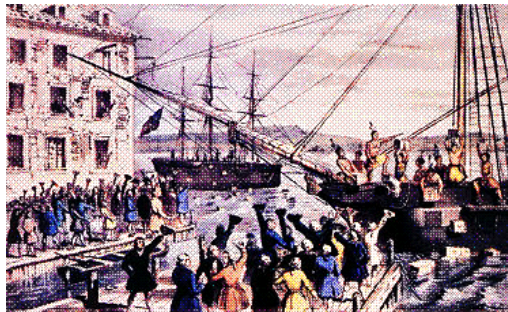




## Military History Anniversaries 16 thru 31 December

**Events in History over the next 15 day period that had U.S. military involvement or impacted in some way on U.S military operations or American interests**

- Dec 16 1773 – American Revolution: Boston Tea Party - Members of the Sons of Liberty disguised as Mohawk Indians dump hundreds of crates of tea into Boston harbor as a protest against the Tea Act.



**The Destruction of Tea at Boston Harbor Lithograph**

- Dec 16 1826 – Benjamin Edwards and his brother Haden ride into Mexican-controlled Nacogdoches, Texas, and declare the area the Republic of Fredonia. The short lived Republic was the first attempt by Anglo settlers in Texas to secede from Mexico.
- Dec 16 1864 – Civil War: In the 2 day Battle of Nashville, Union forces under George H. Thomas almost completely destroy the Army of Tennessee under John B. Hood. Casualties and losses: US 3,061 – CSA Approx. 6,000.
- Dec 16 1907 – The American Great White Fleet begins its circumnavigation of the world. It consisted of 16 battleships divided into two squadrons, along with various escorts.
- Dec 16 1916 – WWI: At approximately 8 o'clock in the morning, German battle cruisers from Franz von Hipper's Scouting Squadron catch the British navy by surprise as they begin heavy bombardment of Hartlepool and Scarborough, English port cities on the North Sea.
- Dec 16 1917 – USS F-1 (SS-20) sunk after collision with USS F-3 (SS-22) off San Diego, California. 19 died.
- Dec 16 1941 – WW2: Japanese forces occupy Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia, on the island of Borneo.

- Dec 16 1944 – WW2: Battle of the Bulge - With the Anglo-Americans closing in on Germany from the west and the Soviets approaching from the east, Nazi leader Adolf Hitler orders a massive attack against the western Allies by three German armies. The German counterattack out of the densely wooded Ardennes region of Belgium took the Allies entirely by surprise, and the experienced German troops wrought havoc on the American line, creating a triangular “bulge” 60 miles deep and 50 miles wide along the Allied front.



- Dec 16 1945 – Occupation of Japan: General Douglas MacArthur orders that Shinto be abolished as the state religion of Japan.
- Dec 16 1950 – Korea: President Harry Truman declares a state of National Emergency as Chinese communists invade deeper into South Korea.
- Dec 16 1965 – Vietnam: General William Westmoreland sends U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara a request for 243,000 more men by the end of 1966.
- Dec 16 1972 – Vietnam: Henry Kissinger announces that North Vietnam has left private peace negotiations, in Paris, France
- Dec 16 1998 – Iraq disarmament crisis: Operation Desert Fox - President Bill Clinton announces he has ordered air strikes, along with the United Kingdom, against Iraq because it refused to cooperate with United Nations (U.N.) weapons inspectors. Clinton’s decision did not have the support of key members of Congress, who accused Clinton of using the air strikes to direct attention away from ongoing impeachment proceedings against him.
- Dec 17 1777 – American Revolution: France formally recognized American independence.
- Dec 17 1812 – War of 1812: Battle of the Mississinewa – U.S. forces attack Lenape and Miami Indian villages which was considered the first American victory of the war. Casualties and losses: US 56 – Indians 80.
- Dec 17 1862 – Civil War: U.S. Army General Ulysses S. Grant, the future 18th president of the United States, issues General Order No. 11, expelling Jews suspected of engaging in war profiteering from a region occupied by the Union Army.
- Dec 17 1939 – WW2: Battle of the River Plate – The Admiral Graf Spee is scuttled by Captain Hans Langsdorff outside Montevideo.
- Dec 17 1941 – WW2: Japanese forces land in Northern Borneo.
- Dec 17 1941 – WW2: Rear Admiral Husband E. Kimmel was relieved of his command of the U.S. Pacific Fleet as part of a shake-up of officers in the wake of the Pearl Harbor disaster.
- Dec 17 1943 – WW2: U.S. forces invade Japanese held New Britain Island in New Guinea.
- Dec 17 1944 – WW2: The German Army renews the attack on the Belgian town of Losheimergraben against the defending Americans during the Battle of the Bulge. Within 5 days the 101st Airborne Division is surrounded at Bastogne Belgium.
- Dec 17 1944 – WW2: Battle of the Bulge - Malmedy massacre. Ninety American 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion POWs are shot by Waffen-SS Kampfgruppe Peiper.

