



Remembering Our Heritage



20-26 August

26 Aug 1901: Lieutenant William “Billy” Mitchell arrived at Fort Egbert, Eagle. Major General Adolphus W. Greely, Chief of U.S. Army Signal Corps, sent him north on a fact-finding mission after becoming concerned about the slow progress being made on the Eagle to Valdez Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System (WAMCATS) link. Lieutenant Mitchell and his party 17 signalmen departed Fort Myer, Virginia on 13 August 1901, traveled across country by train and then by steam ship to Skagway, where they boarded a train on the narrow gauge railway between Skagway and Whitehorse. On arrival at Whitehorse, Lieutenant Mitchell and his party traveled on a 40-foot flat boat down the Yukon River to Eagle. After spending 17 days at Eagle in the vicinity inspecting work in progress, he then traveled down the Yukon River to St. Michael, stopping along the route to visit Fort Gibbon near Tanana. Lieutenant Mitchell arrived at Fort St. Michael on 25 September where he boarded a steamer for Seattle. He arrived in Seattle on 17 October 1901. (Woodman, *Duty Station Northwest*, Vol. I, pp. 216-219.)



24 Aug 1914: Three Royal Flying Corps pilots achieved the first airplane aerial victory when they forced down a German plane by maneuvering against it. One of the British pilots landed, chased away the German crew and set fire to their plane. (Haulman, *100 Years of Flight*, p. 12.)

25 Aug 1917: The 104th Aero Squadron was activated at Kelly Field, TX. This unit was redesignated the 13th Squadron and later assigned to the 3rd Bomb Group throughout World War II and the Korean War. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), Activation to 31 December 1941, p 5)



16 Aug 1934: The Alaska Flight departed Fairbanks for Juneau on the first leg of its return journey to Bolling Field. During its stay in Alaska, the YB-10 crews flew photographic surveys, looked for possible airfield sites and gathered information on Alaska. Using Fairbanks as a base, the Alaska Flight conducted flights to Anchorage and Fort Yukon. On 17 June 1934, the flight departed Juneau for Seattle flying over water for most of the 943 mile route returning to Bolling Field on 20 August 1934. The flight demonstrated the Army Air Corps capability to

deploy aircraft to Alaska without flying over Canada. The flight flew 7,360 miles without major incident. While in Alaska, it photographed 23,000 square miles of the territory and pinpointed strategic areas for future military airfield development. (Army Air Corps Newsletter, Aug 23, 1934.)

22 Aug 1939: Colonel John C. H. Lee, North Pacific Division Engineer and his party arrived at Fairbanks in two Army amphibian airplanes piloted by Maj Dale V. Gaffney and Maj Newton Longfellow, Army Air Corps. The party of 15 also included Maj Edward M. George, Army Quartermaster Corps, Capt C. W. Gibson, and West Point Cadet John Lee Jr. The purpose of the visit was to survey the site proposed for the cold weather test station (later renamed Ladd Field and now known as Fort Wainwright). Local laborers began clearing the site, preparing the ground for the runway, construction a section of railway, developing a water system and pouring a concrete pad to determine the effects of freezing and thawing. (Woodman, *Duty Station Northwest*, Vol II, p. 58.)



Remembering Our Heritage



20-26 August

20 Aug 1940: Major Everett Davis, Major E. D. Post, Intelligence and Operations Officer, Alaskan Defense Force, SSgt Joseph A. Grady, flight engineer and Corporal Edward D. Smith, radio operator took off from Merrill Field in their B-10B on an aerial survey of potential airfield locations. At the same time, Colonel Buckner took off in a Cessna piloted by Jack Jefford along with Marshal Hoppin, the head of the Civil Aeronautics Authority in Alaska. They were joined the next day by Lt Marvin Walseth in the O-38 from Ladd Field. Colonel Buckner and the others in the twin-engine Cessna flew over Little Diomed and Big Diomed Islands to investigate rumors that the Russians were building an airfield on the latter and then flew to Point Barrow. Major Davis, joined by Lieutenant Walseth, flew to Kotzebue and then on to Point Barrow where Major Davis was unable to land and had to return to Ladd Field. The others joined him several days later. Major Davis identified possible airfield locations near Unalakleet, Golovin, Council, Lake Kugruk, north of the Colville River and Nome. Colonel Buckner recommended fields at Nome, Kotzebue, McGrath and near the mouth of the Kuskokwim River. (Ransohoff, Hist, 11AF, pp 7-10.)



