

# *View to the Past*

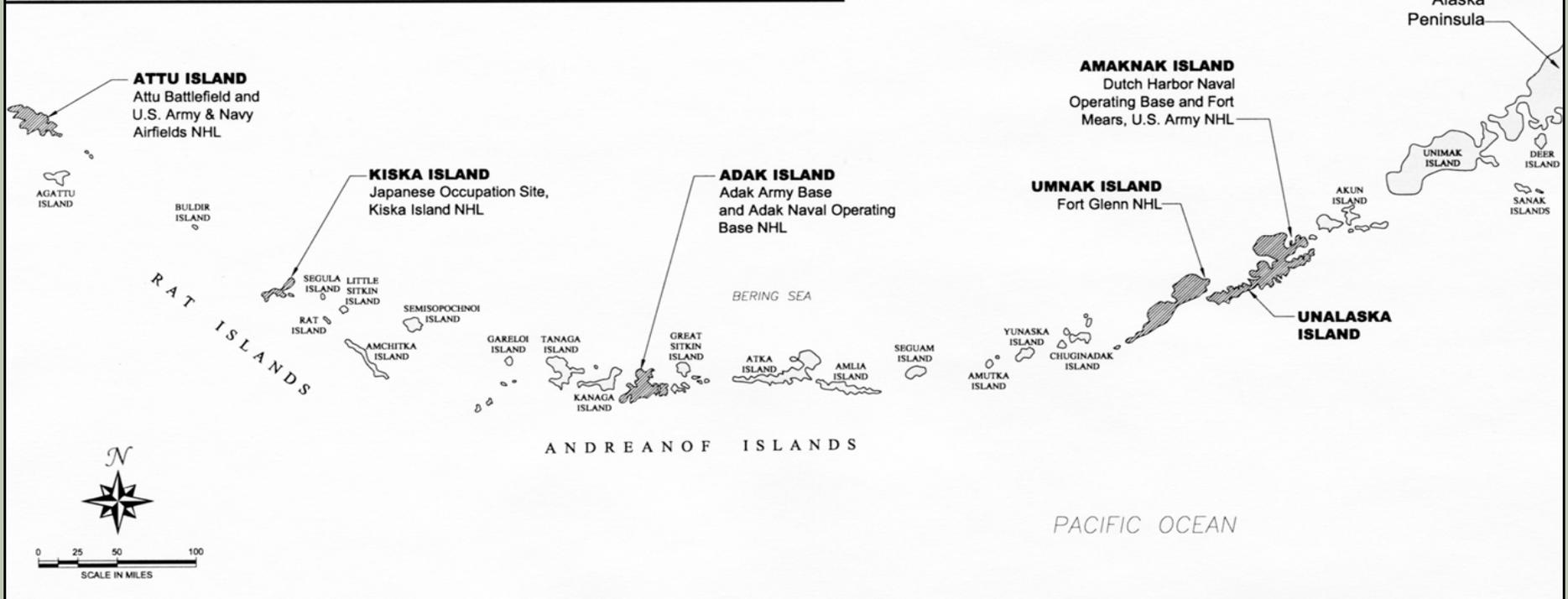


*Base End Station at Ulakta Head overlooking Unalaska Bay, 2000*

***A Driving Guide to  
World War II Buildings  
and Structures on  
Amaknak Island and  
Unalaska Island***



# WORLD WAR II NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS IN THE ALEUTIANS



*The Aleutian Islands, Alaska*

NHL: National Historic Landmark  
Map source: National Park Service, 1993



*C.B. McCoy, Dutch Harbor, 1943. Courtesy Museum of the Aleutians.*

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# WORLD WAR II ON THE ALEUTIAN FRONT

In 1940, anticipating the spread of the war in Europe to the Pacific Theater, the U.S. military began construction of forward-operating bases in the Aleutian Islands of Alaska. By 1943, American troops were stationed throughout this remote, 1,200-mile-long archipelago. From airfields at Adak, Dutch Harbor, and Fort Glenn, U.S. pilots flew patrol bombers, fighter-bombers, and observation aircraft on combat and reconnaissance missions over the Aleutians.

On June 3 and 4, 1942, six months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Japanese pilots bombed Fort Mears and the Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base on Amaknak Island. Three days later, Japanese soldiers invaded Kiska Island, 600 miles west of Dutch Harbor, and Attu Island, 800 miles west of Dutch Harbor. American forces recaptured Attu in June of 1943, at the price of many American and Japanese lives, and the Japanese army abandoned Kiska one month later. U.S. troops remained in the Aleutians until the end of the war in 1945.

In 1985 and 1986, the federal government designated Adak Naval Operating Base, Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base and Fort Mears, Fort Glenn, and the battlefields on Attu and Kiska islands as National Historic Landmarks in recognition of their significant contributions to the defense of the nation during World War II.

## Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base

*“Every station, office, and activity ashore exists but to serve the NAVY AFLOAT, UNDER THE SEAS, OR IN THE AIR.” (War Diary, Dutch Harbor, Alaska).*

Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base was constructed as a naval air station in 1940-1941, at a deep-water port on Amaknak Island used for centuries by the Unangan people and Russian fur traders. As the diary entry above proclaimed, the base provided a landing field and weather data for pilots and also repaired, refueled, and reprovisioned the submarines and other U.S. ships that patrolled the Bering Sea and Pacific Ocean.



*PBY-5A parked in a revetment at the bottom of Mt. Ballyhoo, ca. 1942. Courtesy National Archives, Pacific Alaska Region.*

Some of the remaining defense fortifications of the Naval Operating Base can be seen on the lower slope of Mount Ballyhoo, just north of the airport runway. These structures include earthen revetments, which shielded aircraft from enemy fire and the Aleutian wind, and concrete munitions-storage magazines. Tall concrete blast walls protected the entrances to many of the magazines.



*Hospital wards at Fort Mears, Dutch Harbor, Alaska, ca. 1941. Courtesy National Archives, Pacific Alaska Region.*

## Fort Mears

Fort Mears, named after Colonel Frederick Mears, was established to defend the Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base. The fort was constructed during 1940-1941 on the narrow strip of land between Margaret Bay and Unalaska Bay, the only flat terrain on Amaknak Island. After the construction of Fort Mears was underway, defense installations were also built at Hill 400, Mount Ballyhoo, Eider Point, and Summer Bay.

The photograph above shows wards of the 250-bed hospital at Margaret Bay. In addition to treating injuries from training exercises, construction accidents, and rat bites, the hospital also treated men who contracted diseases such as pneumonia, mumps, and German measles. The nurses at Fort Mears Hospital, the Naval Air Station Hospital, and the field hospital in Pyramid Valley were the only women stationed at Dutch Harbor during World War II.

# HOW TO USE THE DRIVING GUIDE

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The six driving routes—shown on the map on the facing page—were chosen based on the following criteria:

## Land ownership

Most of the land on Amaknak and Unalaska islands is owned by members of the Ounalashka Corporation, descendants of the Unangan people who have lived on these islands for over 8,000 years. Some World War II structures, such as those on Hill 400 and Tundra Drive, were not included in this guide because the access roads are on private property.

## Accessibility and Safety

All six routes are within the City of Unalaska road system and can be driven in a two-wheel-drive rental car during the summer. Some roads, such as Overland Drive in Unalaska Valley and the road to the top of Mount Ballyhoo, have not been included in this guide because of unstable road conditions. Although it is possible to drive on these public-access roads in a four-wheel-drive vehicle during the summer, portions of the roads are steep and narrow with large jagged rocks and many deep ruts.



*Screw pickets. Top: Unalaska Island, 2001.  
Bottom: Amaknak Island, 2001.*



## BEFORE YOU BEGIN . . . .

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### Ounalashka Corporation Land-Use Permit

All visitors planning to walk or hike anywhere beyond the City of Unalaska road system **must** obtain an Ounalashka Corporation Land-Use Permit. This permit can be purchased at the Visitors Center or at the Ounalashka Corporation Office.

### Weather Safety

Aleutian weather is unpredictable. Within minutes, conditions can change from sunny and calm to strong wind and driving rain. Always carry a jacket and a hat, and dress in layers.

### Souvenirs

Collecting “souvenirs” such as stone tools, ivory, eagle feathers, bones, or any World War II-era artifacts, including shell casings or nails, is illegal.

