



This Week in USAF and PACAF History
7 - 13 February 2011



U.S. AIR FORCE

Countdown to 7 December 1941.

7 February 1941 Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War to Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy: "In replying to your letter of January 24, regarding the possibility of surprise attacks upon the Fleet or the Naval Base at Pearl Harbor, I wish to express complete concurrence as to the importance of this matter and the urgency of our making every possible preparation to meet such a hostile effort. The Hawaiian Department is the best equipped of all our overseas departments, and continues to hold a high priority for the completion of its projected defenses because of the importance of giving full protection to the Fleet."

10 February 1908 The Wright Brothers and Capt Charles S. Wallace of the Signal Corps signed the **first government contract for a flying machine**. The price was \$25,000—more than half a million in today's dollars.

13 February 1917 Capt John F. Curry of the Army Air Service arrived in Honolulu to command the **first aviation unit established in Hawaii**—the 6th Aero Squadron — organized for the aerial coast defense of Oahu. This squadron was first stationed at Fort Kamehameha, and then moved to Ford Island.



Jan 1940, Douglas B-18 Bolo



8 February 1938 **The first bombardment unit based at Hickam**, the 31st Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) arrived from Hamilton Field and was assigned to the 5th Composite Group. The

31st emblem (left) was the distinctive skull and cross-bones proper on a black triangle. During the 7 December 1941 attack, four members of the 31 BS were killed in action, nine members

were wounded, and all of the squadron's B-18 Bolo bombers were either damaged or destroyed. Reequipped with B-17s, the squadron was assigned various maritime bombing and surveillance missions in the South Pacific.

10 February 1939 The **prototype for the B-25 Mitchell** bomber first flew. The only U.S. military aircraft named after a person, the B-25 was the type used by General James Doolittle for the Tokyo Raid on 18 April 1942. Designed for level bombing from medium altitudes, it was used extensively in the Pacific area by General George Kenney's 5th Air Force. Field-modified with extensive forward firepower by Major Paul I. "Pappy" Gunn, the B-25s were used for treetop-level attacks on Japanese airfields with parachute-retarded bombs, and for strafing and skip-bombing against enemy shipping.



13-16 February 1951 The 315th Air Division (Combat Cargo) used more than 100 airlifters to drop supplies around-the-clock to the 23d Regimental Combat Team and a French battalion at **Chipyong-ni in central Korea**. Flying through heavy ground fire, C-119 Flying Boxcars delivered 400 tons of ammunition. H-5 helicopter pilots from the 3rd Air Rescue Squadron flew through a blinding snowstorm and 40-knot winds to deliver blood plasma and medical supplies. They also evacuated 52 wounded men.



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10 February 1952 Leading a flight of three F-86 Sabre jets on a combat air patrol mission near the Manchurian border, Major George A. Davis, Jr., engaged 12 enemy MiG-15 jet fighters in aerial combat. After shooting down two enemy aircraft and completely disrupting the enemy formation, Major Davis himself was shot down and killed. For engaging superior forces and shooting down enemy aircraft, **Major Davis earned the Medal of Honor.**

8 February 1953 The American Medical Association recognized **Aviation Medicine as a medical specialty**, the first specialty to evolve from military practice and research.

7 February 1954 **The Lockheed F-104 Starfighter flew for the first time.** In December, 1951, Lockheed Chief Engineer Kelly Johnson was told by some USAF fighter pilots in Korea that they thought the MiG-15 was superior to the larger and more complex F-86. The pilots wanted a small, simple aircraft capable of high speeds and climb rates. In response, Lockheed put a single powerful engine into the lightest, most aerodynamically efficient airframe possible. Nicknamed “the missile with a man in it,” the F-104 could exceed speeds of Mach 2 and altitudes of 90,000 feet.



9 February 1964 **The first group of American dependents were evacuated from Vietnam** to Honolulu following the Viet Cong attack on Pleiku. Met by teams from all the military services, PACAFBASECOM Family Services coordinated the Air Force teams. By the end of the two-week evacuation period, assistance had been provided to 700 dependents.

8 February 1965 F-100 Super Sabres performed the **first retaliatory air strike in North Vietnam.** They flew cover for attacking South Vietnamese fighters, suppressing ground fire in the target area.

12 February 1973 **Operation HOMECOMING.** MAC flew the first of 590 released American POWs from Hanoi, North Vietnam, to Clark Air Base in the Philippines, and then on to various military hospitals in the United States. Altogether, MAC used 118 C-9A and C-141 missions to support the operation and earned the **MacKay Trophy.**



8-10 February 1978 As part of **Operation SNOW BLOW II**, Military Airlift Command aircraft moved 1,084 personnel and 2,339 tons of snow removal equipment in 33 C-141, 16 C-5, and 75 C-130 missions to Boston, Mass., Hartford, Conn., and Providence, R. I., to remove more than 25 inches of snow.



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8-22 February 1978 Air Training Command deployed 250 people overseas to support the **PACAF exercise COMMANDO ROCK**. This exercise, a first in the command's 25-year history, tested the command's wartime/contingency readiness.

13-15 February 1987 **Typhoon Uma** hit the central islands of Vanuatu, leaving hundreds of people homeless. Four aircraft—two C-141 Starlifters from the 60th and 62d Military Airlift Wings and two C-130 Hercules from the 374th Tactical Airlift Wing—took part in the subsequent emergency operation.

10 February 1992 **Operation PROVIDE HOPE** began the delivery of food and medical supplies to the former Soviet Union. In the first two phases of the operation, more than 27,000 tons of food and medical supplies were distributed to cities throughout the former Soviet Union. Phases III and IV saw distribution increasingly handed over to private organizations until the operation's successful conclusion in September 1994.

12 February 1993 The **203rd Air Refueling Squadron (HIANG)** activated at Hickam AFB, with Lt Col Walter K. Kaneakua in command.



8 February 2003 With Department of Defense approval the Air Mobility Command Commander, General John W. Handy, **activated the Stage I Civil Reserve Air Fleet**. Stage I affected 22 U.S. airline companies and 78 commercial aircraft (47 passenger and 31 wide-body planes). General Handy, however, only used the 47 aircraft to deploy American troops to the Persian Gulf. The U.S. activated the Civil Reserve Air Fleet only two other times in its 52-year history, Stage I on 17 August 1990 and Stage II on 17 January 1991, both for the first Persian Gulf War.



8 February 2006 **The first of eight C-17 Globemaster IIIs arrived at Hickam**, greeted by a host of distinguished visitors and a cheering crowd in front of Base Operations. Hawaii Governor Linda Lingle christened the new C-17 (#05-5146) the "Spirit of Hawaii - Ke Aloha (Hawaii One)." The first C-17s to be based outside of the continental U.S., they were assigned to the 15th Airlift Wing. The maintainers were to be a composite of active duty and Hawaii Air National Guard members.

7 February-11 May 2007 **The F-22A Raptor made its first overseas operational deployment** with a flight of 12 F-22s from Langley AFB, Va., to Hickam AFB, Hawaii. After a delay for problems with their computer software, the F-22s landed at Kadena AB, Japan, on 18 February. The *Raptors* redeployed and arrived at Langley on 11 May. During their deployment, the F-22s flew more than 685 sorties.

OPR: PACAF/HO