21 Aug 1941: Major Davis recommended in a memo to General Buckner that only essential fighting units with sufficient supplies be deployed forward on the fact that most advance bases in Alaska could only be re-supplied by air. He recommended pre-stocking munitions, fuel and spare parts in large amounts. He recommended just enough men to service the aircraft. Major Davis noted that because of Alaska's large size, a requirement existed to move aircraft around to meet any threat. (Ransohoff, Hist, 11AF, p 61.)



24 Aug 1942: Major Paul "Pappy" Gunn began modifying the A-20 attack aircraft by installing additional nose and side mounted machine guns and bomb racks for low-level attacks. He installed a 75mm cannon in "Lil Fox" and was impressed with its effectiveness. (*Grim Reapers*, p 35)

21 Aug 1943: *The Anchorage Daily Times* reported that President Roosevelt and Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King had issued a joint statement announcing the end of the Aleutian Campaign with a statement about the retaking of Kiska: "frees the last vestige of North American territory from Japanese Forces." (*The Anchorage Daily Times*, 21 Aug 1943, p 1.)

21 Aug 1943: The Eleventh Air Force destroyed 69 aircraft and sank or damaged 29 vessels in the Aleutians between June 1942 and 21 August 1943. It lost a total of 29 aircraft. (Hutchison, *World War II in the North Pacific*, p 116.)

25 Aug 1948: The Alaskan Air Command submitted its comments and recommendations to Headquarters, USAF, for dividing the lands on Fort Richardson and Elmendorf AFB and establishing boundaries and creating a new Fort Richardson. Fort Richardson which included Elmendorf AFB consisted of 52,800 acres of land traversed by 150 miles of roads and streets. The hospital, a World War II structure, was located eight and a half miles from the main post area near the junction of the Glenn and Davis Highways. The warehouses were four and a half to six miles from the main post and some of the family quarters were as much as fifteen miles away. The need to divide the Army and Air Force activities were based on the following factors: the Army need for facilities that could support 6,700 troops, the Departments of Army and Air



Remembering Our Heritage



20-26 August

Force approval in 1948 for the construction of a separate Army post on east Fort Richardson that required the expenditure of \$489,000,000, the continued efforts by AAC to support its remote stations and sites with limited resources, the improved ground defense capability in Alaska with the establishment of a separate Army garrison area, and the fact that the establishment of the separate garrison area would not result in duplication of effort and would assure maximum joint use of common facilities. (Hist., ALCOM, Jan 1947-Dec 1951, pp 118-120.)

26 Aug 1948: The 3rd Bombardment Group was relieved of administrative and logistical responsibilities for Yokota Air Base per General Order No. 53, HQ, Fifth Air Force. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), 1 January 1948 to 31 December 1949, Unit History for August, p 1)



21 Aug 1949: Ground breaking was held for a \$10 million project to build family housing in the Elmendorf AFB-Government Hill area. The project, which straddled the reservation boundary, consisted of 682 family units, eight to a building, shared two-thirds by Air Force and one-third by the Alaska Railroad. The latter was owned by the Department of Interior. The Alaska-Pacific Development Corporation and the Lewis Construction Company served as the main contractors. (Thomblison, Hist, AAC 1949, p 90.)

21-22 Aug 1949: The Alaskan Air Command's intelligence staff noted an unusual level of radar, barometric, light, sound and earth shock incidents leading it to believe the Soviets had exploded an atomic device. (Thomblison, Hist, AAC, 1949, p 52.)



22 Aug 1951: The 3rd Bombardment Wing completed the move from Iwakuni Air Base, Japan to Kunsan Air Base (K-8) on the west coast of Korea without any disruptions to its combat operations. (Hist, 3BG, Aug 51, Ch 3, p. 4; Ravenstein, *Air Force Combat Wings*, p 248, pp 10-11.)

20 Aug 1953: The Territory of Alaska formally accepted responsibility for the formation of a Ground Observer Corps of volunteers to augment the aircraft control and warning system. Colonel James C. Crockett, Retired,

Territorial Director of Civil Defense had informally agreed to it during a 11 August meeting with AAC representatives. The Command had had an informal system in place since 1948, but did not have the manpower to oversee its operation and provide training. The system had been organized to pass information on unknown aircraft and depended on volunteers from federal, territory, local agencies and private individuals. It had never proven effective due to lack of manpower, lack of training, limited communications, vast distances and remote locations. The Command had initiated steps in July 1953 to establish a viable Ground Observer Corps resulting in Colonel Crockett's agreement of head the system as a joint venture between AAC and the Territory of Alaska. By this time, the Civil Aeronautics Administration stations were active participants. The 1807th Airways and Air Communication (AACS) Group and Alaska Communication System were active participants as were the communications stations of the Alaska Native Service, Weather Bureau and the





