



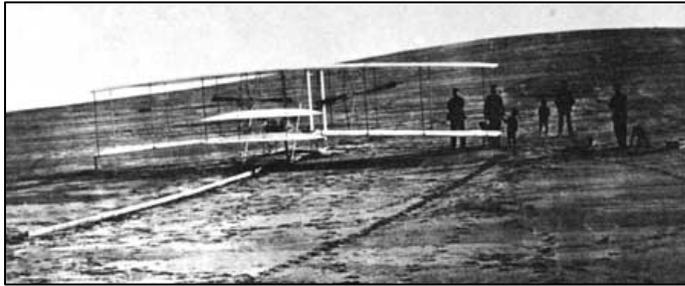
U.S. AIR FORCE



## This Week in USAF and PACAF History

8-14 December 2008

10 Dec 1898 **The United States acquired Guam and the Philippines.** Under the Treaty of Paris, the U.S. acquired Puerto Rico and Guam and agreed to pay Spain \$20 million for the Philippines. This marked the beginning of the expansion of U.S. interests in the Pacific region. At the time of the turnover, the local population of Guam had grown to about 10,000 inhabitants.



14 Dec 1903 Wilbur Wright made the **first powered airplane flight** at Kill Devil Hills, Kitty Hawk, N.C. Although he flew 105 feet in 3.5 seconds, the plane crashed; therefore, this effort was not recognized as the first sustained or controlled flight. (The Wright brothers achieved their goal three days later.)

11 Dec 1914 **First U.S. military two-way air-to-ground radio communication.** Army Signal Corps Lts. Herbert A. Dargue, pilot, and Joseph O. Maubornge, radio set designer, conducted the experiment in a Burgess-Wright biplane over Manila, the Philippines. During World War I and later, radio communications greatly increased the capabilities of combat aircraft to navigate, provide real-time reconnaissance and situation updates, adjust air taskings and coordinate massed air attacks on enemy air and surface forces.

12 Dec 1940 The War Department designated a military reservation near Anchorage as Fort Richardson and a flying field as **Elmendorf Field**. The field was named in honor of Capt Hugh M. Elmendorf, killed in a flying accident near Wright Field, OH, on 13 Jan 1933. With the establishment of the Western Defense Command, **Alaska became a theater of operations.**

8 Dec 1941 The Japanese conducted the **first air raid on Wake Island**. This was followed by 16 more raids between 9-23 December, which destroyed all aircraft, severely damaged communications, surface buildings and guns, killing and injuring numerous personnel.

8 Dec 1941 Within hours of the attack on Hawaii, **Japan attacked U.S. forces in the Philippines.** Japanese airplanes destroyed more than 100 U.S. Army aircraft at Clark and Iba Airfields, including 17 B-17s and 55 P-40s, mostly on the ground. The attack killed some 80 airmen, wounded about 150, and left the U.S. Army Air Forces in the Philippines without striking power. Five U.S. pilots shot down seven of the attacking airplanes. The photo at right shows Japanese bombers over Corregidor.





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10 Dec 1941 Five B-17s of the 93d Bombardment Squadron, 19th Bombardment Group carried out the **first heavy bombardment mission of World War II**, attacking a Japanese convoy as it landed troops on the northern coast of Luzon.

13 Dec 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized the Secretary of War to **take control of any civilian airline needed for the war effort**. Contracts with the airlines permitted the purchase of aircraft and airline services. Ten years later, on 15 Dec 1951, the USAF directed the Military Air Transport Service to develop the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) program.

14 Dec 1946 President Truman approved the **Outline Plan establishing seven regional commands**, including Alaskan Command (ALCOM), Far East Command and Pacific Command. The Navy wanted a unified command for the entire Pacific, but the other services preferred that commands be established by mission rather than geographical area. A compromise was reached, resulting in the Outline Plan approved by President Truman.



Two days later, on 16 Dec 1946, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a **directive establishing Alaskan Command, Far East Command and Pacific Command** effective 1 January 1947. The executive agents for these commands respectively were Commanding General, Army Air Forces (later Chief of Staff, Air Force), the Chief of Naval Operations and the Chief of Staff, Army. Maj Gen Howard A. Craig, US Army Air Forces, was designated as the first commander of Alaskan Command in addition to serving as the Commander of the Alaskan Department.

9-28 Dec 1948 **Mackay Trophy**. On December 9, 1948, an arctic storm forced the crew of a C-47 Skytrain to land on the Greenland ice cap, stranding a crew of seven. Subsequent rescue attempts by a B-17 and a towed glider failed, stranding five rescuers as well. On December 28, Lt. Col. Emil Beaudry landed a ski-equipped Skytrain on the ice cap, rescuing the 12 airmen and subsequently winning the Mackay Trophy.

10 Dec 1954 **Highest G-forces**. In a rocket-propelled sled run, Lt. Col. John P. Stapp, USAF, reached 632 miles per hour and sustained greater G forces (25 Gs with peaks to 40 Gs) than humans had ever endured in recorded deceleration tests—the equivalent of Mach 1.7 at 35,000 feet. The test determined that humans could survive ejection from aircraft at supersonic speeds.

