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100 YEARS OF MILITARY AVIATION

An Advertising Supplement to Stars and Stripes



Photos from Air Force Historical Research Agency

Orville Wright, Lt. Frank P. Lahm and Lt. Benjamin D. Foulois at Fort Myer, Virginia, on July 27, 1909.

ORIGINS

1909: The military gets its wings

In 1909, brothers Orville and Wilbur Wright set out to construct the first American military airplane. The aircraft had a four-cylinder Wright 30.6-horsepower engine, had a 36.5-foot wingspan and weighed 740 pounds. In late June, the brothers headed for Fort Myer, Va., to demonstrate the Military Flyer for the Army. The trials drew crowds, including members of Congress and aviation pioneer Glenn Curtiss.

Orville Wright flew the speed trial on July 30

with Lieutenant Benjamin D. Foulois on board, climbing to 400 feet — a record. As soon as he saw the Fort Myer parade ground, he nosed the aircraft down slightly and began to increase his speed. Foulois stopped his watch as Orville shot past the launching derrick. He flew a victory circle around Arlington Cemetery and landed. He had averaged 42.583 mph — surpassing the Army's 40 mph requirement and breaking yet another record. The Wrights qualified for a \$5,000 bonus by flying two miles per hour, bringing the total cost of the first U.S. military airplane to \$30,000.

The 1909 Wright Flyer was formally

accepted on August 2, 1909, and was designated Signal Corps Airplane No. 1, becoming the United States' first military airplane.

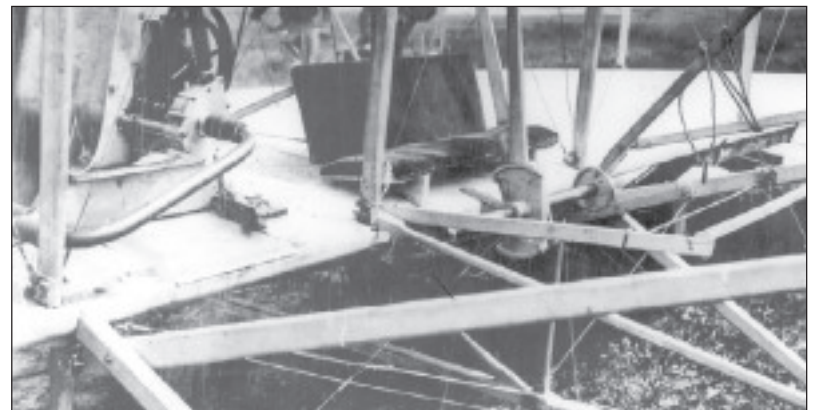
On October 8, Wilbur Wright began giving flying lessons to Lieutenants Frank P. Lahm and Fredrick E. Humphreys. Wilbur Wright had installed an additional set of levers on the plane next to the student seat so that he could control the plane. The flights were quite short, although by October 21, the newspapers reported that Wilbur Wright had taken Humphreys up for 27 minutes and Humphreys had handled the plane for most of the time.

Humphreys soloed on October 26, flying for two minutes and becoming the Army's first pilot. Lahm soloed soon after on a seven-minute flight.

—Information compiled from centennialofflight.gov



Orville Wright flying over Fort Myer, July 27, 1909.



Wright plane seats and controls, Fort Myer, Va, 1908

As early as World War I, night bombing had been countered by defending fighters and anti-aircraft fire.

By World War II, ground defenses were benefiting from radars which could guide them to the general area where the enemy might be found by visual means. But effective night interception had to wait for the development of a radar that could be aloft by a fighter. Such airborne radar could aid in detecting, stalking and identifying the enemy and bringing the night fighter into firing range.

Development of airborne radar was happening in United States, Germany and Great Britain during World War II. The initial attempts by the Allies to develop a night fighter system turned to modifications of existing airframes and saw variations of the Defiant, Beaufighter, Mosquito and American A-20, all flown by the Royal Air Force.

