



THIS MONTH in MILITARY HISTORY

Pearl Harbor at 80

- 1775 28 The Continental Congress creates the Continental Navy.
- 1918 1 American Army of Occupation enters Germany.
- 1941 5 The last carrier at Pearl Harbor, *USS Lexington*, departs.
- 1945 12 GEN George S. Patton dies in a military hospital in Germany.
- 1959 7 America's first ballistic missile is launched at Cape Canaveral.
- 1990 28 Six aircraft carriers are staged in the Persian Gulf & Red Sea for *DESERT STORM*.
- 2000 16 UNSC sanctions are imposed on the Taliban, they are to turn over Osama bin Laden.
- 2001 16 The last fires under debris from the World Trade Center are extinguished.
- 2003 31 Saddam Hussein is captured in the town of Tikrit while hiding in a "spider hole."
- 2006 30 Saddam Hussein is executed by hanging after being convicted in Iraqi court.

TRIVIA

- 1 What day did the largest U.S. Army, pre-WWII, exercise/maneuver end?
- 2 What patriotic American song was written on Christmas day of 1896?
- 3 How much money did it cost a West Point Cadet to watch the first Army-Navy football game in 1890?

ANSWERS FOR NOVEMBER 2021 QUESTIONS

- 1 What was the name of the first aircraft carrier that was commissioned for the U.S. Navy?
➤ **U.S.S. Langley**
- 2 After the advent of the airplane, what part of the Army handled aircraft prior to World War I?
➤ **Aeronautical Division, Signal Corps**
- 3 In relation to a long-running weapons program for the U.S. Army, what does the acronym "SPIW" stand for?
➤ **Special Purpose Individual Weapon**



As big as Amazon is today, it is important to remember the original conglomerate: The Dutch East India Company (or *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*). Founded in 1602, this company handled movement of many goods from Asia to Europe such as silk, porcelain, tea and spices. What were the spices, you ask? *Everything*.



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On the morning of 7 December 1941, an organized and large scale attack was carried out by the Imperial Japanese Military against American forces at Pearl Harbor. Perhaps one of the most infamous days in history, the attacks at Pearl Harbor and other locations in the Pacific Theater underscored the initiation of active American participation in World War II.

Up to the attacks by the Japanese against American assets in the Pacific (to include strikes elsewhere in Southeast Asia), the United States had been supplying materiel to the Allies in Lend-Lease in the European Theater. In the Pacific Theater, the Americans were growing more concerned with Japanese imperialism. Specifically, the U.S. denounced Japan's zeal for its Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, and its aggression in the ongoing Second Sino-Japanese War.

The United States and Japan were still in the midst of negotiations when a large Japanese Task Force launched coordinated strikes in two waves against the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor.¹ However, Japanese intelligence failed to reconcile missions scheduled for the aircraft carriers that were supposed to be docked there. Because of this, the Japanese were unable to remove the American ability to project force into the Pacific. For this reason, while Pearl Harbor was destructive and a major loss of life, it was an objective failure for the Japanese.

The sneak attack maintained its element of surprise, but as the day continued on, Japanese losses began to increase. Failure to strike all of the resources at Pearl Harbor allowed for a relatively rapid resumption of limited operations. However, the most significant losses this day was the loss of life. The attack killed 2,403 Americans and wounded another 1,178. 18 ships were disabled or lost with 188 aircraft destroyed. Pearl Harbor represented the first in a multi-month long string of Japanese raids in the Pacific, to include strikes at Malaya, Hong Kong, Guam, the Philippines, and Wake Island. It was not until LTC James Doolittle's raid on 18 April that the U.S. mounted a counterattack.

However, perhaps most significant was the aftermath of Pearl Harbor and its resounding effects that may have brought World War II to an end more quickly. Just before FDR gave his Infamous Speech, Prime Minister Winston Churchill recalled, "*Hitler's fate was sealed. Mussolini's fate was sealed. As for the Japanese, they would be ground to powder. All the rest was merely the proper application of overwhelming force.*"²

The United States declared war on Japan on 8 December 1941, followed by a war declaration on Germany and Italy on 11 December (after Germany had done so on the same day).

Operation *DESERT FOX*

Following Operations *DESERT STORM* and *DESERT SHIELD*, and preceding Operation *IRAQI FREEDOM*, the Clinton Administration was examining means and methods to reduce Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's ability to conduct war operations. This followed multiple interventions to include the Gulf War, and subsequent hostile actions against the neighboring nation of Kuwait. United Nations Security Council (UNSC) policies in place called for routine weapon inspections of the Iraqi military. In addition, the 1998 "Iraq Liberation Act" was signed into law to help siphon power from Saddam. Funding was then routed to opposition forces in the region.³

The proposal of *DESERT FOX* (and the abandoned *DESERT THUNDER*) was to degrade Iraq's ability to manufacture and use weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical weapons and potential nuclear armaments.⁴ This posture was taken due to the knowledge that Iraq had previously deployed chemical and biological warfare in previous conflicts. Therefore, the mission objective was not to totally eliminate Iraq's WMD stash, but to reduce or degrade it to a much more limited capacity.

DESERT FOX commenced on 16 December 1998 and lasted thru 19 December. The operation was unique

and historic in many ways. Chief among these was the first time women flew in an attack sortie capacity for the U.S. Navy. In addition, it was the first combat deployment for the B-1B *Lancer*. The USAF deployed F-16's on ground attack sorties, in addition to the Navy's F/A-18C's. B-52's struck at targets along with the B-1's over the course of the campaign. By the second night, naval launched cruise missiles were included in the deployment.

By and large, Iraqi air defenses were unable to locate any of the attacking aircraft. Instead, Iraqi defenses resorted to blanketing the sky with machine gun and anti-aircraft fire which were largely ineffective. A total of 415 cruise missiles and 600 bombs were used during the operation against 97 specific sites. The sites included military installations, oil facilities, airfields and weapon production and storage facilities—all of which were struck and/or destroyed. The American-British force suffered no losses during the campaign.

Despite the operational success, its role in the overall reduction of the threat of Iraq has largely been questioned. The operation drew a fair amount of criticism at home and abroad, and the ultimate results of the campaign were effectively rendered moot with the subsequent strikes beginning in 2002.

- 1. Morton, Louis. "The Fatal Turn." *Strategy and Command: The First Two Years*. Center of Military History, Washington, D.C. 2000.
- 2. Churchill, Winston S. *The Grand Alliance*. Houghton Mifflin, New York, New York. 9 May 1986.
- 3. H.R. 4655: Iraq Liberation Act. 31 October 1998.
- 4. Lehrer, James. "Interview with Secretary Albright." *NewsHour*. Public Broadcasting Service. 17 December 1998.

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