



# Remembering Our Heritage



## 27 August – 2 September

**29 Aug 1940:** Colonel Simon Buckner wrote a detailed letter to General DeWitt describing the trip he made to Nome, Point Barrow, Kotzebue and the Diomed Islands with Marshall Hoppin in a Civil Aeronautics Authority (CAA) plane for the purpose of checking out rumors that the Russians were fortifying Big Diomed Island and to assist Mr. Hoppin, the CAA Administrator in Alaska, locating airfield sites on the Seward Peninsula that had been proposed. Colonel Buckner elected to fly the reconnaissance of Big Diomed in the CAA plane piloted by Jack Jeffard rather than a military plane so as not to arouse Russian suspicion. He reported to General DeWitt that he spotted a few Eskimo houses and no military installations. Colonel Buckner noted that Big Diomed was too rugged for any large military construction and noted that "Mr. Dimond, in his zeal to hasten military appropriations for Alaska, may have made a good story out of some unconfirmed rumors." He went on to say, "At any event, the story has served the useful purpose of awakening Congress to the fact that we are not separated from possible enemies by broad oceans but by a narrow strait." In accessing locations for possible military as well as civilian airfields, Colonel Buckner felt that military fields on the Seward Peninsula would be difficult to defend and the terrain was would make construction difficult. (Ltr, Gen Buckner to Gen DeWitt, personal, 29 Aug 1940.)



**31 Aug 1940:** *The Anchorage Daily Times* reported that Colonel Buckner pinned on the rank of brigadier general and went duck hunting the same day. The paper quoted General Buckner as saying that his job as Commander, Alaska Defense Force was "the most interesting job in the Army," and that the "Defense of Alaska has never been thought of before. It's a brand new problem with practically no background or information. It is a big problem and most interesting to work on." The first problem, according to the paper, was suitable clothing for cold weather operations in Alaska and that General Bucker consulted old timers in Alaska to gather information. (*The Anchorage Daily Times*, 31 Aug 1940.)

**28 Aug 1942:** Col William O. Eareckson led three B-17Es from the 36th Bombardment Squadron on bombing mission against Kiska. The flight, late in taking off, ran into darkness and rain during the return flight. The first B-17 landed at Cape Field in heavy rain followed by Colonel Eareckson 30 minutes later. The third bomber, 41-9146, flown by Lt Albert J. Wilsey, who had been flying formation with Colonel Eareckson disappeared during a turn in the darkness. Lieutenant Wilsey and his copilot apparently became disorientated and flew off in another direction. The last radio transmission heard from him was that he had an hour of fuel left. In addition to Lt Wilsey, those lost included Lt Raymond L. Adair, Lt Charles H. Cooper, Lt John W. Sheppard, Cpl Paul W. Lyden, Pvt Charles W. Fantner, Pvt Rudolph S. Olesnsevich, Pvt Harold N. Knutson and Pvt Donald W. Brown. (Hist, 36<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, p. 13; Wheeler Diary, Carter and Mueller, *Combat Chronology, World War II*, p. 35.)





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**28 Aug 1943:** The 3rd Bombardment Group attacked a large fleet of barges bringing in supplies and equipment to Wewak, destroying 16 of the craft. The 3rd Bomb Group continued bombing Japanese shipping through the end of the month. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), 1 January 1942 to 31 March 1944, p. 65, *Grim Reapers*, p. 63)



**30 Aug 1945:** The 3rd Bombardment Group became the first bomber group stationed in Japan when a flight of A-26s, led by Col Howe, landed at Atsugi Airstrip. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), 1 July 1945 to 31 December 1945, Unit History for September, p. 10)



