



## Remembering Our Heritage



**4 Apr 1877:** The decision to withdraw the Army from Alaska became official. It also coincided with the withdrawal of troops from the South and the end of Reconstruction. In March 1877, General William T. Sherman, Commanding General, U.S. Army, informed Secretary of War, George W. McCrary that the Army could no longer afford to provide military government in Alaska. He believed the Treasury Department with its customs agents supported by Revenue Cutter Service vessels was better equipped for the duties. In addition to cost, the Army cited the jurisdictional difficulties it had encountered and the need to redistribute its troops to meet the manpower requirements of the campaign it was conducting against the Sioux in the Dakota Territory. (Nielson, *Armed Forces on a Northern Frontier*, pp. 25 and 26.)

**6-7 Apr 1929:** Headquarters, 8th Corps Area, ordered the Group to border patrol, between Douglas and Nogales, Arizona. The order, relayed by telephone, was prompted by revolutionary activities in northern Mexico. A detachment of the 90th Squadron traveled by air and rail on 6-7 April for Naco, AZ to perform daily border patrols until the end of April 1929. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), Activation to 31 December 1941, pp. 15-16)

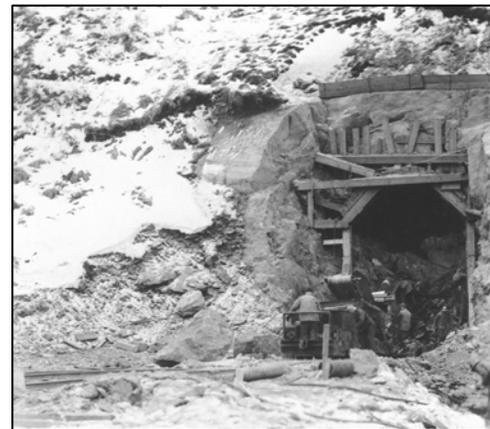


**3 Apr 1939:** President Roosevelt signed the National Defense Act of 1940, which provided the Army Air Corps with more than 48,000 personnel, 6,000 aircraft and a budget of \$300 million for fiscal year 1940 (July 1939-June 1940). The act also authorized the Army Air Corps to train Black pilots. (Haulman, *One Hundred Years of Flight*, p. 35.)



**3 Apr 1940:** The Appropriations Committee to the House of Representatives drastically reduced the \$18,535,560 the War Department had requested in February 1940 for the Panama Canal Zone, Hawaii, and Alaska to \$4,305,675, and sent the bill to the Senate. The funds for the Panama Canal Zone were slightly reduced, those for Hawaii were cut in half and those for the Anchorage airbase eliminated. In a last ditch effort to have the funding restored for an airbase near Anchorage, Delegate Anthony Dimond from Alaska spoke before Congress. He emphasized the strategic importance of Alaska noting that if an enemy seized Hawaii, it would be 2,400 miles from the mainland United States while by seizing the undefended Alaska, it would be 750 miles away. (DoD, *US Army in World War II: The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Japan*, p. 9.)

**5 Apr 1941:** President Roosevelt signed the Fifth Supplemental National Defense Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1941. It contained \$5,300,000 in funding for a railroad tunnel from Portage to the Passage Canal on the east side of the Chugach Mountains and 14 miles of railroad connecting with the Alaska Railroad at Portage and terminating on the Passage Canal leading into Prince William Sound. The idea for the tunnel and port had been in progress for some time. The Alaska Engineering Commission, Alaska Railroad and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers wanted an alternate Alaska Rail Road terminal to the one at Seward. The Seward to Portage section of the railroad ran through rugged terrain subject to avalanches and at one point looped around in a wide circle. The war added, with the threat of sabotage and air attacks against the vulnerable section of track, added emphasis. A reconnaissance and survey had been made in 1913 and 1914 and Alaska Railroad engineers made another surveys in 1939 and 1940, which showed that





