



## ELMENDORF AIR FORCE BASE

Date of Completion: **2007**  
 Total Square footage: **144,000 sq ft.**  
 Total Construction Cost: **\$14,546,000**

Sport Architecture  
 (USA)

ADJACENT TO THE NORTHERNMOST U.S. CITY OF ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, WHERE SUB-ARCTIC WEATHER LASTS FROM OCTOBER THROUGH APRIL, THE ELMENDORF AIR FORCE BASE IS HOME TO THOUSANDS OF MILITARY PERSONNEL. NAMED IN HONOR OF TEST PILOT CAPTAIN HUGH M. ELMENDORF, THE BASE IS A HAVEN AGAINST THE HARSH WINTER CONDITIONS OF THE REGION.

While the elements can be challenging, the beauty of the surrounding lands serve to balance life in this isolated town. A sense of community abounds amid the sound of in-coming and out-going jet aircraft.

The unique design of the main building on the base was inspired by the vista of open fields to the north of the flight line. The entry canopy and lobby roof forms reference the angle of flight as the aircraft leaves the ground, with the canopy stretching out onto the site to bring people 'under the wing' and into the building.

### PRIORITY ONE IN HEALTH AND FITNESS

The Elmendorf Air Force Base is also a gathering point and fitness zone for Air Force personnel and their families – including those of Headquarters, Alaskan NORAD Region (ANR), Joint Task Force-Alaska (JTF-AK), Alaskan Command (ALCOM), Eleventh Air Force (11 AF) and the 673rd Air Base Wing, the 3rd Wing, the 176th Wing and other tenant units. During the winter months, programs at the Fitness Club include both outdoor winter sports and indoor training.

With an abundance of natural light, the Fitness Club includes state of the art training equipment and colorful, open spaces that visually connect the activities and the people. The floor-to-ceiling window in the lobby functions as a beacon of light, drawing people under the protective cover of the canopy wing and into the building. This sense of arrival has added significance on dark winter days and during inclement weather. Adding inspiration for workouts are the colorful floors, inlaid with bold angular shapes that create an upbeat atmosphere to boost energy levels as people head into the fitness facility.

### IT'S ALL IN THE DESIGN

Hastings and Chivetta Architects designed an inviting lobby at the main entry of the complex. Capturing the spirit of the project, a prominent hub of the facility surrounds those who enter with spatial connections. Natural light, life, color and activity fill the space, accentuating its vibrancy.

The open concept, two-story atrium creates an interplay of people and action. It is visually linked to activities on the running track, the exercise areas on the second level overlook, the exterior, and the administrative offices. This part of the complex is also the security control point. To proceed into the



facility, users must pass through a gate formed by the reception sign-in counter and the administrative offices.

Another unique design feature in the fitness area is the array of small windows that frame the two straight sections of running track. A thin shaft of light moves up and down as users travel around the track reinforcing the sense of movement. The effect is like running through a building with small openings torn open in the wall, allowing shards of light to pass through onto the surface. Conceptually, air force personnel can expand upon that image in a combat situation.

### JOINING FORCES TO PROTECT

An important mission for the Elmendorf Air Force Base is to support and defend U.S. interests in the Asia Pacific region and around the world. By providing units that are ready for worldwide air power projection, the Base is capable of meeting PACOM's theater staging and throughput requirements. Since the summer of 2010, Elmendorf Air Force Base has operated as part of the combined Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) along with the adjacent Fort Richardson. These bases were officially combined by the Base Closure and Realignment Commission as they have always shared the same relative geographic position.

This host unit at the JBER is the 3rd Wing. As the largest and principal unit within Eleventh Air Force, the 3rd Wing trains and equips an Air Expeditionary Force lead wing made up of 6,900 personnel and F-15C/D, E-3B, C-17, F-22A and C-12F/J aircraft.

### TAKING CARE OF THE LAND

In addition to protecting the sovereignty of the country, the JBER is responsible for the management and protection of over 74,000 acres of surrounding land. Four sections have been initiated within the Environmental Program, including Environmental Planning and Conservation, Environmental Quality, Environmental Restoration, and Pollution Prevention.

The unspoiled area is habitat to local wildlife, but it is also open to Base personnel and the public for outdoor recreational use. In order to ensure the JBER is in compliance with environmental quality, the Environmental Program is constantly aware of any breeches in use of substances such as hazardous wastes and materials, used oil and unsafe air quality. Additional efforts are made to clean up contamination from past operations. This ensures the restoration of the land and reduces risk to human health.





