

Indian Mt. Alaska 1963-1964

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A1C Leonard E Smallwood "VET" of Indian Mountain 708th AC&W Squadron. I departed Ellsworth AFB 28th Bomb Wing, "Rapid City S. Dakota" in March 1963. Arrived at the 708th AC&W Site March 1963, stayed there until February 1964.

Andy our "bush pilot" introduce me to the 708th as we got within sight of the bottom camp, my thoughts was, oh my God; for one year. Check in the Orderly-Room, made my rounds. Reported to the Civil-Engineering Officer, Maj. Luebow. Since my AFC was "heating" going to be the "boiler master" of Indian Mountain. The Major informed me if the temperature would drop to -38 degrees or colder and if we would lose the boilers for fifteen minutes: there would be a site evacuation due to frozen condensate lines. Well, we will keep the fires burning.

I was assign to bottom camp boiler room, three low pressure boilers "steam" fuel oil for fuel. It was plenty cold at the end of March 1963. I got to know the best bunch of men in my area: which was Power Production personnel and our heating staff. We kept the home fires burning and lights were bright like never before.

At bottom camp, I made A1C in mid summer, then was shipped to top camp. There we had two high pressure hot water boilers. I didn't like top camp to well. Steam is my forte, was promise to return to bottom camp as soon as a replacement came. This happen in the month of September.

The 708th had the best cook's that ever turn an egg,

they could do wonders in the little chow-hall. We had Moose stakes some times, an even tried Bear. Sure appreciated them men behind the serving line.

On site we had two dogs which all the airmen enjoyed: Utopia and Moose. After all a dog is a mans best friend, up there you need the very best of friends. It has been "forty-six" years since I was there at Indian Mountain: ever now an then, I still dream of the Mountain. We in the heating AFC had to also keep the water tank filled "40,000 gal." and treat the water supply, transfer the fuel down to the lower fuel tank, and keep the fire engine " 1949 flat head Ford" in operational order. Who ever was on night duty had do perform a fire watch threw out bottom camp.

Oh, I have to tell about the entertainment of Indian Mountain. For the inside activity there was a pool table, a boxer bag, small movie screen, (the weathermen would be in charge of projector), and we would play "Volley Ball" when ever could get a team together. We had a small B X where we could shop, "it only took thirty-seconds to do your shopping". Usually we would buy ammunition 22-cal. to pop some shots out from the site.

Andy was our bush pilot, the most important man in northern Alaska. I've seen him bring the mail in, "when he really didn't have to, do to extreme bad weather conditions". There was one time he delivered the mail, "with everyone watching" we was witnessing the action of the best bush pilot in all Alaska. The wind was blowing to extreme speed and the snow was

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traveling with the wind. It was hard to see him from the out side entrance of the NCO & Airman's club door. There he was with his single engine Cessna, bouncing from one wheel to another, trying to keep the plane on the runway, "which was an 8% up hill grade". He was doing all he could do to keep from turning over, and it took the total length of the runway to get that plane safely stopped up at the turn around. We got our mail, most important commutation documents ever from home. Andy was a great man, we had high respect for him, and he could have anything on site if he wanted it. Sometimes "if he could spare a moment" he would come in and have a cup of coffee. He flew me in and flew me out, I got a chance to shake his hand and thank him for everything.

Going to try to remember some of the names that was on Indian Mountain Alaska, land of Utopia.

Site Commander- Maj. Terrie; First Sgt.-Decapie; Civil Eng. 1st Lt. Boakie. Supply Officer-Warren Officer 4th-C Mr. Kitter, "he was before the A F had strips" (well respected).

Power Production men: A1C. Farrington; A2C Nix; A2C Ardie; A3C. Hawthorn, (he could fly them Cummings Diesels like no other, even in his room he would tell me what Diesel engine was taking on the load just by the sound of the exhaust). There were other Power Production men, (good men) but I can't remember there names, "right now". The engines got the best of care, a good team of men.

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Top Camp- A1C Cherrpack.

Boiler Operators. A1C. Williams; A2C. Harrison; A2C. Block; A1C Smallwood, A1C Vallano and (a civilian. Mr. Mike Orosie which was at bottom and top camp helping out where ever he could). There are a couple others, can not remember the names now.

We all had our moments of trials when things were not going so well, but we corrected the situation in a short time. Everyone on site performed his duties with excellence.

Supply Personnel. Top Camp. Airman Chadium; Airman Jolly; Warren Officer Mr. Kitter was the supply officer for both camps.

I'll sum this up now; the AAC should have had a Medal for all those men that served remote sites in Alaska. Men of Indian Mountain survived the loneliness, "mother natures weather", confinement and did a job well done. I know I wasn't the only man who served at the mountain, "but I can say this" the mountain made me find myself, other wise I knew A1C Smallwood better when I left the Mountain. I am 68 years old now- 12-12-08 and proud to know some of the men when I was at Indian Mountain.

Retired, Leonard E Smallwood

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