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the project could be accomplished. General Marshall, in his testimony before Congress in support of military construction in Alaska, spoke in favor of the project. General DeWitt expressed his concerns; and on 13 July 1940, the Army authorized a survey. Lieutenant Alvin Welling and Mr. James G. Truitt from the Seattle District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recommended that a three and a half mile tunnel be drilled through the mountains from the Portage Moraine to an area near the Whittier Glacier on the east side. Since the Alaska Railroad lacked the funds, General DeWitt recommended that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers be given the project. Colonel Richard Park, the Division Engineer from Portland, OR; Col. Otto Ohlson, General Manager of the Alaska Railroad; and Major Benjamin B. Talley, made arrangements for a survey party to determine the direction of the tunnel and location of the port and terminal railroad facilities on the Passage Canal. The Whittier project, supervised by Major Talley's Anchorage office would become one of the most beneficial U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's projects in the Territory during World War II. The survey work and decision to extend the railroad and built the Port of Whittier led to the decision to between the Alaska Railroad and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that a town should be built at the port. The U.S. General Land Office surveyed a site shortly afterwards and the Town of Whittier was developed after the war. It was incorporated in 1969. (Bush, *Narrative Report of Alaska Construction*, pp. 122-124; Woodman, *Duty Station Northwest*, pp. 363-365.)



Maj. Gen. S. Buckner preparing to set off final blast of tunnel (11/20/42)



**2 Apr 1942:** Lieutenant Colonel John Davies, a former member of the 3rd Attack Group and veteran of the East Indies Campaign, formerly assumed command of the 3rd Bombardment Group. Lieutenant Strickland was designated Group Executive Officer. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), 1 January 1942 to 31 March 1944, p. 99, *The Grim Reapers*, p. 11)

**6 Apr 1942:** Lt Ruegg led a second attack with eight A-24s against the Lae airdrome, which succeed-



ed in destroying several aircraft. The Japanese shot down one A-24 and damaged another. Lt Henry Schwartz and his gunner, Sgt John Stevenson, were declared missing in action, becoming the first 3<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group casualties of the war. Colonel Davis led the crews of six B-25s of the 13th Squadron on an 800-mile round trip low-level strike against the Japanese aircraft redistribution field at Gasmata on the southern coast of New Britain Island. The 3rd Attack Group claimed 40 Japanese planes destroyed or damaged with no B-25 losses. This was the first mission flown by B-25s against Japanese forces. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), 1 January 1942 to 31 March 1944, p. 8, *The Grim Reapers*, pp. 17-18)

**6-8 Apr 1943:** Lieutenant Billy Wheeler provided a different view of Adak (code named Longview) than the one he had provided in late September. He notes: It's practically a garrison post at this writing. The entire bombing command has moved from the haunts and pleasures and the marts of sin at Elmendorf to this comparatively barren and desolate island. We're now living comfortably in Quonset Huts and bathing daily-

Source: Office of History, Elmendorf AFB



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well almost daily-in the luxurious Navy showers located next to MG Butler's quarters. Movies are being shown four or five different locations, cokes available, long lines for them, a block long. Food improved. (Wheeler Diary.)

**3 Apr 1944:** Colonel John Henebry led the first strike by the 3rd Bombardment Group against the Japanese at Hollandia, New Guinea. It was also the first employment of low-level tactics on Hollandia and the effects were devastating, softening the target for a successful Allied landing. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), 1 April 1944 to 31 December 1944, Unit History for April, p. 4, *Grim Reapers*, p. 78)



**2 Apr 1951:** During a night training demonstration, four B-26s, two from the 8th Bombardment Squadron and two from the 13th Bombardment Squadron, flew a nighttime flare illuminated strafing, rocket fire and bombing demonstration against the "rock." The demonstration was primarily for newly assigned flight personnel to observe the basic tactics of the wing's missions. Unfortunately, with spectators looking on, Major Stein's B-26 slammed into the water while approaching the target area.

