



Remembering Our Heritage



14-20 January

17 Jan 1922: The Army approved the 3rd Group's emblem with the Latin motto, *Non Solum Armis*, which in English translates to "Not by Arms Alone." The emblem was designed by SSgt Floyd L. Parker of the 1st Photographic Section. The significance of the emblem follows: The shield is divided diagonally into the original colors of the Air Service, green and black. Over the dividing line is a band of the Air Force's, present colors, ultramarine blue and golden yellow representative of the Rio Grande River dividing the US and Mexico. On the green field is a yellow cactus commemorating the group's first patrols along the Mexican border. Around the shield is a white border with black German crosses equal to the number of aerial victories credited to the group's original squadrons during World War I.



17 Jan 1935: Representative J. Mark Wilcox (D-FL) and member of the House Committee on Military Affairs, introduced House Resolution 4130, a bill authorizing the selection, construction and maintenance of frontier defense bases for the Army Air Corps. The resolution called for ten military posts, know as "frontier defense bases" to be constructed in the following areas with one base in each: New England, Southern Eastern Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, Southwestern Pacific, Central Pacific, Northwestern Pacific, Great Lakes, Alaska, Panama Canal, and the Rocky

Mountains. He specified that each base should accommodate a bombardment group and a costal defense group, be able to accommodate 1,000 planes and cost no more than \$19,000,000 each.

17 Jan 1939: Secretary of War, Harry H. Woodring, and Army Chief of Staff, Gen Marlin Craig, testifying before the Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives, noted the need for \$4 million to build an airfield in Alaska. At the time, the Panama Canal Zone and the Hawaii each had two military airfields and Alaska none. While the other two locations had substantial defenses, Alaska was limited to Chilkoot Barracks.



15 Jan 1942: The Alaska Defense Command General Order 3, 9 January 1942, activated the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Alaskan Air Force with a permanent station at Fort Richardson and an initial strength of 15 officers and 158 enlisted men. The activation of the headquarters and headquarters squadron established the beginning of the lineage and honors of the Eleventh Air Force. Col Everett S. Davis remained in command, and Lt Col Donald W. Titus became his deputy. His staff consisted of Lt Jack C. Vincent, A-1 and adjutant; Lt Ray D. Lenau,

A-2 and engineer; Capt Earl H. Jacobsen, A-3 and Commander, Headquarters Squadron; Maj William J. Reid, A-4 and quarter master officer; Maj Earl L. House, Administrative Inspector; Maj Willima M. Alfater, Surgeon; Capt Paul E. Stockard, Chemical Warfare Officer; and Capt Charles C. Watson, Signals Officer.



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15 Jan 1942: West Cost Construction Company of Boston, MA, began drilling the Whittier Tunnel, which consisted of two sections. The first, a 4,910-foot section, ran from the moraine of nearby Portage Glacier on the west side of the Chugach Mountains to Bear Valley. The second section ran 13,090-feet from Bear Valley to the east side exit near Whittier Glacier. The rectangular shape, 16-feet wide and 15-feet high tunnel accommodated a standard gage rail. Initially, the contractor had to rely on sending men over an old Indian trail between the two locations to coordinate the work. Later, the two locations were connected by a telephone line, which broke on occasion due to high winds and avalanches.



17 Jan 1942: The first contingent of the 807th Engineer Aviation Company, 64 officers and men, arrived at Chernofski on the western end of Unalaska Island. Chernofski, located across Umnak Pass from Otter Point, provided a natural harbor that the eastern end of Umnak Island lacked. It served as a transfer point for barging personnel, equipment and supplies across the eleven miles of water to the construction site on Umnak Island. The engineers began work on the airfield in late

January. By then additional men had arrived and there were approximately 500 infantry and artillery personnel on the island. The barge operations proved difficult due to the treacherous currents in Umnak Pass between the two islands and the lack suitable cargo discharge sites at Otter Point. On the average, two loaded barges arrived every three days. Often, entire barge loads were lost due to the sea conditions. Despite the losses, construction progress proceeded at a satisfactory pace.

