

Unalaska

Aleutian WWII National Historic Area
Map and Guide

Unangaꝥ Tenganis

Our Islands



Birthplace of Winds...Cradle of Storms

Like precarious stepping stones, the Aleutian Islands span the seas between the New and Old Worlds—reaching westward from the Alaska Peninsula to within 500 miles of the Asian peninsula of Kamchatka. Situated between the Bering Sea and the Pacific Ocean, along the seam of the Pacific and American geologic plates, this 1,100 mile long archipelago has been, and continues to be, the locus of climatic and tectonic events.

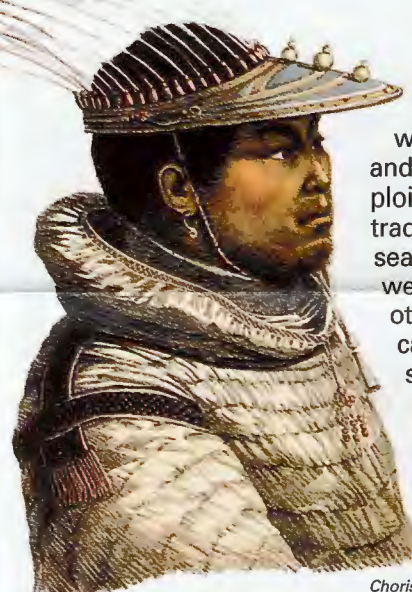
Conflicting weather systems generated in the bordering seas are responsible for severe cyclonic storms, heavy rains, and dense, impenetrable fog. Yearly precipitation averages fifty inches with measurable rainfall occurring 200 days per annum. The Aleutian Chain's foundation of shifting geologic plates results in active volcanism and earthquakes—the birth processes of the islands themselves. The Aleutians betray their violent origins in their rugged landscape—in their mountainous terrain, precipitous coastline, and black sand beaches. It is thought that at least twenty-six of the Chain's fifty-seven volcanoes have erupted in the past two centuries. Yet, this dramatic environment supports the largest concentration of marine mammals in the world and a nesting seabird population greater than that found in the rest of the United States combined. The

volcanist, Thomas Jagger, commented on the newest Aleutian Island in 1906—the still smoking Bogoslof: "The sea was full of fish, the beaches were full of sea lions, the hot lava and air were full of birds. Thus life and deadly volcanism lived together." Such proliferation of wildlife drew man to the island chain as early as 8,000 years before present. By 4,000 years before present a great maritime nation had arisen, one

adapted to efficiently exploit a single subsistence resource: the sea. From their skin boats, Aleut hunters harvested whales and pinnipeds—the sea lion, sea otter, and seal; sea birds were taken and their eggs collected; women fished for spawning salmon and scoured the rich intertidal zone for shellfish, seaweed, and driftwood. From the waters not only came their food, but the raw materials for the vast majority of their manufac-

tured goods, garments, and tools. The sophisticated technology the Aleut developed to harvest the ocean was unparalleled; their ability to do so remarkable, considering their environment. In 1741, the Aleut, their island homeland, and the rich waters which constituted their livelihood were first seen by European eyes.

the ocean swell. The *iqax* was not only a sailing craft, but a hunting partner that identified itself with its master and wished to share his life. "Their fates, indeed, are bound up together," states anthropologist J. Robert-Lambin, "...their lives end at the same time; they disappear at sea together or, on land, share the same grave."



Choris

The Unangan

Within forty-five years after Russian contact, the native *Unangan* or Aleut, as the world at large has come to call them, generally estimated at twelve to fifteen thousand in number, plummeted to a few thousand persons at

most—the population decimated by warfare, epidemics, and starvation. Exploited by Russian fur traders to harvest the sea otter, Aleut hunters were often enslaved, others forcibly relocated, some as far south as the Santa Catalina Islands off California; their wives and children held hostage to ensure acquiescence.

