



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 11 - 17 October 2010



11 October 1910 President Theodore Roosevelt became the **first President to fly** when he flew with Archibald Hoxsey in a Wright biplane at St. Louis. See full-size photo at this link to the *New York Times Store*: [1910 President Roosevelt Flight](#)

15 Oct 1940 **Hawaii's National Guard was called to federal service** as part of the islands' defense. Its strength numbered 126 officers, 1 warrant officer, and 1,616 enlisted men.

11 October 1945 The Army launched a **U.S.-made ballistic missile** for the first time at White Sands Proving Ground. The Tiny Tim booster with a WAC (without altitude control) Corporal rocket reached 43 miles in altitude.

14 October 1947 At Muroc Field, Capt Chuck Yeager (right) was the **first person to break the sound barrier** in the rocket-powered Bell XS-1 after being dropped from a B-29. For this achievement, Yeager received the Mackay Trophy.



Retired Brig Gen Yeager celebrated the 30th and 50th anniversaries of his feat by flying faster than sound in an F-104 in 1977 and in an F-15 Eagle in 1997 (at left).



14 October 1947 SECDEF James V. Forrestal approved the **Air Force's control over all "pilotless aircraft"** and strategic missiles. The Army gained control over all tactical missiles.



Admiral Radford, President Truman, and Colonel Tillery at Hickam AFB

13 October 1950 Enroute to his famous meeting with General Douglas MacArthur at Wake Island, **President Harry S. Truman stopped at Hickam AFB**. Traveling with the President was General Omar N. Bradley, General of the Army, and Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. At Hickam they were met by Admiral Arthur W. Radford, Commander in Chief, Pacific, and Colonel Manning E. Tillery, 1500th Air Transport Wing commander. The official party conducted an inspection tour of both Hickam and Wheeler, as well as other military installations on Oahu, before leaving the next day for Wake Island.



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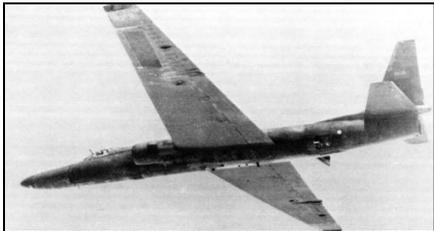


15 October 1952 A B-47 photo reconnaissance mission, authorized by President Truman and staged out of Eielson AFB was flown over the Chukotsky Peninsula in the Soviet Union. This mission **confirmed the Soviets were developing Arctic staging bases** on the peninsula from which their bombers could easily reach targets on the North American continent.

11 October 1961 President Kennedy authorized the deployment of a “Jungle Jim” detachment from the 4400th Combat Crew Training Squadron (later the 1st Air Commando Group) to South Vietnam under **PROJECT FARM GATE**. Arriving on 14 November, the detachment consisted of 151 men, eight T-28, four SC-47, and four RB-26 aircraft. Flying under Vietnamese AF markings, the unit conducted its first strike on 26 December.



RB-26 displayed on Atterbury Circle



U-2 on an operational mission

14–15 October 1962 The **Cuban missile crisis** began when Major Richard S. Heyser and Major Rudolf Anderson, Jr., conducting U-2 reconnaissance flights over Cuba proved that Soviet missile sites were under construction there. On 18 October, eight Air Force Reserve troop-carrier wings and six aerial-port squadrons were mobilized.

16 Oct 1964 **The People’s Republic of China explode a nuclear device** near Lake Lop Nor in the Xinjiang Province. The Air Weather Service provided C-130, WB-50, and WB-57 aircraft from Yokota AB, Japan; Wheelus AB, Libya; Eielson AFB, Alaska; and McClellan AF, CA, to support Air Force Technical Applications Center’s collection of data on the explosion. Radio-chemical analysis of the fallout cloud revealed that it had been a uranium device, contradicting intelligence reports that the Chinese nuclear weapons program was focused on a plutonium device.

14 October – 14 November 1973 In support of **Operation NICKEL GRASS**, Military Airlift Command delivered over 22,000 tons of materiel from 20 locations in the U.S. to Israel during the 1973 “Yom Kippur War.” MAC completed this airlift, with a one-way distance of 6,450 miles, in 567 C-5 and C-141 missions. By comparison, the Soviets needed 935 missions to supply the Arabs with 15,000 tons, over a much shorter 1,700 mile route.



Tank unloaded from a C-5 at Tel Aviv



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16 Oct 1980 As part of the U.S. commitment to the security of South Korea, the USAF announced that **F-16s would replace the F-4Ds at Kunsan and Taegu.**

17 Oct 1980 Exercise Cope North 81-1, held at Misawa AB, Japan, was the first of the **Cope North** series to be funded by JCS, and the first to be joint/combined. U.S. Marine Corps A-4s and EA-6Bs joined PACAF F-4Es and OV-10s to combine with the Japanese Self-Defense Force F-1, F-4EJ, and F-104J aircraft. Previous exercises had been PACAF-funded, and limited to PACAF and Japanese Self-Defense Force participation.

14 Oct – 21 Dec 1994 In response to the movement of two Iraqi armored divisions toward the Kuwaiti border, USAF airlifters started bringing forces to the Persian Gulf as part of **Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR**. CENTAF air assets rapidly expanded to more than 170 aircraft and 6,500 personnel. Iraq soon recalled its troops, but the U.S. decided to retain some 120 aircraft and 5,000 USAF personnel in theater. And in the wake of this crisis, for the first time, Kuwait permitted the Air Force to permanently station fighter aircraft on its soil. A squadron of A-10 aircraft bedded down at Al Jaber AB, Kuwait City.

12 October 1997 The SECDEF deployed **U.S. military assets to support fire-fighting efforts in Indonesia** as part of a technical assistance package. Military support included 60 crew and support personnel for three C-130 aircraft, two equipped with Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems, and one flying in support. The crew and aircraft came from the 153 AW, Wyoming ANG. By the time this PACAF directed the operation concluded in December, 194 sorties had been flown, dropping 685,000 gallons of water and fire retardant in Java and Sumatra.



WANG C-130 spraying fire retardant over a forest in Indonesia



12 October 1998 The 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron (AFRC), at Keesler AFB received the **USAF's first WC-130J aircraft** (left). Specially outfitted for weather reconnaissance, the WC-130J had a mission to retrieve real-time data from the eye of dangerous storms. The aircrew reads sensors on the airframe and dropsondes—instruments dropped from the aircraft that parachute through the storm.

14 Oct 2006 On behalf of all American citizens, President Bush accepted the **Air Force Memorial** from Air Force Memorial Foundation Chairman Ross Perot Jr. during a dedication ceremony at Arlington, Virginia. (See the [Air Force Memorial Foundation website](#))



Keith Ferris' painting "Air Force Memorial"