- Dec 17 1944 – WW2: U.S. Major General Henry C. Pratt issues Public Proclamation No. 21, declaring that, effective January 2, 1945, Japanese American “evacuees” from the West Coast could return to their homes.
- Dec 17 1947 – First flight of the Boeing B-47 Stratojet strategic bomber.



- Dec 17 1950 – The F-86 Sabre's first mission over Korea.
- Dec 17 1957 – The United States successfully launches the first Atlas intercontinental ballistic missile at Cape Canaveral, Florida.
- Dec 17 1969 – The U.S. Air Force ended its "Project Blue Book" and concluded that there was no evidence of extraterrestrial activity behind UFO sightings.
- Dec 17 1971 – Vietnam: Cambodian government positions in Prak Ham, 40 miles north of Phnom Penh, and the 4,000-man base at Taing Kauk are the targets of continuous heavy bombardment by communist forces. The communist Khmer Rouge and their North Vietnamese allies were trying to encircle the capital city.
- Dec 18 1777 – American Revolution: The new United States celebrates its first national day of thanksgiving on commemorating the American victory at the Battle of Saratoga after the surrender of General John Burgoyne and 5,000 British troops in October 1777.
- Dec 18 1862 – Civil War: Battle of Lexington – Confederate cavalry leader General Nathan Bedford Forrest routs a Union force under the command of Colonel Robert Ingersoll on a raid into western Tennessee, an area held by the Union.
- Dec 18 1916 – WWI: Battle of Verdun – The 10 month Battle (the longest engagement of the war) ends when German forces are defeated by the French. Casualties and losses: France 442 to 540,000 with 362,000 KIA – Germany 355 to 435,000 with 336,000 KIA.
- Dec 18 1941 – WW2: Defended by 610 fighting men, the American held island of Guam falls to more than 5,000 Japanese invaders in a 3 hour battle. Casualties and losses: US 458 – Japan 7
- Dec 18 1941 – WW2: Japan invades Hong Kong.
- Dec 18 1944 – WW2: B-29's (77) and 200 other aircraft of U.S. 14th Air Force bomb Hankow, China, a Japanese supply base.
- Dec 18 1944 – WW2: The Supreme Court upheld the wartime internment of Japanese-Americans.
- Dec 18 1972 – Vietnam: The Paris Peace talks temporarily fail and President Nixon orders a resumption of full scale bombing of targets in North Vietnam (i.e. Operation Linebacker 2). American B-52s and fighter-bombers dropped over 20,000 tons of bombs on the cities of Hanoi and Haiphong. The United States lost 15 of its giant B-52s and 11 other aircraft during the attacks. North Vietnam claimed that over 1,600 civilians were killed.

