



Remembering Our Heritage



7-13 May

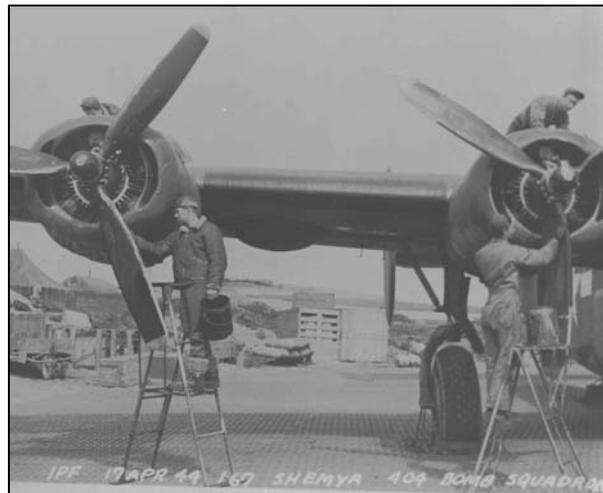
9 May 1924: After waiting for logistical arrangements to be made and for the weather to clear, the Douglas World Cruisers, who had stayed in the Native village at Nazan Bay, departed for Chichagof Harbor, Attu Island, which they reached the same day. It had taken them 33 days to cover the 3,250 miles from that take off point in Seattle, WA. (Official Report of the United States Army Air Service Around the World Flight.)



8 May 1942: The Pacific Command formed Task Force 8 and assigned RADM Robert A. Theobald as its commander in response to the Japanese threat to Alaska. At the time, CAPT Ralph C. Parker commanded the Alaska Sector, 13th Naval District. He had his disposal the gunboat *Charleston* (PG-51) as his flagship, two old destroyers, two 165-foot USCG cutters and an assortment of converted fishing boats, known as Yippee boats. The latter were commanded by COMDR Charles "Squeaky" Anderson, an Alaskan called to active duty with the Navy. The *Charleston* was the only warship equipped with sonar and guns larger than three-inch. The fleet was kept busy providing convoy protection and ferrying supplies. (Morrison, *Coral Sea, Midway and Submarine Actions*, pp. 164-166.)

13 May 1943: The 3rd Battalion, 17th Infantry after being delayed by fog from its original 0630 start time launched an attack against Jarmin Pass in the late afternoon and got within 600 yards of entrance to the pass before being pushed back to its starting point. The 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry landed and went into reserve for the Southern Force. The Northern Force succeeded in taking the rest of Hill X and now dominated the high ground overlooking the Japanese main camp in Holtz Bay. The 3rd Battalion, 32nd Infantry arrived from shipboard reserve aboard the *Chirikof* to join the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry and Col Frank L. Culin, Commander, Northern Force, came ashore and assumed command of the entire force. He began preparing for an assault on the Japanese main camp with both battalions supported by artillery naval gunfire. (Landrum, *Report of Operations-Attu*, p. 4; *The Capture of Attu*, p. 10.)

12 May 1944: Lieutenant Seymour Weiner and his B-24 crew flew the 404th Bombardment Squadron's first daylight mission since 11 September 1943 over the Kurile Islands. They took six usable daylight photographs of the Tagan Point Airfield on Matsuwa Island and dropped bombs on the airfield installations. (Field HQs, 11AF A-2 Intelligence Summary No. 44-35 for 12 May 1944; 1/Lt H.D. Leland, Hist, 404th Bombardment Squadron, May 1944, p.)



10 May 1945: In the largest mission to date, the Eleventh Air Force and Fleet Air Wing Four launched 12 B-24s from the 404th Bombardment Squadron, 16 B-25s from the 77th Bombardment Squadron, and 8 PV-2s from VPB-139 against targets in the northern Kuriles. (Monthly Intelligence Summary, 1-31 May 1945, HQs Eleventh Air Force, Task Force 90, North Pacific Area.)



