ALASKA
MILITARY
HERITAGE
MUSEUM

TOP SECRET

OPERATION TOP COVER : ALASKA'S STRATEGIC ROLE IN WWII

EYES ONLY

How Alaska Helped Defeat the Empire of Japan

Courtesy of 673 Air Base Wing History Office

Colonel Everett S. Davis

THE WINTER OF 1942 was, at that time, the coldest in 23 years. On November 28, 1942, it was -67 degrees Fahrenheit (F) in Fairbanks and the severe winter storm reached to the Aleutian Islands. Enroute to Anchorage from the Aleutians, Colonel Davis's C-47 was blown off course and crashed outside of Naknek, Alaska.

The originator of Alaskan military air power was lost that day. Col Davis was the Eleventh Air Force's first Chief of Staff, beginning in 1939, and had overseen the incredible military build up in the remote Alaskan wilderness. This C-47 Dakota will be called the ***'Colonel Everett S. Davis'*** in tribute to this forgotten American hero.

The Eleventh Air Force was created in December 28, 1941 to prepare for and defend against an invasion of the Alaska Territory from the Empire of Japan.

Its motto in World War II was *"Top cover for the United States"*. The Aleutian Campaign claimed the lives of 114 men with another 42 reported missing. 35 aircraft were lost in combat and another 150 due to operational incidents. This was the highest U.S. combat-to-operational loss ratio of the war, mainly due to the incredibly severe weather. ★

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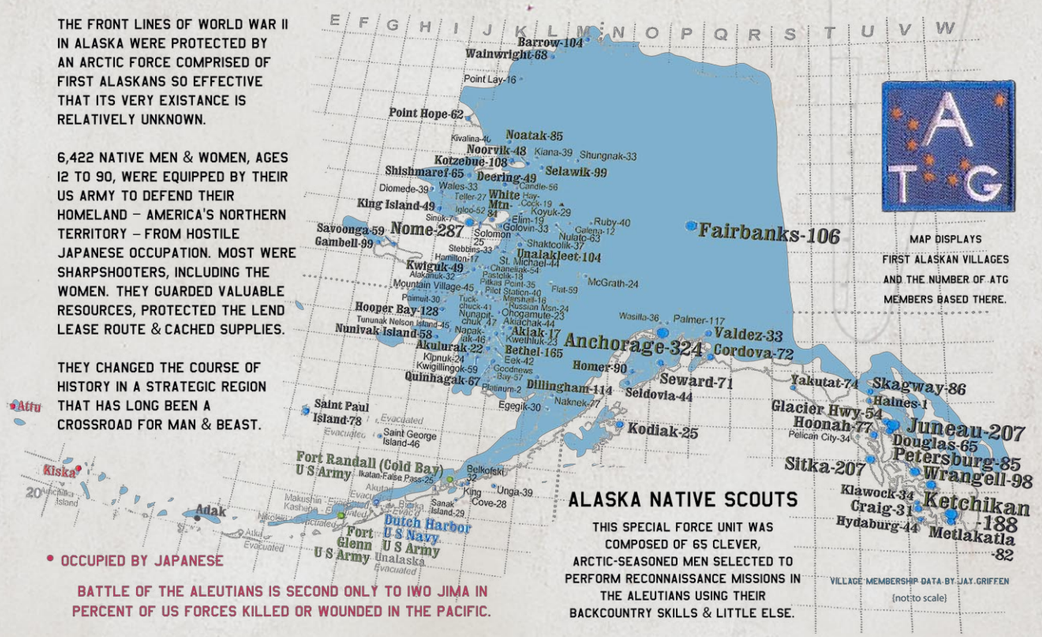
ALASKA TERRITORIAL GUARD

THE FRONT LINES OF WORLD WAR II IN ALASKA WERE PROTECTED BY AN ARCTIC FORCE COMPRISED OF FIRST ALASKANS SO EFFECTIVE THAT ITS VERY EXISTANCE IS RELATIVELY UNKNOWN.

6,422 NATIVE MEN & WOMEN, AGES 12 TO 90, WERE EQUIPPED BY THEIR US ARMY TO DEFEND THEIR HOMELAND – AMERICA'S NORTHERN TERRITORY – FROM HOSTILE JAPANESE OCCUPATION. MOST WERE SHARPSHOOTERS, INCLUDING THE WOMEN. THEY GUARDED VALUABLE RESOURCES, PROTECTED THE LEND LEASE ROUTE & CACHED SUPPLIES.