19 Jan 1942: The 3rd Bombardment Group departed Hunter Field for Australia without its aircraft per Special Order No. 17, HQ, Savannah Army Air Base. 1Lt Robert Strickland, the senior ranking officer left in the group, assumed command of the 3rd Bombardment Group. The 3rd Bombardment Group had been flying anti-submarine patrols off the eastern seaboard. 1 Lt Strickland relieved Lt Col Phillip Melville, who was transferred to the 3rd Air Support Command. Following Pearl Harbor, the 3rd Bombardment Group's senior officers were pulled from the unit and spread throughout the Army Air Forces for training duties.



~18 Jan 1943: The B-26 flew its last combat mission of the Aleutian Campaign. The 73rd Bombardment Squadron and the 77th Bombardment Squadron completed conversion from the B-26 to the B-25Cs and Ds during February and the 406th Bombardment Squadron began converting from A-29s to B-25s on 15 February. The B-25 proved an easier medium bomber to fly and had a greater range than the B-26. The B-26s had not stood up well to Aleutian operations because of its limited range and tricycle landing-gear, which made landing difficult on the primitive, piece steel plank landing strips. The Eleventh Air Force had equipped the medium bomber with torpedoes obtained from the Navy, but their use proved disappointing.



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15 Jan 1944: The first AT-23B (TB-26) arrived at Adak from Elmendorf Field for assignment to the 15th Tow Target Squadron. Its crew brought the news that the remaining 10 TB-26s would arrive later in the month as soon as the tow reels could be installed. All but one of the training aircraft had arrived by the end of the month. One TB-26 involved in a taxi accident at Cape Field, had to be salvaged.



16 Jan 1944: The 404th Bombardment Squadron deployed five B-24Ds along with crews, maintenance, operations and intelligence personnel from Adak to Shemya for a simulated long range, high altitude bombing exercise to determine if long-range fighter escorted bombing missions against the northern and central Kuriles were feasible. The exercise plans called for the launch of the bombers from Shemya and their P-38 escorts from Attu. The mission would then proceed to Amukta Island in the Islands of the Four

Mountains, then reverse course and, climb to 19,000 feet and make the bombing run over Chugul Island, a small island just east of Atka Island and then return to Shemya and Attu.

19 Jan 1944: The Eleventh Air Force conducted a practice mission with four B-24Ds from the 404th Bombardment Squadron and six P-38s from the 54th Fighter Squadron to determine if long range, high altitude, fighter escorted missions could be flown against the northern and central Kurile Islands. The squadron began launching four bombers at 0940 hours. Capt Thomas C. Wood took off first in B-24D 41-11850, followed by Capt Chadbourn Stewart in 41-1091 at 0942, Lt Victor Babkiewicz in 42-40088 and Lieutenant Vogler in 42-40545 "The Duce" at 0943 hours. The bombers then proceeded to Attu



Island they were joined by three P-38Gs and three P-38Js, which had taken off in a squall from Alexai Point Army Air Base joined them at 2,000 feet. Each fighter carried two 300-gallon ferry tanks. The flight then turned east and climbed to 8,000 feet above the clouds. Lt Babkiewicz reported shortly after reaching the altitude that he had lost an engine and was returning to Shemya. Twenty minutes later Lt Vogler reported engine problems and shortly afterwards he turned back. The rest of the flight continued on. Three P-38 pilots experienced engine problems and left the formation near Adak. Two landed there and a third on nearby Atka Island. The remaining two bombers and their P-38 escorts continued east. Two P-38 pilots reported engine problems over Amelia Island and turned back for Adak. The two bombers and the remaining P-38 reached Amukta Island at 1417 hours. The formation reversed heading to 248 degrees and began climbing to 19,000 feet in preparation for the bomb run over Chugul Island. The reached the target to find it covered with clouds. The bomber crews then tried to drop the bombs by radar, but could not due equipment failures. They then jettisoned the bombs and headed back to Shemya. Capt Wood landed at 1824 hours followed by Capt Stewart one minute later. The remaining P-38 pilot experienced engine problems and landed at Adak. The failure of the mission was attributed to the extreme cold which caused mechanical breakdowns.



