



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Month in USAF and PACAF History

January



1-7 Jan 1929 The *Question Mark*. To test inflight refueling as well as crew and aircraft endurance, the *Question Mark*, a modified Fokker C-2A, flew to a world duration record of 150 hours and 40 minutes. Named for its unknown capacity to remain airborne, the *Question Mark* was refueled 43 times by two modified biplane tankers. It flew until engine problems forced a landing. The tankers passed 5,700 gallons of fuel plus oil, food, water, and other items (roughly 40 tons) to the *Question Mark*.



The crew of the *Question Mark* consisted of (left to right) Major Carl Spaatz, Captain Ira Eaker, Lieutenant H.A. Halverson, Lieutenant E.R. Quesada and Sergeant R.W. Hooe. All the officers



on the flight became generals, as did two officers on the tankers: Ross G. Hoyt and Joseph G. Hopkins. Sergeant Hooe, the “airborne mechanic,” was responsible for keeping *Question Mark* in the air. At one point, Hooe had to go outside the aircraft on a catwalk to make engine repairs. He also operated the pump that transferred fuel from the cabin tanks to the wings.

1 January 1947 The Pacific Air Command, U.S. Army, was redesignated as the Far East Air Forces (FEAF). On 15 December 1947, the Seventh Air Force in Hawaii was redesignated Pacific Air Command. The Pacific Air Command was inactivated on 1 July 1957, as FEAF was redesignated as the Pacific Air Forces.

1 January 1958 The Air Force moved the 1st Missile Division and the 704th Strategic Missile Wing—SAC’s first ballistic missile wing—to Cooke AFB (renamed Vandenberg AFB in October 1958), California. The 704th operated the Thor IRBM, and later the Atlas ICBM.

1 Jan 1967 The USAF received 140 CV-2 Caribou aircraft from the US Army. This was the first time an entire aircraft inventory had been transferred between services. Redesignated as the C-7, the aircraft was assigned to the 7th Air Force along with operational control of all fixed-wing cargo aircraft in Vietnam.

1 Jan 1979 The U.S. and Peoples’ Republic of China (PRC) announced the opening of full diplomatic ties. The exchange of accredited ambassadors and the operation of Embassies later that year enabled both parties to negotiate diplomatic disputes and pursue mutual interests. At that time, the United States also declared its intention to abrogate the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of China (Taiwan), originally signed in December 1954. The U.S. declared in the Joint Communiqué that it would “maintain cultural, commercial, and other unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan.”



1 Jan 1988 SAC's missile crew assignment policy changed to permit mixed (male/female) two-person crews in Minuteman and Peacekeeper launch facilities. One of the reasons for the change was to make missile-crew alert tour scheduling and substitutions more flexible. Crewmembers uncomfortable with such an assignment could opt out of serving on a mixed crew.

2 Jan 1953 Cessna's T-37 design won the competition for the USAF's primary jet trainer over 14 other entries. Side-by-side seating in the T-37 "Tweet" made it easier for the instructor to observe and communicate with the student. Nearly 1,300 T-37s were built before production ended in the late 1970s. Additionally, nearly 600 A-37 attack versions were built. The T-37 aircraft retired from the active USAF inventory in 2009, having served for 52 years.



2 Jan 1967 OPERATION BOLO. F-4 Phantom pilots from the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) shot down seven North Vietnamese MiG-21s in a sweep mission over the Red River Valley to set a one-day aerial victory record. This MiG suppression operation was dubbed the largest air battle of the war and the most dramatic use of tactical deception. In a successful ruse, the F-4C pilots simulated F-105 fighter-bombers to draw the MiGs out. The wing commander, Colonel Robin Olds, shot down a MiG and became the only USAF ace with aerial victories in World War II and the Vietnam War. It was during Operation BOLO that Colonel Olds dubbed the 8th TFW the "Wolf Pack" because of its aggressive tactics and high degree of teamwork.



Above-Left, an F-4C of the 8th TFW configured for the MiG combat air patrol (MiGCAP) escort role with Sparrow and Sidewinder air-to-air missiles and extra fuel tanks under the wings. At right, Col. Olds is carried off the airfield after completing his 100th combat mission in Southeast Asia on 23 September 1967.



3 Jan 1933 Roles and missions: General Douglas MacArthur, Army Chief of Staff, sent a letter to Army commanders stating that the Army air arm was "to conduct the land-based air operations in defense of the United States and its overseas possessions." Based on an agreement two years earlier with the Chief of Naval Operations, the Army Air Corps took responsibility for coastal defense and made plans to develop the necessary air forces to accomplish the mission, including long range bombers. Within a year, the Air Corps identified the need for a new heavy bomber, a requirement eventually filled by the B-17 (photo above).



3 Jan 1945 Battle of the Bulge. U.S. and British forces counter-attacked the Germans under the protection of American airpower. While interdiction of supply lines and close air support of ground troops played a role in the Allied success, the most important benefit of Allied air superiority was to destroy 1000 Luftwaffe aircraft and thus prevent them from supporting the German army in the same ways. German General von Mellenthin summed up his own feelings as well as those of Field Marshall von Rundstedt in stating:

"The Ardennes battle drives home the lesson that a large-scale offensive by massed armour has no hope of success against an enemy who enjoys supreme command of the air."



Left: B-17's bomb the Focke Wulf plant at Marienburg, Germany.



