



Remembering Our Heritage



12-18 November

17 Nov 1929: The 13th Attack Squadron was reconstituted at Langley Field and joined the 3rd Attack Group at Fort Crockett via rail, per Section II, General Order No. 25, Headquarters, 8th Corps Area. The 13th Attack Squadron was assigned to the 3rd Bomb Group during WWII and the Korean War. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), Activation to 31 December 1941, p. 16)



13 Nov 1938: Maj Gen Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, who had become Chief of Army Air Corps on 29 September 1938, replied to questions from Alabama Senator Joe Starnes who opposed an airbase in Alaska. General Arnold pointed out that Alaska and Hawaii formed a defensive perimeter for the western United States and the Aleutian Islands flanked the Great Circle Route and formed the apex of the Panama, Hawaii defense triangle. For that reason, General Arnold pointed out the need to provide defense forces in Alaska. In addition, the Navy's plan to expand its operations in Alaska necessitated an increased Army defense presence in the territory. General Arnold stated the need for an airbase near Anchorage that would support operations as far east Ketchikan and as far west as Kiska Island. (Ferguson, *Alaska Air Defense and the Japanese Invasion*, p. 8.)

14 Nov 1940: *The Anchorage Daily Times* carried an article stating that Elmendorf Field was being renamed Fort Richardson in honor Brig Gen Wilds P. Richardson. The article also said the news came as a surprise from the War Department Office. It went on to say that the airbase had been named Elmendorf Field "more than a year ago," and "that the base was named after an officer who had died in a crash." The paper commented that no one locally knew Captain Hugh Elmendorf. (*The Anchorage Daily Times*, 14 Dec 1940, p. 1.)



16 Nov 1940: Maj Edward George announced the construction of a new electric power and heating plant costing \$1,600,000, built by Bechtel, McCone and Patterson of Los Angeles, CA. The diesel power plant was capable of producing 7,500 kilowatts of energy in contrast to the hydroelectric Eklutna power plant, which produced 2,500 kilowatts for Anchorage. (*The Anchorage Daily Times*, 16 Nov 1940.)



12 Nov 1942: An Inspector General team sent by General Henry "Hap" Arnold to look into the morale problems of the provisional XI Bombardment Group submitted it preliminary report. The team found the six assigned and attached squadrons scattered over a 1,200-mile area from Elmendorf to Adak. Three had been sent to Alaska with expectations they would be returned to the states within a few weeks. The team noted the lack of recreational facilities in the Aleutians and the austere working conditions. It also reported the bombardment group was doing a good job despite the conditions and Colonel

William O. Eareckson was providing inspired leadership. (HQ AAF IG Report, First Partial Report of Alaskan Inspector-Organization Morale Problems of the Provisional Bomber Command, 12 Nov 1942.)

17 Nov 1943: Maj Gen Davenport Johnson, 11 AF Commander, arrived at Alexia Point Army Air Base, Attu Island, for a visit. The visit coincided with a major storm which kept him there until 21 November. High winds of 100 miles per hour blew down numerous tents, Jamesway Huts and two large mess tents. On the third night, he turned to the base commander, Lt Col Frank H. Barber, stating "Good God, Barber, you didn't have to put on any more shows. I've seen enough to be convinced." (Seaman, Hist, Alexai Army Air Base, p. 36.)



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15 Nov 1947: Headquarters, Alaskan Department General Orders 125, 10 November 1947, redesignated the Alaskan Department as United States Army, Alaska (USARAL). The order also relieved the assignment of the Alaskan Air Command from the Alaskan Department and assigned it to the Department of the Air Force effective 15 November 1947. The changes resulted from the Presidential signing of the Armed Forces Unification Act on 27 July 1947 and a study directed by General Twining to clarify the command structure in ALCOM. The study anticipated the separation of AAC from Army control, the establishment of an Army command in Alaska and the assumption of the Alaskan Sea Frontier (ALSEAFRON) for all naval operations in Alaska. The Alaskan Command would be required to exercise control over joint planning and operations, policy direction, coordination, operational planning and base development including combat requirements, deployment and construction. The change also required the separation of Army and Air Force functions on Elmendorf AFB and the building of a new Fort Richardson installation nearby to accommodate USARAL. (HQ AK Dept GO 125, 10 Nov 1947; Hist, AAC, 1945-47, p. 34.)



