



Remembering Our Heritage



18-24 June



20 Jun 1940: Construction began on barracks, warehouses and other priority buildings on Elmendorf Field. (Fleischer, Hist, Elmendorf Field, 1940-1944, p. 20.)

18 Jun 1942: Following a four-day weather delay, the Eleventh Air Force launched three B-17Es and the LB-30 from the 36th Bombardment Squadron and four B-24Ds from the 30th Bombardment Group against Kiska. The LB-30 crew flew ahead of the others to report the weather. The B-17 crews went in next followed by the B-24 crews one hour later. Captain Russell Cone's B-17 bombardier, MSgt Alpha G. Story, dropped a bomb in the mid-section of the transport *Nissan Maru* from 14,000 feet, setting it on fire. The transport had brought in a load of coal, fuel oil and gasoline. The transport eventually settled to the bottom of the harbor with only its mast protruding through the water. In addition to the *Nissan Maru*, Captain Cone's squadron claimed another transport damaged and two possible float planes shot down. The occupation of the western Aleutians had been a minor Japanese victory with the Japanese trying to hold on to them while the Americans tried to blast them out. Like Midway, the Aleutians became a contest of airpower. (Carter and Mueller, *Combat Chronology, World War II*, p. 20; Wheeler Diary; USSB No. 99.)



23 Jun 1947: The War Department directed a survey party headed by Lt Col Harold J. Crumly to select radar sites in Alaska. In addition to Colonel Crumly, the team consisted of Capt Robert G. Rushforth, Capt Richard M. Cosel and Mr. Fred E. Bornemann. The team arrived in Alaska on 4 July to find a loosely knit air defense organization consisting of the 625th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron on Adak and the 626th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron on Ladd Army Air Base. The nine pre-war and early World War II vintage SRC radars, no longer operable, were in storage. The ones produced during the war, except for a few, were also in storage due limited manpower and lack of train personnel. Ladd Army Air Base contained four AN/CPS-5 Search Radars, an AN/TPS-1B Search Radar and an AN/TPS-10A Height Finder Radar. The Anchorage area contained an AN/CPS-5 and an AN/CPS-4 Height Finder Radar. Two AN/CPS-5s, an AN/CPS-4, AN/TPS-10A and an AN/TPS-1B Search Radar were located at Adak. The radars were being used for air traffic control and training. None were being used for air defense. Of the radars available at the time, only one was operable. The final report noted: "Based on the above, it can be stated that there is no present air warning coverage in the Alaska area." The study, referred to as the "Crumley Report," recommended thirteen radar sites and three control centers as an inner ring defense. It recommended thirteen other perimeter sites to provide early warning. Because of limited manpower, the study stated only sites guarding key facilities would be available by 1950 and that the remainder would have to be built as funding and manpower became available. (Report of the War Department Survey Party on Radar Sites in Alaska, Vol. II, 19 Sep 1947, p. 51.)

Source: Office of History, Elmendorf AFB



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25 Jun 1950: The air defense forces in Alaska went on 24-hour alert in response to the North Korean attack. Alaskan military forces have maintained a 24-hour air defense capability ever since that time. At the time of the attack, the Alaskan Command's air defense forces consisted of temporary radar sites located on Elmendorf AFB and at Naknek (later renamed King Salmon), Clear and Nome plus a radar site at Gambell on St. Lawrence Island that tracked Russian shipping in the area. Two control centers, one on Elmendorf AFB and the other on Ladd AFB, exercised control over the radars and air defense operations in their respective sectors. The 57th Fighter Interceptor Wing provided fighter protection from Elmendorf AFB with three squadrons of F-80s. It operated detachments at Naknek and Ladd AFB. The 449th Fighter-All Weather Squadron, assigned to the 5001st Composite Wing at Ladd AFB, provided protection north of the range with F-82Hs. It began converting to the Lockheed F-94As in July. The Army deployed the 867th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion on Fort Richardson provided point defense of that installation. The 96th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion and 506th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion arrived in July to provide point defense of Elmendorf AFB and Eielson AFB respectively. Two more aircraft control and warning squadrons arrived in November. (Sturm, *Air Defense of Alaska*, p. 12.)



