

# ELMENDORF AIR FORCE BASE ALASKA

## CULTURAL EXCELLENCE AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD

### FY2007 Secretary of Defense Environmental Award

Award Category:  
Cultural Resources  
Management Award

### SUMMARY

The cultural resources program at Elmendorf is carefully integrated into the installation's long-range planning. This ensures that while future growth occurs, we protect the environment, maintain bio-diversity, safeguard human health, and preserve our unique cultural resources. The commitment to excellence in cultural resources management is demonstrated in the following:

- **Processed 45 separate actions** requiring State Historic Preservation Office concurrence, while supporting the beddown of C-17, F-22, and Kulis ANG aircraft and missions.
- **Monitored cultural resources** during mining of 12 million cubic yards of gravel supporting construction of a joint deployment access road to, and expansion of, the adjacent Port of Anchorage Strategic Seaport.
- **Preserved the Alaskan Command Headquarters Building**, incorporating historic and cultural interpretive displays and artwork into total facility renovation design.
- **Included native elder speakers in the beddown ceremony** of Elmendorf's first C-17, the naming of Dena'ina Road for the local indigenous people. Coordinated the removal of a totem pole and planned replacement with a native built cache fostering trust with native Alaska tribes.
- **Reused WWII Hangars**, applying adaptive reuse principles to shelter and maintain F-15 and F-22 aircraft in historic structures.
- **Integrated cultural resources** preservation with the Environmental Impact Assessment Process.
- **Protected cultural resources** through unique Military Conservation Agent program, involving 40 trained volunteers to perform education and enforcement.
- **Incorporated cultural resources** in our Environmental Management System and US EPA Performance Track certification.

## INTRODUCTION

Elmendorf Air Force Base (EAFB) in Alaska is home of Headquarters of the Alaskan Command (ALCOM) and the 3rd Wing. The 3rd Wing also serves as the host for the Alaska North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) Region Headquarters, Eleventh Air Force Headquarters, and many associate and tenant units. It consists of 6,500 military personnel, 9,600 family members, and more than 1,900 civilians. This proud fighting force is equipped with F-22, F-15, E-3, C-17 and C-12 aircraft.

The 3rd Wing provides air supremacy, surveillance, worldwide airlift, and agile combat support forces to project global power and global reach. It maintains the installation for critical force staging and throughput operations in support of worldwide contingencies, and provides medical care for all military forces in Alaska.

EAFB occupies 13,455 acres of land just north of Anchorage and immediately west of Fort Richardson in Southcentral Alaska. It skirts the shores of Knik Arm, the northern most extension of Cook Inlet, and lies in the Anchorage lowland. Surrounding the lowlands are the rugged mountains of the Chugach Range to the east and the Alaska Range to the north and west.



### Mother with Two Cubs:

This piece was commissioned to create a commanding sculpture visible from both inside and outside the base hospital. This is the largest bear form Sylvester Ayek, an Inupiat Eskimo from King Island, has ever created, with the mother weighing 6,000 lbs., and the cubs 1,500 lbs. each. This sculpture symbolizes our commitment to care for military families.

Alaska Natives are believed to have used the area extensively for hunting and fishing, as well as a base for whaling. First contact with Europeans occurred with the expedition of Captain Cook in 1778, who was later followed by Russian explorers. Russian trading posts were established in the early 1800s and trade continued until 1836, when a disastrous small pox epidemic reduced the local native population by 50%. As the population decreased, native residency shifted to the main villages of Eklutna and Knik, which exist to this day near the northern border of the base.

When the US gained control of Alaska in 1867, an influx of prospectors and miners began to settle in the area, and a group of homesteaders made entry onto the land encompassed by Elmendorf. Two of their buildings are preserved and in use today on base. In 1941, WWII necessitated the acquisition of the area for national defense. The base flourished as a pivotal operational base and staging area during the Cold War. In the post-Cold War era, Elmendorf is key to meeting both US Pacific Command's staging and throughput requirements, and US Northern Command and NORAD's homeland defense mission. Elmendorf and the adjacent Fort Richardson, which eventually will be combined into a joint base, are major economic contributors to both the Municipality of Anchorage and the state.

