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OPERATION HELPING HAND

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The Armed Forces React to Earthquake Disaster

2 July 1964

Dear General Reeves:

Thank you for your informative booklet "Operation Helping Hand."

The manner in which your command reacted to this disaster is an indication of its capability to provide a ready response.

In addition, I am sure that the information you have compiled in "Operation Helping Hand" will prove a reliable reference if the Armed Forces should again be called upon to offer assistance of this nature.

Sincerely,

EUGENE A. SALET
Major General, United States Army
Commandant

Lieutenant General R. J. Reeves, USAF
Commander in Chief
Alaskan Command
APO 942, Seattle, Washington

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HEADQUARTERS ALASKAN COMMAND
Office of the Commander in Chief
APO 942, Seattle, Washington

2 2 JUN 1964

Major General Eugene A. Salet
Commanding General
US Army Training Center
Fort Gordon, Georgia

Dear General Salet:

Immediately following the 27 March earthquake in Alaska, the military establishment provided every assistance possible to the stricken communities to aid in their recovery.

The assistance rendered is worthy of note; not only from the humane aspect but also because in the actual accomplishment many lessons were learned.

The enclosed brochure, "Operation Helping Hand," was prepared by this Command. It includes pictorial coverage of the disaster and a narrative summary of the military assistance rendered. I hope you will find it of interest.

Sincerely,

R. J. REEVES
Lieutenant General, USAF
Commander in Chief

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HEADQUARTERS ALASKAN COMMAND
Office of the Commander in Chief
APO 942, Seattle, Washington

OPERATION HELPING HAND

The earthquake that occurred at 5:36 p.m. on Good Friday, 27 March 1964, was a disaster of major magnitude. This earthquake, which seismologists claim to be the most devastating on record in North America, started a chain reaction of events culminating in a joint military - civilian population effort unparalleled in Alaskan, if not in our nation's history.

Alaskans won the admiration of the world with their immediate display of courage and determination. Never was there a doubt of their ability to rebuild a greater, more prosperous state. This was evident in the bleak hours immediately following the tragic occurrence.

The military in Alaska, from the moment of the disaster, mustered their full strength to assist their neighbors. The military services proved once again that they are ready, willing, and able to cope with emergencies, whatever their origin.

I am extremely pleased with the spirit of cooperation and the positive attitude which has prevailed since the great earthquake. I extend my sincere appreciation to Major General James C. Jensen, Commander, Alaskan Air Command; Major General Ned D. Moore, Commanding General, U.S. Army, Alaska; Rear Admiral Robert E. Riera, Commander, Alaskan Sea Frontier; and all concerned for their full support during this period. It was a privilege to participate in "Helping Hand."

R. J. REEVES
Lieutenant General, USAF
Commander in Chief

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BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE

GOOD FRIDAY

27 MARCH 1964

Suddenly, the earth rocked and rolled -- seismographs throughout the Pacific area registered a magnitude from 8.2 to 8.7 on the Richter scale.

Seismologists describe a destruction of this magnitude thusly:

> "Few masonry structures, if any remain standing.
>
> "Bridges destroyed.
>
> "Broad fissures in ground.
>
> "Underground pipe lines completely out of service.
>
> "Earth slumps and land slips in soft ground.
>
> "Rails bend greatly."

This was the picture throughout many parts of Alaska following the Good Friday earthquake and resultant seismic waves.

FOREWORD

This publication was prepared by Headquarters, Alaskan Command, in cooperation with United States Army, Alaska; the Alaskan Sea Frontier; the Alaskan Air Command; Federal Government Agencies; and other military commands. It was published to provide the many interested agencies and organizations an accurate, historical report of the military assistance rendered Alaskan communities following the 27 March earthquake.

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CHAPTER I

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE EARTHQUAKE

With communications almost non-existent between Alaskan Command Headquarters and the areas hard-hit by the earthquake and seismic waves, only sketchy information was available to evaluate the damage immediately. Based on information readily available, Lieutenant General Raymond J. Reeves, Commander in Chief, Alaska, made the following report to the Department of Defense through the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"An earthquake of 8.5 magnitude centered at 61N 147.5W occurred at 280336Z causing extensive damage in southern Alaska and tidal waves. The major earthquake has been followed by numerous minor tremors. The Alaskan communities of Anchorage, Seward, Valdez, Cordova, Kodiak and Kenai have received major damage. There are apparently some casualties in these communities, but the local civil authorities have not been able to determine estimated numbers.

"The following are summaries of confirmed damage reports that have been received: Anchorage International Airport control tower was destroyed and Federal Aviation Agency facilities thereat are inoperative. At present time, only 3,000 feet of runway is usable. In Anchorage, numerous major buildings have been extensively damaged and homes destroyed. Fuel tanks in the port area have been ruptured and fires started in the rail yards. The business district of Kodiak has been washed away by tidal waves. However, warning was given in sufficient time to allow evacuation out of danger areas. Incomplete reports from Valdez and Seward indicate major tidal wave damage and resultant fires.

"The Alaskan Command has been in constant contact with Governor Egan, Mayor Sharrock (Anchorage) and other civilian and Civil Defense authorities to determine what the military can do to assist in this disaster. The Alaskan Command is giving full available assistance to the stricken communities and will continue this aid as long as required to protect lives and property and help in the recovery from this calamity.

"Some examples of this assistance are: Troops and materiel support have been provided to the Anchorage area. Fissures in the road prevented our support convoy from reaching Seward. Troops and materiel will be sent to Seward by helicopter after daylight on 28 March. Weather prevented airlift of troops and materiel support from reaching Valdez. Barracks on Elmendorf Air Force Base have been made available to shelter civilians.

"The Alaskan Command Headquarters will continue on a 24-hour operation during the present emergency to direct military support and assistance operations.

"Elmendorf Air Force Base, Fort Richardson and Wildwood Station have been damaged. The extent of the damage is currently being surveyed. However, the Alaskan Command is operational and capable of carrying out all assigned missions.

"The preliminary damage surveys of Elmendorf Air Force Base and Fort Richardson reveal the following: The Elmendorf Hospital was severely damaged and the patients were evacuated. There was some damage to aircraft, the Alaska North American Air Defense Region remains fully capable of performing its air defense mission. The control tower at Elmendorf was severely damaged and is unusable, but the airfield remains operational. Both installations have suffered moderate to severe damage to utilities and power has not been fully restored to either. Additional tremors have caused further damage.

"The following is a summary of communications damage: The majority of the long-line voice communications have been restored. Essential circuits to air defense activities are operational. Difficulties encountered are confined to local areas in most instances. The technical control facility at Elmendorf has been evacuated and the major teletype relay is inoperative. One teletype circuit from the Joint Communications Center to Ent Air Force Base has been restored and one teletype circuit from Defense Communications Agency, Alaska to Defense Communications Agency, Washington is operational. Teletype facilities will continue to be severely limited until the technical control and major teletype relay facilities at Elmendorf are restored. There are no known military casualties and none have been reported by the military hospitals and dispensaries. However, a considerable number of our personnel live in the stricken communities and our reports are incomplete.

"A Strategic Air Command KC-135 (Stratotanker) aircraft was sent from Eielson Air Force Base to Juneau to bring doctors and nurses to the Anchorage area. Alaskan Air Command has requested six 36-bed mobile hospital units be sent to assist the command.

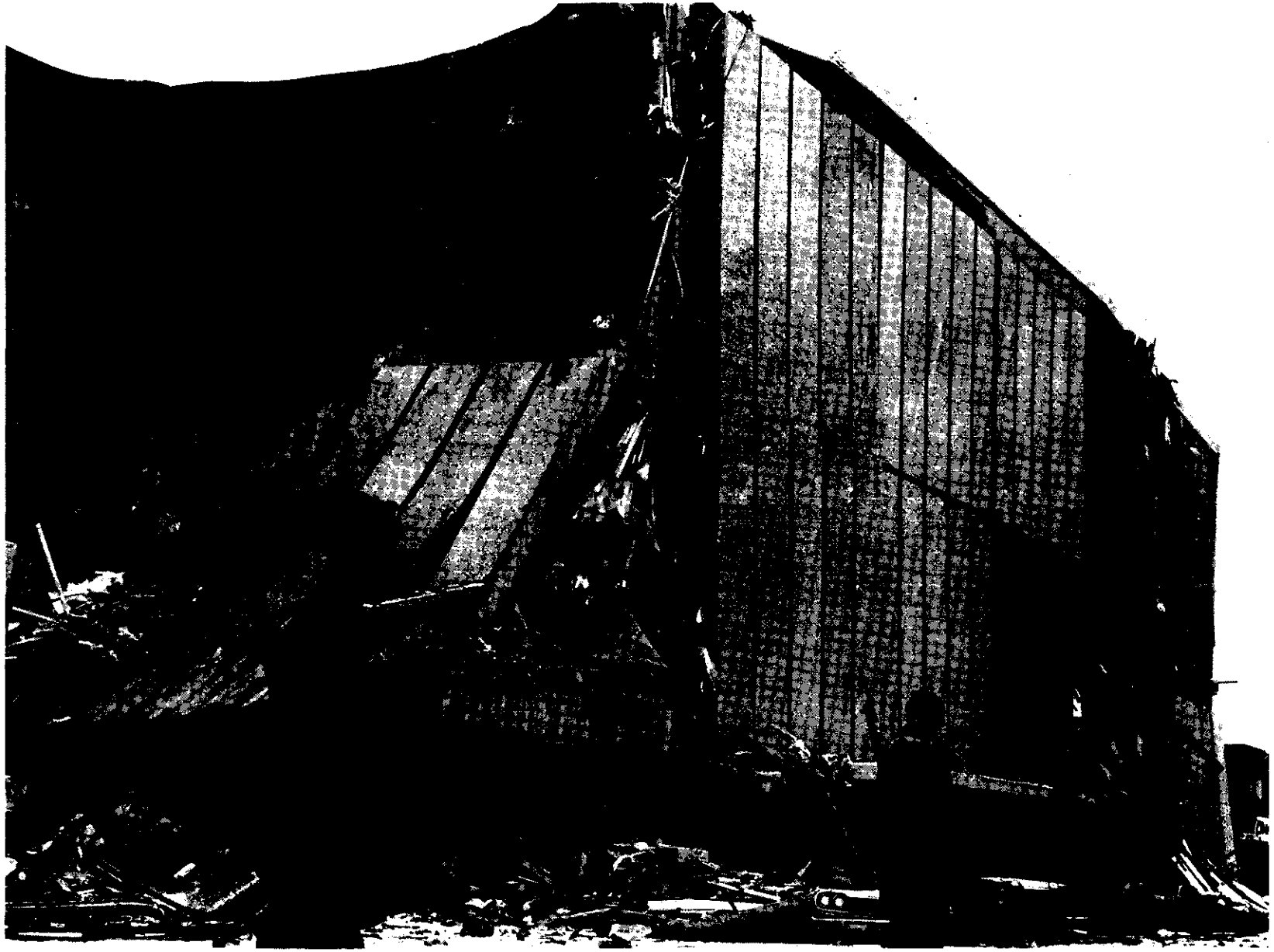
"At daylight, 28 March, with weather permitting, aerial visual and photographic reconnaissance will be made of southern Alaska to fill in the incomplete reports that have been received.

"The following public release has been made by General Reeves: 'The Alaskan Command still maintains its full capability to carry out its assigned mission - Defense of Alaska - despite some damage to both buildings and equipment caused by the disasterous earthquake at 5:40 p.m. yesterday.' This announcement was made by Lieutenant General Raymond J. Reeves, Commander in Chief, Alaska, following his personal evaluation of the situation from a military viewpoint. General Reeves also stated that the military is cooperating with Civil Defense and other state and local officials in providing assistance, emergency equipment, emergency housing, water, and other needed items."

CHAPTER II

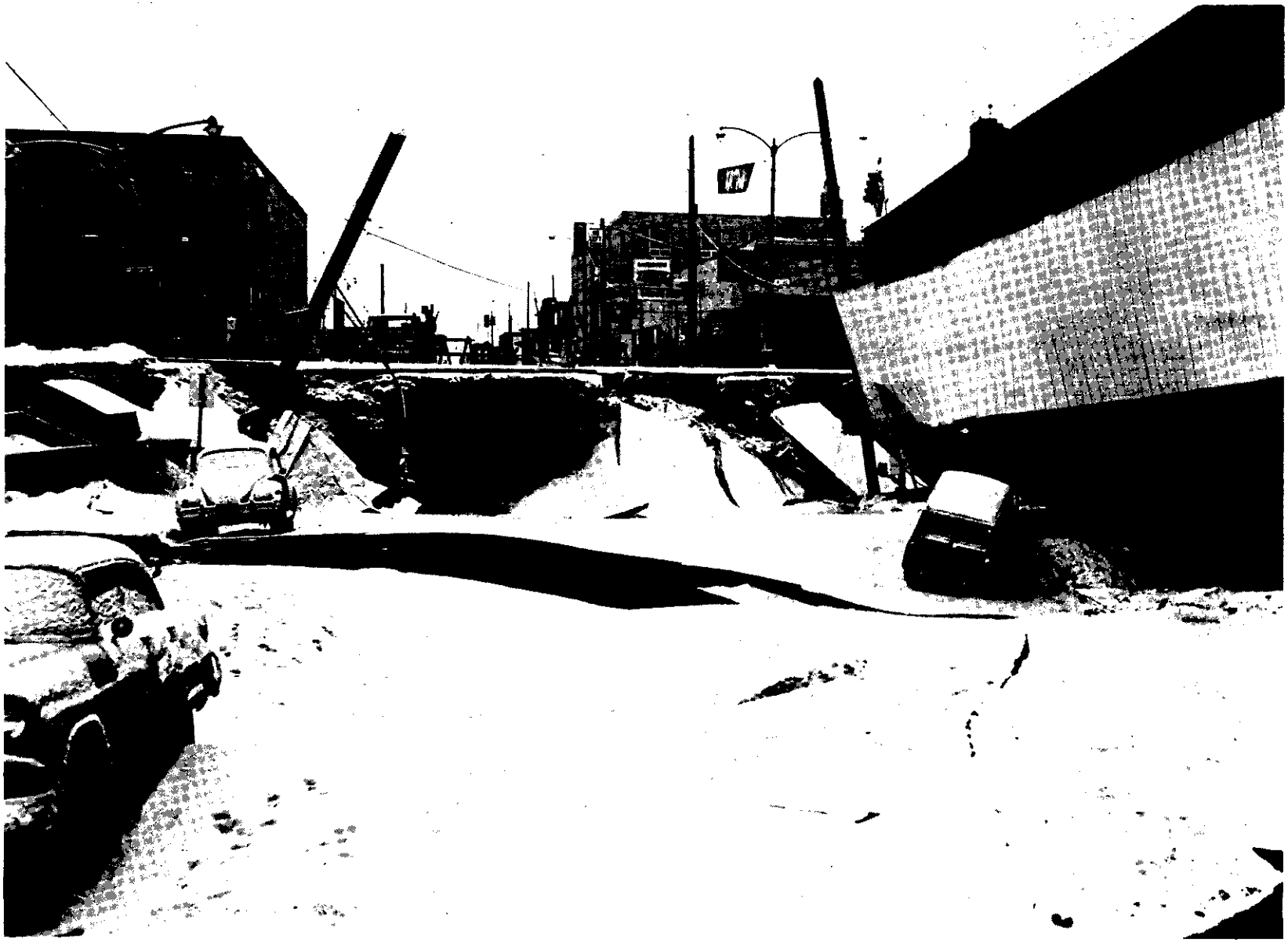
GREATER ANCHORAGE

Looking west from corner of Fourth Avenue and C Street, Anchorage, Alaska

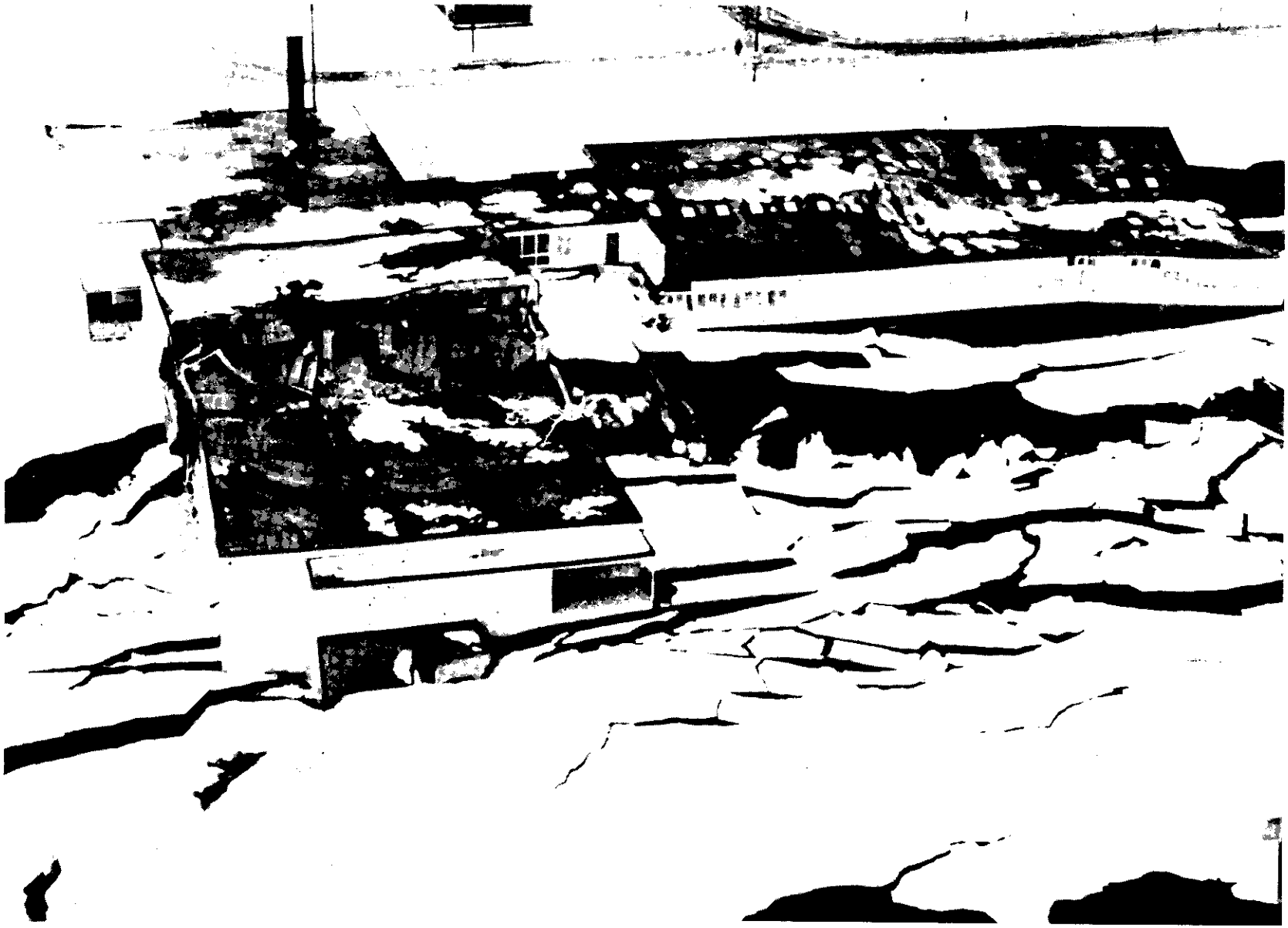


Demolished J.C. Penny Store at Fifth Avenue and D Street, Anchorage, Alaska

North side of Fourth Avenue between C and D Streets, Anchorage, Alaska



C Street Hill between Third and Fourth Avenues, Anchorage, Alaska



Government Hill Elementary School adjacent to Elmendorf Air Force Base, Anchorage, Alaska

Turnagain residential area ravished by 27 March earthquake

Many homes were destroyed in Greater Anchorage ...

Both in the Turnagain and downtown areas

Private homes were not the only dwellings destroyed ...

Many apartment houses also suffered extensive damage

Aerial photographs show large fissures east of C Street, Anchorage, Alaska

Giant fissures spotlight destruction of Four Seasons apartment house, left center

AIRLIFT

Almost as fast as communications were re-established between military installations and State and City Civil Defense Headquarters and among the various other devastated communities of south central Alaska, calls for aid and assistance began pouring into the Command Post of the Alaskan Command. Those in the adjacent Greater Anchorage area were able to receive almost immediate attention. Those further out, which required airlift support, unfortunately, had to be postponed until morning, because of a combination of bad weather and lack of runway information and navigational aids at the stricken communities.

However, with the first light of dawn, the first of some seventeen Provider (C-123) transports of Elmendorf's 5017th Operations Squadron roared down the runway with relief supplies and equipment for such earthquake and tidal wave ravaged communities as Seward, Valdez, and Kodiak.

Immediately, Alaskan Air Command alerted the Air Force Logistics Command in order that they might respond to Alaskan Command requirements without delay.

Military Air Transport Service was notified and Air Force transport aircraft from strategic locations throughout the United States were alerted for use in expediting all emergency requirements to Alaska.

During the next 21 days, this transportation was to develop into the most massive airlift of its type ever recorded by the U.S. Air Force. Over 3,700,000 pounds of cargo was airlifted and distributed to hard-hit areas.

Military Air Transport Service broke its own disaster relief cargo hauling record by moving more than 2,750,000 pounds of supplies in support of HELPING HAND. This involved more than 1,300 hours of flying time.

Utilized in the vast Military Air Transport Service airlift were some 55 giant Globemasters (C-124s), two huge Cargomasters (C-133s), four Stratolifters (C-135s), two Super Constellations (C-121s) and one Liftmaster (C-118). Supplementing these were eight Stratofreighters (C-97s) from the Military Air Transport Service's reserve fleet in the western states Air National Guard units which brought in approximately 195,000 pounds of cargo.

Foodstuffs, supplies and equipment comprised most of the cargo which ranged from baby food to massive construction equipment. Also transported were some 500 passengers which included three Stratolifter (C-135) trips to air-evacuate 58 patients from USAF Hospital, Elmendorf to Travis Air Force Base, California.

Intra-Alaska military airlift support rendered to assist in the civilian-military recovery from the earthquake will not be completed for some time. However, the greater portion of the airlift flying was and is in support of civilian requirements.

In the two weeks following the disaster, U. S. Army, Alaska light aircraft flew 589 hours on 556 sorties in disaster relief, carrying 137,075 pounds of cargo and 947 passengers. Most of this lift was by Army Shawnee (CH-21) helicopters and Otter (U1A) fixed-wing craft, but a total of 66 Army aircraft of seven types, assigned to the U.S. Army, Alaska Aviation Battalion were included in the effort.

Known support figures for the first 12 days following the initial disaster reveal that Alaskan Air Command Providers (C-123s), Skymasters (C-54s), Workhorse (H-21)helicopters, plus Beaver (U-6A) propellor and Tee Bird (T-33) jet liaison aircraft of the 5017th Operations Squadron, and the 317th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, flew more than 200 hours on almost 200 sorties airlifting 560,300 pounds of cargo and approximately 850 passengers and evacuees.