19 Jun 1951: The 3rd Bombardment Wing reached a milestone in the Korean War, when it flew its 10,000th effective sortie. The crew that flew the sortie, a strike against a vehicle convoy north of Pyongyang, consisted of: Captain Thomas G. Crenshaw, pilot; Major Edward S. Ashley, observer; Second Lieutenant Stephen A. Byrne, navigator; First Lieutenant James E. Dunn, radar/observer. Major General Frank R. Everest, Commander Fifth Air Force, presided over the ceremony marking the historical moment. General Everest's first assignment after earning his wings in the pre World War II years had been with the 3rd Attack Group. (Hist, 3BG, Jun 51, Ops Section, p. 6)

22-23 Jun 1951: Captain Heyman, 8th Bombardment Squadron, became the first 3rd Bombardment Wing B-26 pilot to score an air-to-air victory. He was returning from a night strafing mission, when he heard a controller calling for any aircraft in the Seoul area who had ammunition left. Captain Heyman responded and was radar vectored to the point where a Russian built Polikarpov PO-2 biplane was harassing front line troops. Because of its slow speed of 85 knots, the lightweight, and nimble single engine observation aircraft proved difficult to engage. Captain Heyman lowered the flaps and landing gear and opened the bomb bay door to slow his B-26 down to less than 130 knots. After spotting the PO-2 in the moonlight, Captain Heyman lost sight his prey that kept turning into him each time he attacked. The PO-2 pilot descended, and Captain Heyman spotted him again against the background of a river. He succeeded in shooting the enemy plane down with a 90-degree deflection shot with wing-mounted guns at an altitude of 800 feet. (*The Invader*, 9 July 51; Thompson, *B-26 Invader Units Over Korea*, pp. 52-53)





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19 Jun 1953: A fire destroyed the Port of Whittier's dock and three warehouses, causing \$20,000,000 in damages. The fire burned up a significant amount of supplies and destroyed the Alaska Railroad stiff-legged crane, the largest of its type in Alaska. Hundreds of soldier stevedores fought the blaze and seven were injured. Traffic was shifted to the Ports of Anchorage and Seward until facilities at Whittier could be restored. The Armed Services Committee released \$6,000,000 in emergency funds in July 1953, and operations were partially restored by the end of July. Full use of the facilities resumed shortly afterwards after additional



funding was provided. As a result, the Army embarked on another major construction program to repair the damages and build new facilities. Temporary steel prefabricated docks were installed at a cost of \$1,024,000. They were later replaced with in 1957 with 1,000-foot reinforced concrete and steel wharf and support facilities costing \$ 4.3 million. At the same time, the 14-story Hodge Building was erected to provide family quarters. (Hist, ALCOM, Jan 1952-Jun 1956, p. 49; Woodman, *Duty Station Northwest*, Vol. III, p. 67.)



22 Jun 1955: Soviet MIG-15s intercepted a US Navy P2V Neptune with a crew of 11 that was flying over the Bering Straits in international waters 30 miles west-northwest of St. Lawrence Island and 20 miles off the Soviet mainland at 8,000 feet. The P2V was flying out of Naval Air Station Kodiak reconnaissance mission. The aircraft commander, Lt. R.H. Fischer, reported he and his crew was taken completely by surprise when the Soviet pilots made their attacks through heavy clouds and poor visibility under the control of ground radar. The one firing pass lasted four to five seconds. No return fire was initiated. Cannon rounds

