



Remembering Our Heritage



21 Feb 1924: Carl Ben Eielson pioneered the delivery of airmail in Alaska when he delivered 164-pounds of mail in a Farthest-North Airplane Company DeHavilland DH-4BM, on loan from the U.S. Mail Service, from Weeks Field, Fairbanks to McGrath. Alaska Delegate to Congress, Dan Sutherland, had obtained a Post Office agreement to establish the route between Nenana and McGrath on a trial basis. The Post Office contracted with the Farthest-North Airplane Company to make ten trips beginning in February 1924 at two dollars a pound, which was considerably less than a dog team. The 315 mile trip took two hours and fifty-minutes to complete. Carl Ben Eielson flew seven more trips to McGrath, the last being 7 May 1924, before the Post Office superintendent in Seattle, WA, declared the operation unsafe due to the five crashes sustained by Eielson. He remained in Fairbanks during the summer, and then left for Washington DC for enrollment in Georgetown University to study law. Eielson stayed only a short while before enlisting in the Air Service. He resumed his military career 24 September 1924, flying DeHavilland DH-4Bs with the 2nd Bombardment Group at Langley Field, VA. (Stevens, *Alaskan Aviation History*, pp. 153-163)



22 Feb 1929: The US Navy announced in Washington DC that it was resuming its aerial mapping survey of southeastern Alaska since the Alaskan Aerial Survey Expedition of 1926 under the command of Lt Ben H. Wyatt had been unable to complete its work. The Departments of Agriculture and Interior had pressed for resumption of mapping project, and had transferred \$15,000 to the Navy to help defray costs. The regions selected for survey included Baranof, Chichagof and Kuiu Islands, portions of the mainland bordered by Icy Strait, Lynn Canal, Stephans Passage and Fredericks Sound, and sections of the Tongass National Forest that had not been photographed during the 1926 survey. The Navy assigned the San Diego, CA, minesweeper *Gannet* (AM-41) and the covered barge YF-88 to the project. Both had been used in the 1926 survey. The 150-foot, 900-ton displacement *Gannet* towed the 110 by 40 foot barge, which came equipped with a photographic laboratory, a motor overhaul shop, dispensary, quarters for aviation personnel, galley, mess room and office. The small seaplane tender, converted from a minesweeper, provided support to four Loening OL-8A amphibian aircraft powered by a 450 horsepower Pratt and Whitney Wasp engines. All four had been delivered from the factory between 8 March and 4 April 1929 and were named after the principal towns in southeastern Alaska. Aircraft No. 1 was the Juneau, No. 2, Ketchikan; No. 3, Petersburg; and No. 4, Sitka. (Vincent Ponko, Jr., "The 1929 Alaskan Aerial Survey: An Instance of the Navy's Role in the Development of Alaska," published in *Sea in Alaska's Past*, by the Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska, Series No. 25, Nov 1979; Stevens, *Alaskan Aviation History*, pp. 585-606.)



20 Feb 1935: Delegate Anthony J. Dimond from Alaska spoke in support of the House Resolution 2755 before the House of Representatives and introduced House Resolution 5064 calling for the construction of a military base and airfield near Fairbanks, AK and an appropriation of \$10,479,500 be made to pay for it. Delegate Dimond encountered opposition from Representative Wesley Lloyd, Democrat, Washington, who championed his state over Alaska for an airbase because of its "infinitely great cities and rich territory." Representative Lloyd pointed out that an enemy entrenched in Alaska would still be far removed from the rest of the United States. Delegate Dimond retorted the enemy would still be within 750 miles of Seattle. (Gruening, "The State of Alaska," pp. 310-312; Congressional Record, 74th Congress, 1st Session, 20 Feb 1935, p. pp. 2438-2439.)



Remembering Our Heritage



23 Feb 1940: General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, testified before the Sub-Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, on the need for a second air base in Alaska. The War Department had requested \$29,461,748 to improve and enlarge military posts, \$18,535,560 of which was for improving defenses the Panama Canal Zone, Hawaii and building an airbase near Anchorage. General Marshall cited the findings of Col John C.V. Lee, US Army Corps of Engineers, and his party who had visited Alaska the previous year. Colonel Lee had recommended two bases, one near Fairbanks for cold weather testing and an operational base near Anchorage for the basing of a composite group of aircraft. Colonel Lee and his party believed that the climate and location of Anchorage was better suited for air operations. General Marshall requested an appropriation of \$12,734,060 to build the Anchorage base and another \$85,000 to acquire the land. The committee members questioned him a length on the need for two Army Air Corps bases in Alaska and asked why the Army and Navy could not combine operations at Kodiak. (DoD, *US Army in World War II: The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Japan*, p. 9.)