## BACKGROUND

EAFB's current Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP) serves as the cornerstone for Elmendorf's successful cultural resources program, providing a wealth of information about archaeological sites, base history, completed studies, historic structures and districts, and guidance for the future.

## Organization and Staffing

The cultural resources program falls within the 3rd Civil Engineer Squadron Environmental Flight. This program is staffed by civil service employees in the Environmental Planning and Conservation Element who oversee cultural and natural resources management, environmental planning, and enforcement. In addition, approximately 40 volunteers assist with cultural and natural resource protection.

The cultural resources staff supports outreach and implementation programs of a number of committees, which include the base Environmental, Safety and Occupational Health Council; Fort Richardson Cultural Resources Committee; Alaska DoD Native Liaison Committee; the Elmendorf Native Heritage Committee; and our open-to-the public Community Environmental Board.

Funding for the cultural resources program is budgeted annually and projects eight years into the future. Cultural resources projects have received \$40K in funding in FY06; \$65K in funding in FY07; and have projected \$50K in FY08. Recent projects include an ICRMP revision, Cold War Inventory, multiple building mitigation projects, Historic American Building Survey/ Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) documentation, cultural awareness, and education materials.

## PROGRAM SUMMARY

The cultural resources program at Elmendorf is carefully integrated into the installation's long-range planning to ensure that future growth occurs in such a way as to protect the environment, maintain biodiversity, safeguard human health, clean up legacy problems, and preserve our unique cultural resources.

EAFB received its first C-17 named "Spirit of Denali" in June 2007. This aircraft was the first of eight and was piloted by a mixed crew — two pilots and two loadmasters from active duty Air Force and Alaska Air National Guard. The airlifter is flown by the 517th Airlift Squadron and the Alaska ANG's 249th Airlift Squadron. The keynote speaker was native elder, Prof Eliza Jones, who emphasized local native heritage.



## ELMENDORF BASE DEVELOPMENT

EAFB is an exciting place, undergoing many dramatic changes to include adding major new weapon systems and upgrading and/or building new base infrastructure. We are in the middle of a \$392 million infrastructure expansion that includes new roadways and hangars to support several squadrons of C-17s and F-22s. Multiple facilities are also being built to support a BRAC-driven transfer of the Kulis Air National Guard (ANG) from Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport to Elmendorf, along with the construction of a new regional VA hospital.

Beyond our military mission, EAFB is supporting the adjacent Port of Anchorage Strategic Seaport Expansion Project by providing over 12 million cubic yards of gravel fill, impacting more than 375 base acres. This expansion project is vital to the continued growth of Southcentral Alaska and provides a strategic gateway for military deployments.

To support this frenzied development, the base cultural resources staff has integrated cultural resource protection into the existing Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP).

This enhances the flow of dynamic information, education of key staff, and provides consistent communication with emphasis on mission support. An excellent example of this synergy involves the construction of Dena'ina Road. This is a new seven-mile-long all-season road, much of it cut through undeveloped acreage, from Fort Richardson through EAFB to the Port of Anchorage. It supports a vital mission requirement to quickly move Army Stryker vehicles from Fort Richardson to port facilities for rapid deployment.

Through the EIAP processes, the public, including the local native tribes, became integral partners in the success of this project. Detailed field surveys along the proposed route, which included site visits from local village elders, discovered and documented over 200 cultural artifacts. This overwhelmingly positive experience demonstrated that changing mission requirements can be compatible with community and native issues and concerns.

### Cultural Resources Evaluation Procedures

Elmendorf employs a unique "living history" approach in our cultural resources evaluations. This "living history" emanates from those who have been here before us. In the Anchorage area, hundreds of retired military personnel provide a wealth of WWII and Cold War-era knowledge of Elmendorf. Alaska pioneers - homesteaders - have described their pre-military days on what is now our base and documented in our *Homestead Study*. An active native community adjacent to Elmendorf has blessed us with village elders who have been invaluable sources of information regarding the indigenous history and traditional use of the local area.

Additional tools we used included several aerial surveys taken over a 50-year period. This, coupled with an extensive Geographic Informa-

tion System database allows us to expeditiously identify potentially historically valuable sites. In a typical year, the cultural resources staff reviews approximately 300 work orders, of which about 20% will require a more detailed cultural resources assessment.

