

THE JAPANESE INVASION – JUNE 7, 1942

Alex [Prossoff] and I ran past the church to the other side of the village and that's where we saw the Japanese soldiers coming down the hill.

—Nick Golodoff

THE ATTUANS HAD BEEN WARNED by the U.S. military that the Japanese might come. Before the U.S. could evacuate the Attuans, the Japanese invaded. The teacher, Etta Jones, told them about Pearl Harbor. Her husband had a radio.

When the Japanese arrived, it was a nice calm day. Now I know that it was June 7, 1942, but I didn't know it then. The whole village of Attu was in church that Sunday morning. As I was going to church, I looked up and saw Jesus coming down real slow. I turned around to see if anyone else was looking, and when I turned back he was gone. Once church was over we all heard noises that sounded like motors from the next bay. It was a sound we had never heard and turned out to be machine gun fire. Four or five young men were sent up a hill to look. By the time they figured out what the noise was it was too late, the Japanese were already there. Then we saw a plane go over the village. This plane flew over once. The plane had a red round symbol on the wing and the plane was so close to the ground we could see the pilot.

When I saw Alex Prossoff off heading down to the beach I started to follow him thinking he was going boating and that I could come along. Just before I caught up with Alex, on the way down there was a platform where they were going to build a house. On the platform there was a gunnysack spread over it. While Alex and I were down at the beach, we heard sounds and voices that we did not understand. The Japanese were loud as they came down the side of the mountain. We heard a noise that sounded like crows.

Every time I looked I didn't see anything. We started to hear shooting, so Alex ran and I followed. Alex and I ran past the church to the other side of the village and that's where we saw the Japanese soldiers coming down the hill. While I was still running after Alex, I could see a piece of mud popping up in front of me so I stopped. I looked back and the mud behind me was popping up. The reason we were not hit is that the bullets did not reach us, but they came only one or two feet short of the path we were running on. I did not understand the mud popping up at the time, but now I understand that the Japanese were shooting at us. Alex and I were lucky to get away.

Alex was still running so I continued following him. When Alex reached his house, he went under it. His wife was already hiding under their house so Alex crawled in. When I tried to go under I was told to go in the mud house⁴ which was behind the house Alex was under, and is what I did. They had a barabara behind Alex's house that was his old house before they built a wooden one. It was used for storage. Someone opened the door to the mud house for me.

When the Japanese landed in Attu I wonder why they were shooting when they were coming down the hill. I think because everybody was outside listening to the noise from the next harbor where they were landing and nobody knew what was going on. The reason the Attu people were all outside was that there was all kinds of noise from next bay to the village. That is my first time I have seen so many people out at the same time.

When we went up we saw a Japanese plane go over and then later the Japanese came down the hill shooting. The school teacher's husband had a radio, but they did not send out a message until the Japanese were almost to the school. Then they started to send a message and the Japanese took over the school and cut them off. During the gunfire, I

⁴Nick uses the term "mud house" for the traditional Unangan semi-subterranean dwelling commonly referred to as a "barabara."



Photo 23. Alex and Elizabeth Prossoff. Nick hid under their barabara ("mud house") with them during the Japanese invasion. (Source: Aleutian-Pribilof Island Association)

believe the Japanese killed their own people because I heard that one or two of the Japanese people were dead. That only person that was hit from Attu was one woman who was shot in the leg.

While I was in the mud house I heard people outside speaking a different language. It was lucky that Alex went under the house because if he wasn't there the Japanese would have shot the mud house and could have killed us all. After the Japanese caught Alex and his wife under the house, they gave him a note. The note said that everyone had to come out, and if no one listened, the Japanese were going to blow up the house and mud house with machine guns. Alex translated what the Japanese wrote in English. If they told us to get out we would not be able to understand and the reason for the note, Alex told us, was that the Japanese know how to write in English but did not know how to speak it. Alex translated back to the Japanese in English.

