



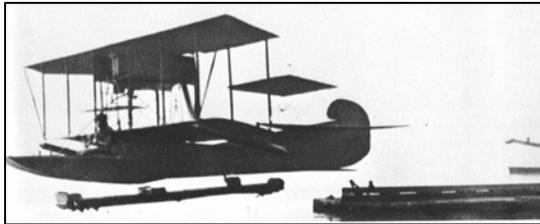
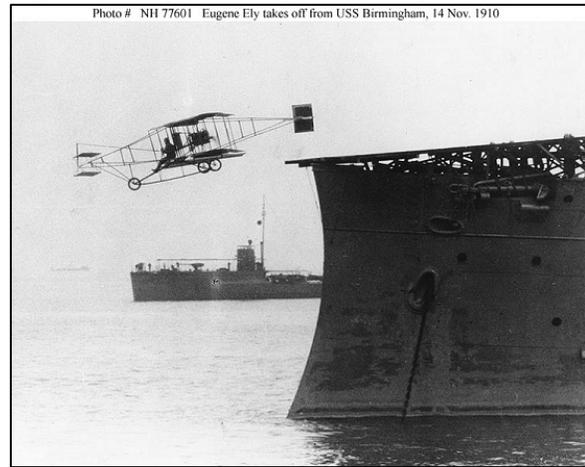
This Week in USAF and PACAF History
10 - 16 November 2008



U.S. AIR FORCE

14 Nov 1910 **First shipboard aircraft takeoff.** Eugene B. Ely, an early aviation pioneer and Curtiss exhibition pilot, took off from a temporary platform erected over the bow of the scout cruiser *USS Birmingham* while it was anchored in Hampton Roads, Virginia. The plane dropped (photo at right) and touched the water before Ely regained control, after which he flew directly across the harbor and landed on the beach at Willoughby Spit. Two months later, in January 1911, Ely was the first to land an airplane on a ship when he used a tail hook to snag ropes attached to sand bags on a temporary wooden platform on the *USS Pennsylvania*.

Ely died in a crash later that year.

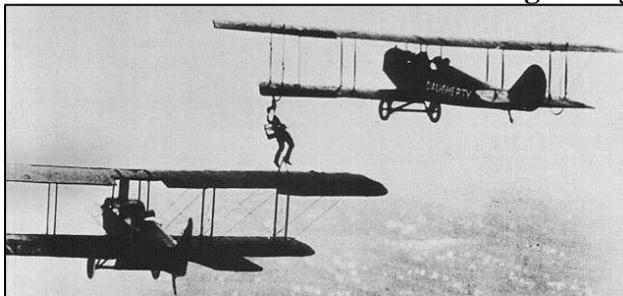


12 Nov 1912 **First catapult launch.** Lt. Theodore G. Ellyson, the Navy's first pilot, successfully launched a Curtiss seaplane, using a catapult mounted on a float anchored in the Anacostia River opposite the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. (Photo at left.)

11 Nov 1918 **The Armistice ending the fighting in World War I** was signed at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. (The war officially ended on June 28th of the following year with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles.) During the conflict, the Army Air Service dropped 138 tons of bombs and had verified credits for 765 aircraft and 76 balloons.

The date of the Armistice was celebrated as Armistice Day or Remembrance Day in many parts of the world. The day was first commemorated in the United States by President Woodrow Wilson in 1919, honoring military veterans. Congress officially named the holiday "Armistice Day" in 1938 and switched it to "**Veterans Day**" in 1954.

12 Nov 1921 **First Air-to-Air Refueling.** Wing-walker Wesley May, with a 5-gallon can of



gasoline strapped to his back, hoisted himself from the wing of a Lincoln Standard to the wing skid of a JN-4, climbed to the engine and poured the gas into the tank. Frank Hawks flew the Lincoln and Earl S. Daugherty the JN-4. This feat took place over Long Beach, California. Photo at left.



U.S. AIR FORCE

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11 Nov 1922 **Wheeler Field was dedicated** and named in memory of Major Sheldon H. Wheeler, the former Commander of Luke Field on Ford Island. Major Wheeler died in a plane crash at Luke Field on 13 July 1921. The base is now known as Wheeler Army Airfield.

16 Nov 1927 **The Navy commissioned the USS *Saratoga***, its second aircraft carrier and **first fast carrier**. Much larger than the earlier USS *Langley* and commissioned just a few weeks before *Lexington*, *Saratoga* had a flight deck almost 900 feet long with an island superstructure for flight control. *Saratoga* quickly proved the value of her type, and she was followed by the *Ranger*, *Yorktown*, *Enterprise*, *Wasp* and *Hornet*. She served in many of the Pacific campaigns, including Guadalcanal, strikes on Rabaul in support of the Bougainville operation, and at Iwo Jima. With the arrival of the larger *Essex*-class carriers, *Saratoga* was surplus to postwar requirements. She was assigned to the Bikini Atoll atomic bomb tests on naval vessels, and was sunk by the 25 July 1946 underwater detonation.



14 Nov 1938 **President Franklin D. Roosevelt called for an Air Corps** of 20,000 airplanes at a secret White House meeting with his military leaders. Although he could not immediately request sufficient funds for the program from Congress, Roosevelt committed his administration to a vastly expanded air force.

15 Nov 1942 **The first women entered USAAF flight training**. The Army designated the Women's Flying Training Detachment at the Huston Municipal Airport as the 319th Army Air Force Flying Training Detachment.