For new construction and building upgrade projects, the cultural resources staff works very closely with planners and design engineers. Staff members determine the need for National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) coordination as projects evolve, prepare required documentation, negotiate mitigation, and ensure contract compliance. Another key component factored into base planning and design is the active involvement of our local State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Partnering with them in the early stages of planning and design has been tremendously successful, resulting in base development being in harmony with cultural resources protection.

Our cultural resources evaluation does not end in the planning phase. We work very closely with construction managers during the building phase to monitor any real-time cultural resources issues. For example, during gravel extraction in support of the Port of Anchorage expansion project, work was halted when potential WWII and Cold War artifacts were discovered. One of these artifacts included a WWII-era Army Air Corps aircraft.

In summary, the critical role we play in cultural resources management is balancing our ever changing mission requirements with cultural resources protection. Our success in accomplishing this on Elmendorf comes from identifying and preserving the best of our heritage and documenting the history that is affected by new development.



ELMENDORF AFB HISTORIC DISTRICTS	
<b>Flightline District</b>	This district includes 13 buildings associated with the original mission, construction, and development of the base as a WWII airfield. It includes the hangars which have architectural significance as representing the period of building technology and engineering.
<b>Alaska Air Depot District</b>	The Alaska Air Depot District has been referred to as one of the most important units on the base as it was the location of maintenance activities for the support of Eleventh Air Force aircraft. This district contains a large area of taxiways, aircraft hangars and warehouses.
<b>General's Quad Residential Historic District</b>	The General's Quadrangle is in the heart of the cantonment area. It contains several senior commander quarters and the Alaska Chateau, which has been used to temporarily lodge important guests. One of the quarters was used for meetings between President Nixon and Japanese Emperor Hirohito in September 1971.

**HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES**

Unlike many military bases throughout the United States, EAFB's history is relatively new, beginning with the advent of WWII. Many of the structures built in the WWII era were hastily constructed with no thought of long-term use. This, coupled with the harsh arctic climate, has made preservation a formidable challenge. The years subsequent to WWII saw tremendous infrastructure growth in response to our country's Cold War necessity for national security. Our wealth of historic buildings and structures dates to this era. These facilities, which include many aircraft hangars, command facilities, and storage buildings remain vital components of our modern-day mission. Only recently has new construction begun to replace these structures.

**Historic Districts**

Elmendorf has three historic districts. These historic districts include our flightline, Alaska Air Depot, and the General's residential quarters. Each of these districts are comprised of WWII and/or Cold War era structures.

**Historic Buildings**

Elmendorf has about 600 buildings, many beyond 50 years of age. Of these, 52 meet National Register of Historic Places eligibility standards. Hangar 5 is an example of one of these historical facilities. In this hangar, Japanese Emperor Hirohito disembarked from his aircraft in Sept 1971 to visit the United States.



**Adaptive Reuse:** WWII-era hangars are currently being used for maintenance of modern fighter aircraft. This hangar supported the P-38 Lightning during WWII and Century-series fighters during the Cold War. Now it serves the nation's most modern aircraft, the F-22 Raptor.

SHPO MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENTS	
Ongoing	Closed
Log Cabin (6485)	Firing Range (4305)
Wood Shop (9340)	Old Hospital (4905)
Vehicle Storage (9342)	Heating Facility (4913)
HQ ALCOM (9480)	Medical Clinics (5887)
Avionics Shop (10547)	Marine Reserve Ctr (5893)
	Printing Facility (10459)

This marked the first time a Japanese Emperor ever set foot on foreign soil. Hangar 5 and similar hangars on base have housed everything from propeller-driven aircraft, to century-series jets, to modern F-15s and F-22s. Additionally, there are 27 sites on base that predate military construction. These include homestead cabins and areas having Alaska Native presence. Four of these sites are potential candidates for eligibility in the National Historic Register.

**ACHIEVEMENTS**

EAFB is undergoing the most significant expansion of infrastructure since the Cold War era, consequently these are exciting times for the cultural resources staff. Our proactive approach of integrating cultural resources requirements at the very earliest stages of planning and design has allowed us to outpace development efforts. This heightened tempo allowed our staff to process 45 separate actions involving SHPO concurrence. Of these, 23 involved the demolition of WWII - or Cold War-era buildings, 11 of which required Memorandums of Agreement. We are proud that 100% of our requests were approved by SHPO, resulting in no mission delays.