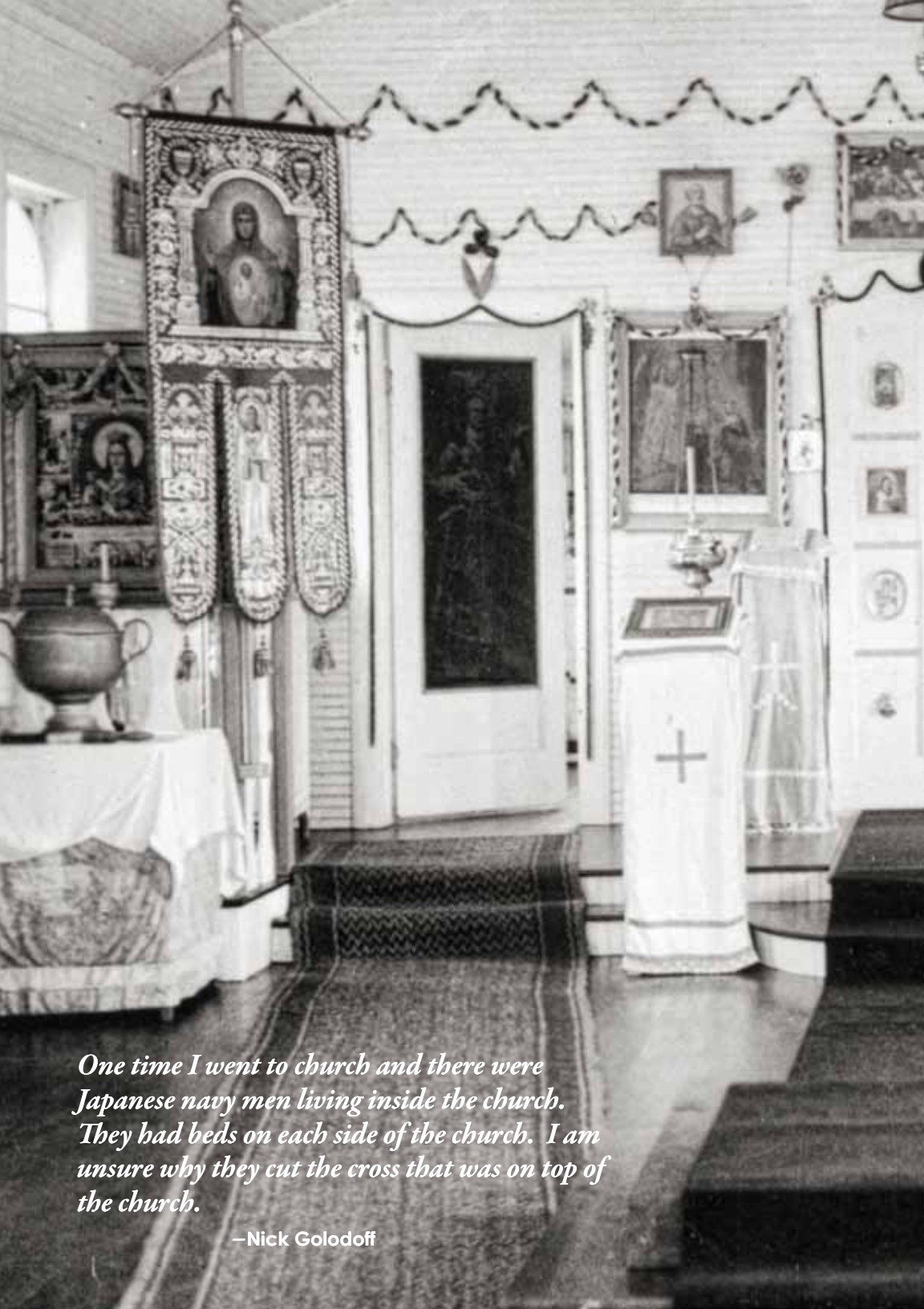


Photo 24. Attu schoolhouse. (Source: UAF Historical Photograph Collection, Vertical File Photograph Collections-Towns-Attu)



Photos 25 & 26. Etta Jones and Foster Jones. "Sad fate of Attu's only white couple." (Source: UAF, San Francisco Call-Bulletin, Aleutian Islands Photographs, 1942-1948)

We all went out and the Japanese marched us all over to the school. That's where I met up with my mom and dad. I threw up when I got there because I was scared. I do not know how they got the other Attu people but when we got to the school, everybody was there except for the four men [teenagers] that went up the hill. Later they took two men from the village and a Japanese soldier to go up and look for them and they hollered at them to come out to let them know everything was ok and they brought them back. There was a teacher and wife in Attu but I don't know what happened to them. The white couple were married and Mrs. Jones was the teacher. I heard they both tried to kill themselves on Attu. I don't know what happened to them. They didn't want to be POWs, I guess. They cut their wrists only someone found out.



One time I went to church and there were Japanese navy men living inside the church. They had beds on each side of the church. I am unsure why they cut the cross that was on top of the church.

—Nick Golodoff



Photo 27. Attu church, "The interior of church." (Source: UAA, Archives & Special Collections, Alan G. May Collection)
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I'm unsure how long they kept us there in the school but it seemed like almost all day. Later that day, toward evening, the Japanese sent us all to our houses. Once we had gotten to our houses, the Japanese posted guards with guns at every house. The guard by our house didn't have any matches or a lighter, so he would knock on our door and ask for a match in Russian. My dad would give him matches. Our guard was nice—just like most Japanese people I know.

The next day I went out and walked around a bit. I cannot really recall what happened, but, again, I was only six years old. Every day I would go out and walk around. I got familiar with the Japanese troops and they were friendly to me. When I would go down to the beach there was a guard that had a box and inside it there was some candy. Every time that I saw him down at the beach he'd offer me some. Behind each house, there was a mud house [barabara] and I believe that the Japanese troops were taking turns sleeping in them. I noticed behind the village there was a long mud house and I think they used it for cooking and a mess hall. The Japanese had foxholes all over Attu. One time I went to church and there were Japanese navy men living inside the church. They had beds on each side of the church. I am unsure why they cut the cross that was on top of the church. They used cloth as a net to catch trout with.

