

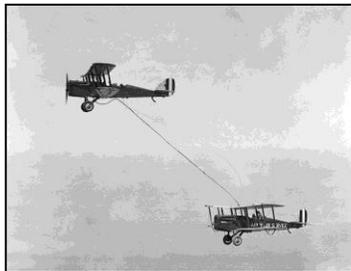


U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 16 - 22 November 2009



21 Nov 1917 The **first flight of a radio-controlled UAV** took place when the Navy's R-9 robot bomber, a flying bomb, was demonstrated to Army, Navy, and civilian aviation experts at Amityville, N.Y. The R-9 (right) was a converted Curtiss N-9 trainer equipped with an automatic gyroscopic stabilizer invented by Dr. Peter Cooper and Elmer A. Sperry. The stabilizer helped to keep the aircraft flying straight and level. The Sperry Aerial Torpedo flew 50 miles carrying a 300-pound bomb in several test flights, but it never saw combat.



18 Nov 1923 The **first aerial refueling-related fatality** occurred during an air show at Kelly Field, when the fuel hose became entangled in the wings of the refueler and the receiver aircraft. The ensuing crash killed the Army Air Service pilot of the refueler, Lt P. T. Wagner, and ended U.S. aerial refueling development until the flight of the *Question Mark* in 1929. (The photo at left depicts an early air refueling operation using a hose and nozzle system.)

22 Nov 1940 The **15th Pursuit Group** (Fighter), forerunner to the 15th Airlift Wing, was constituted. The 15th Pursuit Group was activated at Wheeler Field on 1 December 1940.

22 Nov 1952 **MEDAL OF HONOR.** Major Charles Joseph Loring died while leading a flight of four F-80 jets on a close air support mission during the Korean War. Loring's plane was hit by ground fire as he verified gun positions. His Medal of Honor citation reads: "Major Loring deliberately altered his course and aimed his diving aircraft at active gun emplacements concentrated on a ridge northwest of the briefed target, turned his aircraft 45 degrees to the left, pulled up in a deliberate, controlled maneuver, and elected to sacrifice his life by diving his aircraft directly into the midst of the enemy emplacements. His selfless and heroic action completely destroyed the enemy gun emplacement and eliminated a dangerous threat to United Nations ground forces. Major Loring's superlative gallantry and valor far beyond the normal call of duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflected great credit upon himself, the Far East Air Forces, and the United States Air Force."



21 Nov 1957 The DoD announced that the **first ICBM base** would be built at Francis E. Warren AFB near Cheyenne, Wyoming. On 22 Nov 1982, President Reagan decided to deploy the M-X in the "Dense Pack" closely spaced basing mode at Warren.



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17 Nov 1961 SECDEF Robert S. McNamara approved USAF plans to name **SAC as the single manager for KC-135 air refueling operations**. This plan recognized the critical role of air refueling in executing the SIOP. However, SAC was held responsible for meeting the increasing air refueling requirements of other major air commands, including TAC's needs during the Vietnam conflict and MAC's expanded use of air refueling beginning in the 1970s.

17 Nov – 29 Dec 1967 **Operation EAGLE THRUST**. MAC used 413 C-141 and C-130 sorties to complete the longest distance airlift of combat troops from the US to a war zone to date. The planes moved 10,356 men of the 101st Airborne Division and nearly 5,118 tons of equipment, including 32 helicopters, between Fort Campbell and Bien Hoa, Vietnam.

21 Nov 1970 **SON TAY RAID**. A special task force of Air Force and Army volunteers flying on Air Force special operations helicopters attempted to rescue American servicemen from the Son Tay prisoner-of-war camp 20 miles west of Hanoi. Brig. Gen. Leroy J. Manor, USAF, commanded the operation, while Col. Arthur D. Simons of the Army led the search-and-rescue team. Air Force, Navy and Army aircraft supported the raid with air refueling, surface-to-air missile suppression, fighter cover, close air support, early warning, communications support and reconnaissance missions, as well as highly effective diversionary attacks. Unfortunately, the prisoners had just been moved by their captors due to flooding in the region. The mission was called an intelligence failure but a tactical success. There were no U.S. deaths among the raiders, who killed between 100 and 200 North Vietnamese prison guards. In the aftermath, North Vietnam collected the American POWs together in larger, centralized camps such as the "Hanoi Hilton" where they lived in groups under improved conditions. The POWs, mostly airmen from the various services, learned that their country had not forgotten them. Their health and morale improved for the remainder of their captivity. The painting above is *The Raid, Blueboy Element* by Michael Nikiporenko.



Brig Gen Manor later became Lt Gen Manor, Commander of 13th Air Force from 1 Oct 73 to 12 Oct 76. He received the PACAF Order of the Sword in April, 1976.

22 Nov 1972 The **first B-52 Stratofortress lost to enemy action** was hit by a surface-to-air missile over North Vietnam. The crew members ejected over Thailand and were rescued.

22 Nov 1988 **B-2 Roll-out**. Northrop and the Air Force rolled out the B-2 stealth bomber at Air Force plant 42 in Palmdale, Calif.



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21-23 Nov 1994 **Project SAPPHIRE.** Three C-5s from the 436th AW carried 1,300 pounds of highly enriched uranium (HEU) from Kazakhstan to Dover AFB to protect the nuclear material from terrorists, smugglers, and unfriendly governments.

A cache of **weapons-grade uranium** had been uncovered in Kazakhstan—left over from Soviet Navy development of the power plant for a new nuclear submarine. When the Soviet Union dissolved, the uranium was just left there. This material had to be carefully measured and safely re-packaged for airlift to the United States. Aircraft from Dover's 9th Airlift Squadron flew a team of nuclear technicians and their equipment into Kazakhstan to prepare the HEU for shipment. U.S. special forces, Kazakh MVD and ex-KGB personnel guarded the convoys from the nuclear facility to the airport for loading onto the C-5 aircraft. KC-10 tankers refueled the C-5s on the way to the U.S. After landing at Dover, the material was convoyed to Oak Ridge, Tennessee for conversion into commercial nuclear fuel. The photo at right shows HEU containers in an aircraft cargo hold.



19 Nov 1997 **Operation PHOENIX SCORPION I.** The U.S. deployed additional forces to Southwest Asia and the Indian Ocean to augment Operation SOUTHERN WATCH and to answer Iraq's continued intransigence over UN inspections of weapons of mass destruction sites. Over the Pacific, AMC established an air bridge and airlift support to deploy B-52s and KC-10s to Diego Garcia. Over the Atlantic, AMC provided airlift and refueling support to deliver an Air Expeditionary Force with F-15s, F-16s, B-1s, and KC-135s to Shaikh Isa, Bahrain, a partial Patriot battery to Shaikh Isa, and F-117s to Al Jabar, Kuwait. Iraq's apparent willingness to resume the inspection program ended the deployment on 24 November, and within days most forces had returned home. To close the deployment, AMC flew 51 airlift and 208 tanker missions, delivering over 3,000 short tons of cargo and 7.4 million pounds of fuel.

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.)



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