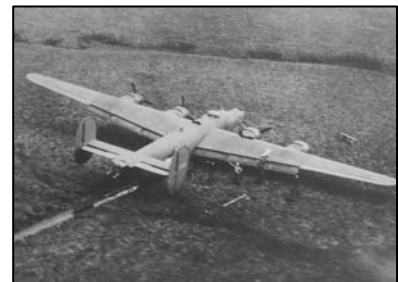


21 Feb 1941: The first flying squadron assigned to Alaska, 18th Pursuit Squadron, commanded by Maj Norman D. Sillin, arrived at Elmendorf AFB with 20 Curtiss P-36A Hawks in crates from Hamilton Field, CA, where it had been assigned to the 35th Pursuit Group since its activation on 1 February 1940 at Moffett Field, CA. It moved to Hamilton Field on September 1940. The squadron had departed Hamilton Field as a unit on 8 February, embarked aboard the Army

Transport *Chirikof* at Fort Mason, CA, on 12 February and arrived at Seward on 20 February. It then traveled by the Alaska Railroad to Elmendorf Field. It was assigned to the 28th Composite Group on 24 February. (Oral Hist Intvw., John H. Cloe, w/Maj Gen Norman Sillin, USAF Ret, 8 Aug 1980; Fleische, *History of Elmendorf Field*, p. 24; Maurer, *Combat Squadrons of the Air Force, World War II*, p. 99.)

25 Feb 1942: The 3rd Bombardment Group arrived at Brisbane, without any aircraft, as the first new Army Air Forces unit to arrive in Australia. The Group was temporarily housed at Ascot Park, a local racetrack. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), 1 January 1942 to 31 March 1944, p. 96, *Air Force Combat Units*, p. 31; *The Grim Reapers*, p. 7)

19 Feb 1945: The crews of six B-24s from the 404th Bombardment Squadron flew a photoreconnaissance mission over Shimushu Island and bombed the Kurabu Cape Air Field on Paramushiru Island from 21,600 feet, dropping 11,800 pounds of bombs. The crews also assessed the damages from the task force raid. Five Japanese fighters intercepted them after the bomb release 40 miles east of the target area. The Japanese pilots made single attacks from the front quarter at the same level as the bombers. The bomber gunners submitted claims for four damaged fighters. One B-24 suffered slight damage from anti-aircraft fire. (1/Lt Bertrand H. Hoak, Hist, 404th Bombardment Squadron, Feb 1945, pp. 27 and 30; Monthly Intelligence Summary, 1-28 Feb 1945, HQs Eleventh Air Force, Task Force 90, North Pacific Area.)





Remembering Our Heritage



20 Feb 1951: The Alaskan Air Command established a weather station of a floating ice island approximately 100 miles north of Barter Island. The camp was discontinued 12 March when violent ice necessitated the removal of personnel. The command continued to explore the possibility of establishing another ice island camp. (Chart and Staff, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1951, p. 231.)

25 Feb 1957: Cost overruns were incurred on the initial estimated \$70,250,485 cost and fixed fee contract for the White Alice Communications System and the Western Electric Company asked the Air Force to increase the amount to \$119,570,000 in order to complete the project. The problem had been identified as early as August 1956 as a result of that revised estimated costs were substantially higher than those called for by those who had originally negotiated the cost-plus-fixed fee contract. (Miller, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1957, pp. 114-116.)

25 Feb 1963: Major General Wendell W. Bowman, Commander, AAC approved the studies conducted during the month determined that the radar stations at Bethel (F-21), Ohlson Mountain (F-25) and Middleton Island (F-22) were redundant to ANR's need and could be closed. The sites covered the approaches from the south and in the interest of economy; AAC determined they were not needed. The Alaskan Command forwarded the study the next day to JCS and NORAD for approval. The Alaskan Air Command had determined that it would save \$3,365,000 in annual operating costs and 323 manpower positions if the stations were closed. (Miller, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1963, pp. 50-52.)



24 Feb 1972: The 819th Civil Engineer Squadron (Red Horse) began construction on the Blair Lakes Bombing and Gunnery Range. The following day, the Resources Committee, Alaska State Legislature, introduced a House Joint Resolution "Requesting the immediate cessation of the new route construction in the Blair Lakes area and the issuance of an environmental impact statement on all further improvements to the Blair Lakes bombing range." No legislative action apparently was taken. (Mongin and Mesloh, Hist, AAC, Jul 1970-Jun 1972, p. xxii.; Hales, Hist, AAC, Jul 1972-Jun 1974, p. 172.)

25 Feb 1975: The President approved the disestablishment of Alaskan Command. ALCOM was disestablished on 1 July 1975. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, Jul 1974-Jun 1975, p. 26.)

21-23 Feb 1978: The Tactical Air Command conducted an E-3 facilities support survey of Elmendorf AFB. (Cloe, Hist, 1978, p. 300.)



25 Feb 1980: Headquarters, NORAD agreed that the designation Alaskan NORAD Region should remain unchanged instead of being changed to the 23rd NORAD Region. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1980, pp. 10-11.)