Alaska Air National Guard Providers (C-123Js) of the 144th Air Transport Squadron from Kulis Air National Guard Base, flew nearly 160 hours handling approximately 315,000 pounds of cargo and more than 150 passengers.

AIR SERVICE OF DIFFERENT TYPE: Because of the loss of communications facilities early damage assessments of the Greater Anchorage area and outlying communities could not be made. By the same token, the damage was so widespread that the whole picture could not be brought into proper perspective. Photo reconnaissance was required.

The only organic military aircraft with an effective aerial photographic capability in Alaska at the time of the earthquake was the Army Mohawk (OV1). These high performance reconnaissance aircraft took to the air with first flying weather on 28 March. In the five days after the earthquake, the Mohawks flew missions over Seward, Whittier, Anchorage, Valdez, Wildwood Station, Kodiak, Seldovia, and Cordova. In the same five days, eighty per cent of the Seward Highway was photographed, as well as selected vital areas of the railroad between Anchorage and Seward and between Portage and Whittier.

The Mohawks flew 64 hours on 23 sorties in the first two weeks after the earthquake and in the 12-day period ending 10 April had made 2,400 aerial negatives, from which 29,040 prints were produced.

The Air Force's Strategic Air Command responded instantly to the need for aerial photography, sending Reconnaissance Stratojet (RB-47) and Hustler (B-58) jet aircraft to Alaska.

These high speed Strategic Air Command photo reconnaissance aircraft expended some 87 flying hours on eleven direct support photo missions to aerial photograph the areas of Anchorage, Seward, Kodiak, Whittier, Valdez, Cordova, Gulkana and the entire south central Alaskan highway complex, with the Reconnaissance Stratojet (RB-47) and Hustler (B-58) aircraft alone shooting more than 4,200 feet of film. Added to this were nearly eighty hours of flying time and 21 missions by Strategic Air Command's Stratotanker (KC-135), Reconnaissance Stratojet (RB-47), and Sabreliner (T-39) aircraft in airlift of the processed photos and film.

TEAMWORK:

Under the direction of the Alaskan Command, U. S. Army, Alaska and Alaskan Air Command forces teamed up to complete many jobs.

Perhaps the most outstanding single operation of all the Air Force airlift support was a combined Military Air Transport Service - Alaskan Air Command - Alaska National Guard mission involving the airlifting of a Bailey Bridge from Elmendorf Air Force Base to the Soldotna-Kenai area on the Kenai Peninsula for the Army Engineers. This bridge was to replace one knocked out by the earthquake at Cooper's Landing on the lower end of Kenai Lake.

Army Engineers of the 562nd Engineering Combat Company trucked the bridge in sections from Eklutna near Anchorage to Elmendorf Air Force Base. There it was loaded on a Military Air Transport Globemaster II (C-124), Alaskan Air Command and Alaska National Guard Providers (C-123s) and two Air Reserve Flying Boxcars (C-119s) from March Air Force Base, California, loaned to Alaskan Air Command for the operation. Nearly sixty sorties were required for the five-day operation which involved approximately 520,000 pounds. The largest single pay-load hauled was by the Globemaster II (C-124) which carried 45,630 pounds on one trip.

It was realized that the demands placed on aircraft under the control of the Alaskan Command would be intense during the critical period immediately following the disaster. To bolster the continuing mission of Air Search & Rescue, Military Air Transport Service Air Rescue Service out of Hamilton Air Force Base, California, and Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, sent three Albatross (HU-16) amphibious aircraft and one Rescue Skymaster (SC-54), respectively, plus 43 personnel to assist the Alaskan Command while it was busy handling the other multitudinous chores involved in airlift relief support.

Detachment 1, Western Air Rescue Center, more commonly known as the Rescue Coordination Center on Elmendorf Air Force Base, coordinated, controlled and assigned all rescue missions conducted by all military, Civil Air Patrol, and federal agencies during HELPING HAND.

COMMUNICATIONS

One of the most critical factors in any great disaster is communications; so it was in the great Alaskan earthquake. The catastrope not only devastated many south central Alaska communities, including heavy damage to major military installations, but immediately knocked out most of the public communications in the entire area.

The military long lines system in Alaska, most of which is owned or operated by the Air Force Communications Service, received little damage. But the major terminals, both for the military system and the commercial offering Alaska Communications System, are located at or adjacent to hard-hit Elmendorf Air Force Base. The job of restoring these centers to service as quickly as possible fell on the Alaskan Communications Region.

On the local scene, all available resources were being quickly mustered to swing into an immediate recovery action. What had once been satellite points in various communications nets now found themselves as major communications points.

For example, Elmendorf and Fort Richardson base and post taxis, used to being called, now found themselves doing the calling. Taxi units, utilizing mobile power and located strategically throughout the installations, established the first installation-wide communications network. Taxis were used for liaison purposes between Elmendorf and Fort Richardson.

On Fort Richardson, the 56th Military Police Company radio net was pressed into service. A squad car sent into Anchorage provided the first communication between the post and the city. It stood by at the Public Safety Building to relay damage reports and requests for assistance until wire communications were re-established.

A point-to-point radio net was established by the 33rd Signal Battalion between U. S. Army, Alaska and Civil Defense Headquarters in Anchorage. Similarly, the Alaska State Police sent a radio-equipped patrol car to standby at the Rescue Coordination Center on Elmendorf to relay messages between the Rescue Coordination Center and State Civil Defense Headquarters.

Within five minutes the Army's Anchorage Area Air Defense Microwave Command and Control System was completely restored to operation.

Within ninety minutes, ninety-five per cent of both Fort Richardson's and Elmendorf's local communications were restored to a limited degree, and the commercial offering service, Alaska Communications System, was passing emergency and Civil Defense telephone traffic to the other states.

Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS) on Elmendorf Air Force Base went into operation on emergency power minutes after the earthquake. A mobile communications van, which had been used on a test basis only the day before, was utilized to supply emergency power. The MARS station and the Civil Defense net joined forces to establish a telephone patch between the Command Post of the Alaskan Air Command and Civil Defense Headquarters. During the first week, this station received and delivered 3,000 MARS grams and sent out 2,800.

On Fort Richardson while emergency power was being emplaced at the MARS station, a Department of the Army civilian employee, volunteer MARS member, maintained communication between the station and Civil Defense Headquarters with the mobile radio rig in his automobile. The MARS station was on the air less than one hour after the earthquake and maintained a 24-hour a day schedule until 15 April.

Because of the pressure of traffic and the use of MARS frequencies and equipment for official as well as amateur messages, the MARS station at Fort Richardson handled outbound messages only. The stations at Fort Wainwright and Wildwood Station received the inbound traffic. Through 15 April, the stations had handled 9,379 messages.

At the Alaska Communications System toll center on Government Hill and the telegraph center in Anchorage, communications personnel were working to restore outside lines. Telephone communications were restored to Anchorage within two hours following the earthquake. Limited telegraph service was provided shortly afterward. Through the combined efforts of the 1929th Communications Group, American Telephone

and Telegraph, the Pacific Company, Western Union and Canadian telephone companies, 26 one-way circuits out of Alaska were hastily activated. These passed traffic directly from Anchorage and Fairbanks to Chicago, San Francisco and Dallas. Telegraph circuits for the Red Cross were provided between Anchorage and Seattle. Two and one-half hours after the earthquake, two teletypes and three phones were set up in the lobby of the Alaska Communications System Building on Government Hill for the use of the public.

Two cables connecting the City of Anchorage Telephone Utility to the Air Force-operated long distance system were severed. Until these broken cables were repaired the next day, people in the city had to go to the Government Hill Telephone Toll Building to place long distance calls and send telegrams. Air Force personnel were joined on Saturday by Anchorage city telephone technicians in restoring limited long distance service to the city.

During the first four days after the disaster, 18,629 calls were made to other states through the toll building; 12,104 were completed.

An estimated twenty thousand telegrams were delivered to Anchorage residents and officials during the first three days after the earthquake. They were being received so continuously at the telephone toll building that they were taken, still in rolls, in big boxes to the downtown telegraph section for delivery. Here they were unrolled, cut and read, so that emergencies could be handled first -- and then delivered by telephone, volunteer teenage runners, or mail.

Meanwhile, to insure vital control liaison communications between Elmendorf, Fort Richardson and Civil Defense, and to fill the gap in local communications, and as a backup for the rapidly-repaired commercial facilities, Army communicators of the 33rd Signal Battalion went on the air Friday night with very high frequency radio relay equipment between switchboards which were separated by broken cable. Very high frequency units were moved to State Civil Defense Headquarters, to provide 12-channel relays between Civil Defense and Fort Richardson, and Civil Defense and Elmendorf Air Force Base. Subsequently, another 12-channel rig was installed to connect the Federal Aviation Agency installations at Merrill Field with the Alaska Communications System Toll Building on Government Hill. The communicators also installed a wire line between Civil Defense Headquarters and the Alaska State Highway Department.

To serve outlying areas, the 33rd Signal Battalion and the Signal Platoon, 172nd Infantry Brigade (Mechanized), established voice and radio teletype connections between Fort Richardson and Seward, and a radio connection between the Army post and Whittier. Signalmen pulled a 4-channel cable through the railroad tunnel into Whittier to provide a voice link between that port and the community of Portage.

The 172nd Infantry Brigade increased the communications capability into Seward by installation of a second voice and radio-teletype link to that city from Fort Richardson. And at Fort Wainwright the 171st Infantry Brigade installed a radio-teletype circuit into Valdez.

HUMANITIES

The first water trailers into the stricken city were five from the 1st Battalion, 37th Artillery, which reported to the Public Safety Building about three hours after the earthquake. They were followed by trailers from other units, and trailers drawn hastily from United States Army, Alaska, Support Command stocks.

From Friday night until Monday morning, six trucks shuttled water trailers back and forth from Fort Richardson. They were placed at hospitals, in school yards, at major public buildings and in the park strip. At the peak of the effort, 33 water trailers were in use.

On Monday the water hydrant at the Orah Dee Clark Junior High School in Mountain View became usable, and was established as the primary water point. A radio network was set up to dispatch the water trailers. Net control station was at the water hydrant. That night, with a forecast of below-freezing temperatures, roving patrols armed with blowtorches were organized to protect the water trailers from freezing.

On Tuesday four water purification units arrived, flown in from the 4th Infantry Division at Fort Lewis, Washington. In coordination with officials of the civilian public health service these purification units were located at four key points in the city.

The water supply effort lasted until Sunday, 5 April, when the city system had been restored enough to provide potable water to most of the area. On Sunday all water trailers except two had been withdrawn from the city. At its peak, the water detail had involved 52 men, in addition to the crews operating the water purification units.

Food was also a major problem in the days immediately following the earthquake. Many homes had been destroyed; others had utilities disrupted to the point where cooking was impossible. Also, there were hundreds of volunteer workers to be fed.

By Saturday morning Fort Richardson had four field mess halls in operation, with the mission of feeding all comers. These messes operated over the weekend with the last one being withdrawn 2 April.

The kitchens operated around-the-clock, serving hot C rations, soup and coffee. Their service is indicated by the statistics: One mess served 7,462 meals and used 198 pounds of coffee, while two messes in midtown locations, during 48 hours of operation, served more than 800 meals per day.

Elmendorf's 5040th Food Service Squadron personnel also went on the 24 hour shifts and in the four days following the earthquake doubled the normal feeding schedule, serving 44,487 regular meals and 11,820 C-ration meals. This included feeding from 200 to 400 evacuees to the base each day.

Loss of the civilian commercial bakeries in Anchorage caused the base bread bakery to go on a 24-hour per day schedule, starting that Saturday with a maximum production of 14,000 pounds per day. This maximum production continued for a four-day period to support troop dining halls at Elmendorf, Fort Richardson and USAF Hospital, Elmendorf, as well as for resale at the Base Commissary.

Included in this total was the baking off of some 3,960 pounds of frozen raw loaves of bread which had been donated to Civil Defense by an Anchorage frozen bread producer who was forced to suspend operations. This was returned in finished form to the Anchorage Civil Defense for distribution. In addition, the bread bakery furnished 600 pounds of its own product to the Anchorage Civil Defense.

Immediate action was also taken to arrange emergency housing on Elmendorf and Fort Richardson for displaced personnel -- military and civilian. Within two hours, structures still safe for occupancy were identified and adequate bedding, rations and field kitchens were available for approximately 5,000 people. The first shelters were operating shortly thereafter and eventually some 2,000 displaced persons, mostly military, were provided emergency housing.

Alaskan Command supply activities, in addition to satisfying the countless military requirements, also managed to fill innumerable civilian requests. These included providing local fuel distributors with some 244,000 gallons of diesel fuel for relief of the local populace.

Other materiel supplied in direct support of the civilian community and governmental agencies included: 800 sleeping bags, 200 bunks, 450 air mattresses, 825 cases of C-rations, 80 mattresses and several hundred blankets, 5,000 paper plates and paper cups, 2,900 feet of electric wire and 2,240 pounds of chlorinated lime. Sanitation kits available in pre-positioned fallout kits were made available to civil authorities.

Civil Defense received radio transceivers, while the Alaska Railroad was furnished with pumps, a small generator set, compressor and large generators. In addition, miscellaneous items including such things as tables, folding chairs, desks, typewriters, water cans, hard hats, drinking cups, file cabinets and arctic gear were furnished governmental inspection teams.

MEDICAL

Medical aid was one of the first requirements. At 2030 hours the Anchorage Police Department requested two Army ambulances with full emergency equipment and four aidmen each, to aid in carrying casualties to the hospital. The ambulances reported to the Public Safety Building in exactly one hour.

Almost immediately after the earthquake, the military installations began providing supplies to the Anchorage area. Alaskan Air Command provided 200 beds, mattresses and blankets for Providence Hospital. Blankets were sent to the Alaska Psychiatric Institute on request and more were made available to other Anchorage hospitals.

Typhoid vaccine was made available and 54,000 c.c. of the vital serum were stockpiled for the local Anchorage area upon request of Civil Defense.

To augment the medical service at Alaska Psychiatric Institute, Army and Air Force medical technicians were furnished that facility. In addition, a field autoclave was sent to Providence Hospital. Six sanitarians were provided to assist Anchorage Civil Defense health authorities in the inspection of city food establishments.

When it was determined to evacuate St. Mary's Residence, 27 USAF Hospital personnel and seven ambulances were made available for the removal of 37 patients.

Standby power generators, operators and fuel to run them were furnished to the Alaska Native Hospital, Providence Hospital and Presbyterian Hospital and the Air National Guard facilities at Kulis Air National Guard Base at Anchorage International Airport.

When the decision was made to reopen Presbyterian Hospital, Army troops aided in cleaning it up and getting it ready to receive patients. For the four days after it was reopened, the hospital's laundry was done at the post laundry on Fort Richardson. In the period the laundry handled 1,472 pieces for the hospital, as well as 124 bundles for the Red Cross.

However, all of the help was not accomplished through local military facilities. A medical team was flown to Alaska from Madigan Army Hospital, Fort Lewis, Washington. The five doctors, ten nurses, two anesthesists and twenty enlisted medical specialists left Madigan on Saturday to provide any medical aid needed in Alaska. They remained in the Anchorage area until 2 April, when it was apparent their support was no longer required.

While their husbands and fathers worked 12-hour days and longer in the disaster relief effort, the women and children also pitched in.

Gray Ladies were busy in the hospitals and so were the teenage nurses aides. One Fort Richardson senior Girl Scout spent 35 consecutive hours as a nurse's aide at Providence Hospital.

Other Red Cross volunteers were very busy in relief centers at the Anchorage Young Mens Christian Association and other locations.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Through the night there was a steady build-up of men and material flowing into Anchorage from Fort Richardson and Elmendorf Air Force Base, in response to requests by the city government and state and city Civil Defense.

Survey teams, made up of one city policeman, one Army medical corpsman, one engineer and three infantrymen, searched all buildings in the damaged downtown area. The teams were backed up by ambulances of Fort Richardson's 514th Medical Company.

When rehabilitation of Anchorage's Turnagain residential area was slowed due to lack of equipment, Elmendorf's motor pool responded with 20 trucks, a large wrecker and 2 radio units plus drivers and supervisory personnel.

Perhaps one of the most dramatic instances of immediate relief provided by Elmendorf right after the earthquake occurred at Anchorage International Airport. The seven-story control tower for the field had collapsed on top of the terminal building, killing one of the operators on duty and trapping the remaining two in the wreckage. An urgent call was sent out for a crane large enough to lift the wreckage to free the entrapped men. Elmendorf's 5040th Civil Engineer Group responded with a 20-ton mobile crane.

Fuel spillage at Anchorage International Airport, caused by ruptured fuel tanks and lines created a highly critical fire hazard. The Alaskan Air Command provided 100 five-gallon cans of foam to neutralize the danger.

Alaskan Air Command Civil Engineers and fire department personnel foamed the Port of Anchorage petroleum, oil and lubricant area so that workers could get in to repair dock equipment and the adjacent tank farms where ruptured fuel lines and split tank seams had saturated the area with thousands of gallons of mixed fuel oil and gasoline.

Army Engineers with mine detectors worked with city utilities' crews for three days, locating water and sewer mains in the earthquake-torn region.

Soldiers and military vehicles were used in transferring goods from wholesale foodstuff warehouses which had fallen in the earthquake. Cold storage facilities were made available on Fort Richardson for meats and other perishables which otherwise would have spoiled.

Heavy equipment was a vital need in the search and rescue operations and the subsequent emergency clearing of danger areas. Municipal garages, private contractors and the military installations all contributed to the pool. From Fort Richardson, for example, two 20-ton cranes, eight bulldozers, one pile-driver and a variety of wheeled vehicles took part in the effort. Not counting jeeps and sedans, the post committed 261 wheeled vehicles in Anchorage in the first five days after the earthquake.

SECURITY

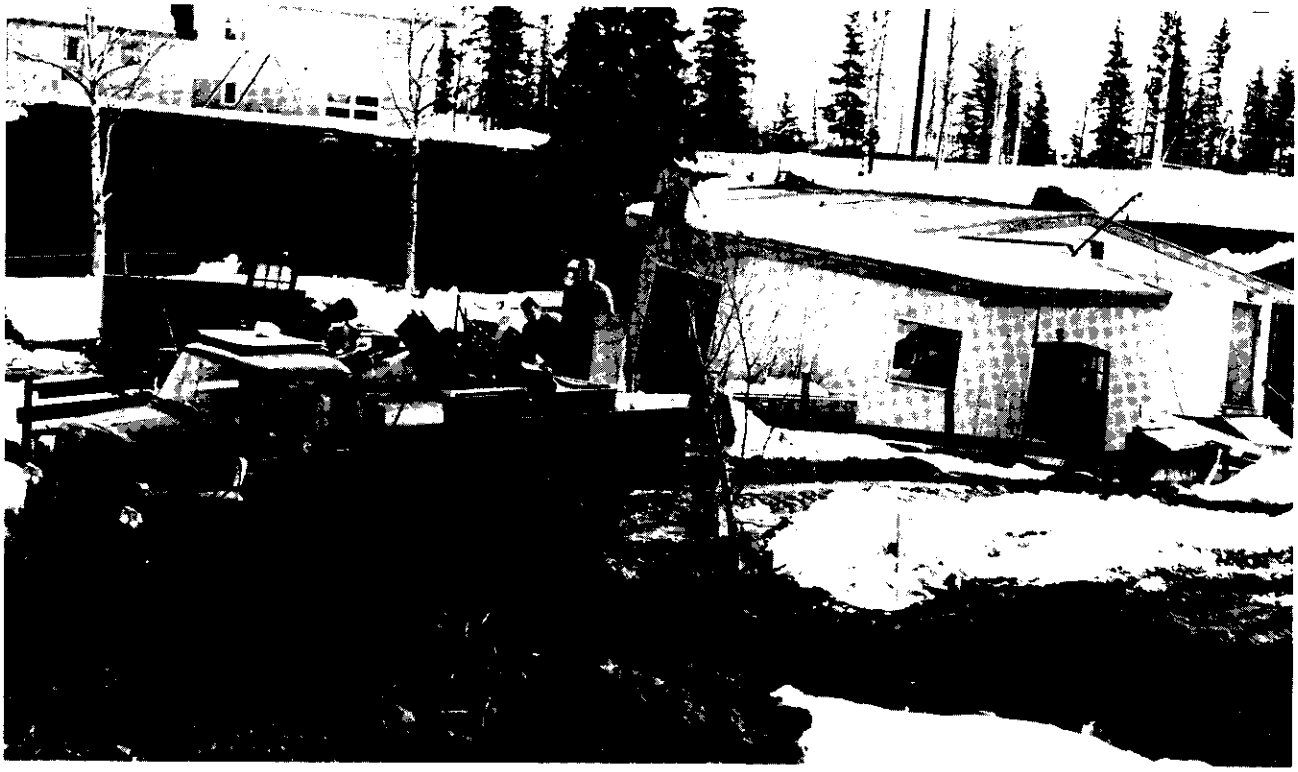
Less than two hours after the earthquake, Company C, 1st Battalion, 60th Infantry, was given the mission of going to the aid of the Anchorage Police Department to prevent looting and block off the damaged areas. By 2130 hours the infantrymen were in place, sealing off the midtown area from A to L Streets, from 3d to 6th Avenues.

Initially the Anchorage Chief of Police had asked for 100 troops to assist his force in security and movement control. By the second day after the earthquake - Easter Sunday - Army troops were manning 200 guard posts in the city, using a minimum of five men per shift as escorts, and making up a large part of the disaster evaluation teams.

The Alaska Army National Guard was also active in the first days of disaster relief in Anchorage. The National Guardsmen, completing their annual two-week tour of active duty training, were extended three days to help meet the emergency. While men of the 60th Infantry were manning guard posts in midtown Anchorage, the "Eskimo Scouts" of the First and Second Scout Battalions, Alaska Army National Guard, were standing guard on the outer perimeters of the stricken area and in damaged residential areas. While most of the Guardsmen remained in Anchorage for that period, first on guard duty and then aiding in the cleanup operations, one detachment started for home. This was the platoon of the 216th Transportation Truck Company, Army National Guard, from Seward. Their home city was badly hit by the earthquake and following seismic waves and these men were sent home to help. The rest of the Guard was relieved from security duties in Anchorage on 31 March.

