

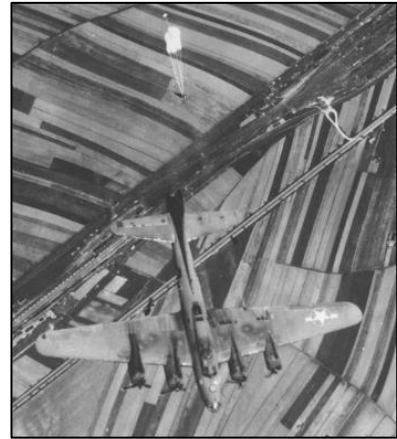


U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 17 – 23 August 2015



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 September. In the photo at right, a crewmember bails out of a doomed B-17 bomber over Germany during World War II.



18 August 1948 **Wing Activations.** During World War II, U.S. Army Air Forces wings were a mix of combat groups and support organizations. Subordinate units were not permanently assigned to the wings nor did they have the wings' numerical designations. During 1947 and 1948, the newly independent Air Force tested a "wing-base" plan (sometimes called the *Hobson Plan* for General Kenneth Hobson) which brought important changes in the organization of Air Force field units. Each combat wing in the test had a combat group, a maintenance and supply group, an airdrome (later, air base) group to operate base facilities and services, and a medical group. The groups all had the wing numerical designation. This wing-base test standardized the functions of the wing elements and permanently aligned the support organizations with the parent wings. Wing-base organizational plans were implemented in all USAF combat commands in the summer of 1948 (and ultimately in USAF support commands as well). As a result, **the 3rd Bombardment Wing (Light) and the 8th, 18th, 35th and 51st Fighter Wings were all activated** on or about 18 August, 1948. The current wing emblems are shown below.



General Hobson served in the Southwest Pacific during World War II as the Commander of the 22nd Bomb Squadron and at Fifth Bomber Command as Chief of Staff. After the war, he had assignments at Headquarters Army Air Forces and later Headquarters, U.S. Air Force where he led the development of the wing-base concept. General Hobson also served as Vice Commander of the Fifth Air Force and as Commander of the Air Force Logistics Command. The photo at left is from General Hobson's official biography at this [link](#).



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23 August 1958 **The Second Taiwan Strait Crisis.** Republic of China (ROC) forces on Quemoy Island were shelled and threatened with invasion by the Chinese Communists. PACAF asked for part of the TAC Composite Air Strike Force (CASF). During Operation QUICK KICK on 29 August, the 16th Fighter Interceptor Squadron (FIS) at Naha Air Base launched six F-86Ds within 27 minutes of notification and the rest of its 22 F-86Ds within four hours. These aircraft



F-86D at the National Museum of the USAF

flew to Tainan Air Base on Taiwan, replacing the 25th FIS which had deployed to Chia-Yi on 4 June. The Joint Chiefs of Staff also directed the 388th Tactical Fighter Squadron, with 16 F-100s, to fly to Clark Air Base. President Eisenhower also authorized the delivery of the new Sidewinder air-to-air missile to the Republic of China F-86 Sabres, giving them an advantage over their MiG opponents. The invasion never took place and a ceasefire between the two Chinas was called on 6 Oct 1958.

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 6593rd'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's [CORONA webpage](#).

At right, a C-119 catches the parachute canopy of a descending capsule (the capsule is below the frame).



21-28 August 1960 A severe **polio epidemic struck Hokkaido, Japan.** C-130s of PACAF's 315th Air Division delivered eight iron lungs and 12 chest respirators to Hokkaido.

21 August 1970 Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird announced the **Total Force Concept** of the armed services. Under this concept, the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard replaced the draft as the initial sources for augmentation of the active force.



23 August 1985 The USAF conducted its **first "cold launch"** of an inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) from an underground silo at Vandenberg AFB, California. The cold-launch technique ejected the missile from the silo by gas pressure, and the propellant ignited after the ICBM was airborne. This technique caused less damage to the silo and reduced the time needed for another launch. In this test, an LGM-118 Peacekeeper ("MX") ICBM was cold-launched from a Vandenberg AFB silo. (At left, a Peacekeeper ICBM test launch at Vandenberg.)



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17 August 1990 **Operation DESERT SHIELD/STORM.** President George H. W. 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. For more on the Civil Reserve Air Fleet, see Air Mobility Command's [fact sheet](#).



22 August 1990 President Bush authorized a **90-day call-up** of up to 200,000 reservists for



Operation DESERT SHIELD. Eventually, more than 20,000 USAF reservists and 12,000 Air National Guard personnel served in the operation and in the DESERT STORM campaign to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. At left, RF-4C tactical reconnaissance aircraft from the Nevada Air National Guard in Operation DESERT SHIELD.

18 August 2005 **JASSM IOC.** The Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM) achieved initial operational capability (IOC). The JASSM is an all-weather, low observable, standoff cruise missile capable of destroying heavily defended, high-priority targets deep behind enemy lines with minimum risk to the launching aircraft and crew. The JASSM-Extended Range variant has about two and a half times the range of the original JASSM.



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