



# Remembering Our Heritage



## 3-9 September

**4 Sep 1901:** Canada completed its promised extension of its telegraph system from the northern extension of the Canadian Pacific Railroad to Dawson where the line connected with Eagle just across the boarder. For the first time, Alaska was connected with the rest of the world by telegraph. (Woodman, *Duty Station Northwest*, Vol. I, p. 219.)

**4 Sep 1922:** Lieutenant James Doolittle flew a 90th Squadron DeHavilland DH-4 from Pablo Beach, FL to San Diego, CA in 22 hours and thirty minutes with one stop enroute at Kelly Field (2,163 miles). He became the first pilot to fly across the county in one day. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross for this feat and the citation credited Doolittle with demonstrating "the possibility of moving air corps units to any portion of the United States in less than 24 hours." (*The Grim Reapers*, p. 3.)



**3 Sep 1940:** General Buckner in a letter of General DeWitt outlined his concept of defense of Alaska. The enemy would only pose a serious threat if the Navy lost control of the North Pacific. Alaska's terrain precluded a major land invasion. Garrisons needed to be established at different parts of Alaska. His concept differed in two respects from that formulated by the War Department. He gave greater emphasis to the use of airpower and the use of Alaska to launch offensive operations. He visualized Alaska as an air theater of operations and noted the need to build airbases in the Aleutians and connect Alaska to the rest of the United States with a series of staging bases. (Conn, Fairchild and Engelman, *The Western Hemisphere, Guarding the United States and Its Outposts*, pp. 240-241.)



**4 Sep 1940:** The paved runway at Ladd Field was declared operational and Maj Dale V. Gaffney made the first landing in the Douglas O-38 Owl. The runway had more concrete than all the streets and sidewalks in Alaska! (Hist, Alaska Div, Air Transport Command, pp. 36-38.)

**3 Sep 1941:** Colonel Frank M. Kennedy and Lt Col Harold L. Clark from General Arnold's staff submitted their report after visiting Alaska. The two found conditions that Major Davis operated under "deplorable." Colonel Davis did not have an adequate staff and he had no direct control over

ground units supporting air operations. They also recommended that Alaska be made a separate theater of operations. The visit resulted in a series of changes. Major Davis received additional staff personnel and the ground personnel were assigned directly under his control. Alaska, however, remained under the Western Defense Command. (Memo, Col Frank M. Kennedy and Lt. Col Harold L. Clark to Maj Gen H. Arnold, Ch of Staff, AAF, "Report on Alaska," 3 Sep 1941; Ferguson, AAF Study No. 4, p. 43.)

**9 Sep 1945:** Admiral Jack Fletcher, Commander, North Pacific Force, formally accepted the Japanese surrender of northern Japanese islands of Honshu and Hokkaido aboard the deck of the amphibious force command ship *Panamint* (AOC-13). He later stated that is was one of his proudest moments. The surrender occurred so quickly that two weeks passed before ground troops could occupy the northern islands. The *Panamint* returned to Adak on 20 September and then proceeded to Kodiak on 2 October. ("Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships." Hutchison, *World War II in the North Pacific*, p. 190.)



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**6 Sep 1950:** General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Air Force Chief of Staff, recommended to Lieutenant General Stratemeyer that the 3rd Bombardment Group be converted completely to night operations. During the Korean War, the 3rd Bomb Group He also suggested that the 731st Bombardment Squadron (Light-Night Attack) be attached to the group since it had been trained low-level night operations. (Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea*, p. 136)



**8 Sep 1952:** The 64th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Elmendorf AFB, deployed F-94Bs to Naknek (later renamed King Salmon) to perform air defense alert for the first time at that forward base. (Chart, Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1952, p. 120.)



**4 Sep 1953:** Airman 2nd Class Robert Festa, a gunner for the 13th Bomb Squadron during the Korean War, was released back to the U.S. Military after 13 months as a POW. His B-26, "Lucky Louise," tail number 43-22306, was shot down on 9 Aug 1952. The 13th Bomb Squadron was assigned to the 3rd Bomb Group during the Korean War. (Invader, March 1999, pp. 25)

**6 Sep 1953:** The first three F-89C Scorpions arrived at Elmendorf AFB and were assigned to the 65th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, replacing the F-94s. Thirteen more arrived by the end of the year as AAC converted from the F-94 to the F-89. (Hist., 10th Air Div, Jul-Dec 1953.)