- Dec 19 1777 – American Revolution: With the onset of the bitter winter cold, the Continental Army under General George Washington, still in the field, enters its winter camp at Valley Forge, 22 miles from British-occupied Philadelphia.
- Dec 19 1941 – WW2: In a major shake-up of the military high command, Adolf Hitler assumes the position of commander in chief of the German army. The German offensive against Moscow was proving to be a disaster. A perimeter had been established by the Soviets 200 miles from the city—and the Germans couldn't break through.
- Dec 19 1946 – Vietnam: Start of the First Indochina War.
- Dec 19 1972 – Vietnam: Hanoi's foreign ministry, calling the new B-52 raids against Hanoi and Haiphong “extremely barbaric,” accuses the United States of premeditated intensification of the war and labels the actions “insane.”
- Dec 20 1803 – Old West: Without a shot fired, the French hand over New Orleans and Lower Louisiana to the United States. In April 1803, the United States purchased from France the 828,000 square miles that had formerly been French Louisiana.
- Dec 20 1914 – WWI: After minor skirmishes, the First Battle of Champagne begins in earnest, marking the first major Allied attack against the Germans since the initiation of trench warfare on the Western Front.
- Dec 20 1941 – WW2: The Flying Tigers – American pilots in China enter combat for the first time against the Japanese over Kunming China.



**1st American Volunteer Group**

- Dec 20 1941 – WW2: In one of his first acts as the new commander in chief of the German army, Adolf Hitler informs General Franz Halder that there will be no retreating from the Russian front near Moscow. “The will to hold out must be brought home to every unit!”
- Dec 20 1946 – Vietnam: The morning after Viet Minh forces under Ho Chi Minh launched a night revolt in the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi, French colonial troops crack down on the communist rebels. Ho and his soldiers immediately fled the city to regroup in the countryside.
- Dec 20 1957: While spending the Christmas holidays at Graceland in his newly purchased Tennessee mansion, rock-and-roll star Elvis Presley receives his draft notice for the United States Army.
- Dec 20 1960 – Vietnam: North Vietnam announces the formation of the National Front for the Liberation of the South at a conference held “somewhere in the South.”

- Dec 20 1963 – Cold War: More than two years after the Berlin Wall was constructed by East Germany to prevent its citizens from fleeing its communist regime, nearly 4,000 West Berliners are allowed to cross into East Berlin to visit relatives.
- Dec 20 1989: Operation Just Cause – The United States invades Panama in an attempt to overthrow military dictator Manuel Noriega, who had been indicted in the United States on drug trafficking charges and was accused of suppressing democracy in Panama and endangering U.S. nationals.
- Dec 21 1861 – Medal of Honor: Public Resolution 82, containing a provision for a Navy Medal of Valor, is signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln.



- Dec 21 1945 – WW2: General George S. Patton, commander of the U.S. 3rd Army, dies from injuries suffered not in battle but in a freak car accident. He was 60 years old.
- Dec 21 1969 – Vietnam: Thailand announces plans to withdraw its 12,000-man contingent from South Vietnam. Thai forces went to Vietnam as part of the Free World Military Forces, an effort by President Lyndon B. Johnson to enlist allies for the United States and South Vietnam.
- Dec 21 2004 – Iraq War: A suicide bomber kills 22 at the forward operating base next to the main U.S. military airfield at Mosul, the single deadliest suicide attack on American soldiers to date.
- Dec 22 1775 – American Revolution: The Continental Congress creates a Continental Navy, naming Esek Hopkins, Esq., as commander in chief of the fleet.
- Dec 22 1807 – Napoleonic Wars: In an effort to avoid engaging in the Napoleonic Wars, the United States Congress passed the Embargo Act, forbidding American ships from engaging in trade with foreign nations.
- Dec 22 1864 – Civil War: Savannah, Georgia falls to General William Tecumseh Sherman, concluding his "March to the Sea". Sherman presents the city of to President Abraham Lincoln. Sherman captured the city after his famous March to the Sea from Atlanta. Savannah had been one of the last major ports that remained open to the Confederates.
- Dec 22 1917 – WWI: A week after the armistice was signed between Russia and Germany and nearly three weeks after a ceasefire was declared on the Eastern Front, representatives of the two countries begin peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk, near the Polish border in what is now the city of Brest, in Belarus.
- Dec 22 1941 – WW2: British Prime Minister Winston Churchill arrives in Washington, D.C. for a series of meetings with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on a unified Anglo-American war strategy and a future peace.

