



# Remembering Our Heritage



## 26 November – 2 December

**27 Nov 1917:** Lt William G. Schauffler, Jr., 90th Aero Squadron, brought mail via aeroplane to the men of the 90th Aero Squadron. This was the first time mail had been received since the squadron left the United States for World War I. ("The 90th Aero Squadron, American Expeditionary Forces, the Pair Of Dice Observation Squadron in World War I," Battery Press, 1990)



**Dec 1931:** The 3rd Attack Group, stationed Ft Crockett, TX, consisted of 51 officers and 598 enlisted men. At the time, the group was flying the DH-4 and A-3 aircraft. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), Activation to 31 December 1941, p. 17)



**1 Dec 1939:** The Army Air Corps' cold weather test facility near Fairbanks, initially referred to as the Fairbanks Air Base, was named Ladd Field in honor of Maj. Arthur K. Ladd, a staff member of GHQ Air Force, who had been killed in an aircraft crash near Dale, South Carolina, 13 December 1935. In 1961, Ladd Field was redesignated Ft Wainwright. (Woodman, *Duty Station Northwest*, Vol II, p. 58.)

**29 Nov 1940:** *The Anchorage Daily Times* reported that Army hailed construction of Ft Richardson and Elmendorf Field as being among "the speediest and most efficient of new defense projects." The paper quoted Harold Anderson, operator of the Anderson construction camp as saying: "The Anchorage Base is the talk of the Army." (*The Anchorage Daily Times*, 29 Nov 1940)

**30 Nov 1940:** *The Anchorage Daily Times* reported that the first contingent of 400 men of the 75th Coast Artillery (Antiaircraft) Regiment arrived in Anchorage from Seward by train. Brig Gen Simon Buckner and Colonel Landreth had flown down to Seward to greet the regiment, which was disembarking from the *St Mihiel*. (*The Anchorage Daily Times*, 30 Nov 1940, p. 1.)

**28 Nov 1941:** Lt William A. Anderson became the first fatality of the 18th Fighter Squadron. He was leading the 3rd two-plane element in flight of nine P-36s conducting training diving attacks against a rock in Chatham Bay near Portlock on the tip of the Kenai Peninsula when the formation encountered severe turbulence at 4,000 feet. The turbulent air scattered the flight. When formation reassembled Lt Anderson's P-36 was missing. A watchman at the Portlock Cannery reported it falling in three pieces into the bay about one mile off shore. Lt Anderson's body was not recovered. Colonel Davis later reported: "The boys have lost their faith in the ruggedness of the P-36s. On inspection one other is reported to have buckled a wing and most all have pulled some rivets." Lt Anderson was the first pilot of the Eleventh Air Force to lose his life. (Ransohoff, Hist, 11AF, pp. 81-82; Hist, 18<sup>th</sup> Fighter Sq, 1 Feb 1940-1 Jan 1944, p. 30.)



**1 Dec 1940:** Brig Gen Buckner designated Maj Everett S. Davis Commanding Officer, Elmendorf Field in addition to serving as Air Officer, Alaska Defense Forces. The command responsibility gave him the authority to implement Army Air Corps plans and policies. Maj Davis was the first Eleventh Air Force Commander, he commanded the unit from 15 Jan-16 February 1942. (HQ Alaska Defense Command GO 9, 2 Dec 1940; Fleischer, Hist, Elmendorf Field, 1940-1944, p.19.)



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**28 Nov 1942:** Col Everett S. Davis, the first Eleventh Air Force Commander, and seven others disappeared after taking off in a 54th Troop Carrier Squadron C-47, 41-38635, from Naknek on a flight to Elmendorf Army Air Base. The control tower at Nankek lost contact 30 minutes after the C-47 departed. The weather at the time required instrument flying with severe winds up to 70 miles per hour reported. The Eleventh Air Force launched a one-month search for the missing transport when it failed to arrive at its destination. Frequent snowstorms made the search difficult. A standing order remained for anyone flying the route to look for the aircraft. The search was resumed 19 August 1943 when the snow had cleared from the tops of all but the tallest mountains. The searches found the wreckage later that month at the 2,000-foot level on south shore of Lake Iliamna. It had apparently struck at full power with everyone aboard killed instantly. The remains of Col Davis and the crew were brought back to Elmendorf and formal services were held. Col Davis was buried with full military honors on 10 September 1943 in the Ft Richardson cemetery including a flyover by three B-25s from the 406th Bombardment Squadron. The airfield on Adak was named in his honor. In addition to Col Davis, those killed in the accident were: 1/Lt. George W. Hinton III, 2/Lt. James W. Moore, SSgt. Virgil V. Bingham, SSgt. Herbert W. Dale, Cpl. William Caputkin, Cpl. Arthur W. Plumb, PFC Wallace L. Anderson and Pvt. A.O. Jensen. (Report of Aircraft Accident, C-47, 41-38635, 54<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Sq, 21 Sep 1943; Ransohoff, Hist, 11AF, p. 239; Interview, Maj. Frank O'Brien, Doc 25 in Hist, Elmendorf Field, 1940-1943, compiled by Capt Henry E. Fleischer.)



