



Remembering Our Heritage



17-23 September

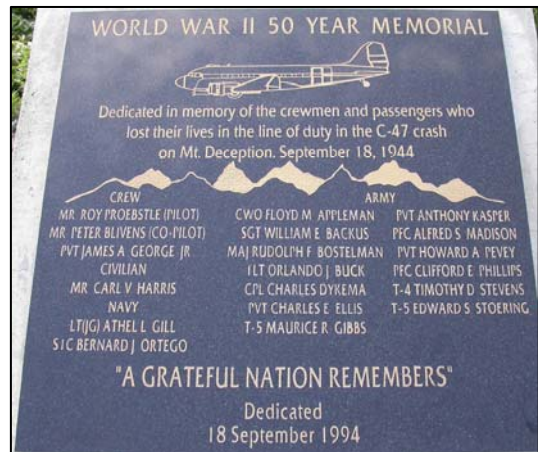
23 Sep 1940: *The Anchorage Daily Times* announced that the 73rd Bombardment Squadron (Medium), McChord Field, WA, commanded by Capt Charles B. Overacker, had been alerted for movement to Alaska. It consisted of 24 officers, 217 enlisted men and nine medium bombers. The paper also stated that Col Gregory Hoisington, former commander of Chilkoot Barracks was returning to Alaska and that 2,600 more troops were due to arrive by November 1940 with 2,400 going to Elmendorf Field bringing the 4th Infantry Regiment up to strength. Other units scheduled to arrive included the 1st Battalion, 1st Field Artillery Regiment and 2nd Battalion, 75th Coastal Artillery Regiment. (*The Anchorage Daily Times*, 23 Sep 1940; Hutchison, *World War II in the North Pacific*, p. 2.)



17 Sep 1941: Morrison-Knudson construction workers began arriving to build an airfield at Cold Bay on the Alaska Peninsula for the Civil Aeronautics Authority. When the men landed, they found Chris the Whaler, an old Navy pensioner living by himself and trapping. He had an outhouse whose seat was lined with furs. The newcomers shot several pesky bears that Chris considered his friends and ruined his solitude. The workers contended with ground covered with volcanic ash, high winds, rain and sleet. Tractors became stuck in the mud. The work dragged on due to the weather, lack of fund and conflicting

directives. The Army engineers took over after Pearl Harbor. (Lt Hyman Diwinsky, Hist, Ft Randall Army Air Base, 15 May 1941-31 May 1944, pp. 1-2; Pitt, *Wide Open on Top*, p. 113.)

18 Sep 1944: A C-47A (43-15788), assigned to Northwest Airlines, crashed 17 miles east-northeast of Mt. McKinley into the side of Mt. Deception, killing all 19 aboard. Northwest Airlines pilot, Capt. Roy Proebstle and First Officer Lauren M. Blivens served as crew members along with Army PFC James A. George, steward. The C-47 was approximately 35 miles off course en route from Anchorage to Fairbanks with sixteen passengers aboard, including one civilian, who were heading for leave in the states after service in the Aleutians. Captain Proebstle and his crew took off at 1604 on a regularly scheduled flight with stops in Fairbanks, Edmonton and Minneapolis. They submitted their last report over Talkeetna. The crew apparently was



flying at 12,000 feet when they encountered a severe downdraft, which forced them to go on instruments into the clouds. The C-47 hit belly first with the fuselage splitting open, then caromed down a precipitous slope coming to rest a third of a mile down from the point of impact. The authorities decided not to recover the casualties because of avalanches dangers and the rugged surrounding area. Others killed were: Maj. Rudolph F. Bostleman, 1/Lt. Orlando J. Buck, Lt. (jg) Athel L. Gill, 2/Lt. Bernard J. Ortego, CWO Floyd M. Appleman, TSgt Timothy D. Stevens, TSgt Maurice R. Gibbs, TSgt Edward S. Stoering, Sgt William E. Backus, Cpl Charles N. Dykema, PFC Clifford E. Phillips, PFC Alfred S. Madison, Pvt. Howard A. Pevey, Pvt. Charles E. Ellis, Pvt. Anthony Kasper, and civilian Karl V. Harris. (AAF Form 14, "Report of Aircraft Accident," C-47A, 43-15738, 18 Sep 1944; Hist, Alaskan Wing, ATC, Sep-Oct 1944, pp. 27-29., w/attached report, USAAF Northern Region Contract DAW535-AC-35714, "Preliminary Narrative Report-Accident 5738, 28 Sep 1944.)

