



U.S. AIR FORCE

## This Week in USAF and PACAF History 7 – 13 Nov 2011



### Countdown to 7 December 1941.

8 November 1941 **Combined Fleet Operation Order #1** was published. The top secret, 100-page order detailed Japan's war plans in the Pacific. The Imperial Navy General Staff printed 700 copies, but the Pearl Harbor attack plan was deleted from all but the original copy. In brief, that plan stated:

1. The Task Force will launch a surprise attack at the outset of the war on the U.S. Pacific Fleet supposed to be in Hawaiian waters, and destroy it.
2. The Task Force will reach the designated stand-by point in advance.
3. The start date is tentatively set as December 8, 1941 [Japan time].

The First Air Fleet conducted their final rehearsal of the Pearl Harbor strike and continued to work on the problem of torpedo runs in the shallow waters. Around 12 November, the torpedo bombers refined their tactics. Torpedoes with the modified fins were to be dropped from **20 meters in level flight**. Unmodified torpedoes would be delivered from **10 meters with a slight nose-down attitude**. When tested, these tactics yielded 82% hits on targets.

The Japanese began to make false radio calls so that U.S. communications intelligence listeners would believe the Japanese carriers were still in their home waters. As the task force aircraft left Japanese bases, other aircraft from Japan's Combined Naval Air Corps replaced them to keep up the same appearance of military air traffic. Naval shore units granted leave to as many men as possible so that the usual numbers of Japanese Navy personnel appeared in Japanese society. On 13 November, **U.S. Combat Intelligence** estimated Japanese naval activity: **"Carriers remain relatively inactive."**

In reality, Admiral Nagumo, the task force commander, had already issued **Striking Force Operations Order #1**, directing his ships to finish outfitting and assemble at Hitokappu Bay in the Kurile Islands, northeast of Hokkaido.

**Japanese carriers Zuikaku (foreground), Kaga (center), and Akagi (background) underway toward Hitokappu Bay.**





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7 November 1917 Eugene Bullard, **the world's first black military pilot**, became the **first black pilot to claim an aerial victory**. Bullard had stowed away on a ship to get to Europe. At the outbreak of World War I,



**Bullard as a Spad pilot**

he joined the French Foreign Legion. Fighting in some of the war's major battles, Bullard was severely wounded and received the *Croix de Guerre* for heroism. After convalescing, he completed flight training in the French Air Service and eventually flew 20 missions. A national hero in France, Bullard was denied entry into the U.S. Army Aviation Section due to his race.

In 1994, Eugene Bullard was posthumously commissioned as an officer in the United States Air Force. Read more in this article from the [Air & Space Power Journal](#).



**Bullard in the French Army**

11 Nov 1918 **The Armistice ending the fighting in World War I** was signed at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. During the war, the U.S. Army Air Service dropped 138 tons of bombs and was credited with shooting down 765 enemy aircraft and 76 balloons.

Congress changed "Armistice Day" to "Veteran's Day" in 1954 to honor all military veterans.

11 Nov 1922 **Wheeler Field was dedicated** and named in memory of Major Sheldon H. Wheeler, the former Commander of Luke Field on Ford Island. Major Wheeler died in a plane crash at Luke Field on 13 July 1921. The base is now known as Wheeler Army Airfield.

8 November 1950 General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Air Force Chief of Staff, agreed to send an **F-84E wing and an F-86A wing to the Far East Air Forces (FEAF)**. These forces arrived in early December. Also on 8 November, seventy B-29 Superfortresses conducted the **largest incendiary raid of the Korean War**, dropping 580 tons of firebombs on Sinuiju, North Korea.

11 Nov 1962 **Typhoon Karen struck Guam** with winds of 175 mph. The storm ruined 90 percent of the island's buildings and left 45,000 people homeless. Some 50 USAF cargo aircraft from PACAF and MATS delivered more than 1,000 tons of equipment and supplies to Guam.

9 Nov 1967 **MEDAL OF HONOR. Capt. Gerald Young** and his HH-53 crew (Capt Ralph Bower, SSgt Eugene L Clay, and Sgt Larry W. Maysey) flew into an area near Khe Sanh to rescue a U.S.-Vietnamese reconnaissance team. His helicopter was hit at point-blank range and destroyed. Wounded with second and third degree burns over one-fourth of his body, Capt. Young helped one of the other crew members to escape. Young then spent 17 hours luring the pursuing North Vietnamese troops away from the crash site and other survivors. After losing his pursuers, Capt. Young called for rescue and was picked up six miles from the crash site. For his heroism, Capt. Young received the Medal of Honor.



Read more of Capt. Young's story in this AF Magazine [article](#).



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9 Nov 1967 **MEDAL OF HONOR.** Ejecting from his F-4C over North Vietnam, **Capt. Lance P. Sijan** evaded capture for more than six weeks. Severely weakened and injured, Sijan was captured but then escaped. After being recaptured, Sijan was tortured, contracted pneumonia and died. The story of Sijan’s Medal of Honor actions are in this AF Magazine [article](#).

10 Nov 1988 The Pentagon **announced the existence of the Lockheed F-117A** stealth fighter. The **Nighthawk** had first flown on 18 June 1981 and reached IOC October 1983. The F-117 could evade most radar detection with its radical shape and radar-absorbent surfaces.



19 November 2005 For the first time, **USAF pilots flying F-16s** faced the **Indian Air Force’s** most advanced fighter — the **Su-30 MKI** — during exercise **Cope India 2006**. U.S. fighters also squared off against the MiG-21 Fishbed, MiG-27 Flogger, MiG-29 Fulcrum and Mirage 2000 during the exercise. (Below, Misawa F-16 taxiing past MiG-27s; Su-30 MKI taking off.)



9 November 2006 The U.S. Air Force activated the **first MQ-9 Reaper unit** – the 42nd Attack Squadron at Creech AFB. The single-engine, propeller-driven Reaper (formerly the Predator B) could carry 3,000 pounds of bombs and missiles, while remaining airborne for 24 hours. The smaller MQ-1 Predator carried 500 pounds of weaponry.