



U.S. AIR FORCE

## This Week in USAF and PACAF History 1-7 November 2010



5-13 November 1912 The **Army used aircraft for artillery adjustment for the first time** at Fort Riley, Kansas. Capt. Frederick B. Hennessy, Lt. Henry H. Arnold, and Lt. Thomas DeWitt Milling signaled the ground, using radiotelegraphy, drop cards, and smoke signals.



1 November 1915 Capt. Raynal C. Bolling organized and took command of an aviation detachment in the New York National Guard—considered to be **the first genuine National Guard aviation unit**. However, the lack of funding support convinced Bolling that military aviation could only be developed under the auspices of the regular Army. A Harvard graduate and famed corporate lawyer, he volunteered to serve on the front lines of World War I as an Air Service officer. While scouting sites for his Air Service aircraft during the second Somme offensive, Col Bolling and his driver were ambushed by German troops near the front lines. Col Bolling drew his pistol and shot one German officer before being killed. In 1918, Bolling Field was named in his honor.

7 November 1917 Eugene J. Bullard, **the world's first African-American pilot**, became the **first African-American fighter pilot to claim an aerial victory**. Born in Columbus, Georgia in 1894, Bullard sailed to Europe as a stowaway and joined the French Foreign Legion at the outbreak of World War I. Bullard participated in some of the greatest battles of 1915-1916. Severely wounded in one such battle, he received the Croix de Guerre for his heroism. While convalescing, he volunteered for pilot duty in the French Air Service. Bullard completed flight training in May 1917 and eventually flew 20 missions, earning himself the nickname "Black Swallow of Death."



5 November 1934 **Lt Col Horace Meek Hickam**, an aviation pioneer, died when his Curtiss A-12 struck an obstruction during night landing practice on the unlighted field at Fort Crockett in Galveston, Texas. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Six months later, **Hickam Field** in Hawaii was dedicated and named in his honor. A West Point graduate, Horace Hickam had voluntarily taken aviation training while serving in the Cavalry. He earned the Silver Star for gallantry in action during the Mexican Punitive Expedition. A trained pursuit pilot, he became the chief of the Air Service's

Information Division; overseeing the writing of the 1st Air Corps history. A proponent of an independent air force, in his 1925 testimony to Congress he said *"I am confident that no general thinks he can command the navy, and no admiral thinks he can operate an army, but some of them think they can operate an air force."*





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1 November 1940 The Air Corps activated the **Hawaiian Air Force**, at Fort Shafter. With a strength of one officer and 63 enlisted men, its mission was the air defense of the Hawaiian Islands. By the time of the 7 December 1941 attack, it was equipped with two pursuit groups at Wheeler Field (P-36s and P-40s), two bomb groups at Hickam Field (B-17s and B-18s), and some additional transports, observation planes and light bombers (A-20s).



P-40 at Bellows AFS



3 November 1944 **Japanese balloons with bombs were first launched**, hoping the jet stream would carry them eastward across the Pacific to the United States. During the war, the Japanese launched some 9,000 balloon bombs against the U.S.. Partially as a reprisal for the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo, they were meant to start forest fires, produce chaos, and divert U.S. manpower from the war effort. Armed with incendiary and anti-personnel bombs, the hydrogen-filled 33-foot-wide balloons had ballast and hydrogen release mechanisms to help them maintain altitude across the Pacific. Though only about 300 were ever observed in North America, analysts estimate that as many as 1,000 may have actually made it to land. The only fatal attack occurred in Oregon in 1945 when a pastor's wife and five children were killed as the children pulled on the balloon. In 1945, one of the balloons descended near the Manhattan Project's Hanford Site in south-central Washington, causing a short-circuit in the power lines to the nuclear reactor cooling pumps, though backup safety devices restored power almost immediately. The Hanford Site was the plutonium production facility that provided materials for the Trinity test and the Nagasaki atomic weapon. The last balloon with a still-lethal payload was discovered in 1955, and balloon remnants continued to be found as late as 1992.

1 November 1950 During the UN forces' retreat from the Yalu River, Korea, back toward the 38th Parallel, **Soviet-made MiG-15s entered the conflict for the first time**. This action set the stage for the air-to-air combat that would take place through the rest of the war, principally between the MiG-15 and the F-86 Sabre.

2 November 1962 India asked the U.S. for assistance after Communist Chinese forces invaded India's Assam Valley and Ladakh District. In response, President Kennedy authorized **Operation LONG SKIP**. From 2-14 November, Military Air Transport Service (MATS) dispatched 48 C-135 missions to deliver nearly 1,035 tons of equipment, small arms, and ammunition to Calcutta. The timely response led the Chinese to withdraw.



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3 November 1965 A B-52 successfully fired an **AGM-28 Hound Dog missile** over Green River, Utah, to the White Sands Missile Range. The mission of the Hound Dog was to attack segments of the Soviet Union's air-defense system so that the launching B-52 could penetrate to its primary target. It had a maximum speed over Mach 2, a 49,000 foot ceiling, and a range of nearly 600 nautical

miles. It could conduct high or low altitude attacks with either air or surface detonations. The Hound Dog was deployed for 15 years until the missile was replaced by newer weapons including the AGM-69 Short Range Attack Missile and the AGM-86 Air-Launched Cruise Missile.



1 November 1971 The **15th Air Base Wing** was activated and stationed at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, assigned to the Pacific Air Forces. Effective the same day, Col Ernest W. Pate assumed command of the Wing.

5 November 1981 The **first operational EF-111A defense-suppression aircraft** was delivered to the 388th Electronic Combat Squadron at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho. The EF-111A Raven would eventually replace EB-66 and EB-57 aircraft. The EF-111A usually provided protection from a stand-off jamming orbit, but it could also escort attacking forces with its high-performance and night terrain-following capabilities built into the basic F-111 design. EF-111s were involved in every U.S. conflict from ELDORADO CANYON in Libya, to DESERT STORM, where an EF-111 was credited with one of the first kills of the conflict. A maneuvering Raven caused a pursuing Iraqi Mirage to crash.



4 November 1997 From 12 October to 4 November, in **Operation PIVOT SAIL**, Eighteen C-17 missions airlifted 21 **MiG-29 fighters**, missiles, and maintenance equipment from the former Soviet Republic of Moldova to Wright-Patterson AF, OH. Loadmasters and aerial port experts squeezed two MiGs apiece, without wings and tails, into the Globemaster cargo holds. The U.S. acquired the MiGs under the Cooperative Threat Reduction Act of 1993, which gave the Department of Defense broad authority to eliminate weapons of the former Soviet Union.

6 November 1998 The USAF began airlifting 7.4 million pounds of relief cargo to Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador after those countries were devastated by the **Hurricane Mitch**, which claimed more than 10,000 lives. By the time the airlift ended on 19 March 1999, the crews had flown **more than 200 humanitarian relief missions**.