



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 13 – 19 August 2012



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 U.S. Army Air Forces began using it as a base for raids against the Kurile Islands. When American troops invaded Kiska on August 15th, they found the enemy had already evacuated 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.

14 August 1945 The 20th Air Force conducted the **final B-29 combat mission against Japan.**



This mission included a record number of effective aircraft: 754 B-29s and 169 fighters. One phase of the mission, against the Nippon Oil Refinery at Tsuchizaka, produced the longest nonstop mission of the war from the Marianas – 3,650 miles. (Photos of B-29s over Japan.)



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.



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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.



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).

14 August 1964 The 36th Tactical Fighter Squadron from Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base conducted the **first F-105D combat employment** in Southeast Asia.

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.



14 August 1973 The **Bellows Air Force Station beach area** was entered into the National Register of Historic Places because of significant archaeological findings, which determined it to be one of the oldest places of human habitation in the Hawaiian Islands. Sociological and scientific studies, including analyses of radiocarbon dating, suggest that Bellows beach area was occupied around A.D. 800 to 1000.



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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 (IOC) 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.

