



Remembering Our Heritage



9 Feb 1923: The 3rd Attack Group staged an exercise in which crews of the DeHavilland DH-4Bs and three Boeing GA-1 attack aircraft simulated an attack on a truck column near Laredo on the Mexican border. Brig Gen Billy Mitchell judged the exercise a success, noting: "I believe even with the way the group now is, no Mexican column can move in the daytime within 100 miles of where this group is stationed." Under Major Brereton command, the 3rd Attack Group perfected new tactics involving DH-4Bs equipped with the new A-3 bomb rack. They involved a low-altitude, high angle attack known as the "diving attack," patterned after similar tactics employed by the Royal Air Force during World War I. Major Ross E. Rowell, a Marine Corps pilot stationed at Kelly Field, observed and was impressed by the accuracy obtained by the 3rd Attack Group. He introduced it into his own squadron, VO-1M, at San Diego, CA. Navy aviators soon picked up on the tactic and refined it. Lieutenant Commander Frank D. Wagner, flying a Curtis F6C Hawk, built to handle extreme stress, conducted a series of test in which the dive angle was increased. The Navy subsequently perfected dive-bombing, which it used to devastating effect during the Battle of Midway. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), Activation to 31 December 1941, p. 12, Roger G. Miller, "A 'Pretty Damn Able Commander'-Lewis Hyde Brereton: Part I," *Air Power History*, Vol 47, No 4, Winter 2000.)



2-24 Feb 1937: The 8th Squadron, assigned to the 3rd Bombardment Group, participated in the Cold Weather Equipment Test Group at Selfridge Field, MI. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), Activation to 31 December 1941, p. 19)



10 Feb 1940: Presidential Executive Order 8343 withdrew 50,000 additional acres of land for air base near Anchorage. The lands included the Loop Road and Otter Lake area. The existing reservation lands withdrawn extended one mile north of the Eagle River, south around the beach of Cook Inlet for a distance of approximately 12 miles and east to the foothills of the Chugach Mountains. ("500 Acres are Added to Army Reserve Here," *The Anchorage Times*, 11 Mar 1940.)

6 Feb 1941: *The Anchorage Daily Times* announced that 20 pursuit aircraft were expected to arrive on Elmendorf Field sometime during 18-20 February aboard the Army

Transport *Cherikof*. The paper also stated that two bombardment squadrons; one B-17 and the other B-18 were expected to fly to Alaska. The total number of aircraft expected was 38. (*Anchorage Daily Times*, 6 Feb 1941, p. 1.)

5 Feb 1942: The War Department re-designated the Alaskan Air Force as the 11th Air Force, commanded by Col Everett S. Davis. Assigned units included Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron; Provisional Pursuit Interceptor Command, commanded by Lt Col Norman D. Sillin, composed of the 11th and 18th Fighter Squadrons; 28th Composite Group, commanded by Lt Col William O. Eareckson, consisting of 36th 73rd and 77th Bombardment Squadrons; 23rd Air Base Group; and Air Warning Service, Alaska. There was serious shortage of first lieutenants and even larger shortage of senior officers. The total number of officer vacancies totaled 24. A similar situation existed in the enlisted ranks. (Ransohoff, Hist, 11AF, p. 111.)



Remembering Our Heritage



~5 Feb 1943: The Japanese Imperial Headquarters decided to “hold the western Aleutians at all costs and carry out preparation for war,” issued orders that the Aleutians would be held. Lieutenant General Hideichiro Higuchi, Commander of the Northern Army, had argued that the islands should be abandoned. The Imperial Headquarters felt that by withdrawing, it would expose the Kurile Islands to invasion and that America and Russia might join in an invasion of the Home Islands. The American landing on Amchitka had caused them concern. Japan by then had suffered major losses during the Guadalcanal Campaign and to submarine losses. The Japanese, realizing it would be only a matter of time before the Americans would mount a major bomber and fighter offensive from Amchitka, rushed to complete the fighter strip on Kiska but were severely hampered by the lack of heavy earth moving equipment. They experienced similar problems on Attu and when the Americans landed there, they found the runway uncompleted. (Hist, *Aleutian Campaign*, pp. 18-19.)

8-17 Feb 1943: While troops rush to construct the base on Amchitka, the Eleventh Air Force continued to bomb Kiska, weather permitting, to keep the Japanese occupied and on the defensive. The Japanese continued air strikes against the Americans on Amchitka. The Americans shot down three “Rufe” float fighters and a “Jake” reconnaissance float plane on 13 February off Amchitka. (Hist, 11AF, p. 250.)

10 Feb 1943: The 36th Bombardment Squadron flew the last B-17 mission of the Aleutian Campaign. The Eleventh Air Force committed two B-17Es and four B-24Ds and eight B-25s accompanied by eight P-38s against the main camp on Kiska. (Intel Summary, Field HQ 11AF, 10 Feb 43.)