Right: Waist gunners take their positions in a B-17

Flying Fortress.



Left: B-17's drop their bombs over Germany.

Right: U.S. soldiers at an anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) battery watch aerial dogfights as they wait to fire on an incoming enemy straffer – Christmas Day, 1944.



Photo credits: University of Missouri at Kansas City [website](#), courtesy of the Truman Presidential Museum and Library.

3 January 1993 President George Bush and Soviet President Boris Yeltsin signed the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) to reduce nuclear bombers, missiles, bombs, and warheads.



4 Jan 1944 Operation CARPETBAGGER. American and RAF planes dropped arms and supplies to French, Belgian, and Italian partisans for the first time. Most Carpetbagger flights were made by glossy black B-24 bombers with the nose guns removed to enhance visual navigation. Flying on moonlit nights at low level, the crews used rivers, lakes, railroad tracks, and towns as check points.

Drops were also made using radio-navigation equipment. The B-24s had their waist guns replaced with blackout curtains and the belly turret removed to create a drop opening for agents and supplies (see photo at right). Supplies were also released in containers designed to be dropped from the existing equipment in the bomb-bay. Pilots often flew several miles farther into enemy territory after completing their drops to disguise the actual drop location from enemy observers. Often operating in weather considered impossible for flying, the Carpetbaggers flew most their missions to supply French partisan groups north of the Loire River in support of the upcoming D-Day invasion. Starting in July, the Carpetbagger mission expanded to actually landing C-47 Dakotas in occupied territory to reinforce Resistance groups and extract downed Allied airmen and wounded Resistance fighters. The Carpetbaggers were forerunners of USAF Special Operations.



of

5 Jan 1916 The 1st Company, 2nd Aero Squadron, sailed from San Francisco, California for the Philippines. It was the **first Aero unit to serve outside the US.**

7 Jan 1931 The MacArthur-Pratt Agreement. General Douglas MacArthur (CSA, at left) and Admiral William Pratt (CNO, at right) agreed that: "The Naval Air Force will be based on



the fleet and move with it as an important element in solving the primary missions confronting the fleet. The Army Air Forces will be land-based and employed as an essential element to the Army in the performance of its mission to defend the coasts at home and in our overseas possessions, thus assuring the fleet absolute freedom of action without any responsibility for coast defense."



Pratt wanted the Navy to have maximum mobility and striking power, without being tethered to coastal defense. While in effect, this agreement gave **the Army primary responsibility for coastal defense.** Two years later, MacArthur defined the Army Air Corps mission "to conduct the land-based air operations in defense of the United States and its overseas possessions."

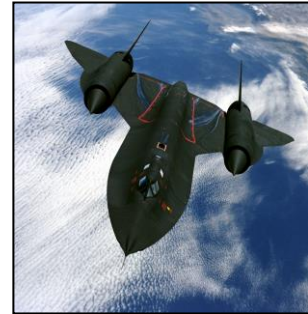


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7 Jan 1966 The 4200th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (SRW) at Beale AFB, California received the first operational SR-71 Blackbird strategic reconnaissance aircraft. SR-71 Blackbirds served in Strategic Air Command from 1966 through 1991. Of the 32 SR-71 aircraft in the inventory, twelve were destroyed in accidents, though none was lost to enemy action. SR-71s first arrived at the 9th SRW's Operating Location at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa on 8 March 1968. On 21 March 1968, Major (later General) Jerome F. O'Malley and Major Edward D. Payne flew the first operational SR-71 sortie from Kadena. From 1968 until 1972, the Blackbird's sortie rate in reconnaissance missions over enemy territory (North Vietnam, Laos, etc.) gradually increased from one sortie a week to nearly one sortie every day. While deployed in Okinawa, the SR-71s and their aircrew members gained the nickname Habu because the Okinawans thought the plane resembled a dangerously venomous pit viper native to the island.



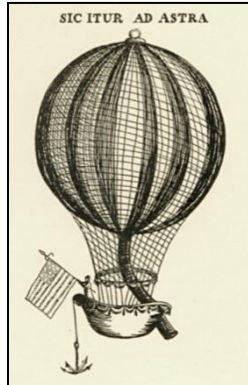
7-11 January 1971 Humanitarian Support for Malaysian Floods. In early January, the Malay Peninsula suffered the worst floods in 40 years. In one week, 100 hours of continuous rain dropped almost 100 inches of rain, and floods drove more than 100,000 people from their homes. The State Department requested airlift support from DoD, which moved medical helicopters and crews from South Vietnam and AID boats from the United States, using two C-141s, two C-124s and one C-130 for airlift. The 60th and 62d Mil Alft Wgs and 463d Tac Alft Wg were involved.

8 January 1973 In their F-4D Phantom, Capt Paul D. Howman and 1Lt Lawrence W. Kullman shot down a MiG southwest of Hanoi with a radar-guided AIM-7 missile. This was the last aerial victory before the North Vietnamese signed the ceasefire agreement, which went into effect on 29 January.

8 January 1977 The first YC-141B (stretched C-141 Starlifter) rolled out of the Lockheed-Georgia Marietta plant. Equipped with in-flight refueling capability, it was 23.3 feet longer than the original C-141A, enabling it to carry more troops and cargo.

