



Remembering Our Heritage



13 Jan 1933 (Fri): Captain Hugh M. Elmendorf died near Wright Field, OH, while testing an experimental Consolidated Y1P-25 twin seat pursuit aircraft. Elmendorf AFB was named after Hugh M. Elmendorf, even though he was never assigned to Alaska, nor is there any record of his visiting the Great Land. Yet his presence is felt still throughout the Air Force. He pioneered high altitude formation flying tactics during the 1920s and early 1930s. He also wrote several scientific papers on the subject. A superb gunner who mastered the fine art of deflection shooting, Hugh Elmendorf won the Army Air Corps gunnery competition at Langley Field in 1927 with the highest score then recorded. He commanded the 19th Pursuit Squadron (currently assigned to Elmendorf and the 3rd Wing) from 1922-1924.



8 Jan 1941 (Wed): *The Anchorage Daily Times* carried an Associated Press article, which quoted Gen George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army as stating that construction of Elmendorf AFB was a year ahead of schedule. It went on to quote General Marshall as stating "...with funds made available in the latter part of June, we have succeeded in delivering material and labor to that isolated northern region in time to construct shelter and develop airfields before winter closed last November." *The Anchorage Daily Times* also announced that Capt Benjamin B. Talley had arrived in Anchorage Yakutat to assume responsibility from Colonel George for overseeing the construction of Fort Richardson and Elmendorf Field

as part of the transfer of installation construction responsibility from the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The paper also announced that Captain Talley would also be responsible for overseeing construction at Ladd Field. (*Anchorage Daily News*, 8 Jan 1940.)

Jan 1941: The 3rd Bombardment Group converted to the Douglas A-20 Havoc, a twin-engine attack bomber. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), Activation to 31 December 1941, p. 20, *The Grim Reapers*, p. 7)

12 Jan 1942 (Mon): *Newsweek* Magazine carried an article, "Dagger at Tokyo," that the Navy had reported suspected Japanese vessels near Kodiak. It quoted Delegate Anthony Dimond as urging that the Aleutians be reinforced and attempts be made to lease the Kormandorskie Islands from the Soviet Union for use as a base for air operations and defense of Alaska. The article went on to describe that the military was "pouring money into defense," of Alaska with bases being built at Kodiak, Dutch Harbor and Sitka. It quoted Brig Gen Billy Mitchell as stating Alaska is "the most important strategic place in the world." ("Dagger at Tokyo," *Newsweek*, 12 Jan 1942.)



8 Jan 1943: Thirteen A-20s, coordinating with B-25s, B-26s, and Australian Beaufighters attacked Lae, scoring direct hits on trucks, supplies, a cargo vessel, and the runway. Two zeros intercepted the formation and one was shot down Japanese anti-aircraft fire. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), 1 January 1942 to 31 March 1944, p. 35)



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12 Jan 1943 (Tue): The Eleventh Air Force lost six aircraft in one day. Following a report by a B-24 weather reconnaissance aircraft of two Japanese ships near Kiska Harbor, the Eleventh Air Force launched six B-24s from the 21st Bombardment Squadron, four B-26s and six P-38s from the 54th Fighter Squadron. The crews of one B-24s and two B-26s turned back for Adak after experiencing mechanical difficulties. The others continued on, encountering bad weather and turned around. The B-24D, 41-23894, flown by Lt Frederick Manthe, 21st Bombardment Squadron, crashed into two parked P-38s on landing at Adak in the semi-light destroying the Lightnings and damaging the bomber. Another B-24 flown by Captain Moore landed at Cold Bay. Lieutenant Earnest C. Pruett, 21st Bombardment Squadron crash landed his B-24D, 41-23908, on the muskeg on the west side of Great Sitkin Island. One crewmember sustained a serious back injury while the others were unharmed. A destroyer picked them up the next day and the bomber was abandoned. Two B-24Ds from the 21st Bombardment Squadron disappeared without a trace. Crew members lost in Lt Thomas F. Bloomfield's crew, 41-23822, were: Lt Marvin H. Bryant Jr., Lt Charles R. Davis, Lt Nunnery Wilson, TSgt Curtis G. Burgdorf, TSgt John H. Crowder, SSgt Jessie C. Easterling, SSgt Eric E. Rundle and SSgt Ralph W. Thomas. Missing in Lt Linton D. Hamilton's crew, 41-23900, were: Lt Bill W. Carpenter, Lt Judson K. Shirer, TSgt John B. Byars, SSgt Edward L. Beavers, SSgt Ranford R. Patterson, SSgt Carl B. Reigh, SSgt Roger P. Vance and Sgt Milton Kalter. (Chronology, 21st Bomb Sq.)



