

## Conclusions

After the Attuans were taken to Japan, their village was occupied by Japanese troops and was destroyed by American bombing (Garfield 1995:213–214). On other parts of the island, the U.S. military left behind the remains of structures including tunnels used for storage. In 1987 a “peace memorial” was installed to honor all the soldiers who died at Attu, and in 1993 a sign was placed to commemorate the Attu villagers’ wartime ordeal.

The island of Attu has remained uninhabited. There is nothing left of the wooden houses, the school, church, or the barabaras that were still in use in 1942. A Coast Guard Loran (long-range navigation system) station operated there in 1961 and was staffed by 20 personnel. It was closed in 2010 after the Global Positioning System (GPS) replaced Loran as a navigational system for ships and aircraft.

As Jennifer Jolis wrote almost two decades ago,

Periodically the island is visited by fishermen or by interested naturalists, biologists, and archeologists, usually in the employ of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The buildings and bridges built by the Navy are disappearing, each year the wind and waves take back the land. Each spring the grasses continue to wave, the eiders to sound their lonely calls. A lone eagle flies over Temnac Valley. The people are gone. The island remains. (Jolis 1994:30).

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Nick Golodoff. (Source: Brenda Maly)

## *Attu Boy*

*“In 1942, before the war began, Attu was a nice, quiet place... We had nothing, no insulation in the houses and no inside plumbing. There was a woodstove to heat the house. Attu was plain and quiet all the time.”*

—Nick Golodoff

**N**ick Golodoff was six years old when the peaceful life of his remote Aleutian village was interrupted by an invasion by the Japanese army on May 7, 1942. As soldiers poured into Attu on foot, shooting, Nick hid in his neighbors' barabara, or sod house.

The Japanese occupied Attu for two months before taking the Unangan occupants of the village to Otaru, a city on Hokkaido. Over the next three years nearly half the Attuans died of disease and starvation, among them Nick's father, brother, and sister. Nick's memoir tells, through a child's eyes, the story of that extraordinary and tragic experience, and reflects on his life in Atka after World War II.