



U.S. AIR FORCE

## This Week in USAF and PACAF History 16 – 22 July 2012



18 July 1914 Congress created an **Aviation Section of the Army Signal Corps**, replacing the Aeronautical Division. The Aviation Section consisted of only 19 officers and 101 enlisted men.



19 July – 20 August 1934 **Lt Col Henry H. Arnold led ten B-10 bombers from Bolling Field in Washington, D.C. to Fairbanks, Alaska and back.** They covered 7,360 miles in 25 hours 30 minutes going north and 26 hours going south. For this flight, Arnold received the Mackay Trophy and the Distinguished Flying Cross. (B-10 at left.)

18 July 1934 A War Department board headed by former secretary Newton D. Baker **recommended formation of a centrally controlled aerial strike force.** The Drum Board had come to the same conclusion in 1933 when it recommended a General Headquarters Air Force.

19 July 1941 **Tuskegee Army Air Field officially opened in Alabama.** Capt. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., a West Point graduate and son of the first black General Officer in the U.S. Army, was one of 12 cadets to begin flight training as the **first class of black pilot candidates in the U.S. military.** Davis commanded an all-black pursuit squadron and fighter group in combat during World War II as well as the 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing in the Korean War. He was Vice Commander of 13th Air Force and Commander, Air Task Force 13 (Provisional) on Taiwan. Benjamin Davis retired in 1970 as a Lieutenant General and was advanced to General on the retired list in 1998.



17 July 1944 **First use of napalm.** Ninth Air Force P-38s dropped napalm on an enemy fuel depot in France. Napalm, a jellied gasoline, was a revolutionary incendiary weapon.

16 July 1945 **“Gadget,” the first atomic bomb,** was detonated at the Trinity Site near Alamogordo, New Mexico. The 19 kiloton device was the prototype for the Nagasaki bomb.



19 July 1962 A Nike-Zeus missile fired from Kwajalein Island in the Pacific Ocean made the **first known “intercept” of an intercontinental ballistic missile** when it came within two kilometers of its target, the nose cone of an Atlas missile launched from Vandenberg AFB, California. At that range, the 400 kiloton nuclear warhead of a fully operational Nike-Zeus would have destroyed the incoming ICBM warhead. The Nike-Zeus was upgraded years later into the five-megaton Spartan missile as a part of **Safeguard**, America's first antiballistic missile system.



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16 July 1965 The **OV-10A Bronco** flew its first test flight. The Bronco was a multi-purpose, light attack aircraft developed under an Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps tri-service program. The USAF acquired the OV-10 primarily as a forward air control (FAC) aircraft, but it also performed observation, helicopter escort, reconnaissance, gunfire spotting, personnel transport and ground attack.

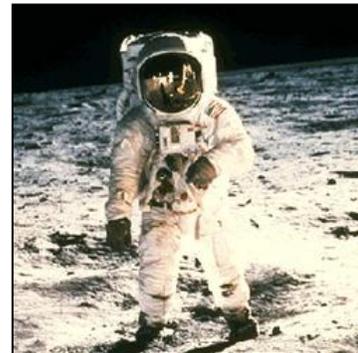


Faster and more tactically versatile than helicopters, but slower and more maneuverable than jets, the Bronco utilized tactics not possible with either. The Bronco was highly effective against guerilla and conventional forces due to its outstanding capability to find and hit battlefield targets close to friendly troops. The first USAF OV-10As destined for combat arrived in Vietnam on July 31, 1968. A total of 157 OV-10As were delivered to the USAF before production ended in April 1969.

16 July 1969 **Apollo XI/First Lunar Landing.** The Apollo XI lunar landing mission launched from Kennedy Space Center, carrying astronauts Neil A. Armstrong, Col. Edwin



“Buzz” Aldrin Jr, USAF, and Lt Col. Michael Collins, USAF. On 20 July, Armstrong and Aldrin landed the lunar module *Eagle* on the “Sea of Tranquility” and became the **first men to walk on the Moon**. During this time, Collins orbited the Moon alone in the mission’s command module. On 24 July, Apollo XI splashed down in the mid-Pacific.



16 July 1971 [Jeanne M. Holm](#) became the **first female General Officer in the Air Force**. A veteran of World War II who commanded several women’s units, Holm was recalled to active duty during the 1948 Berlin crisis. She served in air depot operations in Germany and was the



first woman to attend the Air Command and Staff College. Appointed director, Women in the Air Force (WAF) in 1965, Holm was extended in that position twice. During her tenure, WAF strength more than doubled, job and assignment opportunities were greatly expanded and uniforms were modernized. Under General Holm’s leadership, only four Air Force’s specialties remained closed to women: pilot, navigator, missile operations and security police. General Holm helped lead the Air Force to become the first service to open its Reserve Officer Training Corps to college women and the first service in which a woman commanded a mixed unit of men and women.



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Holm was promoted to Major General in 1973 and retired in 1975. Air University’s Jeanne M. Holm Center for Officer Accessions and Citizen Development is named in her honor.

21 July - 15 August 1972 **Operation SAKLOLO.** PACAF airlifted more than 2,000 tons of relief supplies for the relief of flood victims in the Philippines. C-130s as well as H-3 and H-43 helicopters transported more than 1,500 passengers, including relief teams and evacuees.

19 July 1984 TAC received its **first E-3B Sentry** at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma. Compared to the A-model, the E-3B had five more Situation Display Consoles (SDC), a new computer, radio teletype, and maritime surveillance capability. Other enhancements included one additional HF radio and five additional UHF radios with “Have Quick” anti-jamming circuitry.



17 July 1987 The first **MH-53J Enhanced Pave Low III** helicopter rolled out at Naval Air Station Pensacola in Florida. Pave Low provided night and adverse weather navigation



capabilities for long-range combat search and rescue (CSAR) missions through the use of an infrared sensor and terrain following/terrain avoidance radar.

The enhanced Pave Low III integrated these sensors with a sophisticated navigation and communications suite. In 1991,

USAF Pave Lows led Army Apaches to fire the opening shots of Operation DESERT STORM, the liberation of Kuwait from Iraq.



17 July 1989 At Edwards AFB, California, the **B-2 Spirit flew for the first time.** Known as the “stealth bomber,” the B-2 achieved low observability through features such as composite



materials, special coatings and its flying-wing design. “Stealthiness” gives the B-2 greater freedom of action at high altitudes versus low-level penetration, increasing both its range and the field of view for its sensors. The B-2’s unique combination of low observability, high aerodynamic efficiency and large payload give it a unique ability to fly very long missions, penetrate sophisticated air defenses and attack very important and heavily defended targets.

On 15 July 2000, the **final B-2** arrived at Whiteman AFB, Missouri.