### Hazards

Anti-personnel stakes (also known as screw pickets or Rommel stakes) were installed throughout Amaknak and Unalaska islands during World War II in anticipation of a ground assault by enemy troops. Double and sometimes triple rows of these sharpened iron spikes were planted in the ground: the first 4-foot-high row was strung with barbed wire; another parallel (offset) row of stakes was placed in front. The tops of the stakes in the second row protruded only 4 to 6 inches above ground, hidden by tall grass. **Many of these stakes are still in the ground.**

**WATCH WHERE YOU STEP**

# DRIVING ROUTES

## NOTES:

- Mileage is one-way.
- All routes begin/end at Aleutian World War II Visitors Center.

-  Ounalashka Corporation land
-  Land not owned by Ounalashka Corporation
-  Municipal road system

## AMAKNAK ISLAND

- ① East Point Loop Road.....1.8 miles
- ② Airport Beach Road (North).....2.0 miles

## AMAKNAK ISLAND / UNALASKA ISLAND

- ③ Airport Beach Road (South).....2.5 miles

## UNALASKA ISLAND

- ④ Unalaska Town Site.....3.7 miles
- ⑤ Unalaska Valley .....5.3 miles
- ⑥ Summer Bay Road.....8.3 miles



## MILITARY CONSTRUCTION



Naval Air Station (N.A.S.), ca. 1942. Road at far left is East Point Loop Road: power plant, main dock, Navy Mess Hall, Station Brig, and Navy Barracks are still standing. Courtesy National Archives, Pacific Alaska Region.

In September 1940, workmen from Siems-Drake, the civilian contractor, arrived on Amaknak Island to begin construction of Garrison 1 at Margaret Bay and the naval air station at Dutch Harbor. The 5-mile-long site for these installations consisted of swampy tundra, rocky hillsides, and steep embankments. High winds scattered stacked lumber, horizontal rain made footing treacherous, and dense fog often obscured the site itself. Not surprisingly, employee turnover was high: “as each ship brought a new recruitment of workers to Dutch Harbor, another pulled out of port with a larger number leaving Alaska” (*National Register Nomination*, 1992).

Despite these challenges, the civilian contractor worked an accelerated schedule and, by September of the following year, completed Garrison 1 and many of the structures at the naval air station. After Siems-Drake employees were evacuated from the Aleutians in June 1942, the Navy Seabees took over construction.

## BUILDING DESIGN

Design of the Margaret Bay garrison followed the standards developed by the Army for its stateside construction. Garrison 1 included a hospital, PX, chapel, mess halls, barracks, recreation buildings, and warehouses. Arctic entries and blackout windows were added to most of the buildings. Typically, buildings were painted white and aligned in a grid pattern. These neatly-spaced white buildings gave the garrison the appearance of a permanent military installation, but they also provided a highly visible target for enemy pilots.

The infrastructure of the naval base at Dutch Harbor included above and below-ground fuel tanks, power plants, docks, a ship repair facility, warehouses, and a system of underground tunnels. The Navy hired Michigan architect Albert Khan to design the buildings. Khan’s designs emphasized construction adapted to the space limitations of the site, as well as protection from the harsh climate. Although the barracks, mess hall, and station brig he designed were successful on both counts, these buildings, like the buildings of Garrison 1, were vulnerable to enemy attack because a large number of personnel were concentrated in a small area.



Pacific Hut, Fort Mears, ca. 1942. Courtesy University of Alaska Fairbanks.

After the June 1942 bombing, military planners re-evaluated the placement of all existing structures. A variety of camouflage techniques were used on buildings, such as olive-drab paint, setting a structure directly into the hillside and benching it with sod, draping netting over the roof, and rubbing the exterior with mud and water.

For the newly created garrisons in Unalaska Valley and Pyramid Valley, the standard 63-man barracks design was replaced with small, randomly dispersed cabanas, Quonset huts, and Pacific huts. The men living in the prefabricated, 16-by 20-foot wood-frame cabanas sometimes gave them names such as “Bring ‘Er Inn,” “Squirrel Cage,” “Beli-Acres,” and “Sleepy Hollow” (*The Aleutian*, July 8, 1943). The prefabricated metal Quonsets, measuring from 16 by 36 feet to 20 by 40 feet, and the wood-and-metal Pacific huts were also assembled on site. These huts, in addition to the heavier elephant steel (Armco) huts used for munitions, became the new “standard” and the building type most commonly associated with World War II in the Aleutians.

## ALEUTIAN WORLD WAR II NATIONAL HISTORIC AREA

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Soon after the construction of Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base and Fort Mears was underway, construction began on Fort Schwatka and Battery 402, a coastal defense post at the top of Mount Ballyhoo. Over 350 troops were quartered at Fort Schwatka in barracks, Quonset huts, and cabanas. In clear weather, the top of Mount Ballyhoo provided a panoramic view of approaching enemy aircraft and submarines. Two 8-inch anti-aircraft guns were positioned on Ulakta Head. In 1996, Congress dedicated Fort Schwatka and Battery 402 as a World War II National Historic Area. A land-use permit from the Ounalashka Corporation is required to visit this privately owned park, which is operated in conjunction with the National Park Service.

### MILE 0: ALEUTIAN WORLD WAR II VISITOR CENTER

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#### **Aerology Operations Building (1941)**



*Aerology Building, ca. 1942. Courtesy National Archives, Pacific Alaska Region.*



*Aleutian World War II Visitors Center, 2001 (Aerology Building, Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base). Mount Ballyhoo in background.*

The former Aerology Operations Building, now the Aleutian World War II Visitors Center, is shown on each of the route maps as the designated starting point for the six driving tours. During World War II, the upstairs of the building housed meteorological equipment used to provide navy pilots and ship captains with weather forecasts, including information on wind speed and direction, impending storms, and the height of ocean swells. The Naval Air Transport Service operated on the first floor.

Windows on the octagonal upper floor allowed radio operators a 360-degree view of Mount Ballyhoo to the north, Dutch Harbor to the east, the airfield to the west, and Fort Mears and Unalaska Bay to the southeast. After the naval base was decommissioned, the City of Unalaska used the Aerology Operations Building as an airport terminal until 1985.

The National Park Service, in cooperation with the land owner, Ounalashka Corporation, has restored the exterior of the Aerology Operations Building to its original 1940s-era appearance, and rehabilitated the interior as an interpretive center. The Aleutian World War II Visitors Center was dedicated in July 2002.

#### **Torpedo Bombsight and Utility Shop (1942)**

Several yards directly west of the Aerology Operations Building is the former Torpedo Bombsight and Utility Shop. This two-story steel-frame structure, measuring approximately 80 feet by 120 feet, was where torpedoes were given a final check before loading, and repaired if necessary. A parachute loft and packing room were located upstairs.



*Torpedo Bombsight and Utility Shop, 2001.*

## EAST POINT LOOP ROAD

Turn left out of the Visitors Center parking lot onto Airport Beach Road. Continue straight at the stop sign onto East Point Loop Road. You may encounter heavy equipment and many large trucks as you drive through this industrial area. Please use caution.

### Mile 0.1 Powerhouse (1942)

This 93-foot by 103-foot concrete and reinforced-steel building originally supplied electrical power to Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base. It now supplies power to the City of Unalaska. The 5-foot-thick walls and 6½-foot-thick roof were built to withstand the force of a 250-kilogram bomb. After the hill directly behind the Powerhouse was hit by Japanese bombs in June 1942, it became known as “Suicide Hill” because of the men who died there.

### Mile 0.3 Navy Barracks Buildings 1 and 2 Navy Mess Hall (1942)



Mess Hall, Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base, ca. 1943. The mess Hall could seat 500 people. Courtesy National Archives, Pacific Alaska Region.

Enclosed walkways once connected these large wood-frame buildings designed by Albert Khan. The self-contained, fuel-efficient complex provided welcome relief from the wind, rain, and snow as the men walked from their barracks to the mess hall. An air raid shelter was located beneath the barracks (J. Dickrell, *Center of the Storm*). The barracks, now used as warehouses, retain their original 1940s appearance.



Former Navy Barracks, 2001.

