



Remembering Our Heritage



7-13 January

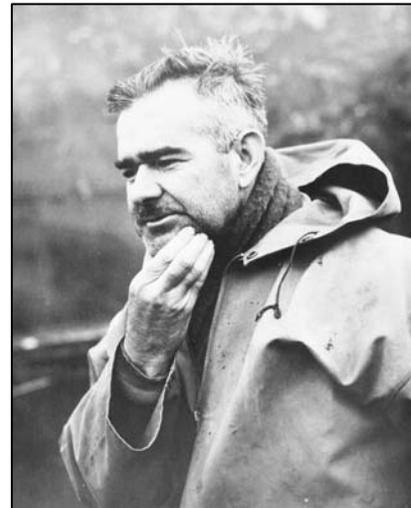
7 Jan 1929: Major Carl Spaatz, Capt Ira C. Eaker, 1/Lt. Harry A. Halverson, 2/Lt. Elwood R. Quesada and SSgt. Roy W. Hooe set an endurance record for a refueled plane in flight by remaining aloft for 150 hours, forty minutes and fifteen seconds from 1 to 7 January. Their aircraft, a Fokker C-2 Trimotor, named the *Question Mark*, was refueled 37 times in the air by two Douglas C-1 aircraft, each with a three man crew consisting of Capt. Ross G. Hoyt, 1/Lt. Auby C. Strickland and 2/Lt. Irvin A. Woodring in one and 1/Lt. Odas Moon, 2/Lt. Andrew F. Solter and 2/Lt. Joseph G. Hopkins in the other.



13 Jan 1933: 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.

12 Jan 1935: Amelia Earhart completed the first non-stop solo flight from Hawaii to California by flying a Lockheed Vega.

7 Jan 1941: Captain Benjamin B. Talley, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, arrived at Fort Richardson to assume responsibility for overseeing construction of the post and its air facilities, Elmendorf Field, as part of the transfer of base construction responsibility from the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Prior to his arrival, a considerable amount of progress had been made. Most of the temporary structures had been erected and foundations for the permanent hangars poured. The runways and aprons had been cleared, the east-west runway graded to 200-feet wide by 7,500 feet long and paved 60-feet and 4,980 feet long. The materials had been shipped from Seattle and San Francisco aboard U.S. Army transports, unloaded at Seward and brought the rest of the way by the Alaska Railroad. The unskilled came from local sources, but skill labor had to be brought in. In a talk before the Cook Inlet Historical Society on 26 June 1969, General Talley recalled that he arrived in Anchorage 7 January after being transported from Yakutat to Seward in a Coast Guard vessel. Colonel Otto Ohlson, General Manager, Alaska Railroad, met Captain Talley in Seward and gave him a ride to Anchorage in his Desoto sedan, which had been converted to run on rails. They arrived at 7:00 AM. General Talley recalled driving through the night and seeing the Northern Lights. On arrival in Anchorage, he made arrangements to live in the Anchorage Hotel on Fourth Avenue, paying \$90 a month in rent. He remained there for eight months before moving into a house on Government Hill (still there in 2005). On arrival, Captain Talley decided that work on the runways and permanent hangars would be completed during the 1941 construction season.





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10 Jan 1942: Brig Gen Simon Buckner wrote to Lt Gen John L. DeWitt that civilian workers at Kodiak were threatening to quit because there was no air protection. He had learned that beyond the two squadrons en route to Alaska, there was no further air units programmed for Alaska.

8 Jan 1943: Thirteen A-20s assigned to the 3rd Bombardment Group, 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 bomber was shot down by Japanese anti-aircraft fire.

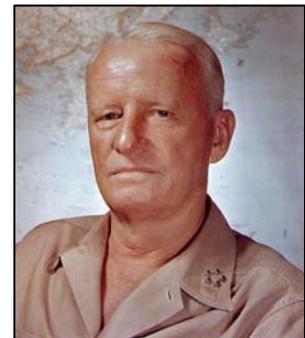


12 Jan 1943: The Eleventh Air Force lost six aircraft in one day. Following a report by a B-24 weather reconnaissance aircraft of two Japanese ships near Kiska Harbor, the Eleventh Air Force launched six B-24s from the 21st Bombardment Squadron, four B-26s and six P-38s from the 54th Fighter Squadron. 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.

7 Jan 1944: Admiral Chester Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific, directed Vice Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher, Commander, North Pacific Force, in his plan *Specific Operations for the Defeat of Japan 1944*, to:

- ❑ Plans for the North Pacific involve the augmentation of base facilities and defensive installations in the Aleutians in preparation for entry into the Kuriles and Soviet territory in the event of Russian collaboration.
- ❑ Naval surface and submarine action, including raids on Japanese fishing fleet will be carried out.
- ❑ Preparations will be made for executing very long range strategic bombing against the Kuriles and Northern Japan.



Admiral Nimitz noted that until then, the Eleventh Air Force and Fleet Air Wing had been engaged in purely defensive operations would now be used for missions against the Kuriles. Plans for 1944 would require continued bombing and reconnaissance missions against the Kuriles. Attacks on the fisheries would also be conducted. He stated that work on the Aleutian bases for a spring 1945 invasion of the Kuriles and the staging of B-29s would continue and studies should be made for the employment of large forces made available by the defeat of Germany.