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19 Jan 1945: Lt Richard J. Korpanty, on his first Kurile mission, flew a radar ferret mission in B-24D 41-11924 "Duchess," which had been modified to gather intelligence on Japanese air defense radars in the Kuriles. It was the first ferret mission conducted against the Kuriles. He took off at 1031 hours with a bomb load of four 500-pound general purpose bombs with four to five second delay fuses in the event he encountered shipping. On reaching a point approximately 50 miles east of Cape Lopatka at 1650 hours, he turned south and began paralleling the Kuriles at 10,000 feet at a distance ranging from 20 to 60 miles off shore. The radar detection equipment, consisting of AN/APR-4 Search Receiver with an AN/APA-11 Pulse Analyzer tuning unit covering the 77 to 330 mega cycles was turned on. The flight continued down the Kuriles until reaching the southern end of Onkotan Island before turning for base, landing at 2043 hours. Japanese radar tracked the bomber from the time it made the turn south to the time it turned east for base.



19 Jan 1945: The 13th Bombardment Squadron, assigned to the 3rd Bombardment Group, was the first to arrive at Mindoro Island, southwest of Luzon, Philippines, and flew its first combat mission from there striking targets in the Calabasan and Norzgaray areas.

14 Jan 1951: A 13th Bombardment Squadron B-26B, assigned to the conducting a low-level reconnaissance to assess the previous night's interdiction damages, was hit by anti-aircraft fire over the airfield at Pyongyang. The pilot, Capt Fred B. Roundtree, ordered the crew to bailout. Capt Roundtree and his navigator, Lt Donald Thomas succeeded in getting out of the burning bomber. Capt Roundtree and the gunner, Sgt Bernard Mitchell, were never heard from again. They were first declared missing in action and later on 31 January 1954, killed in action. Lt Thomas, who had landed near the coast, fortunately met a Christian family. They hid him in a series of caves while waiting for the sea ice to melt so they could arrange for a boat to return him to American control. Finally, the arrangements were completed, and on 7 April 1951, Lt Thomas, the family who had befriended him and the boat crew sighted a British warship, the HMS *Cockade*, who took them aboard. Lt Thomas had spent 83 days in enemy territory, evading capture, a record for an aircrew member in the Korean War.

19 Jan 1954: The Alaskan Command formed a working group under the leadership of Brig Gen E.L. Sykes, J-3, Alaskan Command to develop air defense communications system that also supported other government agencies. Known as the Theater Communications Study Group, it was comprised of representatives from all military commands in Alaska, the Alaska Communication System and the Civil Aeronautics Administration to recommend a reliable communications system of Alaska's air defense system. The group met in eighteen regular and two extraordinary meetings between 21 January 1954 and 10 October 1955. The discussions ultimately led to the "717" Project which became known as the White Alice Communications System. The Air Force awarded a contract to the American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) Company to conduct a communications study and make recommendations. By the end of 1953, AAC had completed the installation of a VHF system augmented by an HF system. Both systems consisted of World War II vintage equipment. It provided an interim system until a permanent one could be developed and built.



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17 Jan 1958: Gen Earl Partridge, Commander-in-Chief, NORAD, concerned about the slow progress in the development of the air defense system, directed Lt Gen Frank Armstrong, Commander, Alaskan Air Command, to accelerate the replacement of the AN/FPS-8 Search Radars with the AN/FPS-20 Search Radar. Gen Partridge had insisted on a fully early warning system that also covered the area between the North Pacific and Midway and the North Atlantic and the Azores. Brig Gen Kenneth H. Gibson, Eleventh Air Force Commander, informed General Armstrong that everything would be done to expedite the program and that the Alaska District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expected the installations of nine AN/FPS-20s would be completed by 25 November 1958. General Armstrong was not satisfied and asked that the program be accelerated even faster, even it meant flying the equipment to the sites and paying overtime and premium wages. General Gibson stated that the schedule at King Salmon (F-3), Sparrevohn (F-15) and Indian Mountain (F-16) could be expedited but the others would be difficult due to the high expense and little would be gained. General Armstrong agreed and informed General Partridge.



