



# Remembering Our Heritage



## 29 October – 4 November

**1 Nov 1929:** The 3rd Attack Group Band was activated at Fort Sam Houston, TX as directed by telegram from the Adjutant General to the Commanding General, 8th Corps Area. The band was constituted and assigned on 5 November 1929 per General Order No. 25, Section 3, HQ, 8th Corps Area. All personnel were drawn from the 15th Field Artillery Band, which was rendered inactive on 31 Oct 1929. The Band joined the group in Fort Crockett, TX on 6 November 1929. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), Activation to 31 December 1941, p. 16)



**30 Oct 1940:** One of the two B-17Bs assigned to the Cold Weather Detachment at Ladd Field landed at Merrill Field shortly after noon. At the time, it was the largest aircraft to land at the Anchorage field. (*The Anchorage Times*, p. 1.)

**1 Nov 1940:** The power plant at Elmendorf Field, consisting of three diesels generators, came on line, ending the dependence on Anchorage to provide power. (Fleischer, Hist, Elmendorf Field, 1940-1944, p. 21.)

**31 Oct 1941:** Brig Gen Simon Buckner requested an experienced staff be sent to Alaska for the newly created Air Force, Alaska Defense Command. At the time, the majority of the units were at half strength and there was a serious shortage of experience flying officers with only six with more than ten years experience. Because of the need for staff personnel, they could not be spared for training duties. To alleviate the situation, General Buckner requested an additional three field grade officers to serve as the executive officer, assisted executive officer and operations officer for the new organization. He also asked for a lieutenant to serve as adjutant and seven experienced clerks. He also requested 61 pilots to bring the units up to strength. His goal was to construct a solid staff that could be expanded to include communications, supply and maintenance officers and enlisted personnel should the need arise. He also wanted to free the experience pilots already in Alaska to concentrate on training the others. General DeWitt added his strong endorsement. The Army Air Forces headquarters agreed to provide sufficient personnel to create a headquarters squadron for the Air Force, Alaska Defense Command. (Ransohoff, Hist, 11AF, pp. 73-74.)



**30 Oct 1942:** The Alaskan Highway opened. General Marshall announced that 800,000 U.S. troops were serving overseas. (Goralski, *World War II Almanac*, p. 238.)

**Nov 1941:** The President ordered the Army Air Forces to coordinate its plans with the Navy. In Alaska, it meant that the Navy played the dominant role in the Aleutians and North Pacific area. This differed from the original Army Air Forces plans for the defense of Alaska, which stated: "In defense of Alaska, the operations of Army Air Forces are likely to play the dominant role. Certainly the interception and destruction of enemy forces by Army Air Forces will be at least as important as plans with Navy." On the eve of Pear Harbor, the mission of the Navy required it to defend the Aleutians with the Army responsible for defending Navy facilities. (Ferguson, AAF Study No. 4, pp. 26-27.)



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**31 Oct 1942:** The 3rd Bombardment Group flew 359 combat and reconnaissance sorties during October 1942, dropping 26 tons of bombs and expending 61,700 rounds of ammunition. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), 1 January 1942 to 31 March 1944, p. 28)

**1 Nov 1942:** The Eleventh Air Force issued a new mission statement, which remained unchanged for the duration of the Aleutian Campaign. It required the bomber squadrons to isolate Kiska and Attu and destroy Japanese shipping. The fighter squadrons were required to protect the bombers during strikes against the two islands and flying interdiction missions. They were also required to provide air defense of Aleutian bases. The Eleventh Air Force also continued to fly off-shore patrols with the attached Patrol Air Wing Four and Royal Canadian Air Force squadrons and the assigned 406th Bombardment Squadron. (Ransohoff, Hist, 11AF, pp. 189-191.)



