THE FLYING, FIGHTING WEATHERMEN OF PATROL WING FOUR

1941-1945
U.S. NAVY

KODIAK, DUTCH HARBOR, UMNAK, COLD BAY, ADAK, AMCHITKA, KISKA, SHEMYA, ATTU
and THE EMPIRE EXPRESS TO PARAMUSHIRO

MEMOIRS OF PAUL E. CARRIGAN

VOLUME III

FOREWORD

My husband of 57 years, Paul E. "The Black Irishman" Carrigan had been researching and compiling his World War II memories which in include 33 months in the Aleutian Islands.

Paul died on June 22, 2001.

I am sorry to say that the manuscript went untouched these last several years due to his deteriorating health.

In his memory I have decided to publish his writings just as he left them.

Finishing this project could not have been accomplished without the encouragement of Paul's brother, Ralph O. Carrigan.

Much Paul's research was done in the libraries of the late James S. Russell, Admiral, USN (Ret.) and the late Carl H. Amme, Captain USN (Ret.)

These men were young pilots when Paul first flew with them in 1941, 1942 and 1943.

The time frame starts before the attack on Dutch Harbor and ends after the last Japanese solider is removed from The United States on the island of Attu.

And following his wishes we dedicate this manuscript to

THE FLYING FIGHTING WEATHERMEN OF PATROL WING FOUR.
AND ALL THOSE AIRDALES THAT FLEW IN THIS COLD CORNER OF HELL.

