REFERENCE CODE: AkAMH

REPOSITORY NAME:
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Guide prepared by: Amy Valentine, Archivist

TITLE: Donald Jeffrey Stehle Elmendorf Air Force Base Collection

COLLECTION NUMBER: B2020.006

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Dates: circa 1956-1961

Extent: 1 folder

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): 5040th USAF Hospital, Alaskan Rose Shop, Ernest Gruening, KBYR Radio Anchorage, INC., Don Stehle, Gay T. Stehle, United States Air Force,

Administrative/Biographical History:
In 1957, Donald Stehle (b. 1923) and wife Gay Stehle (b. 1935) were transferred to Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, Alaska. At Elmendorf, Don maintained and repaired military aircraft while serving on the front lines of the Cold War with the Soviet Union[1]. He achieved the rank of Tech Sargeant. In 1959, the same year that Alaska became a state, their son Donald Jeffrey "Jeff" Stehle was born on base. In 1961, the Stehle family left Alaska when Don was transferred to a base in Michigan. He retired from the military in 1964 and died in 1980. Gay passed in 1993.
As an adult, Jeff worked as a letter carrier for 34 years in Michigan before retiring in 2015.

Scope and Content Description:
Collection contains 12 original photos, 11 copy prints (3 are duplicate prints), hospital materials from Jeff's birth (baby bracelet, hospital room cards, hospital receipts), 2 letters, 3 booklets, 1 pamphlet, 2 newspaper clippings, and 1 map of where the Stehle family lived on

[1] "Donald Stehle." Find a Grave, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/34268679/donald-stehle. Accessed 25 July 2025.

base. The photos primarily depict the Stehle family on base, scenic photos from camping trips, and images of their journey along the ALCAN highway to and/or from Alaska.

Arrangement: Arranged by format.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS AND USE

Restrictions on Access: The collection is open for research use.

Physical Access: Original items in good condition.

Technical Access: No special equipment is needed to access the materials.

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Preferred Citation:
Donald Jeffrey Stehle Elmendorf Air Force Base Collection, Anchorage Museum, B2020.6

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition and Appraisal Information
Collection donated by Donald Jeffrey "Jeff" Stehle on June 23, 2020, and accessioned on July 2, 2020.

Processing Note
Items accessioned and rehoused in July 2020. Collection numbered and processed in July 2025. Duplicative copy prints of .1, .9, and .10 have been retained as the inscriptions contain additional information not attached to the original materials.

RELATED MATERIALS
B2016.014 Thomas Shemwell Slides
B2020.001 Cliff and Joan Fuglestad Collection
Subject Guide - Alaska in the Cold War Archival Resource Guide

SUBJECTS
Alaska Highway
Anchorage / Dgheyaytnu (Alaska)
British Columbia
Chugach Mountains (Alaska)

Elmendorf Air Force Base (Alaska)
Kenai Lake (Alaska)