8 Jan 1986 Military Airlift Command accepted delivery of its **first C-5B Galaxy** (an improved version of the C-5A) at Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma. The C-5B had stronger, redesigned wings, improved avionics, upgraded turbofan engines and more than 100 additional system modifications to improve reliability and maintainability.





9 Jan 1793 Jean Pierre Blanchard, a French inventor and pioneer in balloon flight, made the **first manned balloon flight in America** with a 46-minute trip from Philadelphia to Debtford Township, N.J. President George Washington was on hand to witness the launch along with future Presidents John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe. Since Blanchard did not speak English, Washington gave him an open introduction letter for use wherever he happened to land. The letter has been called the first airmail delivery and the first flight clearance in the United States of America. Blanchard's only passenger was a small black dog. The image at left is from the frontispiece to Blanchard's *Journal of my Forty-Fifth Ascension, Being the First Performed in America*.

Blanchard was already the first person to balloon across the English Channel. He flew under the adopted motto *sic itur ad astra*, meaning "thus one goes to the stars."

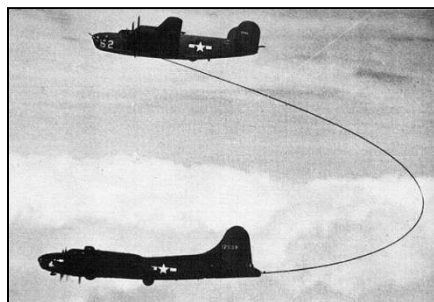
9 Jan 1917 New Air Commanders. Capt Henry H. Arnold was ordered from Aviation School duty at San Diego to Panama to organize and command the 7th Aero Squadron. Capt John F. Curry was ordered to Fort Kamehameha, Hawaii, to command the 6th Aero Squadron.



9 Jan 1976 The first operational F-15 Eagle arrived at the 1st Tactical Fighter Wing, Langley Air Force Base, Virginia. The F-15 was the **first fighter to have a thrust greater than its weight**, allowing it to accelerate while going straight up (left).

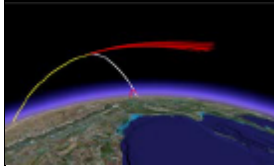
F-15s accounted for 32 of 36 USAF air-to-air victories in Operation DESERT STORM and also downed three Serbian MiG-29 fighters in Bosnia during Operation ALLIED FORCE. F-15s flew combat over Iraq in the 1990s and in Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM in the 2000s.

9 Jan 1996 After three-and-a-half years, Operation PROVIDE PROMISE officially ended. During this international operation—the **longest sustained humanitarian airlift in history**—the U.S. Air Force flew more than 4,500 sorties to deliver 62,802 metric tons of cargo to Sarajevo and other parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina.



10 Jan 1942 The Army Air Forces Materiel Center started investigating **ways to use aerial refueling in the war against faraway Japan**. Planners wanted to launch B-17 bombers from Midway Island to attack Tokyo, refueling them with modified B-24 bombers (see photo at left of an inflight test of this tactic). Planners also considered using B-24s launched from Hawaii, with refueling by US Navy seaplanes. A third option involved fuel-filled gliders, towed by B-17s, which would serve as tankers for the bombers.

However, the Army Air Forces put greater efforts into establishing air bases in China and on islands in the Pacific, and developing aircraft with large internal fuel capacity, such as the B-29 Superfortress. No air refueling proposals were implemented until after World War II.



10 January 2007 China's first successful test of an anti-satellite weapon consisted of a direct- ascent kinetic-kill vehicle destroying an aging Chinese weather satellite. It was the first known successful satellite intercept test since 1985, when the United States

conducted a similar test. The PRC ASAT test was the worst space debris-generating event on record, generating at least 2,087 pieces of debris large enough to be tracked. It surpassed the previous record of 713 pieces from the 1996 explosion of a Pegasus rocket body.



11 Jan 1966. HA/DR Support Following Misawa Fire. Ignited by a mishandled gas heater, a fire spread through downtown Misawa on January 11. Fanned by high winds and a water shortage, the fire destroyed 434 buildings and left homeless 5,583 of the city's 37,480 residents.

Nearly 1,000 Airmen from nearby Misawa AB helped local firefighters battle the blaze (Misawa AB was untouched by the fire). The 315th Air Div in Japan, flew two C-130 planeloads of relief supplies from Yokota AB to Misawa 11-12 January , included 10,000 blankets for the homeless fire victims.

11 Jan 1973 Australia's participation in the Vietnam War officially ended. The arrival of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) in South Vietnam during July and August 1962 was the beginning of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. Australia's participation in the war was formally declared at an end when the Governor-General issued a proclamation on 11 January 1973, ending 1-1/2 years of combat. The only Australian combat troops remaining in Vietnam were a platoon guarding the Australian embassy in Saigon, which was withdrawn in June 1973.

11 Jan 1981 Boeing delivered the **first USAF air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs)** to the 416th Bombardment Wing at Griffiss Air Force Base, New York. Capable of delivering a nuclear weapon to a target 1,500 miles away, the new missiles contained a terrain-contour-matching system that allowed extremely low-altitude flight to avoid detection by enemy radar. In the photo at right, a B-52 Stratofortress carries ALCMs on external pylons.