The Japanese commander used to take baths in drums. The Japanese soldier would put water in the drum and build a fire underneath it to heat the water and when the fire went out, he would take a bath. When Japanese purchased anything in Attu they did not use money, they used fox fur. They would take their foxes to the store and were told how much it would cost and used furs to cover the purchase.

Early one morning while the Japanese occupied Attu, an American plane flew low over the village before anybody got up. Just before the

American plane showed up, we heard a cannon go off at the point of the bay. That happened twice. I figured they were just taking pictures. The first time it happened, my mom and dad hid under the bed, but I was at the window. I saw a Japanese soldier come out in his underwear running to a fox hole with his rifle. While this was going on my dad grabbed me and pulled me under the bed with him. The second time the American plane flew over my mom and dad went under the bed, and I ran to the window again. This time the Japanese soldier had his clothes on as he was running to the foxhole with his rifle.

Other First-hand Accounts

Mike Lokanin, 1947 (1988)

...1942 Jan 12 I had baby girl named Titiana. We stayed on Agattu all winter trapping foxes and the boat was to take us off in Feb 15 or 19 and we were out of ammunitions and out of flour sugar tea and milk we were completly out of everything. We were beginning to starve when findly *M/S Point Reyes* pick us up off Agattu. When we go in Attu everything was blackout and Mr. and Mrs. C. Foster Jones were in Attu. Mrs. Jones was the school teach and Mr. Jones was the radio man. It was plenty snow in Attu then.

When I got in Attu I heard about war, war, but I never did see war so I didnt care much and I didnt think war would be at Alaska. Pretty soon I heard about Japanese are begining to get near Alaska but I still think Japs wont bother Attu because I know Attu is too small for them. We got word from U.S.Govt. to pack up all our things. Some time boat will be in Attu to pick us up. So were already packed everything we got. Of course we got the things we need out so we can use it for temporarily on month of May One day we see vessell come to outside of harbor and it was ruff wind was blowing from N.E. and as soon as we saw the boat coming we thought it was Japanese boat. After she got outside the harbor she wasnt anchor because wind was too ruff for her to anchor out there and she couldnt get inside harbor. Maybe about 1/2 hour later we seen launch coming into harbor. Some peoples still think it was Japanese boat. We look through m,Scope. We can see letters on boat U.S.N.T. They had ruff time coming in. Chief of Attu Mike Hodikoff and second Chief Alfred Prokopioff went down on beach to see if thats our transportation. Of course USN or USCG allways visit Attu once or twice a year anyway but people were talking about war. We got exided. When they come on beach the officer got out and shake hands with both chief and chief ask if this is our boat. Officer say he havent got word to pick anyone up off Attu. All they had was 10 army troops with there supply to be taken ashore on Attu but weather was too ruff to take anything over sea in small boats so they said they gone land them on Kiska Island if they can. Officer want Mike Hodikoff and Alfred to go on *Tasko*

[USS *Casco*] for 2 or 3 days so they can show a good landing places any kind of weather. They stayed out 4 days and come back.

The whole community sent out 10 pelts to Dutch Harbor for sale to Navy. because they didnt have a thing in store. All they got was flour few cans salmon corned beef no sugar no butter no milk or coffee so they got some food of *Tasko* [off the *Casco*]. Mr. Fred Schroeder did not come back from San Francisco with supplys for store. Later last part of Maya sub come to Attu a patrolling sub all the men were invided to sub and when we got to submarine capt. took all the men inside and show inside of sub to everyone and then he got on deck and laying against rail on side he ask some qs about how often the Japs come around Attu a year in present time. I was standing back against cabin and talk to one of the crew and I seen the capt was laying against the real and the chain busted and he went overboard in water and everyone on deck start to laugh. He felt backwards. When he reach the water he swim for dory which was ours tied along side the sub. He couldn't pull himself in so some men went down and help him in dorry. When he got on deck he looked at us and smile. He went below a half hour later he come out and said he is ready to leave now. He told us as soon as we see Japs boat please notify Dutch Harbor. We got off and she took off, too. Thats only U.S. boat we seen since 1942 to 1945 at Okinawa we got out of prison camp.

June we had nice all the way. Not much rain, not much wind sunshine all the time. Of course we always standing by all the time for boat to pick us up.

One day we heard Japs bombing Dutch Harbor over radio. We still hear war on radio. One day Attu mens was getting ready for going out to gather drift wood. They get there boats ready and fill up 5 gallon can with gassoline and mixed with lub oil. Everything was ready for next day. all over village everyone was in deep sad looken face. You can tell something is gone happen but they didnt know what is comeng to them. I myself feel something strange gone happen to us.

Some of the other mens say when I visited his house that he got some kind of heart trouble he said maybe too much blood pressure. I asked him what is trouble Oh he said my heart keep bother me I cannot go to sleep my heart is just like it comes up to my throat if it does that I feel awful weakened I ask him if he is gone out for wood with other mens he said I dont feel like to go but anyways I got to go.

I myself dont feel so good but I didnt pay any tention to what I feel Once and while I can feel my heart thump just like it chock me but I dont pay any tention to it. Most everyone look sad to me.