**1-10 Sep 1947:** General Carl A. Spaatz, Commanding General, Army Air Forces toured Army Air Force installations in Alaska. Issues discussed during the tour were: the need for an air defense system; the need to bring the 10th Rescue Squadron up to full strength; the unsuitability of Big Delta Auxiliary Field for a B-29 basing and possibility of Nenana as alternate; General George Kenney, Commander, Strategic Air Command preference for Shemya over Adak as a staging base for SAC forces because of its better runway and absence of surrounding terrain obstructions; elimination of all Air Force bases in the Aleutians except Shemya and transfer of Adak to the Navy; elimination of the Alaska Department and the creation an Army headquarters equivalent to the Alaskan Air

Command, the Joint Chiefs of Staff determination that Alaska was a strategic location. (Report, Visit of General Carl Spaatz to Alaska, not dated, copy on file in Office of History, 3rdWing.)

**28 Aug-18 Sep 1950:** The Alaskan Command conducted its first major field exercise, Dutch Door, a joint exercise emphasizing the defense of main base complexes of Fort Richardson, Elmendorf AFB, Eielson AFB and Ladd AFB. It involved only units already in Alaska. Lt Gen William E. Kepner, Commander-in-Chief, Alaskan Command, served as the exercise commander. The scenario involved an aggressor seizing the Nome, Galena and McGrath areas followed by a buildup of airborne, transport and fighter forces at those locations and establishing air superiority over Alaska. It required ALCOM to defend the main bases. The main exercise objective was to test personnel, equipment and defense plans and correct deficiencies. Deficiencies noted included lack of understanding of the exercise objective, poor tactical employment by Air Force and Army units, inadequate clothing, lack of adequate coordination, poor communications, and limited capability of radar air defense system. (Hist, ALCOM, Jan 1947-Dec 1951, pp. 209.)



**1 Sep 1950:** Lt Charles Bartels, a 13th Bombardment Squadron pilot, assigned to the 3rd Bomb Group, recounted a mission in support of the US 25th Infantry Division under attack by North Korean ground forces. A ground control unit marked the enemy positions allowing the pilot to deliver a string of 100-lb general-purpose bombs over the enemy formation. He then turned and strafed the enemy troops with his 14 forward firing machine guns. He continued this pattern until he had expended all of his ammunition. U.S. ground forces later claimed that the B-26B mission was a great success and that the body count was staggering. (Thompson, *B-26 Invader Units Over Korea*, p.17)



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**Sep 1951:** The 3rd Bombardment Wing continued to participate in Operation Strangle, targeted against road and rail traffic. The wing also introduced a wing-mounted searchlight into operations to illuminate convoys. Colonel Virgil O. Zoller, Commander, 3rd Bombardment Wing had originated the idea after seeing one at Langley AFB, Virginia. The Navy had mounted the 80 million-candle power AN/ANQ-2AA searchlights on its airships during World War II for submarine patrols. Resembling and about the size of a napalm tank, it was configured so that it could be mounted under aircraft wings. The navigator or observer controlled its elevation and azimuth from the cockpit by means of a toggle. The searchlights arrived in July and one was fitted under the right wing of an 8th Bombardment Squadron B-26. The initial test showed mixed result. Some snapped off their brackets and others caught on fire and had to be jettisoned. The searchlights generated considerable heat and could only be kept on for about 50 seconds. Their size created a considerable amount of drag and when turned on provided an illuminated target for the gunners below. Despite reservations, Colonel Olman decided to employ the searchlight operationally. Two were fitted under the right wings of 8th Bombardment Squadron B-26Bs. One was also installed under the wing of the 13th Bombardment Squadron B-26 and another under the wing of a 90th Bombardment Squadron B-26. (Hist, 8BS, Jul 51, p. 2; Hist, 3BG, Sep 51, Ops Section, p. 5; Hist, 8BS, Sep 51; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, p. 456.)