15 Jan 1960: The Alaskan Air Command completed the abandonment of Ice Station Charlie which deteriorated. This left Ice Station Bravo, T-3, as the only remaining drifting ice station. The breakup of Ice Station Charlie began the first of the year, and by 7 January, the commander requested it evacuation. The ice flow had shrunk to one fourth of its size and the runway length had gone from 5,000 feet to 3,700 feet. The Tactical Air Command provided ski-wheel equipped C-130Ds, which

flew 11 sorties to evacuate personnel and high value equipment. There were around 13 Air Force support personnel and 16 to 20 scientists on the ice islands at the time.

19 Jan 1962: The Commander, Alaskan Air Command ordered a maintenance stand-down of F-102s on alert at King Salmon and Elmendorf AFB until an accident board could make determinations on what caused the emergency landing at King Salmon on 10 January. The aircraft lost electrical power and seared off the front landing gear. The F-102 alert was resumed in February.



17 Jan 1966: Lt Gen Raymond Reeves, Alaskan Command Commander, in a speech to the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, reiterated his earlier statement that there would not be a major reductions of forces due the requirements of Southeast Asia and Alaska would play an important role in support the Military Airlift Command's support to the war effort there. It would also continue to defend Alaska. Observers believed that the General Reeves was trying to allay fears of Anchorage and Fairbanks where the military played an important role in the economy.

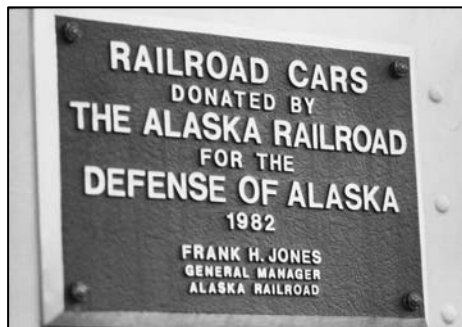


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19 Jan 1970: The Air Force towed the last F-102A assigned to the 317th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, 56-1282, to the Alaska Transportation Museum near Anchorage International Airport. Members of the 21st Field Maintenance Squadron readied the fighter by removing the engine and various other parts and then gave it a fresh painting in Arctic markings. The effort reduced the weight from 20,300 pounds to 15,000 pounds. Anchorage Police provided escort as it travel through the streets of Anchorage. Maj Gen Joseph A. Cunningham, Commander, Alaskan Air Command, officially presented the F-102A to the museum on 21 January and attached a plaque to it commemorating the years it had served with the 317th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron. Lt Col Glenn A. Fletcher, former squadron commander gave brief talk on the history and role the squadron.



14 Jan 1983: Lt Gen Lynwood Clark, Commander, Joint Task Force-Alaska, and Frank H. Jones, General Manager, Alaska Railroad, officiated at the ceremony dedicating the Alaskan Air Command rail based alternate command post.

14 Jan 1986: Lt Gen David L. Nichols, Commander, Joint Task Force-Alaska, 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."

17 Jan 1991: The U.S. led coalition forces launched the air phase of Operation DESERT STORM, the liberation of Kuwait from Iraq. It began with a massive barrage of air and cruise missiles strikes against targets in Iraq and Kuwait. Air Force special operations MH-53 helicopter crews led an Army attack helicopter force in strikes against radar sites. The Coalition Force flew more than 1,200 combat sorties during the first 14 hours. The 2nd Bombardment Wing, Barksdale AFB, LA, completed the longest bombing mission in history by launching B-52s from its base on an air launched cruise missile strike against Iraqi targets. Composed of less than 2.5 percent of the Coalition air assets, the F-117A stealth fighter-bomber attacked over 31 percent of Iraq's strategic targets.



20 Jan 2000: Brig Gen Jonathan S. Gration relinquished command of the 3rd Wing to Brig Gen (Select) Douglas M. Fraser in a change of command ceremony.



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20 Jan 2007: The 90th Fighter Squadron held a Casino Night and Strike Eagle Farewell at the Susitna Club as the 90th Fighter Squadron prepared for the arrival of the F-22A Raptor, the squadron wanted to celebrate the 16 years the F-15Es were in stationed in Alaska and flown by the squadron. The night included a social hour, dinner and gaming, with those present receiving a souvenir tumbler. Door prizes were also included.

