



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 14 – 20 March 2011



Countdown to 7 December 1941.

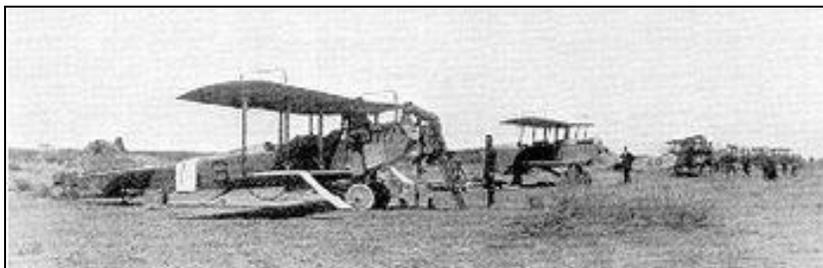
14 May 1941 Nagao Kita, the new Japanese consul general to Honolulu, arrived on the passenger ship *Tatuta Maru*. He brought with him a young man listed on the passenger manifest as “Tadashi Morimura,” supposedly a junior diplomat. The young man was really Takeo Yoshikawa, a trained intelligence agent. His real mission was to make daily, coded reports on the U.S. Pacific Fleet and its bases. Yoshikawa and his aides made regular drives to Pearl Harbor and other military installations on Oahu. He also frequented a Japanese-style teahouse in Alewa Heights which had a telescope and a broad view of Pearl Harbor and Hickam Field.

There are no records that any Japanese stole or photographed classified information, violated any law, or entered a U.S. military installation on Oahu except as an invited guest. Japanese intelligence reports were based on open observations of U.S. forces in Hawaii and conversations with military personnel.

15 May 1941 Captain Irving Mayfield was assigned as head of the Navy District Intelligence Office in Hawaii, which shared authority and responsibility for Japanese subjects with the local FBI office. Mayfield doubted that Japanese espionage on Oahu was based at their consulate, but this was indeed the case.

19 Mar 1910 Orville Wright opened the **first Wright Flying School** on a site at Montgomery, Alabama that later became **Maxwell Air Force Base**.

15 Mar 1916 The 1st Aero Squadron (1 AS) became the **first U.S. aviation unit to engage in field operations**. Equipped with eight Curtiss JN-3 aircraft (photo below), the 1 AS arrived in New Mexico to join the punitive expedition against Mexican revolutionary leader Pancho Villa. On 16 March, Capt Townsend Dodd, pilot, and Capt Benjamin D. Foulois, observer and unit



commander, flew over Mexico in the first American military reconnaissance flight over foreign territory. The 1 AS performed reconnaissance and communications missions in some of the worst weather and poorest conditions

imaginable. By the end of April all eight airplanes had been destroyed.

19 Mar 1944 **Operation STRANGLE began**. Allied progress north through Italy was halted by German defenses at the “Gustav Line.” The Allies tried an amphibious landing behind these defenses at Anzio, but this attack was also blocked. The Mediterranean Allied Air Forces (MAAF) drafted a plan to attack every enemy rail route and starve the German army of supplies. Operation STRANGLE differed from earlier air campaigns as the MAAF simultaneously targeted whole systems of bridges, yards, tunnels, and even open stretches of track (photo below). The German transport capacity was reduced from 80,000 to 4,000 tons per day delivered



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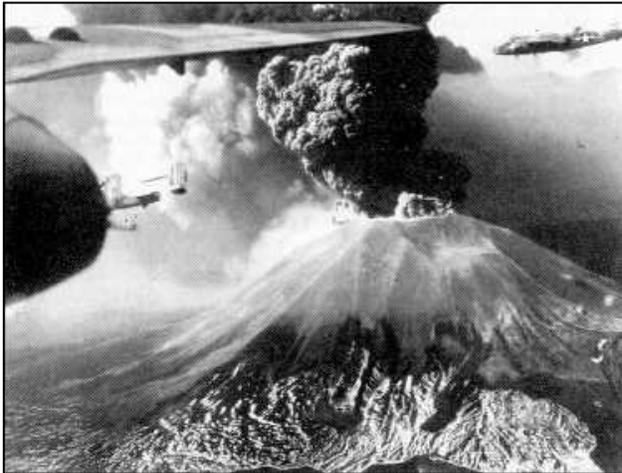


to the front. However, Allied ground forces still made no progress, and the static battlefield



permitted the Germans to maintain their forces in central Italy by strict rationing, foraging for food, and moving supplies and reinforcements at night. When rested and refitted Allied armies renewed their attacks on 12 May, they were supported by Allied air forces striking the front and rear enemy areas. Allied ground forces finally breached the Gustav Line and forced the Germans to retreat. On June 4, 1944, American patrols entered Rome.

