



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 8 – 14 Aug 2011



8 August 1913 **The first military airplane flight in Hawaii** was piloted by Army Lt. Harold Geiger from Fort Kamehameha. The aircraft, a Curtiss E two-seater, soared over Pearl Harbor.

Countdown to 7 December 1941.

10 August 1941 Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Commander of Japan’s Combined Fleet, had argued for much of his career against the invasion of Manchuria and the land war with China. He was also ardently opposed to any war with the United States. In a meeting with Admiral Zengo Yoshida, a member of Japan’s Supreme War Council, a distressed Yamamoto lamented, *“I cannot help feeling that the authorities in Tokyo think war is unavoidable.”*

However, Yamamoto was loyal to his government and loved his country. As he briefed Yoshida on his **Pearl Harbor attack plans**, Yamamoto emphasized the principles of offense and surprise:

“Japan must deal the U.S. Navy a fatal blow at the outset of the war. It is the only way she can fight with any reasonable prospect of success. The Pearl Harbor attack is necessary to give Japan a free hand in the Southern Operation” [to seize resources in southeast Asia].

14 August 1941 A **Chief of Naval Operations advisory** was sent to key U.S. admirals, including Admiral Kimmel, Commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor: *“Japanese rapidly completing withdrawal from world shipping routes. Scheduled sailings cancelled and majority ships in other than China and Japan sea areas homeward bound.”*

10 August 1944: U.S. forces overcame Japanese resistance on Guam, allowing **construction of B-29 bomber bases** on three of the Mariana Islands—Guam, Tinian, and Saipan.

9 August 1945 Maj. Charles W. Sweeney and his crew, flying a B-29 called Bock’s Car, bombed Nagasaki in the second and **last atomic bomb attack**. The weapon dropped on Nagasaki was named “Fat Man” and it largely destroyed the city, killing at least 35,000 people.

14 August 1945 The 20th Air Force conducted the **final B-29 combat mission against Japan**.



This mission included a record number of effective aircraft: 754 B-29s and 169 fighters. One phase of the mission, against the Nippon Oil Refinery at Tsuchizaka, produced the longest nonstop mission of the war from the Marianas – 3,650 miles. (Photos of B-29s over Japan.)





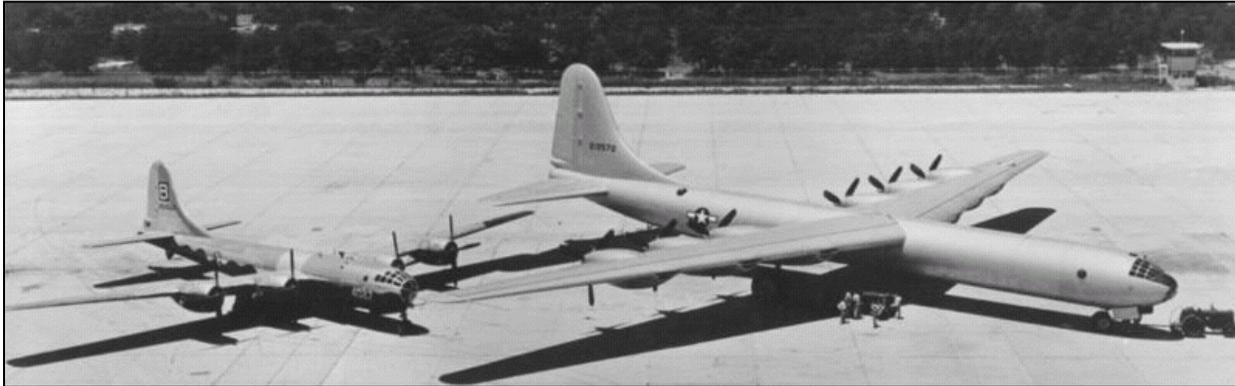
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8 August 1946 **First flight of the Convair XB-36 Peacemaker.** The B-36 was designed in 1941 when it appeared England might fall to Germany and the U.S. would need a trans-Atlantic bomber in a war against the Nazis. With a length of 160 feet and wings spanning 230 feet, the B-36 was the largest bomber ever built. Equipped with six propeller engines, early versions of the B-36 did not meet performance requirements and burned fuel at an exorbitant rate. In 1949, four jet engines were added to solve these problems.

In the photo below, a B-29 Superfortress (left) sits next to an early B-36 Peacemaker.



12 August 1946 **President Truman** signed a bill authorizing an appropriation of \$50,000 to establish a **National Air Museum** in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. The small museum became the **National Air and Space Museum** - the most visited museum in the world.

10 August 1950 President Truman mobilized the first two **Air Force Reserve** units that served in the Korean War. By 1953, all 25 Reserve flying wings had been mobilized.

11-12 August 1958 **Rescue in Japan.** Torrential rain over northern Honshu, Japan, raised the Iwaki-Gawa River over its banks and flooded the city of Hirosaki. Fierce currents prevented the use of rescue boats, so city officials asked Misawa's 6139th Air Base Group, about 80 miles to the east, for help. In a series of rescue missions, H-19 helicopters from the 6139th saved 133 passengers, airlifting stranded flood victims by cable from roofs, bridges, vehicles, trees, and islands of higher ground and transporting them to relief centers. (At right, a UH-19B at the National Museum of the USAF.)



9 August 1960 The **first U.S. ICBM base** began functioning when SAC declared three Atlas D launching pads of the 564th Strategic Missile Squadron at Francis E. Warren AFB operational.



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10 August 1961: An F-105 lifted the **largest load ever carried aloft by a single-engine aircraft** in dropping over seven tons of conventional bombs on a target.

14 August 1964 The 36th Tactical Fighter Squadron from Korat RTAFB conducted the **first F-105D combat employment** in Southeast Asia.

14 August 1973 The **Bellows Air Force Station beach area** was entered into the National Register of Historic Places because of significant archaeological findings, which determined it to be one of the oldest places of human habitation in the Hawaiian Islands. Sociological and scientific studies, including analyses of radiocarbon dating, suggest that Bellows beach area was occupied around A.D. 800 to 1000.



9 August 1990 The **Alaskan Air Command** was redesignated as the **Eleventh Air Force** and concurrently its status changed from a USAF major command to a subordinate command of Pacific Air Forces.

9 August 2000 Andersen AFB, Guam, became the **first installation outside the continental United States to store conventional air-launched cruise missiles (CALCM)**. The 3,150-pound CALCM was capable of flying approximately 600 miles to strike targets while keeping the launch aircraft and crew out of harm's way. The storage of CALCMs at Andersen was part of a continuing effort to build up the base's role as a bomber forward operating location. The significance of placing CALCMs at Andersen was that they were forward deployed and immediately accessible. (At right, an AGM-86B photo from the *Boeing* website.)

