



16 Feb 1926: Carl Ben Eielson arrived in Fairbanks after completing his military service. He had been hired by the Australian Arctic explorer Sir George Hubert Wilkins as the advance man for the *Detroit Arctic Expedition* to make preliminary arrangements for propositioning supplies and fuel at Point Barrow for a flight across the Arctic Ocean from Point Barrow to Spitsbergen, a Norwegian island above the Arctic Circle in the Barents Sea. (Stevens, *Alaskan Aviation History*, pp. 279-280.)



18 Feb 1927: A 75-mile an hour gale force storm destroyed all but four aircraft in the 3rd Attack Group. At the time, the 3rd Attack Group had the O-1 and O-2 aircraft assigned. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), Activation to 31 December 1941, p. 14)



13 Feb 1934 – 1 Jun 1935: Civil airmail contracts were cancelled by the Postmaster General and President Roosevelt because of perceived fraud and collusion. The Army Air Corps took over the delivery of the mail. The 3rd Attack Group personnel were assigned to mail carrying duties for the central United States. A majority of the group was utilized for this detached service, based out of Chicago, IL. (Hist, Third Bombardment Group (Light), Activation to 31 December 1941, p. 18)

12 Feb 1935: Brigadier General William Mitchell, testifying before the House Military Affairs Committee in executive session on behalf of House Resolution 4130, spoke about the strategic importance of Alaska in the coming era of air power. He noted:

Japan is our dangerous enemy in the Pacific. They won't attack Panama. They will come right here to Alaska. Alaska is the most central place in the world for aircraft, and that is true either of Europe, Asia, or North America. I believe in the future he who holds Alaska will hold the world, and I think it is the most important strategic place in the world. (Isaac Don Levine, "Mitchell, Pioneer of Air Power," Duell, Sloan and Pearce, New York, 1943, p. 396.)

12 Feb 1940: The War Department issued a news release, stating that Secretary of War Harry H. Woodring had announced that the Army was planning to build two airfields in Alaska, one near Fairbanks and the other near Anchorage. It also stated that \$4,000,000 at been appropriated in the Fiscal Year 1940 (July 1939-June 1940) budgeted for the airfield near Fairbanks, which would be used primarily for cold weather testing. The news release went on further to say the airfield had been named after Capt. Arthur K. Ladd and provided a short biography. (News Release, War Department, "Location of New Air Corps Stations in Territory of Alaska," 10 Feb 1940.)

15 Feb 1941: The 54th Fighter Squadron at Paine Field, WA, received its first P-38Es. The squadron had been flying cast off P-36s, P-40s and P-43s from other squadrons. The 54th Fighter Squadron began arriving in Alaska in May 1941. (Capt Leo Nocenti, Hist, 54th Fighter Squadron, 15 Jan 1941-31 Dec 1943, pp. 7-8.)







12 Feb 1942: General Buckner presided over the dedication of the Kaskim Service Club on Elmendorf Field. Major Marvin "Muctuk" Marston, the Special Services Officer, had conceived the club as a log cabin type building and had recruited volunteers to build it. The men cut trees near Palmer into 20-foot logs. Construction was done during the winter months. The Kaskim, an Eskimo word for welcome, featured a large stone fireplace and a well-appointed snack bar operated by the Post Exchange. The dedication featured a barbeque with moose and caribou. (Note: Today this building is home to the Military & Family Readiness Center) (1/Lt John B. Crawford, Hist, Personnel Services Section, Eleventh Air Force, 1 Jul 1941-1 May 1945, p. 4.)



14 Feb 1942: General Buckner wrote to General DeWitt, 4th Army Commander, to express his frustration at the low number of fighters and bombers assigned to Alaska. At the time there were 17 operational fighters and 6 medium bombers on Elmendorf Field and another operation fighter and three medium bombers on Kodiak. He noted: "I fear the War Department is obsessed with an unfortunate degree of optimism and dismisses Alaska with the thought that if anything happens, we will rush a lot of planes up there and take care of the situation. The point which is not taken into consideration is that planes cannot be rushed to Alaska and if anything happens it will be too late to do much about it." General DeWitt added his urgent appeal for more aircraft. (Ransohoff, Hist, 11AF, pp. 108-109.)