20 Mar 1944 As Operation STRANGLE began, **Mount Vesuvius erupted and buried the Pompeii airdrome**, the base of the 340th Bomb Group. Lava cinders destroyed or damaged some 88 B-25s in one of the worst single losses of aircraft in the war.



18 Mar 1945 About 1,250 U.S. bombers escorted by 670 fighters dropped 3,000 tons of bombs on Berlin. In numbers of bombers, this daylight mission was the **largest air attack of the war**.

15 Mar 1950 The JCS gave the USAF formal and exclusive **responsibility for strategic guided missiles** in a basic decision on the role and mission of guided missiles.

17 Mar 1961 Northrop delivered the **first T-38 Talon jet trainer** to ATC at Randolph AFB. Some 50,000 military pilots have trained on this aircraft. The USAF remains one of the few armed forces using dedicated supersonic final trainers. Upgrades and modifications should extend the T-38 service life to 2020.



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15 Mar 1967 The **Sikorsky HH-53B**, the largest and fastest helicopter in the USAF inventory, made its **first flight** at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. The HH-53 was the first helicopter specifically designed for combat search and rescue (CSAR) operations, and it succeeded the HH-3 Jolly Green Giant as the primary CSAR asset in Vietnam. The "Super Jolly" was faster, more heavily armed, and had nearly triple the take-off weight of the HH-3. The HH-53B was equipped with armor plating, self-sealing fuel tanks, three 7.62 miniguns and a rescue hoist with 250 feet of cable and a 20,000-pound capacity. The improved performance of helicopters like the HH-53 made terrain an ally rather than a hindrance. Ridgelines, karst, and jungle canopy in Vietnam were used to minimize the effectiveness of enemy fire.

17 Mar 1981 McDonnell-Douglas delivered the **first KC-10A Extender** tanker/cargo aircraft to Strategic Air Command. Substantially larger than the KC-135, the Extender could carry more fuel and cargo and could refuel more types of aircraft, including other KC-10s.

15-28 Mar 1983 **U.S. Air Force anti-ship capability.** Three AGM-84 Harpoon missiles were launched from a B-52 at the Pacific Missile Test Range on Kwajalein Atoll. The Harpoon is an all-weather, over-the-horizon, anti-ship missile. Its low-level, sea-skimming cruise trajectory, active radar guidance and warhead design assure high survivability and effectiveness. Fitted with eight AGM-84Ds externally and U.S. Navy sea mines internally, the B-52H bomber becomes a long-range, rapid response platform for sea control and area denial.

14 Mar 1988 E-Systems Inc. unveiled the new **MC-130H Combat Talon II** special operations airlifter. This aircraft is designed to infiltrate/exfiltrate troops and resupply them behind enemy lines. Its navigation and terrain-avoidance systems allow the aircraft to fly as low as 250 feet at night and in adverse weather and to locate unmarked zones with pinpoint accuracy. The tail was strengthened to allow high speed/low-signature airdrop. The aircraft is also equipped with aerial refueling pods to provide in-flight refueling of SOF and CSAR helicopters.

20 Mar 2006 The **first operational CV-22 Osprey** was delivered to the 58th Special Operations Wing (58th SOW) at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico. This and subsequent aircraft became part of the 58th SOW's fleet of aircraft used for training CV-22 aircrews.



MH-53 Pave Low and CV-22 Osprey

The V-22 Osprey is a tilt-rotor vertical/short takeoff and landing (VSTOL), multi-mission aircraft developed to fill multi-Service combat operational requirements. The Air Force variant, the CV-22, will replace MH-53J and MH-60G helicopters and augment the MC-130 fleet in the long-range insertion and extraction mission. The tilt-rotor design combines the vertical flight capabilities of a helicopter with the speed and range of a turboprop airplane and permits aerial refueling and world-wide self deployment.