**4 Sep 1955:** The Elmendorf AFB Hospital opened its doors for the first time. It was also referred to as the 5005th USAF Hospital. Construction on the \$12 million, 400-bed, seven story hospital had begun in 1953. The flexible design of the hospital allowed for 200 additional beds to be added. Approximately 30 beds were allocated to the Veterans Administration. The construction also included a helicopter landing pad. The modern concrete edifice replaced a temporary wooden, 417 bed hospital built during World War II off the Davis Highway near the Glen Highway. As with the old hospital, the new hospital serviced Army and Air Force personnel. (Hist, ALCOM, Jan 1952-Jun 1956, pp. 80-81; Chart, Hist, AAC, Jul-Dec 1955, p. 6.)



**9 Sep 1977:** The first F-5E "Aggressor" aircraft arrived at Clark AB and was assigned to the 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing. (3 TFW History, 1 Jul-31 Sep 77, p. 59)

**9 Sep 1985:** General Charles Gabriel, Air Force Chief of Staff, sent Chief of Staff Memo 10-85, *Command Arrangements for Alaska* to the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommending that the Unified Command Plan be changed to reflect the creation of a subordinate unified command in Alaska under the Pacific Command and the retention of AAC as a major Air Force command. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1985, p. 24.)



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**7 Sep 2001:** The 3rd Security Forces Squadron held a ribbon cutting ceremony for its new Military Working Dog kennel near the Joint Military Medical Center. (Hist, 3 WG, 2001, p. 70)

**5-7 Sep 1979:** Air Force Chief of Staff Lew Allen, Jr., and Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James M. McCoy and their wives visited Elmendorf AFB, Eielson AFB, Murphy Dome (F-2), Clear AFS and Shemya AFB. The Shemya AFB visit was believed to be the first for a Chief of Staff, USAF. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1979, p. 358.)

**8 Sep 1988:** Admiral Ronald Hays, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Command, informed General McInerney that he agreed with the concept of forming Alaskan as a sub-unified command under his command and agreed to retaining JTF-AK as a provisional command under JCS for disaster response. He also expressed a need to remove Senator Stevens' amendment to the FY 1989 Defense Appropriations Bill on not spending money on creating a sub-unified command in Alaska. Shortly afterward, General McInerney informed Gen. Larry D. Welch, Air Force Chief of Staff, and Gen. John Piotrowski, Commander-in-Chief, NORAD, of the agreement which called for PACOM to be responsible for planning the defense of Alaska. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1988, p. 31.)



**7 Sep 1991:** The first F-15E, 90-0233, arrived at Elmendorf AFB and was assigned to the 90th Tactical Fighter Squadron. The 21st Tactical Fighter Squadron transferred its beddown responsibility to the squadron. (Cloe, Hist, 11AF, 1991, p. 162.)

**5 Sep 1995:** Headquarters, US Air Force, approved the organizational change request for Headquarters, Eleventh Air Force, which reorganized the 611th Air Operations and 611th Air Support Groups and absorbed the Alaskan NORAD positions into them. It created a small headquarters consisting of the command section, safety and staff judge advocate. The 3rd Wing provided history, public affairs and protocol support to 11 AF. (Cloe, Hist, 11AF, 1995, p. 12.)



**6 Sep 2006:** The 3rd Wing was the recipient of the USAF 2005 Major General Clements McMullen Weapons System Maintenance Award, better known as the Daedalian Trophy. The Daedalian award recognized the AF wing with the best weapons maintenance and safety record each year. The 3rd Wing was the most heavily tasked unit in PACAF during 2005, yet the maintainers continued to lead the AF in a

number of areas. The wing maintained a 95 percent quality assurance rate in over 14,000 inspections, maintained the highest mission capable rate for the F-15C for the tenth year running, maintained the highest mission capable rate for the E-3B for the sixth year running, had the highest spare F-15 engine spare level in AF history, maintained a high level of training, and saved the AF millions of dollars through Elmendorf's AFREP program. Accepting the trophy on behalf of the 3rd Maintenance Group were Col Michael Arceneaux, 3 MXG Commander, SrA Trung Dinh, 3 AMXS/12 AMU, SrA Katie Miller, 3 CMS/MXMPJ, A1C Shane Patterson, 3 EMS/MXMGX, SSgt Dana Rosso, 703 AMXS/517 AMU, and SrA Christopher Williams, 3 MOS/MXOOA. (Miller, 3 WG History 2006, 2007.)