

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON JBER
(U.S. Air Force Buildings)
Anchorage
Anchorage
Alaska

HABS AK-240
HABS AK-240

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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AAC	Alaskan Air Command
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
AFB	Air Force Base
AFH	Air Force Handbook
AFI	Air Force Instruction
AHRS	Alaska Heritage Resource Survey
AIA	Association of Industrial Archaeologists
AICP	American Institute of Certified Planners
ALCOM	AAC Headquarters and the Unified Alaska Command
AP	accredited professional
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CRM	Cultural Resource Manager
EA	Environmental Assessment
HABS	Historic American Buildings Survey
Jacobs	Jacobs Engineering Group Inc.
JBER	Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NORAD	North American Aerospace Defense Command
NPS	National Park Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
SABER	Simplified Acquisition of Base Engineering Requirements
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
USAF	U.S. Air Force
VCT	vinyl composite tile
WWII	World War II

I. INTRODUCTION

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Long-term plans for Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska (Figure 1-1) call for significant re-configuration that will require demolition of some aging buildings. These plans are based on the June 10, 2010 *Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, Disposing of Unneeded Federal Real Estate*, which is a federal initiative that intends to develop sustainable installations as detailed in the *Environmental Assessment for Demolition of Building 5303 and 5312*¹. Since JBER is undergoing major re-configuration to meet current military needs, and many of these buildings are in need of repair and updating, it is likely that adaptive re-use will not be possible for many of them.

The U.S. Air Force (USAF) has been directed to reduce their physical footprint and operating costs enterprise-wide. As such, USAF has determined the need to demolish Buildings 5303 (BE Storage CV Facility) and 5312 (Environmental Flight and Simplified Acquisition of Base Engineering Requirements [SABER]) on JBER-Elmendorf (Figure 1-2). Demolition of both buildings was discussed in an Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared by Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. (Jacobs)². Both buildings are underutilized and in poor condition; demolition would alleviate the cost of maintenance and the expense of heating, especially during premium cost months (mid-October to mid-April) when area temperatures are at their coolest. Buildings 5303 and 5312 have been determined to be beyond their safely and environmentally efficient operational design life and do not meet the requirements set forth in Air Force Instruction (AFI) 32-1024 *Standard Facility Requirements*³ or Air Force Handbook (AFH) 32-1084 *Facility Requirements*⁴. Therefore, the buildings are designated for demolition.

This Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) Report is intended to assist USAF in fulfilling the stipulations of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)⁵ to the best possible standard, as determined by the Cultural Resources Manager (CRM) and the Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). This report fulfills the written building history requirement and the research and compilation requirement. Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. (Jacobs) has prepared this report under contract number W911KB-06-D-0006, Task Order 25, with the 673d Civil Engineer Squadron. The remaining deliverables associated with the Task Order 25 project will be submitted under separate cover.

On 30 June 2000, the Keeper of the National Register determined that Buildings 5303 and 5312 are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A for association with significant events. The buildings were determined as eligible for listing on the NRHP as contributing resources to the Alaska Air Depot Historic District. The

¹ USAF, "Environmental Assessment for Demolition of Buildings 5303 and 5312," In progress – March 2013, 673d Civil Engineer Squadron.

² USAF, "Environmental Assessment for Demolition of Buildings 5303 and 5312," In progress – March 2013, 673d Civil Engineer Squadron.

³ USAF, "Standard Facility Requirements," 14 July 2011, Air Force Instruction 32-1024.

⁴ USAF, "Facility Requirements," 1996, *Air Force Handbook 32-1084*.

⁵ PACAF (Department of the Air Force. Pacific Air Forces Headquarters, 673D Air Base Wing). 2013 (17 January). "U.S. Air Force/Demolition of Buildings 5303 (ANC-00932) and 5312 (ANC-00933)." Memorandum of Agreement 339. Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska.

buildings have not been associated with any persons of significance or additional historical periods or events.

The recommended actions to mitigate the demolition of the buildings are included in the MOA⁶, and were developed in consultation between USAF and the Alaska SHPO. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) declined their invitation to participate in the consultation on October 10, 2012. The following MOA stipulations outlined in Section II, MITIGATION, are satisfied under this cover:

A. ARCHITECTURAL RECORDATION

The USAF shall ensure that Buildings 5303 and 5312 are architecturally recorded to HABS Level II standards prior to implementing their demolition or disposal.

B. PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDATION

Each building shall be photographically documented in accordance with NRHP standards:

- Photographs shall consist of, at a minimum, each elevation, setting, and exterior detailing.
- Photographs shall show the building in its immediate setting, major elevations, and noteworthy exterior details.
- A photograph log shall provide a description of the subject, persons, and other features photographed; the photographer's name and date the photographs were taken; the location of the photographer, and the direction in which the photograph was taken.

