



# Remembering Our Heritage



## 25 June – 1 July

**1 Jul 1919:** The Army Surveillance Group, known today as the 3rd Wing, was organized at Kelly Field, Texas, under the command of Maj B.B. Butler. Assigned were the 8th, 90th and 104th Aero Squadrons. The group was assigned to the First Wing, U.S. Army Air Services and equipped with DeHavilland DH-4Bs. Lt Jimmy Doolittle became one of the first members. He was initially assigned to the 104<sup>th</sup> Aero Squadron at Kelly Field in mid-1919 and later to the 90<sup>th</sup> Surveillance Squadron at Eagle Pass on the Texas border with Mexico, where he remained for about for about a year. The squadron was responsible for patrolling the boarder by air and protecting American towns from possible Mexican bandit raids. The aviators patrolled from Brownsville, Texas to Nogales, Arizona, their DH-4Bs powered by Liberty-12 engines, and armed with Marlin forward and Lewis rear guns. The Group continued border patrol until 30 Jun 1921. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), Activation to 31 December 1941, pp. 1-2; Maurer *Air Force Combat Units of World War II*, p. 30; Lawrence Cortes, *The Grim Reapers, History of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group, 1918-1965*, Historical Aviation Album, Temple City, FL, 1985, p. 2.)



**30 Jun 1936:** The 3rd Attack Group was awarded the Columbian Safety Trophy, for achieving the least number of accidents per flying hour for the fiscal year. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), Activation to 31 December 1941, p. 18)



**27 Jun 1940:** The first troops, 456 officers and enlisted men, under the command of Lt Col Earl Landreth, arrived by Alaska Railroad train at the Anchorage depot at 7:00 AM. They had arrived the previous day at Seward aboard the U.S. Army Transport *St Miheil*. They consisted of the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, from Missoula, MT and assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Lewis, WA. The troops pitched their tents in a hay field on the former homestead of Harvey G. Marsh. (Fagen, Hist, Fort Richardson, p.p. 10-11; Lt Henry E. Fleischer, Hist, Elmendorf Field, 1940-1944, pp. 15-16.)

**1 Jul 1940:** *The Anchorage Daily Times* announced that signs had been posted declaring the base off-limits to avoid possible accidents at the construction sites. Persons wanted to enter the base had to secure passes. Pay day to the troops with partial pay distributed. Long lines of buses waited to bring men to Anchorage. New supplies were being unloaded from the *St Miheil*. The first artillery guns arrived and the ammunition was stored in a barn on the former Harvey G. Marsh Homestead. The Anchorage High School offered the use of its showers to the soldiers. (*The Anchorage Daily Times*, 1 Jul 1940.)

**25 Jun 1942:** Lt Billy Wheeler wrote in his diary that the 36th Bombardment Squadron dropped the first incendiary bombs of the Aleutian Campaign. They were home made devices consisting of gas filled rubber casing with black gun power detonators. Three B-17s were employed on dropping them on shore installations Some of the gunners reported seeing smoke, but no damage reported by succeeding flights. Believed bombs dropped into harbor. (Wheeler Diary.)





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**27 Jun 1942:** The 54th Fighter Squadron sustained its first loss in the Aleutians when Lt. David F. Middleton took off from the Otter Point field, Umnak Island, at 0710, entered the clouds, lost his bearings and spun in. The squadron held the funeral services on 29 June and its historian quoted another of the squadron:

Buried "Spider" today in this dreary, uncivilized little island. The funeral was impressive but superficial. The wind howling over the tundra was the funeral march and the sting of the rain helped to bring tears. He lay in a plain pine box and the Chaplain raised his voice over the howl of the elements in prayers to the soul. He placed a small flower on the coffin and the wind flung it back to earth. We all saluted our comrade as an Infantry Squad fired three volleys over his grave and that was the last chapter in the life of Lt. Middleton. (Capt Leo Nocenti, Hist, 54<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, Jan 1941-Dec 1943, p. 21.)