The United States Army Air Forces directed its attentions to the interim P-70 and P-38, and to the new P-61. In 1941 a contract was awarded to the Northrop Corp. for the design and construction of the P-61 Black Widow — the first U.S. aircraft designed from the drawing board as a night fighter. Lacking suitable aircraft from American sources, USAAF units used the British Beaufighter — and later the Mosquito — with good success in the Europe. In the Pacific, night fighter squadrons operated the P-70 versions of the Douglas A-20 until P-61s could be delivered in 1944. By the

end of the war, the P-61 was the standard USAAF night fighter and was in service with 15 of the 16 night fighter squadrons operating in combat theaters.

Technological advances and the conversion to a jet Air Force in the late 1940s saw further development of the night fighter into the “all-weather” interceptor of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, such as the propeller driven F-82, and the jet F-86, F-89, F-94, F-101, F-102 and F-106 models. The advanced radar and electronics of the F-4, F-15 and F-16 give these even more advanced tactical fighters a true all-weather capability.

—Information from *nationalmuseum*.

EVOLUTION

The fight at night



The Northrop P-61C was the first plane specifically designed for night fighting.

National Museum of the U.S. Air Force



Navy Historical Center

On April 18, 1942, Col. James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle, front left, led 16 B-25s from the aircraft carrier Hornet to bomb Tokyo and other sites in the first U.S. air raid on Japan during World War II.

AMBITION

The great raiders

The April 1942 air attack on Japan, launched from the aircraft carrier Hornet and led by Lt. Col. James H. Doolittle, was to that point the most daring mission undertaken by the United States in the Pacific War. Though conceived as a diversion that would also boost American and allied morale, the raid generated strategic benefits that far outweighed its limited goals.

Air Forces leader General Henry H. Arnold assigned the technically-astute Doolittle to organize and lead the group. The modern, but relatively well-tested B-25B “Mitchell” medium bomber was selected as the delivery vehicle and tests showed that it could fly off a carrier with a useful bomb load and enough fuel to hit Japan and continue on to airfields in China.

Gathering volunteer air crews for an unspecified, but admittedly dangerous mission, Doolittle embarked on a

vigorous program of special training for his men and modifications to their planes. The new carrier Hornet was sent to the Pacific to undertake the Navy’s part of the mission.

Most of the sixteen B-25s, each with a five-man crew, attacked the Tokyo area, with a few hitting Nagoya. Damage to the intended military targets was modest, and none of the planes reached the Chinese airfields (though all but a few of their crewmen survived). However, the Japanese high command was deeply embarrassed. Three of the eight American airmen they had captured were executed. Spurred by Combined Fleet commander Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, they also resolved to eliminate the risk of any more such raids by the early destruction of America’s aircraft carriers, a decision that led them to disaster at the Battle of Midway a month and a half later.

—Information from *history.navy.mil*

July 27, 1909: Orville Wright, with Lt. Frank P. Lahm as passenger, performed the first official Army flight test at Fort Myer, Va. On August 2, the Army accepted its first airplane from the Wright brothers, paying \$25,000 plus \$5,000 extra for achieving speed in excess of 40 mph.



September 12–15, 1918: Brig. Gen., William "Billy" Mitchell commands what was at that point the largest air armada ever assembled — 1,481 Allied airplanes — during the first major U.S. offensive of the World War I at Saint-Mihiel, France.

July 7, 1914: Dr. Robert H. Goddard was issued a patent for a multistage rocket design. On July 14, Goddard got another patent for a liquid-fueled rocket design. Those breakthroughs laid the foundation for future spaceflights.

July 18, 1914: Congress passed a law creating an Aviation Section of the Army Signal Corps, which



October 14, 1947: Capt. Charles E. "Chuck" Yeager made the first faster-than sound flight at Muroc Air Base, Calif., in a rocket-powered USAF research plane — Bell XS-1.

May 8, 1911: The Navy ordered its first airplane, an A-1 amphibian, from Glenn Curtiss.

October 22, 1911: Capt. Carlo Piazza of Italy, piloting a Ble-riot XI, conducted the first wartime military airplane flight, reconnoitering Turkish positions in Libya. That same day, another Italian airplane became the first to be hit by ground fire.

June 14, 1912: After training at the Army Air School in the Philippines, Cpl. Vernon Burge became the Army's first enlisted pilot.

November 30, 1913: Phil Rader and Dean Ivan Lamb, flying for opposing sides in the Mexican Revolution, engaged in the first aerial combat, firing pistols at each other over Naca, Mexico.

replaced the Aeronautical Division. Lt. Col. Samuel Reber was the first commander.