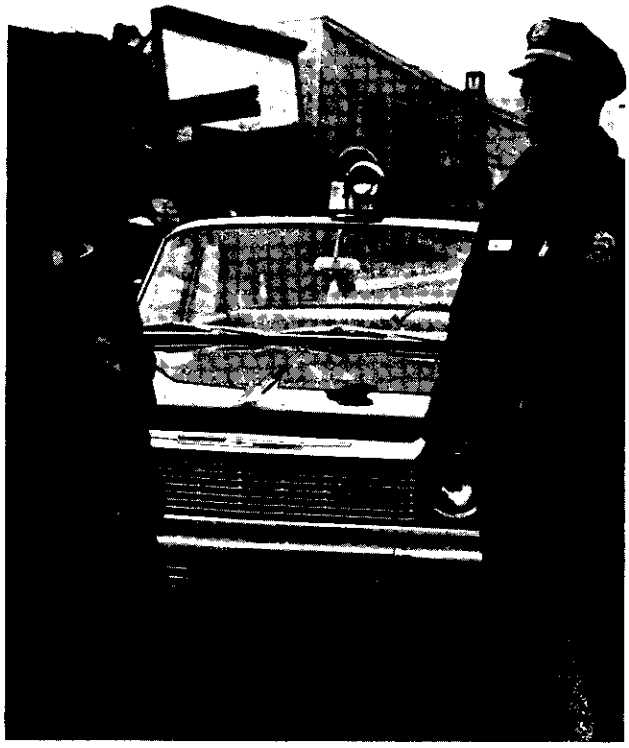
Purification units and trailers provided
Anchorage citizens with potable water

Field kitchens served thousands of meals

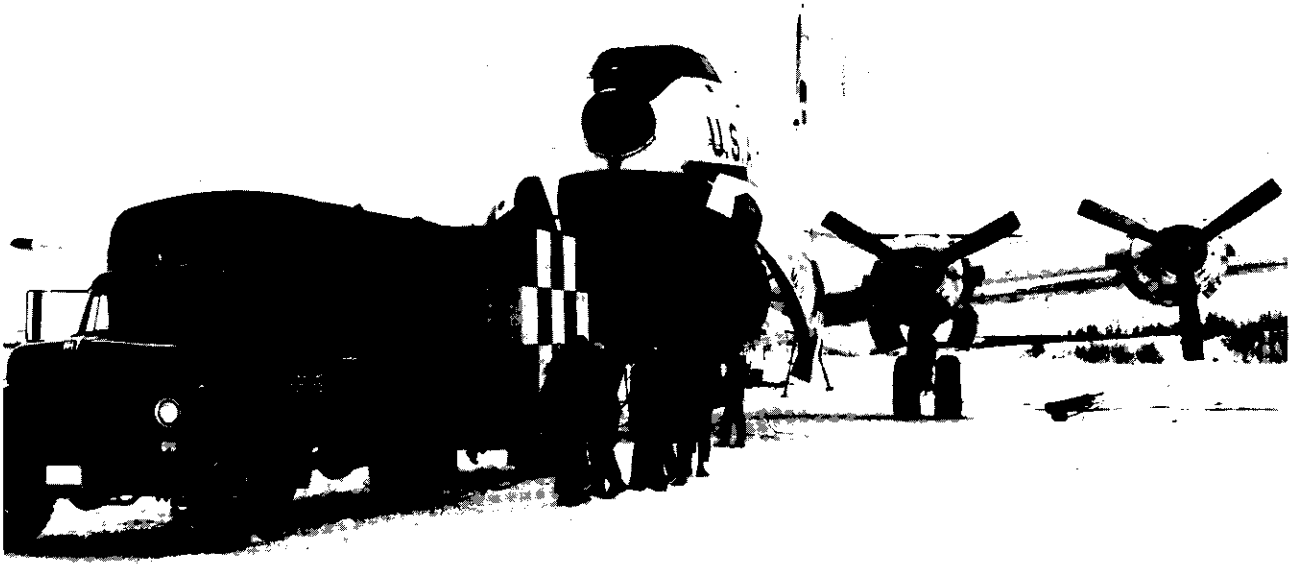


Military aided home owners to recover personal property from wrecked homes

Guards receive instructions



Military - civilian security team



Military airlift arrived and departed daily with vital cargo ranging from

food for the hungry ...

to toys for displaced children

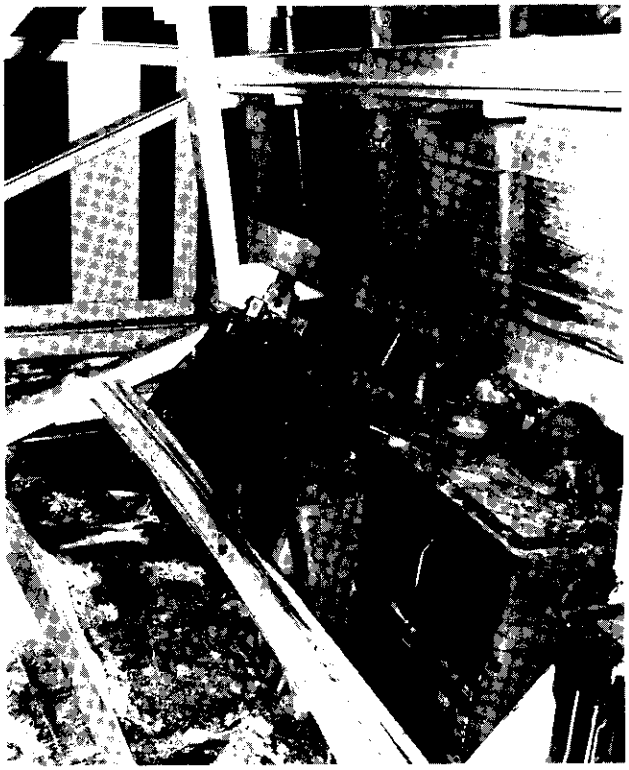
Aircraft to and from disaster areas hauled heavy cargo ...

... displaced persons ...

...and gifts from throughout U.S.

Communications personnel worked long hours to provide telephone ...

... telegraph service ...

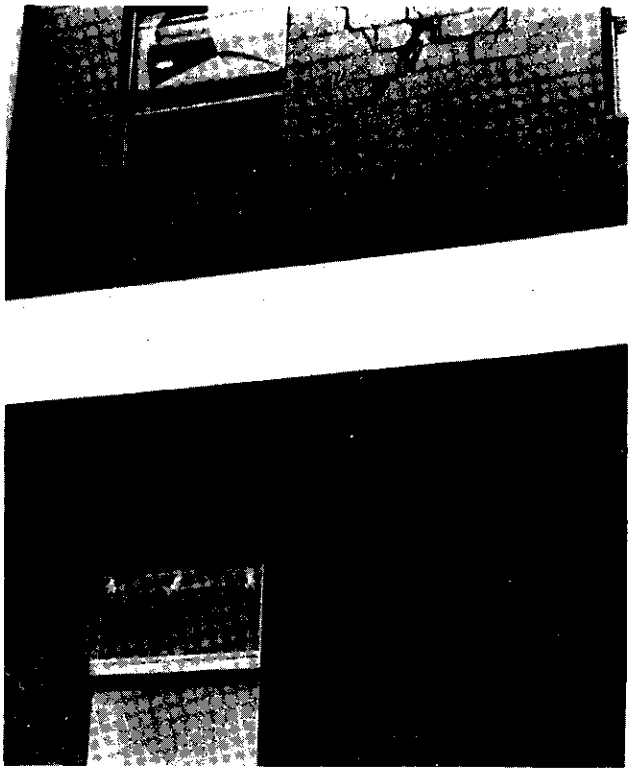


and to repair the severe damage

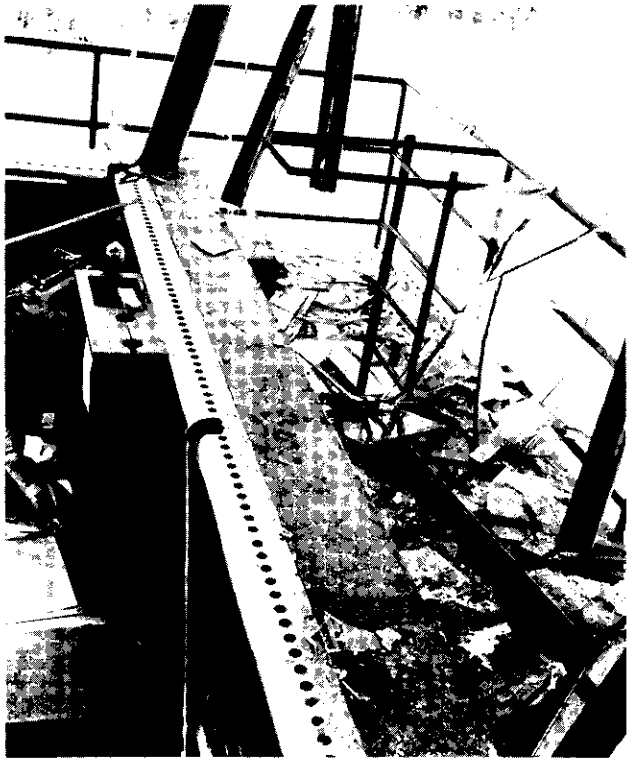
CHAPTER III

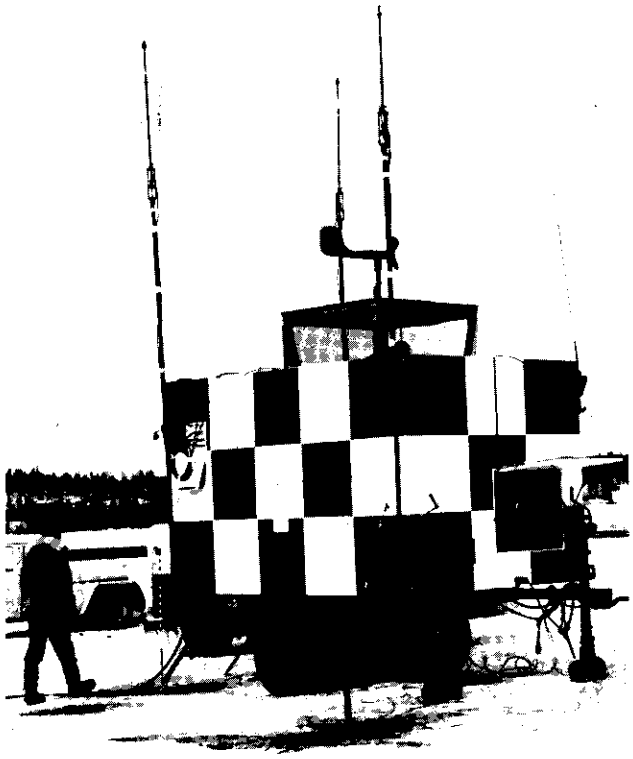
ELMENDORF

Air Force Hospital received considerable damage

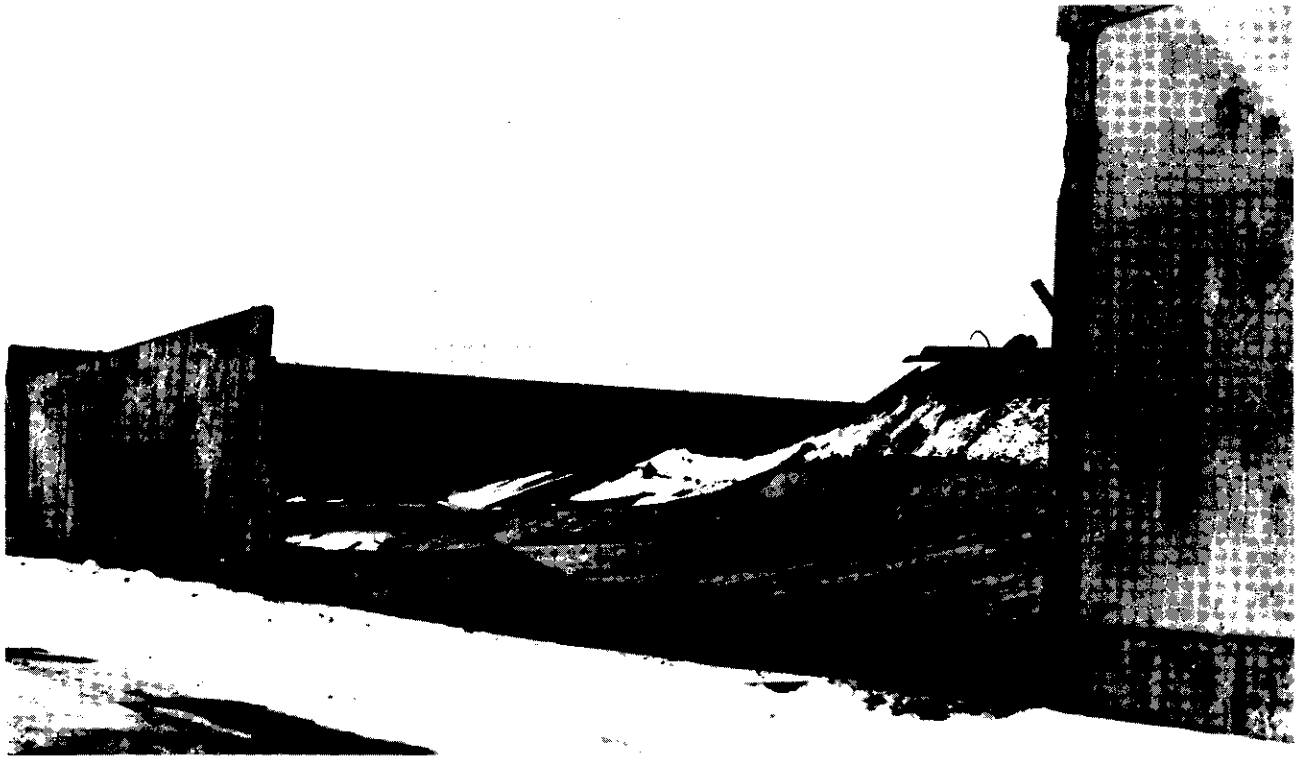


... walls were severely cracked and patients were evacuated





Loss of permanent air traffic control tower necessitated use of mobile unit



Warehouse walls buckled and roofs collapsed

Immediately following the initial shock period, the U.S. Air Force's Alaskan Air Command and Elmendorf's 5040th Air Base Wing were making initial damage assessments and formulating recovery plans. The first total damage assessment was placed at $10,000,000.

Not for an instant did the Command lose its operational readiness capability nor alter its defense posture. Vitally needed facilities at Elmendorf were quickly repaired and put back into operation.

The 41 strategically pre-positioned, auxiliary power units and generators sprang to life throughout the base. Immediately, Air Force command posts were operating with emergency power and light amidst the rubble of crumbled masonry, shattered light fixtures, and broken glass.

As base power was restored to various areas, an additional 30 standby emergency power units were moved to other locations as necessity dictated. Included with these 71 power units were the operating personnel necessary to maintain them.

The base was soon humming with activity. Following quick head-counts of people -- both in the military barracks and dependent quarters, and fast look-sees made of initial damage -- long lines of officers, airmen and civilian employees converged on their duty stations and immediately went on 24-hour duty status.

Off-duty air policemen and security guards reported to their headquarters within 30 minutes after the disaster. They immediately fanned out to furnish necessary additional security.

Air police mobile patrols on the base were also utilized immediately to disseminate announcements of an urgent nature to the base population via the public address systems mounted on their vehicles.

In addition to the 5040th Transportation Squadron's 970 pieces of rolling motor vehicle equipment standing ready, 82 cargo-carrying vehicles were withdrawn from storage and put into use.

Perhaps the largest and one of the toughest jobs facing the base immediately was the restoration of utilities, inspection of buildings and facilities for safety, and the large-scale program of both temporary and permanent repairs which was speedily implemented. All of these tasks fell to the 5040th Civil Engineering Group.

Elmendorf's air traffic control tower was deemed a total loss, because it was so badly twisted and the glassed-in cupola was wrecked. This placed severe limitations and restructions on incoming and outgoing traffic.

Radio equipment in a parked Provider (C-123) aircraft was used as a temporary means of air traffic control. A pilot-controller manned this make-shift expedient for almost two and one-half hours until replaced by a supervisory tower and communications operations personnel.

Air Force Communications Service promptly took action to speed a mobile control tower and operating personnel from the 3rd Mobile Communications Squadron at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma. Arriving Easter Sunday, via a Military Air Transport Service Globemaster II (C-124) of the 1707th Air Transport Squadron, based at Tinker, the unit was in full operation within three and one-half hours after landing.

Some aircraft damage was suffered -- primarily from falling light fixtures and other objects in the hangars. Aircraft maintenance personnel hooked tugs to the aircraft in the hangars and approximately twenty six Delta Dagger (F-102), Provider (C-123), and Skymaster (C-54) aircraft were pulled to safety in 25 minutes.

That they were able to fly at all is a tribute to the mechanics and ground maintenance crews of the 5040th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Group, and its support units; the 5040th Armament & Electronics Squadron, 5040th Field Maintenance Squadron, and 5040th and 5041st Organizational Maintenance Squadrons.

Sheet metal workers and other specialists of the 5040th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Group worked the first 24 to 36 hours straight through to get aircraft back into safe flying condition.

Due to extensive damage, the USAF Hospital, Elmendorf, was forced to evacuate all patients and staff from the building. In just 18 minutes, 181 patients, 18 newborn babies and 45 staff personnel moved to the nearby nurses' quarters, non-commissioned officers' and airmen's barracks.

With the assistance of the 64th Field Hospital from Fort Richardson, which furnished field generators for power and lighting plus a field kitchen, these quarters' buildings were rapidly turned into a modified field hospital with wards, treatment rooms, casualty rest areas, a major surgery suite, pediatrics and an obstetrical area. The latter was needed in short order; within the hour twins were delivered there by the light of a flashlight.

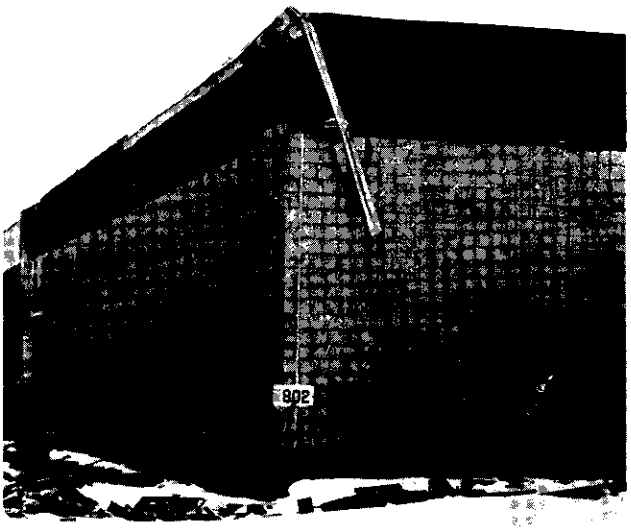
Anticipating a potentially large medical requirement, Alaskan Air Command requested assistance from the Air Force Surgeon General's Office.

Tactical Air Command medical units were alerted and moved into place, in reserve at Eielson Air Force Base, by eight Tactical Air Command Hercules (C-130 turbo-prop) aircraft within 36 hours. These consisted of a 100-bed casualty unit with 62 personnel from Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, one 36-bed hospital unit with 42 personnel from Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina, and another 36-bed unit with 55 personnel from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina.

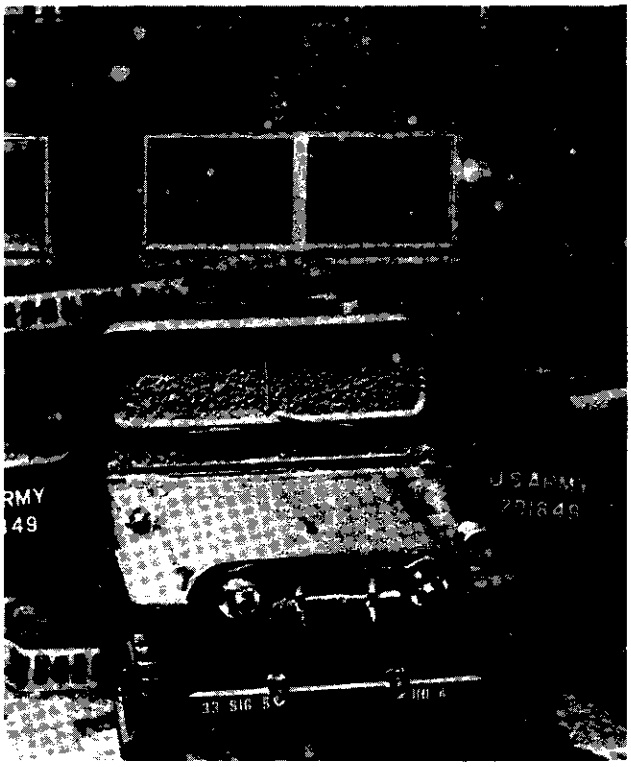
Supply was a major factor during all of these operations and the 5040th Supply Squadron, despite the total loss of one of their largest warehouses, took care of both military and civilian requirements. They began immediate issue of emergency supplies and equipment.

CHAPTER IV

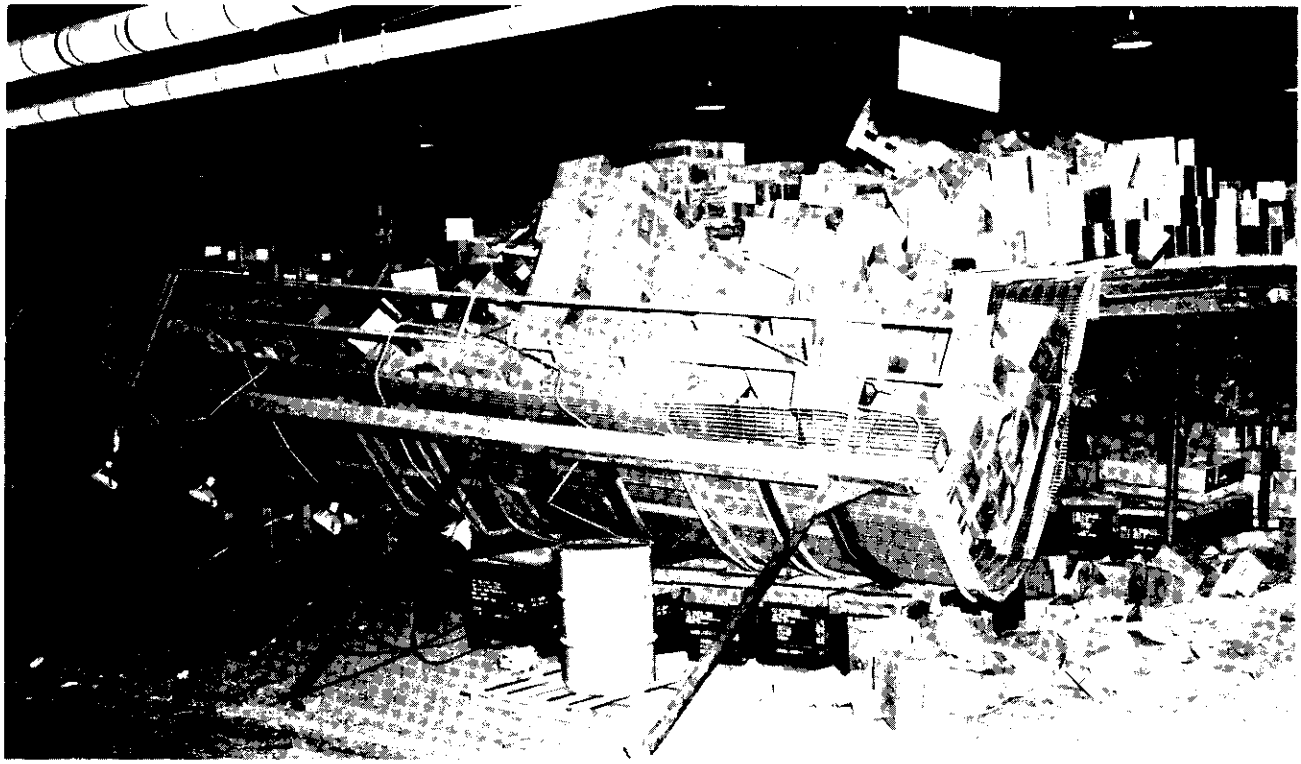
FORT RICHARDSON



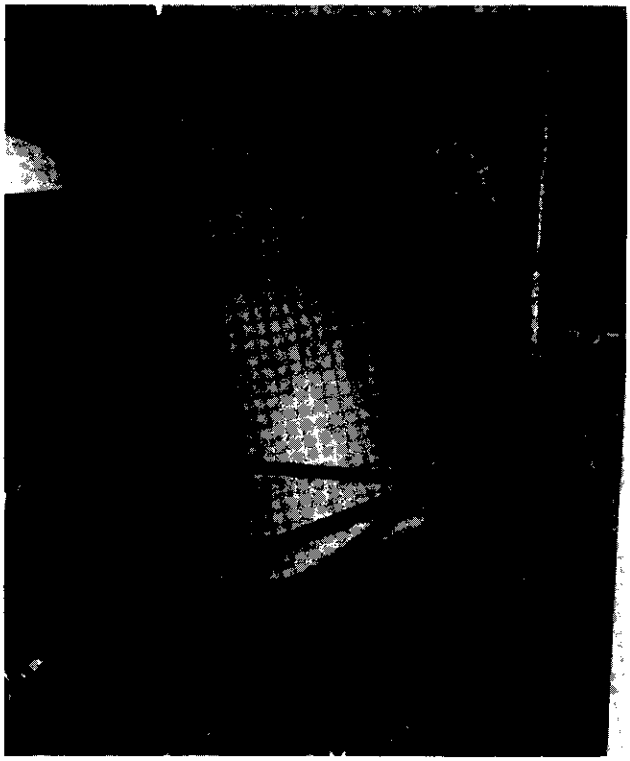
Extensive damage was inflicted on warehouses and various other structures..



