



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in PACAF and USAF History 24-30 August 2009



27 August 1945 Twentieth Air Force B-29s completed the **first supply drop to Allied prisoners of war** at the Japanese internment camp located at Wei-hsien, Shantung province, China. This first mission was followed by a concentrated effort of 900 sorties to China in a period of less than a month. Some 4,470 tons of supplies were dropped to about 63,500 prisoners in 154 Japanese internment camps. In all, 154 camps with 63,500 prisoners in Japan, China, and Korea got food, medical supplies, and clothing.

(Photo of a camp above, with “P-W” and other markings on the roofs).



28 August 1945 **FEAF arrives in Japan.** On 28 August 1945, the American occupation of Japan officially begins as an advance team of communications specialists arrives at Atsugi Airfield (near Tokyo). Among the American personnel was **Colonel Gordon Blake** (shown in photo, below), former Base Operations officer at Hickam Field who was on duty during the attack of 7 December 1941. Protected only by units of the Japanese Imperial Army, Col Blake and this intrepid team set up the control tower and communication equipment necessary for occupation forces to land. Two days later, operation “Mission 75” began landing American occupation forces in Japan. Over the next two weeks, some 1,336 C-54 flights, the 11th Airborne Division, the 27th Infantry Division, advanced echelons of General MacArthur's headquarters, Far Eastern Air Forces, and the Eighth Army, plus the initial Air Transport Command detachment, flew into Atsugi Airfield. From 30 August to 12 September, Special Mission 75 ferried 39,928 occupation troops and 8,202 tons of supplies from a staging area in Okinawa. The mission used 259 C-54s and 360 B-24 bombers as cargo planes, and associated aircraft.

Lt Gen Gordon Blake later served as Director of the National Security Agency (1962-1965) and retired 1 June 1965. He passed away 1 Sep 1997.





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25 August 1952 **Operation HAJJI BABA or MAGIC CARPET.** From 25 to 29 August, 13 C-54s airlifted 3,763 Muslim pilgrims stranded in Beirut, Lebanon, to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia -- the gateway to Mecca, birthplace of the Prophet and site of the Kaaba holy to Muslims. This airlift enabled the faithful Muslims to fulfill their religious obligation of making the pilgrimage to Mecca, known as Hajj. The operation helped restore America's standing in the Middle East. (See USAF photo of Muslim pilgrims aboard a C-54, left. Also see the AF Magazine account by Walter J. Boyne, "[The Pilgrim Airlift](#)").



29 August 1952 On 29 August, FEAF fighter-bombers set a new 24-hour record, routing 854 **Fifth Air Force sorties against Pyongyang, Korea.** This closely coordinated attack destroyed 56 buildings and damaged 33 others.

29 August 1958 **Second Taiwan Strait Crisis Drives Operation X-RAY TANGO.** Beginning 23 August 1958, the Chinese Communists began shelling Taiwan forces on Quemoy Island – a repeat of attacks that had occurred four years earlier. In response, PACAF asked for part of the TAC Composite Air Strike Force (CASF) X-ray Tango force from the mainland, specifically an advance command element, an F-100 squadron, and a C-130 squadron – while six RF-101s already on Taiwan on rotation were included in the CASF. In addition, on 29 August all but two of the F-86Ds from 5AF's 16th FIS at Kadena flew to Tainan Air Base, Taiwan, and the JCS directed the 388th TFS, with 16 F-100s, to fly to Clark Air Base. President Eisenhower also authorized the delivery of the new Sidewinder air-to-air missile to the ROC F-86 Sabres, giving them an advantage over their MiG opponents. A ceasefire between the two Chinas was called on 6 Oct 1958.

30 August 1960 With six Atlas missiles ready to launch, the 564th Strategic Missile Squadron at Francis E. Warren AFB, Wyoming, became the **first fully operational ICBM squadron.**

26 August 1967 The North Vietnamese captured **Major George E. Day**, USAF, after downing his F-100 Super Sabre. Severely wounded, he was taken to a prison camp for interrogation and torture. Despite his crippling injuries, Major Day escaped and evaded the enemy for two weeks. He had crossed the demilitarized zone and was within two miles of a Marine Corps base when he was shot and recaptured. Back in prison and in poor health, he continued to resist his captors until he was released in 1973. For his bravery, he earned the **Medal of Honor.**



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28 August 1972 **Capt Richard S. “Steve” Ritchie** with his backseater **Capt Charles D. DeBellevue** shot down his fifth MiG-21, near Hanoi. This made Ritchie the **first USAF ace of the Vietnam War**. For this feat, Ritchie shared the 1972 Mackay Trophy with Captains Jeffrey S. Feinstein, and Charles B. DeBellevue.

26 August 1980 **Exercise PACIFIC CONSORT**. An ad hoc air defense exercise held in Australia from 26 August to 11 September, Pacific Consort was the first deployment of the F-15/E-3A team to the Southwest Pacific. Exercises in Australia and New Zealand, like other Asia exercises, had been severely curtailed during the Southeast Asia war. (Photo of RAAF sentry guarding USAF E-3 during PACIFIC CONSORT, right)



25 August 1989 PACAF hosted the **first Pacific Air Chiefs Conference** from 16 through 25 August 1989. Six countries sent representatives: Australia, Brunei, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore. The conference was a major effort to promote regional cooperation and security by focusing on possible improvement in each nation's air power capabilities. Beginning at Hickam AFB, the conference then moved to Washington, D.C., Colorado Springs, CO, and Nellis AFB.

26 August 1992 The United States launched **Operation SOUTHERN WATCH** to enforce United Nations sanctions against Iraq. USAF aircraft began patrolling a no-fly zone south of 32 degrees north latitude in southern Iraq to provide protection to Shiite Muslims living there and to discourage any renewed Iraqi military activity against Kuwait or Saudi Arabia.

30 August 1995 NATO launched **Operation DELIBERATE FORCE**, an intensive air campaign against Serb targets in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Together with a Bosnian-Croatian ground offensive, the air attacks persuaded the Serbs to agree to peace terms by the end of the year.

11 – 25 August 2006 **Khaan Quest 2006**. From 11 to 25 August 2006, Mongolia hosted its first multinational peacekeeping training exercise. The Mongolia-U.S. co-sponsored event was part of the Global Peace Operations Initiative, a five year program to increase peacekeeping capabilities worldwide. The FTX included some 1,200 troops from Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Mongolia, Thailand, and Tonga, along with U.S. National Guard units and PACAF security forces. Admiral William Fallon, COMPACOM, considered Khaan Quest to be “a major success story” in building partner capacity in the region, and the exercise has been repeated annually.