

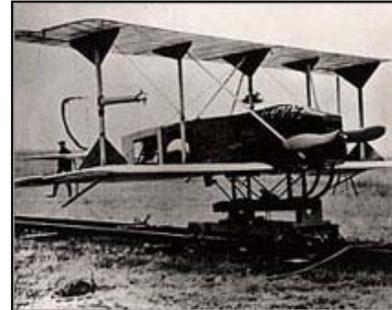


U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 15-21 November 2010



21 November 1917 The **first flight of a radio-controlled UAV** took place when the Navy's R-9 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.



Early air refueling hose and nozzle system

18 November 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.

15 November 1942 **The first women entered USAAF flight training.** The Army designated the Women's Flying Training Detachment at the Huston Municipal Airport as the 319th Army Air Force Flying Training Detachment.

15 November 1952 Under the code name "Operation Ivy," the **largest fission device ever tested** was dropped by a B-36H bomber flying out of Kwajalein Island. "Ivy King" was an implosion bomb, but with an advanced warhead that enabled it to produce 500 kilotons of power.

21 November 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.

15 November 1961 **The USAF officially entered the Vietnam War.** The 2nd Advanced Echelon, Thirteenth Air Force, activated in Saigon, Republic of (South) Vietnam marking the official entry of the USAF into the Vietnam War. Also in November, as part of **Operation FARM GATE**, a detachment of the 4400th Combat Crew Training Squadron began deployment to Bien Hoa AB, South Vietnam with special-operations aircraft to help train the Vietnamese Air force (VNAF). FARM GATE missions later expanded into combat sorties against the Viet Cong.



T-28A-NA aircraft with South Vietnamese markings circa 1960



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17 November 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 single integrated operational plan (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 November 1962 From 13 to 17 November 1962, PACAFBASECOM agencies at Hickam AFB operated 24-hours-a-day to support military dependents evacuated from Guam after Typhoon Karen devastated that island. Most of the 600 evacuees were processed through Hickam en route to Travis AFB. In addition, the Air Forces joined other military and civilian agencies in "Operation Handclasp," which consisted of collecting donations of food, clothing, and other items to be flown or shipped to Guam.

17 November 1964 In Operation DRAGON ROUGE, the 464th Troop Carrier Wing used C-130 Hercules aircraft to carry 600 paratroopers from Belgium to Sabena Airport on the outskirts of Stanleyville to rescue 1,400 European and American hostages held captive by Santos rebels in Zaire, the former Belgian Congo. They airlifted the refugees from there to France—an action for which they received the Mackay Trophy.

15 November 1968 The USAF launched **Commando Hunt**, an extensive interdiction campaign against enemy infiltration on the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos. The operation partly offset the bombing halt imposed on 1 November. Commando Hunt increased the sorties flown in Southeast Asia from 4,764 tactical and 273 B-52 sorties in October to 12,821 tactical and 661 B-52 sorties in November. This campaign ran into the spring of 1972. Although many roads were cut, and many enemy vehicles and supplies were destroyed, the communists succeeded in continuing to supply their combat operations in South Vietnam.



Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos



The Raid, Blueboy Element
by Michael Nikiporenko

21 November 1970 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. 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 larger groups under improved conditions.



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15 November 1973 Arab nations friendly to Egypt cut off the supply of oil to nations supporting Israel in the October War. This Oil Embargo significantly affected PACAF, which received almost 90 percent of its fuel from the Middle East. PACAF imposed restrictions on JP-4 fueled aircraft and ceased all sorties except combat, Medevac, and other essential missions.

15 November 1976 The **High-Speed Anti-Radiation Missile (HARM)** was successfully fired from a manned aircraft for the first time.

19 November 1978 An Aerospace Audiovisual Service photographer, aboard a Military Airlift Command C-141, was the first to document the tragedy at Jonestown, Guyana. Air Force Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service personnel and aircraft evacuated the 903 human remains of the mass ritual death.



HEU containers in an aircraft cargo hold

21-23 November 1994 As part of **Project SAPPHIRE**, three C-5s from the 436th Airlift Wing 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. After the Soviet Union dissolved, the left over **weapons-grade uranium** from a Soviet Navy project had been left on the site. After being transported to Dover, the material was convoyed to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, for conversion into commercial nuclear fuel.

19 November 2004 The 19th Fighter Squadron from Elmendorf AFB won the overall competition, Top Element, at the 2004 William Tell air-to-air weapons meet in Florida. The PACAF F-15 Eagle team flew with three cutting-edge technologies that enabled pilots to detect enemies from further away, target nearby enemy aircraft with a glance and shoot missiles in a wider range of directions. The systems were the APG-63/V2 electronically-scanned radar array, the Joint Helmet-Mounted Cueing System, and the AIM-9X Sidewinder missile. In 2003, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, had become the first operational unit to use these systems. Capt Pete Fesler, 19FS, took home the William Tell Top Gun award.



16 November 2006 Air Force 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.