**Dec 1943:** The 90th Bombardment Squadron (Light) converted from the B-25s to the A-20s. The 90th Bomb Squadron was stationed at Dobodura, New Guinea. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), 1 January 1942 to 31 March 1944, p. 130)

**29 Nov 1944:** The 404th Bombardment Squadron launched three B-24Ds on a high altitude attack against the Kashiwabara Army Staging Area on Paramushiru. The en-route weather consisted of multiple cloud layers below and clear above with similar conditions existing over the target. Lt Wickman took off at 1511 in 42-40996 with a bomb load of 30 100-pound general purpose bombs. He was followed by Lt. Charles A. Weniger in 42-41157 "Flash" at 1512 with the same bomb load and Lt. Robert A. Weiss at 1512 in 42-41152 with twenty 100-pound general purpose bombs. The formation proceeded on course at 8,000 feet to within 200 miles of the Kuriles when Lieutenant Wickman led it in a series of 360 degree turns so as to arrive over the target area at sunset. The formation arrived over the target at 1946 at 16,000 feet and began dropping the bombs by radar. The results could not be observed due to the clouds. The bombers landed between 0035 and 0059. (Memo, Comdr, 28<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group to Comdr, 11AF, subj: Operational Summary for 29 November 1944, 30 Nov 1944.)



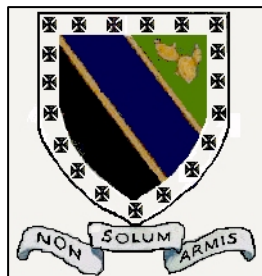


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**26-28 Nov 1950:** To help blunt the Chinese Communist attacks, the 3rd Bombardment Group flew its first close air support night mission under a tactical air control party direction. The group flew 66 sorties within a five-hour period in support of Eighth Army units in the northwest corner of North Korea. The 3rd Bombardment Group flew close air support night missions in support of the 25th Infantry Division, which was being attacked by Communist forces. The B-26 crews arrived within 30 minutes of being notified and strafed within 50 yards of the front lines of an Infantry company under attack. Elsewhere that night, the B-26 crews flew their first "Tadpole" sorties, dropping bombs 1,000 yards of the front line. (Warnock, *The USAF in Korea, A Chronology*, p. 23)



**1 Dec 1950:** When the Korean War broke out, provisional wing organizations were established at the forward deployment locations of the air groups to provide administrative and logistical support. The parent organizations of the air groups remained behind at the home stations to carry on the logistical and administrative functions required for operating and maintaining the home bases. On 1 December 1950, as part of a reorganization of the Fifth Air Force, the 6133rd Tactical Support Wing at Iwakuni was inactivated and the 3rd Bombardment Wing was administratively moved from Johnson Air Base to Iwakuni Air Base where it rejoined the 3rd Bombardment Group and assumed responsibilities of base functions. Another unit was activated at Johnson Air Base to provide base support. Colonel Virgil L. Zoller assumed command of the 3rd Bombardment Wing, replacing Colonel Donald L. Clark. (*United States Air Force Operations in the Korean Conflict, 1 November 1950-30 June 1952*, p. 33; Ravenstein, *Air Force Combat Wings, Lineage and Honors Histories*, p. 10)

**Dec 1951:** The assigned strength of the 3rd Bombardment Wing began to increase from the record low of November 1951. Two factors contributed to the improvement. The numbers of nightly sorties were reduced from 33 to 24, thus slowing down the number of crewmembers completing the required 50 missions. Second, replacements began arriving from the United States. (Hist, 3BG, Dec 51, p.2)

