



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 14 – 20 January 2013



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

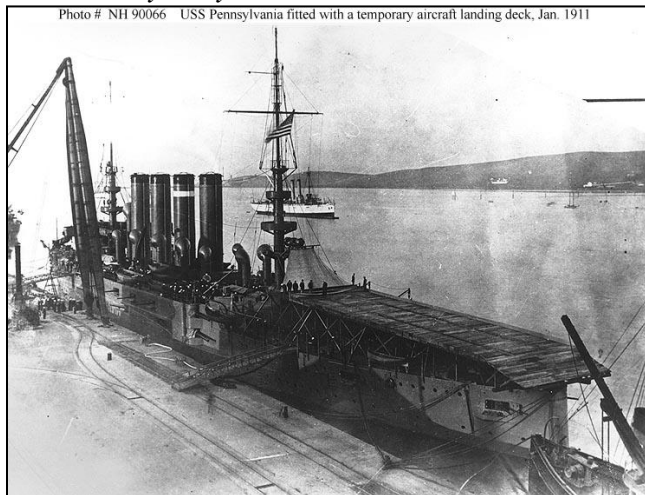


patron, the Earl of Sandwich. At the time, General George Washington and the Continental Army were at winter quarters in Valley Forge, PA. At left, a modern replica of Cook's ship. At right, replica huts at Valley Forge National Historic Park.



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.

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 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. Photos below from *history.navy.mil*.



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.

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.



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14 Jan 1942 **The Thirteenth Air Force was established** on this date, and activated nearly a year later (13 Jan 1943) 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 staged out of tropical jungles on more than 40 remote islands, earning the nickname, "**The Jungle Air Force.**" 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*.

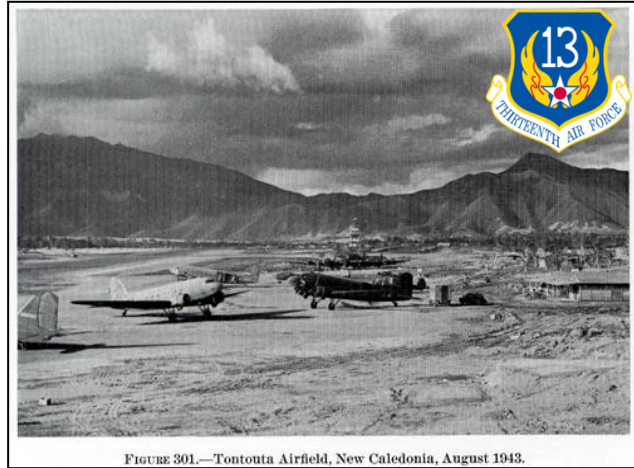


FIGURE 301.—Tontouta Airfield, New Caledonia, August 1943.



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.**

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 Air Force's first fully operational tactical missile.** (At right, USAF photo of the TM-61.)



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.



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.)



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18 Jan 1961 **Operation CHROME DOME.** SAC announced continuous airborne alert missions for B-52 bombers with KC-135s handling the refueling. SAC first tested the airborne alert mission in 1958, and the program ended in 1968 after two alert bombers had crashed. SAC cited escalating costs and the emergence of the ICBM force as reasons for the termination.

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. (At 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.

16 Jan 1998 **Humanitarian airlift to China.** After a devastating earthquake hit China's Northern Hebei Province, a 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. (At right, a C-17 airlifter.)



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 terrorist group. 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.