### Mile 0.3 Station Brig (1942)

(For a better view of the building, turn right at the next street, Delta Way)

This small concrete and reinforced steel structure was part of the mess hall and barracks buildings complex. The Brig consisted of two standard cells, one solitary-confinement cell, and a small exercise area. On September 17, 1942, the crew of the U.S.S. *Reid* sank a Japanese submarine near Kiska Island. Five Japanese crew members survived and were taken prisoner. According to the official report, the prisoners were brought to the Brig at Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base and questioned individually. “All prisoners freely answered questions ... and some information of military value was obtained” (*War Diary*, Sept. 1942). After questioning, several prisoners were taken to the nearby Aeronautical Expedition huts (no longer standing) where they were held until September 28, 1942, when the U.S.S. *Chaumont* transported the captured submarine crew to the continental U.S. for internment.

### Mile 0.3 Delta Western Dock, S.S. Northwestern (1940-1942)

Living quarters for the Siems-Drake construction crew was a refurbished 1889 freight and passenger ship, the S.S. *Northwestern*. The ship housed 280 workers and its steam turbo-generators furnished 2,300 volts of electricity to the naval base. On June 3, 1942, Japanese pilots bombed the ship, causing a fire that lasted for three days. Damaged beyond repair, the S.S. *Northwestern* was towed to the end of Captains Bay where it remains, half submerged. In 1994, the S.S. *Northwestern* Shipwreck Site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

### Mile 0.8 Rocky Point (oil-dock tank farm)

Diesel and gasoline storage tanks were once located on the beach below Rocky Point (not visible from the road). These tanks were bombed during the 1942 attack on Dutch Harbor. Fire from the burning tanks produced thick black smoke that covered the shoreline for days.

### Mile 0.8 Cottage (private residence) (1912)

This wood-shingle house pre-dates World War II and is one of the oldest homes on Amaknak and Unalaska islands.

### Mile 0.8 Radio transmitter power plant (private property) (1919)

This concrete structure supplied power to the Naval Radio Station Apartment House in the 1930s and 1940s. During World War II, the doors were reinforced with freestanding concrete blast walls.

### Mile 0.8 Naval Radio Station Apartment House (private property) (1932)

For many years, this six-unit apartment building was the only brick structure in the Aleutians. It was constructed to provide family housing for the radio operators working at the nearby naval radio station. The building was remodeled during World War II for use as a Chief Petty Officers quarters and mess hall. During the war, a colorful sea-life mural was painted on the walls of the basement lounge, and work crews camouflaged the exterior of the building with olive-drab paint. The building sustained only minor shrapnel damage in the June 1942 bombing of Dutch Harbor.



Naval Radio Station Apartment House (left) and radio transmitter power plant (right), 2001.

**AMAKNAK ISLAND**  
**Route 1:**  
**East Point Loop Road**



## AIRPORT BEACH ROAD (NORTH)

Turn right out of the Visitors Center parking lot onto Airport Beach Road. (To visit the Sitka Spruce Plantation National Historic Landmark, take the first left off Airport Beach Road onto Biorka Drive. Sitka Spruce Park is approximately one block uphill on the left.)

Sixty years after the war, only a few structures from Fort Mears remain along Airport Beach Road. In 1942, hundreds of buildings—mess halls, barracks, hospital wards, warehouses, and mechanic shops—surrounded Margaret Bay and extended to the shore of Unalaska Bay.

### Mile 0.7 Bombing of Fort Mears (1942)

Early on the morning of June 3, 1942, where the Grand Aleutian Hotel now stands and across the street on the shore of Unalaska Bay, Japanese aircraft dropped 16 bombs on Fort Mears. The commanding officer had known for several days that an enemy attack was expected, and had ordered his troops to evacuate the garrison and take cover in trenches and foxholes on the surrounding hills.



Bombing of Fort Mears, June 3, 1942. Courtesy Anchorage Museum of History and Art, B11.15.94.

Tragically, 50 soldiers who had arrived in Dutch Harbor late on the night of June 2 were not informed of the evacuation, and the following morning the bombing killed 25 of these men and injured the others.

### Mile 0.7 Pill Boxes (1941-1942)

These hexagonal reinforced-concrete structures were named for their resemblance to a style of woman's hat with a flat crown and straight sides. Pill boxes provided emergency shelter in case of enemy bombing and were also used as machine gun bunkers. W.J. McKinistry, who was stationed at Dutch Harbor during World War II, remembered that "they told us [on June 4, 1942] that the Japanese were making a ground invasion of Dutch Harbor [rumor] and asked for volunteers to go down to the barracks area to help man a pill box on the beach. I volunteered, but don't ask me why!" (interview in *The Williwaw War*).



Pill Box overlooking Hog Island in Unalaska Bay, 2001.

### Mile 0.7 Hog Island, (1942-1944) Fort Mears Garrison 7

After the June 1942 bombing, troops from Fort Mears were dispersed to Unalaska Island and to nearby Hog Island (named by Russians who raised pigs there in the early 1800s). From Hog Island, Garrison 7 radio operators transmitted critical meteorological data, tide information, and constant weather updates to the military outposts along Unalaska's coastline. Although only a mile from Amaknak Island, the 250 men stationed on Hog Island were often stranded for weeks at a time when bad weather prevented supply boats from reaching them. Their diary entries attest to the serious food shortages

experienced during the winter of 1942-1943: "canned sweet potatoes and sauerkraut for two days;" "only pancakes and sauerkraut for two weeks;" "down to two meals a day of canned sauerkraut;" and "rations ran out; all we have is flour and cauliflower, no salt" (Robert Garrett, Henry Oehrig, E.F. Paulus, and James Massey, interviews in *The Williwaw War*).

### Mile 1.1 Trench on Hill 200 (1941-1942)

Turn left at gas station onto Salmon Way.



Trench on Hill 200 overlooking Salmon Way and the Museum of the Aleutians, 2001.

The clearest view of the trench is from the Museum of the Aleutians parking lot below Hill 200. The trench line was dug in an offset pattern to prevent an enemy soldier from jumping into the trench and firing straight down the

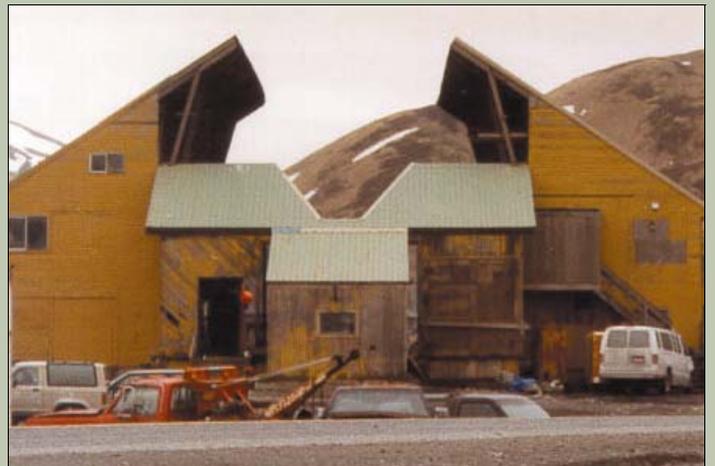
line with an automatic weapon. The uneven pattern would also have prevented an enemy pilot from making one long, continuous strafing run above the trench.

Return to Airport Beach Road and turn left.