Remembering Our Heritage



22 Feb 1981: The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) reduced the Federal General Service (GS) employee cost of living allowance (COLA) in the Anchorage area from 20 to 17.5 percent of base pay. It had been reduced from 25 to 20 percent in 1980. The change resulted from a Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) survey in the Fall of 1980, that compared the cost of living in the Washington DC against Alaska locations. The Alaska Federal Employee COLA at other Alaska locations remained unchanged. Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Civil Service asked OPM to reconsider its action. He noted that the survey, conducted by a part-time BLS employee from Portland, OR, had been flawed. His completed survey had been compared in Washington DC with a survey conducted in the DC area by another employee and the methodology differed. An Anchorage COLA Defense Committee was formed, which hired attorneys to begin the process of a class lawsuit on behalf of the affected Anchorage Federal employees. The lawsuit alleged the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) had used faulty methodology in computing the COLA. The Anchorage District Court ruled in favor to the Federal employees in early 1984, requiring those who had been affected since 1980 receive back pay COLA. Approximately 1,350 Department of Defense employees in Alaska were affected. The COLA had been raised to 22.5 percent in 1982 and 25 percent in 1983. The Wage Grade employees were not affected since their wages were based on the prevalent wages in the area. Senator Stevens recommended that a regional GS pay system be established. (Cloe, Hist. AAC, 1981, pp. 123-125.)

22 Feb 1984: An *Anchorage Daily News* article carried the headline, "Plan to Test Fighters over Caribou Range Draws Opposition." The article appeared shortly after the FAA had announced that the Air Force was planning to use the Military Operating Area (MOA) as the location for a planned Air Combat Maneuvering Instrumentation (ACMI) system. The MOA was located west of Lake Louis, midway between Elmendorf AFB and Eielson AFB over the Talkeetna Mountains. The article expressed the beginning of a mounting opposition to the use of the MOA for the ACMI. Prior to the FAA release of the news, there had been little opposition. The Air Force had prepared an environmental assessment in January 1983, which met with little opposition. A second EA had been prepared on the portion covered by the ACMI with similar results. Several individuals living in the Lake Louis area wrote Alaska's Congressional delegation to express their concerns. The *Anchorage Daily News* quoted Col William Povilus, Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, as saying that emotionalism was being used to block Air Force plans. Colonel Povilus had tried to explain to reporter Tom Kizzia the rationale behind the range and steps that had been taken to mitigate its impact. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game again raised there concerns. The Trustees for Alaskans, an advocacy group, also expressed its concerns. The Air Force determined that a more complete environmental assessment was needed. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1984, pp. 460-464.)

24 Feb 1987: The Alaskan Air Command Public Affairs Office announced that the 54th Tactical Fighter Squadron would be re-activated on Elmendorf AFB and assigned the 21st Tactical Fighter Wing. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1987, p. 83.)

20 Feb 1996: The 90th Fighter Squadron received the Alaska Governor's Safety Award conferred through the Alaska Department of Labor. The 90th Fighter Squadron was the first military organization to win the state award which began in 1980. (Hist, 3 WG, 1996, Chron)



19 Feb 1999: Headquarters PACAF activated the 11th Operational Weather Squadron. (HQ PACAF SO GS-17, 9 Feb 1999; Cloe, Hist, 11AF, 1999, p. 7.)



Remembering Our Heritage



23 Feb 2001: The 962nd Airborne Air Control Squadron deployed 39 personnel and an E-3B to Incirlik AB, Turkey for Operation NORTHERN WATCH. The squadron was the first wave of 300 of personnel from the 19th and 90th Fighter Squadrons scheduled to participate in a 90 day Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) 3 deployment. This was the 3rd Wing's first true AEF deployment. (Hist, 3WG, 2001; p. 134-135; "AWACS Takes Up Iraqi Patrols," *Alaska Military Weekly*, 1 Mar 2001.)

26 Feb 2001: The 3rd Transportation Squadron implemented a comprehensive vehicle parking plan because of a budget shortfall. It required the temporary storage of 458 nonessential vehicles from the 1,250 fleet until August 2001. (Hist, 3WG, 2001, p. 166.)

19 Feb 2003: The Commander, Pacific Command inactivated Joint Rear Area Coordinator-Alaska (JRAC-AK). The organization had been activated on 12 September 2001, following the terrorists attack to coordinate homeland defense in Alaska. The Joint Task Force-Alaska (JTF-AK) was activated and assumed oversight of homeland security matters in Alaska from JRAC-AK. The mission statement for JTF-AK read:

JTF-AK will deter national security threats to Alaska and defend Alaska's territory and populace fro foreign aggression. In coordination with other military and civil authorities, JTF-AK will protect domestic lines of communication and designated critical infrastructure, essential to the projection of US combat power, within the assigned joint operating area, in order to protect the United States and maintain the Nations' freedom of action. (Mst, CDR USPACOM to Comdr, ALCOM, "JRAC Alaska Deactivation," 192108Z Feb 2003.)