12 January 1935 Amelia Earhart completed the first Hawaii-to-Mainland solo flight in her Lockheed Vega monoplane, taking off from Wheeler Field at 1644L and arriving in California 18 hours and 16 minutes later. The photo at right was taken on 2 January. The Pan-Pacific Press photo caption read: "Two American champions investigate the insides of a pineapple.

Amelia Earhart, famous flyer photographed at Waikiki with Duke Kahanamoku, one of America's great swimmers and now sheriff of Honolulu."

12 Jan 1939 In response to the international situation, President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked Congress for \$525 million in defense spending, with \$300 million earmarked for aircraft. Roosevelt recommended the **expansion of the Army Air Corps** to a force of 5,500 planes, 3,200 officers, and 45,000 men, stating:

"There must be a complete revision of our estimates for aircraft... our existing forces are so utterly inadequate that they must be immediately strengthened... Military aviation is increasing today at an unprecedented and alarming rate. Increased range, increased speed, increased capacity of airplanes abroad have changed our requirements for defensive aviation. The additional planes recommended will considerably strengthen the air defenses of the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Canal Zone."



12-27 January 1975. Humanitarian Support for Flooding in Thailand. Torrential rain flooded the southern provinces of Thailand in January, killing more than 200 people and driving over 15,000 from their homes. On 11 January, King Bhumibol Adulyadej asked William R. Kintner, U.S. ambassador to Thailand, for an airlift to relieve the flood victims. C-130s from the 374th Tac Alft Wg transported more than 350 tons of rice, milk, medical supplies, clothing, boats, and fuel from Don Muang Royal Thai AFB to the disaster area. To help distribute the rice, the 56th Sp Ops Wg used a pair of CH-53 helicopters.

13 Jan 1943 The Thirteenth Air Force was activated on New Caledonia Island.

13AF began operations as an organization composed of many widely separated and independent units scattered throughout the Pacific. From 1943 to 1945, 13AF earned the nickname "**The Jungle Air Force,**" staging out of jungle airstrips on more than forty islands. Initially defending against advancing enemy forces, 13AF later took the offensive and traveled northeast from the Solomons to the Admiralty Islands, New Guinea, Morotai and the Philippines. At right, Tontouta Airfield on New Caledonia in 1943. Image from *history.amedd.army.mil*.

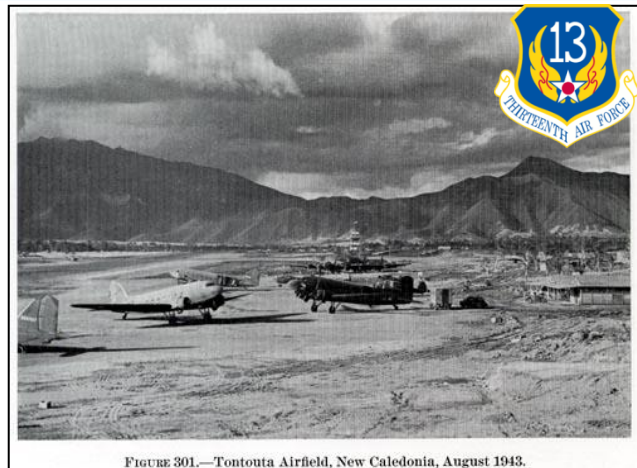


FIGURE 301.—Tontouta Airfield, New Caledonia, August 1943.



13 Jan 1951 The Far East Air Forces (FEAF) flew the **first effective TARZON mission**, destroying 58 feet of an enemy-held bridge at Kanggye, Korea. The Tall Boy Range and Azimuth Only (TARZON) bomb program combined the 12,000 pound British *Tall Boy* bomb with radio controls in the bomber. The bombardier radioed flight corrections to the bomb

based on visual sightings or on television sightings from a camera in the nose of the weapon. The development of **radio-controlled smart bombs** had begun during World War II.

13 Jan 1953 A dozen North Korean fighters shot down a USAF B-29 on a psychological warfare leaflet-drop mission over North Korea (*Stardust 40*). The **captured crew members were held longer than any other prisoners of war during the Korean War**. China did not release the crew until 4 Aug 1955.



13 Jan 1962 PROJECT RANCH HAND. The Ranch Hand test project began to determine if aircraft could destroy jungle foliage by spraying chemicals. The Tactical Air Command deployed six C-123 aircraft, modified with chemical tanks and spray bars, to Clark Air Base on 5 Dec 1961, and they began operations in Vietnam on 13 January 1962.



13 Jan 1993 Major Susan Helms, USAF (left), a member of the space shuttle *Endeavour* crew, became the **first U.S. military woman in space**. Major Helms was also the first woman to live on the International Space Station. [Lt. Gen. Helms](#) (right) retired in 2014 as the Commander of 14th Air Force at Vandenberg AFB, California.



14 January 1938 Construction of the Water Tower at Hickam Field was completed. Built with a Moorish design under the direction of Captain Howard B. Nurse of the U.S. Army

Quartermaster Corps, the 171-foot tall tower cost \$43,146, and contained a 500,000 gallon tank. The walls are made of reinforced concrete, 12 inches thick at the base. At the points of the octagon near the top are eight cast concrete eagles, each weighing over 2,000 pounds. Technically known as a “stand-pipe enclosure,” the water tower is no longer used to store water today. While the Water Tower was not directly attacked on 7 December 1941, it did suffer damage when bombs blew open water mains across the base. The water flowed so rapidly out of the tank that compensating air couldn’t flow into the tank quickly enough, causing the steel tank to collapse within. The steel tank was replaced soon after, although today it is no longer used to store water. (Photo shows the newly completed Water Tower in 1938).