9 Feb 1944: The 3rd Bombardment Group conducted a low-level attack for the first time with its Douglas A-20 Havocs against Japanese installations on Corregidor Island, the first of four successive missions that week. (*Grim Reapers*, p. 93)

9 Feb 1944: The main body of the 77th Bombardment Squadron (2 officers and 145 enlisted men) departed aboard the troop ship *Taloa* for Attu Island. The group arrived 11 February. The squadron mess hall, designed to feed 280 persons, fed as many as 1,100. The squadron began flying expanded night training missions, resulting in speculations among the men that they would be joining Fleet Air Wing Four on night missions against the northern Kuriles. (Hist, 77th Bombardment Squadron, Jan-Apr 1944, p. 4.)

7 Feb 1945: The crews of six B-24s from the 404th Bombardment Squadron, led by squadron commander, Lt. Col. Jack T. Loney, aborted a mission against the Kataoka Navy Base when the lead bombardier in Lt. Corbin Terry's bomber accidentally dropped his bombs through a heavy overcast prior to the bombing run, causing the others in his element to drop on cue. The 18,000 pounds of general-purpose bombs fell short of their target, the Kataoka Naval Base on Shumushu Island. Colonel Loney's bombardier experienced a similar problem with the same results. Brigadier General Harry Johnson, Deputy Commander for Operations, Eleventh Air Force, aboard one of the bombers, observes the mistake. (1/Lt Bertrand H. Hoak, Hist, 404th Bombardment Squadron, Feb 1945, p. 29; Monthly Intelligence Summary, 1-28 Feb 1945, HQs Eleventh Air Force, Task Force 90, North Pacific Area.)



Remembering Our Heritage



6 Feb 1951: The 3rd Bombardment Wing B-26 crews confirmed that the use of the ground based AN/MPQ-2 radar used by the Tactical Air Control Post provided better target definition and increased accuracy for the aircrews. (Warnock, *The USAF in Korea, A Chronology*, p.3.)



10 Feb 1952: The Alaskan Air Command manpower office completed a manning survey of Shemya AFB. Both the Aleutians Islands base and Thornbrough AFB, at Cold Bay, on the Alaska Peninsula were programmed for closure. The Air Force had initially plan to close both World War II bases, but had reversed its decision and kept them open following the outbreak of the Korean War. They supported the Great Circle Route to an from the Far East., used mostly by four-engine transports. The manpower office recommended that the 5021st Air Base Squadron be reduced as a subunit under the 39th Air Depot Wing instead of reporting to Headquarters, AAC, so that the number of personnel on Shemya could be reduced to the minimum essential. The office noted that the number of flights using the base had been significantly reduced and that the physical plant on the island could be consolidated and the hospital closed. The commander on Shemya rebutted the recommendation, noting that the cargo transiting the island, while not carrying as much cargo as in the past, had now increased passenger loads. He argued the need for more messing and billeting facilities. The Alaskan Air Command agreed with the manpower recommendations and allocated funding for consolidating facilities and repairing the dock area. (Chart, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1952, pp. 116-117.)

8 Feb 1957: The Alaskan Air Command activated the 713th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron at Bethel (F-21), 749th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron at Chiniak (F-18), 936th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron on Sitkinak Island (F-19) and 937th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron at Ohlson Mountain (F-25). Since there were no personnel available to man them prior to the release by the contractors, AAC assigned the squadrons a holding designation. (HQ AAC GO 94, 11 Dec 1956; Chart, Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1956, p. 71.)



8 Feb 1960: Headquarters, USAF, informed AAC that it approved of its 3 December 1959 plan to transfer Ladd AFB to the Army, move the 449th Fighter Interceptor Squadron to Eielson AFB and consolidate air defense command and control and support functions at Elmendorf AFB. General Necrason, Commander, AAC, informed the Commander, Alaskan Command, of the Air Force plans, explaining in detail that AAC had proposed consolidating flying activities north of the Alaskan Range on Eielson AFB including moving the headquarters of the 11th Air Division to that base. General Necrason also stated that

the moves were contingent on obtaining funding. He recommended that senior officers from AAC and United States Army, Alaska be appointed to oversee the transfer details. The Army appointed Brig Gen Thomas A. Beck, Commanding General of the Yukon Command and the Air Force appointed Brig Gen Gordon H. Austin, Commander, 11th Air Division. The two began working together on transferring Ladd AFB to the Army, moving the Air Force activities there to Eielson AFB and the Army activities on Eielson AFB to Ladd AFB. (Miller, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1960, pp. 139-143.)



Remembering Our Heritage



5 Feb 1961: The Alaskan Air Command dedicated Building 600 on Shemya AFS in honor of Lt Col George Irvin Poole, the former Commander, 5040th Air Base Squadron, Shemya AFS, who had been killed along with 14 others when their aircraft crashed on Mount Illiamna, approximately 120 miles southwest of Elmendorf AFB. Building 600, a composite facility designed to house 126 officers and 600 enlisted men, was the largest building on Shemya AFS and one of the largest in Alaska. It contained administrative offices, two dining halls, a dispensary, laundry, lounges, post office, and base exchange. (Program, "Dedication of the Lt Col George I. Poole Memorial Building, Shemya AFS," 5 Feb 1961.)