January 20, 1918: Then-Col. William "Billy" Mitchell became chief of Air Service, I Army Corps, upon its organization at Neufchateau, France.

May 27, 1919: Lt. Cmdr. Albert C. "Puffy" Read and his five-man crew in a Navy Curtiss NC-4 Flying Boat completed the first crossing of the Atlantic Ocean by air.

May 21, 1927: In his airplane — Spirit of St. Louis — Charles A. Lindbergh, a captain in the Missouri National Guard, completed the first solo nonstop flight across the Atlantic Ocean. Lindbergh received the Medal of Honor for this flight.

September 24, 1929: Lt. James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle made the first instruments only flight, from takeoff to landing. He flew over Mitchell Field, N.Y., in a Consolidated NY-2 airplane with a completely covered cockpit, accompanied by a check pilot who monitored the flight.

March 1, 1937: The 2d Bombardment Group at Langley Field, Va., acquired its first YB-17A, the prototype of the B-17 Flying Fortress. Equipped with multiple machine guns to defend itself against fighters swift enough to catch it, the B-17 was designed to fly unescorted to long-range enemy targets.

June 20, 1941: The War Department established the Army Air Forces under Maj. Gen. Henry H. Arnold.

December 16, 1941: Lt. Boyd D. "Buzz" Wagner became the first U.S. ace of World War II after shooting down five enemy aircraft in four days. He flew with the 17th Pursuit Squadron against the Japanese in the Philippines.

August 5, 1943: Jacqueline Cochran became director of Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP), an organization that merged her Women's Flying Training Detachment with the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS).

June 6, 1944: Allied forces based in the United Kingdom crossed the English Channel and invaded German-held Normandy in northern France to begin Operation Overlord, the largest amphibious attack in history. Previous Allied air attacks largely prevented interference by the Luftwaffe and cut German transportation arteries. On a day often called "D-Day," Eighth and Ninth Air Forces and the Royal Air Force supported the invasion with some 15,000 interdiction, close air support and airlift sorties.

December 26, 1944: Maj. Thomas B. McGuire, Jr., shot down four enemy planes to bring his total of 38, making him the second-leading U.S. ace behind only Maj. Richard I. Bong.

March 9–10, 1945: In a night air raid on Tokyo, more than 300 B-29 Superfortresses bombed and destroyed 16 square miles of the Japanese capital. In terms of lives lost, this air raid was the most destructive in history. The airstrikes demonstrated a shift in U.S. bombing policy from high-altitude targeted daylight attacks to low-level area bombing at night.

MILESTONES

Flight logs

Looking back on a century of military flight

August 6, 1945: Col. Paul W. Tibbets piloted a B-29 called Enola Gay to Hiroshima, Japan, where the U.S. dropped an atomic bomb that destroyed the city. Three days later, Maj. Charles W. Sweeney and crew, flying a B-29 called Bock's Car, bombed Nagasaki in the second and last atomic bomb attack, largely destroying the city and killing at least 35,000 people.

July 26, 1947: President Harry S. Truman signed the National Security Act, creating the Department of the Air Force equal to the Army and Navy; the National Military Establishment under the secretary of defense; and the Air National Guard as a reserve component of the Air Force. Gen. Carl A. Spaatz as the first USAF chief of staff.

November 8, 1950: In the first battle between jet aircraft, Lt. Russell J. Brown in an F-80 Shooting Star shot down a North Korean MiG-15. Also, 70 B-29 Superfortresses conducted the largest incendiary raid of the 68 Korean War, dropping some 580 tons of firebombs on Sinuiju, North Korea.

April 1, 1954: President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a bill creating the Air Force Academy.

May 5, 1961: Making a suborbital flight in Mercury capsule Freedom 7, Cmdr. Alan B. Shepard, Jr., United States Navy, became the first U.S. astronaut in space.

February 24, 1969: An enemy mortar shell struck an AC-47 gunship on which A1C John L. Levitow served as loadmaster during a night mission in support of a South Vietnamese army post. Seriously wounded and stunned, Levitow flung himself on a smoking magnesium flare that was rolling in the cargo compartment, dragged it to an open cargo door, and threw it out of the aircraft. Almost immediately the flare ignited. For this act, Levitow became the only enlisted airman to receive the Medal of Honor in Vietnam.