12 Jan 1944 (Wed): General Buckner's staff developed a deception plan, code named Operation Wedlock, to fool the Japanese into thinking that the Americans and its Canadian allies were planning to invade the Kurile Islands in August 1944. There were a number of problems with the plan. It exaggerated the fictional force structure in the Aleutians, and it failed to explain the scenario that the planers wanted the Japanese to believe. Finally, it assigned strategic control to the Army, which Admiral Nimitz objected to. In February, Admiral Nimitz convinced the Joint Chiefs of Staff that Wedlock should be tied to the planned invasion of Saipan, set for June 1944. It involved fraudulent information to convince the Japanese that there were five American and two Canadian divisions ready to seize Paramushiru and Shimushu Islands. Troops passing through Seattle were issued Arctic clothing and dummy landing craft and facilities were built on Attu. (Perras, *Stepping Stones to Nowhere*, p. 181.)



13 Jan 1948 (Tue): The air base located 26 miles from Fairbanks, formally known as Mile 26 Field was re-designated Eielson AFB in honor of Alaska aviation pioneer Carl Ben Eielson. (Robert Mueller, *Air Force Bases*, Vol. I, p. 143.)

9 Jan 1949 (Sun): The first shipment of perishable food was made over the Alaskan Highway when two Alaskan Freight Line trucks arrived at Eielson AFB with eggs, celery, lettuce, grapes and pears. All the perishables

arrived in good condition. It was the first shipment of perishable goods to be made over the highway for military consumption. Previously the goods had been delivered by ship to the Army port at Whittier and then by rail to the main bases and then to the outlying bases by air. The goods often arrived in poor condition and had to be disposed of or force issued to the mess. (Thomblison, *Hist, AAC*, 1949, p. 70)



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11 Jan 1949 (Tue): A Headquarters, USAF, manpower team arrived on Elmendorf AFB to assess the condition of AAC. It determined that there was a critical housing shortage, facilities were inadequate and they were widely dispersed, war supplies had been abandoned, the climate was harsh, the airmen were inexperienced and unqualified, recreational facilities were lacking and facilities and equipment deteriorating. The team recommended, that except for the commitment to airway facilities on the Great Circle Route, AAC should withdraw its activities from the Aleutian Islands. The military had undergone a series of budget cuts in the post war era, and maintaining forces in the Aleutians could not be justified. The team out briefed Generals Twining and Atkinson that AAC could not adequately fulfill its mission while encumbered by unnecessary facilities. (Hist, ALCOM, Jan 1947-31 Dec 1951, pp. 93-94.)

8-9 Jan 1951: A crew from the 13th Bombardment Squadron B-26 crashed behind enemy lines. The crew consisted of; Lieutenant Oliver E. Buckle Jr., pilot, Lieutenant Smith, navigator, and Technical Sergeant James R. Hollyfield, gunner. Four days later Lieutenant Smith was rescued as the only survivor from the crew. (Hist, 13BS, Jan 51, p.4)



12 Jan 1951: Interrogations of prisoners captured on 10 January revealed that night raids by B-26s using flares to illuminate the enemy area before bombing had proved effective. The practice resulted in slowing down enemy movement to one-fourth the normal distance. (Ltr, Comdr, 25th Inf Div to Comdr, 5AF, 12 Jan 51)

10 Jan 1955 (Mon): General Curtis LeMay, Commander, Strategic Air Command, informed Lt. Gen. Joseph H. Atkinson, Commander-in-Chief, Alaskan command that SAC was developing a "quick strike" plan for presentation to Headquarters, USAF, that required the basing of three KC-97 squadrons in Alaska. Since the existing bases could not accommodate that number of tankers, AAC examined the possibility of expanding the facilities at the civilian airfields at Homer, Kenaia and King Salmon in southern Alaska and Northway and Tanacross to accommodate the KC097 and possible KC-135s. The study provided various basing options and their costs. The Strategic Air Command, which conducted it own study, considered expanding the airfields at Clear and Bing Delta to accommodate the tanker aircraft. (Chart, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1955, pp. 52-54.)