**Program Highlights (C-17 and F-22 Aircraft)**

Elmendorf is proud to be the home of two new F-22 squadrons (totaling 40 aircraft) and one eight-plane C-17 squadron.

Retrofitting our 50-year old hangars to meet some of the modern needs of these highly sophisticated weapon systems proved to be impractical - the C-17 because it is simply too large and the F-22 because of their super hightech requirements. For these reasons, each squadron required new facilities to be built. Leading the list of 20 new facilities to support these weapon systems are the Large Airframe Maintenance Hanger for C-17s and the Low Observable Maintenance Facility for the F-22s.

The cultural resources staff has stayed abreast of this heightened new construction activity by flawlessly meeting every federal and state requirement necessary to construct these facilities. Cultural resources requirements included everything from contributing to Environmental Assessments to conducting SHPO coordination - even to the naming of our first C-17 the "Spirit of Denali", in honor of our Alaska Native heritage.

**Kulis ANG Relocation**

The BRAC-mandated relocation of the Kulis ANG mission to EAFB also required substantial infrastructure changes. The 20+ new aircraft, including C-130s and HH-60s, associated with Kulis will require a minimum of seven new buildings and adaptive reuse of several other existing structures on base. Like the beddown of the C-17s and F-22s, Kulis has also required extensive cultural resources support, to include the Environmental Impact Assessment Process and SHPO interaction and concurrence.

**Port of Anchorage Expansion**

The Port of Anchorage Strategic Seaport Expansion Project includes filling 135 acres of tidelands. This effort requires the mining of 12 million cubic yards of gravel from Elmendorf. In a win-win situation, the Port needed gravel and Elmendorf needed the hilly area north of our



**Dena'ina Road Dedication Ceremony:** Former Alaska Governor William Sheffield, Director of the Port of Anchorage, Ms. Dorothy Cook, President of the Native Village of Eklutna, Brig Gen Tom Tinsley, Commander, 3rd Wing, and Mr. Michael Carter, Director of the Office of Environment at the Maritime Administration, reveal the new "Dena'ina Road" name located on Elmendorf. The road was dedicated to the Dena'ina people, which means 'The Real People'.

North/South runway leveled for safety reasons. Thus, an agreement was established to let the Port extract the gravel from base acreage.

A key ancillary component of the Port of Anchorage expansion is the development of an all-season access road from Fort Richardson, through Elmendorf, to the Port. This road provides a rapid and secure gateway to deploy the Army's Stryker Brigade Combat Teams and its associated logistical support. A major aspect of this work included our requirement to have a contracted cultural resources specialist on site during construction. As a result, more than 200 artifacts were discovered, ranging from aircraft to buried Quonset huts.



**Alaskan Command Headquarters Building**

The retrofit of the headquarters for the Alaskan Command (ALCOM) is a showcase example of cultural resources preservation. This 1948 structure was simply inadequate to meet the needs of today's high-tech DoD. Serious debate was given to demolish this facility and build new.

Through the tireless efforts of our cultural resources staff, the case for preservation rather than demolition won the day. As a result, this building will be preserved and retrofitted to meet modern electrical, heating and ventilation and operational standards. The new interior construction design replicates original design décor and includes interpretive historical displays and artwork throughout the facility.

Preserving this facility that provides the most senior Alaska military leadership a modern operational headquarters conveys a strong message that cultural resource protection is of paramount importance in the execution of our mission.



**ALCOM Building:** A Memorandum of Agreement was signed in 2007 with the State Historic Preservation Office covering renovation and restoration projects for the Headquarters Alaskan Command. The HQ ALCOM building was completed in 1948 and built as a major command headquarters. This 81K square foot facility is eligible for the National Historic Register. The original cost of this facility was \$1.7 million.

### Tuskegee Airmen

Air Force heritage was incorporated into our newest associate unit with the reactivation of the 477th Fighter Group, originally of Tuskegee Airmen fame, and now the only Air Force Reserve F-22 Group. Several original Tuskegee Airmen were invited and participated in the activation ceremony. The famous African American aviators are known for their combat skills earning two Presidential Unit citations during WWII.