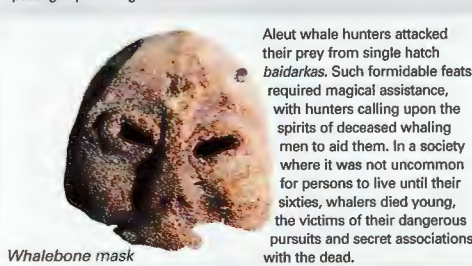
The Russian monarchy attempted to enforce fair treatment, but it was not until the arrival of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 1800s, that the Aleuts' rights were argued in Russian courts. After the purchase of Alaska by the United States in 1867, the Aleut found themselves classi-

fied as "Indians" and made wards of the government. Under U.S. protectorate, the Aleut entered a time of what can best be described as benign neglect, receiving little or no support from the Territorial or Federal authorities. The Aleut worked the introduced fox and sheep farms for wages, became construction workers or longshoremen, but almost all still looked to the sea for sustenance. The Aleuts' hardships lasted for over two centuries, under the governing hand of two countries, culminating finally in the forced evacuation from their homeland during World War II, where the unique geography of their islands, the link between east and west, again played a pivotal role in their history.



The traditional Aleut winter house, called a *barabara* or in Aleut an *usak*, was a semi-subterranean dwelling with a driftwood/whale bone frame overlain with grass, earth, and sod. Entrance was through a portal in the roof, the inhabitants descending into the interior by means of a notched log ladder. Woven grass mats divided the dwellings into familial units with storage, sleeping quarters, and hiding places excavated into the walls—the latter often linked to secret passages providing a means of

escape during warfare. *Barabaras* reached lengths of 60 meters or more and held upwards of 40 families. They functioned as the site of manufacturing, communal and ceremonial activities, and at times, burial of the dead. Although it is thought each house acted independently, an elder of a leading *barabara* in the community was recognized as village leader. Shared dancing and feasting insured harmony between individual villages.



Aleut whale hunters attacked their prey from single hatch *baidarkas*. Such formidable feats required magical assistance, with hunters calling upon the spirits of deceased whaling men to aid them. In a society where it was not uncommon for persons to live until their sixties, whalers died young, the victims of their dangerous pursuits and secret associations with the dead.

To the early Aleut, the *baidarka* or *iqax* was a living being, the skeleton made of hewn driftwood covered with seal and sea lion skin, the joints bound with sinew, bone, and baleen.



Post contact design of an *iqax*. Intimidated by the speed of the early Aleut design, the Russians widened and altered the bow to slow the boats in open water. Harpoon courtesy National Museum of Natural History.

Craftsmen worked for a year or more on a single boat, fashioning an *iqax* both strong and supple, one that "bent" upon the wave. The finished *iqax* was made watertight with boiled seal oil, the skin shell often turning translucent as paper in the process, so that the hunter, the heart of



the vessel, was visible within. In these superb craft, Aleut hunters could paddle for twelve to eighteen hours without rest, traveling 150 kilometers out to sea at speeds reaching eight miles an hour. They navigated by the stars and moon, by watching the winds and tide rips, the flight of birds and the direction of

the ocean swell. The *iqax* was not only a sailing craft, but a hunting partner that identified itself with its master and wished to share his life. "Their fates, indeed, are bound up together," states anthropologist J. Robert-Lambin, "...their lives end at the same time; they disappear at sea together or, on land, share the same grave."



Closed-crowned headgear was reserved for ceremonial occasions and hunts for sea otter and whale. Painted in polychrome and often elaborately decorated with ivory volutes, sea lion whiskers, and bird feathers, the wooden hat, or *chagudax*, not only provided protection from the elements, but denoted status or rank as well.

Spurred by Chinese demand for its luxuriant pelt, the sea otter was hunted to near extinction in 170 years of mostly unregulated hunting by European and American fur traders. Sea otter exploitation was finally halted by the United States in 1911, the otter population subsequently rebounding. Other species were not so fortunate. The sea cow, a manatee-like creature, and the speck-

led cormorant both met with extinction during the Russian period. The Steller "sea monkey," a mysterious hybrid creature with a dog's head, drooping mustache and shark-like tail has never been seen again since its first sighting by Vitus Bering's crew in 1741.

Today, Aleutian waters are home to orca, humpback,



pilot, and fin whales, to Steller sea lions, harbor seals, and Dall porpoise. The skies are profuse with birdlife—albatross and eagles, petrels, puffins, and jaegers, the rare whiskered

auklet and ancient murrelet. The natural world remains sacrosanct to the Aleut, their sense of self deeply rooted in landscape and its wildlife. It is a place of intense beauty, charged with the

ever changing colors of ocean and sky.