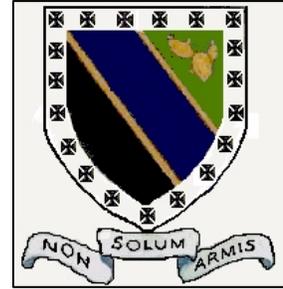
11 Jan 1961 (Wed): The Alaskan Air Command requested guidance from Headquarters, USAF, on the disposition of Drift Station Bravo (T-3), which had run around on 22 May 1960. It was costing AAC around \$300,000 annually to maintain the ice island plus another \$250,000 in repair costs. Because of ice conditions, the repair period was limited to the month of April. Since T-3 remained grounded, AAC and provided limited scientific value, AAC recommended it be abandoned. Headquarters, USAF, however, informed AAC on 24 February that T-3 would remain open and stated that it would continue to provide funding. The Command instructed the 5040th Air Base Wing to proceed with repairs and reopening T-3 for the 1961 season. A repair team arrived at the island on 10 March. Four scientists from the Lamont Geological Observatory conducted studies on the sea ice, underwater sound, tides, nuclear resonance magnetometer, long period seismograph, microbarovariograph, celestial navigation and chronometer during the 1961 Project Ice Skate season. (Miller, Hist, AAC, 1961, pp. 267-271.)



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8 Jan 1964: The 3rd Bombardment Wing (Tactical) was redesignated the 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) and reassigned without personnel and equipment from Yokota AB Japan to England AFB, LA, per PACAF Special Order G-114, dated 24 Dec, 1963 and PACAF Movement Order #11 dated 24 Dec, 1963. The three B-57 equipped squadrons, the 8th, 13th, and 90th, retained their identities and were reassigned to the 41st Air Division, and thus ended the history of the last active B-57 Bombardment Wing in the USAF. (Lineage and Honors Statement, 3 WG, current as of 1 Oct 1998; Hist, 3 BW (Tactical), 1 Jul 63-8 Jan 64, p.1)



14 Jan 1970 (Wed): The *Air Force Times* reported that AAC would receive the Burroughs 3500 computer as a replacement for two computers in operation. The Burroughs contained a 150 kilobyte memory and was used to store data on military and civilian personnel and civil engineering activities. It contained 20 remote consoles that supported Elmendorf AFB and Eielson AFB. ("Computer to Store AAC Records," *Air Force Times*, 14 Jan 1970.)

8 Jan 1971 (Fri): A ceremony was held in the Pentagon to symbolize the transfer of the Alaska Communications System from the military to the private sector. (Salley, Chronology, ACR, p. 29.)

10 Jan 1971 (Sun): The Air Force formally transferred the Alaskan Communication System (ACS) to RCA Alaskacom, during transfer ceremony held in the Anchorage Westward Hotel. The Very Reverent A.L. Abrahamson, Pastor, Central Lutheran Church, gave the invocation; Mr. Fred D. Chiei, Jr., Executive Vice President, RCA Alaska Communications, Inc., gave the greetings; Dr. Clay T. Whitehead, Director of Telecommunications Policy, the White House, provided remarks; Maj. Gen. Paul R. Stoney, Commander, Air Force Communications Service and Mr. Howard R. Hawkins, President, RCA Alaska Communications, Inc. and RCA Global Communications, Inc., officiated in the transfer ceremony; Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK) and Senator Mike Gravel (D-AK) made remarks; and Governor William A. Eagan gave an address. (Brochure for Transfer Ceremony.)

10 Jan-15 Feb 1979 (Wed-Thu): The Joint Chiefs of Staff coordinated, U.S. Readiness Command sponsored joint training exercise Jack Frost 79 was conducted in interior Alaska. Its purpose was to train Alaska based and deployed forces in joint operations in Arctic winter conditions. Approximately 16,000 personnel participated. The scenario called for a force on force engagement an Aggressor lodgment near Fairbanks. The Clear Creek landing strip near the Blair Lakes Bombing and Gunnery Range was reopened by PRIME Beef engineers to provide a forward logistic support point for both forces. The field training part of the exercise was held 26 January-4 February. At the suggestion of General Jenes, the exercise concept returned to the early 1970s when exercise forces were deployed to peripheral locations. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1979, pp. 252-264.)

13 Jan 1980 (Sun): The P-15 Fire Truck, the largest in the Air Force inventory, joined the Elmendorf AFB fire fighting fleet. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1980, pp. 176-177)

14 Jan 1983 (Fri): General Clark and Frank Jones, Manager, Alaska Railroad, officiated and ceremonies dedicating the Alaskan Air Command rail based alternate command post. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1983, p. 464.)

