



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 28 November - 4 December 2011

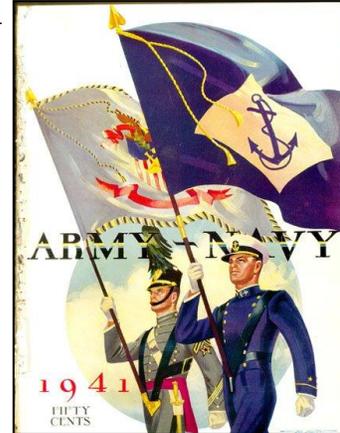


Countdown to 7 December 1941.

28 November 1941 **General Hap Arnold sent a message** for all Air Corps Commands to **protect against sabotage, espionage and subversion.**



29 November 1941 The program at the **Army-Navy football game** included a photo of the *U.S.S. Arizona* with a caption reading: "It is significant that despite the claims of air enthusiasts no battleship has yet been sunk by bombs." Eight days later, Japanese aircraft bombed and sank four U.S. battleships at Pearl Harbor, including *Arizona*, and heavily damaged four more.

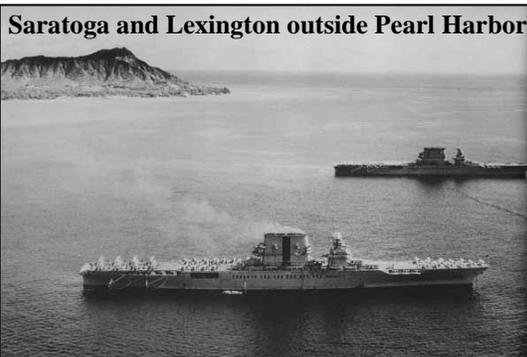


2 December 1941 When the Japanese Navy changed call signs after just one month (rather than their previous pattern of every six months), Admiral Kimmel asked PACFLT intelligence for **an estimate of the locations of Japanese naval forces.** The locations of two carrier divisions were not known because those units had not been heard from in several weeks.

2 December 1941 **Japan ordered diplomatic missions** in North America, East Asia and the Pacific to **burn secret documents and codes.** A wiretap in the Honolulu Consulate revealed the classified destruction to U.S. agents.

2 December 1941 The U.S. intercepted a message to Japan's Honolulu Consulate. The message stressed the "utmost importance" of information on ships and air defenses at Pearl Harbor. The message was routed through routine processes and it was **not translated until 30 December 1941.**

2 December 1941 The code "**Climb Mount Niitaka, 1208**" was sent to Japan's Combined Fleet, ordering attacks on December 8th (Japan time).



Saratoga and Lexington outside Pearl Harbor

4 December 1941 The *USS Lexington* was ordered to reinforce Midway. *Enterprise* was already reinforcing Wake and *Saratoga* was being refitted at Puget Sound, leaving **no aircraft carriers in Pearl Harbor.**

4 December 1941 The *Hawaiian Operation* task force completed its final pre-attack refueling, turned south and **set course for the attack launch point north of Oahu.**



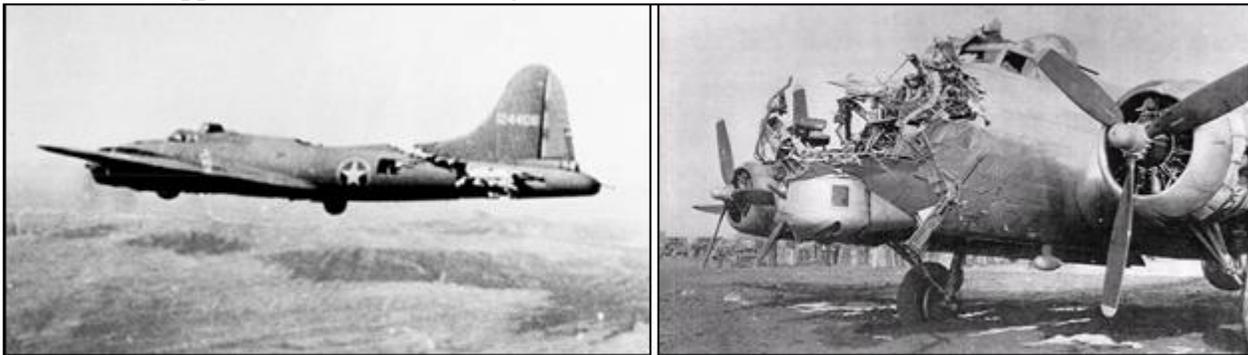
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30 November 1925 **No independent Air Force yet.** A board appointed by President Calvin Coolidge and headed by Dwight W. Morrow released a report recommending conservative reorganization of the Air Service and its redesignation as the Air Corps, rather than establishment of an independent air force coequal with the Army and Navy. The Morrow Board Report also recommended a five-year expansion plan for Army aviation.