Unalaska's first Russian Orthodox church was constructed in 1808. In the 1820s and 1830s the church served as the seat of Father Ioann Veniaminov, later elected head of the Orthodox Church in Russia in 1868 and canonized Saint Innocent in 1977. Much of what is known of early Aleut culture and language is based on Veniaminov's observations. Built in 1895, the present day Church of the Holy Ascension of Christ, is a National Historic Landmark. In 1996, the World Monuments Watch—a highly selective listing which includes India's Taj Mahal—designated the church's 250 religious icons one of

the world's 100 most endangered sites. The Russian Orthodox Church did much to alleviate the ills of colonization. Churches became the most prominent village structure and the locus of community life. Aleuts served as lay readers. They formed choirs, practicing the Orthodox liturgy in their own Aleut tongue. The Church became a sanctuary, its icons representing a spiritual world which transcended the often harsh realities of life. The Russian Orthodox faith remains a dominant force in modern Aleut culture.



Courtesy the artist Byron Birdsell and Anique

Aleut basketry is some of the finest in the world, the continuum of a craft begun in prehistoric times and carried through to the present. Early Aleut women created baskets and woven mats of exceptional technical quality using only an elongated and sharpened thumb nail as tool. Today Aleut weavers continue to produce woven pieces of a remarkable cloth-like texture, works of modern art with roots in ancient tradition. The Aleut word for grass basket is *qiigam aygaaxsii*.



Aleut Internment

Some called the ordeal suffered by...Aleut-Americans the "craziness of war," and dismissed that ugly portion of our history with that excuse. Not many of our people...realized the ultimate insult of the entire story. The evacuations were not necessary; the Aleuts suffered for nothing.

-- Agaon Krukoff, Jr., St. Paul Aleut



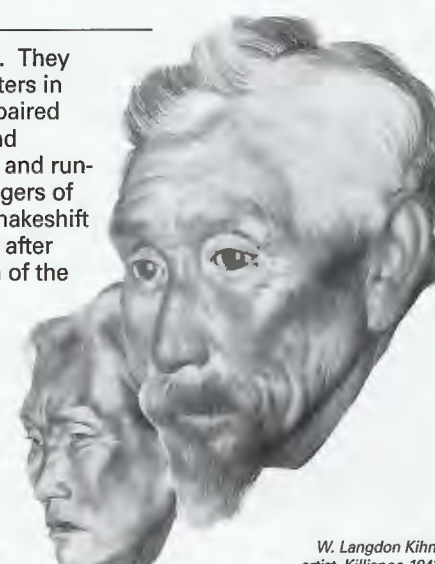
National Archives

In 1942, the Imperial Japanese naval base of Paramushiro lay only 650 miles southwest of Attu Island, the westernmost island in the Aleutian Chain. The Attuans, and the Aleutian Islanders in general, were wary of their proximity to the Japanese installation. "Some day they (will) come to Attu..." predicted Attuan Michael Hodikoff. "They (will) come here; you see. They (will) take Attu some day." On June 7, 1942, in an event for the most part unknown outside of Alaska, Japanese forces did invade this small island, changing forever not only the lives of the forty-two Attuan villagers taken prisoners-of-war, but the Aleut people as a whole. In response to Japanese aggression in the Aleutians, U.S. authorities evacuat-

ed 881 Aleuts from nine villages. They were herded from their homes onto cramped transport ships, most allowed only a single suitcase. Heartbroken, Atka villagers watched as U.S. servicemen set their homes and camp afire so they would not fall into Japanese hands. The Aleuts were transported to Southeast Alaska and there crowded into "duration villages": abandoned canneries, a herring saltery, and gold mine camp—rotting facilities with no plumbing, electricity, or toilets. The Aleuts lacked warm winter clothes, and camp food was poor, the water tainted. Accustomed to living in a world without trees, one open to the expansive sky, they suddenly found themselves crowded under the dense,

shadowed canopy of the Southeast rainforest. For almost three years they would remain in these dark places, struggling to survive. Illness of one form or another struck all the evacuees, but medical care was often nonexistent, and the authorities were dismissive of the Aleuts' complaints. Pneumonia and tuberculosis took the very young and the old. Thirty-two died at the Funter Bay camp, seventeen at Killisnoo, twenty at Ward Lake, five at Burnett Inlet. With the death of the elders so, too, passed their knowledge of traditional Aleut ways. The death of the young foretold the demise of the future, but the Aleut people did not succumb. Attempts to keep Aleuts sequestered from nearby villages and towns failed.