**2 Nov 1942:** The 90th Squadron attacked a convoy off Lae in coordination with B-17s, B-26s, and British Beaufighters. The attack continued all night at half-hour intervals. Zeros attempted frontal attacks but were repelled by the gunners. General MacArthur's Headquarters commended the Squadron for its action. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), 1 January 1942 to 31 March 1944, p. 29)

**1 Nov 1943:** The 862nd Bombardment Squadron activated at McCook Army Air Field. It was consolidated with the 962nd Airborne Early Warning Squadron 19 September 1985 and became the 962nd Airborne Warning and Control Squadron and later, 1 August 1994, the 962nd Airborne Air Control Squadron. (L&H Statement, AFRA, 962 AACCS)



**2 Nov 1943:** The 3rd Bombardment Group participated with the Fifth Air Force strike against Japanese shipping and installations at Rabaul during which Maj Ray Wilkins won a posthumous Medal of Honor. The 3rd Group, joined by two other B-25 Groups and an escort of 70 P-38s, inflicted great destruction on the enemy. The Japanese lost three destroyers, eight merchant ships, and 80 aircraft. Major Wilkins' citation read: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy near Rabaul, New Britain, on 2 November 1943. Leading his squadron in an attack on shipping in Simpson Harbor, during which intense antiaircraft fire was expected, Maj. Wilkins briefed his squadron so that his airplane would be in the position of greatest risk. His squadron was the last of 3 in the group to enter the target area. Smoke from bombs dropped by preceding aircraft

necessitated a last-second revision of tactics on his part, which still enabled his squadron to strike vital shipping targets, but forced it to approach through concentrated fire, and increased the danger of Maj. Wilkins' left flank position. His airplane was hit almost immediately, the right wing damaged, and control rendered extremely difficult. Although he could have withdrawn, he held fast and led his squadron into the attack. He strafed a group of small harbor vessels, and then, at low level, attacked an enemy destroyer. His 1,000 pound bomb struck squarely amidships, causing the vessel to explode. Although antiaircraft fire from this vessel had seriously damaged his left vertical stabilizer, he refused to deviate from



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the course. From below-masthead height he attacked a transport of some 9,000 tons, scoring a hit which engulfed the ship in flames. Bombs expended, he began to withdraw his squadron. A heavy cruiser barred the path. Unhesitatingly, to neutralize the cruiser's guns and attract its fire, he went in for a strafing run. His damaged stabilizer was completely shot off. To avoid swerving into his wing planes he had to turn so as to expose the belly and full wing surfaces of his plane to the enemy fire; it caught and crumpled his left wing. Now past control, the bomber crashed into the sea. In the fierce engagement Maj. Wilkins destroyed 2 enemy vessels, and his heroic self-sacrifice made possible the safe withdrawal of the remaining planes of his squadron." (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), 1 January 1942 to 31 March 1944, p. 73, *Grim Reapers*, pp. 70-74)

**1 Nov 1945:** The Air Transport Command transferred Ladd Field, now Fort Wainwright, to the Eleventh Air Force. (Hist, AAC, 1945-47, p. 29.)

**1 Nov 1950:** 10th Air Division (Defense), Elmendorf AFB, and 11th Air Division (Defense), Ladd AFB, activated to provide operational control of air defense forces in their sectors. The two divisions integrated the fighter aircraft, radar stations and the anti-aircraft artillery into an effective team. The 10th Air Division on Elmendorf AFB exercised operational control over the 57th Fighter Interceptor Wing. By the end of the year, it had achieved a fully operational status. The 11th Air Division at Ladd AFB remained in cadre status with one officer and one airman assigned. Both divisions were authorized 10 officers and 20 airmen. In contrast to previous organizations, the two divisions and its subordinate units were focused exclusively on air defense. (HQ AAC GO 48, 27 Oct 1950; Parsons, Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1950, pp. 21-22 and 45-46.)

**1-7 Nov 1950:** During the first week of November the 13th Bombardment Squadron, assigned to the 3rd Bomb Wing, flew few sorties. Instead, the squadron maintained standby alert status. During one alert scramble, two aircraft were airborne within 15 minutes of notification, a noteworthy achievement considering all factors; weather, terrain, and location. (Hist, 13BS, 1-30 Nov 50, p. 1.)