Jean Carrigan
Tokeland, Washington
August 11, 2001

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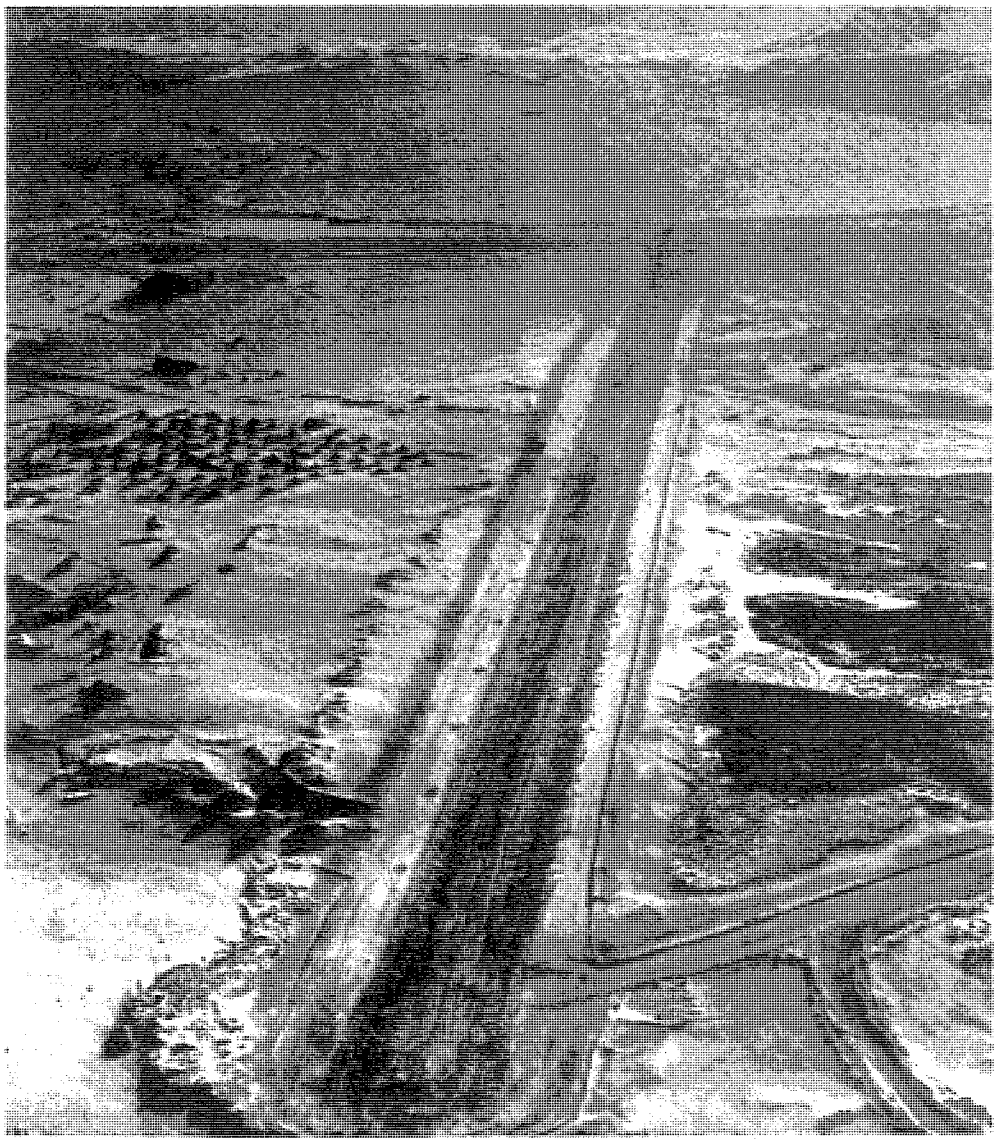
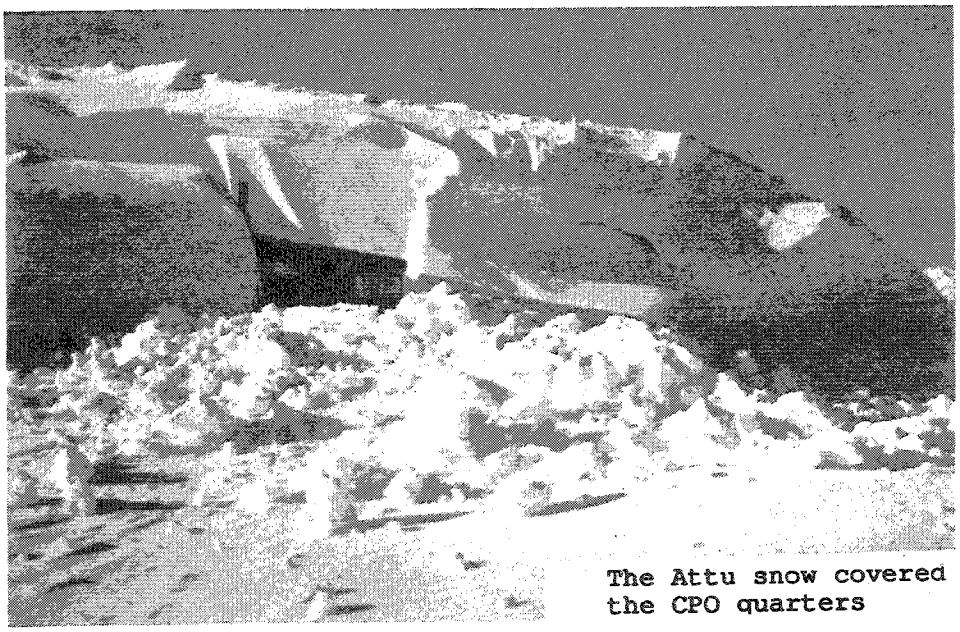


The airstrip at Casco Cove, Attu, didn't always look like this. Don Coe remembers skimming the water and dodging rocks one windy, foggy afternoon looking for it. Coe says he appeared over the end of the strip at the same time Seabees working on the tarmak discovered the plane which didn't appear to the workers to be going the right direction--the nose was about 90 degrees off line. The Seabees scattered and Coe landed in the middle of their construction, blowing a tire.



The Attu snow covered
the CPO quarters

the wind blew
plane captains

and some crews had
to tunnel their way
out of their quonset

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The Battle of Attu

Back Aboard USS Casco Bay For The Battle of Attu

When I returned from my weather flight May 7, 1943, Mr.Tatom handed me a set of temporary duty orders to USS Casco. I was told to pack and report aboard immediately. "Cisco" Calderon had received similar orders earlier that day. USS Casco sailed that evening to join a task force already at sea.

The Casco had recently returned to the fray after having her extensive torpedo damage repaired at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. Carl Hill, S1c qualified striker, was the only other weatherman aboard having joined the ship prior to her leaving Bremerton. Tall, on the lean side, with light brown hair, Hill was bunking in the 20mm. clip room adjacent to the weather office.

