AFLCMC *Heritage Hangar*

AFLCMC History Office

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25 OCT 1985 (Presidential & Executive Airlift Directorate)

The USAF accepted its 80th and last C-21A from Gates Learjet Corporation at Scott AFB. This delivery completed the transition to the C-12F and C-21A for operational support airlift, which began in April 1984. While primarily a business jet transporting Air Force and DoD leadership, it is also capable of carrying cargo as well as up to five ambulatory patients. In 2007, budget reductions cut the number of operational C-21s to 56, which was again reduced in 2010 to 28. What is more, the remaining C-21s in operation were consolidated at Scott AFB, IL and Ramstein AFB, Germany in 2018. (Photo: NMUSAF)

26 OCT 2001 (AFLCMC/WJ)

The DoD announced its decision to go ahead with $19 Billion contract to produce Lockheed Martin's Joint Strike Fighter (JSF)—F-35—for the USAF, Navy, and Marines. The announcement officially ended the concept demonstration phase for the new Joint Strike Fighter. The first 22 JSFs were to be produced under the System Development and Demonstration, which represented a departure from other military testing programs since there were three different variants being tested. In February 2002, the Integrated Shaft-Driven Lift Fan Propulsion System was awarded the Collier Trophy. On 5 June 2002, the JSF was designated the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. (Photo: USAF)

27 OCT 2006 (AFLCMC)

The 747-400F Airborne Laser (ABL) aircraft was unveiled in a ceremony at Boeing's Integrated Defense Systems facility in Wichita, KS. The ABL was developed for the U.S. Missile Defense Agency and promised speed-of-light, megawatt laser capability to destroy ballistic missiles during the early boost phase of flight. Extensive ground testing of ABL capabilities proved successful. Unfortunately, the program was cancelled just as operational testing was about to ramp up due to DoD budget cuts and the need to fund higher priority programs. Directed energy weapons remain an interest and pursuit of the defense industry. (Photo: AFTC)

28 OCT 1966 (Digital/C3I & Network Directorates)

DELTA I, one of the Electronic Systems Division's (ESD) largest computer systems, became operational. Containing some 53 individual programs and 345,000 instructions, it was acquired at a cost of approximately $5 million. DELTA I would provide the operational data processing capabilities for the NORAD COC in Cheyenne Mountain. Its specific duties included (1) maintenance of a surveillance catalog of all detected space objects; (2) detection and warning of space threats; (3) and defense against space systems. (Photo: NARA)

29 OCT 1975 (Fighter & Advanced Aircraft Directorate)

The first Northrup F-5E Tiger II aircraft was delivered to Nellis AFB. The F-5E boasted improved avionics and air-to-air fire control radar systems as well as augmented weapons capabilities over its predecessor, the F-5A. While generally thought of as an international fighter for its widespread, long-term use in allied air forces (some of which still have sizeable fleets of updated F-5E variants such as the F-5EM), the USAF maintained a small inventory of Tiger IIs, which filled out aggressor squadrons due to their ability to simulate the performance of MiG 21s in aerial combat training exercises. (Photo: NMUSAF)

30 OCT 1935 (Bombers Directorate)

The first Boeing Model 299 (XB-17)—the B-17 prototype—crashed on take-off during a test flight at Wright Field, OH, killing the pilot, Maj Ployer P. Hill who died hours later, suffering a skull fracture and severe burns. Weeks later, Boeing's chief test pilot, Leslie R. Tower, died (19 November) of internal injuries and burns from the crash. The Board of Officers that reviewed the crash determined that the locked condition of the rudder and, more importantly, the elevator surface controls (in the "up" position), making it impossible for the pilot to control the airplane. (Photo: NMUSAF)

31 OCT 1976 (Digital/C3I & Network Directorates)

The first Air Force E-3A Sentry—otherwise known as the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft—with its full complement of surveillance and command and control avionics, made its first test flight. The E-3A would provide the DoD a mobile, survivable C3 center that could detect, track (at all altitudes), identify aircraft (as friend or foe), and relay data. With in-flight refueling, the C3 center would be able to remain aloft for extended periods of time. (Photo: NMUSAF)

Installation Spotlight: Hanscom Air Force Base, MA

In May 1941, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts acquired approximately 509 acres of land for the Boston auxiliary airport at Bedford at the cost of $60,000. Believing that U.S. involvement in the Second World War was inevitable, the federal government, among a number of other measures, appropriated the $40 million to go toward the construction of 250 civil airports across the country that could be used for future national defense. In June 1942, the Massachusetts Department of Public Works and the Army Corps of Engineers negotiated the lease of the Boston auxiliary airport to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Days later, the 79th Pursuit (Interceptor) Group, flying Curtiss P-40 Warhawk fighter aircraft, arrived at the airport. Throughout 1942 and 1943, fighter squadrons trained at the air field; specifically, the 85th and the 318th Fighter Squadrons, who learned to fly and maintain P-40 Warhawks and would later be assigned to the North African and European theaters of the war. In February 1943, the air field was dedicated to Laurence G. Hanscom, who was a *Worchester Telegram* reporter, amateur pilot, aviation enthusiast, and vocal supporter of the airport's establishment. Hanscom had tragically died in an airplane crash in February 1941.

It was also during World War II that MIT's Radiation Laboratory was established at Hanscom Field, which developed and tested new radar technology.

In September 1945, the Air Technical Services Command of the Army Air Forces created Cambridge Field Station, which would be re-designated as the Air Force Cambridge Research Center (AFCRC), at Cambridge, MA in July 1949. The Air Force's partnership with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) continued into the Cold War and beyond via the MITRE Corporation. The early systems developed at Hanscom Field led to the post becoming the nerve center for Air Force electronic command, control and communication (C3), Intelligence, and battle management systems development. The Electronic Systems Division (ESD)—re-designated Electronic Systems Center (ESC) in 1992—was established in 1961 to coordinate USAF electronic systems management under one organization. As this mission grew, however, operational activity at Hanscom declined with regular flight operations ceasing in 1973.

Since the creation of ESD/ESC, Hanscom AFB has steadily remained the Air Force's principle electronic systems hub, developing numerous foundational network systems such as SAGE, the NORAD COC, ARPANET, AWACS, and JSTARS, among many others. In 2012, as a part of the Air Force Materiel Command's (AFMC) last major reorganization, ESC was inactivated and its functions assumed by AFLCMC in 2012.

(Photos: AFLCMC/HO)

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