

Supply Native Is Adjusting To Life In U.S. Last Frontier

BY ROLANDO GOMEZ
U.S. Army/Air Force
Hometown News

EIELSON AFB, Alaska—Baby back ribs and chicken sizzling over a hot grill. Sun shining bright, kids playing in the yard—all the ingredients of a typical hot summer's day. They're normal activities for most of us, but for Timmy M. Marlowe, this icon of summertime is taking place near midnight and the place is not Supply, but America's last frontier—Alaska.

Marlowe, son of Carolyn Bellamy of Route 2, Supply, is a staff sergeant stationed at one of the Air Force's northernmost bases where life is considered difficult enough to be an overseas assignment.

Located just outside Fairbanks, Eielson is considered the "top cover for North America," a pivotal point connecting Asia and Europe.

In an area where housing costs are about 25 percent higher than the national average, a gallon of milk can cost more than \$5; the closest state is 2,500 miles away; a typical summer day lasts almost 20 hours; and daytime in winter usually lasts about five hours, Marlowe finds that there are quite a few adjustments that need to be made.

"I had to adjust to all the snow, low temperatures, two hours of daylight in mid-December, and the Northern Lights," said Marlowe. "The Northern Lights are really something, although at 50 degrees below zero, it's a long way to go to see a light show."

Marlowe, a crew chief with the 343rd Maintenance Squadron, finds his job in Alaska has kept him busy.

"I'm a munitions storage crew chief. I train, supervise, and store aircraft munitions for the U.S. Air Force," said Marlowe, a 1982 graduate of West Brunswick High School.

"My crew consists of eight airman, trained to drive a wide range of Air Force vehicles from 4,000-pound forklifts to 10-ton semi-tractor trailers."

For airmen stationed in Alaska, outdoor activity is synonymous with the state itself. Surrounded by four mountain ranges, with North America's largest peaks, downhill skiing, mountain climbing, cross-country skiing, fishing, hiking and biking are



AIR FORCE STAFF SGT. Timmy M. Marlowe inspects ammunition as part of his duties as a crew chief at Eielson AFB, Alaska. Harsh weather conditions, a high cost of living and remoteness make life in Alaska seem like an overseas tour to most airmen.

just a few of the activities airmen and the families have available.

"In my free time I fish, hunt and play basketball. The fishing and hunting are the best you can have anywhere in the world," commented Marlowe. "The basketball competition isn't bad, either."

Many airmen come to America's last frontier with a lot of preconceptions—some good, some bad. But almost everyone comes away with the impression that Alaska is far from an ordinary place to live.

"Before coming to Alaska, I had pictured it to be very cold year-round with polar bears and packs of wild wolves. I thought I would be leaving mosquitoes in North Carolina," said Marlowe. "I was surprised that Alaska had mosquitoes."

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BREATHTAKING VIEWS of mountains, sky and wilderness are the norm in Alaska, a state two-and-a-half times the size of Texas. Temperatures range greatly, from well below zero in the winter to nearly 90 in summer. Daylight also varies greatly, with close to 20 hours of sunlight in the summer to only five hours of light during the winter.

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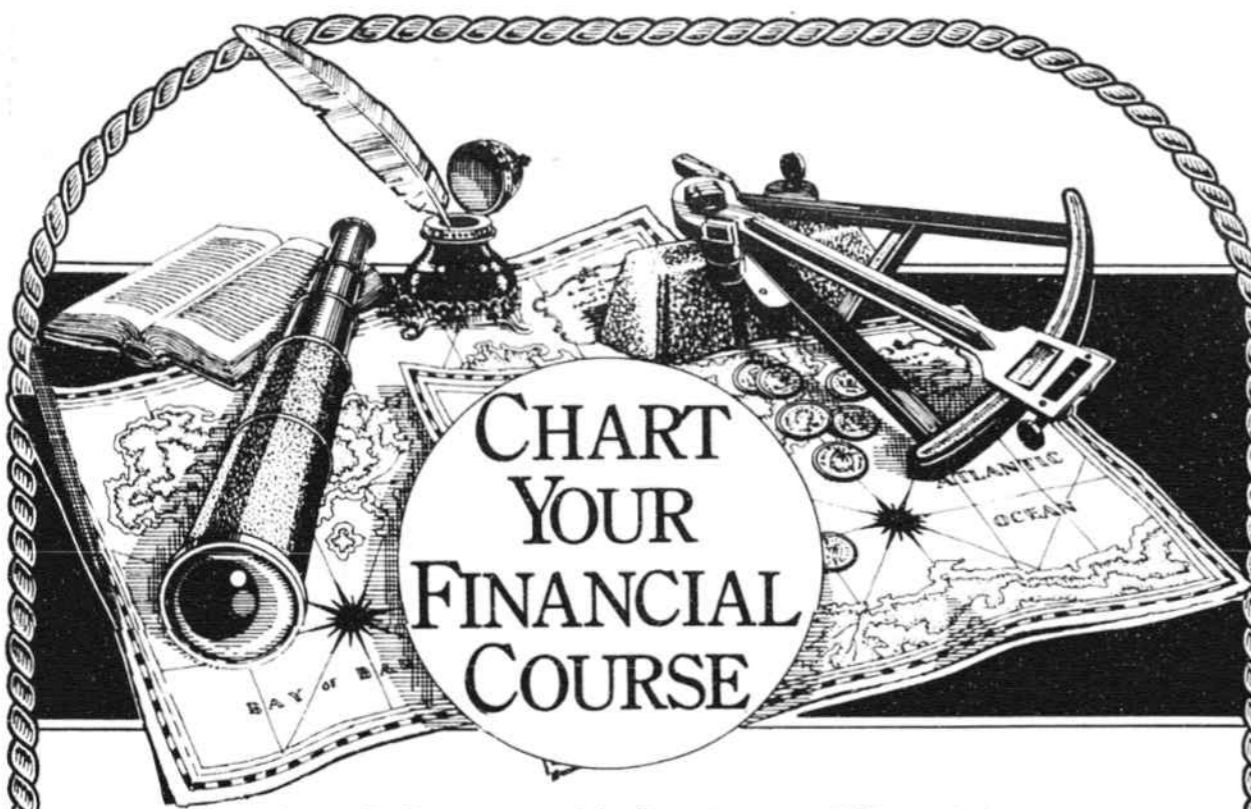


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