



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History **12 - 18 January 2009**



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 in Hawaii** carrying men, dependents, and equipment for an infantry regiment, a cavalry regiment, and three companies of coastal artillery. Two of the coast artillery companies 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 11th BMS was stationed in a dozen locations throughout the Pacific in WWII.

12 Jan 1935 Amelia Earhart completed the **first Hawaii-to-Mainland solo flight** in her Lockheed Vega monoplane, taking off from Wheeler Field at 1644L and arriving in California 18 hours and 16 minutes later. The photo at right was taken on 2 Jan 1935, just ten days before her famous flight. The Pan-Pacific Press photo caption read: "Two American champions investigate the insides of a pineapple. Amelia Earhart, famous flyer photographed at Waikiki with Duke Kahanamoku, one of America's great swimmers and now sheriff of Honolulu."



12 Jan 1939 President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked Congress for an appropriation of \$525 million in defense spending, with \$300 million earmarked for aircraft, in response to world political conditions. He recommended the **expansion of the Army Air Corps** to a force of 5,500 planes, 3,200 officers, and 45,000 men. In his message, the President stated:

"There must be a complete revision of our estimates for aircraft. ... our existing forces are so utterly inadequate that they must be immediately strengthened. ... Military aviation is increasing today at an unprecedented and alarming rate. Increased range, increased speed, increased capacity of airplanes abroad have changed our requirements for defensive aviation. The additional planes recommended will considerably strengthen the air defenses of the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Canal Zone."



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 12 - 18 January 2009



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.

15 Jan 1942 **The Alaskan Air Force was 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 was redesignated as the "11th Air Force," and later in 1942 it was redesignated once again, as the "Eleventh Air Force."



13 Jan 1951 Far East Air Forces flew the **first effective TARZON mission**, destroying 58 feet of an enemy-held bridge at Kanggye, Korea. The Tall Boy Range and Azimuth Only (TARZON) bomb program combined the 12,000 pound British *Tall Boy* bomb with radio controls in the bomber. The bombardier radioed flight corrections to the bomb based

on visual sightings or on television sightings from a camera in the nose of the weapon.

The development of **radio-controlled smart bombs** had begun during World War II.

13 Jan 1953 A dozen North Korean fighters shot down a USAF B-29 on a psychological warfare leaflet-drop mission over North Korea (*Stardust 40*). **The captured crew members were held longer than any other prisoners of war during the Korean conflict.** China did not release the crew until 4 Aug 1955. (See last known photo of crew at right, taken in 1952 before being shot down).





U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 12 - 18 January 2009



13 Jan 1962 **PROJECT RANCH HAND.** The Ranch Hand test project began to determine if aircraft could destroy jungle foliage by spraying chemicals. The Tactical Air Command deployed six C-123 aircraft, modified with chemical tanks and spray bars, to Clark Air Base on 5 Dec 1961, and they began operations in Vietnam on 13 January 1962.



13 Jan 1975 Dr John L. McLucas, Secretary of the Air Force, **authorized purchase of the** low-cost, lightweight, and highly maneuverable **General Dynamics F-16** (at right). The first operational unit to receive the F-16A/B was the 388th Tactical Fighter Wing at Hill AFB, Utah, on 6 Jan 1979.



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>.

16 Jan 1991 **Operation DESERT STORM.** The 2nd 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 before returning to Barksdale. This flight was the longest bombing mission in history to date. The war against Iraq had started.





U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 12 - 18 January 2009



13 Jan 1993 Major Susan Helms, USAF, a member of the space shuttle *Endeavour* crew, became the **first U.S. military woman in space**. Major Helms was also the first woman to live on the International Space Station. Major Helms' portrait is at left.

Brig. Gen. Helms is currently the Director of Plans and Policy, U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt AFB, Nebraska.

16 Jan 1998 **Humanitarian airlift to China.** 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.