- Dec 22 1944 – WW2: Battle of the Bulge – German troops demand the surrender of United States troops at Bastogne, Belgium, prompting the famous one word reply by General Anthony McAuliffe: "Nuts!"
- Dec 22 1944 – WW2: The People's Army of Vietnam is formed to resist Japanese occupation of Indo-China, now Vietnam.
- Dec 22 1971 – Vietnam: The Soviet Union accuses China of backing U.S. policies in Vietnam, an accusation that illustrates the growing rift between the two communist superpowers.
- Dec 22 1989 – Berlin's Brandenburg Gate re-opens after nearly 30 years, effectively ending the division of East and West Germany.
- Dec 22 2010 – The repeal of the Don't Ask Don't Tell policy, the 17 year old policy ban on homosexuals serving openly in the United States military, is signed into law by President Barack Obama.
- Dec 23 1783 – American Revolution: Following the signing of the Treaty of Paris, General George Washington resigns as commander in chief of the Continental Army and retires to his home at Mount Vernon, Virginia.
- Dec 23 1941 – WW2: Despite throwing back an earlier Japanese amphibious assault, the U.S. Marines and Navy defenders on Wake Island after 15 days of fighting capitulate to a second Japanese invasion.
- Dec 23 1944 – WW2: Gen. Dwight Eisenhower endorses the finding of a court-martial in the case of Eddie Slovik, who was tried for desertion, and authorizes his execution, the first such sentence against a U.S. Army soldier since the Civil War, and the only man so punished during World War II.
- Dec 23 1946 – President Harry S. Truman appoints an amnesty board to review cases of conscientious objectors (CO's) who were imprisoned after refusing to serve during World War II. Truman's predecessor, Franklin Roosevelt, had pardoned select World War I "draft dodgers" in 1933.
- Dec 23 1948 – In Tokyo Japan, Hideki Tojo, former Japanese premier and chief of the Kwantung Army, is executed along with six other top Japanese leaders for their war crimes during World War II.



**Hideki Tojo (left) before the International Military Tribunal (right) for the Far East**

- Dec 23 1968 – Cold War: The 82 member crew and captain of the U.S. intelligence gathering ship Pueblo are released after 11 months imprisonment by the government of North Korea. The

ship, and its 83-man crew, was seized by North Korean warships on January 23 and charged with intruding into North Korean waters.

- Dec 23 2002 – Iraq War: A MQ-1 Predator is shot down by an Iraqi MiG-25, making it the first time in history that an aircraft and an unmanned drone had engaged in combat.
- Dec 24 1814 – War of 1812: Treaty of Ghent signed, ending the War of 1812 between the United States and England.
- Dec 24 1864 – Civil War: Fort Fisher NC – A 60 ship Union fleet under Admiral David Dixon Porter begins a bombardment of the fort. Although an impressive display of firepower, the attack failed to destroy it and ground attack the next day did not succeed either.
- Dec 24 1914 – WWI: The 'Christmas truce' begins. It lasts through Xmas Day and as long as New Year's Day in some areas of the front.
- Dec 24 1964 – Vietnam: Two Viet Cong agents disguised as South Vietnamese soldiers leave a car filled with explosives parked at the Brinks Hotel in Saigon. The hotel was housing U.S. officers. Two Americans were killed in the blast and 65 Americans and Vietnamese were injured.
- Dec 24 1955 – NORAD Tracks Santa for the first time in what will become an annual Christmas Eve tradition.
- Dec 24 1964 – Vietnam: Viet Cong operatives bomb the Brinks Hotel in Saigon to demonstrate they can strike an American installation in the heavily guarded capital.
- Dec 24 1979 – Afghanistan: The Soviet Union invades Afghanistan, under the pretext of upholding the Soviet-Afghan Friendship Treaty of 1978.
- Dec 25 1776 – American Revolution: General George Washington crosses the Delaware River with 5,400 troops, hoping to surprise a Hessian force celebrating Christmas at their winter quarters in Trenton, New Jersey.
- Dec 25 1837 – Seminole Wars: Battle of Lake Okeechobee. Casualties and losses: US 138 – Seminoles 25
- Dec 25 1868 – U.S. President Andrew Johnson grants unconditional pardon to all Civil War Confederate soldiers.
- Dec 25 1914 – WWI: Xmas Truce – Just after midnight on Christmas morning, the majority of German troops ceased firing their guns and artillery and commenced to sing Christmas carols. At certain points along the eastern and western fronts, the soldiers of Russia, France, and Britain even heard brass bands joining the Germans in their joyous singing.