17 Nov 1950: The 3rd Bombardment Group began staging 16 of its B-26s along with their maintenance from Taegu (K-2). Although this caused considerable logistical problems, the benefit of being closer to the targets and the increased sortie generation rate far outweighed them. This allowed the group to depart Iwakuni, fly a mission, land at K-2 and then have a replacement crew launch another mission and return to Iwakuni. (*United States Air Force Operations in the Korean Conflict, 1 November 1950-30 June 1952*, p. 16)

16-17 Nov 1951: Two Chinese MIG-15 pilots attacked a 3rd Bombardment Wing B-26 after it had been caught in the cone of searchlights near Sonchon in northwestern North Korea. It was the first instance where a Communist fighter had damaged a night intruder over Korea; the MIG pilots struck the B-26 with a 20mm shell, causing a 10-inch hole in the wing. The crew made it safely back to base. (*United States Air Force Operations in the Korean Conflict, 1 November 1950-30 June 1952*, pp. 110-11)



15 Nov 1957: A TB-29, 44-70039, assigned to the 5040th Radar Evaluation Flight, 5040th Consolidation Maintenance Group, Elmendorf AFB, crashed 39 miles southeast of Talkeetna at around 1822. The crew had taken off from Elmendorf AFB at 0954 under instrument flight rules on a flight path to the Aircraft Control and Warning radar stations at Campion near Galena and then Murphy Dome north of Fairbanks. It was on a ground radar calibration mission. The flight covered 1,800 nautical miles with an estimated ten hours in the air. The training bomber carried fourteen hours worth of fuel and a crew of eight plus an instructor pilot. It

was on the final leg of an approach to Elmendorf AFB when the crash occurred. The glacier on which TB-29, 44-70039, went down became known a "Bomber Glacier," and became a popular hiking destination with the scattered wreckage still visible. Officially, the area remained unnamed. Of the crew, four survived the



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crash, three with major injuries and one with a minor injury later upgraded to major. Those with major injuries were: Lt. Claire Johnson, navigator; TSgt Manuel Garza, flight engineer; and SSgt Robert J. McMurray, flight mechanic. SSgt Calvin K. Campbell, flight mechanic, received light injuries. Those deceased were: Maj Robert A. Butler, senior pilot and instructor; 1Lt William J. Schreffler, pilot; Capt Erwin Stolfich, copilot; Capt Edward A. Valiant, navigator; Capt Richard O. Seaman, navigator; and AB James Roberson, radio operator. (Air Force Form 14, *Report of Air Force Aircraft Accident*, TB-29, 44-70039, 15 Nov 1957.)

An SA-16 Albatross crew from the 71st Rescue Squadron located the downed bomber at 1012. Two SH-21 helicopters were also dispatched from the squadron to assist in the search and recover the survivors. SSgt Calvin K. Campbell, a 34-year old from San Antonio, TX, received credit for saving the lives of the other three survivors of the crash. SSgt Campbell and Lt Claire Johnson and SSgt Robert J. McMurray were located in the aft section of the bomber, which received the least amount of damage. Those located in the nose section, except for TSgt Manuel Garza, were killed. SSgt Campbell pulled SSgt McMurray from the left observation blister where he had been pinned between the fuselage and observation post. Lt Johnson managed to crawl out before collapsing. SSgt Campbell covered both men in parachutes and put Lieutenant Johnson in a sleeping bag. He was unable to get Sergeant McMurray into a sleeping bag due to his extreme pain. SSgt Campbell then climbed up the glacier where TSgt Garza was trapped in the nose section. After freeing and wrapping TSgt Garza in a parachute, SSgt Campbell carried him down to the main section of the bomber and placed him in a sleeping bag. Lt Johnson described SSgt Campbell as "like a mother hen with a brood of chicks." Lt Johnson had moved from the front of the plane to the rear section before the crash. The two helicopters landed shortly after the down bomber was sighted while the Albatross orbited overhead. The four injured men were flown to the Elmendorf AFB Hospital. (Air Force Form 14, *Report of Air Force Aircraft Accident*, TB-29, 44-70039, 15 Nov 1957; Bill Prochnau, "Heroism Shown In B-29 Tragedy," *Anchorage Daily News*, 18 Nov 1957.)

