



Remembering Our Heritage



18 Mar 1868: The Army redesignated the Military District of Alaska as the Department of Alaska and began establishing outposts from Sitka. Fort Tongass was established 29 April 1868 on the Portland Canal with Battery E, 2nd Artillery Regiment as the garrison; Fort Wrangell was established 5 May 1868 near the mouth of the Stikine River with a detachment from Battery E as the garrison; Fort Kodiak was established at St. Paul Harbor, Kodiak, on 6 June 1868 and garrisoned by Battery E; Fort Kenay was established at Port Graham in Cook Inlet 24 March 1869 and garrisoned by Battery F, 2nd Artillery Regiment; and a post was established on St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs on 22 May and garrisoned by Battery C, 2nd Artillery Regiment. The District of Kenai was later established as a subcommand under Kodiak. Because of the wide separation of the posts and lack of water transportation and inconsistent communications, Army influence was limited to the immediate surroundings of the various posts. (Nielson, *Armed Forces on a Northern Frontier*, p. 17.)

14 Mar 1941: The ground echelon, 73rd Bombardment Squadron consisting of a detachment of 8 officers and 127 enlisted men, arrived at Elmendorf Field from McChord Field, WA. (Herold Hist, 28BG, Feb 1940-Mar 1943, p. 19.)

17 Mar 1941: The War Department announced the formation of four defense commands within the continental United States. One, the Western Defense Command, consisted of Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada and Arizona. The War Department announcement failed to mention that the territory of Alaska was part of the Western Defense Command. (Hist, Western Defense Command, 17 Mar 1941-30 Sep 1946, p. 1.)

12 Mar 1942: Work began on constructing the airfield at Otter Point, Umnak Island. Rapid progress was made despite the weather. Some 80,000 pieces of 65-pound Marston Matting were unloaded from ship cargo holds at Chernofski and brought over by barge and then off-loaded by hand, reloaded on cat trains and hauled to the airfield site. (Craven and Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, Vol. I, *Plans and Early Operations*, pp. 306-307.)



12 Mar 1943: The 54th Fighter Squadron moved from Adak to Amchitka. Four C-47s brought in the ground personnel and ten P-38 pilots arrived in their fighters. The squadron historian noted: The many months of aimless wandering along the chain had now finally made sense. Amchitka, to geographers, was only an insignificant spot of sand and tundra, but to us it was the promised land; the land that promised real hell to the Japanese." (Nocenti, Hist, 54th Fighter Squadron, p. 43.)



15-16 Mar 1944: The Eleventh Air Force flew its first mission over the central Kuriles and the first against the islands since the 11 September 1943 raid. The 404th Bombardment Squadron dispatched four B-24Ds. The first, an armed weather reconnaissance mission flown by Lt Bradshaw, took off at 0951 in B-24D, 41-23973 and flew to within 150 miles of the central Kuriles before reversing course and landing back at



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Shemya. The bomber carried a load of six 500-pound general-purpose bombs with 4.5 and 11 second delay tail fuses in the event the crew encountered Japanese shipping. The crew jettisoned four of the bombs to trim the aircraft. Following the weather reconnaissance flight, Lt Robert Lockwood took off in B-24D, 41-11924, "Duchess," at 2234 on a night photoreconnaissance mission against Matsuwa and Onkotan Islands in the central Kuriles as the first and second priorities and Paramushiru Island as the third priority. He was followed by Lieutenant Weiner in B-24D, 41-11850, at 2400, and Lieutenant Wolferman in B-24D, 41-23892, at 0005. Each bomber carried a load of ten M46 photoflash and six 100-pound general-purpose bombs. Lieutenant Lockwood reached the central Kuriles first and proceeded to make a photography run over Matsuwa at 0437 at 11,800 feet. An overcast prevented the crew from seeing the island although it was visible on the radar screen. Lieutenant Lockwood then proceeded to fly over Onkotan and Paramushiru Islands with similar results. He then turned and headed back to Shemya, jettisoning the bombs, and landing there. Lieutenant Weiner and his crew reached Onkotan and then turned southwards to Matsuwa, which was acquired by radar at 0500. After two attempts, the bombardier dropped the bombs through a thin overcast 7800 feet. The crew observed seven of the photoflash bombs explode, but could not determine the damage results because of the overcast. Lieutenant Weiner and his crew landed back at Shemya at 1155 on 16 March. Lieutenant Wolferman and his crew returned to Shemya after experiencing mechanical difficulties and jettisoning the bombs, landing there at 0131. Cloud cover prevented the taking successful photographs. (Memo, Comdr, XI Bomb Comd, to Comdr, 11AF, subj: Operational Summary of 15 March 1944, 16 Mar 1944; Field HQs, 11AF A-2, Intel Summary No. 44-17 for 16 Mar 1942.)

