



Remembering Our Heritage



5 Mar 1934: Anthony J. Dimond, Alaska's non-voting delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives, spoke before the House. Although he had no voting rights as a territorial delegate, Judge Dimond championed Alaska's strategic importance, stating: "Defend the U.S. by defending Alaska." He spoke of Alaska's strategic importance on the Great Circle Route, its proximity to Asia and the potential for enemy invasion of the Pacific Northwest through Alaska. He stressed the need for air bases either at Anchorage or Fairbanks or in the Aleutian Islands. He believed that Alaska provided an invasion route to the rest of the United States, and pointed out that Japan posed the greatest threat. He also pointed out that when Alaska political leadership requested the U.S. Army Air Corps participate in the search for Carl Ben Eielson and his mechanic Earl Borland, they received a reply back that the Army did not have necessary training and equipment to participate in cold weather operations. The Soviet Union, however following an appeal to them, agreed to assist in the search. (Congressional Record, 73rd Congress, 2nd Session, Remarks by Delegate Dimond, 5 Mar 1934, "Alaska's Strategic Position in Proper Plan of National Defense;" Ernest Gruening, "The State of Alaska," Random House, New York, 1954, pp. 309-310.)



11 Mar 1941: President Roosevelt signed the Lend-Lease Act into law. It authorized the lending of war materials including aircraft to any nation considered vital to U.S. interest. Some 43,000 airplanes had been transferred to Great Britain and the Soviet Union by the end of the war. (Haulman, *One Hundred Years of Flight*, p. 36.)

6 Mar 1942: The 3rd Bombardment Group, consisting of 17 officers and 784 enlisted men, departed for Charters Towers, 420 miles north of Brisbane in northern Australia, per Special Orders No. 43, HQ, Base Section No. 3, Brisbane, QLD. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), 1 January 1942 to 31 March 1944, p. 96, *Air Force Combat Units*, p. 31; *The Grim Reapers*, p. 7)

8 Mar 1942: Col William O. Butler assumed command of the Eleventh Air Force with Col Everett S. Davis as his chief of staff. Six days later, Maj Gen Simon B. Buckner, Commander, Alaska Defense Command, pinned the stars of a brigadier general on his new air commander. General Butler had been the Chief of Staff, Fourth Air Force. He reported to General Buckner who reported to General DeWitt. He also had to coordinate air operations with Patrol Wing Four and the Civil Aeronautics Authority in Alaska. The Cold Weather Detachment at Ladd Field and Ladd Field itself remained out of his jurisdiction. It reported directly to HQ, Army Air Forces. A historian at the time described the command relationship as:



With all good intentions in the world, no man in authority in Alaska could overcome both a complicated chain of command and a parallel jurisdiction. The result was that, at best, administration moved slowly, and at worst, not at all, its wheels became entangled in a system where no one had direct responsibility outside his own agency. (Ferguson, AAF Study No. 4, pp. 45-46.)



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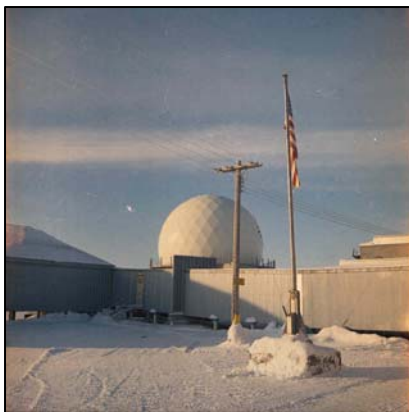


9 Mar 1943: The Eleventh Air Force launched six B-24s, six B-25s and four P-40s against Kiska while a B-24 and four P-38s were dispatched against Attu. The B-25 crews from the 77th Bombardment Squadron, following the completion of the Kiska mission, landed at Amchitka where they joined the 18th Fighter Squadron. Other 77th Bombardment Squadron crews arrived and the squadron began operating from the fighter strip on Amchitka while engineers rushed to complete the nearby bomber strip. (Howard, Hist, 77BS, p. 18.)