C. DRAWINGS

Drawings meeting HABS Level II standards shall be developed for this building. Drawings will consist of floor plans, building elevations of the two most public elevations, and a cross section.

D. AREA DESCRIPTION

JBER is located adjacent to Anchorage (Alaska's largest city), and approximately 40 to 60 miles south of Palmer and Wasilla, which are the primary communities of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. In 2005, the 2005 Defense Base Re-Alignment and Closure Commission re-directed installation management and structure from the USAF and U.S. Army. A new joint base unit was created that encompasses the former Elmendorf Air Force Base (AFB) and Fort Richardson (U.S. Army).

JBER is located in the Anchorage, Alaska lowland between the Chugach Mountains to the east, the Alaska Range to the north, Cook Inlet and the Alaska Range to the west, and

⁶ PACAF (Department of the Air Force, Pacific Air Forces Headquarters, 673D Air Base Wing). 2013 (17 January). "U.S. Air Force/Demolition of Buildings 5303 (ANC-00932) and 5312 (ANC-00933)." Memorandum of Agreement 339. Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska.

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Turnagain Arm and the Kenai Mountains to the south. The Anchorage lowland enjoys the moderating effect of Cook Inlet and is protected from the Gulf of Alaska storms and frigid interior cold air masses by the surrounding mountains⁷. Although temperatures are generally considered mild compared to the interior portion of the state, subfreezing temperatures in the Anchorage and JBER area generally last from mid-October to mid-April with low average temperatures ranging from 5 to 29 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) with the lowest monthly average occurring in January at approximately 12 °F. High-pressure weather systems during this subfreezing period may lead to successive days with temperatures below minus 35 °F.

The topography of JBER has been primarily shaped by Quaternary glaciation, during which ice flowed out of all the surrounding mountain ranges and major valleys and coalesced to form a massive glacier that flowed down Cook Inlet onto the Continental Shelf^{8,9}. At the end of glaciation, the ice front stagnated for a few thousand years to form the Elmendorf Moraine. The glacier deposited large amounts of sand and gravel as well as an outwash fan and formed other glacial features such as kettle lakes and kames. By 10,000 years ago, the modern landforms had been created, and vegetation had begun to colonize the area. By 8,000 years ago, vegetation including spruce, birch, and alder boreal forest reached maturity to present levels¹⁰.

Native peoples have inhabited the area over the past several thousand years. In 1741, the Western World first became aware of Alaska when the Russian explorer, Vitus Bering, visited Alaska, opening the area to Russian fur hunters, trappers, and traders. The first European exploration of the area around Cook Inlet occurred in the 1778 when the English explorer Captain James Cook sailed into Cook Inlet while searching for the Northwest Passage. This event was the first recorded European contact by local native peoples, even though Russian fur traders had no doubt made earlier contact¹¹.

Russian influence prevailed over Alaska throughout the 18th century and in early part of the 19th century until Russian interest began to wane prior to the American Civil War. In 1867 Alaska was purchased from Russia by the United States, and gold was discovered in the Yukon in 1896. An immediate and profound gold rush occurred in which thousands of gold seekers moved into the area. Hundreds of new gold mining camps materialized across Alaska within months, the gold rush opened the area to increased population growth and rapid development.

The U.S. granted territorial status to Alaska on August 25, 1912, and in 1914 when the Federal government built a railroad along the Susitna River from a coastal railhead at Ship Creek, the temporary construction camp on the Knik Arm became known as Anchorage. It quickly became a coal shipping port and a small naval station was ultimately established. Railroad commerce continued to make Anchorage an important commercial hub in southern

⁷ P.M. Daugherty and B.M. Saleeby, "Elmendorf Air Force Base Homestead Study," 1998, National Park Service, Anchorage, Alaska.

⁸ T.D. Hamilton and R.M. Thorson, *The Cordilleran Ice Sheet in Alaska in the Late Pleistocene Late-Quaternary Environments of the United States*, ed. S. C. Porter S. C. Porter, editor (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

⁹ T. Dille, "The Geoarchaeological Potential of Elmendorf Air Force Base," 1996, Unpublished report on file at JBER-Elmendorf.

¹⁰ T. Dille, "The Geoarchaeological Potential of Elmendorf Air Force Base," 1996, Unpublished report on file at JBER-Elmendorf.

¹¹ USAF, *Elmendorf Air Force Base History*, <http://www.jber.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=5280> (November 2012).