12 Feb 1943: The Army Air Forces Naming Board submitted names for airfields in Alaska to the Commanding General, U.S. Army who forwarded with approval to General DeWitt. The following airfields were named in honor of those who gave their lives:

Location	Name	Individual
Otter Point,	Cape Army Air Field	Lt. John J. Cape, 11th Fighter Squadron, KIA,
Umnak Island	Cape Airily All Tield	4 June 1942
Cold Bay	Thornbrough Army Air Field	Capt. George W. Thornbrough, 73rd Bombardment
		Squadron, KIA, 4 June 1942
Bethel	Todd Army Air Field	Capt. Jack F. Todd, 38th Bombardment Squadron,
		11 June 1942
Nome	Marks Army Air Field	Maj. Jack L. Marks, 36th Bombardment Squadron,
		KIA, 17 July
McGrath	Walseth Army Air Field	Maj. Marvin E. Walseth, 36th Bombardment
		Squadron, KIA, 18 July 1942
Kodiak	Miller Army Air Field	Maj. Wilbur G. Miller, 42nd Fighter Squadron, KIA,
		28 Sep 1942
Source: Woodman, <i>Duty Station Northwest</i> , Vol. II, p. 246.		



16 Feb 1943: Lt Kenneth Saxhaug, 18th Fighter Squadron, made the first landing on the newly constructed landing strip on Amchitka Island in his P-40K during the morning a month and three days after the first troops had landed. Seven more P-40 pilots from the 18th Fighter Squadron followed him. Four P-38s from the 54th Fighter Squadron landed and a C-47 with personnel and supplies landed. (Ransohoff, Hist, 11AF, p. 249; Craven and Cate, *The Pacific, Guadalcanal to Saipan*, p. 376;





13-23 Feb 1950: The Alaskan Command conducted joint exercise Sweetbriar that involved U.S. and Canadian soldiers and airmen in maneuvers under severe Arctic conditions along the Yukon-Alaska borders. The three major objectives included developing the strategic, tactical and logistics needed to repel an enemy force from Alaska; achieving administrative and tactical coordination between the Army and Air Force on an international level; and testing equipment and supplies under cold weather conditions. It was the first exercise in Alaska to involve the deployments of troops from the States and Canada. (Hist., ACLOM, Jan 1949-Dec 1951, pp. 233-234.)

12 Feb 1951: Maj Gen William D. Old, AAC Commander, updated Gen Hoyt Vandenberg, USAF Chief of Staff, in a letter on conditions in Alaska. He began by stating: "My estimate of our present capabilities is rather low." The interim or Lashup radar system consisted of old, worn out radars that could not provide adequate early warning or control the limited fighter force that consisted of three squadrons of F-80s and one of F-94. The latter provided the only all weather capability. The construction of the permanent radar system was beset with labor problems, which he noted: "The poor quality of labor gives us an inadequate return for exceptionally high pay." Construction costs were turning out to be higher than anticipated and transportation delays were causing



problems. General Old stated that AAC was investigating two more radar stations to cover gaps in the interior. (Ltr, Maj Gen William D. Old, Commander, AAC to Gen Hoyt Vandenberg, Chief of Staff, USAF, 12 Feb 1951.)



15 Feb 1957: The Alaska District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers awarded a \$7,246,724 contract to the Manson-Osberg Company to build the DEW Line stations at Cold Bay on the southern end of the Alaska Peninsula and Cape Sarichef about 100 miles to the west on Unimak Island. Several weeks later, the Corps awarded a \$3,548,190 contract to Chris Berg, Inc. to build the Aleutian DEW Line (Project Stretch Out) station at Port Heiden and another contract for \$4,010,000 to S.S. Mullen Company to build the Port Moller station. Both were located on the Alaska Peninsula. The final two contracts were also awarded

independently. The joint venture firm Patti-MacDonald Construction Company of St. Louis, MO, and the Morrison-Knudson Company of Boise, ID, received a \$4,915,052 to build the Driftwood Bay station on Unalaska Island and the Nikolski contract for \$4,643,645 went to the Baker and Ford Company of Bellingham, WA. (Miller, Hist, AAC, Jan-Jun 1957, pp. 100-101.)

16 Mar 1959: Headquarters, AAC issued a command wide call for volunteers to man a new drifting ice island as part of Project Ice Skate. The Command wanted nine military personnel under the command of Capt James F. Smith who would support a scientific contingent which would vary between four to eight persons. A tour length of six months was established and the personnel selected had to meet emotional, mental and physical standards. The Command began searching for a suitable ice island that week. (Miller, Hist, AAC, Jul 1958-Jun 1959, pp. 248-249.)





16 Feb 1968 (Fri): A Soviet Union TU-95 Bear flights penetrated the Alaskan DEW Intercept Zone (DEWIZ) near the Aleutians. Another penetration occurred in the same area on 25 April and a third on 11 June. In response, AAC unsuccessfully sought SAC to provide KC-135 refueling support to the F-106s. (Weidman, Hist, AAC, Jul 1968-Jun 1969, p. 137.)