15 Jan 1914 The Signal Corps Aviation School issued the **first Army aviation safety regulation**. It required pilots to wear helmets and leather coats for overland flights, and unsinkable coats for over-water flights.



15 Jan 1942 The Alaskan Air Force was **activated** at Elmendorf Field, Alaska, replacing the “Air Force, Alaskan Defense Command” that had been established 17 October 1941. Less than a month later, the Alaskan AF was redesignated as the **Eleventh Air Force**.

15 January 1985 The 6594th Test Group, an Air Force Systems Command unit based at Hickam AFB, lost seven personnel when their HH-53 helicopter crashed on the Panamanian-registered ship Asian Beauty while attempting a rescue mission. In the 1960’s and early 1970’s, the top secret mission of the Hickam-based 6594TG was to recover film capsules from the CORONA spy satellites. The declassified program is discussed in detail at the National Reconnaissance Office website; <http://www.nro.gov/corona/facts.html>.



16 Jan 1998 **Humanitarian airlift to China.** After a devastating earthquake hit China’s Northern Hebei Province, a USAF C-17 left Kadena AB, Japan, for Beijing with 40 tons of relief supplies, consisting of blankets, sleeping bags, medical supplies, rations, and cold-weather clothing.

16 Jan 2002 **War on Terror in the Philippines.** At the request of the Philippine government, the DoD deployed U.S. forces to train, advise, and assist Filipino troops in combating the indigenous Abu Sayyaf – designated a foreign terrorist group by the U.S. State Department. Through 30 September, AMC flew 78 missions to transport nearly 1,600 troops and more than 3,000 short tons of cargo to the Philippines.

17 Jan 1956 The DoD revealed the existence of **SAGE (semiautomatic ground environment)**, an automated, electronic air defense system. Its radar transmitted data rapidly

via telephone lines to control centers, where large computers processed the information for fighter interceptors.

17 Jan 1991 Operation DESERT STORM, the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi military occupation, opened with a massive barrage of air and cruise missile strikes against targets in Iraq and Kuwait. USAF special operations MH-53 helicopters initiated combat by leading an Army helicopter force that destroyed enemy radar sites.

(Right, MH-53 Pave Lows flying over Iraq on their last combat missions, 27 Sep 2008, after nearly 40 years of service).

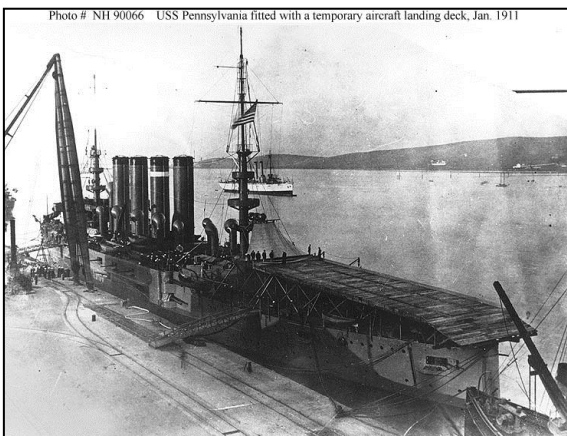


During the first 14 hours of **DESERT STORM**, aircraft from a U.S.-led coalition flew more than 1,200 combat sorties. B-52G Stratofortress crews flew from Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, to launch 35 cruise missiles against targets in Iraq and returned home – the longest bombing mission in history. Constituting less than 2.5 percent of all coalition aircraft, the F-117A stealth fighter-bomber (left) successfully attacked over 31 percent of Iraqi strategic targets on the first day.

18 Jan 1778 Captain James Cook and the crew of HMS Endeavor became the first Europeans to sight the Hawaiian Islands. Cook named them the Sandwich Islands after his patron, the Earl of Sandwich.



18 Jan 1911 Eugene Ely became the first pilot to land on the deck of a ship, bringing his aircraft to a stop on an ad hoc landing deck aboard the *USS Pennsylvania* in San Francisco harbor. Two months earlier, Ely had performed the first shipboard aircraft takeoff when he launched from the deck of the *USS Birmingham* at Hampton Roads, Virginia.



18 January 1981 Iran released 52 American hostages held in the American Embassy in Tehran after 444 days. They were flown on an Air Algeria 727 to Algeria, where two C-9As took them to Germany for medical observation. On 25 January a VC-137, named “Freedom One,” returned the hostages to the U.S. Out of gratitude for U.S. aid following earthquakes in October 1980, Algeria provided vital diplomatic assistance in negotiating the hostage release.

19 Jan 1910 Bombing feasibility. The Army’s Lt. Paul W. Beck, flying with Louis Paulhan in a Farman airplane, dropped three two-pound sandbags over a target at an air meet in Los Angeles, testing the feasibility of using aircraft for bombing.

19 Jan 1918 The U.S. School of Aviation Medicine began operations at Hazelhurst Field, Mineola, New York, to train medical doctors and nurses to treat U.S. military aviation personnel.