2 Dec 1936 **The Boeing YB-17 made its maiden flight.** Even after awarding a contract to the far less expensive B-18 Bolo, the Air Corps was so impressed with Boeing's bomber design that they used a legal loophole to order 13 YB-17s as test aircraft. The B-17 "Flying Fortress" went on to enter full-scale production as the first truly mass-produced large aircraft. It was used primarily in the strategic bombing campaign against Germany and it also conducted raids on Japanese shipping in the Pacific. The B-17's legendary ability to survive extensive battle damage, belly landings and ditchings made it the favorite bomber among World War II aircrews. The B-17 dropped more bombs than any other U.S. aircraft in the war.



1 Dec 1941 By executive order, **President Roosevelt established the Civil Air Patrol** to



facilitate civil defense during war. Members included 17-year-old men not yet of draft age. The Civil Air Patrol flew small aircraft on disaster-relief missions or on coastal patrols to detect enemy submarine activity.



In the fall of 1943, the Civil Air Patrol became an auxiliary of the Army Air Forces.

29 Nov 1945 **The Army Air Forces School** moved from Orlando, Florida, to Maxwell Field, Alabama, and was assigned directly to the Army Air Forces. It later became **Air University**.

3 December 1945 The 412th Fighter Group received its first P-80 aircraft at March Field, becoming the **first Army Air Forces fighter unit equipped with jet-propelled aircraft.**



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28 Nov – 10 Dec 1950 **Combat airlift to the Chosin Reservoir.** When China intervened in the Korean War, about 120,000 enemy troops cut off 15,000 U.N. soldiers at the Chosin (Changjin) Reservoir in North Korea. Airlift was practically the only way to resupply these troops. C-119s and C-47s of the Far East Air Forces' Combat Cargo Command air-dropped and landed some 1,580 tons of equipment and supplies, including eight bridge spans to allow a withdrawal to the sea. The C-47s also evacuated almost 5,000 sick and wounded marines from Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri.

C-47 being unloaded at the Hagaru-ri airstrip



28 Nov – 10 Dec 1950 **Korean War airlift.** Combat Cargo Command C-119s and C-47s air-dropped and landed some 1,580 tons of equipment and supplies, including eight bridge spans, for the 1st Marine Division, which Communist Chinese forces had surrounded at the Chosin (Changjin) Reservoir area in northeastern North Korea. The C-47s also evacuated almost 5,000 sick and wounded marines from Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri.



B-45 Tornado

4 Dec 1950 **MiG-15s shot down a USAF B-45 Tornado** reconnaissance aircraft, marking the **first successful jet bomber interception** in airpower history. Two days later, the 27th Fighter Escort Wing began flying combat operations from Taegu, bringing F-84 Thunderjets to the war.



F-84 Thunderjet

30 Nov 1951 In a **major Korean War air battle** over the island of Taehwa-do, F-86 pilots engaged a squadron of enemy bombers escorted by about 30 fighters. Only three damaged enemy bombers made it back to North Korea. Major George Davis Jr., USAF, achieved Korean War ace status by downing a TU-2 bomber and a MiG-15. He was the first pilot to be an ace in two wars, since he already had seven kills in World War II. Major Winton Marshall, USAF, also became an ace, destroying a TU-2 and an LA-9 fighter. (F-86 photo above.) USAF aircraft helped dislodge the enemy, enabling friendly forces to retake the island.



2 December 1966 "**Black Friday**" of the Vietnam War. Enemy SAMs and anti-aircraft fire downed five Air Force and three Navy aircraft: three F-4Cs, one RF-4C, an F-105, a Navy F-4B and two A-4C Skyhawks. Losses such as these led DoD officials to accelerate acquisition programs and tactics developments aimed at suppressing enemy air defense systems.



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29 November 1975 The **first annual RED FLAG exercise** occurred at Nellis AFB to provide realistic training for combat aircrews. Red Flag was organized to improve the performance of USAF pilots in air-to-air combat after the Vietnam War. Analysis revealed that Air Force tactics relied too much on beyond visual range capabilities and USAF pilots were unpracticed in maneuvering against dissimilar aircraft. The records showed that a pilot's chances of survival in combat dramatically increased after completing ten combat missions, and Red Flag was created to offer U.S. pilots those ten missions in a realistic but safe training environment. T-38s and F-5 Tiger IIs flew as aggressor opponents using the tactical doctrines of the Soviet Union and other potential enemies. Later aggressors included F-16s and F-15s (below, left). Today's Red Flag exercises simulate entire air campaigns, and participants include other U.S. services as well as forces from allied countries. Red Flag Alaska is PACAF's equivalent of this exercise. Aggressor aircraft (below, right) are stationed at Eielson AFB.



29 November 1980 **The American flag** which flew over Hickam during the 7 December 1941 Japanese attack **was returned to Hickam** from the Air Force Academy. In a special ceremony, Lt Gen James D. Hughes (CINCPACAF) received the flag from Lt Gen Kenneth Tallman (Superintendent of the Air Force Academy).

2 December 1991 **Thirteenth Air Force established headquarters at Andersen AFB, Guam** after officially departing Clark AB, Philippines in November.



28 November 2001 **Operation SWIFT FREEDOM.** C-17s landed in Afghanistan on an airstrip about 80 miles south of Kandahar to deliver Navy Seabees. The operation introduced U.S. ground forces into Afghanistan.