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Alaska, and homesteading increased rapidly. In 1920 the city was incorporated, and the first airstrip, Merrill Field, became operational in 1930.

During the Great Depression Federal public works projects resulted in the construction of many necessary public facilities, including schools, bridges, harbors, and water systems. In 1940 American troops arrived in Anchorage as tensions with the Japanese Empire increased. United States' entry into World War II (WWII) was ignited by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Fort Richardson and Elmendorf Field were established as major military centers for the war effort in the Northern Pacific, and played an increasingly significant role in the defense of the Alaska Peninsular from Japanese invasion. The evolving national defense roles of both military establishments became a significant factor in the growth and development of the Anchorage metropolitan area¹².

Military planners conceived the Alaska Air Depot as a necessary logistical organization in a war theater where maintaining air superiority over the enemy was critical. Prior to the construction and operation of the Alaska Air Depot, planes and supplies were required to be ferried to the Alaska Region via Air Corps facilities located in distant Sacramento, California.

Elmendorf AFB inherited an increasing role in the defense of North America as the uncertain wartime relations between the United States and the Soviet Union deteriorated into the Cold War. Close proximity of Elmendorf and Alaska to the Soviet Union across the Arctic Circle rendered the USAF presence at Elmendorf AFB particularly important to national defense strategy as the Cold War deepened. Because of its new northern defense role, the base became known as "Top Cover for North America."

In 1957, Alaska's air defense came under the control of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), a combined strategic defense organization of Canada and the United States. NORAD's role was coordinate aerospace warning, air sovereignty, and defense for the two countries to counter prospective Cold War aggression on the part of the Soviet Union.

E. PROJECT METHOD

The primary objective of the proposed action for demolition of Buildings 5303 and 5312 is to comply with legal and regulatory mandates, especially Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 2000 and Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 36, Section 800 (2004). Specifically, the 2013 demolition mitigation seeks to fulfill the stipulations of the 21 March 2012 MOA between USAF and the Alaska SHPO¹³. The MOA specifies mitigation steps agreed upon by all parties to be completed by USAF for the demolition of Buildings 5303 and 5312 in compliance with Section 106 and CFR 800.

¹² . L. Cook et al, *Elmendorf Air Force Base, Volume I: Historic Context of World War II Buildings and Structures*. (Washington, D.C: National Park Service, 1999).

¹³ PACAF (Department of the Air Force. Pacific Air Forces Headquarters, 673D Air Base Wing). 2013 (17 January). "U.S. Air Force/Demolition of Buildings 5303 (ANC-00932) and 5312 (ANC-00933)." Memorandum of Agreement 339. Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska.

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The primary component of the 2013 demolition mitigation involves historical records research. Available sources of information pertaining to the two buildings were examined at the following offices on JBER, listed with the corresponding results:

- History Office – historical building photos and historical aerial photos of the Base
- Drafting and Engineering – building engineering drawings and plans for modifications
- Real Estate Office – real property records for buildings

Research was also conducted at the State Office of History and Archaeology, which provided earlier versions of Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRS) cards for the two buildings as well as memoranda chronicling eligibility determinations.

Once research was completed, applicable document deliverables were drafted by Jacobs under the supervision of Casey Martin, Historic Architect (AIA, AICP, LEED AP; see attached resume under Qualifications).

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II. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Numerous reports feature the prehistoric and protohistoric context of the upper Cook Inlet and the JBER-Elmendorf area¹⁴. The historic homestead era and subsequent military development in the area have been the sole focus of particular publications^{15,16,17}. The two buildings in questions are not affiliated with prehistoric, protohistoric, or homestead eras, and therefore, a complete reiteration of existing prehistoric and historic background contexts is unwarranted. This section presents a synopsis of key themes and timeframes of pertinent military history at the former Elmendorf AFB.

A. MILITARY BASE DEVELOPMENT, 1930s TO COLD WAR

Volumes of historical studies have covered the development of military bases in Alaska, including the construction and growth of both the former Elmendorf AFB and the adjacent former Fort Richardson, and the social, economic, and political role of the military in Alaska during WWII and the Cold War. The historic context developed by the National Park Service (NPS)^{18,19} provides detailed histories specific to the former Elmendorf AFB.

From its beginning as a territory, Alaska has been recognized as an important element of the U.S. defense strategy in the Pacific. However, because the territory was so sparsely populated and poorly accessible (much of it was still stark wilderness) it brought with it inherent new issues regarding how this newly-acquired American asset could be defended and protected. The purchase of the territory in 1867 was as much motivated by the desire to establish an outpost for the defense of the Continental United States as it was a result of a national policy of “manifest destiny” and the desire to control a region of vast untapped resources²⁰.