September 1, 1975: Gen. Daniel "Chappie" James, Jr., USAF, became the first black four-star general.

January 9, 1976: The first operational F-15 Eagle, a new air-superiority fighter aircraft, arrived at the 1st Tactical Fighter Wing, Langley Air Force Base, Va. The F-15 was the first fighter to have a thrust greater than its weight, allowing it to accelerate while going

straight up.

June 18, 1981: The F-117 Nighthawk — the world's first stealth combat aircraft — made its first flight. Hal Farley piloted the plane, which presented very little radar image, at Tonopah Test Range, Nev.

June 18, 1983: Sally K. Ride became the first U.S. woman to journey into outer space. She was a Challenger crew member of the seventh space-shuttle mission.

December 8, 1987: The United States and the Soviet Union signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, agreeing to remove all intermediate-range missiles from Europe. The agreement resulted in the inactivation of six USAF tactical missile wings equipped with ground-launched cruise missiles.

December 17–February 14, 1990: In Operation Just Cause, USAF aircraft hit military targets, airlifted troops and flew special operations to restore democracy in Panama. F-117 Nighthawk stealth fighter bombers flew in combat for the first time. In the largest night-combat airdrop since World War II, Military Airlift Command aircraft transported 9,500 airborne troops from Pope Air Force Base, N.C., to Panama in fewer than 36 hours.

August 7, 1990: The United States launched Operation Desert Shield to defend Saudi Arabia from a possible Iraqi invasion. Among the first deployments was a 15-hour, 8,000-mile flight of 24 F-15C Eagles from Langley Air Force Base, Va., to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, with 12 inflight refuelings.



July 20, 1969: Four days after launching from the Kennedy Space Center, Apollo 11 crew members Neil Armstrong and Air Force Col. Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin, pictured, became the first men to walk on the Moon.

January 17, 1991: Operation Desert Storm, the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi military occupation, opened with a massive barrage of missile strikes against targets in Iraq and Kuwait.

July 2, 1992: Operation Provide Promise began, delivering food, medical supplies, and other relief cargo to Sarajevo and other communities in newly independent Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was suffering a civil war in the wake of its independence from Serbia. It became the longest sustained relief operation in USAF history.

February 3, 1995: Lt. Col. Eileen M. Collins, USAF, became the first woman pilot of a space shuttle.

October 7, 2001: Operation Enduring Freedom started with air strikes against Taliban targets in Afghanistan. B-2 Spirit bombers of the 509th Bomb Wing flew round-trip from Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, to Afghanistan on the longest bombing missions in aviation history. Other committed USAF aircraft included B-1 and B-52 bombers; F-15E strike fighters and AC-130 gunships; KC-10 and KC-135 tankers; E-3 airborne warning and control system airplanes; EC-130 electronic-combat aircraft; and AC-130, MC-130, and MH-53 special-operations airplanes. Navy F-14, F/A-18, and AV-8 aircraft from three carriers in the Indian Ocean also took part in the operation.

March 20, 2003: The United States invades Iraq in Operation Iraqi Liberation, later becoming Operation Iraqi Freedom.



www.af.mil

The F-86E Sabre flown by Lt. Col. Albert Kelly, 51st Fighter Interceptor Group commander, during the Korean War in 1952.

THE KOREAN WAR

Owning the skies

The Korean War marked the shift to jet fighters. The U.S. Air Force fighter contingent in the Far East at the beginning of the war was composed of the piston-engine F-51D Mustang of World War II fame, the all-weather F-82G Twin Mustang, and the jet-propelled, straight-winged F-80C Shooting Star. Skilled USAF pilots quickly scored a number of kills against the inexperienced pilots of the North Korean Air Force, who were equipped with WWII-era piston-engine aircraft.

U.N. forces enjoyed a period of air supremacy until the arrival of the MiG-15 in November 1950.

Initially flown in combat by Soviet pilots, and later by Chinese and North Koreans, the MiG-15 potentially threatened to wrest control of the air away from U.N. forces.

