



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 21 – 27 January 2013



21 Jan 1911 Lt Paul W. Beck sent the **first radio message from a plane to a ground station** at Selfridge Field, Mich., 1.5 miles away. He designed a transmitter to send telegraph signals and used a Wright aircraft flying at 100 feet. The Wright Flyer is pictured at left.

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.

24 Jan 1944 **D-DAY AT ANZIO**. The Allied air campaign in Italy leading up to the Anzio landings had 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. On 24 January, the allied assault forces landed at Anzio and Nettuno with minimal resistance. Twelfth Air Force provided air cover for the landings and played a major role in defending the beachhead.

The Germans counterattacked with the intention of trapping and destroying allied ground forces. From 24 January until 15 February, allied air forces flew 27,204 sorties, dropped 13,035 tons of bombs, and destroyed 326 enemy planes at a cost of 96 allied bombers and 133 fighters, lost mostly to German anti-aircraft artillery. Twelfth Air Force maintained air cover over the beachhead, supplied convoys and naval vessels and provided close air support to the assault forces. To enhance cooperation between the ground and air commanders, Fifth Army and 12AF personnel met nightly to review the day's operations and plan the next day's attacks. The air-land team also developed the "call targets" system, consisting of telephone calls from Fifth Army to 12AF when emergency air support was needed. 12AF then directly assigned the "call targets" to air units standing by for attack. Several dangerous penetrations by German forces into allied lines were repulsed.



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, the organization was re-designated **Air Force Systems Command**. AFSC was inactivated in 1992.



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 21 – 27 January 2013



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).

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.

23 Jan 1966 Military Airlift Command completed **Operation BLUE LIGHT**, the largest combat zone airlift in history up to that time. The Army's 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division was airlifted from Hickam AFB to Pleiku, South Vietnam, to offset a buildup of Communist forces. A total of 231 C-141 sorties moved some 3,000 troops and 4,700 tons of equipment.

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 Communist troops 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 began on 21 January and lasted into March, prompting an extensive airlift. USAF tactical transports made 447 landings (right) 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. To this date, only the Berlin Airlift had surpassed the size of the Khe Sanh resupply operation.



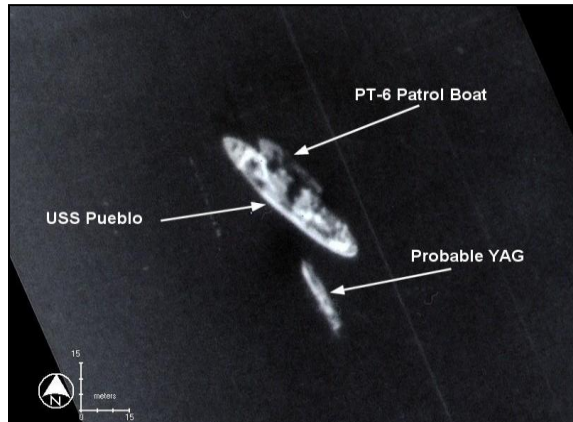


U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 21 – 27 January 2013



23 Jan 1968 **Operation COMBAT FOX.** The USS *Pueblo*, a U.S. Navy intelligence ship in international waters, **was boarded and captured by North Korean forces** (CIA photo at left). One U.S. sailor was killed and the other 82 men on board were taken prisoner. Although not a



part of any contingency plans, Fifth Air Force began deployments to Korean air bases within two hours of the Pueblo seizure. President Johnson approved the initial USAF deployments and mobilized 12 Air National Guard (ANG) units. By the 30th of January, 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 carrier groups also 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 (right). Strategic Air Command deployed one squadron each of B-52 bombers and KC-135 tankers to Kadena Air Base. Aerospace Defense Command made their first ever overseas deployment, sending F-106s to Osan AB. PRIME BEEF and RED HORSE civil engineering teams from across the Pacific and the continental 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 U.S.-based C-130s, C-124s, C-133s, and C-141s. During the first three weeks of Operation COMBAT FOX, MAC aircraft 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.



This Week in USAF and PACAF History
21 – 27 January 2013



U.S. AIR FORCE

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 en route, 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 pararescueman 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. For more on the 21 Jan 1991 rescue mission, see this Air Force magazine [article](#).

22 Jan 1991 **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.



27 Jan 1991 **DESERT STORM.** F-111 Aardvarks 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 (left), the oil spill was part of an Iraqi environmental warfare campaign. Below, an F-111 Aardvark.