Immigrants continued to be drawn to Anchorage’s present location in the early 20th century. Anchorage and vicinity was an active community that served to house railroad workers and served as a supply center for fishermen, miners, and trappers²¹. In 1934, Alaska’s strategic importance was strongly advocated by Alaska’s Congressional delegate, Anthony J. Diamond.

¹⁴ J.A. Fall, N.Y. Davis, and the Dena’ina Team, “An Overview of Athabascan Uses of Sites on and Near Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska,” U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska District, Anchorage, Alaska, 2003.

¹⁵ P.M. Daugherty and B.M. Saleeby, “Elmendorf Air Force Base Homestead Study,” 1998, National Park Service, Anchorage, Alaska.

¹⁶ L. Cook et al, *Elmendorf Air Force Base, Volume I: Historic Context of World War II Buildings and Structures*. (Washington, D.C: National Park Service, 1999).

¹⁷ R.D. Shaw, “Historic Properties and Paleontological Resources Survey for the Realignment of the Alaska Railroad Corporation Tracks Across Elmendorf Air Force Base and Fort Richardson, Alaska,” Alaska Railroad Corporation, 2000.

¹⁸ L. Cook et al, *Elmendorf Air Force Base, Volume I: Historic Context of World War II Buildings and Structures*. (Washington, D.C: National Park Service, 1999).

¹⁹ R.D. Shaw, “Historic Properties and Paleontological Resources Survey for the Realignment of the Alaska Railroad Corporation Tracks Across Elmendorf Air Force Base and Fort Richardson, Alaska,” Alaska Railroad Corporation, 2000.

²⁰ J.M. Neilson, *Armed Forces on a Northern Frontier: The Military in Alaska’s History, 1867-1987*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988).

²¹ L. Cook et al, *Elmendorf Air Force Base, Volume I: Historic Context of World War II Buildings and Structures*. (Washington, D.C: National Park Service, 1999).

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Congress agreed, and an initial request for Federal funds was approved to construct new military installations in Alaska²².

As international conflict grew in Europe and the Pacific during the mid- to late- 1930s, the United States remained officially neutral. Alaska's proximity to Japan and its relatively small military presence (the largest base, Chilkoot Barracks, had less than 300 men) made it a national vulnerability. On April 22, 1939, in response to growing military and Congressional security concerns, 43,490 acres of land for Elmendorf Field and Fort Richardson was withdrawn from the public domain by an Executive Order issued by President Franklin Roosevelt. A year later, on May 21, 1940, Congress appropriated \$12 million for construction of the airfield at Anchorage²³.

Construction of an Army base at Fort Richardson began on June 8, 1940, and Elmendorf Field was included as one of the Fort's newly planned facilities. It was named after Captain Hugh M. Elmendorf who was killed in 1933 while flight-testing an experimental fighter near Wright Field, Ohio. The Army intended the Field to be a major and permanent Army Air Corps airfield.

The first Air Corps personnel arrived at Elmendorf on August 12, 1940 led by Major Everett S. Davis, and the 18th Pursuit Squadron of P-36 fighter planes arrived in February 1941. Shortly afterward, the 23rd Air Base Group arrived to provide base operational support. The airfield was assigned to the commander of the Air Force Alaska Defense Command, who commanded all units, personnel, and installations in the Territory of Alaska, including the remote facilities in the Aleutian Islands and extending far out into the Northern Pacific.

The Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands on December 7, 1941, led the U.S. to declare war on Japan. The immediate affect was that Fort Richardson and Elmendorf became the centerpiece of Army and Navy planning for military buildup in the Alaska Territory in anticipation of the need for rapidly strengthening the U.S. defensive posture. Alaska extended far out into the North Pacific, and it was poorly defended and vulnerable to attack. The need to strengthen the strategic defense of American interests in the Northern Pacific rim was a major national defense priority. In February 1941, two months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Fort Richardson became the headquarters of the Alaska Defense Forces. Additional military units were directed to Fort Richardson and Elmendorf. The Eleventh Air Force was formed at Elmendorf on January 15, 1942, which consolidated the disparate and scattered air units under one central command structure. The Eleventh Air Force consisted of 10 B-17 Flying Fortress heavy bombers and 34 Bolo Medium bombers flying from Elmendorf Airfield, and 95 P-40 Warhawk fighters divided between Fort Randall at Cold Bay and Fort Glenn Army Air Forces on Umnak.