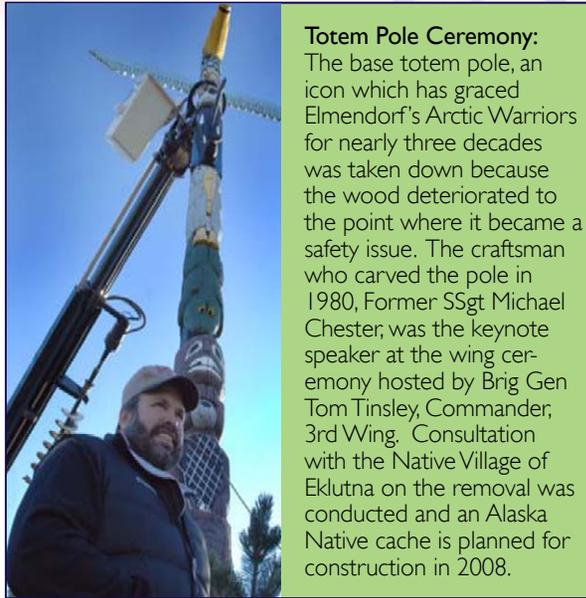
### ALASKA NATIVE RELATIONS

EAFB has fostered positive relations through extensive coordination and government-to-government communications with our local tribal governments in a period of significant mission and associated infrastructure changes. The base emphasizes a relationship with local Alaska Natives that is built on mutual cooperation and trust. An integral component of this is our strong and active Native Liaison Program where tribal elders are viewed as key contributors to the success of the base mission. This program helps to integrate the concerns of the local Knik, Tyonek, Tanacross, Tanana, and Eklutna tribes into the decisions of the 3rd Wing.

Our positive native relations are also enhanced through our Community Environmental Board (CEB). This 17-member board, co-chaired by our vice wing commander and a civilian counterpart, meets bi-annually and serves as our way to inform the public of base environmental activities. We are proud to have a representative from the Native Village of Eklutna as one of the board members. The following examples highlight our successes.

#### Port of Anchorage Expansion

Local native tribes enthusiastically contributed their knowledge during the Port of Anchorage Expansion project, seeing this as a way to



#### Totem Pole Ceremony:

The base totem pole, an icon which has graced Elmendorf's Arctic Warriors for nearly three decades was taken down because the wood deteriorated to the point where it became a safety issue. The craftsman who carved the pole in 1980, Former SSgt Michael Chester, was the keynote speaker at the wing ceremony hosted by Brig Gen Tom Tinsley, Commander, 3rd Wing. Consultation with the Native Village of Eklutna on the removal was conducted and an Alaska Native cache is planned for construction in 2008.

potentially discover previously unknown native activity. Tribal elders from the native villages of Eklutna and Knik conducted site visits and helped to identify 10 "loop trees" - culturally modified birch trees used for navigation and ceremonial purposes. So successful was this cooperative effort that elders from the two tribes asked for the new allseason road from Fort Richardson to the Port to be named Dena'ina, "The Real People", in honor of their heritage. This request was honored and the road was dedicated in an official ceremony.

#### C-17 "Spirit of Denali"

In June 2007, the official C-17 beddown ceremony paid tribute to our Alaska Native heritage (see picture). This ceremony, attended by hundreds of local residents and native peoples, focused on honoring our local native heritage. Key in this ceremony was naming our first C-17 aircraft the "Spirit of Denali." The word Denali, "The High One", is the native name for Mount McKinley, and originates from the Koyukon-Athabaskan native language. Alaska Native, professor Ms. Eliza Jones

provided a rich native heritage message at this ceremony, which received worldwide attention.

#### Elmendorf Totem Pole

The base's wooden totem pole, an icon gracing Elmendorf's Arctic Warriors for more than three decades, had to be brought down due to safety concerns from decomposition. Prior to its removal, a concerted effort involving local natives was conducted in order to bring the pole down with dignity versus allowing it to collapse. The original craftsman of this totem pole, former SSgt Michael Chester, still lives in the area and graciously served as the keynote speaker during the removal ceremony. The pole told our base history through native icons. Plans are now underway to replace this pole with an authentic Alaska Native cache which will include an interpretive display. This new cache will be built with the help of Native Village of Eklutna traditional craftsmen.

### AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

Promoting and preserving our rich cultural resources is a shared goal of Team Elmendorf. The main vehicle for achieving this goal is through our Environmental Management System (EMS) program. EMS, which is patterned after international environmental standards focuses on sustainability and preservation of precious resources. An integral component of our EMS program is the commander's environmental policy statement which establishes our goals for environmental sustainability. In this policy, cultural resources are key assets to be preserved and protected. Over 6,500 base personnel received EMS Awareness Training promoting environmental protection and cultural resources sustainability. In May 2007, EAFB underwent a rigorous three-day independent EMS audit to gauge the health of our program. Not a single nonconformance was noted during this audit.

One of the many positive findings of this audit focused on our superb cultural resources management. As a result of this audit and the diligence of our environmental warriors, EAFB went on to earn the prestigious US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Performance Track certification. EAFB is the first facility, private or military, in Alaska to receive this elite certification. EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson stated in regard to EAFB's Performance Track, "Your facility is being recognized for its commitment to continuous environmental improvement and for its impressive record of environmental management and performance."

#### **Awareness and Community Relations**

To foster an awareness of the rich cultural history, EAFB's cultural resources staff regularly conducts tours of the base. Twenty four of these tours were conducted in 2007. Highlights included visits to our historic districts to view architectural designs and to the base hospital to review our extensive collection of native artifacts on display throughout the hospital. The hospital displays showcase native Alaskan clothing, tools, and artwork. Life-size bear statues made of marble, hand carved benches, and many authentic artifacts bring the culture to life and spark interest in the visitors and patients. This program received a "best practice" finding during a recent headquarters ESOH Compliance Assessment Management Program cultural resources assessment.

#### **Base Conservation Education Center**

A "must-see" stop for any visitor to EAFB is our Conservation Education Center located in one of the oldest structures on base, a rustic log cabin circa 1945. This visitor center contains a world-class exhibit of Alaskan wildlife and detailed pictorial presentations of EAFB throughout its military history. Thousands of



**Alaska Native Clothes and Tools:** Displays at the base hospital include a collection of Native Art Collection; primarily functional clothes and tools. Thousands of service members and their families view these displays. According to anthropologists and folklorists who base their categories on linguistic and cultural similarity, there are four major groups of Alaska Natives. The items on display from these groups have information cards describing each object.

people from all over the world have signed our guest log book and have consistently congratulated us for our remarkable cultural and natural resources displays.

#### **Military Conservation Agent Program**

To protect our cultural and natural resources, EAFB began a unique program called the Military Conservation Agent (MCA). This pioneering program, open exclusively to active duty military volunteers, provides extensive cultural and natural resources training in order to protect base personnel and assets. This 40 person program has been a resounding success and contributes a minimum of three man-years each year to our cultural and natural resources protection. MCA agents have full Conservation Law Enforcement authority on base, and accept this responsibility as an additional duty. MCA agents routinely patrol the installation, using everything from snow machines to patrol vehicles, in order to protect our cultural and natural resource assets. MCAs also respond to

various other vital taskings, such as responding to wildlife-human encounters and providing education in the field. Twenty-seven of our MCA agents were awarded the Excellence in Volunteerism Award. Many of these volunteers have used this training to begin a new career after their enlistments.

#### **SUMMARY**

Cultural resources sustainability and protection are woven into the fabric of our military mission. We are immensely proud of our cultural resources program and hope this award submission captures your admiration for the efforts we have accomplished. The thousands of military members that have been blessed with an assignment on Elmendorf will forever remember the rich beauty and heritage that is here for all to revere. We believe the environmental ethics learned here by these warriors will serve our country well, as cultural resources indeed are truly national treasures.



# CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

---

## ELMENDORF AIR FORCE BASE

Nominee: 3rd Civil Engineer Squadron,  
Elmendorf AFB AK

Nominating Individual: Daniel A. Barnett  
Base Civil Engineer

Nominating Individual's  
Email Address: Daniel.Barnett@elmendorf.af.mil

Nominating Individual's  
Phone Number: 907.552.4833, DSN 317.552.4833

Shipping Address: 3 CES/CEV  
6326 Arctic Warrior Dr.  
Elmendorf AFB AK 99506