19 January 1964 Humanitarian Support for Vietnamese Cholera Epidemic. In early 1964, cholera broke out in Saigon, capital of the Republic of Vietnam, striking over 3,000 people and leaving 300 dead. To save lives, and to protect the health of U.S. military personnel serving in South Vietnam, MATS and the 315th Air Div undertook an airlift of medical supplies and personnel to Saigon. Three C-130s and two C-135s moved a Navy medical team, vaccine, and 15 tons of supplies. MATS and 315th Air Div delivered about one million doses of cholera vaccine and saline solution to South Vietnam by early February 1964.

19 January 1985 TYPHOON ERIC. Through 21 January, two C-5 Galaxies and one C-141 from the 75th Military Airlift Squadron and 312th Military Airlift Squadron moved 186 tons of relief supplies, including 2,400 tents, tarpaulins, plastic sheeting, and water trailers to Viti Levu Island to help over 3,000 homeless victims.



20 Jan 1949 The first flight of the Matador missile occurred at the White Sands Missile Range. Originally designated the B-61 “pilotless bomber,” the TM-61 Matador was a jet-powered cruise missile which became **the USAF’s first fully operational tactical missile**. The Matador was similar to the German V-1 “buzz bomb” of World War II except that the Matador was controlled electronically from the ground during flight.



20 Jan 1960 Soviet Missile Testing. Soviet tests on their *R-7/SS-6 Sapwood*, the world's first ICBM, were planned to impact within a 44,800-square mile area in the Pacific – only 1,000 miles southwest of the Hawaiian Islands. PACAF and the U.S. Navy’s Pacific Fleet cooperated to observe these tests. On 20 and 22 January, PACAF employed KC-135, C-130, and RB-69 aircraft to observe and gather data on the Soviet tests. (At left, an RB-69 aircraft.)

20 Jan 1972 The last of Hickam's C-47 Skytrains (#404), also known as "Gooney Birds," departed for Taiwan after a 14-1/2 year stay at Hickam AFB. Upon arrival at Taiwan, the aircraft was to be modified, overhauled, and turned over to the Government of Indonesia as part of the Military Assistance Program.

20-25 January 1992 Humanitarian Support for Mongolia Medical Relief. Mongolia suffered medical shortages in the wake of the failure of its socialist economy and the collapse of its benefactor, the Soviet Union. A 60th Aft Wg C-5 carried 56 tons of medicine, hospital equipment, and medical supplies to Ulan Bator, where about 100 Mongolians unloaded the aircraft by hand in subfreezing weather.



21 Jan 1911 Lt Paul W. Beck sent the **first radio message from a plane to a ground station** at Selfridge Field, Michigan. Beck designed a transmitter to send telegraph signals and used a Wright aircraft flying at 100 feet. The Wright Flyer is pictured at left.

21 Jan 1961 HIANG Conversion. The first flight of a TF-102A of the Hawaii Air National Guard's 199th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron occurred on 21 January. In May, the new aircraft replaced the old F-86s on alert status.



21 Jan 1968 SIEGE OF KHE SANH. Communist forces began an extended siege of three Marine battalions at Khe Sanh, Vietnam.

In early January 1968, some 15,000 enemy troops had cut off all ground supply to the base. On 16 January, C-130s moved another Marine infantry battalion to Khe Sanh to give the base a total of 6,000 defenders.

The siege lasted into March, prompting an extensive airlift. USAF tactical transports made 447 landings (left) and 576 airdrops under very hostile conditions. The airlift reinforced Khe Sanh with yet another battalion and delivered 12,430 tons of cargo, giving the defenders a 30-day supply of food, fuel, and ammunition. Enemy fire destroyed three aircraft and damaged 18 others. Prior to this date, only the Berlin Airlift had surpassed the size of the Khe Sanh resupply operation.

21 Jan 1991 AIR FORCE CROSS. Captain Paul Johnson earned the Air Force Cross for his action in DESERT STORM. From his citation: “Captain Johnson was the flight lead on Sandy 57, a two-ship of A-10s tasked for search and rescue alert at a forward operating location. While enroute, he received tasking to look for an F-14 crew that had been shot down the night before. During the next six hours he would lead his flight through three aerial refuelings, one attack on a possible SCUD missile site, and three hours of intensive searching deeper inside enemy



territory than any A-10 had ever been. He risked his life as he had to fly at a mere 500 feet in order to pinpoint the F-14 pilot's location. When an enemy truck appeared to be heading toward his survivor, Captain Johnson directed his flight to destroy it, thus securing the rescue.” The F-14 back-seater, on the other hand, had parachuted to the ground some distance away and was captured. He was released with five other POWs on 3 March. At left, the F-14 pilot runs to a U.S. Air Force para-rescueman and an MH-53 Pave Low helicopter.

From July 2004 to July 2006, Colonel Johnson was the Commander, 354th Operations Group, Eielson AFB, Alaska. Major General Johnson is currently the Deputy U.S. Military Representative to NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

22 Jan 1944 The Mediterranean Allied Air Force launched some 1,200 sorties in support of **Operation SHINGLE**, the Allied amphibious invasion of Anzio on the western coast of Italy. This Allied air campaign destroyed German airfields, aircraft and lines of communication, and made a feint toward an Allied landing site different than Anzio. The intensity of the air campaign forced the Germans to withdraw most of their aircraft northward, reducing their ability to mass their air forces and oppose the Allies’ landings. The allied assault forces’ landings at Anzio and Nettuno on the 24th met minimal resistance. Twelfth Air Force provided air cover for the landings and played a major role in defending the beachhead.