**1-2 Nov 1952:** The 3rd Bombardment Wing flew its 20,000-night sortie of the Korean War. (Hist, 3BG/BW, Nov 52, p.3)



**29 Oct 1965:** The Defense Advanced Research Agency detonated an 80-kiloton nuclear device 2,300 feet below the surface of Amchitka Island. Project Long Shot, the first underground nuclear explosion in Alaska, was designed to establish the travel time of an underground nuclear explosion and develop a more accurate monitoring system for underground nuclear testing. Long Shot was the third in a series of underground tests aimed at providing a means for detecting and locating secret underground nuclear tests. The Defense Advanced Research Agency selected Amchitka Island because of its remote location and the fact that it was in an earthquake prone area. One of the desired results of the test was the differentiation of an underground nuclear explosion from an earthquake. Some 350 seismographic stations around the world registered the blast. The Alaskan Air Command provided logistical support, mostly airlift. (Weidman, Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1965, pp. 80-90.)



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**4 Nov 1966:** The Alaskan Air Command transferred the first two of its five of its C-123Bs to the Tactical Air Command in exchange for six C-47s. The remaining three were transferred on 7 December 1966. The twin-engine medium transport had been used for site re-supply since their assignment to Alaskan Air Command in 1957. Because of the needs of Southeast Asia, the Air Force decided to exchange them for C-47s. Initially, Alaskan Air Command had six C-123Bs, but lost one to a mishap at Cape Lisburne (F-7) during the year. Two of the C-123s went to Eglin AFB, FL and the other three to England AFB, LA. The C-123Bs had been assigned to the 21<sup>st</sup> Operations Squadron, which also took possession of the C-47s. The C-130s continued to support the remote sites and the smaller C-47s also proved useful. Contract carriers also continued to be used. The C-47s were winterized by a contractor prior to transfer to Alaska. The process involved installing auxiliary power units, improving the aircraft heating system with combustion heaters, lining them with insulation and painting them in Arctic markings. Estimated cost per aircraft was \$12,100 with a 45 day turn around. The first sent to the contractor, Log Air International, 43-48098, arrived at Miami International Airport on 9 September for modification. It was released on 29 October and arrived at Elmendorf AFB on 9 November. (Weidman, Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1966, pp. 31-34.)



**1 Nov 1967:** The contractors completed the Whittier to Elmendorf AFB fuel pipeline. It was then filled with 20,000 gallons of JP-4 fuel and tested. By December it was averaging 20,000 gallons of JP-4 delivered to Elmendorf AFB weekly. It eliminated the need to use the Anchorage Port facilities to unload large amounts of jet fuel. (Weidman, Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1967, p. 51.)



**3 Nov 1968:** The 531st Tactical Fighter Wing, assigned to the 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing, flying F-100s wiped out an enemy structure complex 60 miles southwest of Can Tho. The target consisted of a group of structure lined up along a 400-meter stretch on both banks of a canal. They made a total of five bomb runs, ripping up the structures, bunkers, and sampans. Their bombs touched off

explosions, which all but blew the camp apart, and caused a fuel fire that sent up smoke that nearly covered the target. The fuel explosion gave off a 100-foot fireball and smoke up to 500 feet. As they pulled off their last strafing run, the ammunition exploded with a brilliant fireball and smoke to 1,500 feet. Total damage consisted of 21 structures, four bunkers, and 5 five sampans, two secondary explosions and one sustained fire. (3 TFW History, Sep-Dec 68, pp. 36-37)

**31 Oct 1970:** The Air Force placed the 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing in an unmanned and unequipped status at Bien Hoa AB, South Vietnam, ending 59 consecutive months of combat duty in Vietnam. In that history, over 23,000 enemy soldiers were officially confirmed killed by wing air strikes. Personnel were reassigned to other organizations and Bien Hoa AB was turned over to the 6251st Combat Support Group. Eventually all operations