That day the village was so quiet all I can hear is the gass motors of power plant which runs three times a day by the school house All we can hear is PUTO PUTO PUTO even the kids dont like to play. It was really nice at evening all the way out is clear the island seems setin on top of the surface out in Ocean. When I look into mountain everything is green flower begining to bloss. Things look awfull nice. When I sniff in air I can smell flowers and look in to mountains on each side of village look clearer than I ever seen before. Little fog string round foot of mountains looks nice. Hardly little breeze come from the southwest most of the houses are smoking. When I pass some houses I smell the boiled salmon So is my house too, my wife she is boiling salmon for supper. I went down to other end of village to see whats doing and I mett John on road. I ask him if he is going out with his father tomorrow. He tol me he will be out tomorrow if the wither keep like this. He say it will be lots of fun tomorrow going to get seagull eggs and shooting ducks and get wood. He ask me why dont I come in his boat. Iv already got boat to go anyway. Most of the 14fters carry 2 men and 2 or 3 five gallon cans of gassoline and guns and cooking eqt. They dont have much room if they carry 3 men. I tol him I already got to go in some once boat. Now the sun was get in back of the mountain and the shadow showed on the other side of the bay. When I look toward the school I see Mr. Foster Jones was coming out of his power plant house which is 10 feet away from the school. He was oiling his motor. Of course he always run it midnight too. I keep walking around no wind the ocean in bay was just like a water in pan on the table. When I look out the bay I can see the seagulls and

sea parrots flying and little birds waving beside the old ravens flying over the village, and crawling. I never see so many crows in my life before as now I thought myself.

I stopt in Alfreds house his wife is my aunt. Sometimes I go visit her house. I had few cups of tea with her. I visited my aunts house untill getting little dark now. When I start to my own house which is 50 or 60 feet away I can hear chipee birds still chiping and still seagulls cloks. I got home.

When I got home my wife had table ready and was waiting for me my daughter was sleeping on the bed. My wife said things look very quiet, lonesome today. I had my supper and whent to lay down on my bed and something in my mind tells me something is gone happened. One thing was in my mind steady, was, Japanese will be here tomorrow but I couldnt figure it out.

My wife was seting by me and said, Darling are you going out with the other men for wood? I tol her I'll be out tomorrow. Bring some seagull eggs when you come home, and I tol her I will if I can. I told my wife that I haven hunch Japs will be here some time she said to me. I hope not they might kill everyone. Every time when my heart thumps makes me feel sick and weak. Its about 11 P.M. so I tol my wife I am gone to. bed now. She tol me Darling before you go to bed get some water there is no water in the house for morning. I got up and get water from my aunts house sky nice and clear then I go to bed. My wife was still up washing dishes I didnt have to thats why I go to sleep.

Innokenty Golodoff, 1966

Before the Japs came to Attu in 1942 the Navy was going to take us away. The Navy came out in May and left about 10 men and 160 drums of gasoline but they didn't take us away because it was too stormy. The Navy had 10 guns and they couldn't leave them all at Attu, so they took them to Kiska Harbor and the Japs took them the same day they took Attu. The Japs came in on June 7, 1942, and took

Attu and I guess they used the Navy's gasoline. The Japs didn't land near our village. They landed on the west side in Holtz Bay. At night we heard them coming in.

Some of us young men were going to fight the Japs. When we saw their ships coming we got out our guns and all our bullets. Then one of the old men came and talked to us and told us not to fight. He said "we are not enough to fight so many men."

Early in the morning we saw the ship. We didn't know what kind of ship it was. About 11 a.m. after we had church—it was Sunday—the Japs came into the Village. They came in over the point on the west side of Chichagof Harbor. I didn't know what to do so I ran off to the hill on the east side and hid under rocks. I stayed there half a day and then I came back. I had nothing to eat. Six men stayed out all day. The Japs were looking for them but couldn't find them, so they sent some of the village men out to bring them in.

The first Japs that came into our village were young kids. They were pretty bad—they shot into the houses. They hit Annie Hoodikoff [Hodikoff] in the leg. The Jap doctor fixed her. She died in Tacoma Hospital about 1946, after we got back from Japan. She had TB.

Right after the first bunch of Japs the second bunch came. They were better. They were the officers and they made the young kids stop shooting.

Alex Prossoff, 1947 (1988)

We were having church services in the little Russian church in Attu on Sunday morning, June 7, 1942, when boats entered the harbor. When the gunboats got closer to the village we saw that they were Japs. They started machine-gun fire on the village. Some of our boys ran for their rifles to fight the Japs but Mike Hodikoff, our chief, said, "Do not shoot, maybe the Americans can save us yet."

Mike Lokanin, 1947 (1988)

June 7th/42 Sunday in the morning early when I was sleeping some one knocking at my door so I got up and look who was it? he said I am fred with frightened voice. I was wondering what was the matter so I ask him what was the matter. he tol me there is boats out there and they are unknown boats dont have any flag on either. One big 2 chimneyed boat. might be Japs.