Fresh out of primary weather school the intelligent, rather serious natured Hill was proficient in basic weather skills but painfully aware of his limitations. He was greatly relieved that two AerM2c's had been sent to the ship at the last moment. "I feel," said Hill, "as though the weight of the world has been lifted off my back."

The unknown lay ahead and the responsibility of Casco's weather work was thrust upon Calderon and me. We in turn wondered why an aerological officer had not been assigned to the ship.

It was surprising to learn the ship was part of an Attu invasion fleet. What about Kiska we wondered? Our planes had been pounding Kiska for almost a year. The past few months' stepped up attacks had been launched from both Adak and Amchitka. Enemy installations had also been heavily shelled by a navy task force. It appeared this was a sofening up process for a large scale U.S. amphibious assault on Kiska. By

comparison Attu had been almost ignored. Calderon and I hoped the Japanese on Attu would be as surprised as we were.

The U.S. Attu Battle Plan

It should be noted that heavily defended Kiska, not Attu, was the original invasion target. These plans were well underway when U.S. forces occupied Amchitka January 12, 1943.

It is beyond the scope of this book to go into the detailed, albeit sometimes muddled, myriad planning for the invasion of Attu or to cover the day-to-day fighting during the battle.

Joint Army-Navy-Air Corps planners held their meetings at San Diego, CA. Alaskan veteran commanders were called in for consultation. These men included Captain Oswald Colclough,USN, Commander of Northern Submarine Division, and Commander James S. Russell, USN, former skipper of FAW 4's VP-42. Four of General Buckner's top colonels: Lawrence V. Castner, William O. Eareckson, William Alexander, and Carl Jones attended the meetings. Many of the recommendations offered by these experienced Alaskans were ignored or could not be followed for various reasons.

Problems were caused by: top-level bickering between services; wartime shortages which resulted in some hasty measures being taken; lack of proper time for planning and training; last minute changes; faulty assumptions and when Attu was substituted for Kiska, a serious lack of knowledge about target topography and the enemy's defensive strength and installations.

A reinforced division was deemed necessary for the assault against Kiska. 7th Division troops were assigned from necessity. This mechanized, armored outfit had been training in the California desert for over a year preparing to fight German Field Marshall Irwin Rommel's Panzer Divisions in North Africa. All other U.S. Army divisions were either already committed to the more major theatres in SouWesPac, Europe, or Africa or were insufficiently trained for combat.

The offered 7th Division could be spared only because Rommel was presently in retreat in Africa. For the Aleutian planners it was take it or leave it.

General Buckner tried repeatedly to have his veteran Alaska 4th Infantry Regiment involved in the operation. Although his troops were well clothed and

acclimated they were considered to be insufficiently trained in combat, morale was reportedly low and they were guarding bases and outposts scattered over hundreds of thousands of square miles.

In March 1943, late in the planning stage, it was discovered there would not be sufficient shipping available for the large scale assault on Kiska scheduled for early May. Therefore, Attu, supposedly lightly defended, was substituted for Kiska.

It was estimated the five hundred Japanese believed to be on Attu, of which only a percentage could be expected to be front line troops, could be annihilated by a U.S. force sufficiently reduced to be transported by the number of ships available.

Merits of the altered plan, proposed by Admiral Kinkaid at Adak, were many and this leapfrog strategy of bypassing strongly defended islands would henceforth be copied with success throughout the campaigns of the Pacific in WWII.

With the retaking of Attu and the subsequent construction of another airfield and base the noose would be drawn tighter around Kiska. With Adak to the east, Amchitka to the south, and Attu to the west, Kiska would be virtually cut off from all supplies or evacuation. It would then be only a matter of time until the Japanese on Kiska were either starved into submission or weakened beyond the point of fierce, prolonged battle.

The ten thousand man 7th, (Hour Glass), Division was reorganized into Regimental Combat teams from which the Attu assault troops would be chosen. This force was expected to total about 2,500 men with a like number held in reserve.

The U.S. Army had never made an amphibious assault on an island. 7th Division troops went through a period of amphibious training exercises under tough, Marine Corps Major General Holland M. "Howlin' Mad" Smith who had commanded the First Marine Division in the landings on Guadalcanal. This training took place at both sunny San Clemente Island off the coast of Southern California and at the beaches of Fort Ord, CA. Neither place resembles Attu in the slightest.