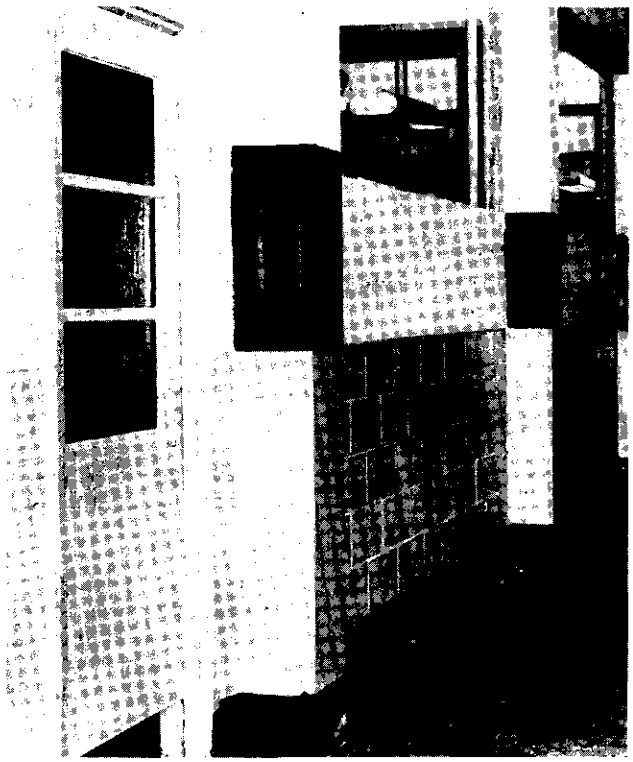
... as well as to vehicles and numerous offices



Stocks of supplies toppled and shelves buckled



Filter damaged at power plant



Interior walls were halved

The daily log of the United States Army, Alaska, Operations Center for Friday, 27 March 1964, contains the entry: "1740 - Experienced earthquake 3 - 4 minutes duration."

The next three entries in order record incoming queries from Headquarters, Alaskan Command; Commanding General of United States Army, Alaska; and the Chief of Staff of U.S. Army, Alaska.

Triggered by what was obviously a major earthquake (and subsequently confirmed as the strongest quake ever recorded in North America) United States Army, Alaska commanders moved into action on several fronts.

Communications were checked, to assure command and control, and the ability to learn what damage had been done.

Survey parties were set to work investigating damage to the military installations.

A reconnaissance party was sent to neighboring Anchorage, to determine the extent of damage.

The commanding officer of the 172d Infantry Brigade was alerted for possible commitment of other units.

The Army post had suffered substantial but not crippling damage in the upheaval. One man suffered critical head injuries in the Fort Richardson Skyline Service Club when interior walls and ceiling support gave way. He later died of his injuries, the only fatality suffered within United States Army, Alaska as a result of the earthquake.

Many buildings also sustained spectacular, although not structurally severe, damages. In troop barracks, nonbearing curtain walls cracked and in many cases gave way. Many of the buildings were evacuated as a safety measure but week end inspections by engineers proved no major structural damage had occurred.

The post dispensary was forced out of its building by the wracking earthquake. Men of the medical battalion erected a Jamesway hut during the evening, to open a field dispensary.

Greatest danger to the post lay in damage to the utilities. The electrical power was cut off immediately after the earthquake as a safety measure while the men on shift checked damage to the huge boilers and turbines that supply the post with both electricity and heat.

Cold water feed lines were broken in the plant, the water treatment plant feeding the boilers was severely damaged, and steam pipes hung awkwardly from broken supports. But the plant remained operational, and by early Saturday morning was producing at nearly full capacity.

This work of restoration was carried on by the regular shift crew, by men who returned to the post as the earthquake was over, and one man who had retired from the power plant three years earlier. The moment the earthquake was over he donned work clothes and reported to the power plant where he worked all night and then returned for a Saturday night shift before resuming his retired status.

Some of the electrical damage had been in the transmission system, and off-duty line crews returned hurriedly to the post. Primary power lines to vital command and communications centers were restored within the hour, and by 0740, 28 March, power was restored to all critical areas of the post, including family housing areas.

Water, too, threatened to be a problem. The Fort Richardson water purification plant serves both the Army post and Elmendorf Air Force Base, and the City of Anchorage draws water from the post reservoir on Ship Creek.

Immediately after the earthquake it was evident that there were some leaks in the system, and early Saturday the water level in the reservoir was dropping at the rate of one and one-half feet an hour. The city, whose own water system was severely damaged, cut its flow from the reservoir to almost nothing, and the flow to Fort Richardson and Elmendorf was drastically reduced. The reservoir never went dry but reached a potentially dangerous level. Meanwhile, Ship Creek went entirely dry on the main post.

Reconnaissance showed the creek had been blocked by slide action resulting from the earthquake about three miles upstream from the water plant. Before engineers could be dispatched to clear the natural dam, the force of the stream had breached it and the water supply danger was past.

Warehouses, too, had suffered under the earthquake. Bricks had burst from the warehouse walls in 100-yard-long segments. Roof combings from industrial-type buildings had fallen; in one case smashing several jeeps parked adjacent to the building. Contents of warehouses were scattered and jumbled.

However, there was need for much of the warehoused material and crews went to work immediately. By 2030 hours, Friday, goods were being moved from the damaged warehouses to meet urgent needs in Anchorage and, by midnight, the warehouses were fully operational.

Other post damage was similar but did not have the same potential effect on the civic assistance mission. The bell fell from the belfry on the post chapel but did not interrupt Good Friday services being held in the sanctuary. Shelves in the post commissary collapsed, scattering groceries helter-skelter through the building. Troops and commissary workers labored through the night to restore order and open the store on time on Saturday.

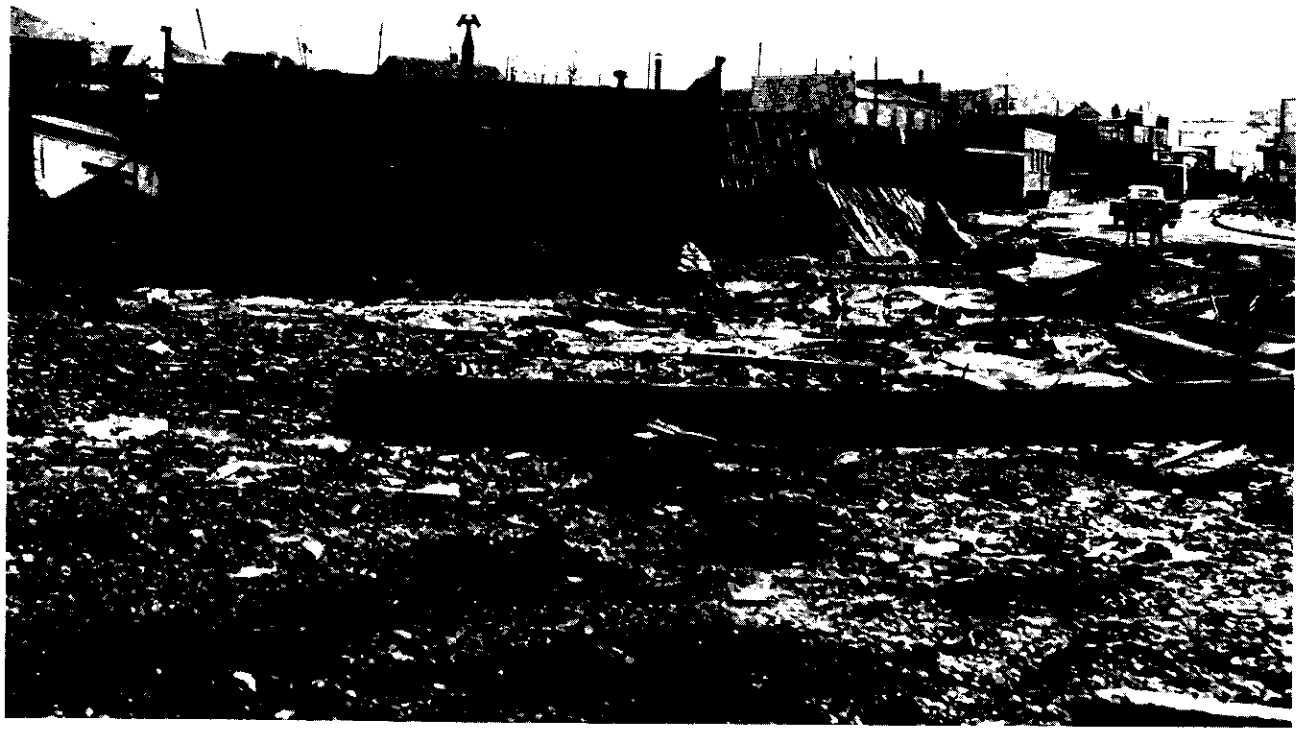
Soldiers and civilians worked shoulder-to-shoulder to repair post damage in the shortest possible time. In the five days after the earthquake post civilian employees worked more than 2,370 hours of overtime.

From Fort Bliss, Texas, the 74th Ordnance Supply Depot Company, reinforced with warehouse specialists from Camp LeRoy Johnson, Louisiana, flew to Fort Richardson to aid in getting the post warehouses back in shape. The Ordnance men arrived the night of March 30 and went immediately to work.

Fort Richardson post installations had suffered damage which will cost an estimated seventeen million to repair, but none of the damage was great enough to materially affect the command's combat readiness.

CHAPTER V

KODIAK

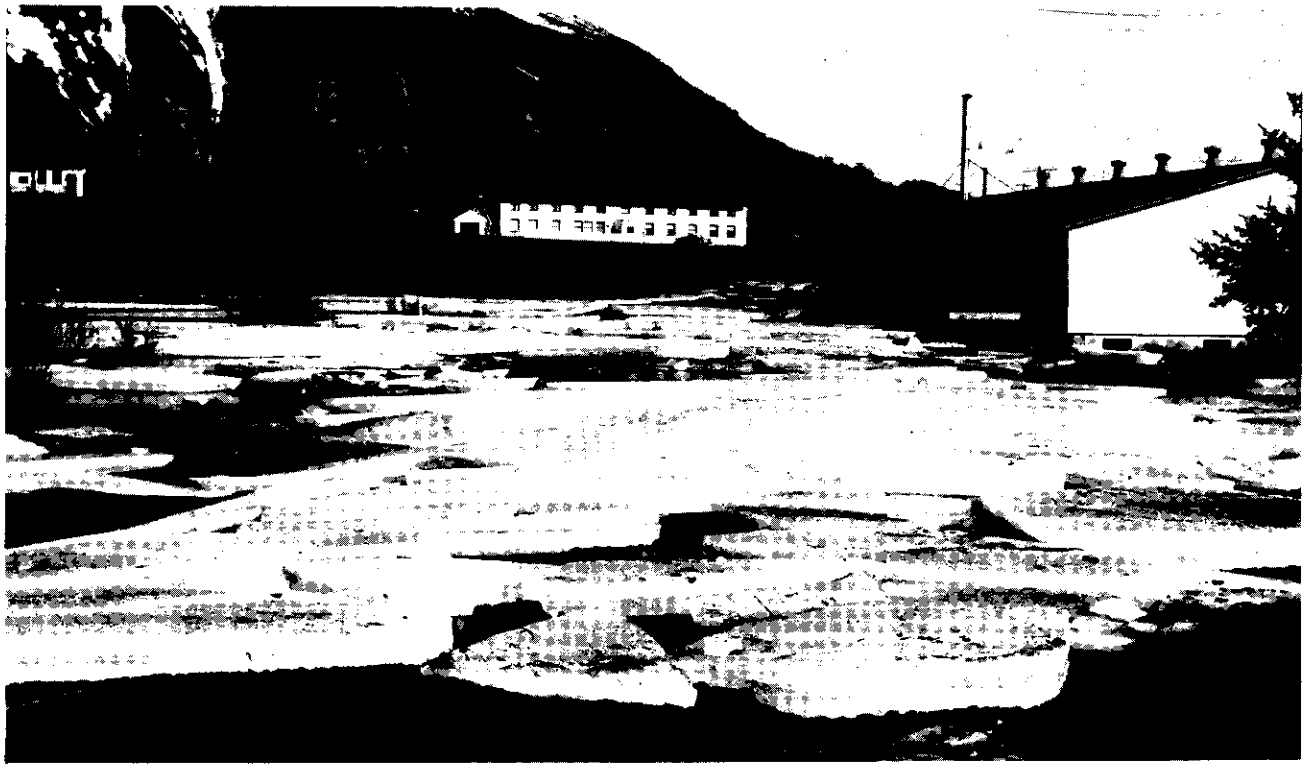


Downtown Kodiak, Alaska, following the earthquake

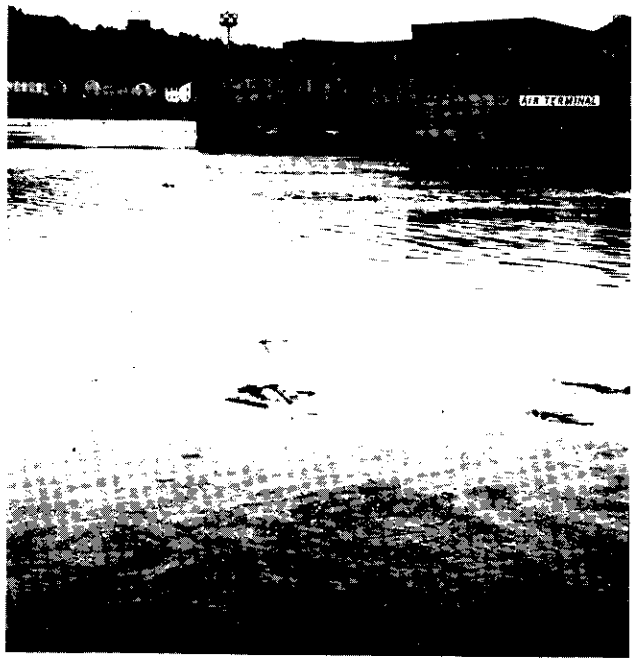
Fishing boats were beached and sunk by seismic waves

Buildings were relocated by force of the waves following earthquake

The VICTORY MAID before and after earthquake



Foot thick ice slabs covered Kodiak Naval Station



Water on flight line and resultant high water mark on building

The destructive force of the Good Friday disaster will stand unchallenged in island history. Eleven city residents and three dependents of Naval Station personnel were killed. Damages amounted to $24 million -- 108 homes, 45 fishing boats, 8 industrial and 45 commercial structures, plus various public utilities were completely destroyed by the seismic waves.

In addition, the disaster sunk or grounded 35 boats and 17 others were unaccounted for. Physically, the area surrounding the Naval Station dropped 5.5 feet.

The Navy sustained heavy damages. Aircraft hangars sagged, docks and waterfront warehouses buckled, roads washed away, runways cracked, power and telephone lines were knocked down, and the main power plant and storage basements were flooded out.

Although the Navy had its military communications system to utilize, all civilian long distance service is dependent upon the Air Force's Alaskan Communications System, with the local facilities being handled by the Trans-Alaska Telephone Company.

Trans-Alaska's facilities were destroyed by the seismic waves. The city had only the Alaskan Communications System long distance service for a few days. The Army and the Air Force provided equipment and technicians to furnish Kodiak with a temporary telephone system.

The Alaskan Communications Region, which operates Alaskan Communications System, borrowed a portable switchboard and 40 telephone units from the Army and installed telephones in reopened business establishments and in strategic spots such as the fire station and Civil Defense. Since there were no poles, the heavy field wire was laid on the ground.

The Air Force continued providing this service until Trans-Alaska resumed service.

Following the disaster, 224 persons left the island and 270 others were forced to evacuate their homes in outlying villages.

Despite its own damage, the Navy undertook the massive job of resurrecting designated areas of the devastated city.

Military assistance to the City of Kodiak involved materiel and manpower. Segments of the Navy's Mobile Construction Battalion NINE, home-based at Port Hueneme, California, were sent to Kodiak to help, as was the seaplane tender SALISBURY SOUND of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

The 150-man Seabee Disaster Recovery Team of Mobile Construction Battalion NINE, equipped with tools, rations and cold weather clothing, departed Port Hueneme on Saturday, 28 March, within less than six hours after receiving notice. Four and one-half hours later, their jet transports landed at Kodiak.

Specialists immediately started round-the-clock operations in the station power plant, while others began work on the road to the nearby Naval Communications Station, which was washed out in certain places. Alternate routes were opened, river crossings were repaired and vital traffic began moving again.

Power linemen of Mobile Construction Battalion NINE worked for three days in the city until all power was restored. Welders and pipefitters helped repair the city's main crab freezing plant. Crane operators helped clear the demolished sections of the city.

Mobile Construction Battalion NINE remained in Kodiak for twelve days and returned to Port Hueneme for departure on a scheduled deployment to Okinawa on 24 April.

The seaplane tender USS SALISBURY SOUND arrived at Kodiak from Oak Harbor, Washington, 31 March and 30 minutes later her generators were completely linked to Naval Station power lines, providing power equal to one-fourth the capacity of the station's power plant.

All ship's facilities were made available. Station laundry was done onboard. Enlisted personnel who had not been out of their clothes since the earthquake were welcomed aboard for hot showers.

The dock landing ship USS ALAMO arrived at Kodiak from San Diego, California, with a 160-foot pontoon dock, equipment and operating personnel to assist in the rehabilitation of Kodiak's fishing fleet.

In addition to Navy ships, the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey ships PATHFINDER and SURVEYOR and the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter BITTERSWEET were in the Alaskan Sea Frontier area for the recovery project.

The PATHFINDER and SURVEYOR collaborated with Fleet Weather Central in gathering tidal data, charting the ocean floor, and relocating navigational aids. The Kodiak-based BITTERSWEET was first to undertake the job of repositioning buoys and replacing lost navigational markers.

Personnel of Marine Barracks, Kodiak maintained continuous security over station operating areas all through the seismic waves, even though many of these areas were under water four times during the evening of 27 March.

Following the initial tremor, Marines were assigned duties of directing traffic in the City of Kodiak, assisting low land evacuation and patrolling areas damaged by seismic waves. An additional group of Marines was sent into the city to assist in property protection in the damaged areas. During the first ten days, 18 sentries were maintained to aid city police on a 24-hour-a-day basis.

During the same period, the Navy's total personnel participation in the recovery effort was 1,135, with man-hours totaling 190,374.

The Navy and Red Cross supplied blankets and sandwiches to the needy. A total of 1,080 blankets, the majority flown in by Navy aircraft from Seattle and Whidbey Island, Washington were distributed throughout the city.

In addition, 12,000 meals were served in the first 48 hours to evacuees on the Naval Station as well as to 350 quartered in the Kodiak High School.

The school was designated by Civil Defense officials as a refugee center. The Alaskan Sea Frontier, Red Cross Field Director disbursed $15,000 to operate the center.

The 270 evacuees from Kodiak Island villages and neighboring islands were fed at the Naval Station galley from Saturday, 28 March until Tuesday, 31 March; when they were flown to Anchorage on request of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. During their stay, Navy chaplains and nurses looked after their well-being.

The galley served approximately 6,000 meals per day for the first four days following the disaster and 4,000 meals per day thereafter.

Materiel supplied by the Navy following the disaster included generators, water pumps, manila rope, boat anchors, office supplies, telephone lines, assorted foodstuffs, disposable diapers, sleeping bags, medicine, mattresses, sheets, kitchenware and many other items.

Individual contributions in unknown quantities were made by military and civilian families in the form of clothing, food, and shelter.

While recovery parties were busy in downtown Kodiak, the USS KODIAK was busy elsewhere, assisting boat owners to relocate the fishing fleet to a safer anchorage, delivering cattle feed to isolated ranches, and evacuating the inhabitants of Old Harbor, Ouzinkie and Kaguyak. Later, the ship was ordered to Homer to pick up floating piers and docking facilities for use in relocating undamaged Kodiak fishing boats in Gibson Cove.

With her diesel engine still warm, the USS KODIAK put to sea once more -- with bulldozers onboard -- and headed for Old Harbor to help work-parties clear the village of debris.

Airlifts are becoming common-place but seldom has one been more important than the airlift of necessary supplies and evacuation of personnel to and from the Island of Kodiak.

Some 15 special flights were made by Kodiak Naval Station aircraft alone, during the first ten days following the disaster.

Other aircraft began delivering necessary supplies to Kodiak in the form of generators, blankets, food, clothing and many other important items. Commercial or military aircraft were landing in Kodiak every hour and a half during the first ten days after the catastrophe.

Navy and Coast Guard aircraft and maintenance personnel aboard the station were washed out of their hangars and were forced to "keep em flying" with little or no protection from the wind and weather. But at no time were aircraft grounded when they were needed.