11 Mar 1943: Admiral Nimitz notified Admiral Kinkaid that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had approved his plan to invading Attu providing it could be accomplished with forces on hand including those committed from the Western Defense Command. Task Force 8 was re-designated Task Force 16 and Admiral Kinkaid was designated Commander, North Pacific Force on 15 March. The Alaska Defense Command received instructions to collaborate in planning and Admiral Kinkaid was designated overall commander with Admiral Rockwell serving as the amphibious force commander. The Joint Chiefs of Staff directive called for only planning and training. (Hist, Aleutian Campaign, p. 60.)

7 Mar 1949: The Deputy Chief of Staff, Communications, AAC, completed its report, "AC&W" Program," which provided a plan for siting radar sites in Alaska. It build on the information provided in the 1946 Hoge and 1947 Crumly reports and the 1948 AAC aircraft warning and control "Perimeter" concept study. Whereas the previous studies had relied heavily on map studies due to limited funding, the 1949 effort involved ground surveys using \$60,000 allocated to the Alaska District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The plan emphasized a perimeter early warning with interior ground control intercept stations to provide fighter direction to protect the main bases. The Aleutian Islands were dropped from consideration. It dividing the requirements into three phases, with the first consisting of essential sites needed for air defense. The other two phases involved a minimum AC&W and a desired AC&W system. The plan developed was the essentially the one implemented in 1950 when funding became available. (Plan, Deputy Chief of Staff, Communications, AAC, "AC&W Program," 7 Mar 1949.)



10 Mar 1958: The 5060th Aircraft Control and Warning Group dedicated Kotzebue (F-24) (748th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron), one of five stations added to the aircraft control and warning system during the year. The new radar site assumed the duties formerly provided by the Ground Observer Corps team made up of Alaskan Natives who had performed the duties since beginning during World War II. Kotzebue was followed by the completion of Ohlson Mountain (F-25) the same month, Fort Yukon (F-14) and Unalakleet (F-20) in April and Bethel (F-21) in June 1958. Brigadier General Kenneth H. Gibson, Commander, AAC, and Brig Gen C.F. Necrason, Commander, 11th Air Division (Defense) were the principal speakers. (Miller, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1958, pp. 60-61.)

8 Mar 1961: The 5040th USAF Hospital on Elmendorf AFB was inactivated and the USAF Hospital Elmendorf AFB was activated and assigned to the 5040th Air Base Wing. Commonly referred to as the Elmendorf Hospital it had an authorization of 116 officers, 315 enlisted and 41 civilians at the time. (Miller, Hist, AAC, 1961, p. 101.)



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8 Mar 1970: The 71st Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron activated. It was assigned to the 39th Air Rescue and Recovery Wing, Air Rescue and Recovery Service. It responded to the Alaskan Air Command operationally. The squadron commander also functioned as a staff advisor to the Commander, Alaskan Air Command and as a search and rescue coordinator. He provided command, technical and administrative control over the Rescue Coordination Center, maintained alert aircraft and provided forces for search and rescue. The Rescue Coordination Center operated under the operational control of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Alaskan Air Command. (Weidman, Hist, AAC, Jul 1969-Jun 1970, p. 7.)

11 Mar 1974: Airman First Class Mary Jo Ferguson became the first woman assigned to Alaskan Air Command Band. (Hailes, Hist, AAC, Jul 1972-Jun 1974, p. xxxiv.)

8 Mar 1978: Headquarters, USAF stated a position that Air Force aircraft could not be used for surveillance of the Alaska Pipeline. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1987, p. 250.)

9-10 Mar 1982: The F-15 Site Activation Task Force met on Elmendorf AFB. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1982, p. 261.)

10 Mar 1983: The 43rd Tactical Fighter Squadron flew the first F-15 mission to test the surveillance of the Alaskan DEW Line coverage. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1983, p. 296.)

6 Mar 1984: The mayor of the Fairbanks North Star Borough notified the Commander, 343rd Composite Wing that Eielson AFB would have to comply with the borough's vehicle emission inspection program by July 1985. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1984, p. 130.)

5-30 Mar 2001: Cope Thunder 01-1 was conducted in conjunction with ALCOM's Northern Edge exercise. It involved over 1,000 personnel deployed at either Elmendorf AFB or Eielson AFB. During the exercise, units flew 449 sorties, dropping over 80 tons of munitions. Aircraft included 12 F-16s, 12 A-10s, 12 C-130s, 4 KC-135s, 2 E-3s, 2 HH-60s, and 2 AC-130s. (Hist, 11 AF, 2001, p. 106.)