THEY CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY IN A STRATEGIC REGION THAT HAS LONG BEEN A CROSSROAD FOR MAN & BEAST.



BATTLE OF THE ALEUTIANS IS SECOND ONLY TO IWO JIMA IN PERCENT OF US FORCES KILLED OR WOUNDED IN THE PACIFIC.

MAP DISPLAYS FIRST ALASKAN VILLAGES AND THE NUMBER OF ATG MEMBERS BASED THERE.

ALASKA NATIVE SCOUTS

THIS SPECIAL FORCE UNIT WAS COMPOSED OF 65 CLEVER, ARCTIC-SEASONED MEN SELECTED TO PERFORM RECONNAISSANCE MISSIONS IN THE ALEUTIANS USING THEIR BACKCOUNTRY SKILLS & LITTLE ELSE.

VILLAGE MEMBERSHIP DATA BY JAY GRIFFEN (not to scale)

THE LARGE NUMBER OF NEWLY CONSTRUCTED AIRFIELDS, under Col Davis`s command, needed to be secured. In June 1942, Major Marvin `Muktuk` Marston created the Alaska Territorial Guard, consisting of 6,389 volunteer soldiers, 12 to 80 years old, mostly Alaska's indigenous people. This vital and somewhat unrecognized force protected the Alaska coast, airfields, flight routes, and other vital terrain from invading forces.

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How Alaska Helped Defeat Hitler's Nazis

The Alaska Siberia Air Route

FEW PEOPLE KNOW that from 1942 through 1945 the United States secretly delivered nearly 8,000 American-made warplanes to the Soviet Union via the Alaska-Siberia air route (ALSIB).

Approximately 6,000 miles long, it runs from Great Falls, Montana up through Canada and Alaska, across the Bering Strait, to Krasnoyarsk in south central Russia. Many of the planes were ferried from the various manufacturers throughout the Continental United States to the staging area in Great Falls by America's first women pilots under the Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) program.

Men from the 7th Ferrying Squadron then flew the aircraft to Fairbanks, Alaska where they were handed over to the Soviet pilots who then flew them an additional 3,000 miles across Siberia.

In all there were 177 fatal crashes among the ferrying pilots. These aircraft and other vitally needed supplies provided the Russians under the Lend-Lease program played a pivot role in helping the Soviet Army defeat Hitler's Nazis. ★

LEARN MORE CLICK HERE

FROM MONTANA TO KRASNOYARSK nearly 8,000 warplanes were secretly delivered to the Russian Front

Courtesy of American Airpower Museum

North to Alaska: Roads & Runways

The Army Corps of Engineers WWII in Alaska Leadership

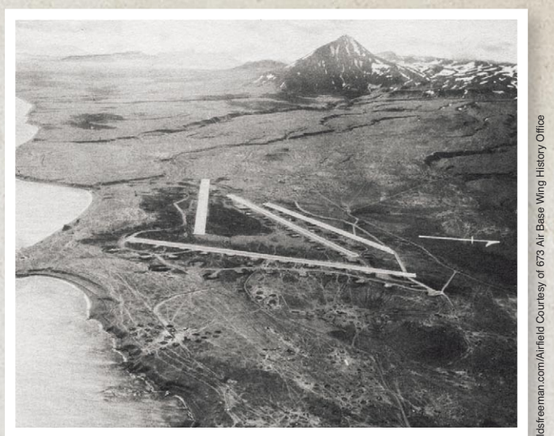
ALASKA PROVIDED a very unique construction environment with temperatures ranging from 90 to -70 degrees Fahrenheit. Vast, undeveloped wilderness where construction supplies, equipment and adequate numbers of trained men were thousands of miles away. Yet in an amazing couple of years they readied the most remote American territory for the anticipated Japanese invasion.

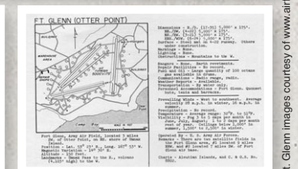
Brigadier General Benjamin B. Talley was born in 1903 in the Oklahoma Territory. In 1926, he was commissioned as a regular army officer in the Corps of Engineers and served in the Corps until his retirement in 1956.

He is known as “the father of Military Construction in Alaska”. General Talley constructed airfields, wharves, gasoline storage, seacoast fortifications, roads, utilities, barracks, warehouses, shops, mess halls, and hospitals.

General William M. Hoge was born in 1894 in Lexington, Missouri. He graduated from West Point in 1916 then commissioned into the engineer branch of the US Army.

