

REFERENCE CODE: AkAMH

REPOSITORY NAME:

Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center
Bob and Evangeline Atwood Resource Center
625 C Street
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone: 907-929-9235
Email: resourcecenter@anchagemuseum.org

Guide prepared by: Sydney Durst, Cook Inlet Historical Society Intern

TITLE: Fritz Awe Collection

COLLECTION NUMBER: B2026.001

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Dates: 1952

Extent: 9 items, 1 folder

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): United States Air Force, Airman First Class David R. Dobson

Administrative/Biographical History:

Frederick "Fritz" M. Awe was born 1904, in Billings, Montana. In 1924, at age twenty, Fritz married Evelyn Dolores Folker, age nineteen. Eventually the two relocated to Flat, Alaska where they had two children, Clayton Awe and Mary L. Awe White. An unincorporated census-designated place known for its summer mining community. Fitz worked as a mining engineer from the 1940s until the 1960s.¹

In the 1940s, Awe registered for the World War II draft in Anchorage, Alaska. To qualify for the draft age restrictions, Awe listed his age as thirty-seven instead of the thirty-eight as his

¹ "Fritz M. Awe," *Find a Grave*, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/21385088/fritz_m-awe. Accessed 20 July 2026; "Evelyn D. Folker Awe," *Find A Grave*, [Evelyn D. Folker Awe \(1904-1972\) - Find a Grave Memorial](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/21385088/evelyn-d-folker-awe). Accessed 20 July 2026.; "The Town Crier," *Anchorage Daily Times*, 14 February 1950, [News Article, Anchorage Daily Times \(published as Anchorage Daily times\), February 14, 1950, p4](https://www.newspapers.com/clip/100000000/News-Article-Anchorage-Daily-Times-published-as-Anchorage-Daily-times-February-14-1950-p4/). Accessed 20 July 2026.; "Enumeration District Description: Otter Recording District; Show separately Flat Village; Holikachuk village, Shageluk Village," *National Archives: 1950 Census*, <https://1950census.archives.gov/search/?ed=4-46&page=1&state=AK>. Accessed 20 July 2026.

registration was during the third round of selective service registration and was limited to men ages 18-37.²

Post-World War II, Awe worked on Project ICICLE, a joint military-civilian scientific project to establish a weather station on the identified ice island, T-3, and conduct geophysical research. After Awe's civilian contact with the Alaska Air Command ended, he returned to Flat, Alaska, where he and his family lived until later relocating to Anchorage. Fritz Awe was a member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks (or B.P.O.E), a national fraternal order, that focused on supporting veterans, youth scholarship, and disaster relief.

Awe passed away on November 17, 1969, and is now buried in Angelus Memorial Park next to his wife, Evelyn, in Anchorage, Alaska.³

Scope and Content Description:

This collection consists of nine photographic prints of an United States Air Force party celebrating the first moments on the North Pole and taking scientific readings pertaining to the Arctic Ocean currents, gravity, and ice samples. The subjects in the photos are Robert L. Wishard, Edison T. Blair, Fritz Awe, Dr. Albert P. Crary, William P. Benedict, Harold Turner, Robert Cotell, Herbert Thompson, and Joseph O. Fletcher. All photographs are stamped by the United States Department of Defense. The collection is housed in the photo file collection. Please see photo list for specific photograph information.

Arrangement: Original order maintained.

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.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:

² United States. Selective Service System. Age in the Selective Service Process, Special Monograph No. 9. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946.; "Fritz Awe's Registration Card," [Ashby - Bilderback \(1 of 3\)](#). Accessed 20 July 2026.; Cooke, Lacey., "Deciphering Draft Registration Card for Genealogy: World War II – Genealogy Gems," *Genealogy Gems*, [Deciphering Draft Registration Cards for Genealogy: World War II - Genealogy Gems](#). Accessed 20 July 2026.

³ "US Arctic Drifting Stations (1950s – 1960s), *Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution*, [Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project | History | Thule and the DEW Line](#). Accessed 21 July 2026.; "Interview With Mary Awe White, Conducted by Heather McCain in July 2026," *Anchorage Museum Archives and Library*, July 2026.; Elks Meeting Advert, *Anchorage Daily Times*, 28 March 1967, [News Article, Anchorage Daily Times \(published as Anchorage Daily times\), March 28, 1967, p12](#). Accessed 20 July 2026.; "Fritz M. Awe," *Find a Grave*, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/21385088/fritz_m-awe. Accessed 20 July 2026.