I ask how many there are. He was half frightened and shake. He said he dont know it look like more than 4 or 5. So then he got out and went down to his house and I went to my bed again. It was 0300A.M. It was too early for me to get up anyway. My wife she was wake up to she ask me what was matter and who was at the door. I told her it was fred and she start to nurse her baby. I went back to sleep again. I usly get up at 0700A.M. and bld fire and make breakfast eat with my wife. I was just about to get up some one at my door again. I got out of my bed and look out through the window. It is Fred again. I said to him whats trouble, Fred. He said the boats are look like Japanese boats. I said to him why if its Japanese thay could come right in harbor and shoot the village. I said to him why dont he go to the school and tell Mr. Jones about it and maybe he can send wire to Dutch Harbor.

I beginning to think it might be Japs too. I go in my house and Fred left.

I said to my wife Honey Fred said Japanese boats outside the harbor. She lift her head off her pillow look at her baby and said Oh god blesses what we'll do then. I said to her Nothing we can do Honey God knows what we'll do and if our time is come' we'll be dead If our hour is there will be dead. So all we can do is think god in our heart that is all.

She said Oh my dear little baby. She gott tears in her eyes as she spook.

I told her I am gone out and see what the others doing. When I got out of my house and start to my aunts house I seen little skiff was

gone out to the cannon island to get close look at the boats. When I got to my Ants house most of the Village men were lined long side of house and they all talking and talk. Try to figure out what kind of boats are they what nationality and we seen plane flying, circling round but didnt seem to bother anything at all. The third time he come to circl round he got close. We saw the red Ball on the wings and on each side the ship single motor and 2 winged and 2 men one on back of pilot. He was gunner. he had machine guns on each side of him.

It was about 830 A.M. evry one getting ready for church that there last time for evr entering there church Before church my brother-in-law Aleck and other person which went out in skiff came ashore. They all said it is Japanese boats. We went to school to talk to Mr. C. Foster Jones and tol him the Japs boat are outside the harbor and we ask him to send message to Dutch Harbor because he got words US Govt to say when he sees Japs or if we seen Japs and tell him. He supost to say "the boys out today and didnt see a boat and come home and they gone to have a fried codfish" that means a Japanese boats are come here. We ask him to send message. He said it might be marines or navy. He was sending weather reports to Dutch Harbor and I told him he might as well send message because boys seen Japanese plane. He said if he make mistake call up Dutch Harbor it will be his nick. So I just walk out I seen Mrs. Jones curling her hair. I stop by her room and tol her I am afraid they are Japs. She smile and said to me Oh it might by Navy. If they are Japs why they couldv be in long time ago. I just walk out I heard the church bell still ring. I did not go to church 4 of us went out tothe Point. The boat was so closs we could see mens walking on deck and around 20 or 25 small landing barges went back and ford from Holtz bay to transport. We were walking along edge of hills and plane was flying round. Didnt seem to bother us so we 4 of us thought might be Americans too. So we just keep on walking edge of hill and wave at boat. It was nice and clear sunshine. I thought I hear a sound of talking I tol the others Hey listen I stood there look around findly I see mens .coming from back of mountain foot. One of the boys I was with tol me lets go to them they might be Americans. I tol him I dont want to go to them

and we stood and watch them running and crewling on ground. We look at boats and boats are raising red and white flags and moving farther out in Ocean. We all made run toward the Village to see what will be happend. We see mens running down the mountain and hills as soon as they reach the beach cross the creek and open machine guns and rifle fire at Village. I though myself My wife and daughter is goner now. I thought in my mind It will be all right if they are killed without tourcher and suffer. The way the rifle and machine guns take off we 4 of us thought nothing was left in Village All we can see is men walking in Village but they were the men which came to Village. We see Japs running to Village with guns in there hands. First building they get in is school where Mr. and Mrs. Foster Jones is. We thought Foster might send message to Dutch Harbor. I tol the boys its no use for us to go to Village now the way the rifles and machine guns are shooting. Lets hide for the night and snake up to village at night and see if anything left. So we cowl under big rock which could weigh 10,00 [one thousand?] pound and we heard plane was flying over us and we was gone to take a peak at it and just about stuck our heads out and big guns went off. Boy we went back in under the rock we was piled on top of each others. We stayed ther most whole morning and afternoon. In late afternoon we heard somebody was talking and it was sound like one of our mens. We said to each other it might be they hide too. Sudnely I heard they calling us but I didnt answer because I want to make a sure its our men. By god I could hear Willie and freds voice so I pull my head out and answer them and I got out under rock with the rest of the boys. Look round but we couldnt see anyone. I answer and said Who is that call us Please show up if you are there. I seen someone setin on a hil was Willie and fred which the Japs send them to look for us. We all come out under the' rock and we start to go home. We ask what was going on. Willie said in low tone them little Japs got us now and fred said We were afraid of Japs before now we got to be afraid of Americans Fred turn his head round with his mad looking face and said We all under Japs instead of Americans. I ask him if anyone got kill He said Evryone is OK accept his wife got hit in her leg but Japanese doctor fix her. I asked him How is my wife and kid He said they all OK I would like to ask more but he lookawfull mad I was kind afraid ask him. I told

him lets go now. Willie tol me theybeen lookin for me all over Place and couldnt fine me and the boys with me. Also one boy was missing Sergy Artumonoff. On the way home we find him he give up because he seen us walking all together When he walk up to us he said, Arent the Japs gone to hurt me We tol him Oh Japs wont do any hurt to you. He bagan to smile.