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12 Jan 1944: 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 planners 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. The plan and other actions taken by the Americans appeared to have worked. The Japanese reinforced the six Army battalions in the Kuriles with three of the ten battalions withdrawn from Kiska. The Japanese increased its strength in the Kuriles from 27,000 in 1943 to 80,000 by the autumn of 1944. The Japanese mistakenly believed the Americans had 400,000 soldiers, 700 aircraft and a powerful Navy force in the Aleutians, when in actuality there were 64,000 military personnel, around 350 planes of different types and around six warships in the Aleutians.



10 Jan 1945: The 404th Bombardment Squadron launched four B-24s on a armed photoreconnaissance of Kakumabetsu Airfield and bombing mission of Kurabu Cape Airfield. Each bomber carried thirty 100-pound general purpose bombs. The en-route weather consisted of nine tenths cloud cover with tops varying between 7,000 and 9,000 feet. Conditions over Kurabu Cape were ceilings and visibility unlimited (CAVU). Other areas of Paramushiru and Shimushu were covered by clouds precluding the taking of pictures of Kakumabetsu. Oblique photographs were taken of Suribachi.

13 Jan 1948: The air base located 26 miles from Fairbanks, formally known as Mile 26 Field was redesignated Eielson AFB in honor of Alaska aviation pioneer Carl Ben Eielson. A 5010th Combat Support Group Fact Sheet, "History of Eielson AFB," produced in the early 1970s by the base public information office describe Eielson AFB as "a principle forward strike base" that was first known as Mile 26 due to its distance from Fairbanks. Congress had authorized its construction in June 1943 as a satellite base to Ladd Field. Unlike Ladd Field, the terrain did not restrict the length of the runway. The first aircraft landing was made in June 1944. Following the end of World War II, activity of Mile 26 was cut back. However, with the advent of the B-36, Eielson AFB assumed an importance as a forward deployment base for SAC bombers and new facilities were constructed. Most of the World War II facilities were demolished and concrete block buildings replaced temporary wooden structures. Eielson AFB became a self sustained base, second only in size to Elmendorf AFB.



9 Jan 1949: 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: A Headquarters, USAF, manpower team arrived on Elmendorf AFB to assess the condition of Alaskan Air Command. 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.



14 Jan 1951: A 13th Bombardment Squadron B-26B, assigned to the 3rd Bombardment Wing, 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, Captain Fred B. Roundtree, ordered the crew to bailout. Captain Roundtree and his navigator, Lieutenant Donald Thomas succeeded in getting out of the burning plane. Captain Roundtree and the gunner, Sergeant Bernard Mitchell, were never heard from again. They were first declared missing in action and later on 31 January 1954, killed in action. Lieutenant 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, Lieutenant Thomas, the family who had befriended him and the boat crew sighted a British warship, the HMS

Cockade, who took them aboard. Lieutenant Thomas had spent 83 days in enemy territory, evading capture, a record for an aircrew member in the Korean War. 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.

11 Jan 1957: The Air Force awarded a contract to the Western Electric Corporation as the prime contractor to perform engineering and installation of all technical equipment on the Aleutian DEW Line Segment (Project Stretch Out) to include the tie into the White Alice Communications System as part as Operation Stretch Out. It was referred to as Project 540. Initially, the DEW Line segment had been planned as a 12-station extension from King Salmons (F-3) to Adak. It was then modified to eight and finally to six stations (one main and five auxiliary) terminating at Nikolski on the western tip of Umnak Island. The Air Force selected the Raytheon AN/FPS-19 Search Radar. Western Electric Company was required to conduct a systems engineering study, review site plans and building design and plan and install and testing the communications and electronic equipment. It also was required to provide equipment not furnished by the government.



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12-23 Jan 1960: The 5040th Radar Evaluation Flight conducted an evaluation of the Cape Newenham AN/FPS-20A surveillance radar. The site, operated and maintained by the 794th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, consisted of a bottom and top camp with the radar equipment located at the top camp. A tramway provided the only means of transportation between the two camps. The 5040th Radar Evaluation Flight flew 26 RB-57 sorties against the site. The radar functioned according to standards.



8 Jan 1964: The 3rd Bombardment Wing (Tactical) was redesignated the 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing 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. The redesignation and change of station was a result of Project Clearwater, designed to reduce the number of USAF units in Japan. As a result, the 3rd Tactical fighter Wing was assigned to the Tactical Air Command.

10 Jan-6 Mar 1965: Alaskan Command joint combined strategic mobility field training exercise Polar Strike was conducted. It was the largest Arctic exercise to date and involved deploying and redeploying CONUS base forces to Alaska. The field portion involved force of force engagements by two Infantry brigades including a Canadian airborne company. United States Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force units supported both sides. Lt Gen Raymond J. Reeves, Commander-in-Chief, Alaskan Command, served as the exercise director. It was a first for ALCOM. Prior to that the command had monitored joint training exercises and let the Commanding General, United States Army, Alaska handle the exercise director duties. General Reeves decided that Headquarters, ALCOM would serve as the director headquarters. This gave ALCOM the same role it would have in actual combat and allowed the component commanders to function in their roles.