The Allied effort in the Mediterranean drained German combat power that could have been used on other fronts, enhanced the re-supply of Allied forces throughout the Mediterranean theater, and deprived German forces of critical resources. The Anzio assault was also an important step toward the allied invasion of southern France in August, 1944.

22 Jan 1950 The U.S. Air Force established the **Air Research and Development Command**. In 1961, it was re-designated **Air Force Systems Command**. AFSC was inactivated in 1992.

22 Jan 1966 The USAF completed **Operation BLUE LIGHT**, the largest and longest airlift

of troops and equipment into a combat zone in military history before Operation DESERT SHIELD. Between 27 Dec 1965 and 22 Jan 1966, more than 4,600 tons of equipment and over 3,000 Army troops were flown from Hickam AFB, Hawaii, to Pleiku, South Vietnam.

22 Jan 1991 OPERATION DESERT STORM. “Smart bomb” attacks began against hardened aircraft shelters in Iraq. The attacks were so successful that Iraqi fighters started flying to Iran to escape destruction. At right, an Iraqi MiG-29 destroyed on the ground during Operation DESERT STORM.

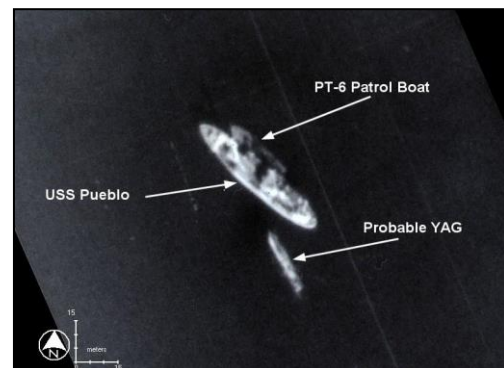


23 January 1942 The Roberts Commission, appointed by the President to investigate the American disaster during the Japanese attack on Oahu, charged Lt. General Short and Admiral Kimmel with dereliction of duty. Secretary of War Henry Stimson said the Commission’s report was “candid and fair” but he also stated that “. . . the printed report does not and could



not go into what is the real underlying basis of the trouble, namely that both services had not fully learned the lessons of the development of air power in respect to the defense of a navy and of a naval base.”

23 Jan 1968 Operation COMBAT FOX. The *USS Pueblo*, a U.S. Navy intelligence ship in international waters, **was captured by North Korean forces** (CIA photo below). One sailor was killed and the other 82 men on board were taken prisoner. Within two hours of the *Pueblo* seizure, Fifth Air Force began deployments from Japan to Korea. The President approved the initial USAF deployments and 12 Air National Guard (ANG) units were mobilized. By the 30th, 34 F-105s from Kadena Air Base (AB) were at Osan AB; 14 F-4Cs from Misawa AB were at Kunsan AB, and 22 F-102s from Naha AB were at Suwon AB. On 4 Feb 1968, 14 RF-4Cs arrived at Taegu AB from South Vietnam. Three U.S. Navy aircraft carriers took stations off the coast of South Korea.



The USAF response to the *Pueblo* crisis was named Operation COMBAT FOX. In addition to the PACAF deployments, Tactical Air Command deployed three squadrons of F-4Ds as well as EB-66 electronic warfare aircraft and F-105 Wild Weasels (left). Strategic Air Command deployed one squadron each of B-52 bombers and KC-135 tankers to Kadena AB. Aerospace Defense Command made their first ever overseas deployment, sending F-106s to Osan AB.



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PRIME BEEF and RED HORSE civil engineering teams from across the Pacific and the U.S. were rushed to South Korea to provide immediate construction and repair support. The airlift operations were organized by PACAF's 315th Air Division, based at Tachikawa AB, Japan. Its C-130 fleet was augmented by US-based C-130s, C-124s, C-133s, and C-141s. During the first three weeks of Operation COMBAT FOX, Military Airlift Command moved 7,861 passengers and nearly 12,800 tons of cargo to Korea and Japan.

Negotiations between the United Nations Military Armistice Commission and North Korea continued at Panmunjom throughout 1968. The initial deployments of USAF units were eventually replaced by other active duty, Air Force Reserve, and ANG units.

North Korea repatriated the Pueblo crew and the body of the dead U.S. sailor to the U.S. through Panmunjom on 23 December 1968. Operation COMBAT FOX diminished, but combat units continued to rotate to South Korea. These deployments ultimately led to the permanent basing of USAF combat units in Korea in 1971.

The USS Pueblo remains a tourist attraction in North Korea to this day.

24 Jan 1951 OPERATION THUNDERBOLT. Close air support for United Nations (UN)



ground troops remained a priority mission for FEAF in the Korean conflict. In an Eighth Army campaign designed to reach the Han River, T-6 Mosquito controllers patrolled ahead of friendly ground forces, notified ground forces of enemy strong spots, and called in air strikes by US fighter-bombers. Generals Matthew B. Ridgway and Earl E. Partridge personally reconnoitered the front lines in a T-6 prior to the 25 January dawn attack on Red Chinese forces.

24 Jan 1953 Two USAF pilots of the 51st Fighter Interceptor Wing, Captains Dolphin D. Overton III and Harold E. Fischer, Jr., achieved ace status. In addition, Captain Overton set a record for becoming a **jet ace in the shortest time** (four days).