As part of the initial Japanese strategy toward the United States that began with Pearl Harbor and quickly led to the Battle of Midway, a northern Japanese naval and army invasion task force attacked the Aleutian Islands. Its purpose was to create a diversion from the main Japanese Naval attack at Midway, but the maneuver was also intended to capture areas in the Aleutian Islands to prevent American air attacks on the Japanese homeland. Kiska and Attu Islands were quickly captured and occupied, and carrier-based air attacks were launched on Dutch Harbor in

²² J.M. Neilson, *Armed Forces on a Northern Frontier: The Military in Alaska's History, 1867-1987*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988).

²³ R.W. Fagen, "History of Fort Richardson (Original Post)," Unpublished Manuscript, 1944, JBER-Elmendorf History Office.

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June 1942. Alaska became a critical focal point for defense of the West Coast and the Northern Pacific.

Driving the Japanese from Kiska and Attu became the primary objective of the Aleutians Campaign during which Elmendorf Field played a vital role as the main air logistics center and staging area for the Eleventh Air Force. The airfield played a vital role as a major air logistics center and staging area during the Aleutian Campaign and in subsequent air operations against the Japanese-controlled Kuril Islands. The Kuril Islands are an archipelago of 56 islands stretching from Hokkaido, Japan to Kamchatka, Russia (former Soviet Union) that were regarded as a potential avenue for invasion as the Pacific war moved closer to the islands of Japan.

Military planners conceived the Alaska Air Depot as a necessary logistical organization in a vast war theater where maintaining air superiority over the enemy was critical. Prior to the construction and operation of the Alaska Air Depot, planes and supplies were required to be ferried to the Alaska Region via Air Corps facilities located in distant Sacramento, California.

The Alaska Air Depot at Elmendorf and construction was expedited to completion in 1943. The building and taxiway arrangement reflected the integrated supply, testing, and maintenance mission requirements for WWII air operations in the Alaska and Northern Pacific Region. It represented a commitment to providing an accessible, permanent, and centrally located military aircraft servicing facility. The Alaska Air Depot's support facilities provided a vital logistics center for the Aleutian Campaign including a range of support functions such as fuel, supplies, ordnance, parts, and equipment provisions, and also training for the myriad of fighter, bomber, and other air units actively engaged in attacking Japanese military installations and elements of Japan's northern Pacific fleet.

After Kiska and Attu Islands were re-captured from the Japanese and additional American bases were established in the Aleutians, Elmendorf Field continued its role as the main logistic center by supporting the Eleventh Air Force bombers who were flying strike and reconnaissance missions against Japanese military installations in the northern Kuril Islands. Meanwhile, the military buildup at Fort Richardson and Elmendorf Field provided the impetus for Anchorage's growth into an urban center.

After WWII, the USAF was formally established in 1947 and efforts were initiated to re-assign personnel and divide operations into distinct facilities. Elmendorf Army Air Base became Elmendorf AFB on March 26, 1948. USAF assumed control of the original Fort Richardson and renamed it Elmendorf AFB. All Army operations and personnel were moved to an adjoining 33,000-acre Military Reservation that continued to operate under its historic name, Fort Richardson²⁴.

Elmendorf AFB inherited an increasing role in the defense of North America as the uncertain wartime relations between the United States and the Soviet Union deteriorated into the Cold War. Close proximity of Elmendorf and Alaska to the Soviet Union across the Arctic Circle rendered the Air Force presence at Elmendorf particularly important to national defense strategy

²⁴ USAF, *Elmendorf Air Force Base History*, <http://www.iber.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=5280> (November 2012).

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as the Cold War deepened. Because of its new northern defense role, the base became known as "Top Cover for North America."

The Eleventh Air Force was re-designated as the Alaskan Air Command (AAC) on December 18, 1945 and was assigned responsibility for Air Force installations and property as the Army moved to the new Fort Richardson Military Reservation. The Air Command ultimately became a unified command operating under the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This leadership change was an attempt to overcome the lack of unified military service leadership and coordination that had frequently hampered WWII operations focused on driving the Japanese from the western Aleutian Islands of Attu and Kiska²⁵. AAC Headquarters and the Unified Alaska Command (ALCOM) Headquarters were established at Elmendorf AFB completing the centralization of command and control of Alaskan defenses. ALCOM's role was to maintain defense against the Soviet Union by maintaining constant radar surveillance and by intercepting Russian aircraft and missiles coming across the Bering Sea. By July 1948, the AAC Combat Operations Center assumed full responsibility for maintenance and utilities functions at all USAF installations in the Alaskan theater. By the outset of the Korean War, the Center began 24-hour operations²⁶.