fred tol me I got to go to school. So when we got to school I walk in all the door got guards by Japanese. In the schoolroom I seen Mr. and Mrs. C. Foster Jones setin on one of the school desks. I said Hello to Mr. Jones but one of the gaurds said to me No no no talk to Ameleka He was tryin to tell me not to talk with American Foster anyway said to me Well Mike the world has seem to change today. We are under Japanese rule now. I was gone tell him it was his fault to but I thought it too late now I just look at him with out saying word. Just then the Japanese MP came in with American flag under his arm and come to me and start to read paper which is Proclamation Of course he read in is language He got Intripiter with him. The MP stand in front of me and read paper I couldnt understand the words Intripiter explain meaning of the words that the Japanes capture us from U.S. Gov. now we are under Japanese Gov. Japanese Gov. will keep us under one condition that from now on we must obey the Japanese. After reading the proclamation he tol me to go home not to go round unless I get primission. from Comander Yamadaki. So I went home and my house was in bad looking shape everything was threwin on the floor. My door was spoiled, 8 pullet holes on end of house, 2 pullet holes in my stove which one go through to fire place and my wife wasnt home. All my guns are gone some other things was gone I didnt care much about guns I hate to lose my watch 21 jewels all my papers were scadder on the floor. So I went down to chiefs house my wife usely stay there if I am not home. By Golly was there I walk in and look for my daughter I didnt see it so I ask wife where is Taty She was sleeping My wife was serving tea and she ask me if I like to have cup of tea I sure need it too. I tol her yess She me cup and just about I was gone to drink my tea one Japs came in they was looking for me he said I just left the table and go out with him. He tol me to help Mr. Jones move out of school so I went in there. Fellow named Kasukabe,

Intriptor, was in school and Mr. and Mrs. Jones was picking up there things. Man had sword. Mr. Jones had big load under his arm. This Jap want him to take some more. He said Aleck and Mike will take them to me Jap said No you take them and he slap Mr. Jones on his face and knock him down on floor and start to Kick em on body and picked em up and slap em down again and kick out door. But they didnt touch Mrs. Jones and they didnt touch Aleck and me. After he kick Mr. Jones out he pull his sword out of its case and went after Mr. Jones Of course I couldnt see what happend after he kicked out anyway I was so scared I shake. Seems like I am gone shake the whole Village down I was tryen to brase myself but I was still shake Japs take Mr. and Mrs. Jones to Traders house. Of course trader which is Mr. Fred Schroeder is not on Attu. Lucky hes not on Attu if he was he might be dead or taken to Japan too.

On the way I find Mrs. Jones slipper stuck in durt. Soon as I deliver the things in there to them I just mnnto my house and I stayed outside try to cool myself from shaking. I didnt want to scare my wife.

I walked into my house my wife looked at me. Whats the matter, Honey you look pale.

Oh I said I just dont feel good maybe from catching cold.

You better warm up Honey she said. She had little supper ready we didnt have much lefted in the house sugar milk also was gone. I had to bum milk from Elizabeth Prosoff for my baby. After I got eaten my supper I helped Pari cleaning dishes and I told her what happend to Mr. and Mrs. Jones She said to me Honey they might do same thing to us. I tol her I dont think so. After we finish dishes it is pass 12 PM day start to break about 1.30AM I went to bed with my wife. I couldnt go to sleep I roll in my bed It was light and bright too. Boy the machine guns go off in the air and I heard plane I went out on my porch and I seen plane was flying very low made a turn go out over Point without bullet touchd. I lite a fire in stove and when I had coffee ready call my wife she wasnt sleeping she got up and have coffee with me she said to me Honey what plane was the Japanese shooting at I said to her It was American plane.

She said to me God bless they might bomb this place.

As I was talking with my wife I heard some one come. I look out It was Kasukabi the fellow who Kick Mr. Jones last night. Jap was in hurry too. I was wondering what was gone on. He come at my door and call me I went out He said Good Morning and I said Good morning to him.

Mr. Foster Jones is dead. Of course I didnt ask him how he died. They had 2 intripiters one was name Imai young fellow and other was Kasukabi He was higher he had 3 stars. Mr Imai had only 2 stars on his collar. When I get down near Schroeder house I mett Mr. Imai for first time.

He said to me Are you intripiter too? Looks to me he is nice to talk with I asked him how Foster died. He said he dont know it either. Later Mr. Kasukabe come to us he start to talk. He was talking in his language I couldnt understand what he says. I see him cut across his wrist with his finger. Someone come out and call him. He go in house and Imai was look round before he spook to me. Then he said Foster cut his own wrist with his pocketknife. I was thinking after they capture Foster Jones I dont see why they left his pocket knife for him.

