

Commander's Call Topics



November 7, 2013

"As we pay tribute to our veterans, we are mindful that no ceremony or parade can fully repay that debt."

President Barack Obama
Veterans Day proclamation

It's the
[238th Anniversary](#)
[of the U. S. Marine Corps](#)
Sunday, November 10, 2013

First air war part of Veterans Day legacy

On November 11th we celebrate Veterans Day, originally created as Armistice Day to mark the end of the Great War, or World War I as we now know it – the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918. Over the course of the decades to come, the day would go on to represent the commitment of all of our veterans who have served throughout the centuries.

For the Air Force, Veterans Day is a way to mark a birth of sorts, a time when aviation in combat was born, during an evolution that would take a fledgling aviation branch of the Army signal corps from doughboys being trained in the fields of France on French-made aircraft to another world war, two major conflicts in Korea and Vietnam, operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and world airpower domination in the 21st Century with fifth-generation aircraft like the F-35A Lightning II and the F-22 Raptor.

According to the official document titled the U.S. Air Service in World War I, from the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center at Maxwell Air Force Base, in Montgomery, Ala., when the U.S. entered World War I on April 6, 1917, the Aviation Section of the Army Signal Corps consisted of 65 officers, 1,100 men, and 200 training planes, none of which were fit for combat. Seventeen months later, the American Expeditionary Forces' Air Service had 7,738 officers and 70,769 men.

In that short time span, the U.S. Air Service would herald 71 aces, creating heroes like Eddie Rickenbacker, shoot down 781 enemy planes, 73 balloons, make 150 bombing runs and drop 275,000 lbs. of explosives onto enemy targets.

During the war, the Air Service was engaged with three distinct missions: observation balloons, bombing and fighters. The new Air Service would emerge from World War I as a major player in the war, and set the stage for making airpower a key to future wars. Col. William "Billy" Mitchell, a key leader for air operations during World War I, was one of the earliest proponents of air power for future wars.

But today we celebrate Veterans Day, not only to mark the end of World War I, and the beginning of what would eventually become the U.S. Air Force, we celebrate service members from all wars who sacrificed to keep America the greatest nation on the planet.

► TRENDING...

"Working closely with the service secretaries, service chiefs, combatant commanders and DOD leaders, these six priorities will help determine the shape of our defense institutions for years to come," said [Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel](#), when outlining his priorities during a [keynote address](#) before the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Global Security Forum.

► RESOURCES

AF.mil

<http://www.af.mil>

Airman magazine

<http://airman.dodlive.mil/>

Air Force Outreach

<http://www.afoutreach.af.mil>

Military OneSource

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/>

Air Force Personnel Center

<http://www.afpc.af.mil/>

Air Reserve Personnel Center

<http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil>

Department of Defense News

<http://www.defense.gov>

Department of Veteran Affairs

<http://www.va.gov/>

TRICARE

<http://www.tricare.mil>

U.S. Government Website

<http://www.firstgov.gov/>

Employment Opportunities

<https://www.usajobs.gov/>

<http://www.nafjobs.org/>

Air Force Association Scholarships

www.afa.org/AFA/InformationFor/Military/Scholarships

Air Force Safety Center

www.afsec.af.mil

► CURRENT ISSUES

[Sexual assault 'trial' gives Airmen real life perspective](#)

The 52nd Fighter Wing Judge Advocate, with the support of the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator and Base Chapel, conducted "Got Consent?" a new training simulated trial involving sexual assault.

► PERSONNEL ISSUES

[Officers have until Nov. 15 to apply for retirement.](#)

Lieutenant colonels and colonels who are eligible to meet the Selective Early Retirement Board slated for Dec. 9 still have time to volunteer for retirement before the Nov. 15 window closes, Air Force Personnel Center officials said.

► FAMILY, HEALTH AND SAFETY

[Official describes life skill of financial readiness.](#)

The Defense Department wants service members to have the life skills to successfully manage their finances and create good credit ratings, the director of the Pentagon's office of family policy, children and youth said.

For more information on Air Force heritage, visit

<http://www.airforcehistory.af.mil>

The Defense Media Activity produces **Commander's Call Topics** weekly. For questions or comments about this, or any other DMA product, send an e-mail to afproducts@dma.mil.

Subscribe to AF news and information products online, go to <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDODAF/subscriber/new>

► THIS WEEK IN AIR FORCE HISTORY

Nov. 7, 1967 - The last Atlas D in the Air Force inventory launched from Vandenberg AFB, Calif.

Nov. 8, 1942 - Through Nov. 11, Army and carrier-based airplanes supported the invasion of North Africa, and American troops landed on French-held territory. [Col. Demas T. Craw](#) volunteered to negotiate an armistice between the U.S. and French. On the way to the negotiations, he was killed by machine gun fire. [Maj. Pierpont M. Hamilton](#), who accompanied Colonel Craw, was captured but completed the mission. For their actions, both men were awarded the [Medal of Honor](#).

Nov. 9, 1967 - Ejecting from his F-4C Phantom over North Vietnam, [Capt. Lance P. Sijan](#) evaded capture for more than six weeks. Enemy forces captured him, but the severely weakened and injured Sijan managed to escape. After his recapture and torture, he contracted pneumonia and died. He received the [Medal of Honor](#) posthumously.

Nov. 10, 1988 - The Pentagon announced the existence of the Lockheed F-117A Stealth Fighter.

Nov. 11, 1956 - Convair's B-58 Hustler, the first supersonic bomber and delta-winged aircraft capable of 1,000-MPH speeds, completed its first flight at Fort Worth.

Nov. 12, 1921 - Wesley May, with a 5-gallon can of gasoline strapped to his back, stepped from the wing of a Lincoln Standard to the wing skid of a JN-4 and climbed to the engine to pour gas into the tank. Frank Hawks flew the Lincoln and Earl S. Daugherty the JN-4. This was the first known air-to-air refueling.

Nov. 13, 1964 - The solid propellant rocket for Titan II Space Booster's first stage fired at the United Technology Center in Sunnyvale, Calif. It had more than a million pounds of thrust.