### Mile 2.0 Marine Railway and Shop Building (1941-1944)

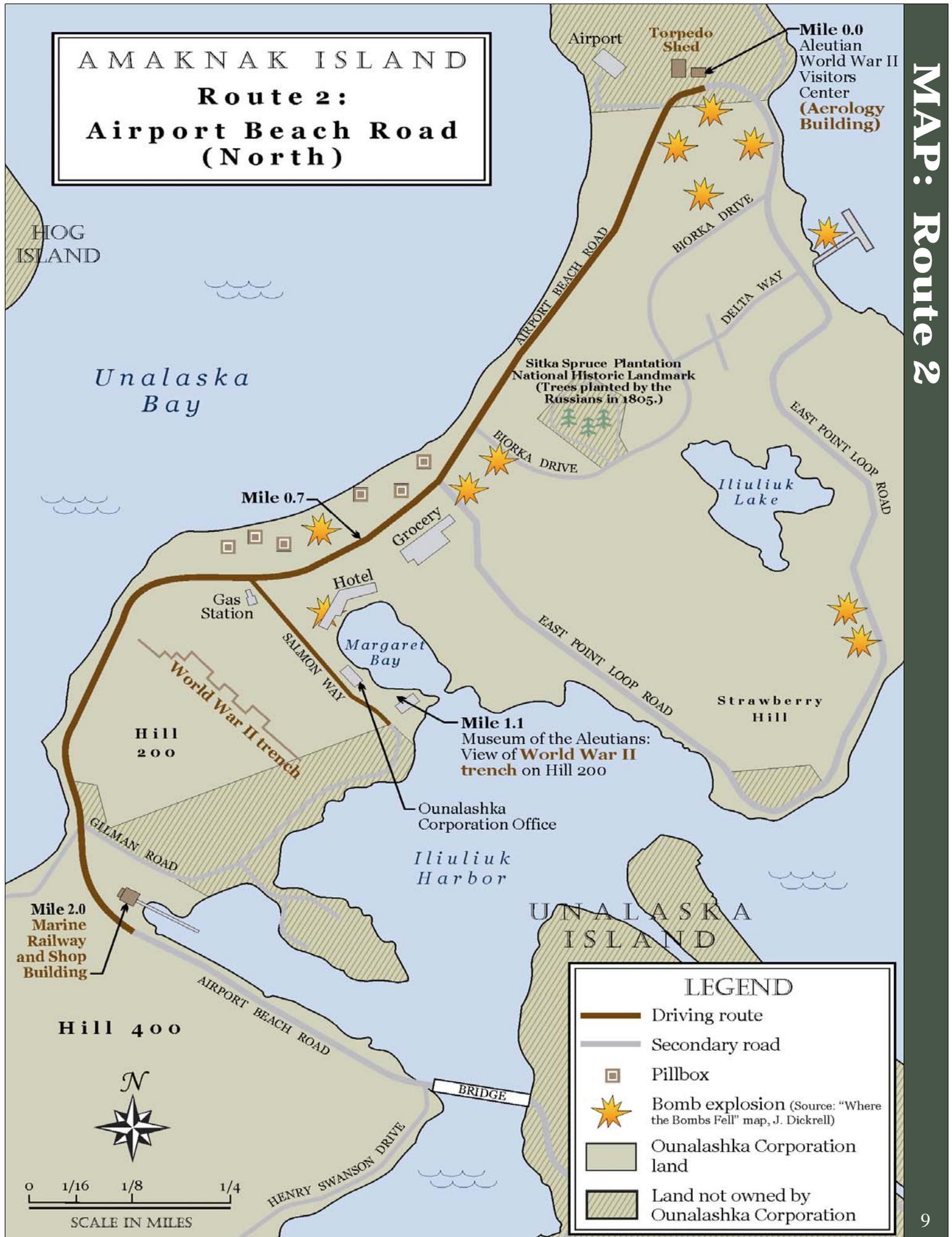
(For the best view of this building, turn right at Gilman Road and park near the intersection of Gilman Road and Airport Beach Road)

The former Marine Railway and Shop Building is the only World War II structure at the former Iliuliuk Submarine Base that has retained both its historic appearance and original function. Just as navy vessels were repaired here 60 years ago, fishing boats today are winched into the Shop Building for repair on a set of tracks (the railway) that leads up the shore from Iliuliuk Harbor. The submarine dock was removed after the war, and the other structures associated with the submarine base have been either removed or extensively remodeled.



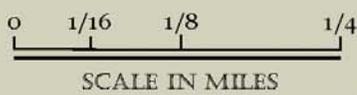
The Marine Railway and Shop Building, 2001.

AMAKNAK ISLAND  
Route 2:  
Airport Beach Road  
(North)



**LEGEND**

- Driving route
- Secondary road
- Pillbox
- Bomb explosion (Source: "Where the Bombs Fell" map, J. Dickrell)
- Ounalashka Corporation land
- Land not owned by Ounalashka Corporation



## AIRPORT BEACH ROAD (SOUTH)

Turn right out of the Visitors Center parking lot onto Airport Beach Road. At Mile 1.9, turn right onto Henry Swanson Drive, just before the wooden bridge to Unalaska Island. Pull over immediately to left, near bridge. Park facing south. Hill 400 is now on your immediate right; Agnes Beach and Pyramid Valley are on your left, across Captains Bay.

### Hill 400 Coastal Defenses, Amaknak Island



Panama gun mount and ammunition huts on Hill 400, overlooking Unalaska Bay, 2000.

Two months after the bombing of Fort Mears, Navy Seabees began constructing a defense installation on Hill 400. Also called Bunker Hill and Little South America (for its geographic shape), Hill 400 overlooks Unalaska Bay, Iliuliuk Harbor, and Captains Bay. This

strategic location provided an ideal coastal defense site. Panama mounts for 155-mm guns were installed at the top of Hill 400. Small elephant-steel magazines stored ammunition and fuses; larger concrete-and-steel ordnance magazines were cut into the side of the hill. The two-tiered Base End Station on top of Hill 400 is visible from Airport Beach Road.

### Pyramid Valley, Unalaska Island

A concrete power plant is the only structure remaining in the valley where a 50-bed hospital, dental clinic, morgue, warehouses, Quonset huts, and cabanas once stood in 1943. After the war, some cabanas were moved or salvaged for lumber; the rest of the buildings were removed during a 1986 federal environmental cleanup.

The most visible reminders of World War II in Pyramid Valley are the Sitka spruce trees planted during the 1940s as part of a military tree-planting program in the Aleutians. The goal of this program, promoted by General Simon Bolivar Buckner, was to “reduce the monotony of the landscape for thousands of soldiers, ... curb erosion, ... and rectify Nature’s apparent omissions” (D. Bruce and A. Court: *Trees for the Aleutians*). Despite the severe winter storms of Southwestern Alaska, a number of the trees planted in this valley have survived.

**Note:** The unpaved road through Pyramid Valley is a public right-of-way; the land, however, is privately owned. If you visit this area and intend to get out of your car, you will need to purchase a land-use permit from Ounalashka Corporation (available at the Visitors Center).

### Agnes Beach and Captains Bay Dock, Unalaska Island

In response to the June 1942 bombing of Fort Mears and Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base, the military ordered the evacuation of all Unangan people in the Aleutian Islands. Two months later, 189 residents of Unalaska were taken by ship to a relocation camp in Southeast Alaska. During the 2-½ years the Unangan were forced to live in the relocation camp, “there was widespread and wanton destruction of [their] property . . . [by] armed forces personnel and civilians alike” (Military report in *The Williwaw War*). Furniture and personal items were stolen or vandalized, and plywood ripped from the inside walls of homes.

The residents of Unalaska were allowed to return to their homes in April 1945. When the ship docked just south of Agnes Beach, the people did not realize at first how much their homes had been damaged because Haystack Hill blocked their view of the town. Nick Galaktionoff, who was 20 years old at the end of World War II, described his homecoming in a 1992 interview: “At Unalaska, they unload us at Captain’s Bay dock and from the army truck—up the valley way. . . by the time we got in the town there it looked bad” (B. Smith, *Making It Right, Vol. II*). Another Unangan elder remembered “When we came [back] to Unalaska we were happy and we were sad at the same time. Windows [were] broken, doors kicked in, personal belongings were gone. It made you feel like crying whenever someone got to go inside of their homes” (Anfesia Shapsnikoff, 1972 interview in *Old Buildings, New Foundations*).

### Mile 2.1 Cabana (private home) Unalaska Island

Because so many of the homes in the town of Unalaska were uninhabitable at the end of the war, the Army moved a number of buildings down from Pyramid Valley as temporary housing for the Unangan. These 16- by 20-foot wood-frame buildings, called cabanas, were relocated in an area of town between Broadway Avenue and the Iliuliuk River that eventually became known as “New Town.” Moving and remodeling cabanas, as well as salvaging lumber from them, became common practice in Unalaska in the post-war years and in the decades to follow. Many of these cabanas are still in use as housing. Please respect the privacy of residents as you drive past these homes.



Cabana (private residence), Unalaska Island, 2001.

### Mile 2.5 Unangan World War II Monument Unalaska Island

Turn left at Raven Way. Pull into City Hall parking lot and walk up a short path to the top of the knoll overlooking Iliuliuk Bay.

