

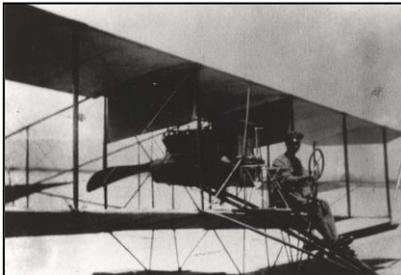


U.S. AIR FORCE

## This Week in USAF and PACAF History 13 – 19 July 2009



13 July 1913 The first military airplanes and aviation personnel arrived on Oahu to establish a **flying school at Fort Kamehameha**. Army 1Lt Harold E. Geiger (at right) brought with him 12 enlisted men, a civilian engine technician, and two Curtiss seaplanes: a Curtiss Model E Pusher (below, left) and a Curtiss Model G Traktor Scout (below, right). However, these aircraft were in poor condition.



In mid-June, 1914, a Signal Corps inspector arrived and condemned both planes as obsolete and unsafe. The aircraft had their engines removed and were then sold. There was no further Army aviation in Hawaii until 1917.

Geiger was killed in 1927 when he crashed while piloting an aircraft in Pennsylvania.



### 13-21 July 1921 **Sinking the Ostfriesland.**

Brig Gen “Billy” Mitchell’s bombers sank several ships off the Virginia Capes. The tests studied the use of bombs on ships to suggest how ship design could counter an air attack. The bombers sank a German sub, the destroyer *G-102*, the light cruiser *Frankfurt*, and the battleship *Ostfriesland* on 21 July (photo at left) to prove that unopposed aircraft could sink capital ships.

15 July 1931 **The Air Corps Tactical School** moved from Langley Field, Virginia to Maxwell Field, Alabama. It produced most of the Air Corps’ doctrine during the 1930s, including the concept of long-range, high-altitude daylight precision bombing of selected military and industrial targets—the fundamental strategy of the Army Air Forces in World War II. (Photo at right is Austin Hall in the 1930s.)



18 July 1934 **Recommendation for an air force.** A War Department board issued a report recommending formation of a centrally controlled aerial strike force. The Drum Board had come to the same conclusion in its recommendation in 1933 for a General Headquarters Air Force.



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19 July – 20 August 1934 **Lt Col Henry H. Arnold commanded ten Martin B-10s from Bolling Field to Fairbanks and back.** They covered 7,360 miles in 51 hours 30 minutes, or 25 hours 30 minutes going north and 26 hours going south. For this flight, Arnold received the Mackay Trophy and the Distinguished Flying Cross. (B-10 bomber at left.)

19 July 1941 Capt. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., a West Point graduate and son of the first black West Point graduate, reported to Tuskegee Institute in Alabama with 12 aviation cadets to begin flight training as the **first class of black pilot candidates in the U.S. military.** (In the photo at right, Capt. Davis is in the center.) Davis commanded an all-black pursuit squadron and fighter group in combat during World War II as well as the 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing in the Korean War. He was Vice Commander of 13<sup>th</sup> Air Force and Commander, Air Task Force 13 (Provisional) at Taipei, Formosa. Lt. Gen. Benjamin Davis retired 1 Feb 1970 and was advanced to General on the retired list in 1998.



14 July 1943 **Air Base Captured.** Comiso Airfield was the first airfield recaptured in Sicily. Shortly thereafter, a German JU-88 landed amid US flak shots. The pilot climbed out, shook his fist at the flak battery and, much to his surprise, became a prisoner. Later, two German ME-109s also landed, believing the airfield was still in German hands. They were also taken prisoner.

17 July 1944 **First use of napalm.** Ninth Air Force P-38s dropped napalm bombs on an enemy fuel depot at Coutances, near Saint-Lô, France. Napalm, a jellied gasoline, was a revolutionary incendiary compound with immense destructive potential.

14 July 1945 After its long, successful island campaign across the Pacific, **Seventh Air Force moved to Okinawa** and was assigned to the Far East Air Forces for missions against the Japanese home islands.

14 July 1945 **First use of rocket bombs.** From Hollandia, A-20s set fire to Japanese oil fields at Boela, Ceram. They used rocket bombs for the first time in the Southwest Pacific.

16 Jul 1945 The **first atomic bomb**, called the “**Gadget**,” was detonated at the Trinity Site near Alamogordo, New Mexico. This bomb had a yield of 19 kilotons. It was the prototype for the Fat Man bomb used against Japan.



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13 July 1950 An Air Weather Service RB-29 led the **first strategic bombing strike from Japan against North Korea**. Fifty B-29s attacked the port of Wonsan.