**1 Jul 1942:** The Eleventh Air Force formed the provisional XI Bombardment Command with Col William O. Eareckson commanding it and the 28th Composite Group to provide command and control of tactical operations. The action began a period referred to by the group historian as Jekyll and Hyde. It had an arrangement with one organization with two names. The provisional XI Bombardment Command consisted of the 28th Composite Group, which was retained to furnish administrative and logistical support, two heavy and three medium bombardment squadrons. The provisional XI

Bombardment Command was responsible for planning and operations. The 36th Bombardment Squadron (B-17Es, a RB-17B on loan from Ladd Field and used for reconnaissance and a LB-30) and the 27th and 38th Provisional Bombardment Squadrons from the 30th Bombardment Group (B-24Ds) continued to fly missions against the Japanese on Kiska and Attu Islands. The 36th Bombardment Squadron, less a detachment at Nome, and the provisional squadrons operated from Cape Field. The B-26s assigned to the 73rd and 77th Bombardment Squadrons and the A-29s assigned to the 406th Bombardment Squadron lacked the range to reach the Kiska from the nearest American base on Cape Field, Umnak Island. They flew anti-submarine patrols and training missions. The 404th Bombardment Squadron arrived later and was sent to Nome to fly patrols over the Bering Sea with its B-24Ds. The new squadrons were in response to repeated request by General DeWitt following the Japanese occupation of the western Aleutians. (Ransohoff, Hist, 11AF, p. 164; Herold, Hist, 28BG, Feb 1940-Mar 1944, pp. 14-15; Craven and Cate, *The Pacific, Guadalcanal to Saipan*, pp. 366-367)

**26 Jun 1948:** The Alaskan Air Command assumed control of all medical installations in the theater with the exception of Army's 183rd Station Hospital on Fort Richardson and the dispensaries at the Port of Whittier and Big Delta. The reorganization resulted from a mutual agreement between the Alaskan Air Command and United States Army, Alaska. The hospital at Ladd AFB had a 250 bed capability and that at Davis AAB a 125 bed capability. All other bases had a 10 to 50 bed capability. Future plans called for a new hospital at Ladd AFB with a 400 bed capability. The Army was planning a similar facility to replace the temporary World War II hospital maintained by the 183rd Station Hospital and located eight and a half miles from the main post area near the intersection of the Glenn and Davis Highways. It was intended to server as a general hospital for all of Alaska. Medical evacuation was handled by the 1st Aeromedical Air Evacuation Flight. (Maxwell, Hist, AAC, 1948, pp. 15-17.)



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**1 Jul 1948:** The Alaskan Air Command assumed responsibility for maintenance and utility functions at all former Army Air Forces installations in Alaska, which included 13 installations valued at approximately \$600 million. The included the major bases of Elmendorf AFB, Eielson AFB and Ladd AFB; the World War II bases of Amchitka AFB (Amchitka Island), Cape AFB (Umnak Island), Davis AFB (Adak), Galena AFB, Marks AFB (Nome), Naknek AFB (later renamed King Salmon), Shemya AFB, Thornbrough AFB, (Cold Bay) and Walseth AFB (McGrath); and the post war Nenana Air Field (Nenana) and Point Spencer AFB. (Woodman, *Duty Station Northwest*, p. 59.)



**25 Jun 1950:** The North Koreans invaded South Korea at 0400 on a Sunday morning. The tank-spearheaded attacks quickly broke through the hastily organized South Korean defenses with comparative ease. Following the outbreak of hostilities, Fifth Air Force assigned the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group the mission of interdicting enemy logistical facilities and lines of communication. This consisted of cutting the enemy's supply lines by bombing roads and railroad bridges from low to medium altitude and hampering enemy movement of troops and supplies by road and railroad with low-level strafing, bomb and rocket attacks. Other targets included marshalling yards, supply dumps and other military targets of high value. (Hist, 3BG, May-Jun 50, Ch 4, p. 2)

**25 Jun 1950:** The air defense forces in Alaska went on 24-hour alert in response to the North Korean attack. It has 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.)