17 Nov 1958: The Alaskan Air Command completed study of the radar station tramways that had been conducted during the fall months. There were seven tramways, six of which had been installed during 1951-1952. The Columbia Steel Company, San Francisco, CA, had designed the tramways for Cape Lisburne (F-7), Cape Newenham (F-5), Cape Romanzof (F-6), Tin City (F-4) and Tatalina (F-10). The Riblet Tramway Company of Spokane, WA, had designed the one for Northeast Cape (F-9). The US Army Corps of Engineers had designed the one at Sparrevohn (F-15) in 1956, which was erected by troop labor. The tramways were designed to transport personnel, supplies and equipment between the bottom and top camps of those stations having split operation. Roadways were also constructed, but they were primitive and narrow with steep grades, hairpin turns and sharp drop offs. The trams were designed to make six trips a day and carry a maximum of 6,000 pounds. The evaluation found that additional construction and increased operational requirements had soon exceeded the original design specifications, especially those designed by Columbia. No significant problems were found with the Riblet tram. They proved difficult to maintain due to winter conditions and the lack of qualified personnel, military or civilian. They could not be used during severe weather. Moving heavy and awkward cargo proved difficult. Some station personnel expressed a reluctance to ride the trams. The team recommended that modifications be made, new tramway cars obtained, diesel engines used instead of gasoline, terminal building expanded to handled loading and off loading of cargo, a regular maintenance program be preformed by qualified civilians rather than a mixture of military and civilians. (Miller, Hist, AAC, Jul 1958-Jun 1959, pp. 152-163.)



Source: Office of History, Elmendorf AFB



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18 Nov 1960: The 3rd Wing moved from Johnson AB to Yokota AB, Japan. (History of the 3rd TFW, 1 Jul 1919-1 Jul 1989, p. xxi)

14 Nov 1967: President Lyndon Johnson signed bill, Public Law 90-135, authorizing the sale of the Air Force owned and operated Alaska Communications System. The government had been trying for some time, particularly after 1952, to divest itself of the ownership of the long-distance communications system. In anticipation of the signing of the law, the Alaska District, US Army Corps of Engineers had awarded a \$52,000 contract to Butler and Walls of Seattle to conduct a boundary survey of 50 ACS sites and provide a legal description of each. To further facilitate the sale to a private sector firm, the Air Force placed it under industrial funding on 1 October 1967 (Weidman, Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1967, p. 62.)

17 Nov 1967: Two F-100s, 90th Tactical Fighter Squadron, were scrambled from the alert pad to assist friendly ground forces 25 miles northwest of Bien Hoa AB, under heavy enemy fire during Operation Barking Sands. The pilots dropped their 500-pounds bombs against bunkers and entrenched positions 250-300 feet from the friendly forces. Then they began strafing the positions. Pilots were credited with destroying one military structure, 17 bunkers, and exposing two tunnel entrances. (Hist, 3 TFW Oct-Dec 1967, p. 28)



15 Nov 1969: The 90th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100D) was redesignated the 90th Attack Squadron (A-37B) using personnel and equipment from the 311th Attack Squadron at England AFB, LA. (3 TFW History, Oct-Dec 69, chronology)



12 Nov 1973: A major fire destroyed all but a two-week food supply at the Barter Island Main DEW Line station. Because of the stringent restrictions of fuel resulting from Arab oil embargo, AAC's C-130s were unable to airlift the needed 62,000 pounds of food replacement. The Military Airlift Command granted authorization for AAC to contract with Northern Air Cargo to airlift the food in its DC-6s. (Hales, Hist, AAC, Jul 1972-Jun 1974, p. 380.)

14 Nov 1974: The Alaskan Air Command announced it had cancelled its Blair Lakes moratorium and had resumed operations on 6 November and began dropping practice bombs ten days later. Lt Gen James E. Hill had sent a detailed letter to Governor Eagan on 31 October explaining the need to use the range. Governor Eagan, busy touring Nome to assess flood damage there, did not immediately respond. Jerry Reinwand, a spokesman for the state Department of Environmental Conservation, responded that he was "astounded" to learn that the military had resumed use of the range. "The issue is how much land do they need to carry out their function in Alaska?" The Alaskan stated that the F-4E crews would not use high explosive and tracer ammunition, napalm or large bombs. Small practice, non explosive bombs with a marking charge would be dropped that would not cause craters. Ron Long, a professional trapper, expressed his desires to continue trapping in the area and possessed a permit from the Army. "They'll have to take me out of there bodily. He was concerned about the disruption of animal habitats. Long was worried about the fire hazard because the area was covered by easy to burn black spruce. He was a member of the coalition opposed to the range. ("Blair Lakes Bombed," *Anchorage Daily News*, 15 Nov 1974.)





