



U.S. AIR FORCE

## This Week in USAF and PACAF History 10-16 January 2011



15 January 1914 The Signal Corps Aviation School issued the **first Army aviation safety regulation**. It required pilots to wear helmets and leather coats for overland flights, and unsinkable coats for over-water flights.

12 January 1935 Amelia Earhart completed the **first Hawaii-to-Mainland solo flight** in her Lockheed Vega monoplane, taking off from Wheeler Field at 1644L and arriving in California 18 hours and 16 minutes later. The photo at right was taken on 2 January. The Pan-Pacific Press photo caption read: “Two American champions investigate the insides of a pineapple. Amelia Earhart, famous flyer photographed at Waikiki with Duke Kahanamoku, one of America’s great swimmers and now sheriff of Honolulu.”

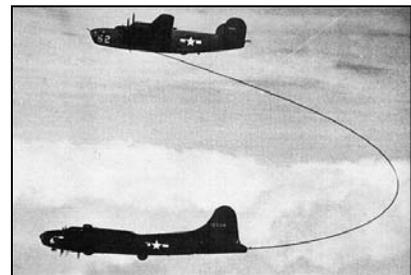


14 January 1938 Construction of the **Water Tower at Hickam Field was completed**. Built with a Moorish design under the direction of Captain Howard B. Nurse of the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps, the 171-foot tall tower cost \$43,146, and contained a 500,000 gallon tank.



12 January 1939 President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked Congress for an appropriation of \$525 million in defense spending, with \$300 million earmarked for aircraft, in response to world political conditions. He recommended the **expansion of the Army Air Corps** to a force of 5,500 planes, 3,200 officers, and 45,000 men. In his message, the President stated: *“There must be a complete revision of our estimates for aircraft. ... our existing forces are so utterly inadequate that they must be immediately strengthened. ... Military aviation is increasing today at an unprecedented and alarming rate. Increased range, increased speed, increased capacity of airplanes abroad have changed our requirements for defensive aviation. The additional planes recommended will considerably strengthen the air defenses of the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Canal Zone.”*

10 January 1942 The Army Air Forces Materiel Center started investigating **ways to use aerial refueling in the war against faraway Japan**. Planners wanted to launch B-17 bombers from Midway Island to attack Tokyo, refueling them with modified B-24 bombers (see photo at right of an inflight test). They also considered using B-24s launched from Hawaii, with refueling by U.S. Navy seaplanes. A third option involved fuel-filled gliders, towed by B-17s, which would serve as tankers for the bombers. However, the Army Air Forces put greater efforts into establishing air bases in China and on islands in the Pacific, and developing aircraft with large internal fuel capacity, such as the B-29 Superfortress. No air refueling proposals were implemented until after World War II.





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14 January 1942 **The Thirteenth Air Force was established** on this date, and activated nearly a year later (13 Jan 1943) on New Caledonia Island. 13th Air Force began operations as an organization composed of many widely separated and independent units scattered throughout the Pacific. From 1943-1945, 13 AF staged out of tropical jungles on more than 40 remote islands, thus earning the nickname, "**The Jungle Air Force.**" Initially in a defensive stance against advancing enemy forces, 13AF later took the offensive and traveled northeast from the Solomons to the Admiralty Islands, New Guinea, Morotai and the Philippines.

15 January 1942 **The Alaskan Air Force was activated** at Elmendorf Field, Alaska, replacing the "Air Force, Alaskan Defense Command" that had been established 17 October 1941. Less than a month later, the Alaskan AF was redesignated as the "11th Air Force," and later in 1942 it was redesignated once again, as the "Eleventh Air Force."



13 January 1951 Far East Air Forces flew the **first effective TARZON mission**, destroying 58 feet of an enemy-held bridge at Kanggye, Korea. The Tall Boy Range and Azimuth Only (TARZON) bomb program combined the 12,000 pound British *Tall Boy* bomb with radio controls in the bomber. The bombardier radioed flight corrections to the bomb based on visual sightings or on television sightings from a camera in the nose of the weapon.



13 January 1953 A dozen North Korean fighters shot down a USAF B-29 on a psychological warfare leaflet-drop mission over North Korea (*Stardust 40*). **The captured crew members were held longer than any other prisoners of war during the Korean conflict.** China did not release the crew until 4 Aug 1955. (See last known photo of crew at right, taken in 1952 before being shot down).

13 January 1962 **PROJECT RANCH HAND.** The Ranch Hand test project began to determine if aircraft could destroy jungle foliage by spraying chemicals. The Tactical Air Command deployed six C-123 aircraft, modified with chemical tanks and spray bars, to Clark Air Base on 5 Dec 1961, and they began operations in Vietnam on 13 January 1962.

10 January 1975 **The first E-3A Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS)** aircraft rolled out. The premier command and control battle-management aircraft in the world, the E-3's jam-resistant radar and IFF (identification friend or foe) systems provide a highly detailed picture of the battlespace.



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15 January 1985 **The 6594th Test Group**, an Air Force Systems Command unit based at Hickam AFB, lost seven personnel when their **HH-53 helicopter crashed** on the Panamanian-registered ship *Asian Beauty* while attempting a rescue mission. In the 1960's and early 1970's, the top secret mission of the Hickam-based 6594TG was to recover film capsules from the CORONA spy satellites. The declassified program is discussed in detail at the National Reconnaissance Office website; <http://www.nro.gov/corona/facts.html>.

16 January 1991 **Operation DESERT STORM**. The 2nd Bomb Wing launched B-52Gs at 0636 hours local time from Barksdale AFB, La., to the Iraqi combat zone, where they launched 35 cruise missiles on 17 January against targets in Iraq before returning to Barksdale. This flight was the longest bombing mission in history to date. The war against Iraq had started.



13 January 1993 Major Susan Helms, USAF, a member of the space shuttle *Endeavour* crew, became the **first U.S. military woman in space**. She later flew on Discovery, Columbia, and Atlantis missions and was the first woman to live on the International Space Station. Today, Major General Helms commands the Fourteenth Air Force, AFSPC, and Joint Functional Component Command for Space, USSTRATCOM—and she was recently confirmed for promotion to Lieutenant General.

13 January 1996 A C-17, “**The Spirit of Bob Hope**,” served as **Air Force One for the first time** in carrying President Bill Clinton on a morale flight to Tazar, Hungary, and Tuzla, Bosnia, two hubs of operation for Operation Joint Endeavor. The mission commander for this flight was Maj William J. Changose, who later became the 15th Airlift Wing commander (2005-2006).



10 January 2007 **China's first successful test of an anti-satellite weapon** consisted of a direct-ascent kinetic-kill vehicle destroying an aging Chinese weather satellite. It was the first

known successful satellite intercept test since 1985, when the United States conducted a similar test. The PRC ASAT test was the worst space debris-generating event on record, generating at least 2,087 pieces of debris large enough to be tracked. It far surpassed the previous record of 713 pieces from the 1996 explosion of a Pegasus rocket body.