- Dec 25 1941 – WW2: The British garrison in Hong Kong surrenders to the Japanese. Hong Kong was a British Crown colony whose population was overwhelmingly ethnic Chinese.

- Dec 25 1991 – Cold War: The USSR is declared officially dissolved marking the end of the Cold War.
- Dec 26 1776 – American Revolution: Battle of Trenton – The Continental Army attacks and successfully defeats a garrison of Hessian mercenaries. Casualties and losses: US 7 – GB/Hessians 1001
- Dec 26 1861 – Civil War: The Trent Affair – Confederate diplomatic envoys James M. Mason and John Slidell are freed by the United States government, thus heading off a possible war between the United States and United Kingdom.
- Dec 26 1862 – Civil War: The Battle of Chickasaw Bayou begins. It ends on 29 DEC with a Confederate victory. Casualties and losses: US 1,777 – CSA 217
- Dec 26 1862 – Indian Wars: The largest mass-hanging in U.S. history took place in Mankato, Minnesota, 38 Native Americans (Dakota) die.



- Dec 26 1943 – WW2: The German battle cruiser Scharnhorst is sunk by British warships in the Arctic after decoded German naval signals reveal that the Scharnhorst is on a mission to attack an Anglo-American convoy to Russia.
- Dec 26 1944 – WW2: General George S. Patton's Third Army, spearheaded by the 4th Armored Division, reaches the surrounded city of Bastogne, Belgium. However it was not until 28 DEC that the area was completely cleared of German troops.
- Dec 26 1967 – Vietnam: Laotian Premier Souvanna Phouma reports that North Vietnamese troops have started a general offensive against government forces in southern Laos.
- Dec 26 1971 – Vietnam: In the sharpest escalation of the war since Operation Rolling Thunder ended in November 1968, U.S. fighter-bombers begin striking at North Vietnamese airfields, missile sites, anti-aircraft emplacements, and supply facilities. These raids continued for five days.
- Dec 26 1972 – Vietnam: As part of Operation Linebacker II, 120 American B-52 Stratofortress bombers attacked Hanoi, including 78 launched from Andersen Air Force Base in Guam, the largest single combat launch in Strategic Air Command
- Dec 26 1998 – Iraq announces its intention to fire upon U.S. and British warplanes that patrol the northern and southern no-fly zones.
- Dec 27 1814 – War of 1812: The American schooner USS Carolina is destroyed. It was the last of Commodore Daniel Patterson's makeshift fleet that fought a series of delaying actions that contributed to Andrew Jackson's victory at the Battle of New Orleans.



- Dec 27 1844 – Civil War: The broken and defeated Confederate Army of Tennessee finishes crossing the Tennessee River as General John Bell Hood’s force retreats into Mississippi.
- Dec 27 1846 – Old West: The rag-tag army of volunteers known as Doniphan’s Thousand, led by Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan, wins a major victory in the war with Mexico with the occupation of El Paso.
- Dec 27 1922 – Japanese aircraft carrier Hosho becomes the first purpose built aircraft carrier to be commissioned in the world.
- Dec 27 1941 – WW2: Operation Anthropoid, the plot to assassinate high-ranking Nazi officer Reinhard Heydrich, commences.
- Dec 27 1941 – WW2: On the federal Office of Price Administration initiates its first rationing program in support of the American effort in World War II: It mandates that from that day on, no driver will be permitted to own more than five automobile tires.
- Dec 27 1942 – WW2: The German military begins enlisting Soviet POWs in the battle against Russia. General Andrei Vlasov, a captured Soviet war hero turned anticommunist, was made commander of the renegade Soviet troops.