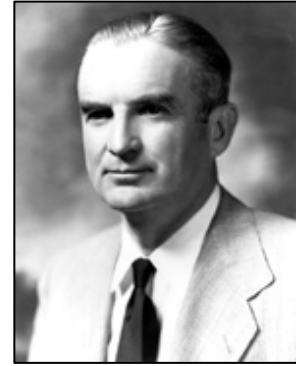


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18 Sep 1947: Stuart Symington was sworn in as the first Secretary of the Air Force marking its birthday as a separate service. General Carl A. Spaatz, former Commanding General, Army Air Forces, became the first Chief of Staff, United States Air Force. The major commands at the time were: Air Defense Command, Air Materiel Command, Air Proving Command, Air Training Command, Air University, Alaskan Air Command, Bolling Field Command, Caribbean Command, Far East Air Forces, Seventh Air Force, Strategic Air Command, Tactical Air Command and U.S. Air Forces in Europe. The Joint Chiefs of Staff decided that Alaska would be an air theater of operations. It focused on the defense of the homeland against a potential Soviet bomber attack. (Ravenstein, *The Organization and Lineage of the United States Air Force*, pp. 10-11.)



18 Sep 1950: A *Time* magazine article, "Ready for Trouble," described a mass dependent evacuation exercise in Alaska. Dependents in the Anchorage area were taken by bus to Elmendorf AFB, where they were organized for flights to a safe area. A special train stood by to take others to the Safe Haven at Whittier. Others, representing the majority, were organized into convoys of privately owned vehicles, which they drove as far as Palmer to test the ability to evacuate the territory by driving the Alaska Highway. The issuance of rations and

bedding was simulated and mechanical checks of cars were actually conducted. The women complained of the lack of latrines at Palmer. Dependents in the Fairbanks and Big Delta areas and on Adak were driven to nearby airports for a simulated evacuation. Those at the Kodiak naval base walked in the rain to the port where they would have embarked on simulated ships. ("Ready for Trouble," *Time*, 18 Sep 1950.)

21 Sep 1965: The Alaskan Air Command published Program Action Directive No. 10, establishing requirements to support Military Air Transport Service (re-designated later Military Airlift Command on 1 January 1966) aircraft transiting through Elmendorf AFB to and from Southeast Asia. The Military Airlift Command had decided to use Elmendorf AFB for flights originating from its east coast bases because of its location on the Great Circle Route. Flights originated from west coast bases generally crossed the Pacific. Military Airlift Command C-141s began landing at Elmendorf AFB in November 1965. By January 1966, there were over 30 C-141 and 150 other monthly cargo flights transiting through Elmendorf AFB and by June the number of C-141 flights had increased to an average monthly number of 810. First, known as Fast Fly, the name was later changed to Combat Pacer. In order to keep up with the fuel demands, a pipeline was built from the Port of Whittier to Elmendorf AFB. The Military Airlift Command and AAC identified deficiencies in the passenger terminal, which had remained essentially unchanged since its construction during World War II. The Military Airlift Command forecasted 10,000 passengers a month passing through Elmendorf AFB. (Truman R. Strobridge, ALCOM History Office, "Strength in the North, The Alaskan Command, 1947-1967," 1966, p. 68; Weidman, Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1965, p. 68.)

