



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

May 2009

Historical Happenings

Notes on Cultural Resource Management in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Historical Happenings provides information on the USFWS Cultural Resources Management program. Information comes from sources such as the Regional Historic Preservation Officers, websites, new sources, as well as other cultural resource management professionals.

Issues are also available on the USFWS Cultural Resources website <http://historicpreservation.fws.gov>. Submissions are encouraged and can be made via email. Please contact Eugene Marino at Eugene_Marino@fws.gov for submission guidelines.

FWS Regional News:

Region 7—New WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument includes parts of the Alaska Maritime NWR

Presidential Proclamation on December 5, 2008 created a new World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument. The monument includes 5 sites in Hawaii and one in California. Three sites, Attu, Kiska and Atka Islands, in the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, Aleutian Islands Unit were included in the monument. President Bush declared the monument would remind generations of Americans of the sacrifices that Americans made to protect our country and of the transformative effect of freedom. Because of their isolation and climate, Attu and Kiska are two of the best preserved WWII battlefields in the world.

After the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo on April 18, 1942, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto conceived an elaborate plan to destroy the remnants of the American Pacific fleet, and to capture Midway Island and the western Aleutians to anchor the defenses of the north and central Pacific. Japanese planes based on two small carriers attacked the fishing port of Dutch Harbor on June 3, 1942. After the defeat at Midway, Japan persisted in capturing Kiska and Attu Islands on June 7 to salvage a propaganda victory.

Attu

The Japanese invaders of Attu captured 42 inhabitants of a small Aleut village. In September they were taken to Japan where almost half died. After the war US authorities refused to allow the survivors to return home. The loss of Attu and Kiska prompted a massive build up of bases and infrastructure in Alaska.

Bombing of the Japanese bases began almost immediately, but it was not until May 11, 1943, that a full scale counter counterattack was launched. For over three weeks, fighting raged over eastern Attu. By May 28, American forces had pushed the Japanese into Chichagof Valley.

Early on May 29, Colonel Yamasaki, with 800 of his 2,600 men left, made a desperate Banzai attack over Engineer Hill, the largest such attack of the war. If his men could take the artillery on Engineer Hill, gain access to supplies, and retreat into the mountains, they could await reinforcement. In reality it was their chance to die an honorable death. Medics, engineers, and service personnel on Engineer Hill fought back. The arrival of the 50th Engineers prevented the attackers from reaching the artillery. On May 30 most of the remaining Japanese committed suicide.

The monument on Attu includes the Japanese base and runway at Holtz Bay, Jarmin Pass and Engineer Hill, and the Japanese strongpoints on Fishhook Ridge and Sarana Nose.

The Battle for Attu was the first amphibious landing by the Army. The harsh lessons learned were put to use during other amphibious operations and during the fighting in Italy. By attacking Attu before Kiska the U.S. military innovated the leapfrog offensive used with devastating effect elsewhere in the Pacific to isolate and neutralize countless Japanese troops. The Battle for Attu was, per capita, one of the most costly of the Pacific War, exceeded only by the casualty rate at Iwo Jima. American casualties (3829) were significant compared to the number of Japanese troops on the island (2650). Only 28 Japanese were captured, the rest were killed or committed suicide. On Iwo Jima, later in the war, Commander Tadamichi Kuribayashi

was ordered to use the lessons of Attu in preparing his defenses.

Kiska

Also on June 7, 1942 the 1,250 man Special Naval Landing Force overran a 10 man US Navy weather station on Kiska. The US launched the Kiska Blitz, an intensive bombing effort beginning on June 11th with the first use of B-24's in combat. One of the new planes was blown up over Kiska and two others were crippled. The Blitz ended June 13 when rumors of an approaching Japanese naval force caused the remaining planes to retreat east.

In July 1943, after the capture of Attu, US and Canadian forces prepared to invade Kiska. The Japanese Navy sent ships to remove the 5,000 man garrison. On July 28, after American naval forces were drawn away by mysterious radar signals that may have been huge flocks of shearwaters, the Japanese entered Kiska Harbor, loaded the men in an hour, and escaped. Three weeks later, 34,426 American and Canadian troops landed. By August 18th the Allies knew there were no Japanese on Kiska.

The Monument on Kiska includes a Japanese mini submarine base in Kiska Harbor, the Japanese Army Base in Gertrude Cove, the Japanese Naval base with a major concentration of coast artillery and anti-aircraft guns, the unfinished Japanese runway and the post-invasion American and Canadian Camps, a Japanese camp and coastal artillery on Little Kiska Island, and an American PB4Y plane crash on Kiska volcano.

A management plan will be prepared over the next three years to outline actions to enhance protection, interpretation and public understanding and appreciation of the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument and the broader story of WW II in the Pacific. The new monument has a website at <https://pwrCMS.nps.gov/customcf/apps/ww2ip/>. More information about war in the refuge can be found on the refuge's site <http://alaskamaritime.fws.gov/>.

Atka Island B-24

This unit includes a Consolidated B-24D Liberator bomber, located at its crash site on Atka Island, Alaska. This type of bomber played a highly significant role in the Aleutian Campaign against Imperial Japanese forces from 1942 to 1943. This aircraft flew in at least 18 combat missions before finally succumbing to bad weather.