9 Dec 1956 The 463d Troop Carrier Wing received the Air Force's **first C-130 Hercules** tactical airlift aircraft. This four-engine turboprop airlifter had an unrefueled range of over 2,500 miles, could carry outsized cargo of almost 50,000 pounds or up to 92 troops, and could take off and land within about 3,600 feet.



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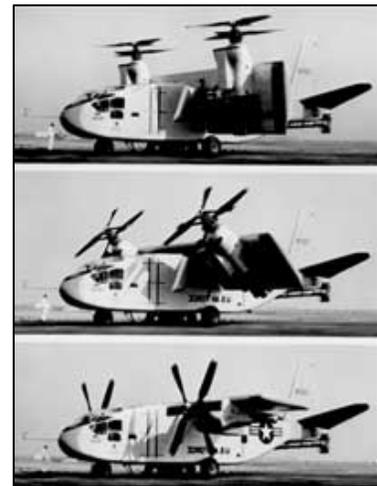


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11 Dec 1956 **Operation SAFE HAVEN began.** By June 30, 1957, cargo aircraft of the Military Air Transport Service had airlifted more than 10,000 Hungarian refugees from West Germany to asylum in the United States. The refugees fled their country as Soviet troops crushed an anticommunist rebellion there.

8 Dec 1958 **Tilt-Wing Aircraft.** Hiller Aircraft Corp. unveiled its X-18 Propelloplane (right), a 16-ton tilt-wing aircraft capable of conventional and vertical takeoffs and landings, at Moffett Field, California. The X-18 eventually flew 20 test flights out of Edwards AFB from 1959 to 1961. The X-18 had several problems, including susceptibility to wind gusts when the wing was rotating. Also, the turboprop engines were not cross-linked, so the failure of one engine meant a crash. On the last flight, the aircraft had to be recovered from a spin. Ground testing of the tilting concepts continued until the plane was severely damaged when a test stand failed. The X-18 program was cancelled in January, 1964 and the X-18 was cut up for scrap.



14 Dec 1964 **First Barrel Roll armed reconnaissance mission flown in Laos.** This mission initiated tactical fighter operations in Southeast Asia on a continuous basis.

14 Dec 1966 **Mackay Trophy.** Col Albert R. Howarth demonstrated exemplary courage and airmanship under the most hazardous conditions of darkness and intense enemy fire while participating in a SEA combat mission. He received the Mackay Trophy for his flight.

13 Dec 1973 General Dynamics rolled out the **YF-16** at its plant in Fort Worth.

8-9 Dec 1978 **Iran Air Evacuation.** As a result of tension in Iran, Military Airlift Command airlifted some 900 evacuees from Tehran to the U.S. and Germany. The airlift included 11 C-141 and C-5 missions. About 5,700 U.S. and third-country nationals left Iran on regularly scheduled MAC flights until Iran's revolutionary government closed the airport in February 1979.

12 Dec 1979 **GCLM and Pershing II deployment.** NATO ministers voted to deploy the Ground-Launched Cruise Missile (GCLM) and Pershing II missiles in Europe, countering Soviet missiles in eastern Europe. On 8 December, 1987, the United States and the Soviet Union signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, agreeing to remove all intermediate-range (620–3,415 statute miles) missiles from Europe. The agreement resulted in the inactivation of six USAF tactical missile wings equipped with ground-launched cruise missiles.



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9 Dec 1988 For the first time, the **United States flew airplanes directly to the Soviet Union without Soviet personnel on board as observers.** The flights were part of the first humanitarian airlift to the Communist country, which earlier had refused such assistance. Over the course of eight weeks, Military Airlift Command aircraft and crews delivered more than 311 tons of relief cargo to victims of an earthquake in Yerevan, Armenia.

14 Dec 1989 For the first time, **women assumed USAF combat-crew roles** as they began to serve on C-130 and C-141 airdrop missions.

9 Dec 1992 **Operation RESTORE HOPE I.** Through 4 May 1993, AMC aircraft moved 51,431 passengers and 41,243 tons of cargo in more than 1,000 missions to support UN peacekeeping efforts in Somalia. The 28,000 deployed troops protected the food, supplies, and aid workers from armed factions in the country. AFRES crews flew 190 sorties to deliver 1,500 tons of supplies, while refuelers completed 1,170 missions to deliver 82.4 million pounds of fuel.

13 Dec 2001 President George Bush provided a formal six-month notice to Russia of the **United States' withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.** President Bush stated: "I have concluded the ABM treaty hinders our government's ability to develop ways to protect our people from future terrorist or rogue state missile attacks." It cleared the way for the construction of a missile defense system in Alaska. The plans called for basing a command center and silo-based missiles at Fort Greely and an advanced radar installation at Eareckson AS on Shemya. (Photo at right shows the first ground-based interceptor missile being lowered into its silo in 2004.)

