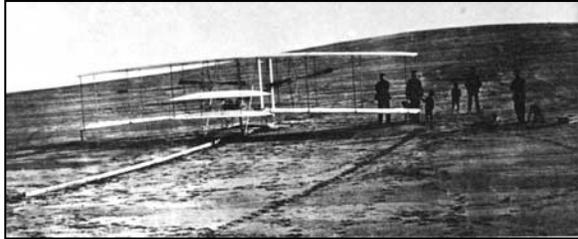




U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 13-19 December 2010



14 December 1903 Wilbur Wright made the **first powered airplane flight** at Kill Devil Hills, Kitty Hawk, N.C. Although he flew 105 feet in 3.5 seconds, the plane crashed; therefore, this effort is not recognized as the first sustained or controlled flight.

17 December 1903 Orville Wright achieved the world's first manned, powered, **sustained, and controlled** flight in a heavier-than-air vehicle. The Wright Flyer lifted into the air at 10:35 a.m. and flew for twelve seconds, covering a distance of 121 feet. Orville's fourth and longest flight of the day was 852 feet in 59 seconds.

13 December 1909 By War Department General Order No. 245, the military reservation along the mouth of Pearl Harbor, that had been named "Fort Upton," was re-named as "Fort Kamehameha" in honor of the Kingdom of Hawaii's first monarch.



17 December 1925 Airpower pioneer **Billy Mitchell was found guilty** of "conduct of a nature to bring discredit on the military service" and sentenced to a five-year suspension of rank, pay, and command. Brig Gen Mitchell had criticized senior military leaders for failing to recognize the potential of airpower in war. After the crash of a Navy dirigible, Mitchell accused Army and Navy senior leaders of incompetence and "almost treasonable administration of the national defense." After the verdict, Mitchell resigned from the Army and wielded far less influence thereafter. He died in 1936 at the age of 56. Mitchell's predictions about the rise of airpower came true in World War II, including a specific prophecy that Japan would conduct an early morning aerial attack on Pearl Harbor. The B-25 "Mitchell" bomber was the only American military aircraft named for a person. He was posthumously awarded a special Congressional Medal of Honor in 1946. In 2007, the Air Force first awarded the Air Force Combat Action Medal (at right), which is based on the insignia painted on Billy Mitchell's World War I aircraft.



13 December 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized the Secretary of War to **take control of any civilian airline needed for the war effort**. Contracts with the airlines permitted the purchase of aircraft and airline services. Ten years later, on 15 Dec 1951, the USAF directed the Military Air Transport Service to develop the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) program.

16 December 1941 Flying a Curtiss P-40, 1st Lt. Boyd "Buzz" Wagner (17th Pursuit Squadron) becomes the first American Army Air Forces ace of World War II by shooting down his fifth Japanese plane over the Philippines. Wagner had a total of eight kills in the war, the last three while flying the P-39 Airacobra. He later received the Distinguished Service Cross.





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17 December 1944 **The 509th Composite Group was established** at Wendover, Utah to develop and employ a combat delivery system for the atomic bomb. The 509th conducted the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan in August 1945. Both the *Enola Gay* and *Bocks Car* belonged to the 393rd Bomb Squadron of the 509th Composite Group. After more than forty years of inactivation, the group was activated again on 15 July 1993, as the 509th Operations Group (part of the 509th Bomb Wing) to conduct B-2 Spirit bomber combat and training operations.



Enola Gay Crew

17 December 1944 Major Richard I. Bong of the U.S. Army Air Forces scored his 40th aerial victory in the Pacific, the **highest victory total of any U.S. ace**.

14 December 1946 President Truman approved the **Outline Plan establishing seven regional commands**; Far East Command, Pacific Command, Alaskan Command, Northeast Command, Atlantic Fleet, Caribbean Command, and European Command. The U.S. Navy had wanted a unified command for the entire Pacific, but the other services wanted the commands established by mission rather than geographical area. A compromise was reached, resulting in the Outline Plan.

14 December 1964 **First Barrel Roll armed reconnaissance mission flown in Laos**. This mission initiated tactical fighter operations in Southeast Asia on a continuous basis.



18-29 December 1972 To force the North Vietnamese to return to negotiations, President Nixon ordered an 11-day all-out bombing campaign against targets in Hanoi and Haiphong—**Operation LINEBACKER II**. USAF aircraft dropped 20,370 tons of bombs, including 15,000 tons from B-52s. SSgt. Samuel O. Turner, USAF, became the first B-52 tail gunner to shoot down an enemy airplane. Altogether, the USAF completed 714 B-52 and 830 tactical fighter sorties, while the Navy and Marine Corps flew another 386 sorties in the 11 days. KC-135s flew more than 1,300 sorties to provide fuel to the various aircraft. North Vietnam shot down 15 B-52s, 2 F-4s, and 2 F-111s during this operation. LINEBACKER II led to the North Vietnamese return to the peace table and a cease fire agreement.

13 December 1973 General Dynamics rolled out the YF-16 at its plant in Fort Worth, Texas.

17 December 1989 Military Airlift Command approved a policy change to allow female aircrew members to serve on C-130 and C-141 airdrop missions.





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17 December--14 February 1990 In **Operation JUST CAUSE**, USAF aircraft hit military targets, airlifted troops, and flew special operations to restore democracy in Panama. F-117 Nighthawk stealth fighter-bombers flew in combat for the first time. In the largest night-combat



airdrop since World War II, MAC flew 9,500 airborne troops from Pope AFB, North Carolina, to Panama in fewer than 36 hours. Aircraft and crews of the 1st Special Ops Wing, 919th Special Ops Group, and 193d Special Ops Group earned the Mackay Trophy during **JUST CAUSE**.

17 December 1995 The **first C-17 to land at Tuzla Airport, Bosnia** landed as part of Operation **JOINT ENDEAVOR**. On this mission, the C-17 carried a 26-ton self-propelled 155mm howitzer and a 14-ton tracked fire support vehicle and trailer from Germany. The C-17 aircraft carried much of the Army's heavy equipment into Tuzla Airport.



Global Workhorse by Keith Ferris depicts C-17 taking off from Tuzla

16 December 1996 Lockheed-Martin assembled its last C-130H model Hercules, ending a 32-year production run. H-models, whose service life was to expire in 2005-2010, are undergoing a Center Wing Replacement program that will enable them to be retained in the inventory until 2030.

16 December 1998 **Operation DESERT FOX** began with the launch of cruise missiles and air strikes by the U.S. and Great Britain against Iraqi targets after Iraq refused to allow United Nations weapons inspectors to continue their work. The four-day operation hit some 100 enemy weapons-production facilities. The largest air campaign against Iraq since **DESERT STORM** in 1991, Operation **DESERT FOX** involved the first combat use of B-1B Lancer bombers.

13 December 2001 President George Bush provided a formal six-month notice to Russia of the **United States' withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty**. President Bush stated: "I have concluded the ABM treaty hinders our government's ability to develop ways to protect our people from future terrorist or rogue state missile attacks." This cleared the way for the construction of a missile defense system in Alaska. The plans called for basing a command center and silo-based missiles at Fort Greely and an advanced radar installation at Eareckson AS on Shemya.

15 December 2005 The **F-22A Raptor reached initial operating capability** for the 27th Fighter Squadron and the 1st Fighter Wing at Langley AFB. The F-22 has a low-observable, highly maneuverable airframe; advanced integrated avionics, and aerodynamic performance allowing supersonic cruise without afterburner.