Late intelligence reports from the Aleutians, based on aerial photographs, kept increasing the estimated strength of the Japanese on Attu. The first estimate boosted the number to 1,100 thence to possibly as many as 1,600. Major General Albert E. Brown, USA, Commanding officer of the 7th Division

decided to commit his entire division. Admiral Francis W. Rockwell, USN, in overall command of the operation objected because of insufficient troop transport. Brown assured Rockwell the division could be crammed into the ships available.

The 7th Division rendezvoused in San Francisco where Lieutenant General John W. DeWitt, USA, Commanding General of the Fourth Army and the Western Defense Command was headquartered.

DeWitt's supply depots were to furnish winter clothing for the 7th Division. Unfortunately, the depots were well stocked with light clothing for fighting in the South Pacific but little for cold climes. Winter clothing had been shipped to U.S. bases in England. As a result, improper winter clothing issued to the 7th Division included light-weight field jackets without hood or collar and woefully inadequate calf length, leather boots. Water proof rubberized shoe-pacs were not available at the departure point. To maintain top secrecy of the 7th's destination the requistioned clothing was placed aboard ship in sealed crates not to be opened until later at sea.

When the troops squeezed aboard the overloaded transports they believed they were heading for combat in the South Pacific. Only a few of the top officers knew they were embarking to the Aleutians.

The flotilla of attack transports, cargo ships, three old battleships Nevada, Pennsylvannia, and Idaho, resurrected from their Pearl Harbor graveyard; cruisers, and destroyers arrived at Cold Bay on the Alaska Peninsula April 30, 1943.

D-day for the invasion of Attu was set for May 7. With the invasion only one week away the planners argued over which of five assault plans would be used. The range, from A to E, varied from all forces landing at Sarana Bay to all forces landing at Massacre Bay, to multiple landings at Sarana, Holtz, and Massacre Bays. It was hoped last minute intelligence would dictate the most suitable landing beaches. Discussions extended through May 2nd. A revised plan E was finally agreed upon although reluctantly by Admiral Rockwell. He didn't have enough warships to support the multiple landings if things went badly.

The plan called for a regiment to be put ashore at Holtz Bay on the north side of Attu, the main landing force put ashore at Massacre Bay on the east, and a Provisional Scout Battalion, under command of Colonel William H. Willoughby, to be landed four miles

west of Holtz Bay. In a three-pronged pincer movement these forces would meet at the high passes between Massacre, Holtz, and Sarana Bays. Any remaining Japanese defenders would thus be compressed into the northeast corner of the island. The combined U.S. troops would then attack from high ground down through Chichagof Valley toward enemy headquarters at Chichagof Harbor, site of the Aleut village.

Japanese Strategy

Increased U.S. air and naval activity directed against Attu during the first week in May 1943 had alerted the Japanese to the possibility of an invasion.

Colonel Yasuyo Yamasaki, IJA, Commander of Japanese forces on Attu knew he did not have sufficient strength to prevent large scale landings. Wisely, he abandoned the beaches and withdrew to long-prepared positions. These holes, bunkers, connecting trenches and tunnels were at strategic locations on the high ridges overlooking the northern and western flank of Massacre Valley and guarding the two narrow passes that led from this valley into Holtz and Sarana valleys and bays. Yamasaki deployed forces in similar fashion on the north side of the island in the area of Holtz Bay.

Japanese riflemen, machine gunners, and mortar squads manned their concealed positions. They waited for the Americans to come ashore and move slowly up the exposed valley floors. With scant cover, U.S. troops would not be able to see the Japanese who from their commanding heights at the base of the fog, would be able to peer down through the thin veil of mist and observe activities. Yamasaki ordered his troops to wait until the Americans were well inland and within point-blank range before opening fire.

The Japanese defenders of Attu were well equipped, acclimated, dressed in warm clothing and footwear, and fought tenaciously from cleverly located and concealed positions. These troops were not the supposed three rifle companies with anti-aircraft and labor troop support. They were tough mountain troops seasoned in Manchuria and adept in the use of short skis and white camouflage, and combat veterans from Japan's Burmese mountain battalions who had contracted jungle diseases and had been sent to a cold climate to recover health. These defenders did not number 1100,

or 1600 but about 2650. We were destined to learn these facts the hard way.

