



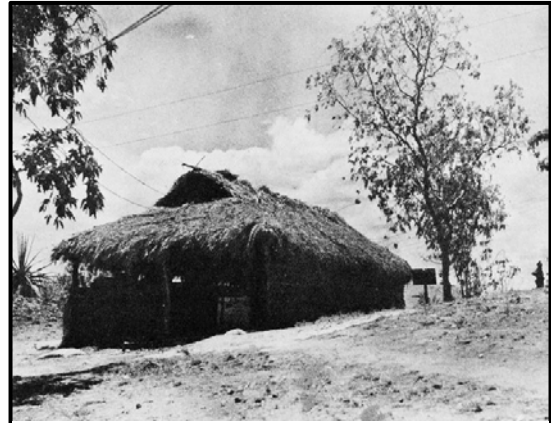
This Month in 35th Fighter Wing and Misawa Air Base History September 2014



This month's edition continues the story of the 35th Fighter Group in the Pacific during World War II and chronicles the many changes at Misawa Air Base from its earliest days.

September 1, 1939: In the month of September, construction began on Misawa's runway under the direction of the Imperial Japanese Naval Air Force.

September 14, 1942: The 39th Fighter Squadron, 35th Fighter Group departed Antil Plains Aerodrome, Australia to return to Port Moresby, New Guinea equipped with the new P-38 Lightning. The 39th Fighter Squadron had arrived in mainland Australia from New Guinea in mid-August to turn in the unit's P-39 Airacobras. The unit was one of the first squadrons in the Southwest Pacific to receive the new aircraft, which quickly established itself as a superior air-to-air platform. Thomas J. Lynch, the 35th Fighter Wing's all-time, top ace scored all of his 20 aerial victories in the P-38, and Richard I. Bong, on temporary assignment to the 39th Fighter Squadron, scored his first aerial victories under the auspices of the 35th Fighter Group in the P-38.



September, 1943: On 17 and 18 August, the 35th Fighter Group participated in a series of attacks at the port of Wewak on the northern coast of New Guinea, heavily damaging Japanese aircraft and facilities. As a result, U.S. forces gained air superiority over New Guinea and freed the 35th Fighter Group to provide close air support to advancing ground forces.

Captain Edward F. Graham of the 35th Fighter Group wrote:

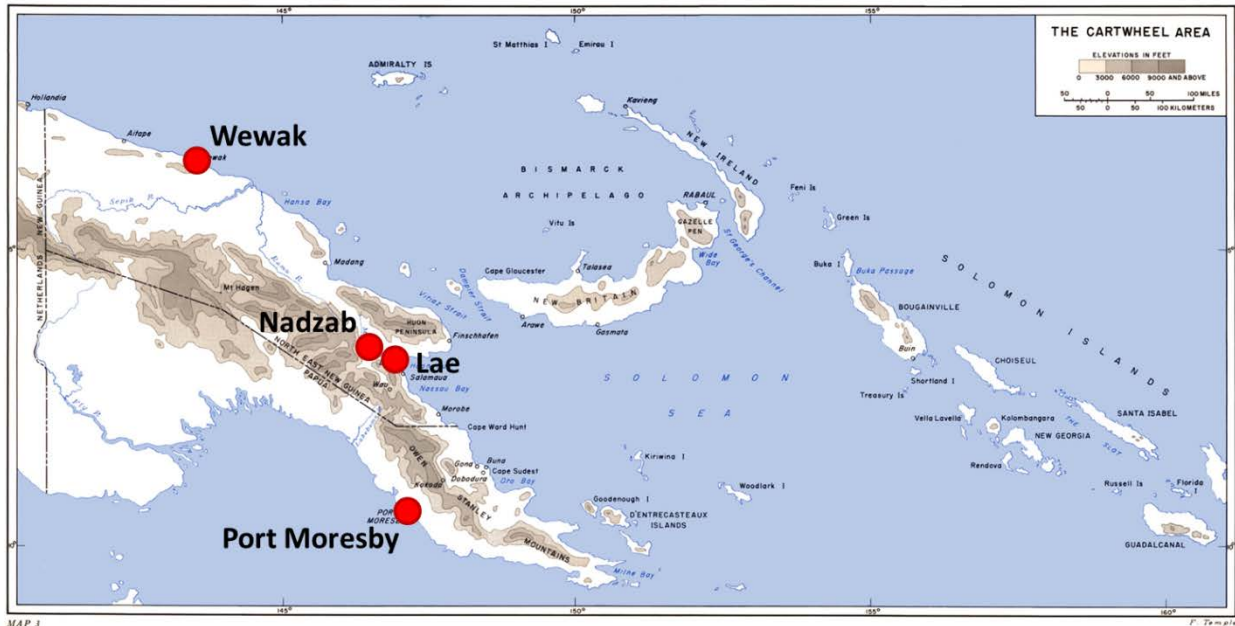


A P-38 Lightning of the 39th Pursuit Squadron at New Guinea, 1943.

On September 3, 1943, the "Lightnings" of the 39th Squadron staged in at Tsili Tsili to participate in the Second Air Task Force's assignment to cover the amphibious landings of the 9th Australian Division on the beach between Lae and Hopoi on September 4th. The landings went off the next day as planned, and the squadron patrolled and maintained surveillance over the area of operations.