As fighter aircraft technology evolved after WWII, the number and capability of the aircraft equipment and the number of personnel required to maintain and operate them over time, evolved as well. In 1947, the 57th Fighter Group moved two squadrons from the Aleutian bases to Elmendorf AFB and in 1948 WWII vintage F-51 Mustangs were replaced with F-80C Shooting Star jet aircraft and F-94 "Starfire" jets. In 1953 and 1954, the squadron equipment was again upgraded, this time to F-89 Scorpions. Upgrades occurred again 1957 and 1960 with evolutionary versions of the F-102 Delta Daggers.

With the introduction of the F-4E Phantom II in the 1970's the range and speed of interceptors dramatically increased, while the overall number of aircraft required for the Elmendorf mission was reduced. The F-15 Eagle fighter began operations in Alaska in 1982; it proved to be the most effective inceptor used during the Cold War. The year 1957 was the high water mark for interceptor aircraft at Elmendorf, when nearly 200 planes assigned to the six interceptor squadrons then stationed at the base.

In 1957, Alaska's air defense came under the control of NORAD, a combined organization of Canada and the United States that coordinates aerospace warning, air sovereignty, and defense for the two countries. In 1958 Alaska became a separate NORAD Division headquartered at Elmendorf AFB. The Elmendorf command centers were fed information from a complex system of aircraft control and warning radars and ultimately from the White Alice Communications System (a system of long-range radio repeaters that bounced radio signals off the troposphere). The White Alice system link was completed in 1956 and the initial link was fully operational by 1958²⁷. Elmendorf began supporting the 59th Troop Carrier Squadron (Heavy) in 1949 with its C-124 and later C-123 transports.

As the mission, equipment, and aircraft technology evolved after WWII, so did the Elmendorf base configuration. Aircraft maintenance capability was greatly expanded during the first years

²⁵ USAF, *Elmendorf Air Force Base History*, <http://www.jber.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=5280> (November 2012).

²⁶ USAF, *Elmendorf Air Force Base History*, <http://www.jber.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=5280> (November 2012).

²⁷ USAF, *Elmendorf Air Force Base History*, <http://www.jber.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=5280> (November 2012).

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of the 1950s. While the southern (original) flight line remained relatively unchanged, it continued to be used, and new facilities were added. For example, Aircraft Ground Equipment facilities were constructed in 1954, a jet engine test cell in 1960, and a complex of large maintenance hangars and support facilities were constructed north and east of the runway.

Alaska became the 49th state in the Union in January 1959, and Elmendorf AFB had become a major factor in the area's growth. Anchorage had developed into the state's largest city and a hub for air, rail, and sea transportation.

The military forces in Alaska, including those at Elmendorf, began a gradual drawdown in the late 1950s and 60's as the likelihood of Soviet attack diminished and the Vietnam conflict diverted resources to other fronts. Despite the decline, the U.S. Army constructed the Nike Hercules missile system between 1957 and 1959 to provide a northern perimeter missile defense at Elmendorf AFB, Fort Richardson, and Fairbank's Ladd Field. In 1960, all aircraft control and warning systems in Alaska were consolidated under the 507th Air Defense Wing at Elmendorf AFB, which not only coordinated intercept capabilities at other bases, but also it had its own fighter interceptors²⁸.

As local forces were being drawn down in response to the decreasing Soviet bomber threat, Elmendorf AFB began to support other commands. During the Vietnam War, Elmendorf AFB's war-related role became a support base for planes en route to Asia, just as it had been during the Korean War. The Military Airlift Command developed a strong presence at Elmendorf AFB during the Vietnam Era. In 1968 the passenger terminal was renovated, and by 1969 more than 1,200 airlift flights a month were landing at the base enroute to the Vietnam theater of operations²⁹.

The 1970s marked a turning point in the Alaskan air defense system, prompted by major technological advances in communications technology. During the 1970s and 1980s, Alaska's air defense system was upgraded and modernized. Expanded use of satellites and Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft had decreased the need for land-based surveillance systems. Under the Seek Igloo Program, remote radar stations were replaced with more modern equipment including minimally attended radars that no longer required extensive manpower. In 1975, ALCOM was de-activated (but was later re-activated in 1989 under the Pacific Command). The importance of Elmendorf AFB as a civilian communications hub ended when the Alaska Communications System was privatized in 1971.

Meanwhile, Elmendorf AFB continued to be an important military transit point between North America and Asia. In September 1971, President Richard Nixon flew to Elmendorf AFB to meet with Japanese Emperor Hirohito, the first meeting of a reigning Japanese emperor on U.S. soil and the first with a sitting president. Nixon was also the first American President to visit Elmendorf AFB. With the end of the Cold War, Elmendorf entered the era of cooperative engagement, regularly hosting units, exercises, and dignitaries from around the world.