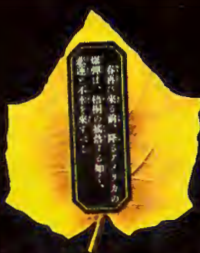
Evacuees found jobs. They built new living quarters in their compounds, repaired the old structures, and brought in electricity and running water. The villagers of Unalaska erected a makeshift church and named it after their beloved Church of the Holy Ascension of Christ. The religious articles and holy cards brought from the villages took on immense importance, the Aleut again turning to their faith for strength.



W. Langdon Kihn, artist, Killisnoo 1943

The Aleutian Campaign

60,000 copies of this psychological warfare flyer were dropped over Attu and Kiska islands by Allied forces. The text on the leaf to the right reads: "Before Fall comes, the raining bombs of America, just like the Kiri Leaves fluttering to the ground, will bring sad fate and misfortune."



Six months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese aircraft struck at U.S. Army and Navy installations at Dutch Harbor in the North Pacific. Two days of aerial bombardment left over one hundred civilians and servicemen dead and wounded—their barracks, fuel tanks, and other structures set afire. The U.S.S. *Northwestern*, an aging Alaska Steamship Company vessel converted to a barracks ship, burned furiously in the harbor. U.S. forces at Fort Mears met the first attack on June 3, 1942, with anti-aircraft and small arms fire, but on June 4, eight P-40s, the Aleutian Tigers, rose to join the Japanese in aerial dogfights. The U.S. airplanes were launched from Cape Field, a secret airbase on neighboring Umnak Island. The Japanese had thought the nearest airfield was on Kodiak, and Cape Field at Fort Glenn, disguised as a cannery complex, had remained undetected. The surprise aerial counter-attack destroyed four Val dive bombers and one Zero.

bomber aircraft searched the Pacific Ocean for the Japanese carriers and their escort ships, with Zeros and the weather exacting a heavy toll on the search planes. Of six Catalinas that had come within sight of the fleet, four were downed by Japanese fighters, another claimed by the fog.



U.S. Catalina Gunner in Cold Weather Gear, Tom Lee. Courtesy U.S. Army Center of Military History

Notwithstanding the loss of life, the first forty-eight hours of the Aleutian Campaign exacted little substantive damage on U.S. or Japanese forces. The fort at Dutch Harbor was quickly repaired, and in spite of heroic efforts on the part of U.S. aircrews, no Japanese vessels were damaged. What had quickly become apparent to the combatants, however, was the role the capricious Aleutian weather would play in the campaign, acting as both ally and foe to both sides until the end of the war.



"The Aleutian Zero," was one of the prizes of the Aleutian Campaign. Downed during the attack on Dutch Harbor, the aircraft was later recovered and shipped to San Diego for repairs. Flown in mock engagements with U.S. fighters, the plane was found to possess superior maneuverability and range, but was fragile—lacking armor plating and self-sealing fuel tanks. Of the aircraft available to U.S. forces at the time, only the most recently produced, the Hellcat, was superior in performance. Summing up the Zero as an aerial foe, U.S. Navy and Army Air Forces warned: Never attempt to dog fight the Zero.