Detailed Description of the Collection

F1
.1 - Old Nellie Bell. Note the frost on her, it was eighteen below zero, when this was taken Christmas morning. That is our 1956 Dodge Station Wagon. My family drove this from Michigan to Alaska up the ALCAN HWY in 1956. The rear of our Base housing. Elmendorf AFB, Anchorage, AK. C. 1957-1958. [car in front of housing on base. Has duplicate copy print.]
.2 - So, I've got a big belly. (Donald Jeffrey) Jeff Stehle c. 1959 Elmendorf AFB Anchorage, AK [baby in bassinet]
.3 - Bring on the chow (Donald Jeffrey) Jeff Stehle c. 1960 Elmendorf AFB Anchorage, AK [baby in highchair]
.4 - What's the use (Donald Jeffrey) Jeff Stehle Elmendorf AFB Anchorage, AK. C. 1960 [baby laying on couch]
.5 - Would you repeat that. (Donald Jeffrey) Jeff & Penny Stehle Elmendorf AFB Anchorage, AK. C. 1959 [dog Penny beside baby Jeff]
.6 - Hi Grandma (Donald Jeffrey) Jeff Stehle Elmendorf AFB Anchorage, AK. C. 1960 [baby seated on couch with toys]
.7 - Drunken Bum. Donald Stehle Elmendorf AFB C. 1960 [Donald reclined on sofa]
.8 - View out the bedroom & kitchen windows. Elmendorf AFB C. 1960 [buildings on base, winter]
.9 - This is where we live up stairs to the right. Base housing Elmendorf AFB C. 1957-1960. Photo taken by Don or Gay Stehle. [building exterior, winter. Has duplicate copy print.]
.10 - Had my head out the bedroom window to take this. Elmendorf AFB Anchorage, AK. C. 1957-1960. Chugach Mtns. As seen from our base housing. This was taken by Don or Gay Stehle, probably Don. [buildings on base, winter, mountains at far distance. Has duplicate copy print.]
.11 - This is the big game hunters the day we took our moose hunting trip. What do you think of the gear we took. A "1" Elmendorf AFB [people tying hunting gear to the roof of an automobile]
.12 - Donald Stehle stationed at Elmendorf AFB 1956-1961 [studio portrait of Don in uniform]
.13 - Base housing Elmendorf AFB. Anchorage, AK. Photo taken late 1950s by Don or Gay Stehle. [buildings on base, parked automobiles at left. Copy print.]
.14 - Kenai Lake. Taken during camping trip to Kenai Peninsula c. 1957-1958 by Don or Gay Stehle while stationed at Elmendorf AFB [copy print]
.15 - Scenery along the ALCAN HWY. 1956 or 1961. Probably Northern British Columbia. Photo taken by either Don or Gay Stehle. [view of river bridge and mountain. Copy print.]
.16 - East Bound Alaska HWY. Toad River & Mt. Peterson (in back) East of Muncho Lake, B.C. Photo taken by Don or Gay Stehle. [river and mountain view from road. Copy print.]
.17 - View from ALCAN HWY. Probably taken in lower British Columbia. By Don or Gay Stehle in 1956 or 1961. [landscape. Copy print.]

.18 - Kenai Lake Alaska c. 1957 or 1958. Taken during a camping trip to the Kenai Peninsula while my family was stationed at Elmendorf AFB. Anchorage, AK. Photo taken by Don or Gay Stehle. [lake shoreline and mountain. Copy print.]
.19 - This is either Don or Gay Stehle, probably the latter, c. 1957 or 1958 with our dog Penny. Elmendorf AFB Anchorage, AK. [person in winter gear, dog Penny at left, base housing in background. Copy print.]
.20 - Unknown river, probably along the ALCAN HWY. Image taken in 1956 or 1961 by Don or Gay Stehle [copy print]
.21 - 287 Male Stehle, Gay – 80301. 22 Aug 59 – 2024 – Dr Holzman. 5040th USAF Hospital Baby [infant hospital bracelet]
.22 - 5040 USAF Hospital Room. Name Stehle Infant Male [hospital room card with Jeff Stehle's birth information]
.23 - Formula. Stehle, Gay T. NONMIL 80301 5040 USAF HOSP APO 942 [hospital room card]
.24 - Hospital Invoice / Receipt 731. Stehle, Gay T. 21 Aug 59
.25 - Hospital Invoice / Receipt 766. Stehle, Gay T. 24 Aug 59
.26 - Welcome to Anchorage. The date of your birth August 22, 1959 [letter containing facts about 8/22/1959 and This Day in History from KBYR Radio Anchorage, Inc. With envelope postmarked Aug 28, 1959]
.27 - United States Senate, November 14, 1959 [letter to Gay and Don from Ernest Gruening congratulating them on the birth of Jeffrey, with envelope]

Ephemera and publications

- Pressed flower and Alaskan Rose Shop business card inscribed "May we have the honor and pleasure of presenting your new son with his first boutonnier."
- Pamphlet, government publications covering Child Care
- Infant Growth Record booklet for Donald Jeffrey Stehle.
- Infant Care booklet, dated 1955, stamped "From the office of Sen. Ernest Gruening (Alaska)"
- Facts for you, Elmendorf Air Force Base booklet, dated 1 April 1958
- Newspaper clipping photocopy, Anchorage Daily News, Oct. 27, 1959 "382,000 Babies Were Born in U.S."
- Newspaper clipping photocopy, "Vital Statistics – Births – 5040th Hospital" with mention of Donald Jeffrey's birth to Gay and Donald Stehle
- 1961 Telephone Directory map with block highlighted "This is where we lived"

Guide written: 28 July 2025
Guide updated: 3 February 2026