



U.S. AIR FORCE

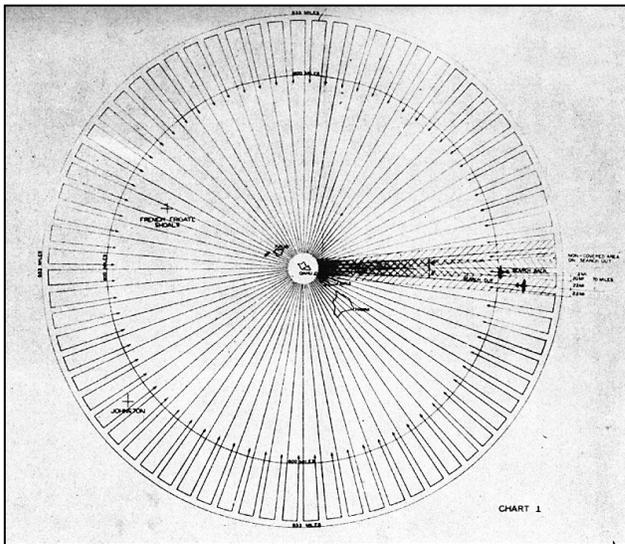
This Week in USAF and PACAF History 15 – 21 Aug 2011



Countdown to 7 December 1941.

20 August 1941 In response to a War Department tasking to the Army's Hawaiian Department, Colonel William Farthing, commander of Hickam Field's Fifth Bombardment Group, forwarded a report entitled ***Plan for the Employment of Bombardment Aviation in the Defense of Oahu*** to Headquarters, U.S. Army Air Forces. The "Farthing Report" supported a widely held objective: The Hawaiian Department, particularly the Hawaiian Air Force, would defend the naval base, relieving the Pacific Fleet of this task and giving the Fleet complete freedom of action in the central Pacific.

The basic plan required the Hawaiian Air Force to have long-range aircraft sufficient to conduct a 360° search of the adjacent ocean area during daylight. The Air Force would bomb enemy aircraft carriers before they got to within a night's sail of a launch point for an attack on Oahu. The report



correctly predicted that the Japanese would use six carriers, avoid the usual sea traffic lanes, approach in darkness for a dawn attack, and be willing to accept large losses to achieve success. However, the Farthing report shared some fatally flawed assumptions with most of the American leaders of that day. One of these was that the Japanese would only try such an attack after they first gained control of the sea lines of communication enroute to Hawaii. So the war would have

already started and the U.S. Pacific Fleet would already be at sea (and not in port). Most of the Americans thought that if the Japanese attacked Oahu, they would bomb facilities, not ships, perhaps to prepare for an invasion. Furthermore, the plan required 180 long-range bombers and 36 long-range torpedo bombers. Although the cost of this force would be less than one U.S. Navy battleship, the reality in late 1941 was that there were only 109 B-17s in the entire Army Air Corps, and they were already committed to Europe, mainland defense and the Philippines.

Beyond these mistakes, the American leaders badly underestimated Japanese courage, resourcefulness and determination to solve the problems, overcome the obstacles and accomplish their mission.

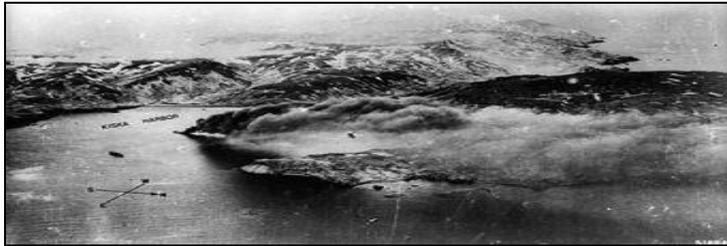


U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History **15 – 21 Aug 2011**



15 August 1943 The **Aleutian Campaign ended** with the reoccupation of Kiska. The Japanese occupied Aleutian islands to secure the northern flank of their Pacific empire, and the U.S. feared that the islands could be bases for air attacks on the American west coast. In May 1943, American forces seized Attu, and by July the USAAF began using it as a base for raids against the Kurile Islands. When U.S. troops invaded Kiska on August 15th, they found the



enemy had already given up the outpost. Primarily an air war, the Aleutian Campaign was the only World War II campaign fought on North American soil. (At left, a Japanese ship burns in Kiska harbor after an Eleventh Air Force raid.)

17 August 1943 **Schweinfurt-Regensburg raid.** More than 300 B-17s took off from the United Kingdom without fighter protection to attack ball-bearing factories at Schweinfurt and aircraft plants at Regensburg on the deepest U.S. air raid into Germany to date. Many bombers missed their targets and 60 were lost, mostly to enemy fighters. The high loss rate shook the confidence of Eighth Air Force leaders, and the bombers did not return to Germany until 6 Sep.

15 August 1945 **VICTORY DAY —JAPAN.** After U.S. atomic bombs struck Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese government announced it would surrender "unconditionally," subject to an Allied agreement to maintain the monarchy. Washington declared a cease-fire immediately.

16 August 1950 **Massed bomber mission in Korea.** In the largest employment of air power in direct support of ground forces since the Normandy invasion of World War II, 98 B-29s dropped more than 800 tons of 500-pound bombs on a 27-square-mile area near Waegwan, where large numbers of enemy troops were suspected to be massing for an attack on Taegu.

15 August 1957 **General Nathan F. Twining became the first USAF officer to serve as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.**

During World War II, General Twining was the Commander of 13th Air Force and Chief of Staff of Allied Air Forces in the South Pacific. Later in the war, he commanded 15th Air Force in Europe and then 20th Air Force in the strategic bombing campaign against Japan, including the atomic bomb missions. In 1947, he assumed command of Alaskan Air Command. General Twining was the Chief of Staff of the Air Force prior to being appointed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Twining was known for his belief in strategic bombing, his common sense and his ability to work well with other officers across the DoD.





U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 15 – 21 Aug 2011



19 August 1960 Flying a specially-modified C-119, the 6593rd Test Squadron made the **first successful mid-air catch of a DISCOVERER satellite capsule**. For this feat, the unit received the 1960 Mackay Trophy. Based at Hickam since 1958, the 6953rd's capsule recoveries were part of the **CORONA project**, America's first operational space reconnaissance effort. History and images of the program are now declassified and available at the National Reconnaissance Office [CORONA webpage](#). At left, a C-119 catches the parachute canopy of a descending capsule (the capsule is below the frame).

21-28 August 1960 A severe **polio epidemic struck Hokkaido**, Japan. C-130s of PACAF's 315th Air Division delivered eight iron lungs and 12 chest respirators to Hokkaido.

21 August 1970 Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird announced the **Total Force Concept** of the armed services. Under this concept, the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard replaced the draft as the initial sources for augmentation of the active force.

15 August 1972 **Operation SAKLOLO concluded**. In this disaster relief operation to aid flood victims in the Philippines, PACAF C-130s, H-3 and H-43 helicopters airlifted more than 2,000 tons of food, medical supplies, clothing, fuel, and other relief to Luzon.

17 August 1990 **Operation DESERT SHIELD/STORM**. President Bush activated the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) for the first time since it was established in 1952. CRAF aircraft transported 709,613 passengers and 126,309 tons of cargo for the campaign.

18 August 2005 **JASSM IOC**. The 7th Bomb Wing became the first unit to achieve initial operational capability of the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM). The JASSM is an all-weather, low observable, standoff cruise missile capable of taking out heavily defended, high-priority targets deep behind enemy lines, allowing manned aircraft to penetrate enemy airspace.