This stone monument was erected as a memorial to the Unangan people who sacrificed their homes and their lives during the war. In 1988, Congress passed *An Act Concerning War-Time Relocation of Civilians* (Public Law 100-383). This act acknowledged the injustices and unreasonable hardships endured by the Unangan people of the Aleutian Islands (Smith: *A Sure Foundation*). In 1989, Congress authorized reparation payments to each of the 400 survivors of the internment camps (Alaska Geographic: Dutch).

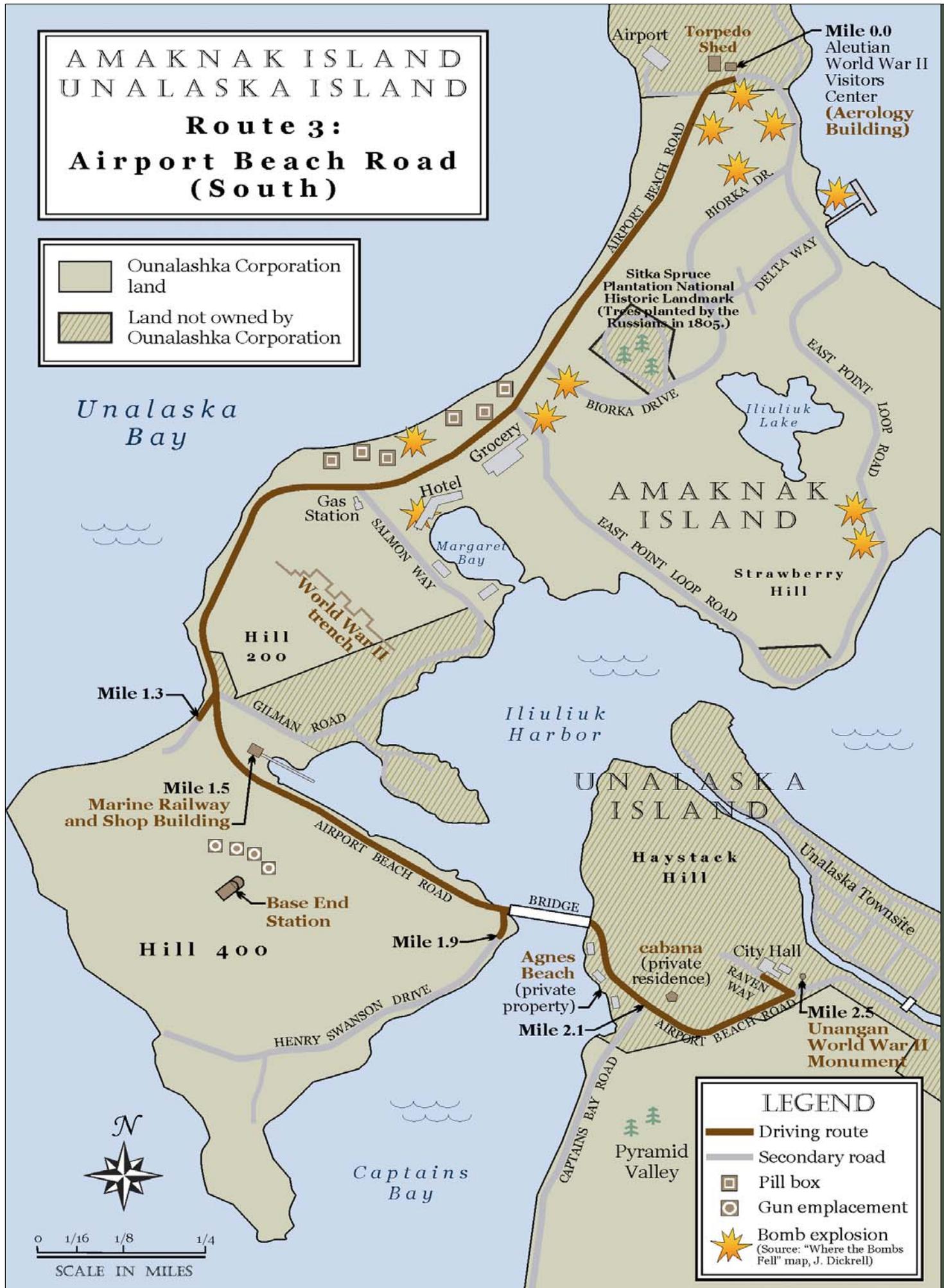


Unangan monument overlooking Church of the Holy Ascension, 2001.

AMAKNAK ISLAND  
UNALASKA ISLAND

**Route 3:  
Airport Beach Road  
(South)**

 Ounalashka Corporation land  
 Land not owned by Ounalashka Corporation



**LEGEND**

-  Driving route
-  Secondary road
-  Pill box
-  Gun emplacement
-  Bomb explosion  
(Source: "Where the Bombs Fell" map, J. Dickrell)



## UNALASKA TOWN SITE

Turn right out of the Visitors Center parking lot onto Airport Beach Road; drive south on Airport Beach Road and cross over the bridge to Unalaska Island. Continue downhill past City Hall and cross the Illiuliuk River Bridge. On the north side of the bridge, Airport Beach Road becomes 5<sup>th</sup> Street. At the first stop sign, turn left onto Broadway Avenue.

### Mile 2.8 Burma Road Chapel (1942)

The former Burma Road Chapel, now the Unalaska Convention and Visitors Bureau, is the only remaining military church on Unalaska Island and Amaknak Island from the World War II era. Despite new doors, windows, and paint, the building is still recognizable as a 1940s-era structure. The Sitka spruce on each side of the chapel were likely planted soon after the chapel was built, as part of the military tree-planting program.

### Mile 3.1 Bomb Site (1942): Bureau of Indian Affairs Hospital



Bureau of Indian Affairs Hospital, June 1942 after Japanese bombing. Courtesy University of Alaska Anchorage Archives, C.A. Clower Collection.

Just past the intersection of Broadway Avenue and Cathedral Way is the site where the Bureau of Indian Affairs Hospital once stood. In early June 1942, hospital personnel received word from base intelligence that an enemy air strike was expected at Dutch Harbor. The hospital staff immediately moved patients to nearby dugout shelters. On June 4, a Japanese bomb hit next to the hospital, severely damaging the building. Only two people were in the hospital at the time, the head nurse and the janitor, but neither was injured. In an interview, ward attendant Martha Tutiakoff recalled that the explosion “tore out the whole end of the building and destroyed the nurses’ quarters and all their belongings. It twisted and shattered the rest of the building...[but] there was no fire” (*The Williwaw War*). The hospital was rebuilt, but burned in the 1950s.

### Mile 3.2 Church of the Holy Ascension (1898) National Historic Landmark

The site on which the present Church of the Holy Ascension was constructed in 1898 has been the site of the Russian Orthodox Church in Unalaska for almost 200 years and the spiritual center of the Unalaska community. Parishioners regularly maintain and repair the building. After the Unangan were evacuated from Unalaska in August 1942, the military used the Church primarily as a warehouse until 1945, and the building received no maintenance for three years (*A Sure Foundation*).

When the Unangan returned home in April 1945, they found their church in severe disrepair. Holes in the roof and broken windows had allowed “wind and rain [to penetrate] behind loose shingles and siding, causing a permanent dampness to the building” (*Making It Right, Vol. I*). The parishioners repaired their church as best they could, but could not afford the extensive structural restoration required, and the condition of the building continued to deteriorate. The Church of the Holy Ascension was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1970. It was restored in 1996 at a cost of 1.4 million dollars, with funding from the

National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, and the Russian Orthodox Church.



1898 Church of the Holy Ascension, ca. 1943. Courtesy University of Alaska Anchorage Archives, Harris M Whiting Collection.