Vlasov and Himmler

- Dec 27 1966 –Vietnam: A United States and South Vietnamese joint-service operation takes place against one of the best-fortified Viet Cong strongholds, located in the U Minh Forest in the Mekong Delta, 125 miles southwest of Saigon.
- Dec 27 1969 –Vietnam: In the fiercest battle in six weeks, U.S. and North Vietnamese forces clash near Loc Ninh, about 80 miles north of Saigon. Elements of the 1st Infantry Division reported killing 72 of 250 North Vietnamese soldiers in a daylong battle.
- Dec 27 1996 – Afghanistan: Taliban forces retake the strategic Bagram Airfield which solidifies their buffer zone around Kabul, Afghanistan.
- Dec 28 1781 – American Revolution: British troops commanded by Major James Henry Craig are posted at John’s Island, just outside of Charleston, South Carolina.

- Dec 28 1835 – Osceola leads his Seminole warriors in Florida into the Second Seminole War against the United States Army. It lasts for 10 years.
- Dec 28 1964 – Vietnam: South Vietnamese troops retake Binh Gia in a costly battle which ended 1 Jan. Casualties and losses: ARVN 461 – VC 32
- Dec 28 1972 – Vietnam: After 11 days of Operation Linebacker 2 heavy bombing raids North Vietnam agrees to return to the Paris peace talks.
- President Nixon halts the air offensive and agrees to resume peace negotiations with Hanoi representative Le Duc Tho.
- Dec 29 1778 – American Revolution: British Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Campbell and his force of between 2500 and 3600 troops, which included the 71st Highland regiment, New York Loyalists, and Hessian mercenaries, launch a surprise attack on American forces defending Savannah, Georgia and capture the city.
- Dec 29 1812 – War of 1812: The USS Constitution under the command of Captain William Bainbridge, captures the HMS Java off the coast of Brazil after a three hour battle.
- Dec 29 1813 – War of 1812: The two day Battle of Buffalo (a.k.a. Battle of Black Rock) begins with an ensuing rout of American forces and a British victory. Casualties and losses: US 169 – Brit. 112.
- Dec 29 1835 – Indian Wars: The Treaty of New Echota is signed, ceding all the lands of the Cherokee east of the Mississippi River to the United States.
- Dec 29 1862 – Civil War: Battle of Chickasaw Bluffs – Union General William T. Sherman is thwarted in his attempt to capture Vicksburg, Mississippi, when he orders a frontal assault on entrenched Rebels.
- Dec 29 1890 – The last major conflict of the Indian wars takes place at Wounded Knee Creek in South Dakota after Colonel James W. Forsyth of the 7th Cavalry tries to disarm Chief Big Foot and his followers. U.S. soldiers kill more than 200 Oglala Lakota people with four Hotchkiss guns. Casualties and losses: US 64 – Sioux about 300.



**A Hotchkiss 42 mm gun**



**Wounded Knee Memorial**

- Dec 29 1934 – Japan renounces the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 and the London Naval Treaty of 1930.
- Dec 29 1940 – WW2: In the evening London suffers its most devastating air raid when Germans firebomb the city. Hundreds of fires caused by the exploding bombs engulfed areas of London, but firefighters showed a valiant indifference to the bombs falling around them and saved much of the city. Almost 3600 civilians are killed.
- Dec 29 1966 – Vietnam: Assistant Secretary of Defense Arthur Sylvester admits that the North Vietnamese city of Nam Dinh has been hit by U.S. planes 64 times since mid-1965, and that the

air strikes were directed only against military targets: railroad yards, a warehouse, petroleum storage depots, and a thermal power plant.