The USAF countered the MiG with the swept-wing, F-86 Sabre jet fighter. The F-86A entered combat in mid-December and quickly proved its worth. The F-86 was a better gun platform and could dive faster. Ultimately, any MiG-15 performance advantages over the Sabre were more than offset by the superior quality of American pilots.

—Information from nationalmuseum.af.mil



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File

Above: Lt. Col. Charles Dryden was selected for Aviation Cadet Training Tuskegee Army flying school in Alabama in 1941. Dryden went on to retire from active-duty service and teach at Harvard University.
Right: The 99th Fighter Squadron's patch.

GROUNDBREAKERS

The pride of Tuskegee

The achievements of the Tuskegee Airmen paved the way for full the full racial integration of the U.S. military.

In March 1941, the Air Corps announced the formation of its first-ever black combat unit, the 99th Pursuit (later Fighter) Squadron.

On March 7, 1942, the first group of African Americans to graduate from military flight school was inducted into the Air Corps.

Capt. Benjamin O. Davis Jr. — part of that first class — went on to be the first African American to undertake a solo flight in a military aircraft as a U.S. Army Air Corps' officer. Promoted to lieutenant colonel, Davis, pictured right, assumed command of 99th Fighter Squadron on August 24, 1942.

Almost 1,000 African American pilots were trained at Tuskegee until 1946. About 450 deployed overseas to Europe, and 150 airmen lost their lives in training or in combat.

While serving with the 332nd Fighter Group and its subordinate 99th, 100th, 301st and 302nd Fighter Squadrons, Tuskegee graduates flew more than 15,000 combat sorties during World War II, destroying about 500 enemy aircraft and a destroyer. Also of note, the Tuskegee airmen never lost a bomber to the enemy during allied B-17 and B-24 bomber formation escort duties.

Tuskegee fliers also earned 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 744

Air Medals, 14
Bronze Star Medals and eight Purple Hearts.

The U.S. Army Air Corps became the U.S. Air Force in 1947. Davis continued his military career after the war ended. In 1954, Davis was promoted to brigadier general, becoming the first African-American general officer in the U.S. Air Force.

But the Tuskegee achievements didn't end there.

Daniel "Chappie" James Jr, another Tuskegee graduate, James became the first African-American officer in the history of the U.S. military to attain four stars, signifying full general rank, when the Air Force promoted him in 1975.

The Tuskegee Airmen proved African-American pilots could fly and fight as well as their white counterparts. And, the Tuskegee pilots' wartime exploits played a key role in President Harry S. Truman's 1948 decision to desegregate the U.S. military, which in turn opened up opportunities for all African Americans.

—Information from nps.gov; nationalmuseum.af.mil





P-26A



P-51D



B-29



B-17F

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F-4B



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HELICOPTERS

Wherever they need to be

When Paul Cornu built what is widely credited as being the manned rotary wing aircraft in 1907 — a design that was too hard for the inventor to control and supposedly got just a foot off the ground — he probably couldn't have imagined the capabilities the genre would have a century later.

In 1939, helicopter pioneer Igor Sikorsky built the VS-300, America's first successful helicopter. What started out as a machine that could make a series of short hops turned into a mass-produced flyer, and the U.S. Army owned more than 400 Sikorsky helicopters by the end of World War II.

Today, the United States military uses a variety of helicopters — including this Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation HH-60 Pave Hawk — for everything from combat to delivering humanitarian aid.

—Information from nasa.gov and centennialofflight.mil

GLOBAL INFLUENCE

Have planes, will travel

Increasingly involved in global security issues, the United States' economy and security depends upon our protecting overseas interests as well as encouraging peace and stability around the globe.

Forward presence by U.S. Navy aircraft carrier battle groups and amphibious ready groups are a significant tool in providing both. As former Secretary of Defense William Cohen said, "If you don't have that for-

ward deployed presence, you have less of a voice, less of an influence."