Spectators watched as he began his decent into the target area, but for unknown reasons, he continued descending until he hit the water. He and the bombardier both died in the crash. (Hist, 13BS, April 1951, p. 5)

**4 Apr 1967:** Americans on T-3, a floating ice island in the Arctic Ocean, observed a Russian single-engine biplane land nearby and its occupants conduct scientific research. The Americans and Russians visited for about ten minutes. The Russian plane flew over T-3 on 5 and again of 9 April. A Navy Douglas R4D supporting T-3 spotted two Russian helicopters and flew over the Russian ice camp, which was about 340 to 350 miles north of Point Barrow. On 10 April a biplane over flew T-3. A C-124 crew, on the same day, reported a biplane parked 30 miles from T-3. On 14 April, a Russian two-engine plane over flew the ice island. It was followed by a biplane the next day. A Navy Douglas R4D from the Naval Arctic Research Laboratory at Pont Barrow landed at the Russian camp on 16 April. The Americans presented the Russians with five cases of beer and 20 cartons of cigarettes and the Russians in turn gave the Americans a keg of caviar and a case of frozen fish. The R4D made another courtesy call on 18 April. (Weidman, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1967, pp. 136-139.)

**3 Apr 1968:** 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing was named outstanding USAF tactical fighter wing of the year from 12 Mar 1967 to 29 Feb 1969 by American Fighter Pilots Association. (3 TFW History, chronology)

**7 Apr 1968:** Two F-100s, 90th Tactical Fighter Squadron, scrambled to aid a US Army battalion which inadvertently stumbled into a regimental-sized North Vietnamese Army base camp eight miles northeast of Phuoc Vihn. Pilots dropped their 500-pound high drag bombs directly on target, blocking the enemy retreat route. They also released napalm and 20mm canon fire on the enemy. (Hist, 3 TFW, Apr-Jun 68, pp. 35-36)



**6 Apr 1969:** F-100 aircraft from the 90th Tactical Fighter Squadron destroyed 40 fortifications and damaged two others as they attacked an enemy base camp 50 miles southwest of



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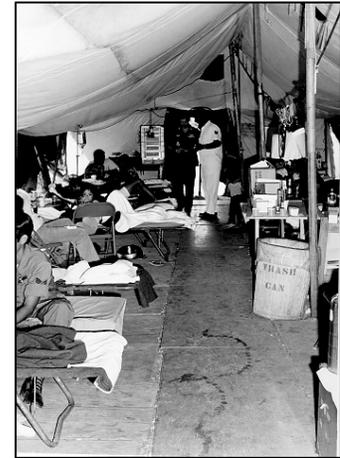


Can Tho. The FAC described the target as an active enemy encampment area consisting of a series of fortifications along both sides of an east-west canal. The pilots said that, after two bomb runs, they had the place “smoking and burning real good.” (3 TFW History, Apr-Jun 69, p. 25)

**2 Apr 1975:** The 17th Tactical Airlift Squadron began flying its last refueling missions to the Greenland DEW Line sites DYE II and DYE III. The annual refueling mission along with the squadrons C-130D ski-wheel cargo aircraft were scheduled to be turned over to the 109th Tactical Airlift Group, New York Air National Guard. The 17th Tactical Airlift Squadron assisted by crews from the 109 Tactical Airlift Group in a training status airlifted 336,600 gallons of Arctic diesel fuel to DYE II in 105 sorties and 324,600 gallons to DYE III in 103 sorties. Following the fuel re-supply mission, one C-130D remained at Sondrestrom until 18 June 1975 supporting the Greenland Ice Sheet Program, a scientific program involving testing a deep ice drilling system. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, Jul 1974-Jun 1975, p. 280.)

**3 Apr 1975:** Operation Babylift began when President Ford announced that the US would begin evacuating approximately 2,000 orphans from South Vietnam. The first C-5 Babylift aircraft from Saigon crashed shortly after takeoff, killing 155 of the 403 aboard. Among the dead were 98 orphans, 46 escorts and 11 crewmembers. (3 TFW History, Apr-Jun 1975, p. 104)

**5 Apr 1975:** The first plane of Operation Babylift orphans arrived at Clark AB with 31 children aboard. The 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing was stationed at Clark AB and hosted the operations. (3 TFW History, Apr-Jun 1975, p. 105)