A stage was set for the second bloodiest of all Pacific Campaign battles fought in terms of men involved and yet, one of the least known. The only battle fought on North American home soil during WWII and the first against an invading enemy since the War of 1812, it would prove costly beyond all expectations.

USS Casco's Pre-Invasion Assault On Attu

D-day for the invasion had been moved from May 7 to May 8 but rain, wind, and fog accompanied by heavy surf on the proposed landing beaches caused several additional postponements. D-day was extended to May 11, 1943. H-hour was 0740.

In the pre-dawn, dense fog and darkness of May 11, USS Casco Bay split off from the main invasion fleet. Our task force of three battleships, six cruisers, nineteen destroyers, CVE Nassau, a baby flattop, four attack transports (APA), and three attack cargo ships (AKA) had approached Attu from the north. When Casco moved off on her own the force was groping its way out of the Bering Sea between Attu and the Semichi Islands to the east.

Casco had received word the night of May 10 that H-hour had been further postponed until 0940 because of the dense fog. At that hour the main landing force, about 2200 troops, would hit the beach at Massacre Bay. Casco's orders were to proceed into a small, unnamed cove on the south side of Massacre Bay and set out buoys for an advanced PBY base. Flight operations were to commence within a few days. It had been estimated it would take only two days, three at the most, to overwhelm the Japanese and secure the island.

GQ sounded aboard Casco before dawn May 11th. As H-hour neared we were ghosting along in the thick fog at dead-slow ahead, radar antenna whirling ceaselessly and depth sounder bouncing signals off the bottom as we entered the cove. We had earlier heard what sounded like either the muffled explosions from a shore bombardment or heavy bombs but this came from over the mountains on the north side of the island. About 0830 hours Casco's radar had picked up the blips of several

aircraft flying above Attu but these were believed to be 'friendly'. When H-hour arrived in our Massacre Bay area, the silence was profound.

The cove Casco entered was like an elongated horseshoe with one shorter side. A narrow, low ridged peninsula extended out from shore about a mile into Massacre Bay on our starboard. This formed the short arm of the cove.

To port, cliffs of a fog enshrouded mountainous ridge extended down to the waters of the cove. This ridge was cut by many draws containing small creeks. The high ridge extended eastward dropping down in a series of shoulders until it became a narrow 200-300 foot high tundra covered plateau that terminated at Murder Point. This ridge and Murder Point formed the long side of the cove and was also the southern arm of Massacre Bay. A half to three quarters of a mile in width, the cove was a mile and a half in length on the Murder Point side.

Fog lifted considerably as Casco penetrated deeper into the cove. Our ceiling rose to 300 feet and visibility increased to three quarters of a mile. A shoreline at the head of the cove was soon discernable. Not a shot had been fired at us. No enemy installations could be seen. All engines were stopped and the ship glided silently and slowly along from the momentum of her 2695 tons.

There was a stir of excitement on the port wing of the bridge. Someone had observed a tiny cluster of tents in a steep sided narrow draw on the south shore. A 40mm. gun crew was ordered to open fire on the enemy camp. Shells and tracers streaked in the direction of the draw. After a few dozen rounds the gun crew was ordered to cease-fire. No enemy fire was returned.

Several minutes of silence passed. Over the ship's speakers came a request for volunteers to form a landing party. Calderon and I told Carl Hill to hold down the fort at the weather shack. With about forty or fifty other volunteers we reported to the boat station.

The assault party was in charge of an ensign with a chief boatswain's mate second in command. This chief asked if any men were qualified in the use of an automatic rifle (BAR). Calderon, one other man, and I replied affirmatively. Along with about thirty other volunteers we were selected to form the party. When rifles and ammunition were issued, we three were each

handed a BAR.

A fifty foot motor launch was called away and we shoved off and headed for the mouth of the draw. It must have been assumed that 2,200 U.S. combat troops were already ashore at the two Massacre Bay landing beaches one half mile and one mile north.

Our coxswain nosed up to the beach. We went over the bow, lowering ourselves in icy, shallow water that, nevertheless, was over our shoe tops. When the assault force was safely on the beach the ensign gave orders for the boat crew to back off and standby offshore.

A path led from the shelf of beach up the right side of the small gorge. The ensign took the lead followed by the chief. The chief "Boats" positioned me directly behind him with one BAR, ordered the other automatic rifleman to take up a mid column position and Calderon to bring up the rear. Single file, with feet squooshing through patches of dirty snow, our column went cautiously up the narrow canyon.