8 Jan 1985 (Tue): Lieutenant Colonel James A. Killian, Director of Manpower and Organization, AAC, briefed General Brown and MG Gerald H. Bethke, Commander, 172nd Infantry Brigade (AK) and their staffs on how to improve the Joint Task Force-Alaska permanent cell manning. General Brown had asked for the



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study in late 1984. At the time the brigade furnished two of the eight positions on the permanent JTF-AK permanent cell, the O-6 chief of staff and an O-3 plans officer. Of the 193 positions identified to support JTF-AK, the brigade provided 27 and the AAC the rest. They brigade was supposed to provide an O-6 to fill the J-3 requirement, but General Bethke claimed he could not spare one. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1985, pp. 30.)

14 Jan 1986 (Tue): General Nichols wrote the Gen. Larry D. Welch, Air Force Chief of Staff, noting the problem of split command in Alaska and the attempts to create a sub-unified command to correct it. He stated:

...the issue revolves around Senator Stevens and it will be difficult to get his support. As far as the Civilian Advisory Board is concerned, they want a unified command but most of them are ready to accept a sub-unified command as an acceptable fix...unless Senator Stevens' continuing public statements reverse some of their views. In a nutshell, Stevens wants a unified command with the Alaskan commander reporting directly to the JCS, and it is unlikely that I can convince him otherwise. This issue will have to be worked at the JCS level if we are to succeed. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1986, p. 314.)

11 Jan 1987 (Sun): The Alascom satellite terminal adjacent to the Regional Operations Control Center (ROCC) achieved operational capability. It provided for the transmission of bulk encrypted data between the ROCC and the Long Range Radar sites. It solved the long standing problem of the lack of secure air defense communications. Another milestone was achieved in November when communications was established with the McChord ROCC in Washington which allowed to the exchange of radar data. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1987, p. 101.)

8 Jan 1990 (Mon): Senator Ted Stevens met with Gen Merrill A. McPeak, Commander, Pacific Air Forces, who convinced him that re-designating AAC as a numbered Air Force was in the best interest to all concerned. General McPeak informed the Air Force Chief of Staff of his discussions with Senator Stevens. Senator Stevens suggested the re-designation ceremony be held in August 1990 to coincide with the reunion of the Eleventh Air Force veterans and the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the first Army Air Corps personnel on Elmendorf Field.

10 Jan 2003 – 3rd Engineering Squadron Reconstituted & Redesignated: The 3rd Engineering Squadron, disbanded 8 October 1948, was reconstituted and re-designated as the 703rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron effective 17 December 2002 and activated on Elmendorf AFB on 10 January 2003 and assigned to the 3rd Maintenance Group. (HQ PACAF SO GS-023, 9 Jan 2003.) Lieutenant Colonel Mark Bibler assumed command of the 703rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron during a ceremony presided over by Col Tom Ragland, Commander, 3rd Maintenance Group. ("In the Name of Tradition," *Sourdough Sentinel*, 17 Jan 2003.)



13 January–3 February 2005 – Operation NORTHERN DENIAL 10: (U) Forces assigned to 11 AF conducted Operation NORTHERN DENIAL 10 in response to the Russian strategic long range aviation exercise. The deployment of E-3 aircraft, F-15C fighters, and KC-135 tankers were ANR's response to posture forces to react to the Russian deployment exercise to their arctic forward operating locations. (Frank, Hist, 11 AF 2005)



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11 Jan 2006- Mount Augustine Activity: (U) Mount Augustine erupted, blowing ash six miles high above Augustine Island. Scientists with the Alaska Volcano Observatory (AVO) expected the climax of the eruption cycle to occur at a later date. They said the Augustine Volcano was behaving similarly to its eruptions in 1976 and 1986, which peaked with explosions that belched ash steadily for hours. By contrast, Wednesday's two initial bursts, at 0444L and 0513L, lasted only a few minutes each. According to the National Weather Service, the ash plume drifted away from the volcano like a smoke signal, and headed north over the unsettled western side of Cook Inlet,. On 12 January 2006, the 3rd Communications Squadron (3 CS) released a base-wide e-mail directing all users to power off all communications equipment (computers, printers, copiers, fax machines, etc.) prior to leaving work for the weekend because of the potential volcanic activity. The city of Anchorage also prepared for possible ash fall. The Municipal Office of Emergency Management issued a notice advising residents that the city was on alert status and providing information on what individuals could expect and what they should do in the event ash reached Anchorage. Mt Augustine erupted again on 13 January and continued erupting periodically for the remainder of the month. On 1 February, despite the eruptions at the end of January, ALCOM ordered that automated equipment no longer needed to be covered at the end of each day. The 3 CS stated that the inability to remotely install security patches while the machines were off was causing a risk to automation security. The 3 CS believed it had enough time to take necessary actions to protect Elmendorf AFB networks in the event of ash reaching the area. (3 WG History 2006)