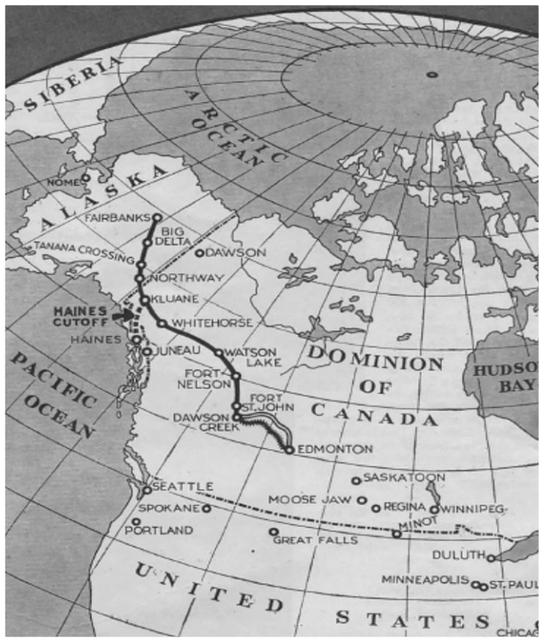
He directed one of the greatest engineering feats of World War II, the construction of the 1,519 mile ALCAN Highway in 9-months. He was promoted to full General in October 1953 and retired from active duty in 1955. ★





Ft. Glenn images courtesy of www.airfieldsfreeman.com/Airfield Courtesy of 673 Air Base Wing History Office

AIRFIELD AT FORT GLENN constructed by U.S. Army Engineers



Map by Geoge L. Peterson, 1994

Let’s Roll

The Alaska Canada Highway

LONG BEFORE THE WAR BEGAN, there were proposals to build a road connecting the lower 48 States to Alaska. Following the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii by the Empire of Japan, construction began on the Alaska-Canada (ALCAN) Highway, to provide a direct military supply route to Alaska.

Construction of the 1,422 mile road out of the woods required super-human effort and has been compared second only to the building of the Panama Canal in its size and complexity.

Temperatures ranged from plus 90 degrees F in the mosquito infested summers to minus 70 F in the arctic winter. Nearly 11,000 men were required to build the ALCAN including three African American engineer regiments. Since the military was still segregated at that time, the contributions of the nearly 4,000 black soldiers has remained undertold.

It took nearly eight months in the harsh conditions to carve the road through the wilderness which officially opened November 20, 1942. ★

Douglas C-47 Dakota

LEARN MORE CLICK HERE

THESE MILITARY AIRCRAFT TRANSPORTED TROOPS, cargo and wounded throughout every WW II theatre. Over 10,000 were produced. More than 50,000 paratroopers were dropped by C-47s in the first few days of the DDay invasion of Normandy, France in June 1944. They became certified as DC-3s for civilian service following the war. ★

Join our Alaska Honor Squadron

C-47 Dakota Restoration

• (2) Propellor overhaul	$15,000 each	$ 30,000
• (2) Carburetors	$ 5,000 each	$ 10,000
• Tires, brakes		$ 10,000
• Windows		$ 5,000
• Control cables		$ 5,000
• (2) Engines	$45,000 each	$ 90,000
• Avionics		$ 20,000
• DDay Paint job		$ 40,000
• Control surfaces		$ 15,000
• Cleaning		$ 10,000
• Annual		$ 30,000
Total Restoration costs:		**$265,000**
• Annual operating costs	(25 days x 4 hrs/day x $1,400/ hour)	$ 140,000
• Museum operating costs for the C-47		$ 100,000
• Pilot & Co-pilot costs (25 days x $900/ day)		$ 22,500
• Annual		$ 30,000
Annual Operating costs:		**$ 292,500**

“Dakotas fly in low and slow, to places where no boat, fighter or truck can go.”

DAVE MCKAY IS CHIEF PILOT with 32,410 flight hours & has recently been nominated for the ***Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award*** *for 50-years of professional flight.*

LARS GLEITSMANN IS MUSEUM CURATOR He is lead of artifact investigations, recovery and proper curating. Lars has flown ***52 different types of aircrafts*** *in 11 countries on 5 continents.*

Hans Wiesman / www.dc3dakotahunter.com

ALASKAMHM.ORG

Alaskan Heroes Who Flew Aircraft in World War II

Alaska is home to many members of the greatest generation. Because Alaska was invaded by Japan, literally all Alaskans from that era were involved in the war effort. Other Alaskans served in war theatres far from the last frontier. This C-47 is a tribute to the heroic Alaskans who flew combat, transport and training aircrafts throughout Alaska and the world. These legacy Alaskan heroes' name, theatre and primary aircraft flown will be listed on the C-47`s tail section.