A part of the Military Air Transport Service airlift which was servicing the Alaskan theater was being diverted directly into Kodiak. Although there is no separate break-out of tonnage and passengers figures hauled, Air Force support into Kodiak included three Globemasters II (C-124s), two Cargomasters (C-133s) and one Stratolifter (C-135).

In addtion, one of the Air Force's Tactical Air Command Hercules (C-130) hospital aircraft, being held in reserve at Eielson Air Force Base, was pressed into service picking up 6,000 pounds of bread at Elmendorf for the Kodiak population. On the return trip to Elmendorf the aircraft evacuated natives to Anchorage.

Aircraft of the Alaskan Air Command hauled thousands of pounds of cargo from Elmendorf to Kodiak and transported passengers to and from the island city during the days immediately following the earthquake.

On 13 April, the Navy officially became the administrator of rehabilitation funds allotted to Kodiak by the Office of Emergency Planning.

After three weeks, all major demolition in the downtown business district was completed and work in the outlying areas was finished.

The Treasury Department's 17th Coast Guard District was active in disaster relief, working in the Prince William Sound and Kenai Peninsula areas, as well as on Kodiak Island.

Within two hours after the earthquake, five Coast Guard Cutters were diverted to assist the areas hardest hit, as determined by the meager communications available at that time. The Cutters MINNETONKA, STORIS, and SORREL were directed to Prince William Sound; the Cutter BITTERSWEET to Seward; and the Cutter SEDGE to Valdez.

Urgent marine broadcasts were issued by Coast Guard Secondary Radio Station NOJ for all vessels to proceed to nearest villages to assist, evacuate, and report.

At first light on Saturday, 28 March, three Coast Guard fixed-wing aircraft were dispatched to complete surveys of the entire area from Sitkinak Island on the south to Cordova on the north.

Helicopters of the Air Detachment were used in the Kodiak area for evacuation of stranded personnel and damage surveys.

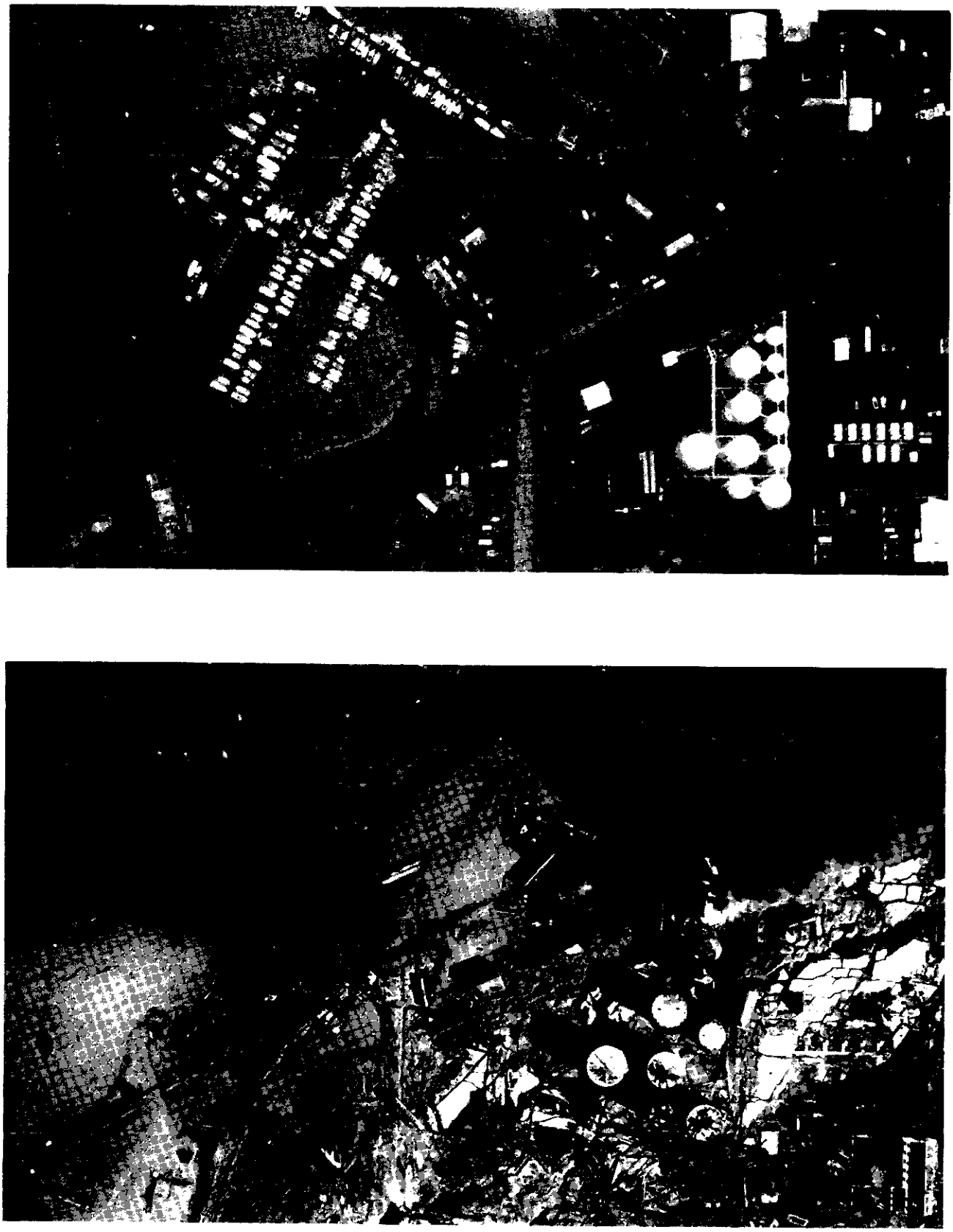
Sunday, 29 March, saw continued aerial surveys of the disaster area with particular attention to location of missing persons in the remote island areas. The Cutters SORREL and BITTERSWEET remained in the Seward area with the Cutter SEDGE continuing assistance in Prince William Sound. The Cutter STORIS was diverted to Cook Inlet for ice breaking duties for the Port of Anchorage.

Although no damage was sustained by vessels, the water immersion of one Provider (C-123) aircraft, damage to equipment, maintenance facilities and hangar spaces was estimated in excess of 750,000 dollars to Coast Guard facilities.

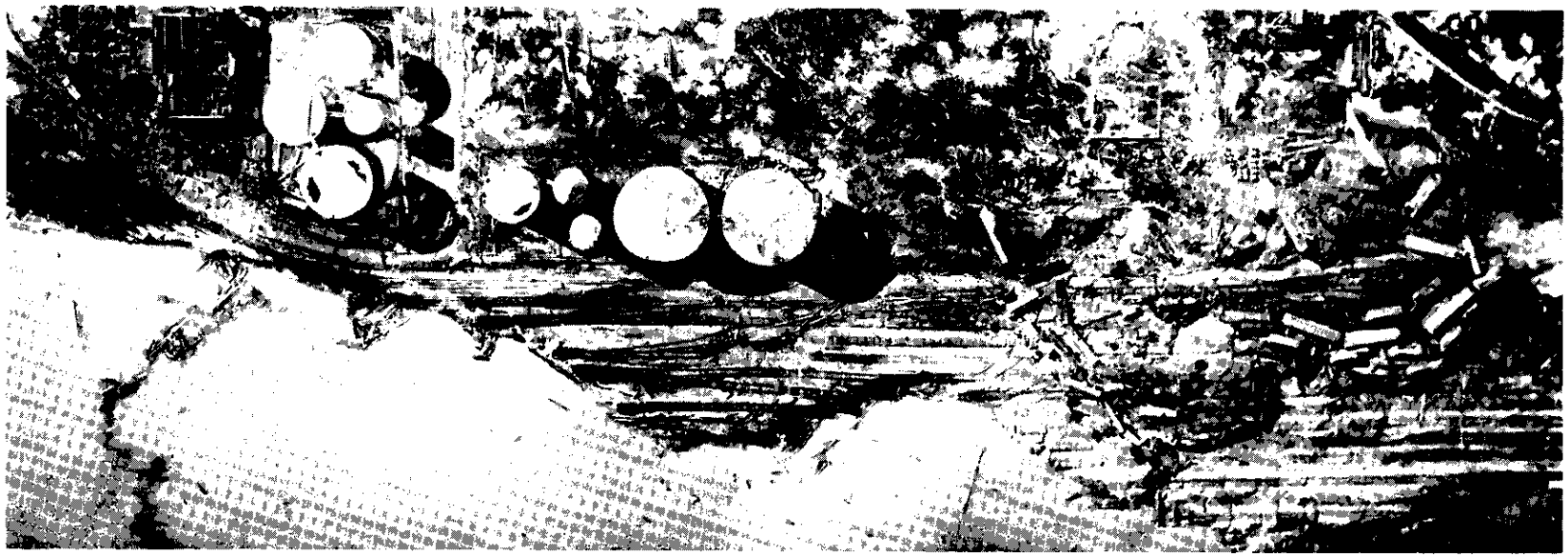
Total manhours expended during the HELPING HAND operation by the Coast Guard exceeded 156,624.

CHAPTER VI

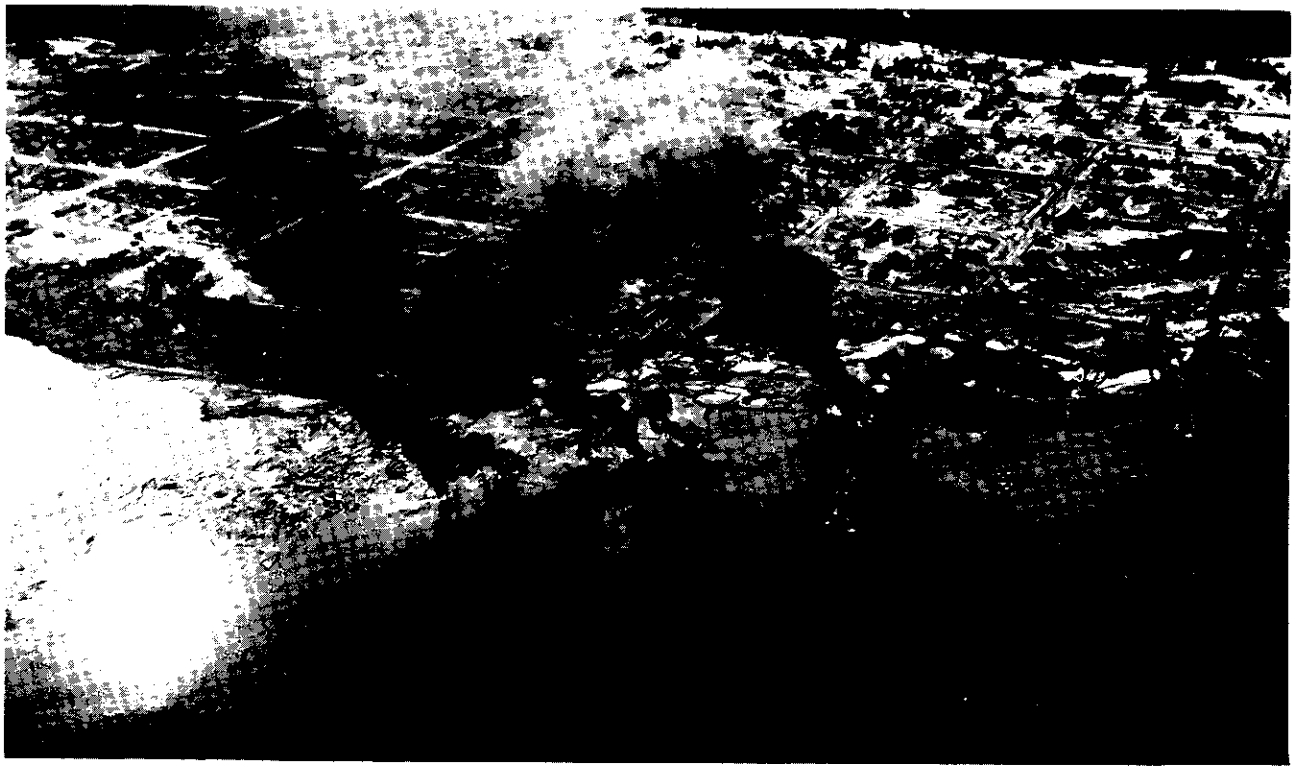
SEWARD



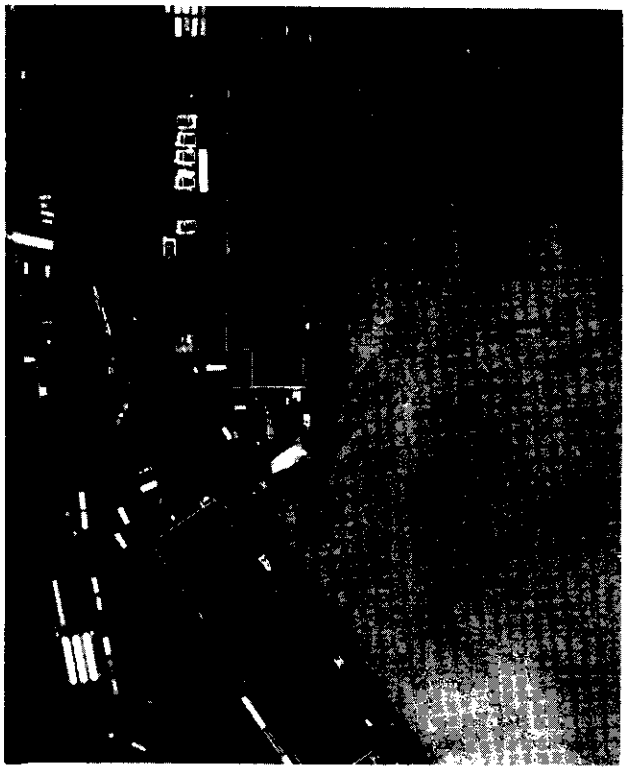
Small boat harbor and tank farm before and after disaster

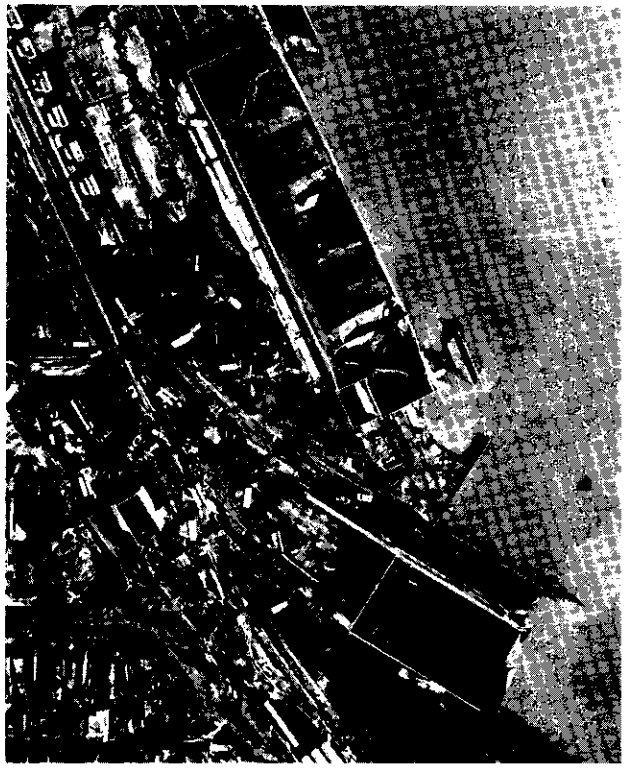


Railroad yards and tank farm before and after earthquake



Fire was an added danger to the Seward community





Seward dock facility before and after earthquake

Seismic waves derailed freight cars and damaged Army recreation camp

Tracks come to an abrupt end

Community damage was extensive

The triple punch -- earthquake, seismic waves and fire -- left Seward, a major Alaskan port and rail terminus, helpless. Her utilities were battered, harbor wiped out, rail and road transportation lines wrecked and communications, including the town's only radio station, gone. The only remaining major facility in usable condition was the air strip, which was to be her only transportation link to outside civilization for the critical days to come.

There were 21 soldiers from various United States Army, Alaska units in Seward when the earthquake struck. They were there on special duty to ready the Army Recreation Center for opening during the Seward All America City celebration.

Most of the soldiers were in the dining hall at the time. As they cleared the building and ran to higher ground, they stopped to pick up children from some civilian houses adjacent to the camp.

After recovering from the initial shock and resultant seismic waves, many of the soldiers went to the Seward hospital, helping any way they could. The three cooks in the group went to the Jesse Lee Home, an orphanage, and got the kitchen operating on Army field ranges. They manned the kitchen all night and well into Saturday afternoon, feeding the children of the home and all others in Seward who were hungry.

At daybreak Saturday the soldiers reported to the Chief of Police and established a search party. They probed the smashed and twisted dock area and other hard-hit parts of the city throughout the day, searching for the dead and injured.

At Alaskan Command Headquarters during the hours immediately after the earthquake, information arrived in spurts and starts, tantalizing but incomplete. Seward was wiped clean of communications with the rest of Alaska. The Seward Highway had been torn by fissures, and there were reports of at least one bridge out. It was reasonable to expect the highway had suffered some land and snow slide damage and that Seward needed help.

At 1000 hours Saturday, 139 officers and men of Company A, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry, were alerted to fly via Alaskan Air Command and Air National Guard Providers (C-123s) to Seward. With them were the 36 men of the Seward detachment of the 216th Transportation Truck Company, Alaska Army National Guard, who had been on a two-week tour of active duty at Fort Richardson.

The company's equipment included a radio-teletype unit from the 172nd Infantry Brigade and a demolitions expert from the 562d Engineer Combat Company. The radio-teletype gave the community its first communications with the rest of Alaska since the earthquake, and was Seward's sole message link with the rest of the state until late evening of 31 March, when two telephone lines were opened.

About 60 messages a day were transmitted out of Seward over the set during the first three days it was installed and an equal number received. It was over this radio net, for example, that Seward got word to State Civil Defense Headquarters in Anchorage that there was an urgent requirement for utilities experts in the ravaged city.

The call was answered by the United States Army District Engineer who got the water and sewage systems back into operation, and by personnel from the Chugach Electric Association who performed the immediate repairs on the power lines.

Petroleum product tank farms along the Seward water front had caught fire almost the moment the earthquake struck. The great waves that followed had spread blazing gasoline and oil over part of the city, and much was floating on the bay. City officials had requested the demolitions expert in the hope he could blow the fire out of the tanks with high explosives.

This proved to be an impossible task, but the Army Engineer made good use of his talents by knocking down dangerously toppling buildings, blasting pits for sanitary use, and in similar jobs requiring the use of explosives.

Guard posts were established along the dock areas and in the business district, and a roving downtown patrol was set up to assist city police.

An engineer water purification unit was flown into Seward on Saturday and established at a small lake near the city's edge. Six water trailers were spotted throughout the city for public use. On its first day of operation, the unit produced 10,000 gallons and worked at peak capacity from that day on, closing out on 9 April.

Cooks from the Alaska Army National Guard unit took over the mess hall in the Jesse Lee Home, and the Army cooks from the Recreation Center opened a mess hall in the high school. Here they fed nearly all the citizens left in Seward, using foodstuffs from damaged stores and private homes. Much of the town's frozen and refrigerated food supplies -- commercial and private -- had to be cooked if they were to be saved.

Women and girls of Seward pitched in to act as cooks' helpers at both military mess halls. At the Jesse Lee Home, the cooks fed all the Home's children and staff, and about fifty displaced citizens whose homes had been in the neighborhood. At the high school, the community kitchen fed an average of 800 meals per day to citizens and volunteer workers. To lighten the load, Company A established its own field kitchen to feed the soldiers in the city.

On Easter Sunday, a 30 kilowatt generator was flown in to provide emergency power for the hospital, and two smaller 1 1/2 kilowatt generators were furnished for airfield control facilities.

In coordination with local Civil Air Patrol members, the United States Army, Alaska troops established an air field control center to operate the airport and organized an air depot detail to unload the many supply aircraft coming into Seward. They also manned a petroleum - oil - lubricant depot at the field.

After eight days of intensive effort on behalf of Seward, Company A was withdrawn from the city on 4 April, and replaced by Company C (Airborne) 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry.

Although the bulk of the intra-Alaska airlift support was to be in the Seward area, other immediate steps were taken by the Alaskan Air Command to relieve this beleaguered community. These included the immediate release of Air Force emergency supplies, stored in the Seward Safe Haven area for the health and welfare of the local citizenry. Good Friday evening, an Alaskan Air Command Provider (C-123) took off from Elmendorf Air Force Base with 10,400 pounds of relief cargo for Seward.

During the period 0600 hours, 30 March to 0600 hours, 31 March, Alaskan Air Command and Air National Guard Provider (C-123) aircraft delivered 168 passengers and 59,120 pounds of cargo to the Seward area. In the following 24 hours the aircraft delivered 127,700 pounds of cargo and 198 passengers.

A special project during this period was the handling of 60,000 pounds of perishable food and 32,700 pounds of equipment, off-loaded from the steamship TONSINA at the Port of Anchorage for delivery to Seward.

Despite damage to their own communities, Civil Air Patrol personnel of the Anchorage, Homer, Kenai, and Seward units flew a considerable number of search and rescue missions as well as transporting cargo and passengers.

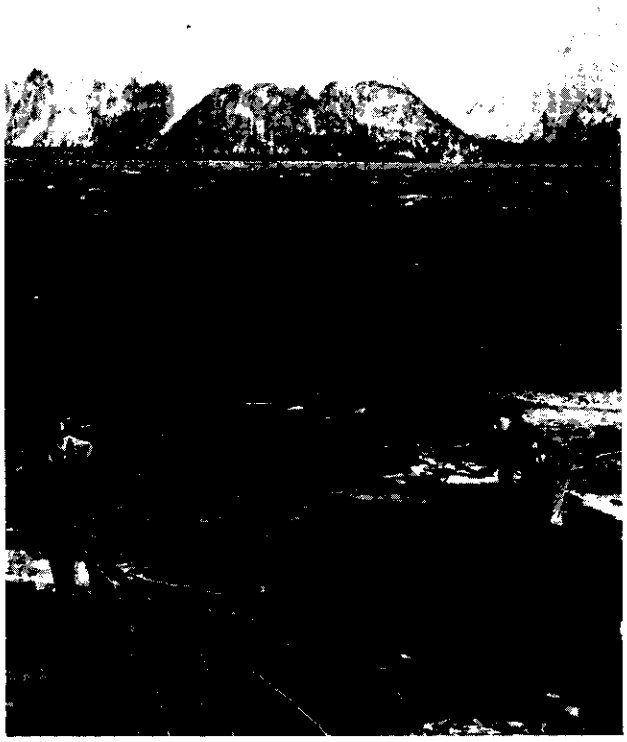
During the early days of the disaster, Civil Air Patrol airlifted thousands of pounds of foodstuffs, medical supplies, fuel, equipment and a large number of passengers to Seward and other Kenia Peninsula areas. Air evacuations of persons, especially from Seward, Hope, and Portage, also received the special attention of the Civil Air Patrol.