13 Feb 1974: General George S. Brown, Air Force Chief of Staff, inquired if AAC was "concerned about possible loss of career employees to jobs created by the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline" scheduled to begin in the summer. He wrote again on 13 June after hearing reports of concern from commanders. Colonel Louis S. Mauro, responded that it had not been a serious problem. The civilian vacancy fill rate



had actually improved. Of the 59 vacancies that occurred at Eielson AFB, 24 where known to have been caused by pipeline construction and of the 81 at Elmendorf AFB, five were attributed to the pipeline. (Hist, AAC, Jul 1972-Jun 1974, pp. 58-59.)

15 Feb 1978: A shape charge blew a hole in section of the Trans Alaska Pipeline that resulted in oil spill of 330,000 gallons and the shut down of the pipeline for 24 hours. While the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company stepped up security, General Boswell asked Air Staff if military forces could be used to provide security. Lieutenant General Andrew B. Anderson, Deputy Chief of Staff, Plans, Headquarters, USAF, replied on 8 March. While he recognized the strategic value of the pipeline, which transported 1.2 millions barrels of oil daily, the laws were clear. Alyeska would have to request the protection the Transportation and Energy agencies, which in return would have to ask for Department of Defense support on a reimbursable basis. The 172nd Infantry Brigade (Alaska) tried a similar approach. The U.S. Army Forces command relented to a point, where the aircrews on routine flights could report an oil spill to state and other appropriate authorities. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1987, p. 250.)

15 Feb 1979: The Alaskan Forces Satellite TV network became operational, providing live TV services to Shemya AFB, Galena, King Salmon and Adak Naval Station via satellite. It cost \$545,000 to set up the system of which the Navy paid \$140,650. The cost was offset by the elimination of 21 Air Force positions. The 5049th Broadcasting Squadron looked into the possibility of providing similar services to the other remote states, but the idea was rejected due to the high costs and the fact that there were non manpower positions that could be eliminated. (Cloe, Hist, AAC, 1979, p. 349.)



16 Feb 2002: The 3rd Wing deployed six F-15Cs from the 19th Fighter Squadron and six F-15Es from the 90th Fighter Squadron along with more than 400 personnel to Nellis AFB, NV to participate in Red Flag from 19 Feb-1 March. (1/Lt. Johnny Rea, "3rd Wing Joins International Mock War," *Alaska Military Weekly*, 21 Feb 2002)

16 Feb 2002: President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush stopped at Elmendorf AFB while enroute on Asia for state visits in Japan, Korea and China. The President spoke to a crowd of approximately 5,000 military personnel in Hangar One followed

by an appearance at a Republican fundraiser at the Alaska Native Heritage Center. He spoke of his support of the military and the opening of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil exploration to a cheering crowd. (SrA Connie L. Bias, "5,000 People Pack hangar to Hear President," *Sourdough Sentinel*, 22 Feb 2002)





13 Feb 2003: Colonel Daniel J. Bonny, Alaskan Command Chief of Staff, announced the activation of Joint Task Force-Alaska (JTF-AK) to support the US Northern Command homeland security mission. He also announced that the command center, located in the J3 area, would assume the responsibilities of the JTF-AK Joint Operations Center (JOC), and that it would become the focal point for JTF-AK operations. It would operate 0730 to 1630 Monday through Friday with the capability to expand to 24-hour operations, seven days a week. The Elmendorf AFB Command would be the primary contact for JTF-AK matters after duty hours. (E-Mail, ALCOM J02 to all ALCOM personnel, "JTF-AK Battle staff Directive," 13 Feb 2003.)



14-28 Feb 2003: Around 200 personnel from the 3rd Wing participated in Cope Tiger 03 at Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand. The deployment included 10 F-15Cs from the 12th Fighter Squadron and an E-3B from the 962nd Air Control and Air Warning Squadron. They joined the other 400 personnel from the Air Force, U.S. Marines and the 600 servicemen the Republic of Singapore and Thailand. The annual joint/combined air-to-air and air-to-ground and large force employment training exercise provided a means for sharpening the three nations war fighting skills, improving national relations and demonstrating the commitment of the U.S. to regional stability. (Maj Valerie Trefts, Cope Tiger Public Affairs, News Release, "Multi-Lateral Training Exercise Under Way in Thailand," 21 Feb 2003.)

14 Feb 2005: Brig Gen Michael Snodgrass, 3rd Wing Commander, cut the ribbon during the grand opening of the Alaska USA Federal Credit Union building. The new credit union was located near the Base Commissary and Base Exchange. (Miller, *3 WG Hist 2005*, 2006.)



16 Feb 2005: The 90th Fighter Squadron deployed two F-15Es and six personnel to India for a Pacific Command (PACOM) directed air show. The Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) Vice Commander commented that the 90th Fighter Squadron's F-15Es were the 'best looking' ones he had seen in his career. (Miller, *3 WG Hist 2005*, 2006.)