8 Feb 1967: A C-123J, 64391, assigned to the Alaska Air National Guard, broke through the ice on Nuyakak Lake 110 miles northwest of King Salmon while taxing. It was carrying a 6,500 pound load lumber for the construction of a fish processing plant for the Eagle River Cold Storage Company. The Air Force had approved the flight on 3 February. The cargo plane landed on the snow packed surface. During the landing roll, the C-123 broke through the ice and sunk to the wing pylons and horizontal stabilizers. It settled further once the engines were shut off, apparently kept afloat by the cargo of lumber. The C-123 came to rest 200 yards from shore over water 60 feet deep. Plans began immediately to recover it. An Army team, brought in by helicopter from King Salmon, made the initial attempt. The cargo plane was finally repaired and flown to Anchorage on 2 February 1968. (Weidman, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1967, pp. 130-132.)

8 Feb 1968: The 531st Tactical Fighter Squadron flew the 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing's 75,000th combat sortie in Vietnam. The 3rd Wing was the first TFW in Vietnam to reach that mark. (Hist, 3 TFW, Jan-Mar, 1968, p. 34)

6 Feb 1972: Direct distance dialing was implemented on Elmendorf AFB. ("Six Days of Line," Dial System is OK," *Sourdough Sentinel*, 11 Feb 1972.)



7 Jan-14 Feb 1975: The Alaskan Command conducted joint field training exercise Jack Frost 75 in interior Alaska. Over 8,000 personnel participated in the largest exercise in Alaska since Polar Strike in 1965. The participants came from ALCOM, U.S. Readiness Command (USREDCOM), Air National Guard (ANG), Air Force Reserves (AFRES), U.S. Army Special Forces, Navy Seals and the Canadian Mobile Command. It emphasized the defense of a main base military complex during Arctic winter conditions by a large force. The exercise planners

selected the Fort Wainwright-Eielson AFB-Fort Greely-Blair Lakes area for the exercise. The scenario envisioned an enemy force seizing a lodgment that threaten Fort Wainwright and Fort Greely. Terrain in the area varied from low mountains to flat plains with sub-Arctic temperatures around minus 23 degrees Fahrenheit and snow depths of three to five feet. (Cloe, Hist., AAC, Jul 1974-Jun 1975, pp. 229-241.)



Remembering Our Heritage



6 Feb 1978: The Elmendorf AFB AN/FCS-78 Satellite Communications Earth Terminal became operational. The temporary AN/MS-46 Satellite Communications Earth Terminal was turned off on 4 February 1978, and dismantled for shipment to Humosa, Spain, leaving behind its concrete base. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1978, p. 318.)

8-11 Feb 1979 (Thu-Sun): General James E. Hill, Commander-in-Chief, NORAD, Lt. Gen. G.A. MacKenzie, Commander, Air Command, Canada, and General Scott reached an agreement to include six Canadian positions in the Elmendorf AFB Regional Operations Control Center with the ranking Canadian being a lieutenant colonel who would service as the assistant operations director. The other ranks included a major, two captains, a sergeant and a corporal. They would replace a similar number of USAF positions. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1979, p. 119.)

9 Feb 1986 (Tue): Elmendorf AFB hosted the Special Olympics Winter Games for the fourth consecutive year. Colonel Par R. Paxton, Commander, 21st Tactical Fighter Wing, Col. Larry R. Bolls, Commander, 21st Combat Support Group and Mayor Tony Knowles of Anchorage officiated in the opening ceremonies at the Hillberg Ski Lodge, which featured a "Parade of Athletes" of the more than 40 participants around the lodge led by the Air Force marching band. Competition took part at Hillberg and the Eagle Glen Golf Course. A victory dinner was held in the NCO Club. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1986, p. 310.)

11-13 Feb 1986 (Tue-Thu): A site activation task force meeting was held to accomplish final planning for the beddown of two E-3s on Elmendorf AFB. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1986, p. 192.)

7 Feb 1989: The Alaskan Air Command hosted the first meeting to develop the implementation plan for the reestablishment of the Alaskan Command.

5 Feb 1991 (Tue): The *Anchorage Daily News*, quoting Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK), reported that Elmendorf AFB would receive 26 F-15Es. The announcement caused some confusion. Initially, the 90th Fighter Squadron had been programmed to be equipped with 24 primary authorized aircraft F-15Es and 2 backup aircraft inventory F-15Es. General Merrill McPeak, USAF Chief of Staff, because of other requirements, reduced the number to 18 PAA and 2 BAI. The Air Force did not release the information to the public. (Cloe, Hist, 11AF, 1991, pp. 8-9; 157.)



11 Feb 2005: The C-130 was added to Heritage Park. In 1999 Col Jonathan S. Gration requested that Elmendorf AFB receive a C-130 to place on display in the 3rd Wing Heritage Park in order to provide a true representation of aircraft that have supported the 3rd Wing's mission. In 2003, a C-130E became available for placement on Elmendorf AFB from the 86th Wing, Ramstein AB, Germany. It arrived on base in May 2004. Project officers had to wait until mid-winter to place the C-130 because the ground needed to be frozen in order to support the plane's weight. (Miller, 3 WG Hist 2005, 2006.)