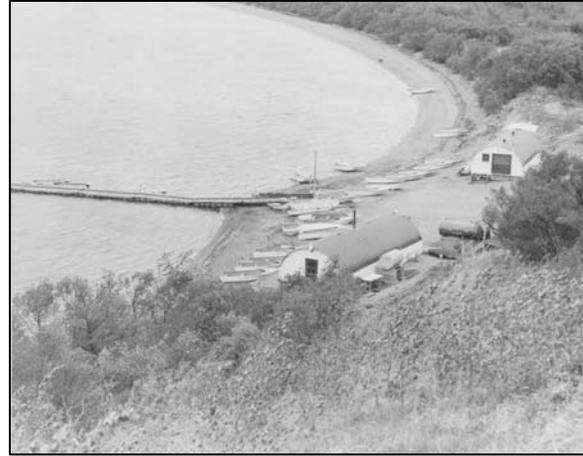
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would be turned over to the Vietnamese Air Force. The Air Force reassigned the 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing from Bien Hoa AB, South Vietnam to Kunsan AB, South Korea and was assigned to the Fifth Air Force on 15 March 1971. (Lineage and Honors Statement, 3 WG, current as of 1 Oct 1998; History of the 3<sup>rd</sup> TFW, 1 Jul 1919-1 Jul 1989, pp. 58-59; 3 TFW history, 1 Jul-31 Oct 1970, p. 1)

**Nov 1974:** The Air Force Chief of Staff expressed concerns about the high cost of operating the King Salmon fish camps (Lake and Rapids Fish Camps) during King Salmon Season. He was also concerned over the dedicated airlift used to fly passengers to and from King Salmon. A cost analysis showed that during the 1974 season (7 June-2 July) it cost the Air Force \$382.24 per individual including airlift. Some 804 individuals had used the facilities. Compared to King Salmon cost, it cost \$73.00 per individual at the Seward Recreational Facility and \$6.71 at the Birch Lake facility near Eielson AFB. As a result, General Gamble elected not to open the King Salmon facilities for the 1975 season. At one point, the Air Force operated recreational facilities a Cold Bay, Lake Louise and Unalakleet in addition to Birch Lake, King Salmon and Seward. The first three facilities were closed over the years due to economic reasons. The others, especially King Salmon, received considerably notoriety when Senator William Proxmire (D-WI) asked the General Accounting Office in 1974 to investigate the use of the recreational facilities. On 13 October 1974, "The Harry Reasoner Report," broadcast by ABC featured the King Salmon camps. Several news articles, pro and con appeared in the Anchorage papers. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, Jul 1974-Jun 1975, pp. 84-85.)



**3 Nov 1980:** The Alaskan Air Command published a new mission statement, changing the emphasis from air defense to a tactical air force role. It read:

Train and employ combat ready tactical air forces to preserve the national sovereignty of the United States lands, waters, and airspace. In the event of a contingency or when directed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Commander, AAC, becomes the Commander, Joint Task Force Alaska (JTF-AK). The Commander, JTF-AK, maintains air superiority in Alaska and provided air-t-surface support of Alaskan ground forces. The Commander, AAC, maintains the capability to provide attack warning throughout the transition from peacetime to hostilities. Also, the Commander, AAC, is the coordinating authority for all joint military administrative and logistic matters in Alaska, and is the military point of contact for the State of Alaska. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1980, p. 1.)



**30 Oct 1985:** Lt Gen David L. Nichols, 11 AF Commander, ordered the King Salmon runway closed to jet operations because of unsafe conditions. The F-15 alert was switched to Elmendorf AFB until repairs could be made to the King Salmon runway. The State of Alaska owned runway had been subject heavy usage and repairs

had been deferred. Engineers noted that the soil condition contributed to the problem. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1985, p. 108.)



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30 Oct 2005: Two C-130 flight crews located at Bagram AB, Afghanistan, and deployed from Elmendorf AFB, dropped approximately 50,000 pounds of humanitarian supplies into Pakistan. The recipients were victims of an earthquake on 8 October 2005. Two Alaska Air National Guard pararescuemen from Kulis ANGB continued providing aid to earthquake victims. They provided search and rescue assistance as well as medical help in the areas affected by the quake. (Miller, *3 WG Hist 2005*, 2006.)