This Month in 35th Fighter Wing and Misawa Air Base History September 2014



He continued:

On September 5th, the 39th Fighter Squadron provided escort for troop carrier units flying paratroopers from Port Moresby to seize Nadzab in the Markham Valley. The mission was successfully accomplished and the squadron's planes gave constant air protection to the ground units as they seized their objectives in the valley. Later in the day, the 9th Australian Division, pushing inland from the beaches at Hopoi crossed the Markham River by pontoon bridges and joined forces with the paratroop units holding the Nadzab airstrip.

September 10, 1944: Over the course of World War II, the Japanese Imperial Naval Air Forces stationed at Misawa Naval Air Base restructured and reorganized to meet the needs of the Japanese war effort, and by 1944, the installation served as the home station of the 705th Air Group. Following several critical military defeats, the Japanese Imperial Navy organized a number of special attack units known as Kamikaze and designated the 705th at Misawa as a training division for Kamikaze pilots on September 10, 1944. Misawa's Kamikazes deployed in early 1945, and by August of 1945, more than half of the Misawa pilots had died in combat.

September 2, 1945: VJ Day: Japan signed the instrument of surrender on board the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, marking the end of World War II.



This Month in 35th Fighter Wing and Misawa Air Base History September 2014



September 15, 1945: The first American troops arrived at Misawa Air Base under the command of Captain Davis K. Stark, commander of the 32d Army Engineering Construction Group. Known as the Wild Cats, Stark's troops secured the base and prepared it for the arrival of the 49th Fighter Group and its F-51 aircraft in March 1948. During this time, several experimental Japanese aircraft abandoned at Misawa were disassembled and transported to the United States for further study.



Captain Davis K. Stark, Commander, 32d Army Engineering Construction Group, circa 1945.

September 5, 1946: The Government of Japan completed the transfer of all properties on Misawa Air Base to the U.S.

September 28, 1950: Misawa tanks. The 49th Fighter-Bomber Group, stationed at Misawa Air Base, flew the first F-80 missions from Taegu Air Base during the Korean War. In order to enable the extended flight time from Misawa to Taegu, Lieutenants Robert Eckman and Edward Johnston of the 49th Fighter-Bomber wing created the Misawa Tank, an extended fuel tank mounted on the wing tips of the F-80. At that time, F-80 fuel tanks came in three pieces -- a front, a middle, and an end. The industrious officers built the tanks by adding a second middle section and increased the tank's capacity from 165 to 265 gallons.

September 12, 1957: The Far East Network, a predecessor to the Armed Forces Network Pacific, began broadcasts at Misawa Air Base.

September 29, 1978: After a four year absence, Pacific Air Forces returned to Misawa Air Base with the activation of the 6112th Air Base Wing. Pacific Air Forces had ended regular operations from Misawa Air Base in 1972 and turned flight line operations over to the U.S. Navy. Pacific Air Forces did not resume regular flight operations from Misawa until 1984.



This Month in 35th Fighter Wing and Misawa Air Base History September 2014



September 6, 1980: The 6112th Air Base Wing and the Japan Air Self-Defense Force's 3d Air Wing combined efforts in the first bilateral open house and air festival at Misawa Air Base. The air show occurred on September 7 and featured the final appearance of the Blue Impulse flight team in F-86 aircraft at Misawa. Established in 1960, the Blue Impulse team flew their first aerial performance in March of that year. The team performed during the opening ceremonies of the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games; they drew the Olympic rings in colored smoke over Tokyo.

September 6, 1981: The 3d Air Wing and 6112th Air Base Wing unveiled the static display F-86 in Risner Circle during the second annual Friendship Festival and Air Show. The aircraft featured U.S. markings on one side and Japanese markings on the other and symbolized the strong bilateral relationship of Misawa Air Base.

September 1, 1983: A Soviet Su-15 interceptor shot down Korean Air Lines Flight 007 over the Sea of Japan. The aircraft was en route from Anchorage, Alaska to Seoul, South Korea when it entered restricted Soviet airspace. The incident resulted in the deaths of 269 passenger and crew including U.S. Congressman Lawrence McDonald of Georgia. The episode was one of the tensest moments of the Cold War and contributed to a resurgence of U.S.-Soviet tensions. In the wake of the tragedy, the U.S. military deployed Air Force F-15s and Navy F-4s to Misawa Air Base, which was the center of the U.S. air response to the incident. Ultimately, the disaster demonstrated the need for greater U.S. air defense and rescue capabilities in Northern Japan and led to the resumption of regular flight operations by the Pacific Air Forces from Misawa.

September 17, 1995: On October 1, 1994, the 35th Fighter Wing activated at Misawa Air Base to serve as the operating unit for the Pacific Air Forces' Wild Weasel squadrons. In the early 1990s, the U.S. Air Force began to phase out the F-4G Wild Weasel platform in favor of the newer F-16 CJ, Block 50. Pacific Air Forces identified Misawa Air Base as the new home for the Wild Weasels in the Pacific, filling a role previously held by Clark Air Base in the Philippines. On September 17, 1995, the last Block 50 F-16 CJ arrived at Misawa Air Base and completed the 35th Fighter Wing's conversion to the new aircraft.

September 27, 1996: As part of Operation Desert Strike, the 13th Fighter Squadron destroyed an Iraqi SA-8 site and become the first unit to employ the AGM-88 High-speed Anti-Radiation Missile (HARM) from an F-16CJ.

September 7, 2000: The 373d Intelligence Group activated at Misawa under the Air Intelligence Agency. The existing 301st Intelligence Squadron realigned under the new group alongside the 373d Support Squadron, which activated the same day.