

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES IN THE REGIONS...

March 2009

A MONTHLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Top Cover for America: Early Warning Air Defense Systems in Alaska, 1949–1985

Among the records of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Alaska District is a large series of almost 12,000 photographs of about 150 formerly used defense sites from the Cold War period and still active military installations in Alaska. Many of these photographs were produced as a result of the Corps' work in designing and supervising the construction of military facilities for the U.S. Army and Air Force.

The development of early warning air defense systems in Alaska and Canada resulted from the Soviet Union's perfection of intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) technology in the mid-1950s. There was a shift away from large military bases toward strengthening air defense systems. Specifically, these changes led to the construction of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line; improvements to Air Control and Warning (AC & W) stations; and construction of a Ballistic Missile Early Warning System (BMEWS) station at Clear Air Force Base. These defense systems were all linked together into a cohesive network of 84 stations known as White Alice (1955–1979). The Alaska radar and communications systems were also connected to an integrated defense network, the North American Air Defense Command or NORAD, located in Colorado. Warning time of an ICBM missile attack detected at one of these stations was 15 minutes.

Tatalina, located 230 air miles northwest of Anchorage, provides an example of a station that was accessible only by air. The photograph from 1958 of the Tatalina Aircraft Control and Warning Station shows two parabolic tropo communications antennas in the foreground. The radar site can be seen beyond them. A technological advance, known as forward propagation tropospheric communications, was used to beam radio signals from a transmitting antenna, and then bounce them off the troposphere back down to a receiving antenna. Tropo communications made the rapid transmission of data over long distances possible. Tropo systems used microwave towers, which linked Distant Early Warning (DEW) stations and AC & W sites every 50 miles or so. The DEW Line (1953–1985) was a string of 50 radar and communications stations erected in the Arctic to alert against a surprise attack from Soviet long-range bombers. The AC & W system (1949–1984) was designed to provide advanced radar warning of enemy aircraft and to assist in the control of friendly planes. Because of the limitations of electronic equipment at that time, AC & W stations had to be constructed at high elevations to ensure the radar's capacity to detect enemy aircraft.

The Tatalina Aircraft Control and Warning System site was constructed in 1953 as one of the 10 original AC & W sites in Alaska. Tatalina was one of five split-level operations camps, with the radars on a mountain top at high camp. The support functions and runway were at a lower camp, connected by a dirt road and by tramway. It was essential that men running the station had enough food, water, and fuel to last all winter. Supplies were flown to an airstrip at the base of the mountain and hauled to the top by trucks, weather permitting. The aerial tramway was used in emergencies to carry food and needed supplies. The access road, built during good weather, was often useless when deep snow, black ice, or heavy rains made it impassible. In emergencies, the tramway created problems when high winds or ice destabilized it.

The original Tatalina station involved the wood-frame con-

struction with steel radomes. The buildings included operations, power, and equipment buildings; two warehouses; a recreation center, mess hall, barracks, and officers' quarters; roads; heat, water and sewer systems, and wells; radar domes; fuel tanks; and snow fences. In the 1960s, prefabricated buildings replaced the wood-frame structures. During the 1950s and 1960s, about 100 military personnel were stationed at Tatalina. In 1987, the station was demolished except for a pump house, weather station building, modernized radar dome, and two geodesic Minimally Attended Radar (MAR) domes. Tatalina is still in use as an active Long Range Radar Site of the Alaska Radar System of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD).

These defense systems made the north coast of North America a top cover for its defense. America's defense became strongly dependent upon Alaska for advance warning and initial interception. In sites like Tatalina, communications were first by high-frequency radio, then White Alice with satellite communications starting in 1959. In the 1970s, satellite communications replaced the White Alice tropospheric and microwave system. In the mid-1980s, Minimally Attended Radar (Geodesic Dome) structures were built at four of the original AC & W sites, including Tatalina, as part of a radar modernization program that required far less personnel with increased capabilities. This system has been improved over the years and remains in service as part of the Long Range Radar System.