15 July 1954 The **Boeing 707**, the first U.S. jet-powered airliner, made its first flight near Seattle, Washington. This aircraft revolutionized commercial aviation, replacing slower propeller-driven airliners, and became the prototype of the **C-135** transport and **KC-135** tanker; the latter designed to refuel the new B-47 and B-52 jet bombers.

15 July 1958 **Operation BLUE BAT**. After the fall of the Iraqi government brought civil unrest to the region, Lebanon's President asked for U.S. assistance. President Eisenhower authorized Operation BLUE BAT, in which U.S. marines secured the Beirut airport and the Composite Air Strike Force BRAVO from TAC deployed to the Middle East in 12 hours. When the crisis ended on 8 September, MATS had airlifted 5,500 passengers and 5,500 tons of cargo in 314 missions to support the strike force. This was the first U.S. military operation in the region since WWII, and the intervention resulted in political negotiations that produced years of peace.

19 July 1962 A Nike-Zeus anti-missile missile fired from Kwajalein Island in the Pacific Ocean made the **first known intercept of an intercontinental ballistic missile** when it brought down the nose cone of an Atlas missile launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California.

16 July 1965 The **OV-10A Bronco** flew its first test flight. The Bronco was a multi-purpose, light attack aircraft developed under an Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps tri-service program. The USAF acquired the OV-10 primarily as a forward air control (FAC) aircraft, but it also performed observation, helicopter escort, reconnaissance, gunfire spotting, personnel transport and ground attack. Faster and more tactically versatile than helicopters, yet slower and more maneuverable than jets, the Bronco utilized tactics not possible with either. The Bronco was highly effective against guerilla and conventional forces due to its outstanding capability to find and hit battlefield targets close to friendly troops. The first USAF OV-10As destined for combat arrived in Vietnam on July 31, 1968. A total of 157 OV-10As were delivered to the USAF before production ended in April 1969.



16 July 1969 **Apollo XI/First Lunar Landing**. The Apollo XI lunar landing mission launched from Kennedy Space Center, carrying astronauts Neil A. Armstrong, Col. Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin Jr, USAF, and Lt Col. Michael Collins, USAF. On 20 July, Armstrong and Aldrin flew the lunar module Eagle to the Sea of Tranquility, where Armstrong took the first step on the moon. On 24 July, Apollo XI splashed down in the mid-Pacific.



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16 July 1971 Jeanne M. Holm, director of Women of the Air Force, was promoted to brigadier general, becoming the **first woman general in the Air Force**.

### **15 July 1973 LAST SOUTHEAST ASIA COMBAT MISSION / VIETNAM SUMMARY.**

All U.S. bombing in Cambodia ended after eight years of conventional operations in SEA. An A-7D from the 354th TFW flew the last combat mission in SEA. Altogether, the USAF flew 5.25 million sorties over South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The USAF lost 2,251 planes—1,737 to hostile action and 514 for operational reasons—at a cost of \$3,129,948,000.

During the Vietnam War, tactical or intratheater airlift carried 7 million tons of passengers and cargo from 1962 to 1973. Between 1964 and mid-August 1973, air rescue operations in Southeast Asia saved 3,883 lives. And from 9 June 1964 through 15 August 1973, KC-135s flew 194,687 sorties to supply 8,964 million pounds of fuel



during 813,878 refuelings. They also routinely airlifted people, equipment, and aircraft parts

between the U.S. and bases in the Far East and Southeast Asia. Photo above: A U.S. Air Force HH-3 helicopter crewman fires a mini-gun during rescue patrol over South Vietnam, Oct 1968.

19 July 1984 TAC received its **first E-3B Sentry** at Tinker AFB. Compared to the A-model, the E-3B had five more Situation Display Consoles (SDC), a new computer, radio teletype, and maritime surveillance capability. Other enhancements included one additional HF radio and five additional UHF radios with “Have Quick” anti-jamming circuitry.

17 July 1987 The first of 33 **MH-53J Enhanced Pave Low III** helicopters rolled out at NAS Pensacola. Pave Low provided night and adverse weather navigation capabilities.

17 July 1989 The **B-2 Spirit flew for the first time** over Edwards AFB. On 15 July 2000, the **final B-2** arrived at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri.

The USAF planned to add no new bombers to its inventory for 35 years.

15 July 1998 The **first T-6A Texan II aircraft, or Joint Primary Aircraft Training System (JPATS)**, successfully completed its initial flight at Wichita, Kansas. To meet Air Force and Navy primary aircraft training needs, the DoD decided to buy 740 T-6A aircraft, along with the accompanying JPATS Ground Based Training System.

14 July 2001 A prototype Minuteman **ICBM interceptor** successfully targeted and destroyed an unarmed Minuteman II ICBM over the central Pacific. Ten minutes after launch, the interceptor destroyed the warhead, traveling some 15,000 mph at more than 140 miles in altitude above the Earth.