²⁸ . USAF, *Elmendorf Air Force Base History*, <http://www.jber.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=5280> (November 2012).

²⁹ . USAF, *Elmendorf Air Force Base History*, <http://www.jber.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=5280> (November 2012).

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JBER, which comprises Fort Richardson and the former Elmendorf AFB, is the home of the ALCOM Headquarters, NORAD. ALCOM is responsible for integrating military activities within Alaska to maintain mission assurance and maximize readiness of theater forces in support of contingencies. The command consists of the Eleventh Air Force and U.S. Army, Alaska. The Eleventh Air Force provides forces to maintain air superiority in Alaska and support Alaska-based ground forces to preserve national sovereignty and defend U.S. interests overseas. (USAF 2012).

The original layout and construction plans for Elmendorf AFB included concrete runways with aprons and permanent hangars; gasoline facilities with storage, fueling, and reserve systems; bomb and ammunition storage igloos; and a hospital. Utilities included a sewage system, water supply system, central heating and power plant, and a bombproof radio transmitter building³⁰.

Construction at the airfield was divided into two priority categories, either "permanent" or "temporary". "Temporary" structures were those of wood or other material designed to be of use for 15 years or more, and "permanent" were listed as structures of steel or concrete, stone, or brick, with an expectancy of some 100 years of use³¹. This first phase of construction was completed under severe schedule constraints related to the impending winter weather and growing political tensions worldwide. Many factors hampered progress, including the site's spongy muskeg, which was prone to entrap heavy equipment and vehicles, material shortages due to shipping via boat, and labor scarcities; the latter two factors grew worse as wartime needs increased³².

The Flight Line Historic District is located in JBER-Elmendorf to the west of the main north/south oriented runway. It represents one of the earlier areas of construction at Elmendorf Field. The districts buildings are clustered in an L-shape, with the long axis trending north/south. On the west edge, the Flight Line Historic District is bordered by Sijan Avenue and 22nd Street; Building 8565 (Hanger 4) at the latitude of Wewak Drive lies to the south.

The Alaska Air Depot Historic District is situated near the southern edge of JBER-Elmendorf southwest of the residential area. This District was identified by the National Park Service (NPS) during a 1997 inventory of WWII buildings. Taxiways on the east and north frame the eastern and northern boundaries. The taxiways and runways are considered contributing elements, as are the 20 remaining buildings.

Elmendorf AFB contracted with the NPS to assess, inventory, and perform significance determinations in accordance with NRHP criteria. NPS applied NRHP criteria to buildings and structures constructed between 1940 and 1945 as well as five potentially eligible Cold War facilities. Of the 200 buildings, sites, and structures surveyed, 72 were considered eligible for the NRHP because of their association with the events of WWII. The findings were published in *Elmendorf Air Force Base Volume I: Historic Context of World War II Buildings and Structures*³³.

³⁰ L. Cook et al, *Elmendorf Air Force Base, Volume I: Historic Context of World War II Buildings and Structures*. (Washington, D.C: National Park Service, 1999).