**1 Sep-15 Oct 1953:** The 21st Fighter-Bomber Wing deployed three F-86F equipped squadrons in successive two week rotations to Eielson AFB for air-to-ground training, nicknamed Project Knucklehead. The 72nd Fighter Bomber Squadron arrived first on 1 September and remained until 11 September. The 416th Fighter-Bomber Squadron replaced the first deployed squadron on 15 September after experiencing a weather delay in Canada. The 531st Fighter Bomber Squadron experienced a similar delay and did not arrive for its two week deployment until 5 October. The Eighteenth Air Force provided C-119 support. Approximately 39 officers and 154 airmen and 20 F-86Fs participated in each deployment. (Monograph, Office of Hist, AAC, "Evolution of the Fighter-Bomber Concept," 18 Dec 1953, 36-43.)



**1 Sep 1956:** The Commander-in-Chief, Continental Air Defense Command (CINCONAD) assumed responsibility for air defense operations in Alaska. Specific duties included assuming responsibility for all air defense activities in the territory, assuming operational control over all air defense forces assigned or allocated for the defense of Alaska, designating Commander-in-Chief, Alaskan Command (CINCAL) as commander responsible for all air defense activities in Alaska, and designating to CINCAL the authority to exercise operational control over all air defense forces assigned

or allocated for the air defense of Alaska. The Commander-in-Chief, Alaskan Command further delegated the responsibility for Air Force air defense assets to Commander, AAC, and anti-aircraft artillery to the Commanding General, United States Army, Alaska. The terms of the agreement were outlined in a 28 August memorandum of agreement signed by Gen. Earl E. Partridge, Commander, Air Defense Command and Continental Air Defense Command and Lt. Gen. Joseph H. Atkinson, Commander-in-Chief, Alaskan Command. (Strum, *Air Defense of Alaska*, pp. 41-42.)



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**28 Aug 1958:** The Air Force accepted the Cape Sarichef DEW Line Station (COB-3) of the Aleutian DEW Line Segment (Project Stretch Out) from the contractor. As in the case of the other Aleutian DEW Line stations, the Western Electric Company operated and maintained the station until 31 March 1959, providing on-the-job training to military personnel. Detachment 3, 704th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron assumed responsibility on 1 April 1959 for the station and its AN/FPS-19. They lived and worked in a composite building similar to the other Aleutian DEW Line Stations. Two small circular antennas faced towards Driftwood Bay and two large parabolic antennas faced towards Cold Bay. Power supply was similar to the other Aleutian DEW Line stations. (Miller, Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1960, pp. 255-.256.)



**1 Sep 1963-8 Jan 1964:** The Air Force placed the 3rd Bombardment Wing in an inactive status without headquarters manning and moved it in January from Yokota AB, Japan to England AFB, LA. (Lineage and Honors Statement, 3 WG, current as of 1 Oct 1998.)



**1 Sep 1983:** A Soviet Su-15 Flagon F pilot shot down Korean Airlines Boeing 747, Flight 007, off the southwestern tip of Sakhalin Island during the early morning hours with loss of all 269 lives aboard. The Korean Airline had strayed off course after departing Anchorage International Airport. Instead, it began veering west as it flew over southwestern Alaska. At 1630 GMT, 44 minutes after being acquired by radar, Flight 007 flew into Soviet airspace and crossed the southern tip of the

Kamchatka Peninsula. The Soviets responded by scrambling fighters from Petropavlosk. The U.S., in an effort to provide as much information as possible, provided facts that would have ordinarily been classified. The incident received considerable media attention and the U.S. was quick to condemn the action. President Reagan declared his "disgust that the entire world feels at the barbarity of the Soviet government...", and added "words can scarcely express our revulsion at this horrifying act of violence." Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK) called it "a despicable act of violence," and noted that he had often expressed concern over the buildup of Soviet forces in the Far East. Three HC-130s from the 33rd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron at Kadena AB, Japan, conducted an unsuccessful search. (Haulman, *One Hundred Years of Flight*, p. 128.; Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1983, p. 145.)

