



The Alaskan Air Command

THE past year has been one of which all the men and women of the Alaskan Air Command (AAC) can look back with pride. It was a year marked by successful execution of two missions—massive aid to a disaster-struck people and continuous aerospace defense of our largest state.

Nature's shock wave shook Alaska into the history books on March 27, 1964. The earthquake began at 5:36 in the afternoon. In Anchorage, headquarters for the command, the first shock lasted three minutes with a Richter-scale intensity of 8.4, making the Alaskan earthquake one of the most severe ever to strike North America.

Military aid to Alaskan communities following the earthquake marked one of the finest jobs of community relations in the history of the US Air Force. Of this the AAC is very proud.

But disaster duty was over and above the regular mission of AAC.

Guarding the primary aerial gateway to North America against possible enemy air attack is the number-one mission at AAC.



Alaskan Air Command F-102 Delta Daggers play a significant role in the northernmost command's mission of flying top cover for America. Above, two F-102s roar off to check out unidentified aircraft in command's defense area.

Maj. Gen. James C. Jensen became Commander, AAC, in 1963. A native of California, he won his wings in 1932.

During World War II, he served with Air Transport Command and after the war in various operational and staff posts including NORAD assignments. Before his present assignment he served for two years as DCS/Operations, Hq. ADC.



As the air component of the unified Alaskan Command (ALCOM) and the Alaskan Region of the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD), AAC protects the nation's largest state which is strategically located at the air crossroads of the world—only minutes by jet from the Siberian coast of the Soviet Union.

AAC does the job with a defense system that includes F-102 and F-106 fighter-interceptor aircraft; a network of aircraft-control-and-warning sites scattered from the fogbound Aleutian chain to the Arctic coastline and dotting the jagged, lonely mountain peaks and tundra of the vast interior; plus support personnel, operating hardware, and facilities at strategically located Alaskan installations and stations.

Maintained at instant readiness around the clock, AAC forces, tied directly to the NORAD Combat Operations Center at Colorado Springs, Colo., provide a formidable defense shield against any enemy air invasion in or over Alaska.

One of the smallest major air commands, AAC is charged with a fourfold responsibility:

- Providing early warning of attack on the United States and Canada.
- Providing air defense of Alaska.
- Supporting SAC forces in Alaska.
- Supporting special projects assigned by ALCOM and the USAF Chief of Staff.

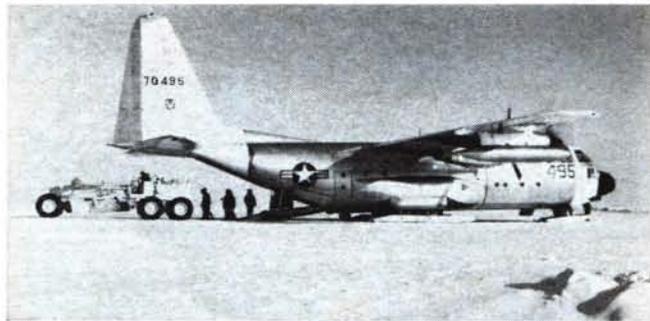
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From his headquarters at Elmendorf AFB, near Anchorage, Maj. Gen. James C. Jensen, AAC Commander who marked his first anniversary in the job on August 15, directs all Air Force activities in the northernmost state. It is a big job. The distance across Alaska from east to west is equivalent to the distance from Savannah, Ga., to San Diego, Calif., and north to south from the Canadian border into Mexico.

AAC supports approximately seventy tenant units, the newest of which was added on July 1 when the command was assigned twelve C-130s. The new aircraft, several of which are ski-equipped, belong to the 17th Troop Carrier Squadron and support AAC airlift requirements. DEW Line sites in Greenland, owned and operated by ADC, are also supported by AAC's C-130s. These sites are completely dependent on aerial resupply for all their needs, including fuel for heat and power. The C-130s were needed by AAC to support the USAF worldwide requirement for C-130 ski-equipped aircraft and the maintenance of troop-carrier qualification.