A carrier battle group, operating in international waters, does not need the permission of host countries for landing or overflight rights. Nor does it need to build or maintain bases in countries where our presence may cause political or other strains. Aircraft carriers are sovereign U.S. territory that steam anywhere in international waters — and most of the surface of the globe is water. This characteristic is not lost on our political decision-makers, who use Navy aircraft carriers as a powerful instrument of diplomacy, strengthening alliances or answering the fire bell of crisis. As former President Bill Clinton said during a visit to the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, "When word of crisis breaks out in Washington, it's no accident the first question that comes to

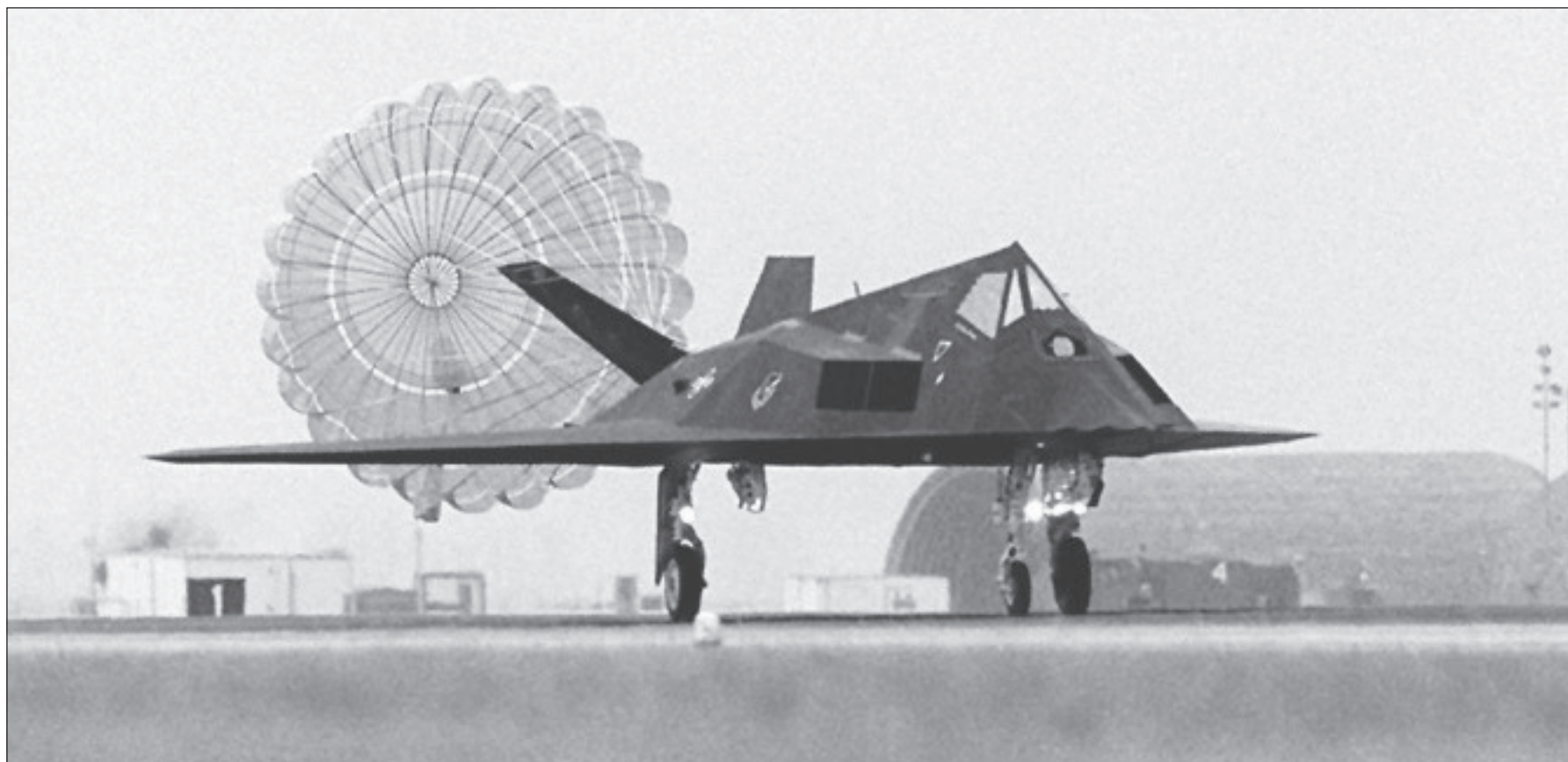
everyone's lips is 'where is the nearest carrier?'"