15 Mar 1950: Eighteen months after General Twining had requested Air Force concurrence on separating Army and Air Force functions on Fort Richardson, Headquarters USAF stated that it had reached an agreement with its Army counterparts on the separation and that a local agreement was needed between US Army Alaska and Alaskan Air Command. Final approval was contingent on a budget, establishment of boundaries, joint use facilities and joint agreements. General Twining forwarded the initial agreement on 27 May 1950 to the Departments of Army and Air Force. (Hist, ALCOM, Jan 1947-31 Dec 1951, p. 121.)



14 Mar 1951: The 3rd Bombardment Wing used 18 of its B-26s to drop tetrahedrons (a four pronged piece of metal tubing) on targeted roads in three different locations. The tetrahedrons were dropped inside of an explosive canister that spread them in all directions. The primary purpose of these devices was to inflict damage to the tires of enemy supply convoy vehicles; thus stopping or at least slowing the convoy. They proved more effective than the roofing nails, which had been used earlier. Unfortunately, adverse weather prevented an evaluation the next day by the

fighter-bomber pilots. The project was abandoned after achieving little success. (Hist, 3BG, Mar 51, Ch 4, p. 4; Furtrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, p. 328; Warnock, *The USAF in Korea, A Chronology*, p.37; Thomas and Ricketts, "The Night Intruders," p.13)



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18 Mar 1953: The Cape Romanzof (F-6) radar station achieved 24-hour operations. The station continued to function despite the fact the tramway broke down requiring the men to backpack supplies up a 50-degree slope to the Top Camp. The video connecting the radar at the Top Camp with the Bottom Camp broke. Finally, the water reservoir froze leaving a reserve of 560,000 gallons in storage tanks. All outlets except those to the kitchen were turned off and the men relied on melted snow for personal needs. (Chart, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1953, p. 84.)



12 Mar 1956: Based on an agreement reached with Canada in July 1955 that it would be difficult to operate and maintain the DEW Line with military personnel, the USAF awarded a cost-plus fixed fee contract to the Federal Electric Corporation. Its affiliate, International Telephone and Telegraph assumed the responsibility of recruiting, training and assigning personnel to operate and maintain the sites. The responsibility included 6 main, 23 auxiliary and 28 intermediate stations plus 3 rearward communications stations and 3 domestic stations. Initially, the contractor estimated 900 personnel which was revised to 760. The plan called for 6 Air Force and 50 civilians at each main station, 16 civilians at each auxiliary station, 5 civilians at each intermediate station and 12 civilians at each rearward communications station. (Miller, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1957, pp. 94-96.)



15 Mar 1963: Two Soviet bombers conducted an over flight of southwest Alaska that brought international notice to Alaska. The Cape Newenham (F-5) Surveillance Station reported two unknown aircraft 150 miles southwest of their station at 2043. Two F-102As scrambled from King Salmon. The unknown track continued northeast to a point 80 miles of Bethel. At that point, one aircraft turned northwesterly and flew between the mainland and Nunivak Island to point 40 miles south of Cape Romanzof (F-6) and continued on a general northwest heading until

lost from radar contact. The other aircraft turned separated from the first and turned west, over-flying Nunivak Island and then joined the other aircraft. Both headed northwest. The two F-102As reached a point 20 miles within the two aircraft when low fuel forced them to return to King Salmon. (Miller, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1963, pp. 54-55.)

15 Mar 1971: The Air Force reassigned the 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing from Bien Hoa AB, South Vietnam to Kunsan AB, South Korea and was assigned to the Fifth Air Force. Col Abner Aust, Jr. assumed command and the wing immediately began flying operations in the F-4 fighter using personnel and equipment gained from the 475th TFW. The 35th, 36th, and the 80th Tactical Fighter Squadrons at Kunsan AB were also reassigned to the wing. Other organizations assigned were as follows: 3rd Supply Squadron, 3rd Field Maintenance Squadron, 3rd Munitions Maintenance Squadron, 3rd Organizational Maintenance Squadron, 3rd Avionics Maintenance Squadron, 3rd USAF Dispensary, 3rd Combat Support Group, 3rd Civil Engineering Squadron, 3rd Security Police Squadron, 3rd Services Squadron, 3rd Transportation Squadron, and the 3rd Radio Relay Station. (Lineage and Honors Statement, 3 WG, current as of 1 Oct 1998; Hist, 3TFW, 15 Mar-30 Jun 71, p. 1)



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14 Mar 1980: The limitation on the number of women that could be assigned to Shemya AFB, Galena and King Salmon was lifted. The policy of restricting assignments to the Aircraft Control and Warning stations remained in force. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1980, p. 49.)