struck the left wing and fuselage, wounding three crewmembers and setting the wing on fire and knocking out the left engine during the one pass that was made. One MIG pilot had apparently made the attack while the other flew cover. Lt Fischer and his crew made a wheels up landing on the tundra five miles south of the village of Gambell. Natives assigned the Alaska Army Guard's Eskimo Scouts, who had observed the burning aircraft descending, reached the crash site by boat one hour later. They took the crew to Gambell, and from there a 10th Air Rescue Squadron aircraft from Ladd AFB flew the crew to Elmendorf AFB where the injured were treated and the rest of the crew was flown to Kodiak. The Soviets claimed the maritime reconnaissance aircraft had violated their airspace and their pilots had only opened fire in response to fire from the Neptune. The attack came at a time when President Eisenhower was in New England on a speech tour and American diplomats and statesmen were in San Francisco to commemorate the ten anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov was also there. The Big Four were scheduled to hold talks in July. The shoot down resulted in a storm of protest. Lieutenant General Joseph H. Atkinson, ALCOM Commander, called the attack "entirely unwarranted and without provocation of any kind." Democrat and Republican leaders expressed their feelings. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles insisted on a full explanation and complete reparation from Moscow. Foreign Minister Molotov handed him a note stating that while the Neptune had violated Soviet air space, the Soviet government expressed regret over the incident which had taken place under conditions open to interpretation by both sides. The Soviets agree to pay compensation one half the costs of damages suffered by the Americans. The U.S. demanded \$724,947. (Chart, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1955, pp. 237)



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21 Jun 1969: The Department of Defense publicly announced the sale of the Air Force operated Alaska Communication System RCA Global Communications Inc., for \$28,430,000, and the sale of local telephone exchange at Healy Alaska for \$5,000 to the Matanuska Telephone Association. The Radio Cooperation of America guaranteed to spend \$27,683,000 in improvements that included direct dialing by 1971 and new services to 124 small communities that lacked communications. The company also planned a microwave system using the COMSAT earth terminal at Talkeetna. The savings in long distance rates to Alaskans was estimated to be \$40,000,000. The Matanuska Telephone Association also agreed to spend \$167,000 to improve the Healy exchange. The final approval rested with the Alaska Public Utilities Commission. (Weidman, Hist, AAC, Jul 1968-Jun 1969, p. 110.)

23 Jun 1970: Eighteen F-4Es from the 43rd Tactical Fighter Squadron arrived at Elmendorf AFB under the command of Lt Col Thomas "Tom" J. Humphrey after a 4,400-mile nonstop flight from MacDill AFB, FL. Major General Joseph A. Cunningham, Eleventh Air Force Commander, Col John C. Nelson, 21st Composite Wing Commander and Mr. Bob Reeve, Reeve Aleutian Airline, were on hand to greet the squadron. The flight took 7.5 hours and three in-flight re-fuelings to complete. The squadron had been assigned to the 15th Tactical Fighter Wing at MacDill AFB. It was assigned the 21st Composite Wing and was under the operational control of Commander-in-Chief, Alaskan Command. It had three separate missions, aid defense, tactical air support of ground forces and training. The air defense was primary and included a 24-hour, seven days a week alert commitment at King Salmon and Galena. It was also had to requirement to deploy. The problems faced by the squadron on arrival in Alaska included: Arctic weather, long distances between bases, limited number of suitable airfields, large numbers of aircraft control and waning personnel not familiar with F-4E operations and inadequate ranges. The Alaskan Air Command had discussed its requirements for the F-4 Phantom as early as 1963 when it began entering Air Force service. The requirements of Southeast Asia delayed assignment of the dual capable aircraft to Alaska for seven years. (Mongin and Mesloh, Hist, AAC, Jul 1970-Jun 1972, p. 31.)



23 Jun 1970: The 531st Tactical Fighter Squadron, in preparation of the 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing stand down, ceased combat operations. The last combat mission was flown by squadron commander, Maj William Endres and 3rd TFW Deputy Commander for Operations, Col Emmett Barrentine, Jr. During the four and a half years of service in Vietnam, the 531st "Ramrod" pilots flew a total of 28,972 combat missions. (3 TFW history, 1 Apr-30 Jun 1970, pp. 32-33, 43)

18 Jun 1976: Governor Jay Hammond signed Senate Bill 565 authorizing permanent hunting and fishing licenses for newly assigned military personnel. Up until then, military members and their families had to wait a year before getting a resident hunting and fishing license, which cost \$12 versus for the \$40 non-resident annual license. Alaska was the only state with the one year requirement. The discrepancy had been the subject of military complaints and news media articles. State Senators John L. Raider, Mike Culletta, and W.E. Bradley (retired USAF Lt Col), introduced bill on 23 January 1976, and General Hill had testified before the Senate Natural Resource Committee in support. The Senate voted on 28 April 17 in support and the House on 27 May 22 to 9 in support. (Hales, Hist, AAC, 1976, pp. 175--178.)



