



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 3 - 9 December 2012



7 Dec 1941 **Japanese carrier-based aircraft attacked U.S. military airfields on Oahu** along with the primary Japanese target—the **Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor**. The bombing and strafing of Hickam, Wheeler, and other airfields crippled U.S. air defenses and prevented U.S. bombers from striking the Japanese aircraft carriers. The Army Air Forces on Oahu suffered 690 casualties, including 238 killed. Out of 234 AAF aircraft, 76 were completely destroyed and only 83 were still in commission after the attack.



The attack brought the United States of America into World War II against Japan and its allies, Germany and Italy. These photographs show the Wheeler and Hickam flightlines burning (above) and a pile of aircraft wreckage collected at Wheeler after the attack (right).



Japanese bombers over Corregidor in the Philippines

8 Dec 1941 Within hours of the attack on Hawaii, **Japan attacked U.S. forces in the Philippines**. Japanese warplanes destroyed more than 100 U.S. Army aircraft at Clark and Iba Airfields, including 17 B-17s and 55 P-40s, mostly on the ground. The attack killed some 80 airmen, wounded about 150, and decimated the striking power of the U.S. Army Air Forces in the Philippines. Five U.S. pilots shot down seven of the attacking airplanes.

3 December 1945 The 412th Fighter Group received its first P-80 aircraft at March Field, California, becoming the **first Army Air Forces fighter unit equipped with jet-propelled aircraft**.



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5 December 1949 The USAF diverted \$50 million from other projects to build a **radar network in Alaska and certain US areas** after detecting a Soviet atomic explosion in August 1949. The successful Soviet test came several years earlier than expected and alarmed U.S. defense experts.



B-45 Tornado

4 Dec 1950 **MiG-15s shot down a USAF B-45 Tornado** reconnaissance aircraft in Korea, marking the **first successful jet bomber interception** in airpower history. Two days later, the 27th Fighter Escort Wing began flying combat operations from Taegu, bringing F-84 Thunderjets to the war.



F-84 Thunderjet

7 Dec 1956 **The DoD placed all air transport operations under a single service manager** and named the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) as its operating agency. This directive required the Navy to transfer its transport aircraft, except for 30 four-engine land transports belonging to the Fleet Logistic Air Wings, to the Air Force. MATS essentially became Military Airlift Command (MAC) on 1 January 1966 and then Air Mobility Command on 1 June 1992.



9 Dec 1956 The Air Force received its **first C-130 Hercules** tactical airlifter. This four-engine turboprop had an unrefueled range of over 2,500 miles, could carry outsized cargo of almost 50,000 pounds or up to 92 troops, and could take off and land within about 3,600 feet. The photo at left is a C-130 "Blind Bat" flareship that lit up the night skies over the Ho Chi Minh trail during the Vietnam War.

8 Dec 1958 **Tilt-Wing Aircraft.** Hiller Aircraft Corp. unveiled its X-18 Propelloplane (right) at Moffett Field, California. The X-18 was a 16-ton tilt-wing aircraft capable of conventional and vertical takeoffs and landings. The X-18 eventually flew 20 test flights out of Edwards AFB from 1959 to 1961. The X-18 had several problems, including susceptibility to wind gusts when the wing was rotating. Also, the turboprop engines were not cross-linked, so the failure of one engine meant a crash. On the last flight, the aircraft had to be recovered from a spin. Ground testing of the tilting concepts continued until the plane was severely damaged when a test stand failed. The X-18 program was cancelled in January, 1964 and the X-18 was cut up for scrap.





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7 Dec 1960 The first ten of 29 **F-102 “Delta Dagger”** aircraft joined the **Hawaii Air National Guard**, replacing their F-86s.

8-9 Dec 1978 **Iran Air Evacuation.** As a result of tension in Iran, Military Airlift Command airlifted some 900 evacuees from Tehran to the U.S. and Germany. The airlift included 11 C-141 and C-5 missions. About 5,700 U.S. and third-country nationals left Iran on regularly scheduled MAC flights until Iran’s revolutionary government closed the airport in February 1979.

9 Dec 1992 **Operation RESTORE HOPE I.** Through 4 May 1993, AMC aircraft moved 51,431 passengers and 41,243 tons of cargo in more than 1,000 missions to support UN peacekeeping efforts in Somalia. The 28,000 deployed troops protected the food, supplies, and aid workers from armed factions in the country. AFRES crews flew 190 sorties to deliver 1,500 tons of supplies, while refuelers completed 1,170 missions to deliver 82.4 million pounds of fuel. At left, aerial port personnel and infantrymen prepare a Bradley M2-A2 fighting vehicle for transport on a C-5 to Mogadishu, Somalia.



5 December 1994 **The START I Treaty went into force.** The breakup of the Soviet Union had delayed START's entry into force for nearly three-and-a-half years until Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, which had inherited strategic nuclear weapons from the Soviet Union, ratified START and joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as non-nuclear states.

6 December 1995 USAF airlifters started moving troops and equipment to Bosnia-Herzegovina as a part of **Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR.** This NATO operation implemented the Dayton Peace Accord between Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia reached at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. At right, a Bradley Fighting Vehicle is backed into a C-17 at Rhein Main Air Base, Germany, on 4 Jan 1996 for transport to Bosnia.