### Mile 3.2 Bishop’s House (1883)

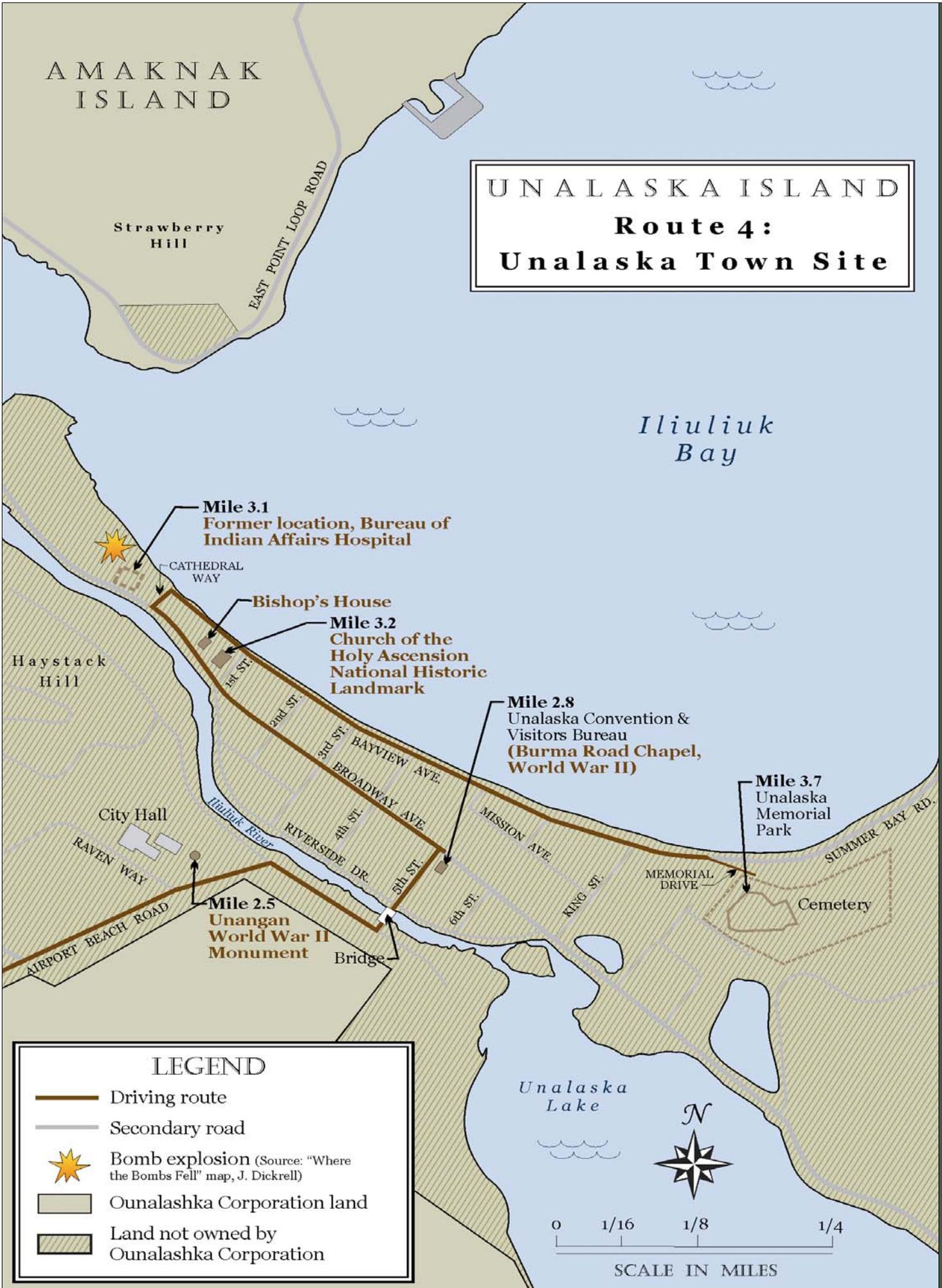
The Bishop’s House, with its distinctive Italianate styling and Victorian trim, was designed and constructed in San Francisco, shipped piece by piece to Unalaska, and then reassembled at its present site. The 30-foot-square elementary school that was once attached to this building burned in 1960.

### Mile 3.7 Unalaska Memorial Park and Cemetery

This small memorial park was constructed in 1992 next to the Unalaska Cemetery. The park displays memorial plaques honoring Unalaskans lost at sea, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the Unangan people and military personnel who died during World War II. Benches overlooking Illiuliuk Harbor flank a pill box and the 9-foot-high, solid brass propeller salvaged from the *S.S. Northwestern* by the City of Unalaska. Most of the grave markers in the cemetery are Russian Orthodox, and some of the gravesites and surrounding fences are more than 100 years old.



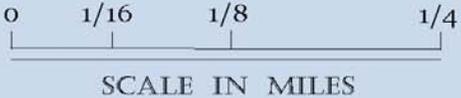
Unalaska Cemetery, 2001.



UNALASKA ISLAND  
**Route 4:**  
**Unalaska Town Site**

**LEGEND**

-  Driving route
-  Secondary road
-  Bomb explosion (Source: "Where the Bombs Fell" map, J. Dickrell)
-  Ounalashka Corporation land
-  Land not owned by Ounalashka Corporation



## UPPER UNALASKA VALLEY

Turn right out of the Visitors Center parking lot onto Airport Beach Road. Continue on this road until you cross the Iliuliuk River Bridge into the Unalaska Town Site, where Airport Beach Road becomes 5<sup>th</sup> Street. At the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway Avenue, turn right onto Broadway Avenue and follow the road until you reach the washout.

### The Move to Unalaska Valley

After the 1942 bombing of Dutch Harbor, work began almost immediately on moving Fort Mears operations from Margaret Bay to Unalaska Valley, a more geographically protected area. By 1943, construction of the new installation (designated Garrisons 2 and 5) was completed, and the men of Garrison 1 were now quartered in 46 barracks buildings and 14 officers quarters, in addition to 674 Quonset huts and 350 cabanas scattered randomly throughout the valley. After the battle on Kiska Island in 1944, the army established the North Pacific Combat School in an area of Lower Unalaska Valley known as Ski Bowl (J. Dickrell).



Cabana in Upper Unalaska Valley, 2001.

Sixty years later, only one intact cabana can be seen from the road in Upper Unalaska Valley. Some buildings were moved into town for housing after the war, and others salvaged for lumber. Many were removed during an environmental cleanup. The rest have fallen due to years of rain, wind, and snow load. Although the buildings in Upper Unalaska Valley are no longer standing, many of the foundations remain; a drive through the valley provides a sense of what it might have been like to live here during World War II.

### Mile 5.3 Water System Remnants

On the creek bank at the washout are traces of the original World War II water system. The rectangular concrete structure on the left was the chlorination station. Protruding from the bank to the right of the station are wood-stave water pipes wrapped with wire.

### Mile 5.3 Munitions Magazines (1942-1943)

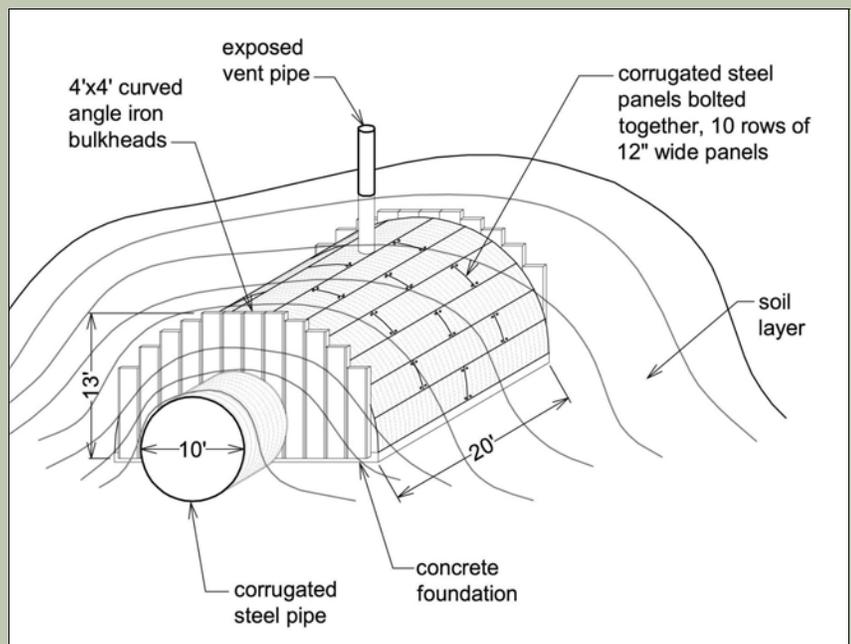
When you reach the washout at the end of the road, look to your left across the river. The two black tunnel-like openings in the hillside are the entrances to munitions magazines known as elephant steel shelters or Armco huts. These structures were built of panels of heavy-gauge corrugated steel bolted together and covered with soil. Grass and willow soon grew over the soil, making the shelters very difficult to detect.