On 1 April, the 2868th Ground Electronics Engineering Installations Association Squadron of the Air Force Logistics Command, stationed at Elmendorf, provided self-sufficient outside plant personnel for approximately ten days to assist the Alaska Railroad in making open wire communications repairs from Seward back toward Anchorage. Other wire personnel were working from Anchorage down along the Kenai Peninsula toward Seward. At the same time, Alaskan Air Command arranged airlift to Seward for 40 poles, crossarms and hardware, plus an auger truck to be used by the Alaska Railroad to rehabilitate the pole line from there to Portage.

To fill the information void created when Seward's Radio Station KIHB was destroyed, Army personnel, in conjunction with city officials, began publication of a daily bulletin. The mimeograph news sheet kept Seward citizens abreast of the activities in their city.

A chain reaction put KIHB back on the air in just a few days. Learning of the station's problem, a Seattle, Washington newspaper published the story. A radio station in the state heeded the call and donated a transmitter. It was flown by Northwest Orient Airlines, free of charge, to Anchorage, where it was transferred to an Air National Guard Provider (C-123) and flown to Seward. Supplementing with equipment loaned by Armed Forces Radio Service, Alaska, Army and Air Force technicians had KIHB back on the air just three days after it went silent, to serve the community as a Civil Defense communications medium.

Military cooks and local citizens teamed up to feed the hungry



Civil and military police search for possible victims

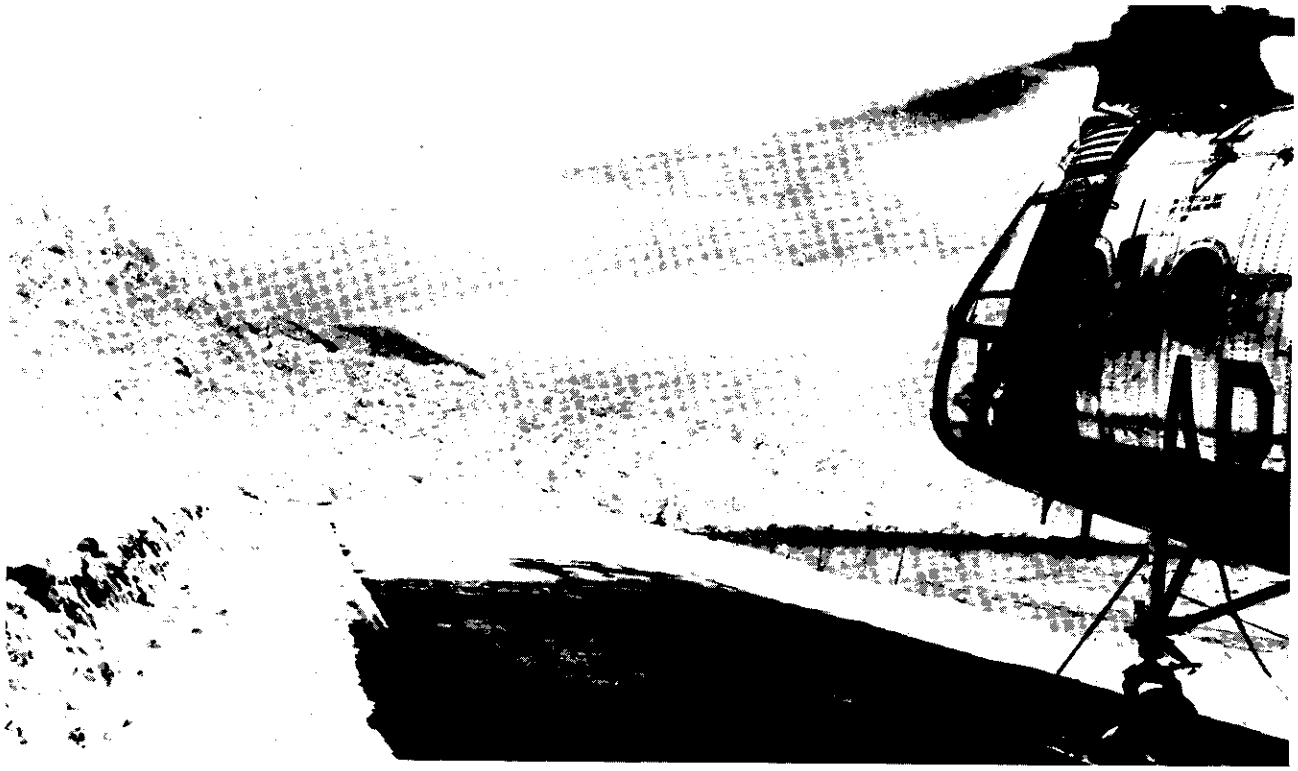
Airlift of emergency supplies was vital

Military airlift carried tons of heavy equipment ...

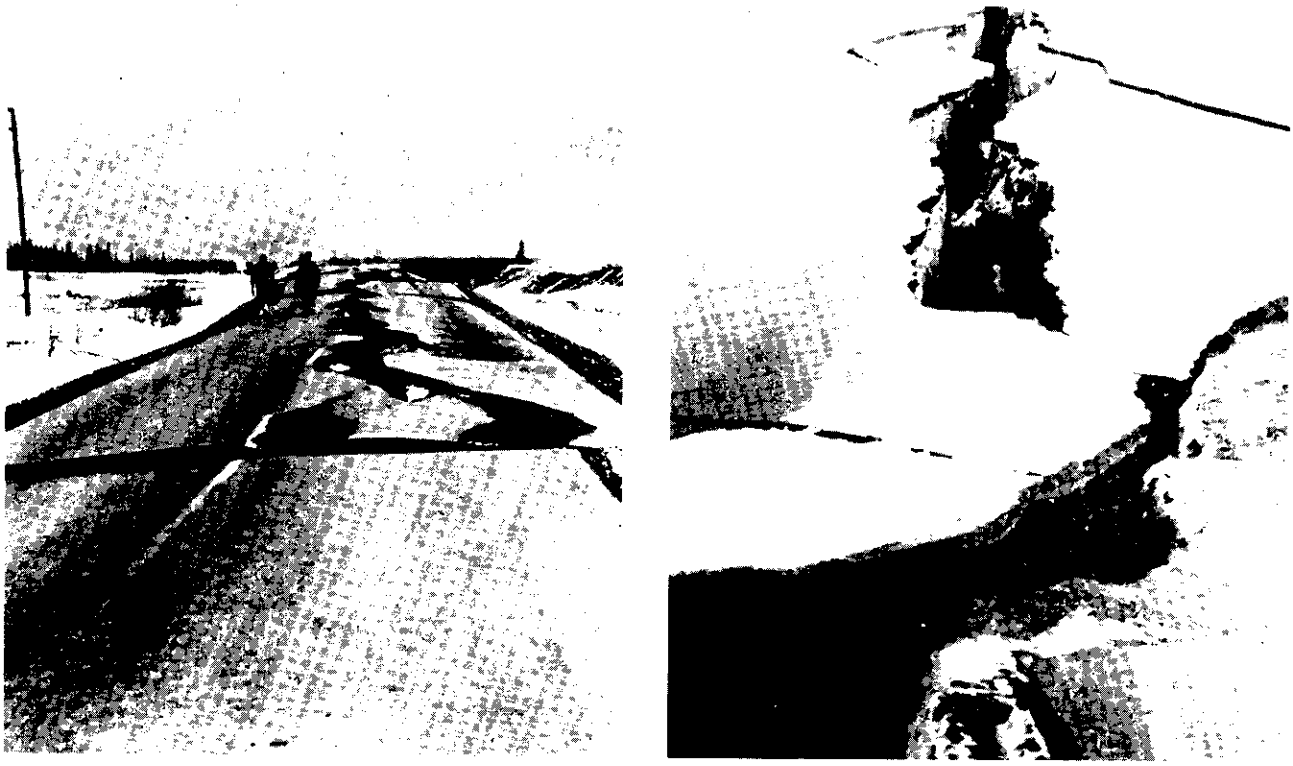
food ... fuel ... into the stricken city

CHAPTER VII

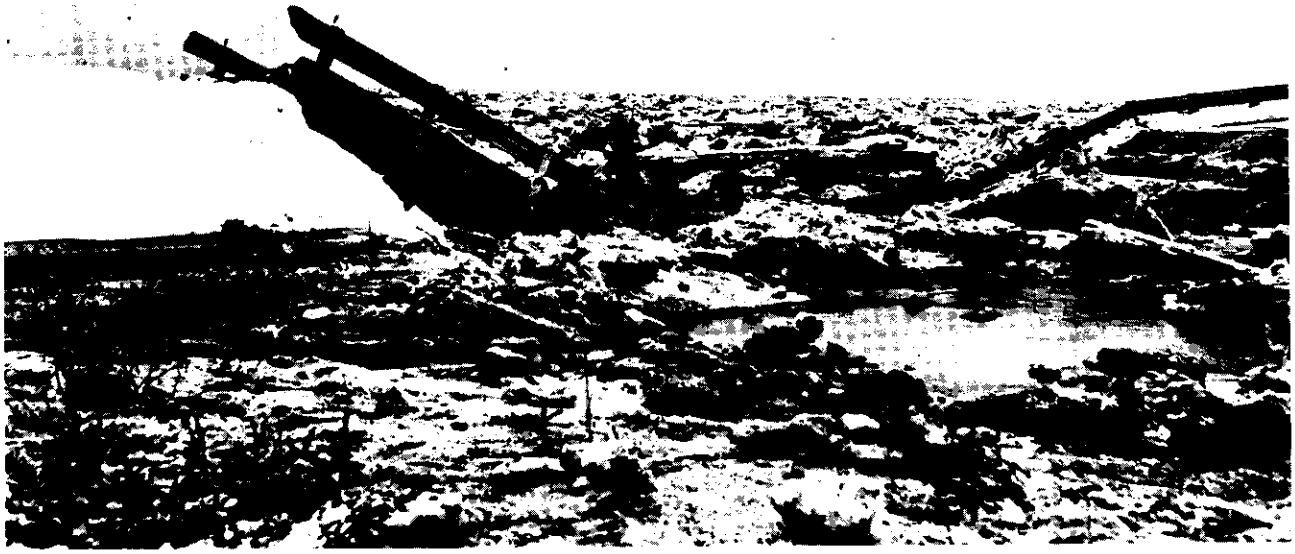
SEWARD HIGHWAY



Giant landslides cut highway artery to stricken communities

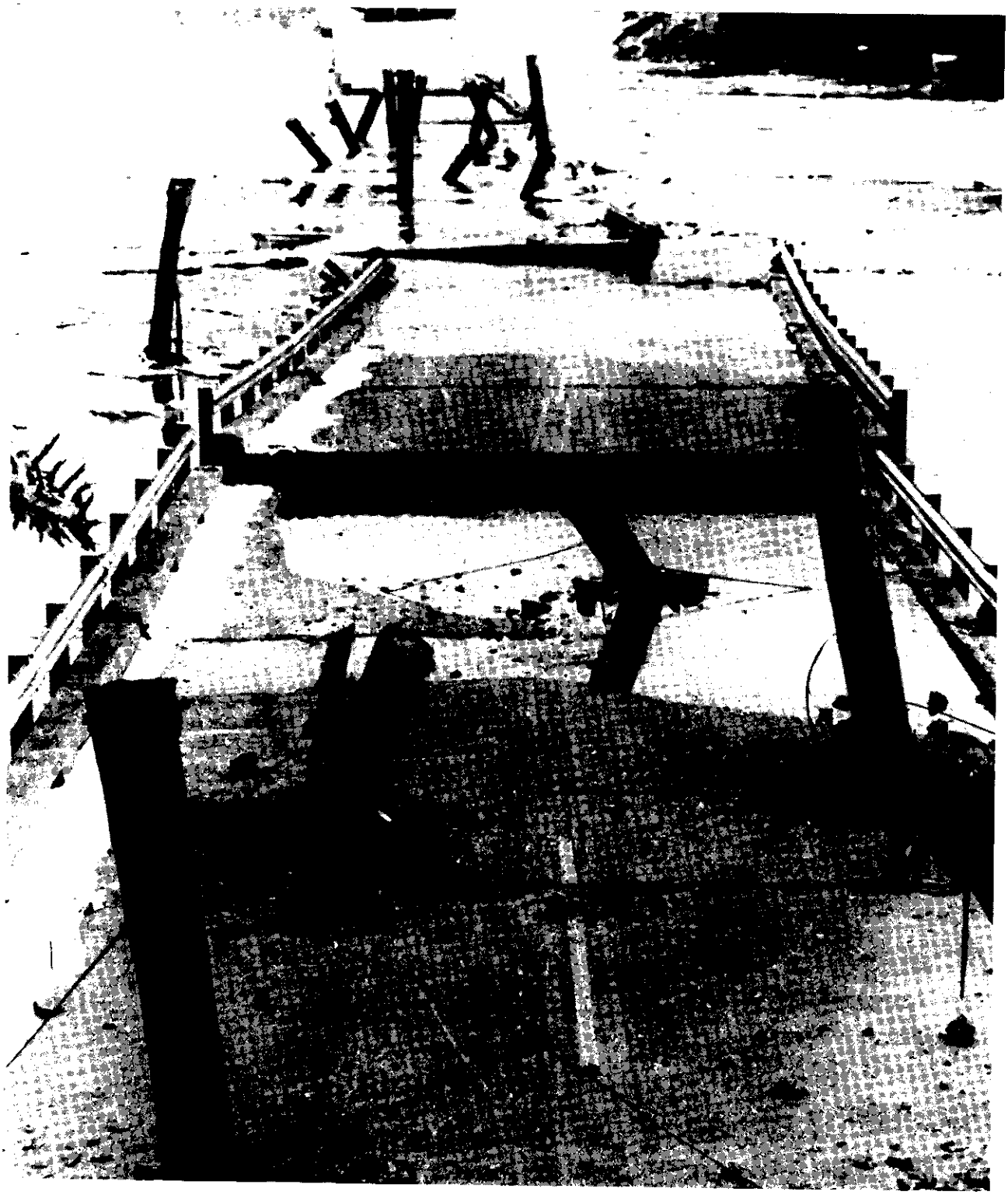


Large fissures also impeded highway travel

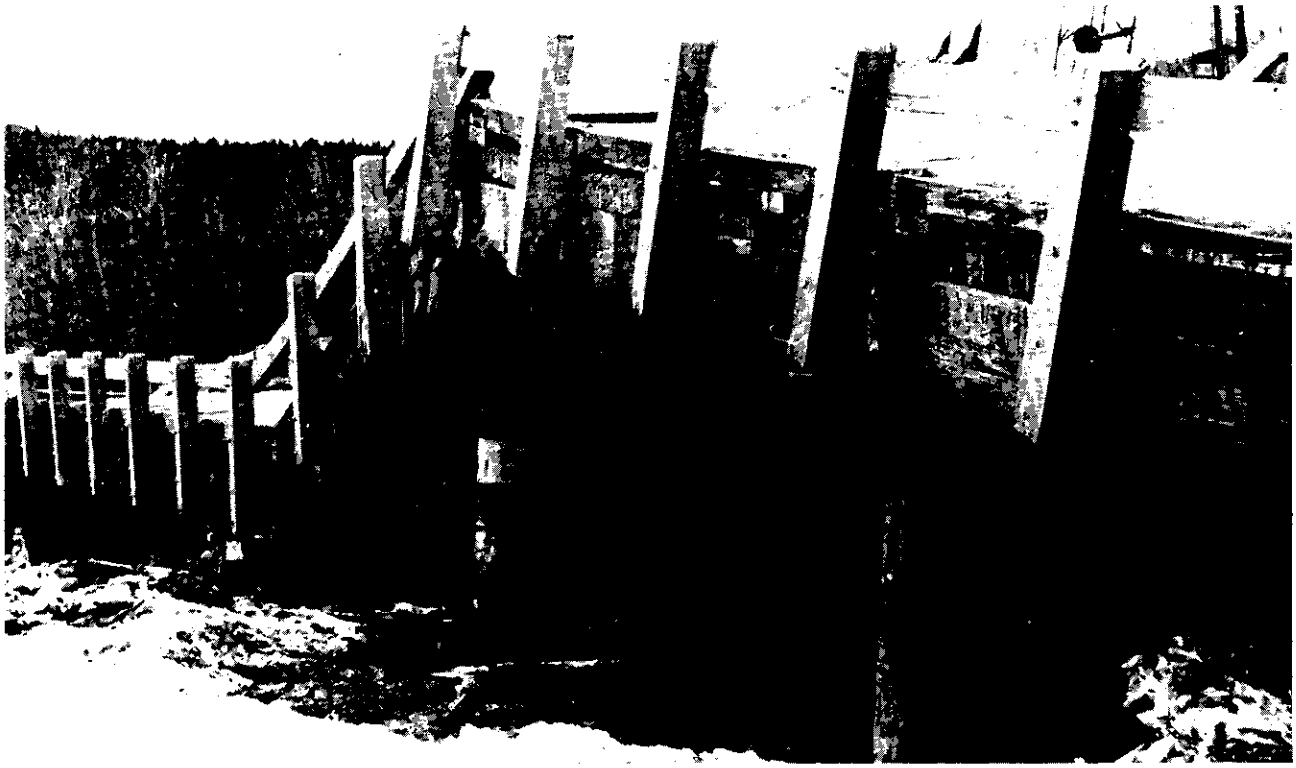


Seventeen highway bridges were destroyed between Anchorage and Seward

Portage was inundated with ice following high tides



Wooden pilings driven through concrete show force of earthquake



Seward Highway bridges were not the only victims of the disaster

Railroad bridges and roadbeds were also destroyed

The Seward Highway, some 140 miles long, is one of the two main transportation arteries running from Anchorage around the Turnagain Arm and down the Kenai Peninsula to Seward. The other is the Alaska Railroad which parallels the highway most of the way. Both suffered extensive damage; 17 highway bridges were lost and roadbeds were damaged, destroyed, or blocked by avalanches in many areas.

The first commercial radio station back on the air in Anchorage after the earthquake was monitoring the Civil Defense and ham radio nets, and reporting all available information. Hard facts were sketchy at best, but early among the report was word that there was an impassable fissure in the Seward Highway near Rabbit Creek, and the highway had reportedly suffered other damage.

Word reaching Alaskan Command Headquarters made it appear reasonable that Seward had been hard-hit. Reaching that city over the shattered highway would require a force of considerable strength.

At 2235 hours on Good Friday, an element of the reconnaissance platoon of the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 60th Infantry, left Fort Richardson to head down the Seward Highway. The reconnaissance element was followed in 25 minutes by Company B of the battalion and two platoons from the 562nd Engineer Combat Company, equipped with two bulldozers.

Orders for the force were to go to Seward over the highway. It was soon evident this would be a monumental task which could possibly take several days.

The force that moved out of Anchorage that Friday night found considerable splitting and heaving of the road; but it was passable to Rabbit Creek, where earlier reports proved to be correct. The large fissure was temporarily filled with earth and snow by bulldozers.

The column then picked its way cautiously down the road, meeting only minor obstacles. The Bird Creek Bridge was cracked, but would still support heavy traffic. A rock slide had littered the road but had not closed it. Crevices that would catch the wheels of trucks were packed with anything at hand -- earth, gravel, timber, and in some cases ice and snow.

About ten miles short of Girdwood they hit their first major obstacle. A massive slide covered the road. The slide was mostly snow mixed with dirt, rocks, and trees; some so large a big man could not span them with his arms.

The bulldozers went to work, joined by three dozers of the state's Department of Highways. As they bucked a one-way passage through the slide, engineers and infantrymen worked side-by-side clearing the bulldozer trail by hand.

The next major obstacle was at Glacier Creek, just short of Girdwood, where the bridge had collapsed. It was here that B Company, less one platoon, was recalled to Fort Richardson at mid-day Saturday. The one platoon stayed with 50 men of the Engineers to put a 150 foot Bailey Bridge across Glacier Creek.

By this time the mission of the men on the highway had changed. The urgency to get to Seward over the road no longer existed. Now they were to clear the road enough to get the people out of Girdwood, Alyeska and Portage.

One tracked vehicle had gotten through to Anchorage from Alyeska and it was learned that there were about one-hundred and forty persons there.

It took two Bailey Bridges to get past Girdwood. The Glacier Creek Bridge completed, the Engineers went on to Virgin Creek, where again they found a bridge torn out by the upheaval. Here they threw up an 80 foot Bailey Bridge.

Between Girdwood and Portage -- a distance of twelve miles -- there were about fifteen slides cutting the road. They were the same hard mixture of snow, dirt, rocks, and trees. Some of them were vast, measuring up to 300 feet long and 30 to 40 feet deep across the road. The bulldozers worked up to ten hours clearing a single slide. Even after such labor, the paths they sliced through some of the slides were so narrow the mirrors on the cabs of big trucks dragged along the snowbank on either side of the cut.

Where there were no slides, the highway was badly fissures by the earthquake. In some places the cracks were two and three feet wide. In the race for Portage they filled only those they could not go around.

Every bridge and major culvert on the road was damaged or destroyed. Hasty repairs were made, or the dozers bucked rough roadways around them.

The highway bridge at 20-Mile Creek was gone, its concrete decking lying in the creek bed. The incredible force of the earthquake had driven wooden pilings through the concrete like a steel awl through cheese.

But the railroad bridge was intact. The dozers cut new approaches across the tide flats and the engineers decked the trestle to accommodate wheeled vehicles. The first vehicles entered Portage Tuesday afternoon. The Engineers had fought the highway around the clock for four days.

Army and Air Force helicopters had evacuated many people from Portage, but 35 had chosen to stay. The soldiers found them all living in Diamond Jim's, an old log lodge which was the only building remaining intact.

Earlier reconnaissance and rescue missions flown by Alaskan Air Command's 5017th Operations Squadron Workhorse (H-21) and light aircraft of Anchorage Civil Air Patrol units along the Kenai Peninsula the day after the earthquake resulted in the rescue of 11 people from the highway near Portage their first trip out. An additional 16 persons had been picked up by United States Army, Alaska helicopters. Also picked up were two linemen on the road who were transported to Portage.

Later, Air Force Workhorses (H-21s) visited all populated areas on the Seward Highway between Anchorage and Seward, evacuating 21 persons to Anchorage. Easter Sunday, four 5017th Workhorses, on an aerial reconnaissance of the Anchorage local area, Turnagain and the highway between Anchorage and Portage, evacuated three persons from Portage. The next day three were picked up at Hope and brought to Elmendorf Air Force Base. Other mercy flights included trips to Silver Tip and Tyonek.

Civil Air Patrol aircraft flew 200 pounds of meat and 50 pounds of typhoid serum to Hope on 4 April, and 50 pounds of medical supplies to Portage. Later Civil Air Patrol missions to Hope provided a haylift to the isolated community, carrying baled hay to the starving livestock.

The Army advance party brought the first drinking water Portage had had since the earthquake. The 40 gallons of potable water brought in by the lead tracked vehicle was soon increased by water flown in by an Army Shawnee helicopter. Later, a water trailer and engineer water purification unit were brought over the road from Fort Richardson.