MAC C-141 Landings October 1965 to October 1966

Quarter	Passengers	Patients	C-141	Commercial
Oct-Dec 65	13,279	172	82	991
Jan-Mar 66	12,388	198	343	1,316
Apr-Jun 66	16,826	156	701	1,877
Jul-Oct 66	20,844	727	880	1,838



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21 Sep 1971: The Alaskan Air Command completed its first season of the environmental cleanup of discarded 55-gallon fuel barrels at its remote stations. It had received the first of nine barrel crushers on 23 April 1971. Seven more were delivered during the summer and sent to the remote stations where the personnel there and civilian crews engaged in annual remote installation seasonal maintenance collected and crushed the barrels for burial or if economically feasible, for shipment back to Elmendorf AFB for sale as scrap metal.



Engineers had estimated during the spring of 1951 that there were 350,000 abandoned barrels at the remote stations. The barrel crushing and disposal program, nicknamed "Drums Along the Yukon," disposed of 300,000 during the season. The entire cleanup project was expected to be completed by 1974, as more barrels were found. (Steve Gordenier, AAC OI Press Release, "AAC's Barrel Cleanup," 15 Dec 1971.)



18 Sep 1972: Governor William A. Eagan declared 18 September "United States Air Force Silver Anniversary Day," in a proclamation signed on 31 August. It stated: "The mission of the U.S. Air Force is fly and fight as a deterrent to war and in protection of freedom-loving people of the world." Governor Eagan went on to extend his "congratulations and appreciation to the men and women of the Air Force for their great service to the state of Alaska and to our nation." He declared that the Air Force men and women "have served selflessly and courageously in both peace and war," and that the Air Force "has served not only as an agency of defense but has served the nation as a national resource, training and returning to our society thousands of men and women trained in skills useful to our peaceful endeavors and industrial growth. The Air Force adopted as its 25th Anniversary theme "Pride in the Past—Faith in the Future." The Air Force had been established as part of the National Security Act of 1947. The theme pointed to the advances of the first

quarter of a century of Air Force advances as a separate service and the future role that airpower was expected to play. ("AF Birthday Proclamation," AAC News Release, 1 Sep 1972.)

17 Sep 1985: In a succession of intercepts, 43rd Tactical Fighter Squadron F-15s from Galena and King Salmon intercepted the same pair of TU-95 Bear As at different times as they flew over the Bering Sea. Later that day, Capt Nievin E. Smith and Capt Larry D. Tutor, 43rd Fighter Squadron, made the first intercept of a flight of Bear Hs over the North Pacific. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1985, pp. 140-141.)

18 Sep 1986: Colonel William Povilus, Commander, 21st Tactical Fighter Wing, and Anchorage Mayor Tony Knowles, presided in a ceremony naming F-15A, 74-0100, the "City of Anchorage." Other distinguished visitors in attendance were Mr. Dave Walsh, Chairman of the Anchorage City Council and Mr. Robert Smith, City Manager. Following the ceremony, Mayor Knowles was given a flight in an F-15B flown by Lt. Col. Lt. Col. Peter R. Loken. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1986, p. 316.)





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22 Sep 1995: Twenty-four lives were lost when an E-3B, 77-0354, Yukla 27, assigned to the 962nd Airborne Air Control Squadron, crashed on takeoff from Runway 05, Elmendorf AFB after striking a flock of Canadian Geese and losing power in the number one and two engines. The Class A Flight Mishap left 18 wives without husbands, 31 children without fathers and scores of mothers, fathers and siblings without sons and brothers. The Pacific Air Forces convened an accident investigation board. The board determined that the crew did everything humanly possible to control the aircraft as it did a slow climb to the left before going down in a wooded area less than a mile from the runway departure end. The board faulted the 3rd Wing for not having an aggressive plan to detect and deter Canadian Geese and the failure of the Bird Hazard Working Reduction Working Group for not adequately preparing for the migration season. The board also faulted the control tower personnel of not notifying the E-3 crew of the presence of nesting geese near the runway. The pilots last words were, "We're going in, we're going down." (Hist, 11AF, 1995, p. 29; Study, TSgt Gary Boyd, 3rd Wing Historian "An Unwelcome Silence, Elmendorf's Response to the Loss of Yukla 27," 1995; AFI 51-503, "USAF Class A Flight Mishap," 22 September 1995, E-3B, Tail #77-0354, 962 AACs.)