### Unalaska Valley/Pyramid Valley Water System (1943)

Soon after the Fort Mears troops moved to Unalaska Valley in July 1942, testing revealed that the water supply for the new garrisons was contaminated. The source of the contamination was traced to living quarters located above the watershed. Although personnel quarters were immediately moved down the hillside below the watershed, by the end of the year it became necessary to strictly ration water use. During this time, an “outbreak of acute gastroenteritis was traced to unclean messing gear due to a shortage of available hot water . . . in the galleys” (*War Diary: Dutch Harbor, Alaska*).

As soon as the snow melted in Pyramid Valley the following spring, work began on a new water system. Water from Pyramid Creek was channeled through 16-inch-diameter wood-stave and cast-iron pipe at Icy Creek Dam. From here, waterlines ran to Amaknak Island and to two dams in Upper Unalaska Valley. Water flowed from these dams downhill to the chlorination facility (Mile 5.3) before reaching Garrisons 2 and 5.

When completed, the new water system provided a fresh water supply of approximately 3,500,000 gallons per day to all the military installations on Amaknak and Unalaska islands. This water system served the City of Unalaska for many years after the war. Remnants of wood-stave pipe can still be seen in Unalaska and Pyramid valleys and on the shore of Unalaska Bay.

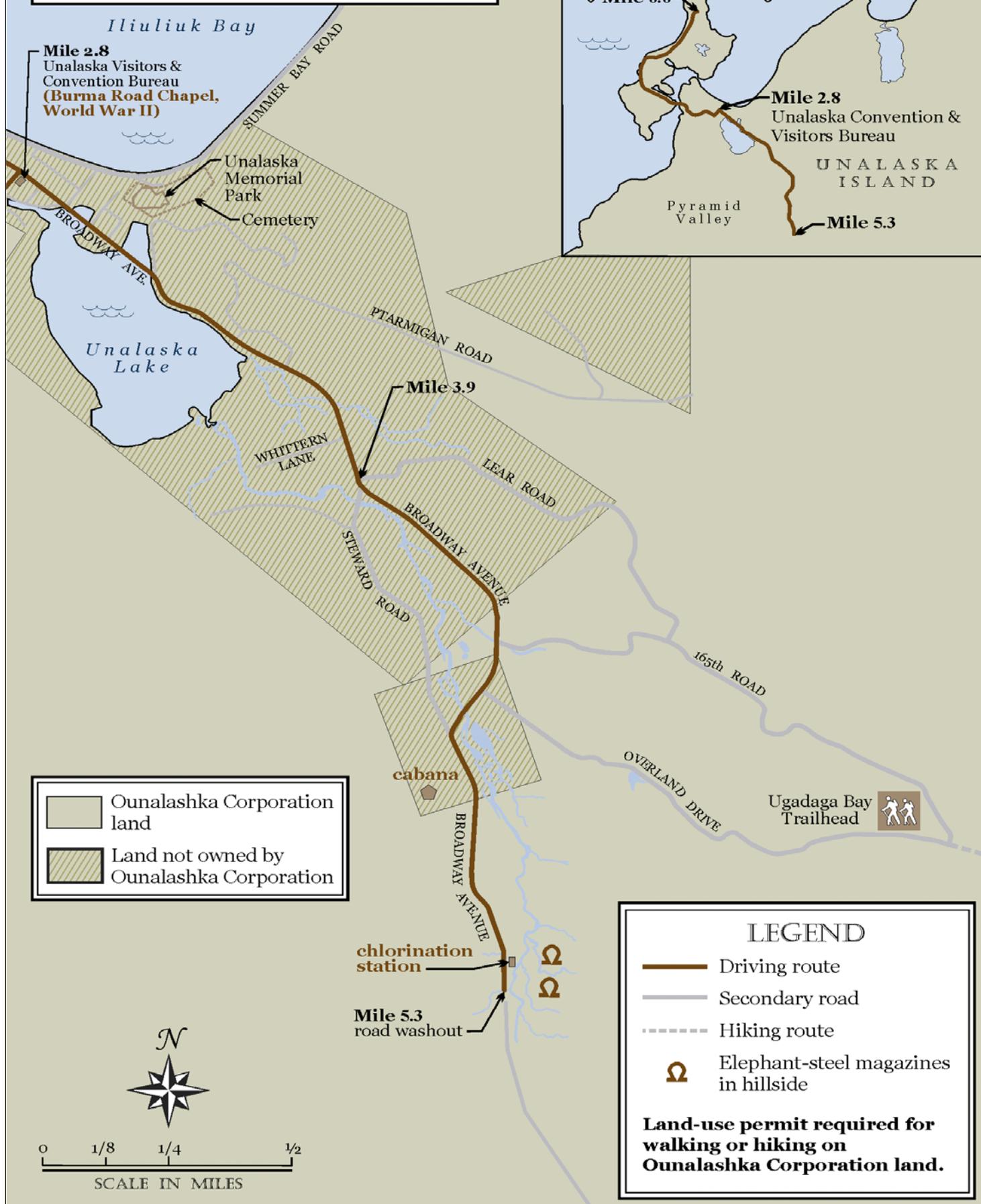


Elephant-steel munitions magazine.

# UNALASKA ISLAND

## Route 5: Unalaska Valley

# MAP: Route 5



**Mile 2.8**  
Unalaska Visitors & Convention Bureau  
(Burma Road Chapel, World War II)

Unalaska Memorial Park  
Cemetery

**Mile 3.9**

Ugadaga Bay Trailhead

chlorination station

**Mile 5.3**  
road washout

Legend:  
[Green box] Ounalashka Corporation land  
[Hatched box] Land not owned by Ounalashka Corporation

**LEGEND**  
— Driving route  
— Secondary road  
- - - Hiking route  
Ω Elephant-steel magazines in hillside  
**Land-use permit required for walking or hiking on Ounalashka Corporation land.**



## SUMMER BAY ROAD

Turn right out of the Visitor Center parking lot onto Airport Beach Road. Continue on this road until you cross the Iliuliuk River Bridge into the Unalaska Town Site. On the north side of the bridge, Airport Beach Road becomes 5<sup>th</sup> Street. At the first intersection, turn right onto Broadway Avenue then left at King Street. At the end of King Street, turn right onto Bayview Avenue and continue past Unalaska Memorial Park and Cemetery. After this point, Bayview Avenue becomes Summer Bay Road.

Fort Brumback on Morris Cove was one of the eastern points of Dutch Harbor's coastal defense network known as "The Iron Ring." Construction of the fort and access road, Summer Bay Road, began in 1942. Army Garrison No. 6 included administration buildings, mess halls, 10 barracks buildings, and 70 Quonset huts. A few badly deteriorated Quonsets are all that remain of these buildings. However, a number of Fort Brumback's defensive fortifications, located between Summer Bay and Humpy Cove, are still standing.

### Mile 6.3 Second Priest Rock

Named for its resemblance to Priest Rock, some 4 miles north, Second Priest Rock was a familiar landmark for the men of Garrison No. 6, as well as those stationed at Fort Schwatka on Mount Ballyhoo.

### Mile 6.5 Tramway Remains

A track of rusted steel rails on the side of Mount Coxcomb is all that remains of a wood and steel tramway that once transported supplies up the mountain to a searchlight station overlooking Iliuliuk Bay. Opinions differed on the usefulness of the 800-million-candlepower searchlight. One former member of Battery A recalled that when the light was shined vertically, it became a homing device for navy pilots trying to land in heavy fog. Another believed that the searchlight was of little use in the thick Aleutian fog, and it "more likely would have guided the enemy to us" (Jodie Jones and John Proffitt, interviews in *The Williwaw War*).



Tramway remains, 2001.

### Mile 6.9 Elephant Steel Magazine

The most common function of this structure, also known as an Armco hut, was munitions storage, but elephant steel shelters were also used as generator buildings, plotting rooms, and searchlight shelters. The magazine was constructed on a concrete foundation with 10-foot panels of corrugated steel bolted together to form the roof and sides. No internal bracing was required. The entrance is a 10-foot-wide piece of corrugated steel pipe. The iron bulkhead above the entrance and at the back provided additional support to the exterior of the magazine when it was camouflaged with earth.