Logistical support in Alaska is uniquely difficult. Only the two main air bases, Elmendorf and Eielson, enjoy rail service. Only two of the sixteen AC&W radar stations are served by a road. Of the remaining fourteen sites, two are accessible only by air; the rest can be reached by water routes only during the short summer months.

Once each year, when the ice pack recedes from the Arctic coast, AAC remote stations are stockpiled with nonperishable supplies. Called Mona Lisa, the massive civilian-contract operation delivers material ranging from bulldozers to razor blades. As the big
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Above, mighty C-130 Hercules transport uses skis to land equipment at distant sites. Right, HH-21 copter rescues an Eskimo during flood season. Below, C-123 Provider skims over mountain peak, routine on many AAC transport runs.



ALASKAN AIR COMMAND
Headquarters, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska

Commander
Maj. Gen. James C. Jensen





Countless Alaskans were rescued or provided airlift after the devastating March 1964 earthquake, a catastrophe that provided AAC a formidable challenge—that was met. Above, an evacuee is helped onto rescue plane in tidal-wave area.



Alaskan Air Command and Civil Defense personnel pitched in to keep supplies moving during the post-quake period. Above, a crew of military people and civilian volunteers work together in biting cold at Seward to unload aid cargo from a C-123 Provider. Supplies were rushed to needy areas.

barge are towed through the Bering Straits and up the mighty Yukon, logistic planners are already preparing to marshal supplies for next year's Operation Mona Lisa.

But Mona Lisa can never meet the full resupply needs of these remote stations. Storage facilities are limited and there is a continuing requirement for perishables, spare parts, and mail. To provide this airlift, more than 250 tons per day, AAC is equipped with the C-123 Provider and C-130 Hercules aircraft.

The culmination of more than two years of intensive planning, development, training, and computer programming was celebrated within the command in April, when the new AAC regional data-processing center was opened.

The high-speed computer system is linked directly with all components of the command (Eielson AFB and the remote AC&W sites) and provides centralized data-processing services to all AAC functional managers.

The aerospace defense posture of Alaska is maintained in readiness by a variety of methods. One method is participation in training exercises, either as a com-

Clad warmly against Alaskan winter, an evacuee arrives safely at Elmendorf AFB aboard an HH-21. One of a legion of civilians evacuated from dangerous areas in the aftermath of the earthquake, she was able to carry but few of her personal belongings, here being offloaded by crew member of the helicopter.



Handling disaster shipments in the kind of cold that marks Alaskan winters is a special kind of job. Here, a steam thawing rig is unloaded at Seward, along with a shipment of freshly baked bread, flown in from an Anchorage bakery.

mand unit or in a combined services operation. Two of the outstanding exercises this year were Polar Siege and Midnight Sun. Polar Siege was unique in that it was the first time ground proximity extraction was used in an Arctic environment.

Under the operational control of AAC is Detachment No. 1, Western Air Rescue Center, commonly called the Rescue Coordination Center, at command headquarters. The RCC directs search and rescue missions in Alaska, working closely with Army, Navy, Air Force, Civil Air Patrol, Coast Guard, National Guard, state police, and mountain rescue groups.

RCC responds to distress calls from civil and military aircraft, boats, hunters, and anyone lost or in trouble. The center averages over one request a day, and during the busy summer season it is not uncommon to have as many as seven missions under way at one time. During the spring floods of the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers, RCC directed air evacuation of flooded native villages. From the towns of Sleetmute, Aniak, McGrath, and Bethel, all on the Kuskokwim, the center directed air evacuation of 459 people in a two-week period, flying a total of 230 sorties.

During fiscal year 1964, RCC directed 464 search and rescue missions, which saw 3,946 flying hours expended and a total of 3,174 sorties flown.

Well over seventy-five percent of the aircraft utilized in RCC search and rescue missions are from AAC's 5017th Operations Squadron, with emphasis on C-123s and HH-21 helicopters.—END