

Robert Davis: On July 23rd, 1946 a P-38 fighter from the 343rd Fighter Group crashed into the sea three miles south of the east tip of Niski Island. I understand that the pilot had completed his tour of duty and was to leave for home the next day. He apparently received permission to take a last flight in his P-38 with another aircraft for the purpose of filming him flying the P-38. For some unknown reason he lost control of the aircraft and crashed into the sea and his body was not recovered.

In August of 1946 I was included in a cadre of personnel being send to the Alaskan mainland to an air base known then as 26 Mile. It later became designated as Eielson Air Force Base. It is located about 26 miles from Fairbanks.

We were assigned to the 65th Fighter Squadron and were to transition pilots and maintenance personnel from P-38 aircraft to P-51 Mustangs. Once trained the pilots would ferry the P-51s to Shemya. It was said that some pilots were reluctant to convert to P-51s because they liked the security of the twin engine P-38 out over the North Pacific. Engine failure took on a new meaning with the P-51 Mustang.