16 Mar 1984: The Elmendorf Regional Operations Control Center received an excellent rating during its first NORAD Operational Evaluation (NOE). North American Air Defense Command live air defense exercise Amalgam Mute 84-2 served as the vehicle for the evaluation. The Alaskan NORAD Region had prepared for the NOE, by using a series of exercises as building blocks to train the personnel. General Brown appointed Canadian Lt Col A.J. MacInnis as the project officer for the NOE. General Brown hosted a party following the NOE in the Officers Club. The 21st Tactical Fighter Wing also received a satisfactory rating on a first of a two phased NORAD operational readiness inspection during the same period. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1984, pp. 353-363.)

16 May 1997: The Air Force announced that the 517th Airlift Squadron would gain an additional six C-130Hs and 200 personnel. (Hist, 3 WG, 1997, Chron)

13 Mar 2001: Brig Gen Douglas Fraser, Commander, 3rd Wing, and Col David D. Gilbreath, Commander, 3rd Medical Group, officiated over a ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly renovated and relocated Health and Wellness Center in the Old Base Exchange Building. (Hist, 3 WG, 2001, p. 175.)



15 Mar 2001: The Air Force awarded a Private Sector Finance military housing 50 year contract for \$400 million to Anchorage based Aurora Military Housing LLC to build 372 units in the Boniface/Ship Creek area, renovate 200 Chugach units, construct 48 new Dallas units, demolish 176 Dallas units and assume ownership, operation and management of 208 new Sunflower units. The project was designed to alleviate a housing shortage on Elmendorf AFB. The Aurora Military Housing began cutting down trees the following day from the property where the Private Sector Finance military housing was to be built. (Hist, 3 WG, 2001, p. 91; Tony Hopfinger, "Base Awards \$400 Military Housing Deal," *Anchorage Daily News*, 16 Mar 2001)



17 Mar 2002: The Anchorage area was hit with a record snowfall that began Saturday afternoon and continued without letup until Sunday evening. Official measurements taken at Ted Stevens International Airport showed a record dump of 28.6 inches, which broke the old 24-hour record of 15.6 inches set 29 December 1955. Elmendorf AFB was closed on 18 March to all except emergency essential personnel. The Sun Removal Flight, 3rd Civil Engineer Squadron responded quickly and removed the accumulated snow within in two days. It took the Municipality of Anchorage about three weeks to accomplish the same task. That

accomplishment plus others earned the approximately 130 person flight the Air Force "Bachen Post" award for 2002. ("28.6 Inches of Chaos," *Anchorage Daily News*, 18 Mar 2002; SSgt Nate Hier, "Snow Removal Team Named Best in AF," *Sourdough Sentinel*, 31 Jan 2003.)



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12-14 Mar 2003: High winds gusting up to 99 miles per hour struck Anchorage and the Mat-Su area Wednesday night and Thursday morning causing considerable damage. At one point the Ted Stevens International Control Tower recorded 105 mile per hour gust 150 feet above the ground. The tower and airport shut down. The wind was accompanied by cold temperatures that dipped as low as 30 degrees below zero with the wind chill factor. Elmendorf experienced sustaining high winds in excess of 43 knots (48 mph). Initial damage reports indicated down power lines, roof top damage to buildings, and fallen trees. Airfield was closed to transient aircraft. The 3rd Civil Engineer Squadron estimated the damages on Elmendorf AFB to be \$5.3 million. The high winds caused extensive damages to the hangar and building roofs and sidings, fences and utility poles, parked military and private buildings. Burst frozen water pipes added to the damage. (Msg, 139020Z Mar 03, "Command Post Rpt to PACAF;" Email, 3CES/CEC to 3WG/HO, "Storm Damage Est," 25 Apr 2003, w/atch Briefing, 3rd CES, "3rd Wing Wind Damage, 12-14 Mar 2003, and Spread Sheet, 3rd CES, "Elmendorf Wing Storm Damage Estimates," 12-14 Mar 03.)