Visiting the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area

In 1996 Congress designated the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area to interpret, educate, and inspire present and future generations about "the history of the Aleut people, and the role of the Aleut people and the Aleutian Islands in the defense of the United States in World War II." The Federal government does not own or manage the park land as it does in the more traditional national parks. Rather, the Uunalashka Corporation, a Native village corporation in Unalaska privately owns and preserves the land. The NPS provides technical assistance through a cooperative agreement to assist with the interpretation and planning of the park. Through this relationship of affiliation, the history of the Aleutian Islands contributes to the national heritage represented in the National Park System. The location of the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area follows the historic footprint of U.S. Army Fort Schwatka located at Ulakta Head on Mount Ballyhoo. The fort is one of four coastal defense posts built to protect the harbor; it is also the highest in the United States at 897 feet above sea level. The fort was named for Lt. Frederick Schwatka who made several military surveys of Alaska, including Unalaska, in the 1880s. The army built over a hundred buildings at Fort Schwatka. Engineers designed the concrete observation posts and command stations to withstand earthquakes and 100 mile per hour winds. In 1942 the navy completed a magnetic loop station which connected underwater cables to a fluxmeter in a cottage on the Ballyhoo Spit. It identified vessels, friendly or not. Spotters at the Fort Schwatka Observation Post would alert the Harbor Entrance Command Post, the Harbor Patrol, the Officer of the Day, and Ship Operations, who would then investigate the vessel. The remoteness of the area has contributed to its preservation. The gun mounts and lookouts are among the most intact in the country.



View from inside bunker looking towards Unalaska Bay, Scott Darsney

Access

Several commercial airlines provide non-stop service to Unalaska from Anchorage. The 800-air mile flight from Anchorage takes between two and three hours. The cruise ship industry is growing in the Aleutians with departures from Seattle and the Russian Far East. The Alaska Marine Highway ferry system departs from Seward or Homer monthly. Contact the Alaska Marine Highway System for rate and schedule information. For all additional information contact: the Unalaska/Port of Dutch Harbor Convention and Visitors Bureau; P.O. Box 545, Unalaska, Alaska 99685, (907) 581-2613. Approximately 4000 people live in Unalaska. Hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, and rental cars are available. One World War II era road leads up to the historic area. Tours are available and recommended. A tour map of the observation posts, gun mounts, and buildings will be available. If you are on your own, you must contact the Uunalashka Corporation office at 400 Salmon Way, Unalaska, near Margaret Bay for an access permit. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8 am-12 pm and 1-5 pm.

Things You Should Know

The Aleutian Islands are known for unpredictable and stormy weather. Rain, fog, and wind are common. Dress warmly and pack rain gear even in summer. Summer temperatures range from 45° to 65°F. The best time to visit is May through October; snow cover makes the historic area inaccessible in winter. Early summer and fall often have clear sunny days with spectacular views of the surrounding volca-



Headquarters, Camouflage Umnak, Ogden Pleissner



Bombing of Fort Mears, 1942, and Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto

Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, the Commander of the Japanese Combined Fleet, had travelled extensively within the U.S. and was familiar with her industrial capabilities and seemingly limitless oil reserves. When the Admiral counseled against

waging war with the "sleeping giant," he was met with veiled threats of assassination. "If you insist on my going ahead," he told the Prime Minister, "I can promise to give them hell for a year or a year and a half, but can guarantee nothing as to what will

happen after that." The impetus for Yamamoto's attack on the Aleutian Islands was twofold: to divert forces of the U.S. Pacific Fleet from the central Pacific Theater and to gain a largely psychological foothold on American soil. He accomplished both

goals with a minimal commitment of men and materials. U.S. and Canadian forces grew to 144,000 troops in the Alaska-Aleutian area by 1943, but the ships dispatched northward by U.S. Admiral Chester Nimitz from his fleet were but a token force having little or no impact on the outcome of the Battle of Midway. The Japanese occupation of Attu and Kiska islands at the western tip of the Aleutian Chain, would in the end call for over 2,300 Japanese soldiers of the North Sea Garrison to sacrifice their lives for the Imperial Edict.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE ALEUTIAN CAMPAIGN

December 7, 1941	Hostilities begin in the Pacific
March 31, 1942	Runway completed at Fort Glenn
June 3, 1942	Japanese attack Dutch Harbor
June 6, 1942	Japanese forces occupy Kiska
August 30, 1942	American forces occupy Adak
September 14, 1942	Adak based U.S. aircraft bomb Kiska
January 12, 1943	American forces occupy Amchitka
February 21, 1943	Amchitka based U.S. aircraft bomb Kiska
May 11, 1943	American forces land on Attu
May 29, 1943	Last Japanese attack crushed on Attu
May 30, 1943	Occupation of Attu completed
July 28, 1943	Japanese evacuate Kiska
August 15, 1943	Allied forces occupy Kiska