**26 Jun 1950:** The 8th Bomb Squadron completed its deployment of 12 B-26s from Johnson AB to Ashiya AB in support of the Korean emergency. The squadron joined ground personnel from 13th Bombardment Squadron already deployed there in support of a pre-war exercise. The flight echelon of the 13th Bombardment Squadron and the 3rd Bombardment Group headquarters joined them the next day in order to be closer to Korea. The remainder of the 3rd Bombardment Wing remained at Johnson Air Base to support base activities. The wing also operated an F-51 replacement-training unit, providing transitional training to U.S. Air Force pilots. (Hist, 3BG, May-Jun 50, p. 3; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, pp. 6-7, 111)





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**27 Jun 1950:** The 8th Bombardment Squadron flew the first ground air strike mission of the war. Six of the squadron's ten available B-26s were committed to escorting the Norwegian merchant ship *Reinholt*, which was evacuating 682 non-combatants from Seoul. This left four aircraft to carry out the mission of finding and attacking a North Korean tank column reported north of the capital city. Weather and poor maps prevented them from finding the target. They returned to Ashiya Air Base at dusk. The next mission launched at 2030 from Ashiya with five B-26s and was equally unsuccessful in finding the enemy because of darkness and the poor weather.

(Hist, 3BG, May-Jun 50, Ch 4, p. 3; Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, p. 27; Warnock, *The USAF in Korea, A Chronology*, pp. 2-3)



**1 Jul 1950:** At 0930 Korea time, 30 June Washington DC time, President Truman, met with the Service Secretaries and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and authorized the full commitment of U.S. forces to the Korean conflict including ground troops. Lieutenant General Stratemeyer submitted a request to HQ USAF for another B-26 wing and two additional squadrons for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Wing. It was part of a general request for more forces for Korea. Since there were no other active B-26 units, HQ USAF agreed to send the 452<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Wing (Light), an Air Force Reserve unit based at Long Beach, California, which was in the process of training with the B-26. (Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, p. 37)



**Jul 1951:** The 3rd Bombardment Wing maintenance personnel installed two 20mm cannons in addition to the six 50-caliber machine guns on B-26C, tail number 44-35388. Initial tests showed that ground damage was greatly increased with the additional armament. Tests were also conducted on a modified B-26 to see if it could employ flares. The B-26 could carry approximately 60 flares. Plans called for modifying two B-26s from the 8th and 13th Bombardment Squadrons. (Hist, 3BG, Jul 51, Commander's Summary, pp. 1-2)

**27 Jun 1952:** The 3rd Bombardment Wing reached another milestone in the Korean War when it flew 20,000th effective sorties. (Hist, 3BW, Jun 52)

**28 Jun 1952:** The 3rd Bombardment Wing began flying 24-hour continuous sorties. Aircraft were launched in poor visibility and low ceilings so as to meet the operational requirements. The wing flew 47 sorties during the first 24-hour period. (Hist, 3BG, Jun 52, p. 3)

**30 Jun 1952:** General Hoyt Vandenberg, Air Force Chief of Staff, signed a letter of concurrence for AAC to establish forward operating bases at Galena and Naknek (later renamed King Salmon). In the case of Galena, General Old had initially considered Fort Yukon for a forward base, but then reversed his decision. The command began developing the two bases for the basing of forward basing of air defense alert aircraft. (Chart, Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1952, pp.119-120.)

**26 Jun 1953 (Fri):** The 54th Troop Carrier Squadron transferred its last C-54D to the 5039th Maintenance Group. The squadron received 13 C-124s as replacements for its C-54s, completing the conversion, which began in October 1952. In addition to the 54th Troop Carrier Squadron, the 5039th Air Transportation Squadron supported AAC with C-47s and the 5th Liaison Squadron with L-20s. All three squadrons were assigned to the 5039th Air Transport Group on Elmendorf AFB. (Chart, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1953, pp. 206-207.)