The Anchorage Museum is the owner of the materials and makes available reproductions for research, publication, and other uses. Written permission must be obtained from the Anchorage Museum before any reproduction use. The Anchorage Museum does not necessarily hold copyright to all of the materials in the collections. In some cases, permission for use may require seeking additional authorization from the copyright owners.

Preferred Citation:

Fritz Awe Collection, Anchorage Museum, B2026.001

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition and Appraisal Information

Donated by Mary Awe White on July 7, 2026.

Processing Note

Cook Inlet Historical Society Intern Sydney Durst processed the collection under the supervision of Senior Archivist Heather McClain during their Summer 2026 internship.

RELATED MATERIALS

B1980.105 2nd Mapping Squadron Photographs

B2013.065 2nd Mapping Squadron Photographs

SUBJECTS

Awe, Frederick "Fritz" M., 1904 – 1969

Airplanes, Military

Alaska Air Command

Arctic Ocean – Military Geography

Arctic Regions – Discovery and Exploration

Arctic Regions – Research

Civil-military Relations

Coast – Alaska

Douglas Transport Planes

Drifting Ice Stations

North Pole

Project ICICLE

Robert Peary – "The North Pole" – Expedition

United States – 20th Century

United States Air Force

World Politics – 1945-1989

Detailed Description of the Collection

.1 – *44274 A. C. – Enroute to Pole. Pilot and co-pilot of the U.S.A.F. [United States Air Force] C-47 which made the historic landing at the North Pole are Lt. Colonel William P. Benedict, left, Paradise, California, and Lt. Colonel Joseph O. Fletcher, right, Shawnee, Oklahoma. Fletcher is organizer and

commander of this Alaskan Air Command's special Weather Station and Scientific Expedition on T-3, the floating ice island. Benedict flew British Spitfires as a member of the RCAF [Royal Canadian Air Force] prior to the U. S. entry into World War II and is an expert in bush operations in Alaska and the far north. Here, the two men appear confident as they speed through the skies over the frozen north, enroute to the North Pole. Washington, D. C., 15 May 1952. Official Air Force Photo, Released by [Department] of Defense. [view of two individuals, a pilot and co-pilot, inside the cockpit]

.2 - *44275 A.C. – On Top of World. Here, surrounded by thousands of miles of desolate arctic pack ice, this Alaskan Air Command U.S.A.F. C-47 sits at the geographic North Pole, a few minutes after it was landed on 3 May 1952. The 10-min U. S. Air Force party remained on the ice for three hours and ten minutes to collect dirt bearing ice samples and other scientific data from this little known part of the world. Washington, D. C., 15 May 1952. Official Air Force Photo, Released by [Department] of Defense. [three individuals in front of open military plane, parked in the snow]

.3 - *44276 A.C. – U. S. Flag Placed at North Pole. An historic moment is reached when two members of the U. S. Air Force party landed on the North Pole on 3 May 1952, place the National Ensign on top of the world. At the base of the oil drum monument which they erected at the Pole are placed glass jars containing dated notes which the Air Force hopes will contribute to their knowledge of Arctic Ocean currents when they are found at some later date. Washington, D. C., 15 May 1952. Official Air Force Photo, Released by [Department] of Defense.

.4 - *44277 A.C. – Photo for Posterity. Members of the U. S. Air Force expedition that landed at the North Pole on 3 May 1952, gather around the oil drum monument, marking their accomplishment. From far left to right: Airman First Class Robert L. Wishard, radio operator from Askland, Kentucky; Master Sergeant Edison T. Blair, recorder, Whitesburg, Kentucky; Fritz Ahl [Awe], Alaskan bush pilot, McGrath, Alaska; Dr. Albert P. Crary, geophysicist, West Newton, [Massachusetts]; Lt. Colonel William P. Benedict, pilot, Paradise, California; Staff Sergeant Harold Turner, engineer, Louisville, Kentucky; Robert Cotell, assistant to Dr. Crary, Cambridge, [Massachusetts]; 1st Lt. Herbert Thompson, navigator, [Ellinwood], Kansas (kneeling in front of Benedict) and Lt. Colonel Joseph O. Fletcher, co-pilot and commander of the ice island project (kneeling at right). Col. Fletcher removed his parka for this photograph to show the sweater which his wife had knitted especially for this expedition. This photograph as are all others at the North Pole, was made by Airman First Class David R. Dobson, Alaskan Air Command photographer who was the tenth member of the party. Washington, D. C., 15 May 1952. Official Air Force Photo, Released by [Department] of Defense. [group photo with the United States flag and Air Force flag in background]