This B-24D came to Alaska in March 1942 and served exclusively in the Aleutian Campaign. B-24s flew in the initial patrols and search missions and are best remembered for the Kiska and Attu bombing campaign in the summer and fall of 1942, and the operations to recapture Kiska and Attu from the Japanese in 1943. During this time, hazardous long-range missions were flown from Umnak Island in the Aleutians to bomb

Japanese installations at Kiska and Attu islands. The concentration of Japanese anti-aircraft fire and weather proved formidable foes. This plane's final mission, on December 9, 1942, was a weather patrol to Attu Island. Fog obscured the new airbase on Adak and the plane, low on fuel searched for a flat landing area, stumbling onto the broad valley at the head of Bechevin Bay on Atka. Had it crashed during combat, the usual pattern of explosion, fire, or total loss at sea would have destroyed it. The tail broke off in the characteristic B-24 manner, but the tail section is intact, minus the vertical tail fins, which are in the vicinity of the aircraft. This is one of the oldest existing B-24's left and is one of the very few survivors of combat missions.



B-24D Liberator bombers such as this one which crashed due to weather on Atka played a significant role in WWII in the Aleutians. Of the original 20 made, this one and one other are the only B-24Ds known to still be in existence. Photographer Steve Hillebrand/USFWS



Japanese anti-aircraft gun on Kiska in 2007. Remnants of Japanese coastal defenses are found on the Kiska and Attu portions of the Monument. Photographer Kent Sundseth/ USFWS

Other Agency News

BLM/NPS—Planning underway to address the Paleontological Resources Protection Act

Led by the BLM and NPS an effort is underway that includes all DOI bureaus and the Forest Service to plan for implementation of the Paleontological Resources Protection Act. Current discussions focus on permitting for the action and working with Law Enforcement.

ACHP—Organizes efforts to assist agencies with their stimulus projects.

In the first of a series of planned meetings, ACHP staff discussed Section 106 and NEPA compliance with regard to the stimulus to federal NEPA and NHPA managers.

USGS—Archeological Sites Lost as Erosion Doubles along Part of Alaska's Coast

A USGS-led study reveals that coastal erosion has more than doubled along a 40-mile stretch of the Beaufort Sea in Alaska - up to 45 feet per year - in a 5-year period between 2002 and 2007. The average annual erosion rates along this part of the Beaufort Sea climbed from historical levels of about 20 feet per year between the mid-1950s and late-1970s to a rate of 45 feet per year between 2002 and 2007.

Another recent study along the same stretch of the Beaufort Sea verified "disappearing" cultural and historical sites, including Esook, a turn-of-the-century trading post, and Kolovik (Qalluvik), an abandoned Inupiaq village site that may soon be lost. The authors speculate that recent trends toward warming sea-surface temperatures related to global warming and rising sea-level act to weaken permafrost-dominated coastlines by more quickly thawing ice-rich coastal bluffs and may explain the disproportionate increase in erosion along ice-rich coastal bluffs relative to ice-poor coastal bluffs.

To read the USGS study, go to Increase in the rate and uniformity of coastline erosion in arctic Alaska in the journal *Geophysical Research Letters*, at www.agu.org/journals/gl/gl0903/2008GL036205/

To read more about erosion and the loss of archeological sites, go to Modern erosion rates and loss of coastal features and sites, Beaufort Sea Coast, Alaska in the December 2008 issue of *Arctic*.

HUD— HUD Develops Section 106 Agreements Database

The HUD office of Environment and Energy has posted a NHPA Section 106 agreement on its public website.

The database is a collection of HUD-related Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) and Programmatic Agreements (PA) from across the country, mostly from 2001 to present. The main purpose of this database is to provide users with a way to find agreements that may serve as models or samples for current projects that require a MOA or PA for compliance purposes. The intent is to facilitate the drafting of new Section 106 agreements. Users can also search the database and obtain a copy of an MOA or PA currently in effect for their records. The database will be updated as new MOAs and PAs are submitted.

To view the database, go to www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/environment/section106/index.cfm

Legislative News

Omnibus Public Lands Bill passes the House and Senate and is expected to be signed into law.

The bill includes many items but of chief importance for cultural resources programs is the passage of the Paleontological Resources Protection Act that will afford paleontological resources on federal land similar protections currently afforded to archaeological sites.

The bill also makes permanent the Save America's Treasures and Preserve America grant programs.

See the link for more information

www.achp.gov/news090330.html

Public Lands Service Corps Bill Would Benefit Historic Sites

House Natural Resources chairman Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) introduced HR 1612, the "Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2009" this week. HR 1612 would require the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce departments to establish department-level offices to coordinate Public Lands Service Corps activities within those agencies that administer eligible service lands. Modeled on the existing Youth Conservation Corps program, this new program would fund eligible conservation activities on public lands that include: 1) assisting in historical and cultural research, museum curatorial work, oral history projects, documentary photography, and activities that support the creation of public works of art related to public lands; and 2) construction, repair, rehabilitation and maintenance of roads, trails, campgrounds, and other visitor facilities, and employee housing, historic sites and structures.

The House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands will hold a hearing on the bill on April 2nd.

**Training, Upcoming Events,
Education, and Volunteers and
Friends News**

There are a number of activities at the Cathlapotle plankhouse. For information on these events take a look at www.plankhouse.org