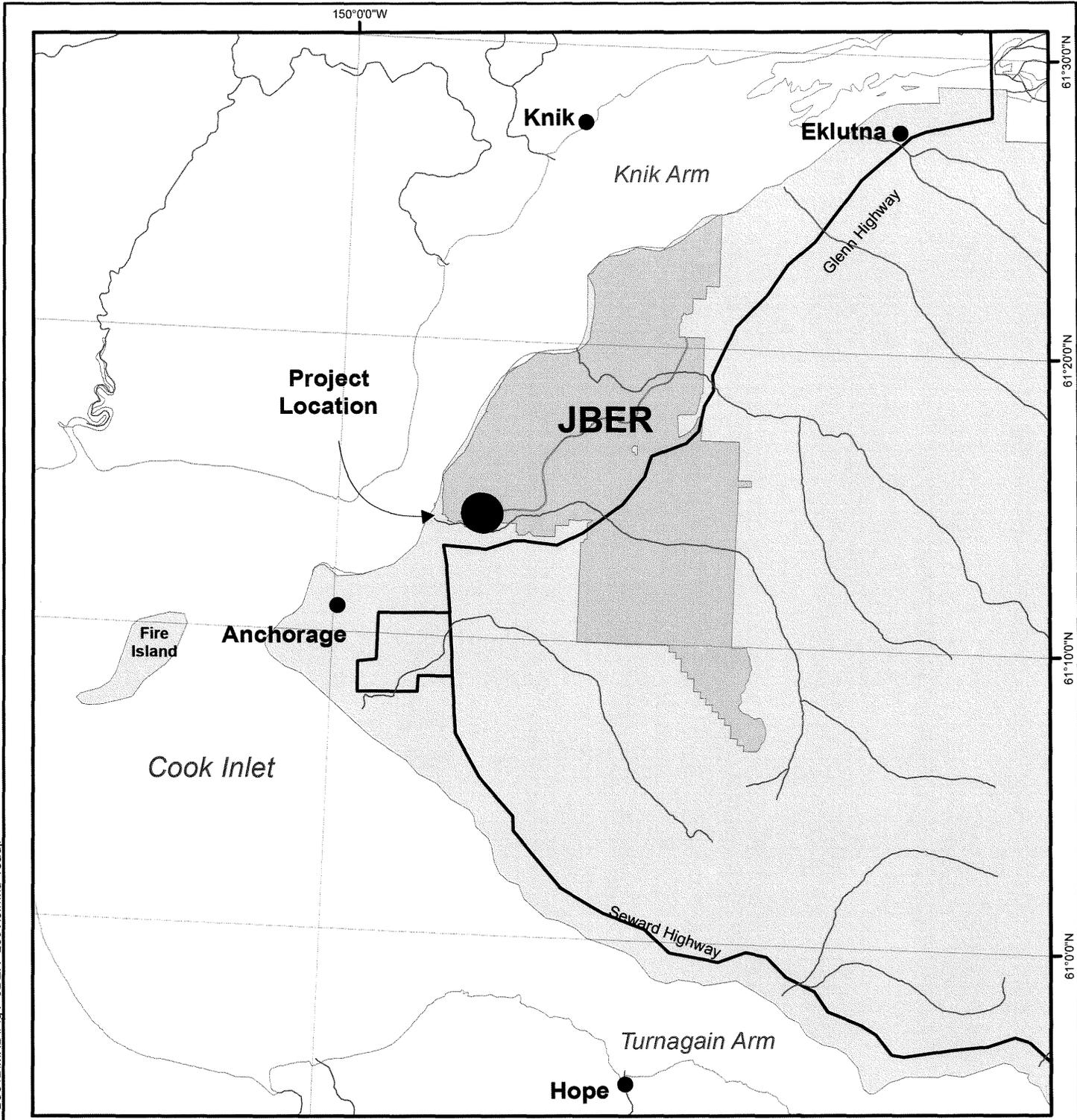
³¹ R.W. Fagen, "History of Fort Richardson (Original Post)," Unpublished Manuscript, 1944, JBER-Elmendorf History Office.

³² L. Cook et al, *Elmendorf Air Force Base, Volume I: Historic Context of World War II Buildings and Structures*. (Washington, D.C: National Park Service, 1999).

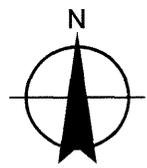
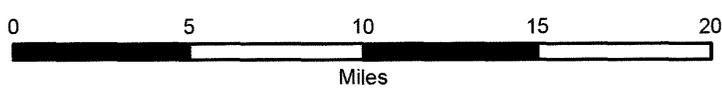
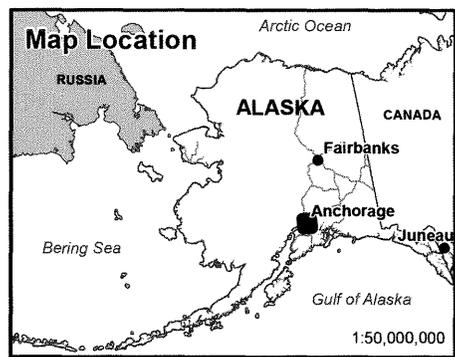
³³ L. Cook et al, *Elmendorf Air Force Base, Volume I: Historic Context of World War II Buildings and Structures*. (Washington, D.C: National Park Service, 1999).

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Buildings 5303 and 5312 were included on the 1999 NPS list of potential eligible facilities. After publication of the NPS study, negotiations were conducted to finalize the list of eligible buildings. The Keeper of the Record determines final eligibility.



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WGS 1984 UTM Zone 6N

PROJECT LOCATION AND VICINITY			
JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, ALASKA			
JACOBS	DATE: 08 Jan 2013	PROJECT MANAGER: P. CALLINA	FIGURE NO. 1-1

ADDENDUM TO:
JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON JBER
(U.S. Air Force Buildings)
Anchorage
Anchorage
Alaska

HABS AK-240
HABS AK-240

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001