Remembering Our Heritage



11 May 1945: The first B-29 to land on Shemya touched down at 1032. The crew had flown it down from Ladd Field where it had undergone cold weather testing as a morale booster. Before landing, the crew made a low pass over the island from the east in a bright, cloudless day with an escort of six P-38s. The B-29 pilot, Capt Joe E. Halm, later claimed he was flying at 310 miles per hour. After completing the flyby, the crew landed on the main runway from the west, using only 5000 feet to stop the big bomber. In addition to Captain Halm, other crew members were: Lt. Edwin F. Sweeny, copilot; Lt. Edward A. Caldwell, radar officer; MSgt. Wilson E. Ogan, crew chief; TSgt. Bert D. Hein, TSgt. David Krupsew, Cpl. Frank L. Henderson, Cpl. James R. Byron, Cpl. Leo C. Thomas, Cpl. Henry D. Tritschler and PFC Melvin A. Lawrence. The crew parked the B-29 in front of the freight dock where it remained on display until the departure the following day at 1311 for Amchitka. Base personnel were allowed to go inside the bomber, and lines formed at its rear and front. (Daily Diary, Base Operations, Shemya, contained in Hist, Shemya, May 1945.)



11 May 1950: The mobile AN/TPS-1B Search Radar site at Gambell on St. Lawrence Island was reactivated to track Russian shipping transiting the Northern Sea Route between western and eastern Russia. The radar had been operated on a seasonal basis since 1948 to track Russian shipping passing through the Chaplina Narrows. It was also used in the air defense role. The World War II vintage radar used, however, was limited in capabilities and its coverage could be avoided. (Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1950, pp. 36)



8-9 May 1951: A former American POW, who escaped his captors, described the night attack against a convoy north of Taegwag, North Korea, by a 3rd Bombardment Wing B-26. He stated, "We came to the place where the B-26 had dumped his load. The place was in an uproar. First, we began meeting litter carts with wounded on them, then came hand carried stretchers, and then handmade 'makeshift' stretchers, then men carrying others on their backs, and finally carts pulled by mules or Chinese soldiers with 10 to 15 dead bodies on each cart...I would estimate there were a minimum of 200 wounded and about 12 to 15 carts with the dead stacked solid on them.

Probably 225 dead. I don't know how many B-26s had attacked, but it sure was a mess." (Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, p. 330)

11 May 1952: Due to increase of aircraft accidents, a meeting was held consisting of all squadron operations and flying safety officers to create a flying safety program. In addition the 3rd Bombardment Group created a standardization board. The intent of the two new programs was to train pilots to a combat readiness level that would insure trained and competent pilots and a decrease in the accident rate. (Hist, 3BG, May 52, p. 2)

13 May 1955: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology issued a study, entitled "Lamplight" that addressed in part AAC's offensive capability. It recommended the use of a striking force to neutralize Soviet long range bomber bases in Siberia east of the 90 degree meridian. The Alaskan Command and AAC on the other hand believed that offensive force of fighter-bombers and Matador surface-to-surface missiles should be committed against targets of immediate threat to Alaska. The "Lamplight" study also envisioned building a long-range radar station in the Pribilof Islands that would enable surveillance well within the Soviet Union. The Command had already considered and rejected the idea due to difficulty of construction and support. (Chart, Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1955, pp. 4-5.)



Remembering Our Heritage



12 May 1956: Lieutenant General Joseph H. Atkinson, Commander-in-Chief, Alaskan Command and interim Commander, AAC, wrote to Gen. Curtis LeMay, Commander, Strategic Air Command, recommending SAC establish a unit at Eielson AFB to manage SAC deployments there. Prior to the permanent rotational deployment of Republic F-84F Thunderstreaks and their aerial refueling support that September 1955, the 5010th Air Base Wing had been able to support the seven to fifteen day deployments of B-36 and B-47 bombers and reconnaissance aircraft without difficulty. The wing had also been able of maintain the SAC preposition "Sea Weed" equipment. The rotational deployment of the F-84 squadrons and their refueling support, however, strained the base's resources. General LeMay did not respond to General Atkinson's concerns. The table below shows the deployments made between May and August 1956. (Chart, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1955, pp. 39-41.)