**30 Nov 1952:** The month marked a decrease in formation and bomber stream missions and a return to reconnaissance missions. Sightings and destroyed claims showed a dramatic rise possibly attributed to better visibility caused by the reflection from the snow-covered ground. Crews claimed 64 rail cuts and 2,209 vehicles, 3 locomotives, 66 railcars and 3 bridges destroyed. The wing flew 1,048 sorties. By squadron they were: 8<sup>th</sup>, 364; 13<sup>th</sup>, 333; and 90<sup>th</sup>, 351. For the third month in a row, the wing suffered no combat personnel and aircraft losses. (Hist, 3BG Nov 52, pp. 3-4; Hist, 3BW, Jul-Dec 52, p. 23)

**29 Nov 1955:** An F-84F flown by Lt Alfred Pounders, on temporary duty to Eielson AFB with the 506th Strategic Fighter Wing, crashed into the Eielson AFB housing area, killing 14 people including seven children and the F-84 pilot. Lt Pounders had just taken off and was unable to gain altitude. Those killed in their quarters included MSgt Keith Ellis and his children Lynn, Clark and Debra; three 11-month old triplets Dale, Donald and David Fimple; Army Sergeant First Class Weldon Rucker, his wife Hazel and mother-in-law Emma McBrayer; Betty and 2-year old Niala Williams; and Juanita Jones. Eielson AFB dedicated its new child development center in April 1995 in honor of the children who had been killed. (TSgt. Dave Byrd, Historian 354 FW, "A Tragedy in History," *Goldpanner*, 24 Nov 1995.)





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**29 Nov 1955:** The *Anchorage Daily News* announced that Northwest Airlines was switching its operations back to Shemya Island from Cold Bay, beginning 1 December 1955. The airlines had been using Shemya since 1947 as a refueling base on the Great Circle Route until 1954 when the Air Force withdrew from the island. The change to Cold Bay added 900 miles to its Seattle to Tokyo route. The paper stated that Northwest Orient would station 35 personnel on Shemya. Prior to that, Alaskan Air Command had announced that the



Strategic Air Command would engage in a classified meteorological survey of the island beginning 1 September 1955. At the time, the 17th Naval District, who had assumed responsibility for Shemya from the Air Force, was in the process of turning inland over to the Bankers Life and Casualty, the successful bidder on a salvage contract. Following discussions, the Air Force agreed to pay Northwest Orient for housing and feeding the 59 personnel conducting the survey. (Chart, Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1955, pp. 84-87.)



**29 Nov 1956:** Lt Gen Frank A. Armstrong, Jr., Commander-in-Chief, Alaskan Command, made the first telephone call over the White Alice Communications System (WACS) at a ceremony during a bleak, snowy morning on Elmendorf AFB as a small group of dignitaries gathered around. The call was made to the White Alice Communications station on Middleton Island (F-22), 200 miles away. (Miller, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1957, p. 109.)

**1 Dec 1956-31 Mar 1957:** The Alaskan Air Command conducted a test, code named Donna Marie, to determine if contract personnel could provide communications and electronics support at the aircraft control and warning stations. The Command had experienced difficulties filling the radar, communications and teletype positions at the radar stations with qualified airmen. It selected six radar stations. Two, Campion (F-8) and Northeast Cape (F-9), were manned contractor; two, King Salmon (F-3) and Cape Lisburne (F-7), by military; and two, Sparrevohn (F-15) and Tin City (F-4), by a combination of military and civilian. The test covered maintenance and technical operations of search and height finder radars, electronic test gear, air-ground and point-to-point radio equipment, carrier system and other communications and electronic equipment associated with radar station operations. The Alaskan Air Command concluded from the test that contractor operations was the most cost effective. It cost \$5,600,000 annually to operated and maintain the communications-electronic equipment at the 20 radar stations with military personnel, \$6,126,904 with a combination military and contract personnel and \$2,541,000 with contract personnel only. (Miller, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1957, pp. 131-133)





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**2 Dec 1957:** Headquarters, USAF, approved military manning the Aleutian Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line Segment (Project Stretch Out) as opposed to civilian contract personnel as was the case at the other DEW Line stations. It established a two year test period, 1 January 1959 to 1 January 1961. The Air Force was convinced that military personnel were capable of operating early warning equipment in a remote location with the same or better efficiency than contract personnel. The Aleutian DEW Line Segment (Project Stretch Out) presented a “unique opportunity to determine just how effectively and economically an Air Force early warning mission can be accomplished on an experimental basis, given the proper minimum resources and imaginative action to accomplish this test successfully.” (Miller, Hist, AAC, Jul 1958-Jun 1959, p. 199.)