15 Jan 1968: The building containing the film library and the Airmen's Club was destroyed in a fire. The Alaskan Air Command received authorization of \$735,000 to erect a new club during 1968-69.

10 Jan 1971: The Air Force formally transferred the Alaskan Communication System (ACS) to RCA Alaskom, during transfer ceremony held in the Anchorage Westward Hotel. The Air Force had accepted the Alaska Communication System from the Army on 1 July 1962. Within the next few years, the continuing growth of Alaska and the military increasing decrease in its share of the usage of the long line communications system, made it apparent that it should be transferred to a commercial firm. The 90th Congress passed the necessary legislature in late 1967, and on 25 June 1969, President Richard M. Nixon approved the sale of ACS to RCA Global Communications for \$28,430,000 with the stipulation the communications firm invest another \$27,683,000 in capital improvements. To operate the system, RCA established RCA Alascom.



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12 Jan 1972: The 5040th Helicopter Squadron rescued a Russian crewman, Vasily Andrevich, the first mate, who was suffering from a burst appendix, from the deck of the Soviet fishing vessel *Luchegorsk No 54*. The trawler had requested assistance the previous day and the US Coast Guard had given it permission to put the sick crewman ashore at the village of Mekoryuk on Nunivak Island, where he could be flown to Bethel for treatment. Poor weather and an ice jam prevented a docking, and the Elmendorf AFB Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) launched an HH-3E at 1100 with flight surgeon Lt Col Darrold A. Stoebner and pararescueman SSgt Donald P. Mulhall aboard. An HC-130 provided refueling and navigation support during the 490-mile flight to the rescue location four miles north of Nunivak Island. The helicopter arrived over the vessel at 1522 and lowered Lt Col Stoebner and SSgt Mulhall to the deck. They examined the patient and all three were hoisted aboard the HH-3E, which then flew to Bethel, where they were transferred to an HC-130 for a flight Anchorage International Airport. From there, the patient was transported to the Alaska Native Medical Center. The patient recovered. The HH-3E crew included Majors Robert H. Robinson, George C. Hitt and Richard G. Ground, pilots; and TSgt. Kenneth Rohrbouck, flight engineer.



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, US Readiness Command, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserves, US 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 Ft Wainwright-Eielson AFB-Ft Greely-Blair Lakes area. The scenario envisioned an enemy force seizing a lodgment that threatened Ft Wainwright and Ft 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. The planners envisioned division size exercise. The Army, because of the Vietnam commitment, had not been able

to deploy a large force to Alaska since Polar Strike, and had to depend on forces already in Alaska with minimum outside augmentation. The Air Force, not restricted by the airlift requirement to move large numbers of troops, frequently deployed squadron size forces to Alaska to participate in exercises. The scenario involved massive strikes against continental US and Europe and a land invasion of NATO countries with a surprised Orange air and sea attack on Alaska and a nuclear attack on the Kenai Peninsula. Unlike previous exercises which focused on an attack from the north, Brim Frost 75 involved one from the Gulf of Alaska. An Orange naval task force secured Kodiak, Valdez and Glennallen and then moved against Fort Greely and Eielson AFB. The 172nd Infantry Brigade and the Alaskan Air and Army National Guard played the Orange force.



9 Jan 1976: The 1st Tactical Fighter Wing, Langley AFB, VA, accepted the first operational F-15 Eagle. The new air-superiority fighter was the first to have a thrust greater than the weight of the aircraft, which permitted it to accelerate while going straight up.

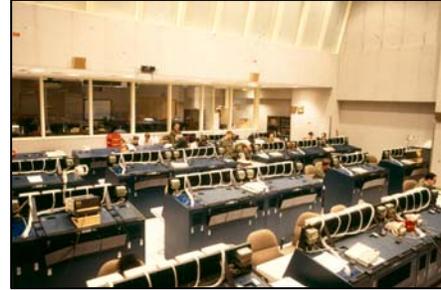


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11 Jan 1987: The Alascom satellite terminal adjacent to the Regional Operations Control Center (ROCC) achieved operational capability. It provided for the transmission of bulk encrypted data between the ROCC and the Long Range Radar sites. It solved 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.



15 Jan 1994: The C-17A Globemaster III combined test team arrived at Eielson AFB for cold weather testing of the cargo plane.



10 Jan 2003: The 3rd Engineering Squadron, disbanded 8 October 1948, was reconstituted and redesignated 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. Lt Col Mark Bibler assumed command of the 703rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron during a ceremony presided over by Col Thomas Ragland, 3rd Maintenance Group Commander.

7 Jan 2005: In September 2004, the 90th Fighter Squadron and 90th Aircraft Maintenance Unit deployed in support of Air Expeditionary Force 1 taskings to Korea. In January, 12 aircraft and over 300 short tons of equipment were redeployed back to Elmendorf.