In Portage the 562nd Engineers turned to assisting Alaska Railroad crews in raising the sunken roadbed and otherwise aiding in the emergency repairs necessary to get the rail line open into the Port of Whittier. Communications equipment from the 33d Signal Battalion was moved to Portage to temporarily replace damaged railroad and Federal Aviation Agency communications and to provide the communications capabilities between Anchorage, Seward and Whittier.

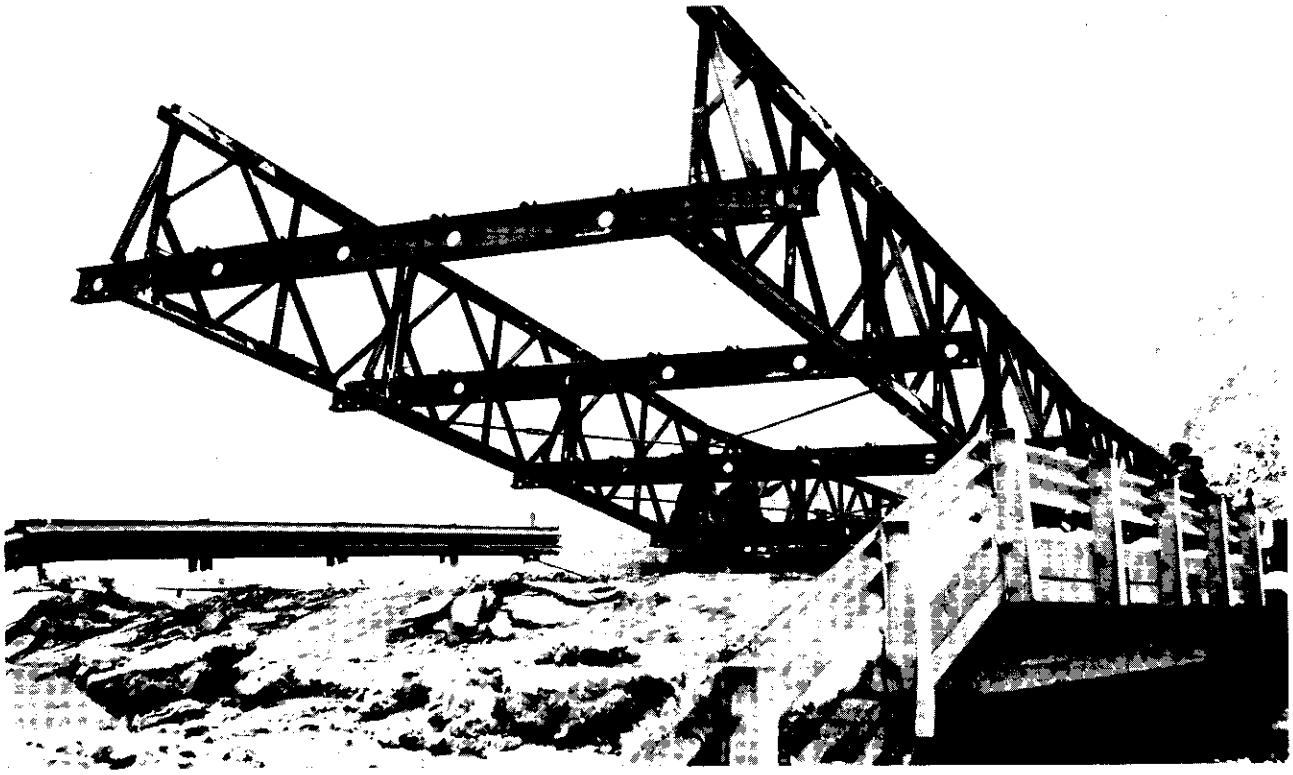
Gradually the remaining citizens left Portage and by the weekend of 11 - 12 April only a handful remained.

Annual spring high tides which flooded the village of Portage and carried huge chunks of ice through the already quake-battered community on 13 April forced the remaining residents to send out an urgent distress call for evacuation. Two 5017th helicopters responded to the call, despite the fact that the weather was almost ceiling zero at the time, and took out 12 people that afternoon -- 10 to Girdwood and 2 to Elmendorf.

The last eight people, except for a few communicators, were lifted from Portage to the high school at Girdwood aboard an Army Shawnee helicopter which had gone in to bring out communications equipment. The tides of the evening before had put 43 inches of water in Diamond Jim's lodge.

The tides also did major damage to the highway and the railroad. In anticipation of the high water, the Engineers from Fort Richardson sandbagged the approaches to Girdwood over the weekend of 11 - 12 April. The 27,000 sandbags could not keep the water from flooding the community, but did keep ice chunks from destroying the buildings.

At Virgin Creek the flooding tides washed away the approaches to the Bailey Bridge, leaving the 80 foot span lying in the bottom of the enlarged stream bed. Men from the 562nd Engineers dismantled the bridge in place, and on 15 April went back to Virgin Creek to span it with a 130 foot Bailey to remain in place until new state bridging is completed.



To traverse the damaged highway to stricken areas military engineers constructed Bailey Bridges

Many were evacuated by helicopter

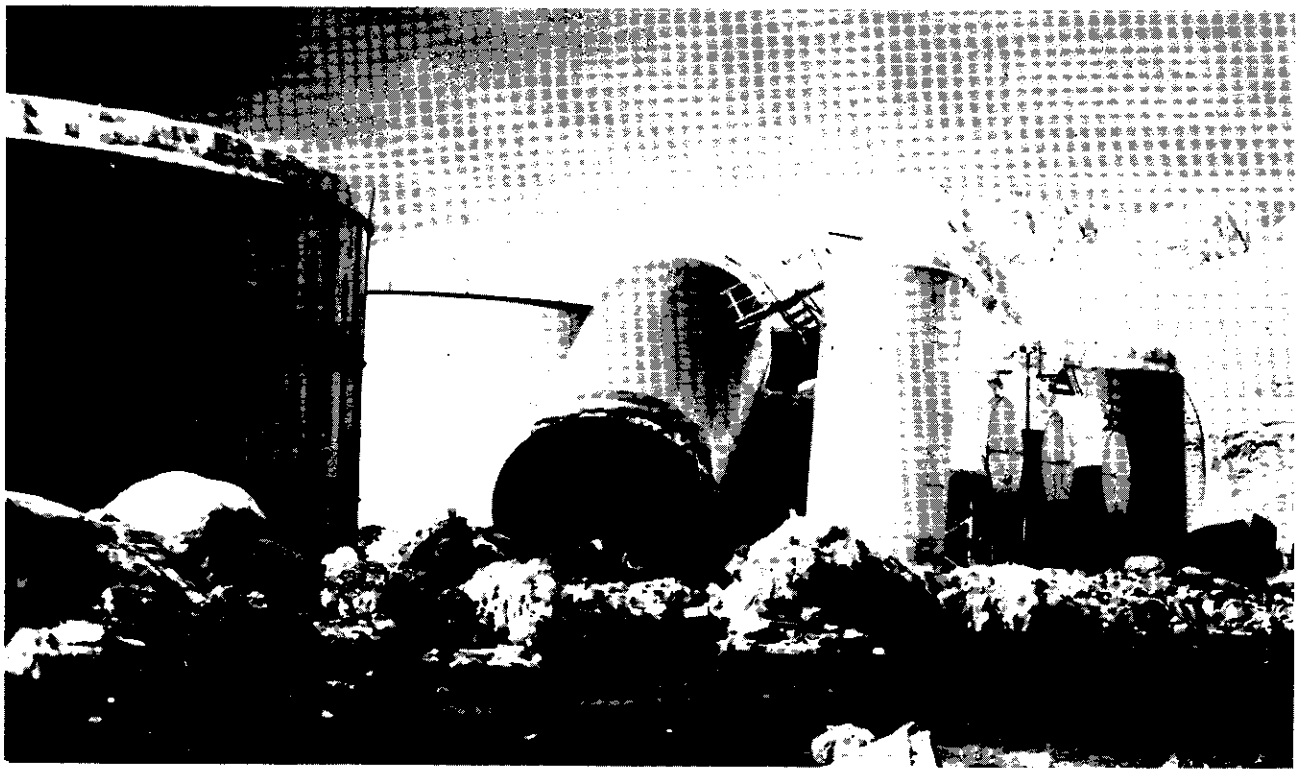
Sandbags battle high tides

CHAPTER VIII

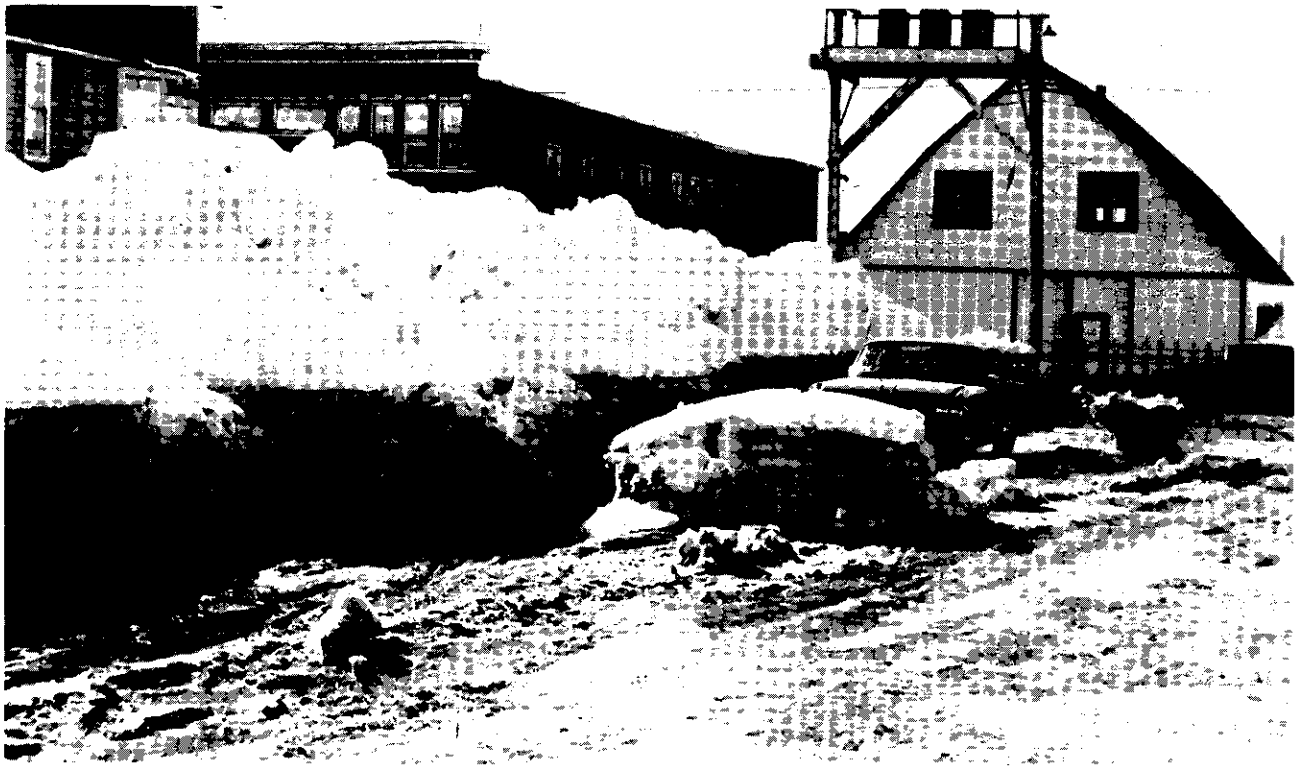
VALDEZ

Earthquake, seismic waves and fire was fate of Valdez

Dock area was completely destroyed



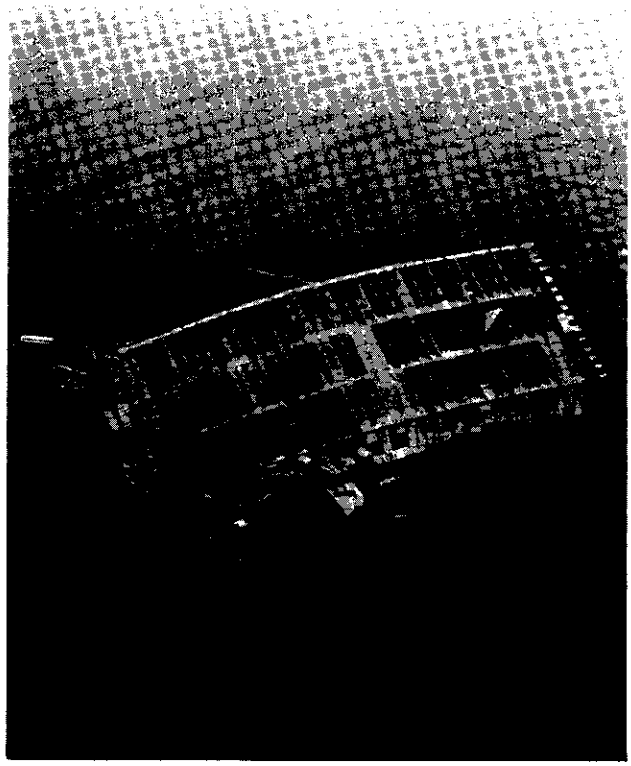
Fuel tanks were up-ended



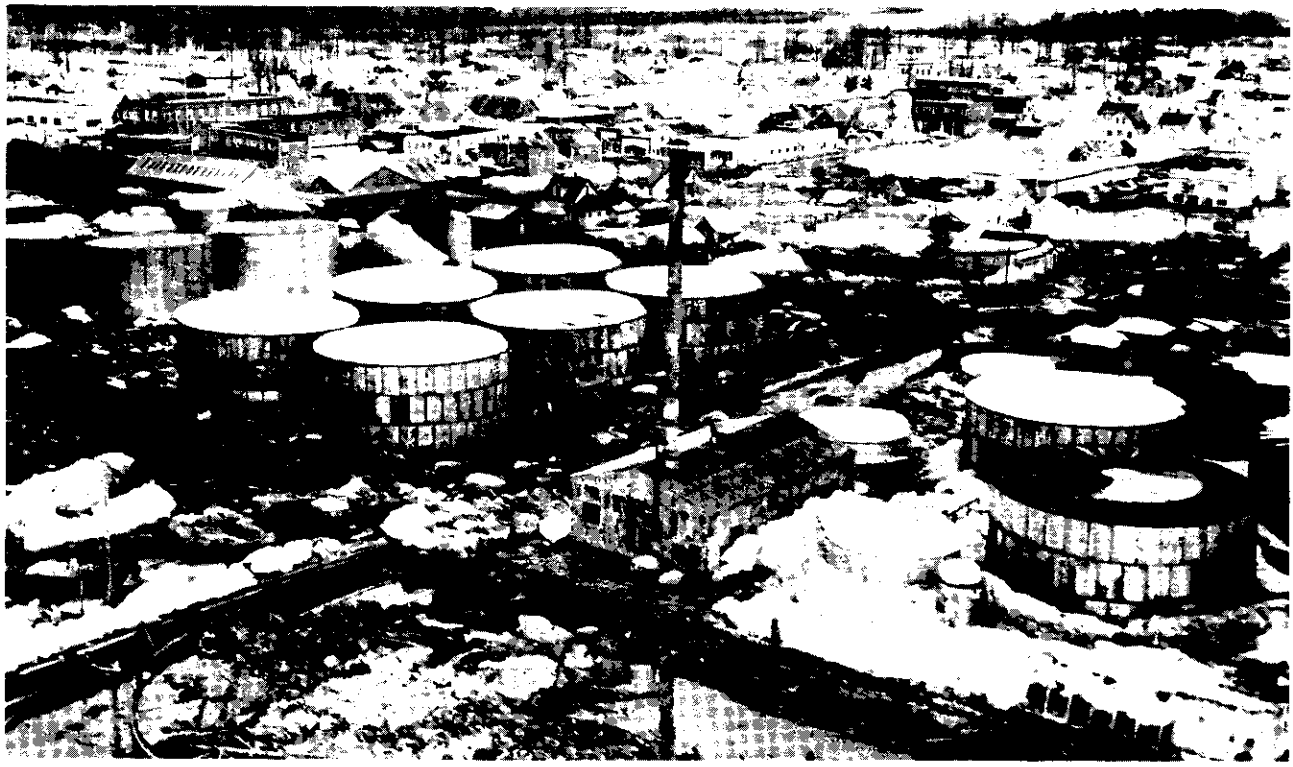
Note high water line on snow bank

Semi-trailers oddly parked by seismic waves

Fissure becomes stop sign



Non-houseboat puts to sea



Petroleum tank farms were severely damaged

One of many junk heaps attributed to 27 March earthquake

"Valdez is a shambles" was the first word on that Prince William Sound port city to reach the Command Post of the Alaskan Command. Like much of the information filtering in from Alaskan communities devastated by the earthquake, this report was cryptic, but held elements of fact.

Further information was equally nebulous, but indicated a need for someone to go to the aid of Valdez. The mission was assigned to the United States Army, Alaska Yukon Command and Fort Wainwright.

Communications between Valdez and Anchorage were temporarily maintained by a ham operator in the stricken city and an Air Force sergeant at Cape Newenham Air Force Station, Alaska. The Air Force Communications Service MARS operators at Elmendorf were unable to reach Valdez on the MARS frequencies, so they asked the sergeant who was a licensed ham, to try and make contact over the amateur radio band.

The Valdez ham gave accounts of the disaster to the sergeant, who then relayed the information over the MARS network to Elmendorf, which further relayed the data to State Civil Defense. This three-way contact continued until the Valdez ham was knocked off the air by one of the following seismic waves. It was later learned that he had lost his teenage son in the disaster.

The first elements of the assistance force took off from the Fort Wainwright air strip at 2350 hours, Good Friday, less than three hours after the mission had been assigned. There were six Army Otter (U1A) aircraft in the midnight aerial convoy. In the first were the task force commander and a survey team made up of an Army surgeon, an engineering officer, and other specialists. Behind them flew five planeloads of men from Company B, 1st Battalion, 47th Infantry (Mechanized).

They were followed by Army Shawnee (CH-21) helicopters, flying empty. The plan was to land the Otters at Gulkana, and transfer the passengers to the helicopters for the rest of the trip to Valdez. Information was scant but it would do no good to fly the fixed-wing aircraft to Valdez and not be able to land.

The weather was getting increasingly bad. The first Otter landed at Gulkana at 0200 hours, Saturday. The other five were forced to turn back to Fort Greely. Meanwhile, the survey team on the ground at Gulkana stood anxiously listening as the helicopters searched for the airfield through the gloom. The choppers finally landed on frozen lakes in the region to wait out the weather.

At 0730 hours the survey party landed by helicopter in Valdez, followed closely by the rest of the advance party. Other men and equipment from Fort Wainwright were on the way by highway.

Valdez had taken a desperate beating. The waterfront was a tangle of smashed timbers, boats, and debris of all sorts. None of the waterfront installations remained. The Union Oil tank farm was ablaze. The electricity was out, the water system inoperable, and the sewer system damaged beyond use.

The Army task force commander and his survey team met immediately with the mayor of Valdez, the local state policeman, and a doctor. The mayor had decided to evacuate the city and the other concurred in this judgment.

All but 40 men and 5 women in Valdez were evacuated on 28 March. Most of them traveled by private automobile over the highway; although some were evacuated by Army aircraft. The 53 patients at the Harbor View Hospital, a mental institution, were flown by Air Force Provider (C-123) aircraft to the Alaska Psychiatric Institute in Anchorage.

Meanwhile, in Gulkana and Glenallen a follow-up from Fort Wainwright had been working rapidly with local Civil Defense officials and Air Force personnel of Alaska Communications System. A dining hall was established at the Glenallen High School and the entire area was surveyed for living quarters for the evacuees. Listed was all available space in schools, lodges, private homes, even garages and warehouses.

Civil Defense set up headquarters in the Glenallen High School and Alaska Communications System provided emergency communications.

The temporary quarters were stocked with cots and blankets. Clothing was contributed by personnel

living in the bachelor quarters and by dependents of Alaska Communications System station personnel.

The Army set up a check point near the junction of the Richardson and Glenn Highways to meet all evacuees from Valdez, explain the situation to them, and guide them to temporary quarters. Some 500 people were housed and fed in this manner, for periods ranging from one to six days.

In Valdez the soldiers went to work with the remaining civilians to clean up the devastated town. A mess hall was established to feed everyone. A water purification unit was driven in from Fort Wainwright to meet all needs of the community, and a tank truck delivered water to the hospital and other buildings still in use.

There were three known dead in Valdez, and 32 persons were listed as missing. Many of them had been along the waterfront when the earthquake struck and some had been seen to fall in fissures or be hit by the following wave. One of the first actions of the soldiers was to hand-pick the entire beach area in a search for the missing.

To assist in the search, United States Army, Alaska, Alaskan Air Command, Air National Guard, and Civil Air Patrol aircraft conducted numerous reconnaissance missions over the city and surrounding area in the critical first few days following the disaster.

Army Engineers and signalmen worked with Valdez public utilities workers to get the telephone lines and electrical system back in operation. Communications had been temporarily knocked out in the city, but by Saturday morning two lines were open out of Valdez and the situation continued to improve. Limited electrical service was re-established by Easter Sunday.

City heavy equipment, which had been in storage for the winter, was brought out and put into action. Soldiers and civilians worked shoulder-to-shoulder running heavy equipment, driving trucks, and laboring by hand to clear the rubbled areas of the city.

The mayor organized a work party to gather all perishable foodstuffs, both from commercial outlets and private homes, and stockpile them at the evacuated hospital. Here the city postmaster, who is also a cook, took over. He established a kitchen to feed the community. The Army continued to operate its mess close to the downtown area and many of the civilian relief workers ate there.

Three Army doctors and some aidmen had been among the first soldiers in the city. Working closely with the Valdez doctor and a public health nurse who drove down the highway, they inoculated everyone in the city against typhoid.

Dogs became an early problem. Many had been left behind by fleeing citizens and, hungry, were prowling the community. Many of the relief workers feared they would become a danger, and the suggestion was made that the Army detachment shoot them. The task force commander, however, decided against such drastic measures, since he felt most of the dogs were family pets and when the citizens returned to Valdez they would want to recover their dogs. He appointed a crew of dog catchers who captured the stray animals and placed them in a compound. Here they were fed and watered and within two weeks most had been reclaimed.

The highway into Valdez had suffered only minor damage in the earthquake. This was a boon in many ways, since it meant there could be a steady flow of supplies into the city. But it also offered a problem of control of sightseers and potential looters entering the area. Working with the city officials and state police, troops established a check point at the entrance to the town where all visitors were turned back expect those who had a need to be there.

