft was heavily influenced by the examination of

captured German aircraft technology, especially the advantages of swept wings.



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2 March 1965 Lt Hayden J. Lockhart was shot down on an F-100 mission over North Vietnam. Lockhart was conducting flak suppression in support of a raid against an ammo dump north of the demilitarized zone. A week later, he became the first USAF pilot taken as a prisoner of war in Vietnam. He was released on 12 February 1973.

1 March 1973 Fairchild-Republic received a contract for the A-10, the first U.S. Air Force aircraft designed primarily for close air support (CAS). See photo below.

Large numbers of aircraft were shot down by ground fire in Vietnam, and the Air Force was criticized for neglecting the CAS mission. Military helicopters of the time carried only anti-personnel weapons which were ill-suited for use against armor. Fighters of the day flew too fast and lacked an effective gun to engage small, hardened battlefield targets. They also consumed fuel too quickly to loiter in the battle area. In 1967, the Air Force initiated a design study for a low cost attack aircraft that would have long loiter time, low-speed maneuverability, massive cannon firepower, and extreme survivability. The study concluded that the ideal aircraft would combine the heavy armor and powerful guns of the Soviet Ilyushin IL-2 and the German Henschel HS-129 of World War II with the ordnance capacity, loiter time and low altitude maneuverability of the Douglas A-1 Skyraider. In May 1970, the USAF issued a revised request for proposals as the threat of Soviet armored forces and all weather attack operations became more serious.



28 Feb 1994 **Operation DENY FLIGHT.** Two F-16 Fighting Falcons from the 526 FS, 86th Wing, at Ramstein AFB shot down four Serbian J-21 Jastreb-Galeb attack aircraft over Bosnia. In accordance with the rules of engagement, the F-16s ordered the Serbian aircraft to "land or exit the No-Fly Zone or be engaged." The Serbian aircraft ignored the orders, dropped bombs, and were engaged by

the F-16s. This action was the first aerial combat in NATO history. (Photo at left is a J-21 Jastreb of Armed Forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina.)



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2 March 1997 **Operation DEEP FREEZE.**

The 60th Air Mobility Wing's last scheduled C-141 mission in support of this operation left Travis AFB. For more than 40 years, Travis aircrews flew Deep Freeze missions from Christchurch, New Zealand, to McMurdo Station to resupply scientists in Antarctica. The 62nd Airlift Wing (62 AW) at McChord Air Force Base, Washington took over the mission.

On 28 Feb 2006, Operation Deep Freeze completed its final sortie. Flight operations in the last season of the operation were supported by LC-130s from the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing at Scotia, N.Y., and by an Air Force C-17 Globemaster III from the 62 AW. (See AF photo, C-17 arrival at McMurdo, 2006).



25 Feb 2002 From 22 to 25 February 2002, senior leaders from the USAF and Indian AF joined for a conference at PACAF — the first between the Air Forces since the U.S. lifted anti-nuclear sanctions against India in October 2001.

1 March 2002 **Operation ENDURING FREEDOM/ANACONDA.** The US and its coalition partners launched Operation ANACONDA in eastern Afghanistan. Using B-52s, B-1s, AC-130s, A-10s, and F-15s for air support, the coalition ground operation tried to surround and kill Taliban and al Qaeda forces regrouping south of Gardez.

1 Mar 2006 The USAF announced that the preferred alternatives for the third and fourth operational F-22A Raptor squadrons are Hickam AFB, Hawaii and Holloman AFB, New Mexico. PACAF Commander Gen Paul Hester welcomed the announcement that Hickam was in line for the Air Force's most capable aircraft. "This announcement is great news. We'll be better poised to provide more airpower options to U.S. Pacific Command, and make sure we continue to increase our effectiveness within the Pacific region," said Hester. (See AF photo of F-22s at Hickam en route to Japan, Feb 2006).