Tatalina Aircraft Control & Warning System, 1958

Historical Photographs, ca. 1950–1985 (U.S. Army COE, Alaska District, Anchorage) Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, RG 77, Courtesy of Pacific Alaska Region—Anchorage



Tatalina Aircraft Control & Warning System Radome and White Alice Site, 1958

Historical Photographs, ca. 1950–1985 (U.S. Army COE, Alaska District, Anchorage) Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, RG 77, Courtesy of Pacific Alaska Region—Anchorage

NARA WestCoast March 2009

**Snow Banks in the Pike
National Forest, 1912**
RG 95, Courtesy of NARA Rocky
Mountain Region—Denver



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY		
1	2	Anchorage, AK Beginning Genealogy at NARA Workshop/Genealogists 907-261-7820 Denver, CO Genealogy Workshop and Tour Workshop and Tour General Public 303-407-5749	3	4	5	Seattle, WA Pacific Northwest Historian's Guild Conference Conference/General Public 206-336-5115 3/6-3/7/09 Ontario, CA California Council for Social Studies Conference Conference Center Information Booth and Exhibit K-12, Students 650-238-3478 3/6-3/7/09	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
	Denver, CO Genealogy Lecture Lecture General Public 303-407-5749			Seattle, WA Brick Wall Discussion Group Workshop Genealogists 206-336-5115	Shoreline, WA North Sound History Day Competition Other/General Public 206-336-5115			
15	16	17	18	19	20	21		
					San Bruno CA Census Records 1790-1930 Research Workshop and Tour General Public 650-238-3485	San Bruno, CA Chinese American Student "Roots" Program Workshop and Tour K-12, Students 650-238-3478		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28		
	Bremerton, WA Olympic History Day Competition Other/General Public 206-336-5115			Seattle, WA Organization of American Historians Conference Conference/General Public 206-336-5115 3/26-3/29/09 Auburn, WA Seattle South Sound History Day Competition Other/General Public 206-336-5115				
29	30	31	Exhibit: Seattle, WA Blue vs. Gray: The Civil War in the Pacific NW 9/1/08-Ongoing		Exhibit: Seattle, WA Picturing the Century in the Pacific Northwest 5/6/08-Ongoing			
		Seattle, WA Assoc. of King County Historical Organizations Archival and Allied Professionals 206-336-5115						

NARA's Pacific Region

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NARA's Pacific Alaska Region

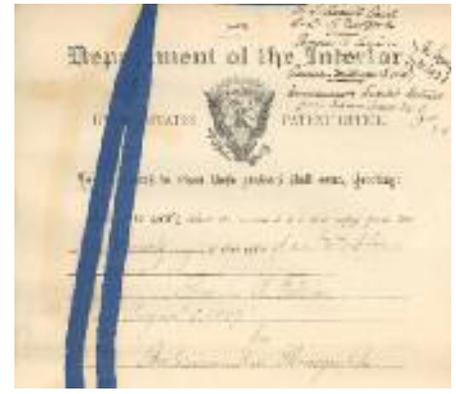
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NARA EastCoast March 2009

Thomas Edison Patent for Improvement to the Phonograph, 1900
RG 241, Patent A-1, Courtesy of NARA
Northeast Region—New York