27 January 1967 A flash fire during ground testing of the Apollo 1 command module at Cape Kennedy Florida, killed three astronauts: Air Force Lt. Col. Virgil I. Grissom, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Roger B. Chaffee, and Edward H. White. They had been rehearsing for a 21 February flight.

27 January 1968 After North Korea seized the S.S. Pueblo on 23 January, MAC supported USAF and Army deployments from the U.S., Pacific, and South East Asia to South Korea and Japan as part of Operation COMBAT FOX. During the next three weeks, MAC moved 7,996 passengers and nearly 13,700 tons of cargo in over 800 missions to the region.

27 Jan 1973 After the 11-day Linebacker II bombing campaign against Hanoi and Haiphong, North Vietnam signed a peace accord, and a cease-fire was declared.



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27 Jan 1991 DESERT STORM. F-111 Aardvarks (see photo below, left) delivered guided bombs on oil manifolds at the Al Ahmadi oil refinery to stop the biggest deliberate oil spill in history. Together with the ignition of oil well fires (right), the oil spill was part of an Iraqi environmental warfare campaign.



29 Jan 1991 Battle of Khafji. In the first weeks of Desert Storm, coalition air attacks were rapidly immobilizing Iraqi ground forces. The Iraqis, attempting to seize the initiative while their armored forces still had the ability to maneuver, assembled an assault force to attack across the border into Saudi Arabia. Joint STARS aircraft detected the Iraqi movements and warned coalition commanders. However, the weight of U.S. Army and other coalition land forces were in the midst of a three-week redeployment 200 miles to the west in preparation for the planned “left hook” coalition ground attack. Iraqi forces attacked and seized the town of Khafji, but the Joint Force Commander, General



Schwarzkopf, decided not to play into Saddam’s hands by launching a ground counterattack. Instead, he told his commanders to use airpower as the key element, along with Marine, Saudi, and other coalition ground forces, to stop the Iraqi offensive.

Hundreds of air attacks on Iraqi forces in Kuwait were already scheduled and under way. With airpower already flowing through the kill boxes, air controllers quickly diverted sorties to the Marine forward air controllers or sent them ahead to interdict the Iraqi forces attempting to reach coalition lines. The previously dug-in Iraqi armored vehicles were now in the open and more easily identified and targeted by coalition air assets. In three days, the Iraqi attack was stopped.



At 0600 hours on the morning of January 31, “Spirit 03” was the last of three AC-130 Spectre gunships on station to provide close air support. Spirit 03 was due to end its patrol when it



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received a call from U.S. Marines needing an enemy missile battery destroyed. Despite the risk of enemy fire in daylight, the crew of "Spirit 03" chose to remain and destroy the position as requested. Soon after eliminating the target, Spirit 03 was shot down by a surface-to-air missile, killing all 14 crewmembers. This was the largest USAF loss of the war.

30 Jan 1953 The Boeing B-47 Stratojet first flew. Designed in the late 1940s, the innovative, all-jet B-47 (left) had swept wings and aerial refueling capability. The B-47 carried only one or two high-yield nuclear weapons, but it was produced in numbers sufficient to strike the targets in the war plans of Strategic Air Command (SAC).



By 1956, there were more than 1,300 B-47 bombers and over 200 RB-47 reconnaissance aircraft assigned to SAC. Many B-47 features were later used in the B-52 Stratofortress.

31 Jan–12 Feb 1932 In January-February 1932, the US Navy and Army Air Corps conducted **“Grand Joint Army-Navy Exercise No. 4,”** an exercise that **anticipated Japan’s attack on Oahu by nine years.** The premise of the exercise was that “Blue forces” (the United States) was at war with “Black forces” (a coalition of European and Asian powers). Due to the diversion of “Blue forces” from the Pacific to the Atlantic, “Black forces” Asian partner had captured the Hawaiian Islands. Blue’s mission was to undertake an expedition from the West Coast of the U.S. to recapture Hawaii through **an aerial attack launched from aircraft carriers and an amphibious assault on Oahu’s North Shore.** The maneuvers were designed to test the fleet’s ability to conduct expeditionary operations across vast distances, and to test the defenses of the Hawaiian Islands. Both aerial attacks and amphibious landings were deemed a success.

The exercise was reported in the Honolulu Advertiser on 15 Feb 1932: “The feasibility of modern airplane carriers on a foreign expedition was tested, and it was found beyond a doubt that they can steam in within striking distance of shore and launch their fighting craft on a mission of destruction and pave the way for a landing force... **The enemy’s main threat in this mid-Pacific battle was supremacy of the air in both reconnaissance and combat ability.**”

31 Jan 2001 Disaster Relief. Through 3 February, two C-5s and four C-17s flew 115 short tons of humanitarian cargo to Ahmedabad, India in the wake of a devastating earthquake. Each C-5 was refueled in flight by Hawaii ANG KC-135s during nonstop missions from Travis AFB, California to Andersen AFB, Guam. At Andersen, the cargo was transferred from the C-5s onto four C-17s from McChord AFB (photo at right) because Ahmedabad’s airfield was too small for the C-5s. KC-135Rs from the 18th Wing at Kadena Air Base refueled the C-17s on their 13-hour flight between Guam and India.