Escape from Kiska

After the expulsion of the Japanese from Attu, U.S. naval and aerial bombardment of Kiska increased in fervor. Japanese submarines attempted to evacuate the estimated 5,100 Japanese troops on the island, but the process proved too slow, and far too dangerous with a tightened U.S. blockade. On July 28, under the cover of thick fog, Japanese cruisers and destroyers managed to slip through U.S. naval forces and aerial reconnaissance without detection. In thirty

minutes, the 5,100 Kiska troops were boarded, and the fleet headed back to the safety of Paramushiro Harbor. The evacuation was so bold and well executed, U.S. commanders refused to believe it had taken place. However, U.S. fighters strafing Kiska no longer received return anti-aircraft fire. In one instance, four U.S. P-40s landed on the shell pocked Kiska airfield. The pilots left their planes and strolled near the runway, seeing no sign of the enemy. In spite of this evidence, U.S. intelligence argued that the Japanese adherence to the Bushido Code forbade them from surrendering Kiska without a fight. The lessons of Attu, America's first experience with Japanese suicide attacks, had been too well learned. The invasion of Kiska went underway as planned. On August 15, 1943, U.S. and Canadian troops landed on Kiska. In the three day operation that ensued, over 313 allied soldiers died from "friendly fire," booby traps, and mines. The Japanese had

occupied U.S. territory for over a year before being routed at Attu. Not since the War of 1812 had a foreign battle been fought on American soil. Weather claimed more than its share of lives. Soldiers shot their own in the fog; ships were thrown against rocks and sunk; pilots met the sides of mountains in heavy overcast skies, or flew off into the void never to be seen again.

Aleut Restitution

Despite their poor treatment at the hands of the U.S. government, the Aleut remained a fiercely patriotic people. Twenty-five Aleut men joined the armed forces. Three took part in the U.S. invasion of Attu Island, and all were awarded the Bronze Star. At their camps, the Aleut surreptitiously voted in Territorial elections. Through exposure to the outside world, they had come to understand the importance of their participation in the democracy by which they were governed, and they desired participation with the full rights of citizens. The Attuans suffered the severest deprivation during the war. For three years, they were imprisoned in the Japanese city of Otaru on Hokkaido Island, subsisting almost solely on rice. Sixteen would die there. On the day of their release, the survivors left their quarters through the windows, a symbol of their newly acquired freedom, bringing with them the



Mary Galaktionoff and her family return to Unalaska, 1945. National Archives

Battle of Attu

On May 11, 1943, two contingents of U.S. soldiers, numbering approximately 12,500 men in total, landed on the north and south ends of Attu Island and began pressing towards the Japanese strongholds at Holtz Bay and Chichagof Harbor. Progress was slow and costly. Eight days of heavy fighting passed before the South Landing Force climbed its way out of Massacre Bay. The North Landing Force, amongst their numbers the unorthodox Alaska Scouts, forced the Japanese from Holtz Bay, then continued towards Jarmin Pass and the North Landing Force to complete the pincer movement. The approximately 2,300 Japanese troops that remained had retreated to the wild heights of Fish Hook Ridge above Chichagof Valley, waiting for reinforcements. None arrived. On May 23, a force of sixteen Japanese Betty bombers was met by U.S. P-38 Lightnings over Attu. Five of the Japanese bombers were downed. It was the last attempt by the Japanese to support their Aleutian troops by air. On the ground, American forces had swelled to 15,000. Air strikes and U.S. ground force assaults up the precipitous Fish Hook Ridge further whittled down Japanese forces. On May 29, Colonel Yamasaki, and the remainder of his Attu troops, numbering 750 or less, broke through American lines in a desperate attempt to reach Massacre Bay and needed stockpiles of U.S. supplies. They were finally halted at Engineer Hill, as a hastily organized U.S. defense repelled wave after wave of *banzai* attacks. Those Japanese troops that were not killed by U.S.



Patrol Dismissing Camp, E.F. Hughes

fire, took their own lives. In the end, less than thirty soldiers of the North Sea Garrison were left alive, many ashamed that they had dishonored themselves by surrender. American dead numbered 549, with at least twice that number wounded.