Remembering Our Heritage



20-26 August

Alaska Department of Communications. Colonel Crockett agreed to organize and expand the system. It included appointing supervisors and then seeking volunteers. The Alaskan Air Command would help in the selection of observer post and provide training. Colonel appointed Mrs. Alex Holden to as the Ground Observer Corps administrator. While the Territory participation relieved AAC of the responsibility to administer the system, still had to exercise operational control and provide training. The most serious problem it faced was limited manpower. It asked without success for 12 officers and 12 enlisted men. Instead, it received three officer positions to cover a 586,000 square mile area, populated by approximately 130,000 people living in 960 communities. By the end of the year there were 200 ground observer posts in Alaska. Staff visits and exercises, however, showed that the system was not functioning as well as it should. (Ravenstein, Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1953, pp 81-96.)

26 Aug 1955: Major General George R. Acheson, Commander, AAC, stated the need to the Chief of Staff, USAF, for a TM-61 Matador surface-to-surface mission squadron in Alaska. The Command had already stated its need for a long-range strike capability. The requirement had been filled in part by the F-82G and later by the F-86F. The Alaskan Air National Guard's 114th Fighter-Bomber Squadron possessed a limited strike capability with its F-86Es and SAC promised to deploy F-84F to Eielson AFB. General Acheson believed, however, the fighter bombers lacked the capabilities of the Matador to attack Soviet bases in Siberia. He believed that an offense was the best defense in destroying the bomber bases. He stated:

As you know our air defense weapons system in Alaska is incomplete to the extent that it contains only those elements designed for final defense—that is, air-to-air fighting. We lack the ability to attack enemy air forces on bases in Siberia. I believe that an all-weather nuclear offensive capability is as much a part of the air defense of Alaska as in the final air battle—Certainly an on-hand all-weather offensive capability such as the TM-61 squadron would provide a significant augmentation to the present strategic fighter force. (Chart, Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1955, pp 49-50.)

22 Aug 1968: While PACAF Commander-in-Chief, General Joseph Nazzaro visits Bien Hoa, enemy forces launch an attack against the air base, delivering eleven 122mm rockets. One missile strikes the Vietnamese bomb dump, and the ensuing explosion causes widespread damage. (3 TFW History Jul-Sep 68, p 63.)

20 Aug 1974: C-124C (51-0075), the last Globemaster II in the active Air Force inventory, was permanently grounded after a 21st Composite Wing maintenance personnel found a cracked wing spar during a Time Compliance Tech Order inspection. The large cargo plane had made its last flight, a routine training mission of three hours, the day before. Later on 19 September 1974, the Air Force Logistics Command authorized the salvage of the C-124 and all usable parts



were removed. The cargo plane was then towed from its parking area near Hangar Five to the north side of the base where its tail was cut off as part of the de-militarization process. It was then turned over to the Defense Property Disposal Office on 5 December and dropped from the Air Force inventory on 10 December. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, Jul 1974-Jun 1975, pp 90-91.)



Remembering Our Heritage



20-26 August

20 Aug 1978: The last F-4E, 66-0333, needed to equip AAC's two tactical fighter squadrons arrived from the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing, Homestead AFB, FL. It gave AAC 36 operational authorized F-4E and four not operational authorized F-4Es as maintenance spares. Each squadron received 20 Phantoms, with the older 1966 models going to the 18th Tactical Fighter Squadron and the 1967 models assigned to the 43rd Tactical Fighter Squadron. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1978, pp 161-162.)



21 Aug 1984: Captain Mark Wilson and Lt. James Austin, 43rd Tactical Fighter Squadron, made the first intercept of a IL-18 Coot A. The intercept was made out of Galena over the Chukchi Sea. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1984, p 218.)

26 Aug 2002: The NORAD Inspector General conducted an Alert Force Evaluation on the 3rd Wing and 611th Air Control Squadron. Overall the 611 ACS received an Outstanding rating, while the 3rd Wing received an overall Excellent rating. (Rpt (FOUO), NORAD/IG, "611th Air Control Squadron Alert Force Evaluation Report, AMALGAM MUTE 02-04," 26 Aug 2002; Rpt (FOUO), NORAD/IG, "3rd Wing Alert Force Evaluation Report, AMALGAM MUTE 02-03," 26 Aug 2002.)