The 24 who died were: Lt Col Richard G. Leary, navigator, 41; Maj Richard Patrick Stewart II, mission crew commander, 40; Maj Marlon R. Thomas, mission crew commander, 39; Maj Steven A. Tuttle, air surveillance officer, 40; Capt Robert J. Long, senior weapons director, 27; Capt Bradley W. Paakola, copilot, 27; Capt Glenn J. Rogers, Jr., aircraft commander, 28; 1/Lt Carlos A. Arriago, weapons director, 25; MSgt Stephen C. O'Connell, instructor-trainer evaluator instructor advanced air surveillance technician, 32;

TSgt Mark A. Bramer, instructor flight engineer, 34; TSgt Mark C. Collins, instructor communications systems operator, 30; TSgt Bart L. Holmes, instructor flight engineer, 37; TSgt Ernest R. Rarrish, airborne area intelligence specialist, 381st Intelligence Squadron; TSgt Charles D. Sweet, Jr., instructor airborne radar technician, 33; TSgt Timothy B. Thomas, instructor computer display maintenance technician, evaluator, 33; TSgt Brian K. Van Leer, instructor advanced air surveillance technician, 34; SSgt Scott A. Bresson, instructor airborne radar technician, 32; SSgt Raymond O. Spencer, Jr., instructor air surveillance technician, 26; SrA Lawrence E. Defrancesco, instructor communications system operator, 24; SrA Joshua N. Weter, computer display maintenance technician, 21; Amn Jeshua C. Smith, air surveillance technician, 20; Amn Darien F. Watson, air surveillance technician, 20; Master Corporal Joseph Jean-Pierre Legault, Canadian Forces, communications technician, 35; and Sgt David L. Pitcher, Canadian Forces, battle director technician, 35. *Ibid.*)

General John Lorber, Commander, Pacific Air Forces, dedicated the Yukla 27 memorial near the eagle cages and 3rd Wing headquarters on 22 September 1996. The memorial, built with considerable self-help and local talent cost about \$160,000. (Hist, 3 WG, 1996, Chron)



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16-20 Sep 1996: The joint U.S., Canadian and Russian search and rescue exercise, SAREX 96, was held near Khabarovsk, Russian Far East. This was the first truly tri-national SAREX to transpire in Russia. This series of exercises allowed the three nations to foster cooperation and friendship among former adversaries. The HC-130 carrying General Gamble and the Alaskan Air National Guard contingent was the first foreign military aircraft to land at the Central Airfield since 1934. (Boyd, Study, 1996)



17 Sep 1999: Approximately 60 people and four C-130 aircraft from the 517 AS deployed to Darwin, Australia to support United Operations in East Timor. Three of the aircraft diverted Saturday from New Zealand, where they provided airlift support for President William Clinton's visit to the country. (Hist, 3 WG, 1999, p. 108)

24 Sep 1999: The Army and Air Force Exchange Service and the Defense Commissary Agency officially opened the new \$32 million, 330,000 square foot Joint Military Mall on Elmendorf AFB. (Frank, Hist, ALCOM, 1999, p. 46.)



20-24 Sep 2004: A Pacific Air Forces Site Activation Task Force (SATAF) visited Elmendorf AFB for the proposed C-17 bed down of eight primary authorized aircraft. The previous C-17 SATAF visit took place from 4-8 August 2003. The first aircraft tentatively scheduled for delivery was the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2007. (Frank, Hist, 11AF, 2004, p. 11.)