



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History 11 – 17 February 2013



17 Feb 1912 The Army published its **first physical examination requirements for pilots**. These standards included normal vision, normal hearing and ability to visually determine distances. Candidates were disqualified for respiratory, circulatory or nervous system diseases, color blindness, or for any serious middle or inner ear problems.



17 Feb 1913 The Army conducted its first test of an **automatic pilot** device. Called a **gyrostabilizer**, the test was conducted by Lawrence Sperry (left), the son of the famed gyrocompass co-inventor Elmer Sperry. A gyroscope is a weighted, balanced wheel mounted on bearings. It spins at high velocity through a connection to a motor. The gyroscope holds its position, no matter the angle at which it is held. Sperry's automatic pilot used gyroscopes to stabilize an airplane's controls. When they sensed movement, the gyros activated compressed air through pistons to operate the aircraft controls.

In 1914, Lawrence Sperry's device won an award of 50,000 French francs when he demonstrated the device in a flight over Paris. On the first pass, he took his hands off the controls and held them visible to the crowd below. On the second pass, he held his hands out while a mechanic walked out on the plane's wing. On the third pass, both Lawrence Sperry and the mechanic were out on the wings with an empty cockpit.

13 Feb 1917 Captain John F. Curry of the Army Air Service arrived in Honolulu to command the **first aviation unit established in Hawaii**—the 6th Aero Squadron — organized for the aerial coast defense of Oahu. The squadron was first stationed at Fort Kamehameha, and then moved to Ford Island. The unit was eventually equipped with Curtiss N-9 seaplanes.



16 Feb 1945 **Army Air Forces C-47s dropped 2,065 paratroopers** on the Japanese-held island of Corregidor in Manila Bay in conjunction with a U.S. amphibious landing on the island. The goal was to secure the harbor of Manila, the most important city in the Philippines.



13-16 Feb 1951 **Combat airlift**. The 315th Air Division (Combat Cargo) used more than 100 airlift aircraft to drop supplies around-the-clock to the 23rd Regimental Combat Team and a French battalion in central Korea at **Chipyong-ni** (photo at left). Flying through heavy ground fire, C-119 Flying Boxcars delivered 400 tons of ammunition. H-5 pilots from the 3rd Air Rescue Squadron flew through a blinding snowstorm and 40-knot winds to deliver blood plasma and medical supplies. They also evacuated 52 wounded men.



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The fighting around the village of Chipyeong-ni followed the United Nations withdrawal from Northern Korea after the Chinese Communist intervention at the end of 1950. Chipyeong-ni was seen as the key to stabilizing the Eighth Army's front against the Communist Chinese offensive. The siege of Chipyeong-ni was one of the most bitterly contested engagements of the Korean War. The Army's 23rd Regimental Combat Team inflicted tremendous casualties on elements of five Chinese infantry divisions. Chipyeong-ni was the **first operational defeat of Communist Chinese forces in the Korean War.**

17 Feb 1962 Formal dedication of **new Hawaii Air National Guard facilities** at Hickam included participation by the Governor, State Adjutants of the Army and Air Force National Guards, and the Hickam Base Commander. A fly-by of HIANG F-102 jets in the morning ceremony was followed by an open house attended by an estimated 10,000 people.

13-17 Feb 1968 **Tet Offensive – Airlift Response.** After the Commander of U.S. Forces in Vietnam asked for more troops to check the Tet Offensive, the Military Airlift Command airlifted 10,500 troops and equipment of the 82nd Airborne Division and a regimental landing team of the 5th Marine Division to Vietnam. Air Force Reserve military airlift units assigned moved channel traffic in the United States to assist the Military Airlift Command.

12 Feb 1973 **Operation HOMECOMING.** MAC flew the first of 590 released American POWs from Hanoi, North Vietnam, to Clark Air Base in the Philippines, and then on to various military hospitals in the United States. Altogether, MAC used 118 C-9A and C-141 missions to support the operation and earned the **Mackay Trophy.**



12 Feb 1993 The **203rd Air Refueling Squadron (HIANG)** activated at Hickam AFB, with Lt Col Walter K. Kaneakua in command. See photo and emblem below.





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17 Feb 1997 The **Air Force Reserve became a major command**—the Air Force Reserve Command—reflecting the growing integration of Reserve and active forces and the increasing role of the Reserve in USAF operations.

Feb-Apr 2000 U.S. Air Force personnel and cargo aircraft participated in **Operations Atlas Response** and **Silent Promise**, airlifting humanitarian relief supplies to Mozambique and South Africa following severe flooding in those nations. (AF photo at right: USAF MC-130P reconnaissance of damaged roads in Central Mozambique, March 2000).



Two paintings from the PACAF art collection whose locations are currently unknown:



Cope Thunder: Over the Delta River (2006-154)

In 2006, the Air Force renamed the Cope Thunder exercise held in Alaska as Red Flag – Alaska. These exercises include ground, space and cyberspace training, as well as focusing on air combat at the operational level. A significant benefit of conducting Red Flag exercises in Alaska is the size and space available on the 67,000 square miles of the Pacific Alaska Range Complex, which includes a portion of the Delta River.



Pilot and Crew Chief (1972-072)

Throughout the history of military aviation, aircrews have always known that the crew chiefs and other technicians that maintain their aircraft are the real heroes of force readiness. The men and women who maintain USAF aircraft are some of the most highly trained and knowledgeable professionals of any technical field. Click on this [link](#) to read a recent DoD article on flying crew chiefs.

If you know the location of either painting, please call 449-3936.