TED STEVENS Joined the Army Air Corp in 1943. He served in the China-Burma-India theatre in the 14th Air Force. He flew C-46 & C-47 over the Himalayas, known then as the *`Hump`* in support of the Flying Tigers. Ted Stevens went on to be a U.S. Senate for nearly 40 years. ★

JAY HAMMOND Joined the US Marine Corp in 1942. He flew Vought F4U Corsairs in the Pacific & China theatres. He later became Governor of Alaska from 1974-1982. ★

GEORGE BROWN Joined the National Guard in 1941 and served in the China-Burma-India theatre flying B-24s over the Himalayas, known as the *`Hump`* helping the Flying Tigers. He earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. Founder of Lucky Wishbone Restaurant. ★

BOB REEVES He was one of the few civilian pilots hired by the Army to survey the remote Alaskan landscape for new runways. Reeve then flew large amounts of building materials and workers out to these remote locations. Founder of Reeve Aleutian Airways. ★

CLIFF EVERTS Joined the Civilian Pilot Training program to support the war effort. In 1942, he accepted a job with Alaska Star Airlines (now Alaska Airlines). He moved to Fairbanks in 1944. He flew for Wien Airlines for 35 years. Founder of Everts Air Fuel utilizing former WWII C-46 Commando transport aircraft. ★

HOWARD `MIKE' HUNT Joined the Army Air Corp, as a commissioned officer, in 1942. He was part of the Air Transport Command Ferry division that had him fly about every WWII plane in the United States inventory. This mission took him around the world starting in Montana to Alaska then destined for Moscow to help fight Hitler`s Nazis. ★

LOWELL THOMAS JR. Joined the Army Air Corps in 1942 where he flew North American B-25 Mitchell Bombers as a flight instructor. He later became Lt Governor of Alaska from 1974-1978. ★

KETCH KETCHUM Joined the Army Air Corp in 1942 where he flew C-46 transports in the Pacific. He then flew C-54 transports in the "Berlin Airlift" after WWII. Founder of Ketchum Flying Service. ★

HANK RUST Joined the Army Air Corps in 1941. He flew 50 combat missions in the Pacific including being shot down over New Guinea. Earned the distinguished flying cross and air medal. He then flew in the "Berlin airlift". Founder Rust's Flying Service. ★

CARL BRADY SR Joined the Army Air Corp in 1943 as a flight instructor. In 1948 he brought to Alaska the state`s first commercial helicopter. He went on to found ERA Helicopters in 1958. ★

J. VIC BROWN Drafted into the Army Air Corp as a flight instructor of P-40s, B-25s, C-47s and C-54s. He later became a strong advocate of the Civil Air Patrol becoming Squadron Commander in 1962. ★

**JAMES `JIMMY' DOOLITTLE** He grew up in Nome, Alaska. On April 18th, 1942, 4 months after Pearl Harbor, he led a surprise attack of 16 B-25 Mitchell medium bombers on Tokyo, Japan. He received the Medal of Honor for leading the 'Tokyo Raid`. ★

OREN HUDSON He was a civilian flight instructor in 1941 as part of the Civilian Pilot Training (CPT Program) as part of the War Training Service. He went on to fly his own transporter business for over 50 years in Alaska. ★

F. ATLEE DODGE He enlisted in the Army Air Corp in 1941. Became a flight engineer, crew chief and gunner on a B-24 Liberator heavy bomber. He started F. Atlee Dodge in the 1960s where he was called *`Mr Super Cub`*. ★

URBAN RAHOI He enlisted in the Army Air Corp in 1941 beginning as a flight instructor. Eventually flew Boeing B-17 Flying Fortresses on bombing missions from Italy to Austria and Germany. He moved to Alaska in 1947 and founded Interior Airways and was a big game guide. ★

MERL 'MUDHOLE' SMITH He came to Alaska in 1937 where he flew for Cordova Air Service on flights to McCarthy. During WWII he helped Bob Reeves fly war supplies to rural military airport construction sites. He later became Director/Vice President of Alaska Airlines. ★