.5 - *44278 A.C. – Takes Scientific Measurements. Robert Cotellm a scientist from the U.S.A.F. [United States Air Force] Cambridge Research Center, Cambridge, [Massachusetts], records the [Earth's] strongest gravitational pull during the three hour and 10 minute stop which the U. S. Air Force made at the geographic North Pole on 3 May 1952. Readings were taken from the gravity meter a few minutes after the landing. The delicate instrument was kept warm by plugging it into the plane's electrical system by a cord which can be seen at upper right. Washington, D. C., 15 May 1952. Official Air Force

Photo, Released by [Department] of Defense. [one individual identified as Robert Cotllm sitting in snow next to plane, looking at gravity meter]

.6 - *44280 A.C. – Reminder of Another Polar Expedition. Three broken sled runners, tied to form a tripod with a piece of wind-frayed manila rope, mark this cache of wood-crated metal boxes left on Cape Columbia, a land point jutting into the Arctic Ocean from Canada's Ellesmere Island, by Admiral Peary in 1909. A few yards away was the signpost described in Peary's book to designate their point of departure from land for the North Pole, 413 miles away. Peary's party returned to this spot after a 53-day round trip over the pack ice. The cache was discovered by the crew of the U. S. Air Force C-47 that landed at the geographic North Pole on 3 May 1952, while they were flying low along the Canadian coastline to make studies of the shelf ice where T-3, the floating ice island is believed to have originated. Washington, D. C., 15 May 1952. Official Air Force Photo, Released by [Department] of Defense.

.7 - *44281 A.C. – First Visitors in 43 Years. Here, a few feet away from the broken sled runners, marking the cache of Admiral Peary, Lt. Col. Joseph O. Fletcher, left and Lt. Colonel William P. Benedict, pilot, of the C-47 which landed at the North Pole, examine the signpost built by a member of Peary's party. Several of the inscriptions, punched into the copper plates on the signs did not coincide with the descriptions given in Peary's book "The North Pole" which indicates that he too, was confused by the continuous daylight in these latitudes during the spring and summer. According to this book, this sign should read June 6 and not June 8 as it obviously does. Washington, D.C., 15 May 1952. Official Air Force Photo, Released by [Department] of Defense.

.8 - *44282 A.C. – Broken Signpost Left by Peary. Lt. Colonel William P. Benedict, of Paradise, California, the Alaskan Air Command pilot who landed a ski equipped C-47 at the North Pole on 3 May, and then one day later discovered this historic signpost erected by Admiral Peary's expedition in 1909, holds part of the broken marker which reads, PEARY -- S. S. ROOSEVELT -- Washington, D.C., 15 May 1952 Official Air Force Photo, Released by [Department] of Defense.

.9 - *44283 A.C. – U. S. Air Force Party Leave Record at PEARY's CACHE. As the U. S. Air Force expedition prepares to leave the site marking Peary's camp, Lt. Colonel Joseph O. Fletcher, his hands encased in thick gloves, carves this date of their visit to Admiral Peary's cache on one of the party's skis. Dr. Albert P. Crary, geophysicist from the U.S.A.F [United State Air Force] Cambridge Research Center, holding the ski, has a frosted mustache, which is indicative of the temperature on Ellesmere Island on 4 May. At left if Lt. Colonel William P. Benedict, pilot of the U. S. Air Force C-47 which landed at the North Pole on 3 May 1952, and who spotted this signpost left by Admiral Peary's expedition in 1909 while flying low along the barren coast of Cape Columbia. Washington, D.C., 15 May 1952. Official Air Force Photo, Released by [Department] of Defense.

Guide written: July 21, 2026