About a hundred yards up the draw we rounded a small bend and came upon the Japanese camp. It appeared deserted. There were three camouflaged tents in a row alongside our path. The first tent was half collapsed. The second was intact and taut while the roof of the third sagged. Beyond the third tent the path crossed a tiny rushing creek to a sod covered wooden shack.

The ensign halted the column and ordered us to cover him and the chief while they went ahead. After they had checked out the tents and cook shack the ensign signalled us to move up. Our having done so, he ordered the word passed down the line to, Keep it quiet, and Watch the cliffs on both sides.

It was evident the Japanese left in a hurry. Clothing was strewn about in the mud. On both sides of the creek were several wooden boxes with contents spilled. Two of six large rice bags at the cook shack had been ripped open. Much rice had cascaded out then been scattered. Apparently rice had been scooped out by the handfuls and hurriedly stuffed into pockets and musette bags. A sack of coal was also spilled over. Fresh muddy footprints led away from the camp up the draw.

In low tones the ensign and chief discussed the situation.

The ensign detailed two men to remain at the camp and ordered the rest to follow him. As the tracks led

upward the path grew steeper. Soon everyone was slipping and sliding in soft wet snow. Sides of the canyon became so narrow and more vertical the tracks had crossed and recrossed the cascading creek many times to take advantage of favorable footing.

We had climbed another hundred feet in altitude when the ensign raised his arm in the signal to halt. Snow was eight inches deep; fog a scant ten feet above our heads. Single file footprints of the retreating Japanese were visible to a point twenty feet beyond where they disappeared around a sharp bend to the right.

Our column jammed up and men began to jabber like monkeys, many complaining about freezing feet. The chief ordered the men to be silent. The ensign was peering at the tracks and the ominous bend ahead.

"What do you think, chief?" he asked. "Would you judge the
tracks to be about an hour old?"

"Pretty close," replied the chief. "If the Nips took off when
we opened fire they have about a thirty minute head start.

"But we could be walking into an ambush."

"That's a possibility, sir," said the chief, "but it looks like they left in one helluva hurry and they're more intent on clearing out than fighting."

"I agree but one man left behind in a delaying action could raise holy hell in a place like this. Especially if he had grenades."

There was additional quiet conversation during which the ensign wondered aloud about the purpose of the enemy camp. It wasn't a defensive position but more like a small supply depot and living quarters. He wondered if this might indicate a number of gun crews manning positions higher on the ridge. In that case the ship was vulnerable hove-to so close to the near shore.

"I'll go on ahead," offered the chief "and check it out." I thought this a most courageous offer. His only weapon was
an unholstered .45 pistol. Command decisions are weighty. While the ensign deliberated the chief gave me a long sideways glance. I had the feeling he was about to suggest he could take a BAR man with him.

Listening to their conversation while standing in the snow- covered claustrophobic canyon was spooky. Ghostly fog eddied eerily about us and added to the

sepulcheral gloom of being in a place with the doomsday names: Massacre Bay and Murder Point.

The Ensign might have entertained similar thoughts. He also had the responsibility of three dozen sailors weighing upon his conscience. Rather than add one more grisly name to the map he vetoed the chief's offer as not being worth the risk.

"Ten feet higher you won't be able to see ten feet." "I'll be able to follow tracks and see where they lead." "No," said the ensign firmly. "I agree they probably cleared out. They know the country and are probably moving fast. No telling how far ahead of us they are by now. We aren't dressed for deep snow and have no supplies or chow. I'll make my report and the skipper can decide what to do."

In reverse file he ordered the column back to the camp. He ordered me bring up the rear. With safety off and weapon on full automatic I spent half my descent concentrating on my footing and the other half looking over my shoulder. Even though the trip down was quicker I came in as a straggler 75 feet behind the ensign and chief. The forerunners were in a frenzy seeking souvenirs.

I didn't join in immediately for several reasons. Perhaps first and foremost I saw no point. As a tail-ender I stood little chance of finding a good souvenir. Second: The ensign had not told me nor had I any idea when my rear-guard responsibilities ended. With barrel pointing skyward I rested the butt of the heavy weapon on my hip, took in the activity around me and periodically studied the swirling fog up the canyon.