- Dec 30 1813 – War of 1812: British soldiers and Indians sack Buffalo NY and burn down all but 4 of its buildings. They also destroy the navy yard, three armed schooners, and one sloop. They then move on to the independent municipality of Black Rock and burn all but one of its buildings.
- Dec 30 1862 – Civil War: The U.S.S. Monitor sinks in a storm off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. Just nine months earlier, the ship had been part of a revolution in naval warfare when the ironclad dueled to a standstill with the C.S.S. Virginia.
- Dec 30 1950 – Cold War: In a fiery statement, Secretary of State Dean Acheson declares that the United States will increase its efforts to contain communist aggression and calls upon the American people for support and sacrifice.
- Dec 30 1970 – Vietnam: The South Vietnamese Navy receives 125 U.S. vessels in a ceremony marking the end of the U.S. Navy’s four-year role in inland waterway combat. This brings the total number of vessels turned over to the South Vietnamese Navy to 650.
- Dec 30 1972 – Vietnam: Officials in Washington, D.C., announce that the peace talks in Paris between National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger and North Vietnamese negotiator Le Duc Tho will resume on January 2. On December 28, Hanoi agreed to return to the negotiations, and President Nixon ordered a halt to Linebacker II, the intensive bombing over the densely populated area between Hanoi and Haiphong.
- Dec 30 2006 – Iraq: Former President of Iraq Saddam Hussein is executed. His last words are, “To the hell that is Iraq!?” Video at <https://youtu.be/n6IFzM3eoss>.



- Dec 30 2009 – Afghanistan: A suicide bomber kills nine people at Forward Operating Base Chapman, a key facility of the Central Intelligence Agency.
- Dec 31 1775 – American Revolution: Battle of Quebec – Patriot forces under Colonel Benedict Arnold and General Richard Montgomery attempt to capture the city of Quebec under cover of darkness and snowfall. They fail, and the effort costs Montgomery his life. Casualties and losses: Colonies & 1st Canadian Regiment 515 – GB & QP 19.
- Dec 31 1862 – Civil War: The three day Battle of Stones River begins near Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Casualties and losses: US 12,906 – CSA 11,759

- Dec 31 1862 – Civil War: Battle of Parker’s Crossing – Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest narrowly escapes capture during a raid at the Crossroads in western Tennessee. Despite the close call, the raid was instrumental in forcing Union General Ulysses S. Grant to abandon his first attempt to capture Vicksburg, Mississippi.
- Dec 31 1862 – Civil War: Abraham Lincoln signs an act that admits West Virginia to the Union, thus dividing Virginia in two.
- Dec 31 1942 – WW2: After five months of battle, Emperor Hirohito allows the Japanese commanders at Guadalcanal to retreat. Casualties and losses: US 7,104 – Japan 32,000.
- Dec 31 1944 – WW2: The provisional government of Hungary officially declares war on Germany, bringing an end to Hungary’s cooperation—sometimes free, sometimes coerced—with the Axis power.
- Dec 31 1944 – WW2: Operation Nordwind, the last major German offensive on the Western Front begins.
- Dec 31 1946 – WW2: War related deaths – US President Harry S. Truman officially proclaims the end of hostilities in World War II. US 418,500 - GE 7 to 9M - JP 2.6 to 3.1M - Total 60 to 85M.
- Dec 31 1968 – Vietnam: The bloodiest year of the war. At year's end, 536,040 American servicemen were stationed in Vietnam. Estimates indicated that 181,150 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese were killed during the year. Allied losses were 43,463 KIA. Since January 1961, more than 31,000 U.S. servicemen had been killed in Vietnam and over 200,000 U.S. personnel had been wounded.
- Dec 31 1971 – Vietnam: The gradual U.S. withdrawal from the conflict in Southeast Asia is reflected in reduced annual casualty figures. The number of Americans killed in action dropped to 1,386 from the previous year total of 4,204. South Vietnam losses for the year totaled 21,500 men, while the combined Viet Cong and North Vietnamese total was estimated at 97,000 killed in action.
- Dec 31 1978 – Cold War: Flags at both the American embassy in Taipei and the Taiwanese embassy in the United States are lowered for the last time as U.S. relations with Taiwan officially come to an end. On January 1, 1979 the United States officially recognized the government of the People’s Republic of China

[Source: <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history> | This Day In History | December 2016 ++]