Source: Office of History, Elmendorf AFB



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**30 Jun 1961:** The Clear Ballistic Missile Early Warning System site achieved initial operational capability. It went through a series of tests before becoming fully operational on 30 September 1961. The site was constructed 1959-1961. It was equipped with the AN/FPS-50 Detection Radar and later, in 1966, with an AN/FPS-92 Tracking Radar. Detachment 2, 71st Surveillance Wing, Air Defense Command, operated the Clear BMEWS site. Clear achieved fully operational capability on 1 October 1961. It, along with the BMEWS sites at Thule, Greenland, and Flyingdales Moor, England, provided detection and early warning of Soviet missile attacks against North America for relay to the NORAD Combat Operations Center, Cheyenne Mountain, Colorado. The three sites were also responsible for tracking satellites and reporting them to NORAD's Space Detection and Tracking System. The construction cost of the facilities to accommodate the radar came to \$62 million. More than 1,100 workers worked on the project. It involved excavating 185,000 cubic yards of dirt and gravel and the pouring of 65,000 yards of concrete. Materials totaled 4,000 tons of structural steel, 2,600 tons of reinforcing steel and 900,000 square feet of fabricated panels. (Miller, Hist, AAC, 1961, p. 484; Miller, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1965, p. 175; E-mail, subj: Clear BMEWS, USAF Space Command History Office to 3rd Wing History Office, 25 Jun 2001.)

**Jul 1964:** The Alaskan Air Command changed its Safe Haven location from Seward to Whittier during last half of the year. It required that the mode of transportation be switched from privately owned vehicles to the Alaska Railroad. The plans called for the parking of railroad cars on a siding between Fort Richardson and Elmendorf AFB for loading of passengers and baggage. (Weidman and Ravenstein, Hist, AAC, 1964, p. 371.)



**1 Jul 1975:** The Alaskan Command (ALCOM) disestablished at 2400 30 June 1975 as a unified command as a result of a DOD-directed reduction in headquarters and the recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Defense Panel. General Hill became the last Commander-in-Chief, ALCOM at the stroke of midnight and Commander, Alaskan Air Command, Joint Task Force-Alaska (JTF-AK) and Alaskan NORAD Region with the authorized rank of lieutenant general. The change resulted in a lesser close working relationship with the 172nd Infantry Brigade (Alaska), who now answered operationally and well as administratively through its own chain of command. Cooperation was by mutual consent. Contact with the civilian leadership in Alaska was also less direct. The disestablishment of ALCOM required a major rewrite of plans. (Mr. Grant M. Hales, Hist, AAC, 1 Jul-31 Dec 1975, pp. 1-4.)

**1 Jul 1975:** The Alaskan Air Command opened six remote stations for assignment of enlisted women. The table below provides a breakdown by station for a total of 93 women positions authorized.

Station	No. Women Auth	Station	No. Women Auth
Shemya	24	Murphy Dome (F-2)	5
King Salmon	16	Cold Bay	24
Galena	15	Kotzebue (F-24)	9
Hales, Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1975, p. 26.			



**26-27 Jun 1984:** Bob Hope visited Alaska to fish at King Salmon and participate in the Bob Hope Grizzly Bear Golf Classic at the Elmendorf Golf Course. There were 180 entrants in the gold tournament. He returned on 11 August to give a performance at the Sullivan Arena. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1984, p. 555.)



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**27 Jun 1992:** Mt Spurr erupted, sending volcanic ash into the air. The volcano erupted again on 18 August, causing Elmendorf to take protective measures. The 3 WG deployed 22 aircraft to Eielson. Officer personnel covered equipment with plastic garbage bags. From eruption until the first signs of ash was 2 hours. By time it passed the base, roughly 1/4-inch of very fine dust laid over everything and crept through the smallest cracks in offices and vehicles. (Hist, 3 WG, 1992, p. 157.)



**27 Jun 2005:** The Expeditionary Combat Skills Training, a new three-day course, prepared airmen for deployment by ensuring airmen were proficient and comfortable with handling a weapon and working in a team to defend each other and the mission. Located at the Camp Mad Bull training complex, Airmen practiced many of the tasks that might be needed in a combat situation. Participants gave the training mixed reviews, but seemed to gain skills from the experience. (Miller, *3 WG Hist 2005*, 2006.)

**30 Jun 2005:** In preparation for the long 4th of July weekend, senior noncommissioned officers and company grade officers (CGOs) were posted at all Elmendorf AFB gates from 1400 until 1800 local. They worked at all exit lanes, provided a short safety briefing and passed out cards reminding everyone to be careful over the weekend. In addition, a safety briefing covering the 101 Days of Summer Safety was available. It covered topics such as fireworks safety, grilling and cooking out, boating, swimming, seatbelt use, motorcycle safety and heat-related concerns. (Miller, *3 WG Hist 2005*, 2006.)