**Sep 1991:** The expiration of the Clark AFB lease and the eruption of Mount Pinatubo prompted PACAF to move its Cope Thunder exercise series to Alaska. PACAF had determined a three-phase program "to establish the Yukon Ranges as PACAF premier training area." The first phase, FY92 and FY93 called for improving the electronic combat scenario and training capabilities of the Yukon Electronic Warfare Range. The mid-term phase, FY 93-95, involved completing the transfer of equipment from the Philippines, and the final phase, FY95-97, the installation of the Joint Air Combat Training System at Eielson AFB and the consolidation of Cope Thunder into one facility there. (Cloe, Hist, 11AF, 1991, pp. 213-215.)





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**27 Aug 2000:** The 962nd Airborne Air Control Squadron (962 AACCS) deployed one E-3B aircraft and 78 personnel to Prince Sultan AB, Saudi Arabia in support of Southern Watch. The deployment marked the first time the squadron deployed one of their aircraft to Saudi Arabia. (Hist, 3 WG, 2000, p. 27.)



**27-29 Aug 2001:** The Inspector General, PACAF conducted a Combat Employment Readiness Inspection on the 3rd Wing. The inspection measured the ability of the wing to prepare personnel, aircraft and equipment for a wartime contingency tasking. The exercise was conducted under realistic conditions. The wing earned an excellent overall rating. (Hist, 3 WG, 2001, pp. 148-153)

**29 Aug 2003 – Phase I Privatized Housing:** Elmendorf AFB completed the first phase of the Private Sector Housing initiative becoming the first base in the Air Force to simultaneously construct, renovate and provide new housing units to families within the confines of the base. Elmendorf AFB was also the first base in PACAF to award a privatized housing lease under the new private sector housing regulations and the fourth the Air Force behind Lackland AFB, TX; Robbins AFB, GA; and Dyess AFB, TX. The 50 year contract awarded to Aurora Military Housing LCC 15 March 2001, required the housing management firm to build 372 new units in the Boniface/Ship Creek area, renovate 200 new units in the Chugach Housing area, demolish 172 units in the Dallas Housing area and build 48 new units there. Staff Sergeant Brian Lynch, 381st Intelligence Squadron, occupied the last completed unit in the Dallas Housing area, completing phase one of the private sector housing initiative. Aurora was expected to earn \$1.4 billion in lease payments over the course of the contract. Phase two was expected to begin in June 2004 and tentatively completed in 2007. That phase would take care of the remaining 986 housing units on base. (1/Lt Eric Badger, "Movin' on UP," *Sourdough Sentinel*, 5 Sep 2003;" Discussions, John H. Cloe, 3 WG/HO w/Mr. Ted Franklin, Lease Management Office, 3 CES, 5 Sep 2003.)

**29 Aug 2004:** Airman 1st Class Carl Anderson, Jr., assigned to the 3rd Logistics Readiness Squadron, was killed in action while on a supply convoy near Mosul, Iraq. His vehicle hit a roadside bomb. He was the first airman from Elmendorf AFB to be lost in combat since Vietnam. One year later, the base honored Airman Anderson by naming a street after him in the Moose Creek Housing Area. (Frank, Hist, 11AF, 2004, p. 32.)



**27 Aug 2005:** The BRAC Commission decided to send 24 F-15C fighter jets from the 3 WG to Langley AFB, VA and 18 F-15Es from the 3 WG to Mountain Home AFB, ID. This move provided space for the expected two squadrons of F-22 Raptors scheduled to arrive at Elmendorf AFB over the next five years. Elmendorf also expects to receive eight C-17

cargo jets by 2007 and 15 C-130s from Kulis Air National Guard Base in Anchorage and Dyess Air Force Base, TX. Elmendorf AFB has two years to begin the transfers and six years to complete them if the President approves the recommendations. Although Governor Murkowski questioned the federal government's rights to make changes to state guard units without the consent of the governor, the Justice Department advised the BRAC Commission that it could. (Miller, 3 WG Hist 2005, 2006.)