### Mile 7.3 –7.4 Panama Mounts



Panama gun mount and munitions storage magazine. View facing north to Morris Cove and Split-Top Mountain, 2000.

Each of the circular tracked Panama mounts supported a 155-mm gun that was removed from the mount when not in use. The track enabled the gun to rotate a full 360 degrees. It took three men to operate these guns: the gun point, who pointed the gun in the right direction; the

elevation setter, who raised the gun to the angle for the range; and the gunner, who fired the gun.

### Mile 7.4 and 7.8 Fuse Magazines

These four structures, sometimes called fusee huts or igloo huts, contained ammunition fuses, which were stored separately from the ammunition.

### Mile 7.8 Munitions Magazine

This elephant steel magazine was originally camouflaged with earth, grass, and brush. The only parts of the structure that were visible were the entryway and the vent pipe.



Munitions storage structure, 2000.

### Mile 7.8 Base End Station

This two-tiered concrete structure on the hillside provided a sweeping view of Iliuliuk Bay. Its position, shape, and lack of color also provided a degree of camouflage. The soldiers at this post used a scope to measure the azimuth (angular distance) between a target (approaching enemy vessels or aircraft) and the Base End Station. This measurement was then relayed to personnel in the plotting room, who used the information to calculate the correct range and firing angle for the 155-mm guns.



Base End Station, 2000.

### Mile 8.3 Bridge

Driving Route 6 ends at the parking area just before the bridge. The road up the hill leads to Morris Cove. It is extremely rough and recommended only for 4-wheel drive vehicles.

UNALASKA ISLAND  
**Route 6:  
 Summer Bay Road**



**LEGEND**

- Driving route
- Secondary (rough) road
- Hiking route
- Bridge
- Elephant-steel magazine, large
- Elephant-steel magazine, small
- Gun emplacement
- Quonset hut

**Land-use permit required for walking or hiking on Ounalashka Corporation land.**

# THE IRON RING

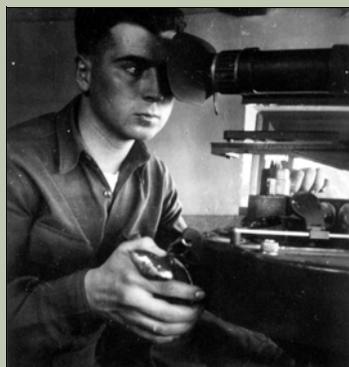
The many strategically placed observation outposts and defense fortifications constructed along the coastlines of Amaknak and Unalaska islands during World War II formed what was known as the “Iron Ring.” Anti-submarine nets strung across Iliuliuk Bay and Captains Bay were also part of this coastal defense system. The two largest coastal defense fortifications were Ulakta Head Battery 402 at Fort Schwatka and Eider Point Battery 298 at Fort Learnard.

## **Fort Schwatka/Ulakta Head Coastal Defenses (1942-1944), Amaknak Island**

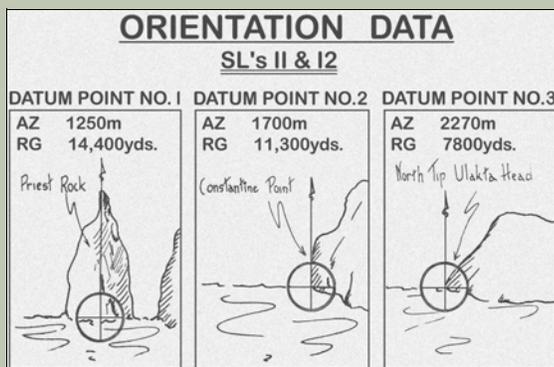
Fort Schwatka and Battery 402, constructed during 1942-1944, was the center point of the coastal defense system. At the top of Mount Ballyhoo overlooking Unalaska Bay, Ulakta Head is the northernmost point of Amaknak Island. This defense battery is 897 feet above sea level, the highest battery in the United States. Fort Schwatka and Battery 402 at Ulakta Head form the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area.

Artillery at Battery 402 consisted of two 8-inch guns. Artillery support structures included the concrete Harbor Defense Command/Harbor Defense Observation Post, shell and powder magazines, a generator room and a radio room. The plotting room was below ground, connected by a tunnel to the Observation and Command Post.

Fort Schwatka provided housing and support services for the men of Battery 402. Some of the buildings, such as the barracks and warehouses, were wood frame, but many others—the mess hall, PX, and supply and administration buildings—were Quonset huts. Although most of the concrete and steel structures at Ulakta Head are still standing, few of the wood-frame buildings and none of the Quonset huts at Fort Schwatka have survived 60 years of wind, rain, and snow atop Mount Ballyhoo.



*Soldier using M1910 Azimuth Finder, ca. 1942. Courtesy Kenneth Sprunger.*



*Reproduction of a piece of canvas ca. 1942 from Fort Learnard. Courtesy Museum of the Aleutians. 2000.87.*



*Remnant of a 6-inch gun shield at Fort Learnard, overlooking Unalaska Bay and Hog Island to the southeast, 2001.*

## **Fort Learnard (1942-1944), Unalaska Island**

Fort Learnard and Battery 298, accessible only by water, are located on the cliff above Eider Point, 4 miles directly west of Ulakta Head. Until a road was built to the top of the cliff, supplies were transported to the fort by means of a tramway. Housing and support services buildings were similar to those constructed at Fort Schwatka and Hill 400. Only a few of these buildings remain intact due to the harsh Aleutian climate.

A 492-foot-long underground tunnel provided access to the two 6-inch guns at Battery 298, which were set into pits, protected by large steel shields, and camouflaged by netting. Behind the guns was a battery magazine of reinforced concrete. The battery magazine and the gun shield remnants at Fort Learnard are still in relatively good condition, but only traces of the tunnel remain. The access road up the hillside to Fort Learnard is on private property, and the land at Eider Point is owned by the Ounalashka Corporation.

AMAKNAK AND UNALASKA ISLANDS  
U.S. Defense Installations 1941-1945  
(Fort Mears installation dispersed to three other locations after June 1942 bombing)



Source: Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army map, 1946

0 1/2 1 2  
SCALE IN MILES

## READING LIST

***The following books about World War II in the Aleutians  
can be purchased at the Aleutian World War II  
Visitors Center and the Museum of the Aleutians***

- Bradley, Charles C. *Aleutian Echoes*. University of Alaska Press, 1994.
- Cloe, John Haile. *The Aleutian Warriors: Part I*. Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., 1990.
- Cohen, Stan. *The Forgotten War*, Vols. I, III, IV. Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., 1981.
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- Freeman, Elmer. *Those Navy Guys & Their PBYS: The Aleutian Solution*. Kedging Publishing Co., 4th ed. 1992.
- Garfield, Brian. *The 1000-Mile War*. University of Alaska Press, 1995.
- Goldstein, Donald M. and Katherine V. Dillon. *The Williwaw War: The Arkansas National Guard in the Aleutians in World War II*. University of Arkansas Press, 1992.
- Mitchell, Lt. Robert J., Sewell T. Tyng, and Capt Nelson L. Drummond, Jr. *The Capture of Attu*. University of Nebraska Press, 2000.
- Rearden, Jim. *Koga's Zero*. Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., 1995.
- Rennick, Peggy, ed. *World War II in Alaska*. Alaska Geographic, Vol. 22, No. 1, 1995.
- Rourke, Norman E. *War Comes to Dutch Harbor*. Burd Street Press, 1997.
- Unalaska High School, Students of. *Old Buildings, New Foundations: Perspective of the Legacy of World War II in Unalaska and Dutch Harbor*. Unalaska School District, 1992.



*U.S. submarine, Iliuliuk Harbor, ca. 1942. Hill 400 in background.  
Courtesy University of Alaska Fairbanks, Hanna Call Collection, 70-11-27-N.*

# NOTES

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*Collapsed barracks, Fort Schwatka on Mount Ballyhoo, 2001.*



*Dutch Harbor, ca. 1942. Courtesy Anchorage Museum of History and Art.*