



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 29 Aug – 4 Sep 2011



3 September 1925 The Navy dirigible *USS Shenandoah* was destroyed during a storm over



Ohio, killing 14 of 43 passengers, including the commander Lt Cmdr Zachary Lansdowne. The event compelled Brig Gen William “Billy” Mitchell to charge the War and Navy Departments with incompetency and “almost treasonable administration of the national defense.” In response to that charge, **President Calvin Coolidge ordered General Mitchell’s court-martial.** Found guilty of insubordination, Gen Mitchell resigned in February 1926. (The image at left was the subject of the painting “Billy Mitchell Court Martial,” by Bob Schaar, currently in the PACAF/A4 Conference Room.)

31 August 1939 **Wheeler Field** became a separate permanent military post, although the transition to independent status had been gradual. By the end of the year, units stationed at Wheeler included the 18th Pursuit Group and the 4th and 5th Reconnaissance Squadrons, under the jurisdiction of the 18th Bomber Wing headquartered at Hickam Field.

Countdown to 7 December 1941.

4 Sep 1941 The Japanese Cabinet approved an “**Outline Plan for the Execution of the Empire’s National Policy**” formulated primarily by the Imperial General Headquarters of the military. The decision included demands, or “minimum requirements,” from the United States and Britain: no interference with Japanese settlement of the “China incident” nor with the Japanese presence in Indo-China, no further aid to China, no further increases in U.S. or British military forces in East Asia, and an agreement to “cooperate in the acquisition of goods needed by our Empire.” Source: Prange, Gordon W., “At Dawn We Slept,” Penguin Books, 1981, p.205.

At the same time, key staff officers of the Imperial Navy’s aviation forces were directed to plan an attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor. This effort would transform Yamamoto’s concept into an **operational plan.**

2 September 1945 “**V-J Day**” -- **Japan Surrenders.**

In ceremonies onboard the battleship *USS Missouri* in Tokyo Bay, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, formally received the Japanese envoys who signed the instrument of surrender, ending World War II.



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29 August 1952 FEAF set a new 24-hour record by flying 854 **Fifth Air Force sorties against Pyongyang, Korea**. This attack destroyed 56 buildings and damaged 33 others.

31 August 1956 The **Boeing KC-135 Stratotanker** flew its maiden flight. The KC-135 was more capable of refueling the USAF's jet bombers than previous propeller-driven tankers.

30 August 1960 With six Atlas missiles ready to launch, the 564th Strategic Missile Squadron at Francis E. Warren AFB, Wyoming, became the **first fully operational ICBM squadron**.



1 September 1966 Tactical Air Command activated the **Tactical Fighter Weapons Center, forerunner of today's USAF Warfare Center**, at Nellis AFB. The Center was activated during the Vietnam War to improve tactical air operations in conventional war and contingencies. At the time, the Center conducted special fighter training in F-100s, F-105s, and F-4s.

1 September 1968 **MEDAL OF HONOR.** Lt Col William A. Jones led a flight of four A-1H Skyraider aircraft on an escort mission to rescue an F-4 pilot down near Dong Hoi. Spotting the downed flier, Jones repeatedly attacked an enemy gun position, sustaining heavy damage to his aircraft and severe burns to himself. Finding his radios broken, Jones returned to base, where he reported the downed pilot's location while on the operating table. The F-4 pilot was rescued later that day.



1 September 1982 **Space Command activated** at Peterson AFB, Colorado. It was redesignated **Air Force Space Command** in 1985 following the activation of U.S. Space Command.

30 August 1983 Lt. Col. Guion S. Bluford, USAF, became the **first black astronaut** to journey into space. He rode aboard *Challenger* on the eighth space shuttle mission.

31 August 1983 **Korean Air Lines Flight 007**, a Boeing 747, left New York en route to Seoul. After refueling in Anchorage, Alaska, KAL 007 strayed over the Kamchatka peninsula and southern Sakhalin Island. Before dawn on September 1, a Soviet SU-15 interceptor shot down the airliner as it was about to re-enter international airspace. KAL Flight 007 had 269 people aboard, including many U.S. citizens. Three HC-130 aircraft from the 33rd Rescue Squadron at Kadena AB deployed at Yokota AB for the search. An HC-130, flown by Capt. Mark Leuthold and his crew, was the first U.S. aircraft over the search area. Despite all efforts, searchers found no survivors.



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30 August 1995 NATO launched **Operation DELIBERATE FORCE**, a precise air campaign against Serb targets in Bosnia-Herzegovina, accompanied by a Bosnian-Croatian ground offensive. On Sept. 14th, the Serbs agreed to peace terms that were signed in December.

29 August 1990 The Lockheed/Boeing/General Dynamics team **unveiled the YF-22A Advanced Tactical Fighter** in ceremonies at Lockheed Plant 10 in Palmdale, California.

1 September 1995 **The SR-71 returned to active service.** The Air Force had retired its fleet of SR-71s on 26 January 1990 because of a decreasing defense budget and high costs of operation. The aircraft was retired again in 1998.

31 August – 3 September 1996 **Operation DESERT STRIKE.** Iraq attacked Kurds and seized the city of Irbil in a zone protected by the United States. In response, President Clinton ordered a strike on military targets in Iraq posing a threat to coalition aircraft in the no-fly-zone. The B-52 contingent of AEF IV in Southeast Asia left Andersen AFB, Guam on 2 September and flew non-stop for 33.9 hours and 13,600 miles, launching 13 conventional air launched cruise missiles (CALCMs) against targets in Iraq. Nine KC-10s – one from McGuire AFB and eight from Travis AFB--along with 14 KC-135s from Fairchild AFB flew air refueling missions to support the raid. Andersen AFB also began hosting more than 6,600 Kurdish evacuees during the eight-month humanitarian assistance mission, Joint Task Force Pacific Haven (16 Sep 1996 – 30 Apr 1997). (See photo of B-52 launching a CALCM, at right).



31 August 2006 **Super Typhoon Ioke** passed almost directly over Wake Island, with winds approaching 160 mph. Ioke was the first Category 5 storm to develop in the Pacific since record-keeping began in the early 1960s. Ioke demolished buildings, toppled satellite dishes, and ripped out communication links. Three days earlier, C-17s from the 15th Airlift Wing and HIANG 154th Wing had evacuated 188 personnel from Wake Island.

4-8 September 2006 The **Pacific Rim (PACRIM) Airpower Symposium** (formerly known as the PACRIM Director of Operations Conference) was co-hosted by 13 AF Commander Major General Edward A. Rice and Indonesian Air Force Vice Marshall Edy Harjoko, in Indonesia. Forty-nine participants from 19 countries attended, the largest number in the history of this venue since its beginning in 1995. The large number of active participants indicated regional friends and partners found the forum to be a very valuable venue to discuss important topics such as maritime security, HA/DR lessons learned, and multilateral exercises.