**Exhibit:
Morrow, GA
From Sacred Harp
to Elvis: Music in
the Archives
3/7/09**



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY												
1	2	<p>Waltham, MA On-Site Facility Tour, 1:30 P.M. General Public 781-663-0130</p> <p>Waltham, MA Local History in Federal Records Lecture/General Public, 2 P.M. 781-663-0130</p>	3	4	<p>Pittsfield, MA Beginning Your Genealogy Research at NARA Workshop/Genealogists 413-236-3600</p> <p>Waltham, MA Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Lecture/General Public, 6:30 P.M. 781-663-0130</p>	5	6	<p>Philadelphia, PA First Friday Genealogy Open House General Public 215-606-0112</p>	7	<p>Boston, MA National Council for History Education Conference Documenting the Rights of Individuals 11:30 A.M. 781-663-0130</p>								
8	9	<p>New York, NY Finding Family: Using Census Records Workshop/General Public 866-840-1752</p> <p>Philadelphia, PA National History Day Competition (Junior Division) K-12, Students 215-606-0103</p>	10	11	<p>Boston, MA National Council for History Education Conference Other, K-12 Teachers 866-840-1752 3/12-3/14/09</p> <p>Pittsfield, MA Using Federal Census Records Workshop/Genealogists 413-236-3600</p>	12	13	<p>Boston, MA National Council for History Education Conference Mass 54th: American Courage, Sacrifice and Glory, 1:30 P.M. Conference 781-663-0130</p> <p>Boston, MA National Council for History Education Conference Revolution at Boston: April 1775-March 1776, 2:30 P.M. Conference 781-663-0130</p>	14	<p>Boston, MA Documented Rights Panel Discussion Lecture/K-12, Teachers 866-840-1752</p> <p>Middlebury, CT Using Military Service and Pension Files at NARA Lecture/Genealogists 413-236-3604</p>								
<p>Long Island, NY National History Day -NY K-12 Students 866-840-1752</p>	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
<p>Boston, MA National Council for the Social Studies NE Regional Conference on the Social Studies Conference 781-663-0130 3/15-3/19/09</p>	<p>Boston, MA National Council for the Social Studies NE Regional Conference on the Social Studies Revolution at Boston April 1775-March 1776, 1:30-2:30 P.M. Conference 781-663-0130</p>	<p>Boston, MA National Council for the Social Studies NE Regional Conference on the Social Studies Mass 54th 3:30p-4:30 P.M. Other/Conference 781-663-0130</p> <p>Hicksville, NY Civil War Ancestors in the Records of the Provost Marshall Lecture/Genealogists 866-840-1752</p>	<p>Philadelphia, PA Genealogical Series: Military Records Workshop/Genealogists 215-606-0112</p>	<p>Pittsfield, MA Using Military Records at NARA Workshop/Genealogists 413-236-3600</p>	<p>Pittsfield, MA Finding Italian Ancestors I Workshop/Genealogists 413-236-3600</p> <p>Pittsfield, MA Finding Italian Ancestors II Workshop/Genealogists 413-236-3600</p>	<p>Boston, MA New England Archivists Conference 781-663-0130 3/27/09-3/28/09</p>	<p>Wayne, PA Sisters in Crime Workshop Other/General Public 215-606-0112</p> <p>New Jersey National History Day -NJ K-12 Students 866-840-1752</p> <p>Morrow, GA Genealogical Society of Clayton and Henry Counties Workshop/Genealogists 770-968-2555</p> <p>Waleska, GA Family History Day Workshop/Genealogists 770-968-2555</p>	<p>Waltham, MA Genealogical Roundtable Facility Introduction & Tour Genealogists General Public 781-663-0130</p>	<p>Watertown, MA Introduction to Genealogy Class Part One, 7-9 P.M. General Public 781-663-0130</p>	<p>Philadelphia, PA Genealogical Series: Military Records Workshop/Genealogists 215-606-0112</p>	<p>Pittsfield, MA Finding Your Immigrant Ancestors at NARA Workshop/Genealogists 413-236-3600</p>	<p>Boston, MA New England Archivists Conference 781-663-0130 3/27/09-3/28/09</p>	<p>Federal Hall, NY New York's National Treasures General Public 866-840-1752</p>	<p>New York, NY National History Day -NYC K-12, Students 866-840-1752</p>	<p>Watertown, MA Introduction to Genealogy Class Part Two, 7-9 P.M. General Public 781-663-0130</p>	<p>Bay Ridge, NY Educational Resources of NARA Workshop K-12, Teachers 866-840-1752</p>	<p>Exhibit: Philadelphia, PA Elusive Freedom 8/1/08-9/30/09</p>	<p>Exhibit: New York, NY Ella Fitzgerald Goes to Court 1/5-3/31/09</p>

NARA's Northeast Region
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NARA's Mid Atlantic Region
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NARA's Southeast Region
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NARA Midwest March 2009

**Tornado on the ground near
Scottsbluff, Nebraska, 1955**
RG 27, Courtesy of NARA Central
Plains Region—Kansas City



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
				Claycomo, MO Internet and the Genealogist Lecture/Genealogists 816-268-8012	Chicago, IL Black Women in History: Harriet Tubman General Public 773-948-9001	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
					Kansas City, MO Discovering Your Indian Heritage Part II Lecture General Public 816-268-8071	
29	30	31	Exhibit: Cinema in the Stacks <i>Tucker: The Man and His Dream</i> <i>The Great White Hope</i> <i>Anatomy of a Murder</i> 9/1/07–6/30/09			

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**NARA's
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Kansas City 816-268-8000
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**NARA's National Personnel
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NARA's Southwest Region
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