Only 33 years of living and I am to die here. I have no regrets. Banzai to the Emperor. I am grateful that I could have kept peace of my soul...Goodbye, Taeko, my beloved wife, Midaka who just became four years old will grow up unhindered. I feel sorry for you Matsuko, born February of this year and never will see your father. Well, be good...goodbye.

-- Paul Nobu Tatsoguchi: final diary entry prior to his death on Attu battleground

The Japanese Occupation

The Eleventh Air Force alone dropped 26,910 bombs on Kiska and Attu islands in an attempt to soften Japanese encampments prior to amphibious landings of U.S. and Canadian forces, but the Japanese troops were well entrenched, and the terrain was often obscured by fog. The boxy B-24 bore the brunt of the early missions, one of the few heavy bombers capable of making the 1,200 mile round-trip from Cape Field to the western end of the Aleutian Chain. Once over their targets, U.S. aircrews often had to drop their bomb loads blindly through the cloud cover, using the crests of volcanoes as landmarks, then fight their way home through anti-aircraft fire. Under their protective blanket of fog, the Japanese ground forces found the continuous bombardment little more than a nuisance. Construction of their own airfield on Kiska proceeded slowly for the Japanese, a lack of heavy equipment forced workers to use hand tools and wheelbarrows. With the departure of the carriers *Ryūjō* and *Junyō* and their Zeros, the air defense of the islands rested on the Rufe float fighter plane. The U.S. Eleventh Air Force and the Aleutian weather took their toll on these fighters, leaving only a handful to meet Allied raids. U.S. forces continued to move westward through the Chain. With the aid of heavy earth-moving equipment, engineers constructed a landing field in a water soaked tidewater

flat on Adak Island in twelve short days. Just 250 air miles from Kiska, this forward field brought the Japanese within range of U.S. fighter and dive bomber planes. In the Pacific Ocean, American aircraft and submarines patrolled for Japanese shipping, effectively shutting off resupply and reinforcements. Isolated, their air power virtually eliminated, the Japanese troops dug in and prepared for the inevitable invasion.



Preflight Briefing, Paul Goranson. Courtesy Canadian War Museum. Catalogue Number 14444.

cremated remains of the dead to be buried according to Russian Orthodox custom in their beloved Aleutians. But there would be no return to the village of Attu for its people, nor for the people of Biorka, Kashega, or Makushin. Partly due to financial considerations, U.S. authorities had decided these villages would be incorporated into the villages of Unalaska, Atka, and Nikolski. What the war had not done, a stroke of the pen had accomplished – four communities had met with extinction. Those villagers allowed to reoccupy their homes found them ravaged by the weather and vandalized by U.S. servicemen, the windows smashed, doors and furniture gone. Worse still was the theft of religious icons and subsistence equipment – boats and rifles. Some Aleut worked until their hands bled to repair the damage that had been done, but it would take years to recover, to fashion new communities and a new order for

themselves. Politicized by their stay in the camps, the Aleut began the long battle for restitution. The evacuation had taken place for humanitarian reasons, but racism too had played a role in their abrupt evacuation and poor treatment in the camps. It would be forty years until restitution would be made, but on August 10, 1988, Public Law 100-383 was signed calling for financial compensation and an apology from Congress and the President in behalf of the American people. Throughout their recorded history, the Aleut were thought to be a people on the verge of extinction, but like the sea otter, whom the early Aleut believed to have been transformed human beings, the Aleut have proven their tenacity and ability to adapt. Survival against overwhelming odds is their personal victory.

Based upon "When the Wind Was a River" by Dean Kohlhoff

LOCATOR MAP



Building ruins.



Hiking on volcanoes, Scott Darsney

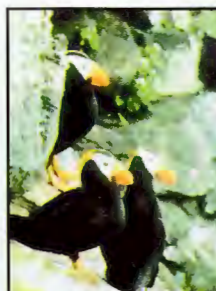
Scenery and History



Ulakta Head and command center.



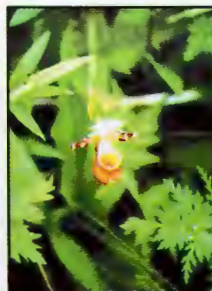
Hill 400 battery end station.



Horned puffins, Scott Darsney



Lupines in bloom, Scott Darsney



Lady Slipper orchid.



Observation post with Eider Point in background.



Entrance to elephant steel bunker.