BOB ELLIS He was a Navy reservist prior to WWII. He was the commander at Kodiak in 1944 when President Roosevelt visited. He went on to utilize surplus WWII Goose aircraft in his Ellis Airlines. He joined Alaska Coastal Airlines in 1962 which became Alaska Airlines. ★

HAROLD GILLAM He came to Alaska in 1923. In WWII, he flew supplies to rural military airport construction projects for Morrison-Knudsen. He crash-landed on January 5, 1943 out of Annette Island and was lost . ★

HUGH BREWSTER He was a Marine pilot in WWII. First CAA Dept of Commerce aircraft inspector in Alaska. ★

CLARENCE "SLIM" WATERS He arrived to Juneau in 1935. In WWII he joined the Ferry Command where he flew aircraft from the US to different theatres of war. He founded Alaska Island Airlines then flew for Reeve Aleutians Airways for years. ★

CLAYTON L. "SCOTTY" SCOTT He flew amphibious airplanes in 1929 from Juneau to Cordova. Became the chief production test pilot for Boeing from 1940 – 1966. ★

GEORGE S. "TONY" SCHWAMM He came to Petersburg in 1937. He was a Lt Commander in the US Navy and constructed remote air stations. He became the first Director of Territory Aviation. ★

NANCY STATFORD When the US entered WWII, she and 23 other American women were recruited to join the Royal Air Force. She flew 47 different types of aircraft. She moved to Juneau in 1956 where her and her husband owned a helicopter service from 1960-1978. ★

MURRELL SASSEEN He moved to Alaska in the mid 1930s. At the outset of WWII he joined the Air Transport Command. Following the war he flew for Woodley Airways and then Alaska Coastal until his retirement. ★

HERBERT `HERB` MUNTER He moved to Alaska in 1935. When WWII broke out and joined the US Navy. After the war he partnered with Nick Bez and began the West Coast Air Lines. The airline later became Air West ★

KENNETH WAYNE "KENNY" NEESE He came to Alaska in 1932. He joined the Air Transport Command in 1941. He flew fighters and bombers between Florida to South America and Africa. He was killed on his last scheduled flight in 1944 prior to being transferred to a non-flying assignment. ★

SAM WHITE He came to Alaska in 1922. He then began flying charter for the Army Air Corp. Following the war he continued to fly commercially in Alaska until his retirement in 1964. ★

ELBERT E. "AL" PARMENTER He came to Alaska in the mid 1930s. Prior to WWII he moved to Burbank, California to work for Lockheed which produced military aircraft including the P-38. ★

CHET BROWNE He moved to Alaska in the 1930s. He enlisted in the Army Air Corp where he flew the *'Hump'* in the China-Burma-India theatre. He later founded Siam Airlines. ★

ROY JONES He moved to Ketchikan in 1922 and founded Northbird Aviation Co. He was an Air Force Officer in WWII stationed at Ladd Field. He retired as a Major in the Air Force Reserves. ★

JACK ELLIOT He came to McGrath in 1934. He left Alaska in 1943 to become chief pilot for Consolidated Vultee Aircraft in San Diego, California which produced the B-24 and the PBY. ★

EARNIE BROOKING Joined the Army Air Corp in 1942 where he became a flight instructor. He & his family moved to Alaska in 1950. He worked at Alaska Freight Lines and SeaLand Freight Service until he retired in 1978. ★

**MARGARET `MARGO' COOK** She joined the Women`s Air Service Pilots (WASPs) in WWII. She later joined Stinson Aircraft Corp as a test pilot. She moved to Alaska in 1953 where she worked for the Anchorage School District. ★

WILLIAM `BILL` BROOKS He enlisted in the Army Air Corp in 1943 intending to be a mechanic but went through the wrong door where he passed the flight test and flew transports. He moved to Alaska in the late 1960s and, while working in construction, he was instrumental in the Alaskan aviation industry. ★

KENNETH MARLAR TAYLOR He joined the Army Air Corp in 1940. One of the few pilots who engaged the Japanese airplanes who attacked Pearl Harbor. He shot down 4 planes and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. He moved to Alaska in 1967 where he commanded the Alaska Air National Guard. ★

ROBERT E `BOB` RENKERT He joined the Army Air Corp in 1942. He was sent go Alaska in 1943 as part of the 54th Troop Carrier Squadron, 11th Air Force. He and his family remained in Alaska following WWII. ★

CARL THOMAS RENTSCHLER He joined the Army Air Corp in 1942 and flew transports in the Aleutians for which he was awarded an Air Medal. He and his family remained in Alaska following WWII. ★

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