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14 Nov 1977: The Alaskan Air Command graduated its first NCO Academy class for master sergeants and senior master sergeants. While AAC had a NCO Leadership School, which celebrated its 10th anniversary in 1977, it did not have the next level in the NCO professional development program. Those needing to attend had to be sent on temporary duty at considerable expense to other command schools. On 17 February 1977, Lt Gen Marion L. Boswell directed his Senior Enlisted Advisor, CMSgt. Richard P.E. Cook and the Commandant of the AAC NCO Leadership School to conduct a study to determine if an academy could be established. They determined that AAC could operate it annually at \$20,000 less than sending students elsewhere. They also determined that the same facilities and faculty could be used by reducing the number of leadership school classes from ten to seven to accommodate two accident classes. They were able to establish the NCO Academy by reducing the number of NCO Leadership School classes from ten to eight to allow time for planning during 1977. The first Alaskan Air Command NCO Academy graduated 28 students from Elmendorf AFB and 10 from Eielson AFB. (Hales, Hist, AAC, 1977, pp. 83-85.)

16 Nov 1982: The last three F-4Es, 67-0237, 67-0311 and 67-0230, departed Elmendorf AFB at 1030 for assignment to the 4th Tactical Fighter Wing, Seymour-Johnson AFB, NC. Colonel Wilfred K. Abbott, Vice Commander, 21st Tactical Fighter Wing and Lt Col John A. Borchert, Commander, 43rd Tactical Fighter Squadron witnessed their departure along with maintenance personnel who had maintained them and a handful of media personnel. Colonel Borchert, as a captain, had flown one of the original F-4Es to Elmendorf AFB in 1970. (Cloe, Hist. AAC, 1982, p. 266.)



13 Nov 1985: Joe Meyer, an aid to Senator Frank Murkowski (R-AK) announced that Alaska would receive two E-3 aircraft. The announcement was made before Air Force public release of the information and appeared in the local papers in the Associate Press. The articles quoted Mr. Meyers as stating that at the prompting of

Senators Murkowski and Stevens, Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger and asked the Air Force to consider assigning the planes to Alaska. The articles went on to discuss the TU-95 Bear H threat and Alaska's inadequate radar coverage. Lieutenant Ted Tilma, Director of Public Affairs, AAC, did not confirm or deny the information. While the issue of the E-3 assignment to Alaska was being resolved, the 552nd Airborne Warning and Control Wing, Tinker AFB, OK, continued its regular temporary duty E-3s to Elmendorf AFB. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1985, p. 179.)

13 Nov 1987: Capt Richard von Berchefeldt, 54th Tactical Fighter Squadron, became the first Alaskan Air Command fighter pilot to intercept 10 Soviet aircraft when he intercepted a flight of two TU-95 Bear D aircraft over the Bering Sea. He was deployed on alert at King Salmon. Lt Gen David L. Nichols awarded him with the Sustained Activity Air Medal. General Nichols had decided to award the medal to pilots making ten or more intercepts. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1987, p. 74.)





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13 Nov 2003: The 3rd Wing and Raytheon Missile Systems held a ceremony in Hangar One marking the delivery of the AIM-9X Sidewinder. Brig Gen Robertus C.N. Remkes, 3rd Wing Commander, and Mr. Targoff, Vice President, Air-to-Air Missiles, Raytheon, officiated the ceremony. The 3rd Wing was the first Air Force wing to receive the new missile in its inventory. The 12th and 19th Fighter Squadrons were programmed to be equipped with the newest and most technologically version of the infrared-guided Sidewinder missile. ("Elmendorf First to Field New AIM-9X," Air Force Print Service, 13 Nov 2003; Fact Sheet, Raytheon, "AIM-9X Sidewinder," not dated; Program, Raytheon, "AIM-9X Delivery Ceremony," 13 Nov 2003.)



14-18 Nov 2005: PACAF conducted a Site Activation Task Force (SATAF) for the beddown of eight C-17 aircraft at Elmendorf AFB. The task force focused on continued support for the beddown process and assessed current progress preparing for the beddown. (Miller, Hist, 3 WG, 2005, p. liii.)



13-23 Nov 2006: The 962 AACS deployed two crews to Paya Labar, Singapore for President of the United States (POTUS) support. The 962 AACS crews provided 24/7 airborne threat warning for the President's visit to Vietnam for the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit. Squadron members worked with Singapore, and Vietnamese Command and Control agencies. (Miller, Hist, 3 WG, 2006, p. xcvi.)

18 Nov 2006: More than 200 people attended the Firefighter's Ball, hosted by the Joint Base Elmendorf and Richardson Fire and Emergency Services. The evening featured dinner, an awards ceremony and a speech from Dan Daly, retired New York City battalion fire chief. Chief Daly's remarks recounted his experience on 11 September 2001. (Miller, Hist, 3 WG, 2006, p. c.)