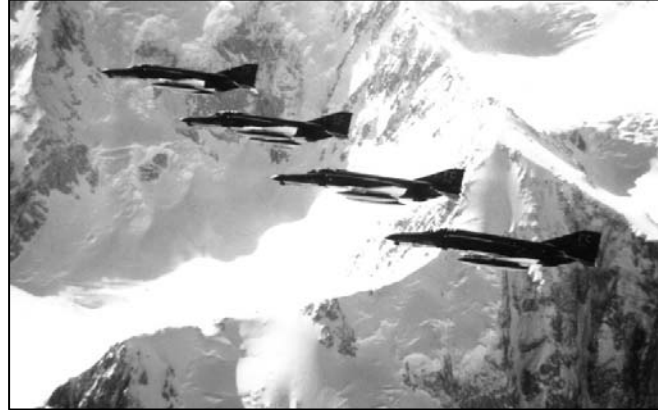


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24 Jun 1978: The 57th Tactical Training Wing, Nellis AFB, NV, deployed six F-5Es to Eielson AFB for four weeks to participate in the first Dissimilar Aircraft Combat Training exercise ever conducted in Alaska. The light weight fighters, painted in Soviet aircraft markings, were flown by the 64th Fighter Weapons Squadron. The 21st Composite Wing deployed 10 F-4Es to Eielson AFB to engage in the training, which was considered a success. A total of 156 missions were flown. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1976, pp. 387-.)



18 Jun 1986: The first three C-130Hs, 74-1692, 74-2062, and 74-2131, to be assigned to the 17th Tactical Airlift Squadron arrived on Elmendorf AFB. They were followed by 74-1658, 74-1659, 74-1668 and 74-2071 on 18 July, 74-2066 on 18 August, 74-1690 on 19 August and 74-2070 on 12 December. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1986, p. 173.)

19-27 Jun 1998: The 3rd Wing sent one C-130 and a team of 23 to McChord AFB, WA to participate in RODEO 98. The team competed against 63 other teams from the Air Mobility Command (AMC), and from countries as Canada, Spain, Great Britain, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Belgium, and Brazil. The 517AS had proven they were the best. They won the following trophies: General Dutch

Huysen trophy for the Best Air Mobility Wing; Best Shortfield Landing Aircrew; Best Airdrop Crew; Best Airdrop Wing; Best C-130 Aircrew; and Best C-130 Wing. (Hist, 3 WG, 1998, Chron)

18 Jun 1990: A Pacific Air Forces site survey team visited Elmendorf AFB and Eielson AFB to determine their ability to support Cope Thunder. Headquarters, PACAF, had initiated the series in 1976 based on Tactical Air Command's Red Flag series and the lessons learned in Vietnam. With the possible closure of Clark AB in the Philippines, Headquarters, PACAF began looking at other alternate locations for its Cope Thunder exercises series. The team, during its Alaska visit, looked at the base facilities and evaluated range facilities, air space and command and control. As a result, it recommended that Cope Yukon, later changed to Cope Thunder North, be conducted as a two-week air interdiction exercise using the interior range complex near Eielson AFB. The team recommended that the air-to-air forces be located on Elmendorf AFB and the air-to-surface forces be on Eielson AFB. (Cloe, Hist, AAC/11AF, 1990, p. 259.)

23 Jun 2004: The Boniface Gate reopened after an eight-week renovation project. Colonel Michael Snodgrass, 3rd Wing Commander, officiated the ribbon cutting ceremony. (Boniface Reopens, *Sourdough Sentinel*, 25 Jun 04.)



24 Jun 2006: The new Arena Football League team in Anchorage sponsored a name-the-team contest for the team. TSgt Deryl Morse submitted the winning name, Alaska Wild. His reward was a family season ticket pass. (Art (U), "AF2 team will be called the Alaska Wild," *Alaska Sports Digest*, 24 Jun 2006.)

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