



Ladd Field, Fort Wainwright

Fort Wainwright was originally established in 1939 as Ladd Field, a natural winter laboratory and home to the Cold Weather Test Detachment.

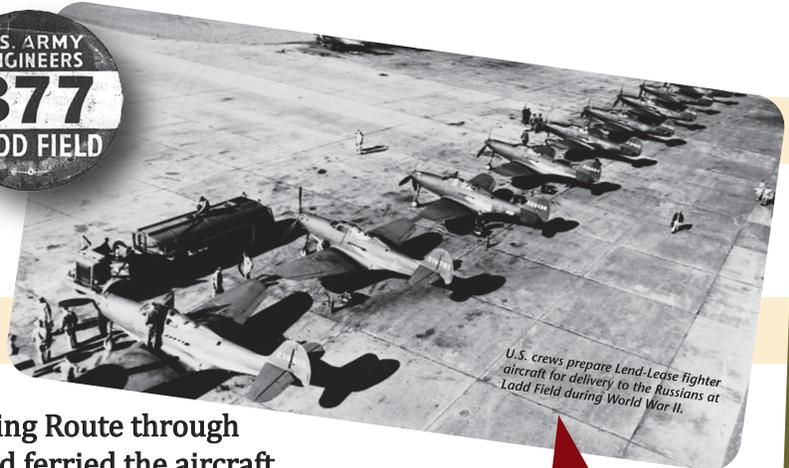


The North Post featured a horseshoe-like layout with Hangar No. 1, at left, as a center of operations.



At Ladd Field, military and civilian personnel made vital advancements in communications, aircraft maintenance, and combat operations, helping to unravel the mysteries of Arctic flying. With the entrance of the United States into World War II, Ladd Field also became important strategically to the defense of Alaska and as a link on the international supply route.

To accommodate the increased wartime missions, Army and civilian workers built a second runway, constructed six additional hangars, and added hundreds of temporary buildings. Ladd Field emerged as the Alaska Air Transport Command hub, supporting military operations throughout the region, including the Aleutian Islands campaign.



U.S. crews prepare Lend-Lease fighter aircraft for delivery to the Russians at Ladd Field during World War II.

During WWII, the most significant new task was Ladd Field's international role as the transer point for nearly 8,000 aircrafts U.S. crews delivered the airplanes to the Soviet Union under the Lend-Lease program, under which the United States military aid to its allies.

American pilots flew planes along the Northwest Staging Route through Canada to Ladd Field where Russian pilots took over and ferried the aircraft to Europe. Hundreds of Russian personnel were stationed at Ladd Field during much of the war, working alongside their American counterparts.

Did You Know?

- By the time Ladd Field's runway was completed in the fall of 1940 the runway contained more concrete than all of the streets and sidewalks in Alaska.
- Ladd Field's utilities were placed in heated underground tunnels known as utilidors. The Utilidors linked all of the buildings within the horseshoe and were large enough to be used as walkways between the buildings during the winter months.

Learn more here!

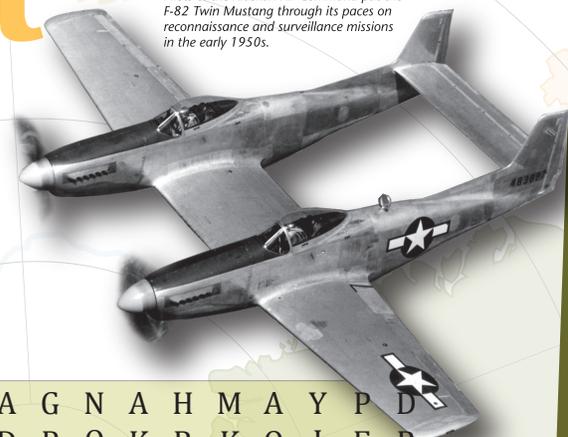


Hangar No. 1, the largest building in Interior Alaska, takes shape in the winter of 1940-41.



Aviation History of Ladd, Fort Wainwright

During World War II, the Cold Weather Test Detachment tested all aircraft in the American arsenal. It's mission was to make every plane operable at temperatures of 65 degrees below zero. The aircraft manufacturers and support companies that made everything from tires to engines sent representatives to Alaska to work with the detachment.



Pilots of the Alaskan Air Command put the F-82 Twin Mustang through its paces on reconnaissance and surveillance missions in the early 1950s.

History
Arsenal
Planes
Extreme
Ladd
Alaska
Runway
Test
Defense
Hangar
Aviation
Military

S Z D B R Y T Y Y R A G N A H M A Y P D
W E B N A M R W N F D P O K R K O I E R
N L N W I A C K L M N S I S D S D F U K
S P N A T S Q A Q B T O T A T V E H V J
S U P I L F R Z M N Z L A L E N M N J R
R M L W N P O I I R A J I A S B C D A A
E I P H I S T O R Y I R V E Y J W Z P L
M T Z Q U X X G Y S Y E A O B Z E J J U
H X E P T R D U L A D D P D Y A X J S B
L A L S D V K U M Q L H N H J E T G L M
P X T Z T A D X E P E U V D J W R T E Z
Y U H E E Y P G E R S F L P U N E F M U
B I E B N I D G U E C J T P W Z M K L M
A X N S I I H M A I K A Q B X V E S P C
B T J G I E Z F J Q D I J R A U G Q Q W

The aeronautical research effort grew into a sophisticated enterprise through which more than 700 military personnel tested 22 types of aircraft and related equipment. Knowledge gained on the ground and in the air helped the U.S. military and the aviation industry conquer engineering challenges of extreme conditions.

In 1947, the Air Force opened a cold weather test hangar at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

Cold weather test operations continued in Alaska on a reduced basis, while strategic reconnaissance, air defense, research, and search and rescue missions became the main mission of Ladd Air Force Base.



A squadron of F-89 Scorpions provided air defense for much of Alaska in the 1950s.

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