They call us in he was half sunk in his own blood. They wont let me see his face or body. He was wrapped in blanket. They tol me to bury him without coffin. So I dug a grave by our church. Measure destains from corner of church with my eyes and try to remember wind direction It was burried in SW corner of church grave depth 7 ft. disent from church to grave 15 ft. After that I bury him that was end of him then and I never try to forget where I berried his body. And Imai was by me all the time I work.

Some of us Attuans stay by Mrs. Jones all the time. We dont know what Japs might do to her. She is sick and has bad cuts on her wrists too. But she gets well.

Mr. Kasukabe lost one star. Mr. Imai received 3 stars. He got higher After Foster got murdered.

Alex Prossoff, 1947 (1988)

A few of the boys ran away. Japs landed and came running into the village, shooting. Lucky only one woman get hurt. She is shot in leg. So much shooting and machine gun bullets flying all around Japs kill some of their own men. They capture the village. Some Japs take Mr. and Mrs. Jones and all the natives to schoolhouse and keep us there whole day without food and water. Mr. Jones is radio man. Mrs. Jones is school teacher. They very nice people. The Japs keep us there until nine o'clock at night. The Joneses live in schoolhouse but the Japs want the building so they tell them to leave. Mr. Jones try to take little food. The Japs beat and kicked them. They knocked them down. Some of us take a few of their things over to Mr. Schroeder's house and then we could not do anything more for them and the Japs let us go home.

Next morning the Japs tell us Foster Jones is dead. Mike Lokanin buried him by the church. He was just wrapped in blanket. Mike said his wrists are cut. We tried to make Mrs. Jones comfortable. Some of us stay with her all the time. She is sick and has bad cuts on her wrists, too. But she gets well.

Japs have taken down our flag but Innokinty gets it and hides it. I hide the church money. The Japs go through our houses and take many things until one officer stop them. They put lines around our houses and Jap soldiers are not allowed to bother us.

Olean Prokopeuff (Golodoff), 1981

The year 1942, on a Sunday morning, the Japanese armed forces came and captured us. They came from the interior of our island after day-break. That morning, a Japanese airplane flew around the village three times. The teacher [Etta Jones] was informed of this by the villagers. Instead of informing the authorities, the teacher told the

villagers that there were lots of American patrol planes patrolling this area. After the teacher told them that, the villagers felt secure.

After they came down from the hills, it was said that our village was surrounded by them.

After that, the villagers went up to the observation hill and saw the Japanese fleet anchored in the bay on the other side. As they were attacking in force, one of our ladies was shot in her leg. As they were firing their weapons in all directions during their assault, their forces also hit their own men and it is believed that a few of their own men had been killed.

After they came, they went to Alfred's wife's house. Since my house was being shot at, and since I was being scared, I went to Alfred's wife's house carrying my three year child, Elizabeth.

From there we went to Alfred's wife's house where she was lying in bed with a sore leg. After we went to Alfred's wife's house, the Japanese soldiers surrounded it. They faced the house and had their rifles aimed at it. So at that point in time, Perocoviya [Pariscovia] sat down. I then thought to myself, "What if I get shot standing up? I would drop the child and she might hurt herself." So I, too, sat down. The Japanese soldiers did not shoot, and an officer got there in time to give orders to move away from the house. So the soldiers moved. The Japanese had an interpreter who spoke English pretty well. He told us to follow him to the school house, and we followed him there.

After we arrived at the school, when a fire was made outside, I was afraid that the school house was going to be set afire with all of us in there. Since we weren't being set on fire, we were asked if we were all present. We stated that three of our young men were out. They waited for the young men to come back to the village but there was no sign of them. The young men did not return from hiding until some of the village men went out and escorted them back to the village. Only then did they return.

The young men were brought home then we were sent back to our houses. When we went into our homes, everything was scattered on our floors, even the Easter eggs were on the floor. It was never determined what the Japanese searched for.

We all stayed inside our homes. The guards stayed by our homes with bayonets. They were standing around guarding like that for three days. Once day-break came, some flares were shot into the air. We went under our beds because of being scared, not knowing what was happening.

Innokenty Golodoff, 1966

We lived on Attu three months after the Japs came. They guarded our houses all the time. We could go outside for fresh air but not away from the houses except that they let us go out and fish once in a while. We had to eat our own food. We didn't have to give the Japs any food. They didn't bother our women.

Alex Prosoff, 1947 (1988)

More and more Japs come to Attu. Many of their men get sick. They make their camp all around our village. They pile their things on the beach. One time I tell them wrong thing and storm comes and they lose lots of their things. They get very mad and tell me next time I tell them wrong thing they kill me.

All summer long the Japs stayed on Attu. We did not have much food but sometimes they would let us go out in dory to fish. They made us take little Jap flag on our boat. We used to make fun of it and say it looks like target. We cannot hunt wood so we have to tear boards from inside our homes to burn.

Commentary

The Japanese bombed Dutch Harbor on June 3 and 4, 1942. On Attu, in the early morning of June 7, Foster Jones sent his usual weather report by radio. Charles Magee, teacher and radio operator on Atka, heard Jones say he had a hunch the Japanese were going to attack Attu. The radio went dead after that (Stein n.d.:8).