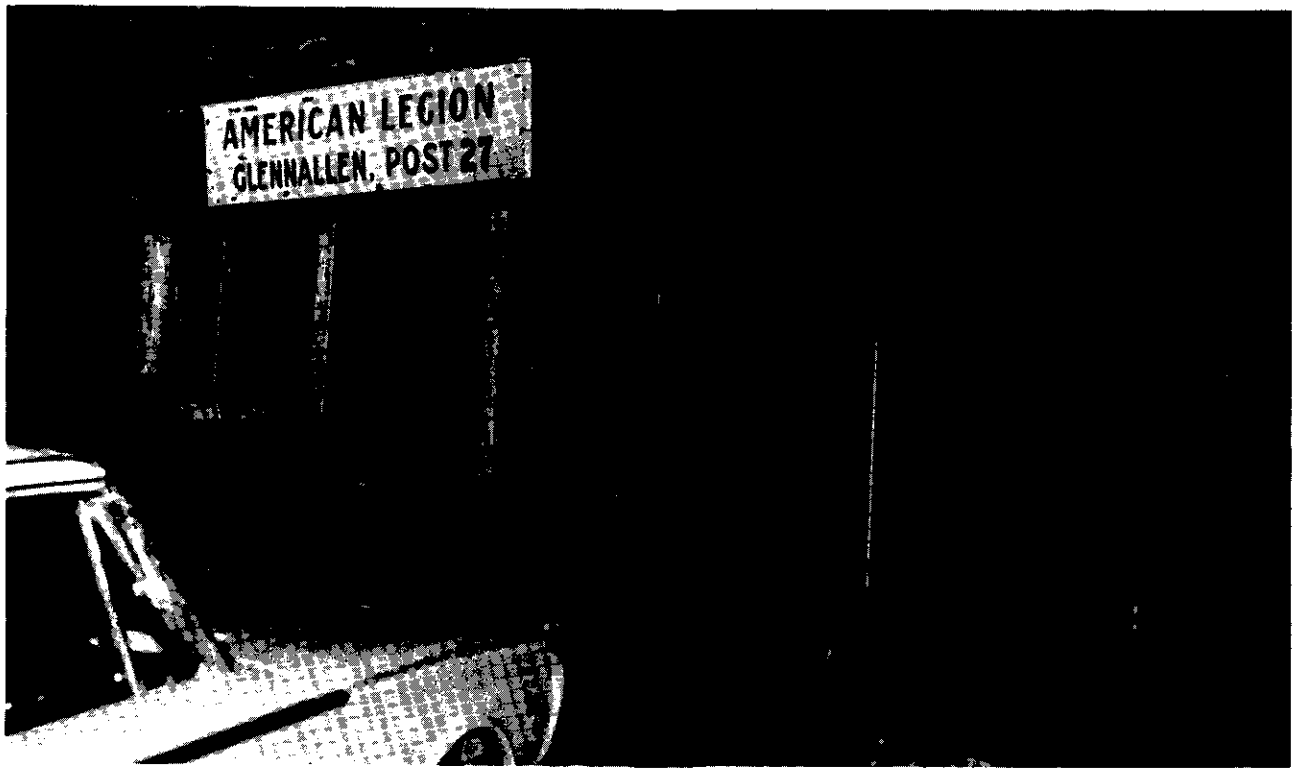
The check point also helped in keeping track of Valdez citizens, in case any new tremors or waves should cause further losses of life. Similar check was kept at the airport, where the task force established a passenger control point. In further effort at the airport, men of the engineer detachment operated city heavy equipment to fill crevices and keep the strip and parking areas graded.

Within the city the mayor and task force commander devised a pass system which permitted workmen into areas where they were needed, and gave businessmen access to their establishments for salvage purposes while keeping the curious and would-be-looters out, and sealing off areas which were safety hazards.

At its peak the Army strength in Valdez was 114 officers and men, including infantry, engineer, signal, and medical personnel. Another 85 to 90 were employed in the Gulkana-Glenallen area.

When the community had recovered to some degree, a joint Alaskan Air Command - Air National Guard Provider (C-123) airlift returned troops and equipment in the Gulkana-Valdez area to Fort Wainwright.

Food rations arrived early to feed local citizens

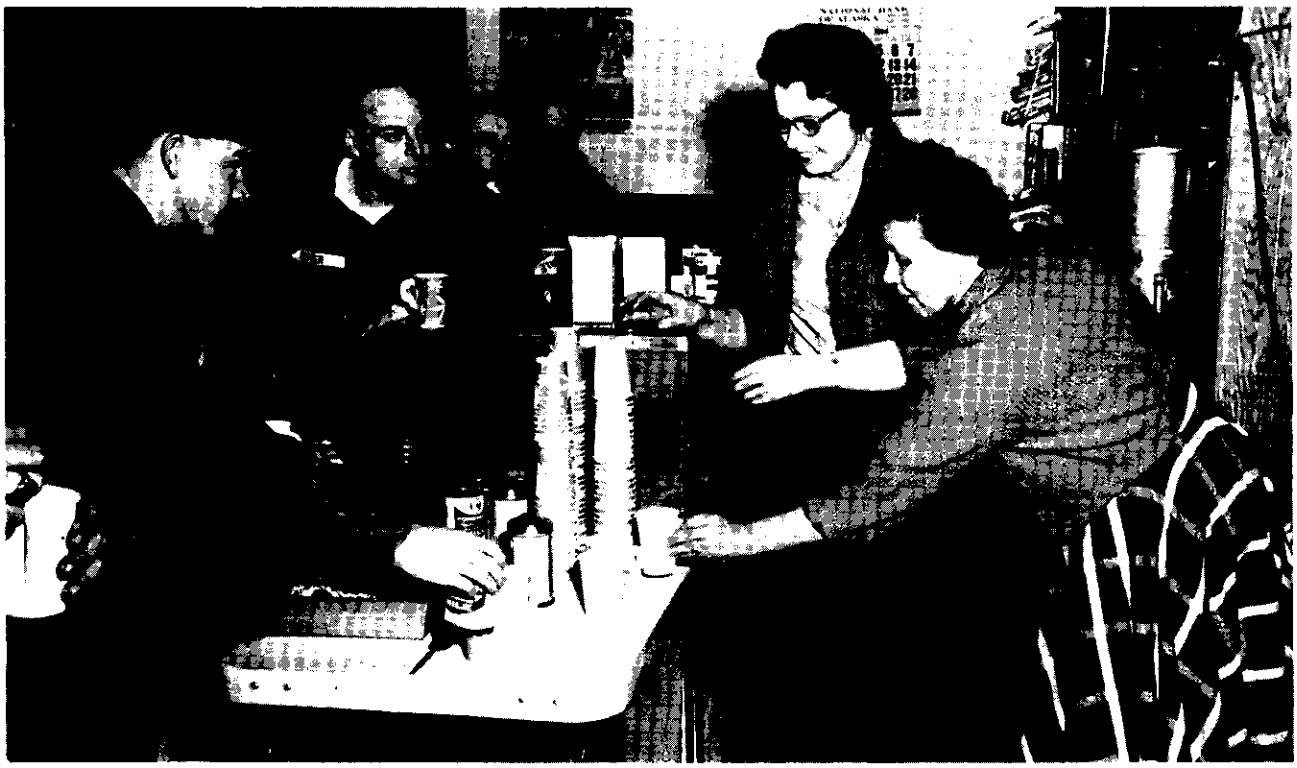


Glenallen residents arranged for care of evacuees

Evacuated by military helicopter ... displaced persons receive medical check

...typhoid shots for safety and a warm bed

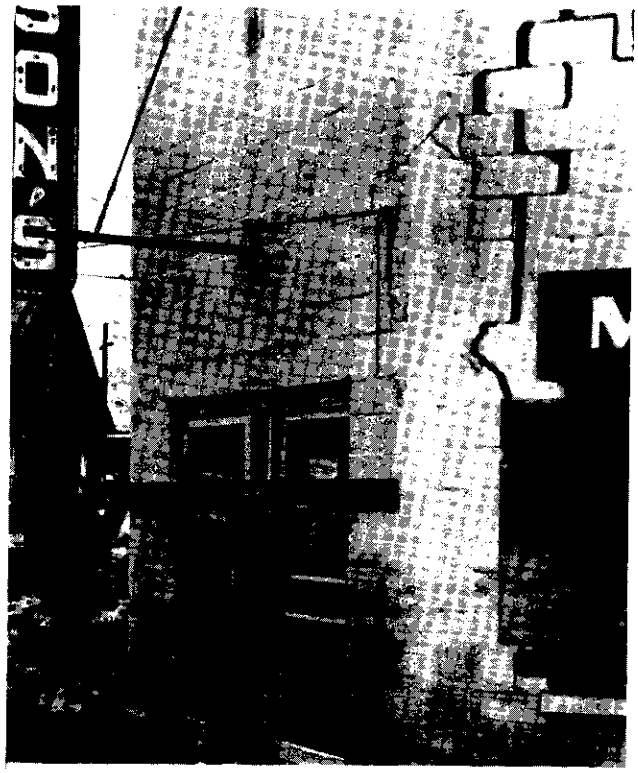
Faces mirror horror of disaster which struck their city



Soldiers enjoy coffee break after a long night

No one went hungry

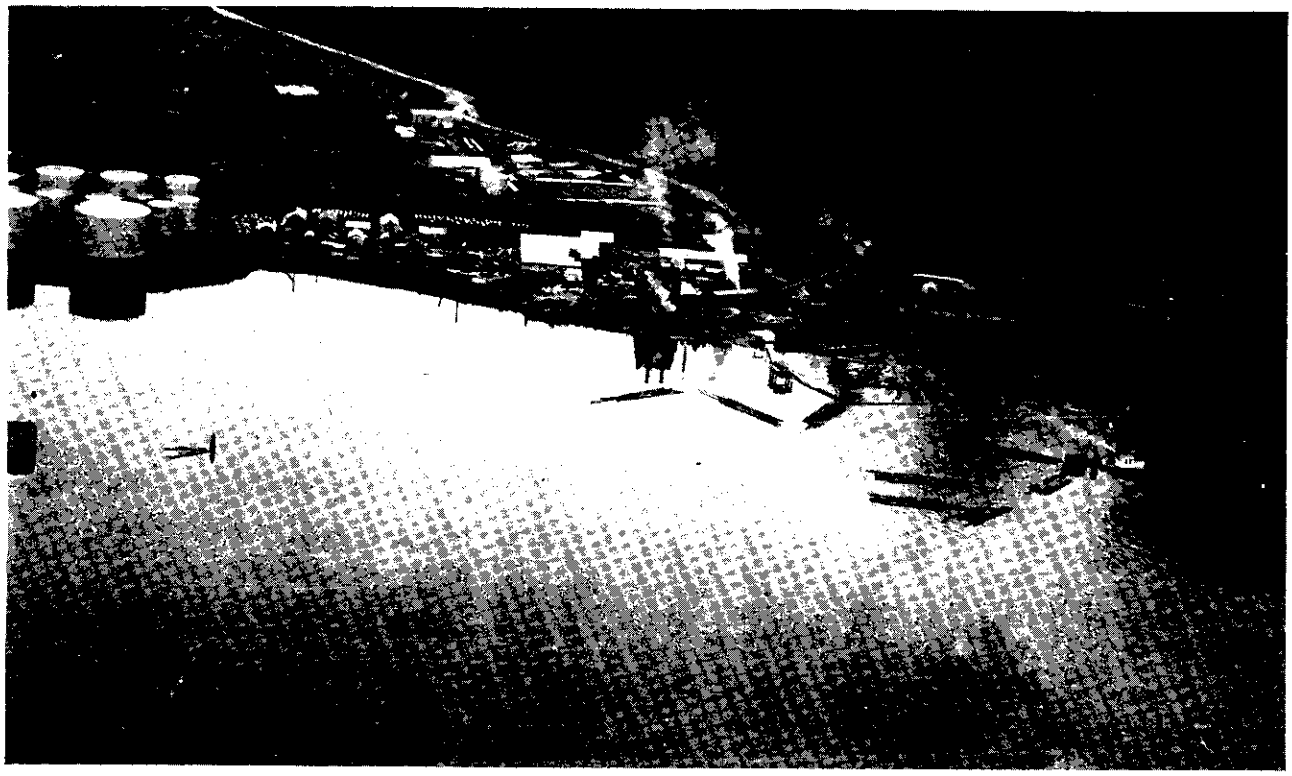
Alaska Governor visits hometown



Damaged buildings secured

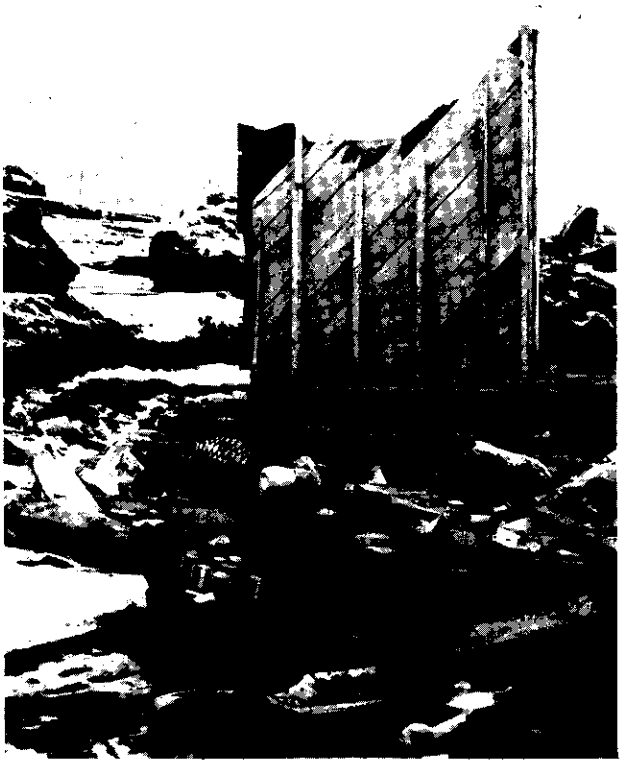
CHAPTER IX

WHITTIER



Columbia Lumber Mill before and after earthquake and seismic waves

Petroleum tank farms became raging infernos



Dwellings were destroyed and port facilities crippled

Whittier is one of Alaska's most modern seaports and is located on a sheltered, deep water channel which is open all year. However, it is strangely isolated for a port; being accessible only by water, rail, and, to a limited degree, air. Because of the short runway, helicopters and light fixed-wing aircraft are the only military aircraft which can visit the port. The single rail line is a spur from the Alaska Railroad, departing the main Seward-Anchorage line at Portage and entering Whittier through two tunnels.

Conditions at the port were unknown. The earthquake destroyed all communications out of Whittier and cut the rail line. Lowering weather kept aircraft on the ground at Elmendorf Air Force Base and Fort Richardson until mid-day Saturday.

At 1045 hours on 28 March, a Coast Guard plane flew over the port and reported that oil tanks were burning. The plane had been unable to make contact with any Whittier ground station.

Less than two hours later, a Pacific Northern Airlines pilot reported that Whittier was all aflame as he flew over.

Two hours after that, an Alaska highway patrolman reported to Civil Defense Headquarters that the tunnel to Whittier was open. He said the community had suffered 1 dead and 12 missing. The remaining 52 people in the tiny community, including the 28 Department of Army civilian employees and their 9 dependents, were all right.

The first plane to reach the isolated port was an Army Shawnee helicopter, which finally got into the port on late Saturday afternoon. The pilot picked up an Alaska Railroad employee, his wife and their dead baby, which had been killed in the earthquake. On the way back to Fort Richardson, the pilot picked up 16 more women and children along the highway between Portage and Anchorage.

Mission logs of the 5017th Operations Squadron show aerial reconnaissance flights over Whittier by Air Force Workhorse (CH-21) helicopters and light aircraft of the Anchorage Civil Air Patrol. Numerous passenger flights in and out of the port were also made.

Final count showed the infant was the only recovered fatality in Whittier. All 12 persons at the Columbia Lumber Mill were missing after the seismic wave struck and two railroad employees were injured.

Physically, the port was not as badly damaged as early reports indicated. One Army tank farm and the Union Oil tank farm were totally destroyed. So were the Columbia Lumber Mill and the railroad station.

But the power plant was still in operation and the major port buildings had suffered relatively minor damage. The docks were in usable condition, with space to berth and work three ships. All communication facilities were inoperable. The rail lines in the port suffered only minor damage. Their quarters badly shaken by the earthquake, and with aftershocks still coming, the members of the small community moved into the gymnasium. The women set up a community kitchen in the school cafeteria.

Electricity was restored in six hours, and water was running in ten hours. By the third day the normal way of life was generally restored, except for the community dining room.

The Thursday after the earthquake the first cargo moved over the Whittier docks. Ships and barges continued to arrive and off-load. By the time the first train ran into Whittier more than 80 carloads of cargo were waiting.

Although the port was operating, it was on a skeleton basis. There was a large clean-up job to do. While structural damage to the buildings had been minor, there were many cracked and fallen curtain walls and one end of the maintenance building had been seriously damaged, although the rest of the building was in use.

First military aid into the port was an Army Engineer detachment from Fort Richardson, sent to probe and clear the tunnel. They were followed by a detachment from the 33d Signal Battalion, which installed a radio connection with Fort Richardson and then a 4-channel telephone cable through the railroad tunnel to connect with Portage. An Army civilian Communications Engineer assisted by Alaska Communications

System restored the badly damaged local telephone system to service. With them were five men from the 56th Engineer Company who helped with the job of restoring port utilities.

On 6 April Fort Richardson sent a composite platoon to help in the heavy clean-up work. Made up of a squad each from the United States Army, Alaska Support Command, Service Battalion, Medical Battalion and Maintenance Battalion, with platoon headquarters primarily from the Service Battalion, the detachment numbered 46 men.

The men and three jeeps were lifted into Whittier by Army Shawnee helicopters and went immediately to work on the job of clean-up and damage control. They tore down unsafe walls, cleared debris, and salvaged and restacked the Safe Haven supplies which had been stockpiled in the port area. In all they knocked down and removed the concrete block from 172 walls in eight buildings.

A boon to the ladies of the port was the kitchen crew that accompanied the detachment. The women closed their community kitchen in the school with the evening meal on 7 April, and the Army cooks took over. They cooked for their own detachment, bachelor Department of the Army civilians, more than 40 railroad employees, stevedores and visiting official parties until about the first of May.

CHAPTER X

WHY HELPING HAND

Immediately following the earthquake, the military forces in Alaska had both a moral and legal responsibility to assist their civilian neighbors in every way possible.

Public Law 875, 81st Congress, the National Disaster Act of 1950, and Executive Order 10427, 16 January 1953, provides the statutory right to provide assistance during a domestic emergency.

In time of need when a good friend and neighbor requires and requests a Helping Hand it is only natural to assist in every way possible.

So it was on 27 March 1964 when the men and women of the Alaskan Command fulfilled their moral and legal responsibilities by reacting immediately to the earthquake disaster.

Alaska State Legislature

Speaker of the House

BRUCE KENDALL
"O" STREET
MORAGE, ALASKA

House of Representatives

April 14, 1964

Lt. General Raymond J. Reeves
Commander-in-Chief
Alaskan Command
Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska

Dear General Reeves:

The Alaska House of Representatives has unanimously voted to send a resolution of appreciation to the officers and men of the Armed Forces for their superb contributions to the State of Alaska during the March 27 disaster period. Time and again those of us who did view the actual areas were impressed with the fine spirit of comradeship and quiet ability to work as part of the total effort exhibited by your staff and men. We know that the task of rescue, patrol, and rehabilitation would have been virtually impossible without the cooperation and help you so readily provided.

We hope that we can continue to exhibit this spirit of cooperation in our legislative efforts to help make Alaska a better place to live for all concerned.

Sincerely,

Bruce Kendall

Bruce Kendall
Speaker

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

April 1, 1964

The President
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

I do not know what would have happened in Alaska following the earthquake and tidal waves there last Friday if military cooperation had not been available and had not been extended. At a minimum, it can be said that the agonizing experiences suffered by the people in the affected areas and communities would have been far worse had the military not been there to -
That assistance was gladly given.

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ANCHORAGE

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
NOV 23, 1920

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Office of The Mayor

April 17, 1

-ieutenant General Raymond J. Reeves
Commander-in-Chief, Alaska
Headquarters ALCOM
Elmendorf Air Force Base
Alaska

Dear General Reeves:

I never thought an o-
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to tel

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

27 April 1964

Lt. Gen. Raymond J.
Commander-in-Chief
Alaskan Command
Elmendorf Air Force base,

Dear General Reeves:

I would like to add my co
Secretary in which mem
Alaska a
I am sure you must have been receiving
for the magnificent way in which
services under your command assisted the
citizens throughout Southcentral Alaska a
after the Good Friday earthquake. Presence
military contributed greatly, I am convinced,
orderly way in which Alaskans met this catastro

J Reeves:

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ERNEST GRUENING, U.S.S.

Ernest Gruening

Cordially yours,

By means of this letter I wish to thank you
also for the many courtesies you extended to me and
Administrative Assistant, George Sundborg, during our
visit to Alaska following the earthquake.

With best wishes, I remain

tor of the Federal Aviation Agency
standing performance of your
e recent earthquake. A copy also is
the Air Force Chief of Staff for information
rd.

We all are proud of the manner in which the military services responded to the call for assistance to the victims of this disastrous occurrence.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

MAXWELL D. TAYLOR
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

MAY

eral Raymond J. Reeves, USAF
mmander-in-Chief
askan Command
Alaska

y Secretary of Defense
r. Lawrence E. Davies of the
is appreciation for the magnifi-
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a workload we imposed upon you
by sending scores of newsmen
dd to Mr. Davies' plaudits by
gratulations for a job well done.

ssing on to the public information
s responsible my most sincere

Sincerely,

Arthur Sylvester

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, D.C.

April 20, 1964

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George Sharrock

CITY OF SEWARD
P. O. BOX
SEWARD, ALASKA
ALL AMERICA CITY 1963
Alaska's Major Seaport

April 24, 1964

Lt. General Reeves
Alaska Air Command
Elmendorf Air Force Base
Alaska

Dear General Reeves:

As Mayor of the City of Seward, on behalf of the City Council and the citizens of Seward, I wish to attempt to express to you our deep appreciation for your splendid help in times following our disaster. Being in an extremely isolated position such as we are, our immediate concern was: "how are we going to supply our people with food and other necessary items?" and "how are we going to get along with limited trained personnel to run a disaster operation?" Your organization, through its manpower and its capabilities, relieved us of these worries and responsibilities.

On behalf of the citizens of Seward, I wish also to express formally our deep gratitude and thanks to you for all the assistance given and still being given us by your units. While we can never repay each man personally, we would like for you to circulate this message of gratitude and appreciation to the persons actually involved, so they may know of the place they have won in the hearts of all the citizens of Seward.

Very truly yours,

Perry R. Stockton
Mayor

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Sincerely yours,

E. L. Bartlett

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

May 4, 1964

Robert S. McNamara,
retary of Defense,
d
neral Maxwell D. Taylor
airman,
int Chiefs of Staff,
ashington, D. C.

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As the United States Represe
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Speaking for all the
a heartfelt salute to a
and others in Alaska who re
earthquake disaster, for a job

Ralph J. Rivers,
Member of Congress

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