SAC Fighter Deployments May-Aug 1956

Date	Unit	# A/C	# of Per	From	To
1 May	9 th AREFS	20 KC-97s	631	Mt Home AFB, ID	Elmendorf AFB
8 May	12 th SFW	25 F-84Fs	268	Bergstrom AFB, TX	Eielson AFB
5 May	27 th AREFS	10 KB-29s	222	Bergstrom AFB, TX	Elmendorf AFB
30 Jun	96 th AREFS	15 KC-97s	523	Altus AFB, OK	Elmendorf AFB
8 Aug	506 th SFW	24 F-84Fs	270	Tinker AFB, OK	Eielson AFB
8 Aug	506 th AREFS	10 KB-29s	238	Bergstrom AFB, TX	Elmendorf AFB

Source: Chart, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1956, p. 41
 Notes: aerial refueling squadron (AREFS), strategic fighter wing (SFW)

9 May 1960: Major General Conrad Necrason, 11 AF Commander, in response to the Air Force decision to inactivate the 449th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, wrote to Maj Gen Howell M. Estes Jr., Deputy Chief of Staff, HQ, USAF, asking that the number of F-102s assigned to the 317th Fighter Interceptor Squadron be increased from 33 to 48 in order to cover the alert commitment at Elmendorf AFB, Eielson AFB and Galena and King Salmon. He stated the need was due to Alaska's large size and the Soviet bomber threat. The Alaskan NORAD Region maintained two fighters on five minute alert at the four bases. The Commander-in-Chief, NORAD, supported the need for 48 fighters. General Estes stated that a team would be formed 27 June to study the issue. (Miller, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1960, pp. 149-152 and 253.)



12 May 1967: Viet Cong forces staged a night attack against Bien Hoa AB, using small arms, mortar, and rocket fire. There were four fatalities, numerous injuries, and heavy damage to buildings and aircraft. Repairs began immediately and normal flight operations resumed at daybreak. (Hist, 3rd TFW, 1 Apr-30 Jun 1967, p. 48)

8 May 1973: The Joint Chiefs of Staff approved the reorganization of the Alaskan NORAD Region. The reorganization was implemented May and June. Champion (F-8) was downgraded from a NORAD Control Center to a NORAD Ground Control Intercept Station on 13 June and Kotzebue (F-24) was downgraded from a NORAD Ground Control Intercept Station to a NORAD Surveillance Station on 22 May. Murphy Dome (F-2) assumed responsibility for the entire northern sector. Lieutenant General James C. Sherrill, Commander-in-Chief, ALCOM, had made the recommendation in late 1972 as a means of reducing manpower and tightening command and control with the Alaskan NORAD Region. The recommendation was forwarded to Commander-in-Chief, NORAD for approval in April 1973 who concurred and sent it to the

Source: Office of History, Elmendorf AFB



Remembering Our Heritage



Joint Chiefs of Staff on 2 May, who approved it on 8 May after the Canadians had agreed. Implementation resulted in the deletion of 38 positions at Campion and 16 at Kotzebue and an estimated savings of \$600,000 per year. (Hales, Hist, AAC, Jul 1972-Jun 1974, pp. 17-18.)

10 May 1974: The Alaskan Air Command announced that construction of the Blair Lakes Bombing and Gunnery Range was nearing completion and that it would be closed to all unauthorized personnel. Six days later the Fairbanks *Daily News-Miner* reported that the "Blair Lakes Coalition," had been formed and had filed a suit in the U.S. District Court, Anchorage, to prevent use of the range. The basis of the law suit to stop the Air Force from using the range, spearheaded by the Tanana Valley Sportsmen's Association, was that the Air Force had not complied with the provisions of the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Their specific objections were that the Air Force had not adequately considered alternative sites selections; and operations, as described, were unsafe and constituted hazards to Fairbanks and local aviation. The coalition also argued that use of the range would deprive them of the peaceful enjoyment of their property which was taken without due process of law in violation of the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution. As an alternate to stopping the use of the range, the coalition sought to have the Air Force comply with NEPA and operate the range under the highest safety standards. (Hales, Hist, AAC, Jul 1972-Jun 1974, p. 178.)