The carrier battle group can not only operate independently but also presents a range of options to the president, Congress and secretary of defense. By using the oceans both as a means of access and as a base, forward-deployed Navy and Marine forces are readily available to provide the United States with a rheostat of national response capabilities.

From the first aircraft carrier — the USS Langley, commissioned in March 1922 — to the carrier seen here, the USS Kittyhawk, carriers have provided a launching pad for U.S. military air power around the world for decades.

—Information from *navy.mil*





Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

An F-117 stealth fighter touches down at Aviano Air Base, Italy.

Most people witnessed the display of American airpower at the opening of Operation Desert Storm by following the green traces across their television screens.

The U.S.-led coalition's response to Iraqi president Saddam Hussein's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait was a decisive aerial victory.

Brig. Gen. Greg Feest, then a major, saw Desert Storm from a slightly different perspective. Flying the lead F-117 stealth fighter, his mission was to drop a 2,000-pound laser-guided bomb onto an Iraqi interceptor operations center. The weapon impacted on time, on target, marking the opening of the air campaign.

He then headed to strike his second target, a sector operations center. With the target in his jet's crosshairs, he watched as it recorded a direct hit. The F-117 — already 10 years old at the time — combined stealth and precision was tested in front of the world.

"It was like flying into the biggest fireworks demonstration you have ever seen," Feest said about the first night over Iraq. "Realize, we were in the heart of it. Because of the delivery system we had at the time, we had to be down low. We couldn't fly over the [anti-aircraft artillery], we had to fly into the heart of it."

OPERATION DESERT STORM

Under the radar

Before taking off that night, nearly all of the F-117 pilots were leery of how well its stealth characteristics would protect them from radar that directed thousands of Iraqi guns and surface-to-air missiles. Since the Nighthawk's targets, including many in downtown Baghdad, were highly defended, wing leaders had privately prepared themselves for F-117 losses as high as 50 percent on the first night.

"We didn't know if it was going to work," Feest said of the jet's stealth abilities. "The engineers all assured us that it would."

Coming off their targets to return to their operating base on the Arabian Peninsula, General Feest listened in as the F-117 attack fleet began checking in to refuel with an airborne tanker. Carrying a list with call signs for each pilot, he started checking off names. "At the end I was amazed to see I had a checkmark next to every call sign and every pilot's name, knowing we were all coming home."

After landing, every jet was inspected by maintainers for evidence of battle damage. No F-117 had been hit. The amazing milestone was repeated again the next night.

"After about the fourth night we realized this stealth technology really worked and we were begging to get back up into the air and fly as many missions as we could," General Feest said.

Lessons learned working with the F-117's low-observable materials have been incorporated in development of more modern aircraft including the B-2 Spirit, F-22 Raptor and F-35 Lightning.

—Information from *af.mil*

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Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

An MQ-1 Predator unmanned aerial vehicle takes off from Creech Air Force Base, Nev.

THE FUTURE

An all-seeing eye

Unseen guardians patrol Afghanistan day and night, searching for enemies.

The Shadow unmanned aerial vehicle, or UAV, has cameras that function as aerial eyes for the 25th Infantry Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team. The UAVs are controlled from the ground by a small group of paratroopers from the 425th Brigade Special Troops Battalion.

"We do everything from battle-damage assessment to convoy route clearance, but our main mission over here is to provide situational awareness for battlefield commanders," said Army Chief Warrant Officer

Nicholas Jones, a UAV technician.

In the first three months the UAV platoon was operating, Jones said, the Shadow has provided the necessary advantage for mission accomplishment on several occasions.

"The Baki Kheyl District Center called and said they were receiving fire," he said. "We immediately scanned over to them, found the guys firing at them, and followed them all the way back to their safe house."

These new capabilities play a vital role against elusive enemies the United States is fighting today in the war on terror.

In fact, in his recommendations for the

2010 budget, American Secretary of Defense Robert Gates laid out plans to divert funding from fighters flown by pilots in the cockpit to the drones that have helped the U.S. succeed from Iraq to the mountains of Afghanistan.

New Predator and Reaper UAVs are coming on line. These UAVs are starting to supplant some of the mission space that manned aircraft once dominated.

The Reaper is like a Predator UAV on steroids. The aircraft can carry up to 1.5 tons of weapons and stay aloft for hours.

—Information from defenselink.mil

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