11 Nov 1943 The Fifth and Thirteenth Air Forces, along with Navy carrier planes from the USS *Saratoga*, made their **first joint attack on Rabaul**.

13 Nov 1943 Allied planes carried out the **heaviest raid on New Guinea to date** when 57 B-24s and 62 B-25s hit Alexishafen and Madang airdromes, while P-40s strafed the area.

15 Nov 1952 Under the code name "**Operation Ivy**," the **largest fission device** ever tested was dropped by a B-36H bomber flying out of Kwajalein Island. "Ivy King" was an implosion bomb, but with an advanced warhead that enabled it to produce 500 kilotons of power.

11 Nov 1956 **Convair's B-58 Hustler**, the first supersonic bomber and delta-winged aircraft capable of 1,000 MPH speeds, completed its first flight at Fort Worth.

13 Nov 1961 The **first Minuteman I operational silo** was accepted by a Site Activation Task Force at Malmstrom AFB, Montana.



U.S. AIR FORCE

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15 Nov 1961 **The USAF officially enters the Vietnam War.** The 2nd Advanced Echelon, Thirteenth Air Force, activated in Saigon, Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam). As part of **Operation FARM GATE**, a detachment of the 4400th Combat Crew Training Squadron began deployment to Bien Hoa AB, South Vietnam with special-operations aircraft to help train the Vietnamese Air force (VNAF). FARM GATE missions later expanded into combat sorties against the Viet Cong. (See photo at right of 4400th CCTS T-28A-NA aircraft wearing South Vietnamese markings over Vietnam, circa 1960s).



11 Nov 1962 **Typhoon Karen struck Guam** with winds of 175 mph. The storm damaged 90 percent of the island's buildings beyond repair and tore the roofs from four out of five homes, leaving 45,000 people homeless. PACAF and MATS joined efforts to bring relief. Some 50 USAF cargo aircraft delivered more than 1,000 tons of equipment and supplies to Guam, including tents, food, medicine, blankets, and clothing, as well as electrical and liquid oxygen generators, communications equipment, aircraft spare parts, tools, and a field kitchen.

14 Nov 1966 A C-141 Starlifter became the **first jet aircraft to land in the Antarctic.** Commanded by Capt. Howard Geddes, 86th Airlift Sqdn, Travis AFB, California, the aircraft landed on the ice at McMurdo Sound after a 2,200-mile flight from Christchurch, New Zealand.



15 Nov 1968 The USAF launched **Commando Hunt**, an extensive interdiction campaign against the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos. The operation partly offset the bombing halt imposed on the first of November. Commando Hunt increased the sorties flown in Southeast Asia from 4,764 tactical and 273 B-52 sorties in October to 12,821 tactical and 661 B-52 sorties in November. The campaign ran into the spring of 1972.

Although many roads were cut and large numbers and percentages of enemy vehicles and supplies were destroyed, the communists succeeded in supplying their combat operations in South Vietnam. Their success has been attributed to their skill at mobilizing personnel and vehicles, circumnavigating or repairing damaged roads

and bridges, and dispersing, concealing and decentralizing their operations. (The photo above shows communist infiltration on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.)



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11 Nov 1970 **Operation CHERRY TREE.** PACAF and 5AF were advised of **major force reductions and realignments in Japan** to take place by 30 June 1971. Included were the inactivations of the 374 TAW and the 51 FW at Naha AB. All USAF activities were to be removed from Naha, Itazuke, and Kimpo air bases, and Misawa was to be stripped of flying units. CHERRY TREE reductions were the largest in Japan since 1957.

15 Nov 1973 **OIL EMBARGO.** Arab nations friendly to Egypt cut off the supply of oil to nations supporting Israel in the October War. The action significantly affected PACAF, which received almost 90 percent of its fuel from the Mideast. PACAF imposed restrictions on JP-4-fueled aircraft and ceased all sorties except combat, Medevac, and other essential missions.

14 Nov 1974 The **first operational F-15A Eagle** was delivered to Luke AFB, Arizona, with President Gerald Ford officiating.

15 Nov 1976 The **High-Speed Anti-Radiation Missile (HARM)** was successfully fired from a manned aircraft for the first time.

10 Nov 1988 The Pentagon **announced the existence of the Lockheed F-117A Stealth Fighter.** The Nighthawk had first flown on 18 June 1981 and reached IOC October 1983. The F-117 could evade most radar detection with its radical shape and radar-absorbent surface.

12-15 Nov 1998 **Operation PHOENIX SCORPION III.** After Saddam Hussein expelled UN weapons inspectors from Iraq, the DoD ordered more US forces to Southwest Asia using AMC airlifters. During the four-day effort, AMC completed 257 airlift and tanker missions to move more than 3,000 passengers and 2,700 short tons of cargo. Tankers refueled 90 aircraft, offloading 9.3 million pounds of fuel. The Clinton administration accepted Iraq's peace overtures to end the deployment.

16 Nov 2006 AF Special Operations Command officially accepted the **CV-22 Osprey** at Hurlburt Field. The USSOCOM commander, Gen Doug Brown, flew the Osprey to the arrival ceremony at Hurlburt.

The Air Force was acquiring the Osprey to replace its fleet of MH-53J Pave Low helicopters used to insert and extract special operations forces covertly from hostile areas.

(Photo at right.)