As the Japanese forces approached Attu, they split up, and the larger force got lost. On the night of June 7, 1942, the Attu residents heard the Japanese boats coming into Holtz Bay, on the west side of the island. A contingent of soldiers came into the village on foot the next morning. It was Sunday morning and the attack surprised the Attuans as they left church (Carter 1994:35).

The Japanese poured out of the hills west of the village, yelling and shooting. The frightened Aleuts ran to their homes. Rifle fire randomly struck the houses. At least two Aleuts were slightly wounded, one of them Annie Hodikoff, the chief's wife,⁵ shot in the leg. Some of the younger Aleuts wanted to get their rifles and defend their homes and families. (Stein n.d.:8)

An older man counseled the young men that they were outnumbered and would never prevail. Six men, including Innokenty Golodoff, ran away to the hills and stayed there all day (Golodoff 1966). Later the Japanese sent other Unangan residents to bring them back.

The Unangan residents were gathered in the schoolhouse and Foster and Etta Jones were questioned separately. The Japanese distributed mimeographed papers and announced to the Native population of the village that they were liberated from the American oppressors. After the soldiers searched the houses for guns, ransacking them in the process, the Attuans were allowed to return home.

There are conflicting accounts about what happened to Etta and Foster Jones, and the death of Foster Jones is especially controversial. According to one Unangan man, the Japanese knew Foster Jones

⁵Actually, it was chief Mike Hodikoff's brother Fred Hodikoff's wife Annie who was shot in the leg. Annie Hodikoff was 23, about the same age as Annie Borenin, who became Mike Hodikoff's common-law second wife in Japan.

had a radio, and tortured him to find it, then killed him. Japanese reports, and some Attuans including Nick Golodoff, have said that Foster Jones killed himself, or attempted to commit suicide. Several sources agree that Etta Jones had wounds on her wrists, but that they were not mortal. According to some accounts, Foster Jones also slit his wrists. However, Mike Lokanin, who was ordered to bury Jones, denied this story. When he told Mike that Jones was dead, one of the Japanese soldiers pantomimed cutting his wrist to indicate that Jones had killed himself. Mike, however, was skeptical and said later that it was clear that Jones was deliberately killed. When Jones's body was exhumed at Attu in 1948, examination confirmed that he had been shot through the head (Kohlhoff 1995:42).

The next morning, the Native residents of the village were assembled at the flagpole, and the Japanese flag was raised (Stein n.d.:9). Later some of the Attuans covertly mocked the flag, calling it the "Japanese meatball" or saying it looked like a target. One of them stole the American flag back and hid it from the Japanese. The Japanese soldiers took some food from the Attuans, but their commander⁶ returned the stolen food. He ordered the Unangan residents to stay in their houses and made the village off-limits to soldiers (Kohlhoff 1995:43). The Japanese roped off the houses of the village, evidently more to discourage the Japanese soldiers from bothering or stealing from the Attuans than to keep the Attuans inside (Carter 1994:40-41).

The Japanese troops occupied Attu for three months before they took the Unangan residents to Japan. During that time there was a death in the village, the elderly John Artumonoff, a former chief (Jolis 1994:11; Murray 2005). The Attuans found it difficult to fish, hunt, or collect food, because they had to get permission from the Japanese every time they went out in a boat. When they caught fish, the Japanese confiscated some for their own use. Because the Attuans were not allowed to go looking for firewood, they had to burn boards from their houses. One of the Japanese officers wrote in his diary that the Attuans loved to wear bright colors, and some wore berets. He noted that although alcohol was forbidden on Attu, the villagers enjoyed sake and beer when the Japanese soldiers

⁶Kohlhoff states that this was Commander Yamazaki, but John Cloe has corrected that statement. Major Matsutoshi Hozumi was the senior Japanese commander on Attu at the time the soldiers stole the food. Colonel Yasuyo Yamazaki was the commander in charge of Japanese forces during the Battle of Attu (Cloe 2011).

offered it to them. The officer said the chief's son "Little Mike" [George Hodikoff?] accompanied them on mountain hikes and boat rides, and often played the guitar and accordion for them (Stewart 1978:62-63). Some of the other children also befriended the Japanese during these weeks in the summer of 1942. Kiri Sugiyama, a military photographer, took several pictures of Attuan children.



Photo 28: Japanese soldier with local boy, perhaps "Little Mike," on Attu, 1942. (Source: Aleutian Pribilof Island Association)

Some of the most familiar pictures of the Attuans are the ones the Japanese took after pinning numbers to every man, woman, and child. These appear to have been taken in Attu, before the villagers were taken to Japan.

► Photo 29. Young boy, #24. (Source: Aleutian Pribilof Island Association)





Photo 30. Mother and baby, #22 and #23. (Source: Aleutian Pribilof Island Association)



Photo 31. Marina Hodikoff, #36. (Source: Aleutian Pribilof Island Association)



Photo 32. Alex Prossoff, #31. (Source: Aleutian Pribilof Island Association)



Photo 33. Elizabeth Prossoff, #8. (Source: Aleutian Pribilof Island Association)



Photo 34. Young man, #17. (Source: Aleutian Pribilof Island Association)