12-15 May 1975: The US merchant vessel SS *Mayaguez* and her crew of 40 were seized by the Khmer Rouge in the Gulf of Sian and taken to the Koh Tang Island, located a few miles off the Cambodian mainland. The 7th ACCS provided airborne command and control in support of the recovery of ship and crew. (3 TFW History, Apr-Jun 1975, p. 54)

7 May 1981: John L. Gonzales, an Air Force second lieutenant, who had deserted to Canada during the Vietnam War was arrested by U.S. Customs officials at Wrangell on a 13-year old warrant for desertion. It resulted in considerable media coverage. He was one three Air Force officers to desert during the Vietnam War. One had taken advantage of President Carter's 1977 amnesty program and the third was still at large. Lieutenant Gonzales had deserted after graduating from college with a ROTC commission, became a Canadian citizen, married a Canadian woman and went to work as a commercial pilot at Telegraph Creek. He had flown to Wrangle to drop off a friend who was picking up an aircraft. Lieutenant Gonzales was placed in pretrial confinement at Fort Richardson until his case could be settled. General Clark recommended he be given an Other than Honorable discharge and released. The Air Force agreed. (Cloe, Hist. AAC, 1981, pp 98-100.)

8 May 1983: The first A-10 deployment outside of Alaska occurred when the 18th Tactical Fighter Squadron deployed five A-10s to support Mountain Home AFB ID to support Snake Rive Search and Rescue Exercise. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1983, p. 397.)



11 May 1998: Lieutenant General David J. McCloud, 11 AF Commander, briefed the initial results of the Alaska 2010 vision for the future to the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, stressing Alaska's strategic importance, its force structure, joint training opportunities, established military-to-military contact program, civil-military relationships, large training areas and range complexes, joint construction projects, increased force structure, close working relationship with the Reserve components. Looking ahead, he stressed the need to involve the community with its education, business and political capabilities

Source: Office of History, Elmendorf AFB



Remembering Our Heritage



more in military planning and operations; and exploit developments in joint technology. He offered a new dimension to the traditional strategic importance and joint training opportunities offered by Alaska. He sought to make the state "the epicenter of experimentation for new military tactics, communications, sensors and weaponry." (Cloe, Hist, 11AF, 1998, p. 4.)

12 May 1998: The 3rd Wing and 33rd Fighter Wing began a complete aircraft transfer of F-15C/D aircraft. This aircraft transfer project was the largest inter-command aircraft transfer on record. (Hist, 3 WG, 1998, Chron)



9 May 1999: The last baby was born, Alec'sandre Melendez, at the old Elmendorf AFB hospital to Specialist Zosimo Rey and Maria Melendez. The following day, 10 May, Jacob Thomas was the first baby born in the new medical facility. The parents were SrA Brandon and Valerie Thomas. (Hist, 3 WG, 1999, p. 73)

9 May 2005: The 3rd Wing installed new traffic lights on Arctic Warrior Drive on either side of the approach end of the North/South runway, Runway 34 as a result of the closure of Elmendorf's primary runway. These lights were used for all heavy aircraft (C-17, KC-135, KC-10) departures using Runway 34. All traffic, to include vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists were required to stop at the light when these lights turned red to prevent jet blast debris from injuring people or damaging vehicles. The traffic delays averaged approximately 4-5 minutes. (E-Mail (U), 3 CS/CCO, "Runway/Traffic Lights," 9 May 2005)

13 May 2005: Defense department BRAC recommendations proposed that Kulis Air Guard Station be closed, with equipment transferred to Elmendorf AFB and a loss of 218 military jobs and 241 civilian jobs; that Elmendorf ABF be realigned with a loss of 1,102 military jobs and a gain of 168 civilian jobs; that Eielson AFB be realigned with a loss of 2,821 military and 319 civilian jobs; and that Fort Richardson be realigned with a loss of 86 military and 199 civilian jobs. (Media File, AP, "Proposed changes to Alaska military bases," 13 May 2005; Seth Linden, "Alaska bases targeted on Pentagon hit list," KTUU-NBC, 13 May 2005.)