



U.S. AIR FORCE

## This Week in USAF and PACAF History 6 – 12 August 2012



8 August 1913 **The first military airplane flight in Hawaii** was piloted by Lt. Harold Geiger from Fort Kamehameha. The aircraft, a Curtiss E two-seater, soared over Pearl Harbor.

10 August 1944 U.S. forces overcame Japanese resistance on Guam, allowing **construction of B-29 bomber bases** on three of the Mariana Islands—Guam, Tinian, and Saipan.

6 August 1945 A B-29 crew flying the “Enola Gay” from the Marianas island of Tinian made the **first atomic bomb attack**. Hiroshima, Japan was destroyed by a single bomb called “Little Boy.” Three days later, a B-29 crew flying “Bock’s Car” bombed Nagasaki in the second and **last atomic bomb attack**. The weapon, named “Fat Man” largely destroyed the city.

The atomic bombs were the primary reason that Japan surrendered and an Allied invasion of Japan was never launched. Estimates of expected casualties in such an invasion varied widely. However, forecasts based on an expected mobilization of Japanese civilians for combat predicted death for over one million Americans and five to ten million Japanese citizens. At right, the Enola Gay at Tinian in the Marianas Islands.



8 August 1946 **First flight of the Convair XB-36 Peacemaker**. The B-36 was designed in 1941 when it appeared England might fall to Germany and the U.S. would need a trans-Atlantic bomber in a war against the Nazis. With a length of 160 feet and wings spanning 230 feet, the B-36 was the largest bomber ever built. Equipped with six propeller engines, early versions of the B-36 did not meet performance requirements and burned fuel too fast. In 1949, four jet engines were added to solve these problems. Below, a B-29 (left) sits next to an early B-36.





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12 August 1946 **President Truman** signed a bill authorizing an appropriation of \$50,000 to establish a **National Air Museum** in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. The small museum became the **National Air and Space Museum** - the most visited museum in the world.

10 August 1950 President Truman mobilized the first two **Air Force Reserve** units that served in the Korean War. By 1953, all 25 Reserve flying wings had been mobilized.

6 August 1953 **Operation BIG SWITCH.** Through October, the USAF airlifted more than 800 former prisoners of war from Korea to the U.S. after the end of the Korean War.

11-12 August 1958 **Rescue in Japan.** Torrential rain over northern Honshu, Japan, raised the Iwaki-Gawa River over its banks and flooded the city of Hirosaki. Fierce currents prevented the use of rescue boats, so city officials asked the 6139th Air Base Group at Misawa Air Base for help. USAF H-19 helicopters from the 6139th saved 133 passengers, airlifting stranded flood victims by cable from roofs, bridges, vehicles, trees, and islands of higher ground and taking them to relief centers.

At right, a UH-19B at the National Museum of the USAF.



9 August 1960 **First operational ICBM base.** Strategic Air Command declared three Atlas D launch pads operational at Francis E. Warren AFB, Wyoming – the first operational Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) base. Below left, an Atlas D missile launch.



10 August 1961 An F-105 lifted the **largest load ever carried aloft by a single-engine aircraft**, dropping over seven tons of bombs on a target.

At right, an F-105 with a full bomb load.





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7 August 1990 **Operation DESERT SHIELD.** In response to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait on 2 August, the US military initiated deployment actions to protect Saudi Arabia from Iraqi aggression and to liberate Kuwait. The 71st Tactical Fighter Squadron deployed 24 F-15C

Eagles on a non-stop, 15-hour, 8,000-mile flight from Langley AFB, Virginia to Saudi Arabia. This mission included 12 in-flight refuelings.



9 August 1990 The **Alaskan Air Command** was redesignated as the **Eleventh Air Force** and concurrently its status changed from a USAF major command to a subordinate command of Pacific Air Forces.

6 August 1993 Dr. Sheila E. Widnall became the **first woman Secretary of the Air Force** and the first woman to head any of the military services.

7 August 1995 **First B-52 PGM employment.** A B-52H bomber from the 2 BW at Barksdale AFB employed precision-guided munitions in a training mission for the first time.

9 August 2000 Andersen AFB, Guam, became the **first installation outside the continental United States to store conventional air-launched cruise missiles (CALCM).** The 3,150-pound CALCM was capable of flying 600 miles to strike targets while keeping the launch aircraft and crew out of harm's way. The storage of CALCMs at Andersen was part of a continuing effort to build up the base's role as a bomber forward operating location. (Boeing photo of an AGM-86B cruise missile at right.)



7 August 2009 **The USAF stood up Air Force Global Strike Command** – its first completely



new major air command in 27 years. AFGSC’s mission is to “develop and provide combat-ready forces for nuclear deterrence and global strike operations.” The Command provides a single organization responsible for the oversight of two-thirds of U.S. nuclear capabilities through two Numbered Air Forces: 20th Air Force with responsibility over the United States’ three intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) wings, and 8th Air Force with responsibility over America’s two B-52 bomber wings and the nation’s only B-2 bomber wing.