Oct-Dec 1967)

**28-29 Nov 1967:** F-100s from the 90th and 510th Tactical Fighter Squadron, and A-37s from the 604th Air Control Squadron, aided the defenders of the Bo Duc-Bu Dop complex in Vietnam. The pilots delivered their bombs and anti-personal ordnance in within 40 feet of the defenders. The attack was broken and the Viet Cong retreated into the jungle. (Hist, 3 TFW,

**1 Dec 1969:** The Military Airlift Command transferred the first of two C-124s, 51-0075 and 51-0098, from the 62nd Military Airlift Wing, McChord AFB, to the Alaskan Air Command who further assigned them to the 17th Tactical Airlift Squadron. The Military Airlift Command was phasing the C-124s out of its active inventory. It had provided outsize cargo support to Alaskan Air Command. The Command acquired the Globemaster IIs when the Air Force Reserves and Air National Guard proved unable to fulfill the “Cool Mule” mission of supporting its remote stations. Major General Joseph A. Cunningham, Commander, AAC, welcomed the first of two Globemasters in a ceremony. (Weidman, Hist, AAC, Jul 1969-Jun 1970, pp. 27-28; Hist, 21COMPW, p. 4.)



**1 Dec 1972:** The *Sourdough Sentinel* reported that a WC-130 had returned to Elmendorf AFB to resume Cool Cowl operations, which involved seeding fog with dry ice to turn it into ice crystals. The weather plane returned as a backup for a propane fog dispersal system consisting of 19 radio remotely controlled 1,000-gallon tanks encircling Elmendorf AFB. The unit consisted of a white painted tank, a solenoid control valve and a dispensing and vaporizing valve. The propane was released from 20 masts and worked by lowering the

temperature to minus 40 degrees, which caused the fog to freeze into ice crystals and drop to the ground. It took 45 to 60 minutes to disperse the fog. (“Guam Fog Busters Arrive to Clear Air,” *Sourdough Sentinel*, 1 Dec 1972.)

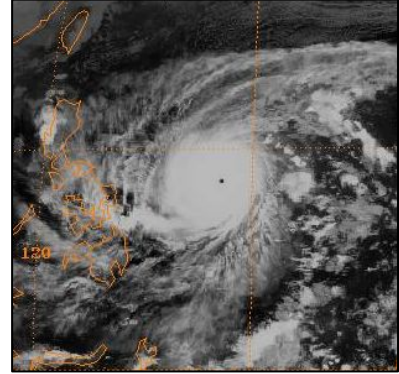


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**28 Nov 1974:** Typhoon Irma arrived at Clark AB on Thanksgiving Day with some of the highest winds recorded to date: 98 mph. Although no deaths or major injuries occurred on Clark AB, \$75,000 damage was done including structural damage to four warehouses, three aircraft hangars, and several houses. Typhoon Irma was the last of 1981's eight typhoons to hit the Philippines. (3 TFW History, 1 Oct-31 Sep 74, p.5)



**30 Nov 1979:** The Alaskan Air Command published Program Action Directive 79-4, *E-3A Beddown*, which provided milestones for the permanent rotational deployment of two E-3A aircraft to Elmendorf AFB. The command had selected the former Strategic Aircraft Command alert hangar, Number 8, on the north side of the base to accommodate the airborne warning and control aircraft. They were programmed to arrive during 1982. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1979, pp. 211-212.)



**1 Dec 1980:** Lt Gen Winfield W. Scott, Jr., Eleventh Air Force Commander, promoted the following individuals to master sergeant under the newly implemented Air Force Stripes for Exceptional Performers (STEP) program: TSgt. Homer Williams, 21st Aircraft Generation Squadron; TSgt Joseph E. Harris, Headquarters, 21st Combat Support Group; and TSgt. Johnny L.B. Jacobs, 5010th Civil Engineering Squadron. They were the first in the Alaskan Air Command to be promoted under the newly implemented Air Force STEP program. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1980, p. 56.)

**27 Nov 1981:** Lt Gen Clark directed his Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics, to have the aircraft fail code change from FC to AK to reflect their Alaskan location. (Cloe, Hist. AAC, 1981, p. 235.)

**1 Dec 2005:** All users of base handheld radios began using the new Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR) system. The system was designed to increase communications range, coverage and clarity. Now, Elmendorf AFB personnel could communicate throughout Alaska and with all federal, state and local Alaskan agencies. The change-over occurred at midnight 1 December 2005. (Miller, 3 WG Hist 2005, 2006.)