**8 Apr 1976:** Major D. Currin, Case Civil Engineer at Shemya AFB accepted beneficial occupancy of the four Cooper-Bessemer diesel generators. The project to install and operate the former Safeguard generators to meet the increase power demands of the Cobra Dane phased array radar had been plagued with problems and delays. The delays resulted in the shipment and installation of Solar generators from Harvest Base mobility stocks assigned to the 4449<sup>th</sup> Mobile Operational Bare Base Squadron at Holloman AFB, NM. The Cooper-Bessemer generators promptly failed due to contaminated oil left in the sumps and an accumulation of oxide and scale in the tubing during their five year storage. The operators had to revert back to the Solar generators, which had been retained as a contingency. In the interim, work continued on rehabilitated the older American Locomotive Company and Worthington generators. The Cooper Bessemer generators were brought back on line in June. Despite the fixes, the generators continued to fail during 1976, including 25 October to date the Cobra Dane systems testing began. The Solar generators were shipped back to Holloman AFB, NM, and on 30 November 1976, the Commander, 4449<sup>th</sup> Mobile Operational Bare Base Squadron, contacted AAC that they had been received in a poor state of repair. This resulted in AAC funding an inspection and repair contract. (Hales, Hist, AAC, 1976, pp. 275-292, 296.)

**2-9 Apr 1987:** Headquarters, NORAD, conducted a NORAD Regional Evaluation (NOE) of the Alaskan NORAD Region. The region received an outstanding rating. It was the highest rating given to a NORAD region in recent years. Canadian Brig. Gen. Ronald Bell, Deputy Commander, ANR, prepared it for the inspection. The inspectors noted the intensity of training and sense of mission purposed was clearly evident. The ANR, unlike other NORAD regions, had to respond to Soviet bomber flights on a frequent basis. Additionally, its computer based Information Management System had been completely revamped. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1987, p. 119.)

**6 Apr 1992 – Completion of the F-15E Beddown:** With the arrival of F-15Es, 90-0253 and 90-254, from the McDonnell-Douglas factory, the beddown of the F-15E was completed. (Hist, 11AF, 1992, p. 67)



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**6 Apr 1992 (Mon):** With the arrival of F-15Es, 90-0253 and 90-254, from the McDonnell-Douglas factory, the bed down of the F-15E was completed on Elmendorf AFB. The fighters were assigned to the 90<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron. (Cloe, Hist, 11 AF, 1992, p. 67.)

**8 Apr - 17 Jul 1995 – Operation PROVIDE COMFORT:** In a historic first, the 54<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron deployed six F-15Cs to Incirlik AB, Turkey in support of Provide Comfort, a humanitarian mission that ensured that the Iraqis would not fly air strikes against the Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq. The 19<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron later relieved the 54<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron. The deployment lasted until 17 July 1995. (Hist, 11AF, 1995, 74)

**2 Apr 2001 – Privatized Housing Ground-breaking:** Brigadier General Douglas Fraser, Commander, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wing; the Honorable Jimmy Dishner, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Air Force for Installations; and Jonathan Rubini, Chairman and CEO of JL Properties, officiated in ground-breaking ceremony to officially kick off the housing privatization project at Elmendorf AFB. (Hist, 3 WG, 2001, p.1; SSgt Nate Hier, "Privatization Fully Underway," *Sourdough Sentinel*, 6 Apr 2001)



**5 Apr 2002:** Colonel Robertus "Dutch" Remkes assumed command of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wing from Brig Gen Douglas Fraser during ceremonies held in Hangar Three, Elmendorf AFB, beginning at 1000 AM. Lieutenant General Norton Schwartz, Commander, Eleventh Air Force, presided over the ceremonies. (Staff Reports, "Change of Command, Remkes Takes Helm of 3<sup>rd</sup> Wing," *Sourdough Sentinel*, 5 Apr 2002)

**8-9 Apr 2005:** Three separate DUI incidents occurred during this weekend. As a result, General Snodgrass instituted a new policy requiring offenders and their chain of command to appear in front of him the following duty day after the incident. (Miller, *3 WG Hist 2005*, 2006.)