I felt uneasy. I was relieved we had not proceeded beyond the bend. I don't know what course I would have taken at that point had I been in the ensign's shoes. I believe he made a wise decision. But in light of all the unanswered questions raised and concerns voiced I think the chief's offer to check ahead would have been worth the risk to make certain the enemy had cleared the immediate area. Significantly, I hadn't volunteered to back him up. Part of my uneasiness was likely caused by being uncomfortable with myself.

All those unanswered questions and concerns did not seem to be troubling anyone but me. The scene was one of happy, unruly children at a picnic. The chief had entered the cook shack where he joined a dozen men

checking out the many tins and dry food stores. This ramshackle, double-roomed hut was about 20' x 20' and hammered together from weathered packing crate lumber. Its lean-to roof was covered with sod.

Our ensign had crossed the creek to the tent area where he watched men sorting through two carboard boxes and a crate of miscellaneous clothing. Used but serviceable it was the kind of clothing found at rummage sales.

On my side of the creek and to my left a group was clustered around a large wooden box. This crate contained dozens of pairs of new, suede, winter work shoes lined with rabbit fur. Like a pack of terriers excavating to bury bones sailors were digging through the box in search of shoes large enough but all were of small size.

I was watching this operation when from the right I heard a low but urgent, "gimme, gimme." Someone at the cook shack had found a bottle of sake buried in a bag of rice. This had been opened and was being passed around. I edged closer and was about third in line. A chug-a-lugger wiped his smiling lips with the back of his hand and handed the near empty bottle to a shipmate. As this man raised the bottle to his mouth the ensign became aware of what was going on. From across the creek he ordered the man to empty the bottle. After receiving an 'aye, aye, sir' the ensign turned his back. The man drained the sake. As he shook the upside down bottle he hollered, "It's empty, sir."

With a feeling of a 'day late and dollar short' I crossed the creek. The tents were pyramidal type and about the size of the cook shack. I passed the activity at the first two tents and stopped at the partially collapsed one. When I stuck my head in I was dismayed to find three sailors. I was about to back out when I noticed no one was in the collapsed area. I crawled into that portion and saw what was once a bundle of letters tied with red ribbon but was now a strewn pile on the ground near a cot. Among the letters was the photograph of a Japanese naval officer. He was dressed in summer shorts and standing alongside a large calibre gun on the deck of a warship. I slipped this photograph inside my shirt.

In a corner behind another cot and almost covered by an old blanket I found a handsome wooden case with brass hasp. Inside was a surveyor's transit nestled snugly in purple velvet lining. I closed the lid, grasped the carrying handle and scooted the case ahead

two feet. From outside and close at hand the ensign hollered a belated warning.

"Stop! Stop! Don't touch anything else. It might be booby-trapped!" He then ordered us back to the beach and waiting boat.

The ensign checked our booty before we climbed in the launch. When he spied my case he asked if I'd already opened it. I told him I had and it hadn't blown up. He asked what was in the case.

"All right," he said as he motioned me into the boat. "In you
go."

Casco's assault team returned to the ship about 1130 hours. After turning in weapons and ammunition we were dismissed. In the privacy of our weather office Calderon and I looked over our loot. The surveyor's transit was scrutinized admiringly for its quality and optics.

Calderon had been in the collapsed tent before me but had missed the transit. He had found a handsome gold-plated pen and pencil set and a few other articles including a 6 by 9 inch hard cover surveyor's notebook. Many pages were filled with Japanese characters unintelligible to us. Interspersed were pages of sketched sections of shoreline some with offshore rocks and all accompanied by compass bearings, angles, elevations and straight lines drawn to reference points.

In the middle tent Calderon had found two small porcelain sake cups. He said several men had come aboard with bottles of sake, all but one of which had been discovered and confiscated at the gangway.

It would have been impossible to pack around the bulky transit and case for it seemed I was always traveling fast and light. The ensign's report would surely include the finding of a transit. There was slim chance I'd be able to keep it or be allowed to mail it home. Calderon believed and I agreed that the survey notes might be of some military value. I turned the transit and notes over to the executive officer around noon. In answer to the exec's questions: The items were found in the collapsed portion of the first tent in the down stream corner closest to hill; I had not noticed any charts, maps or other official documents; Such items might be in the clutter of the collapsed area where it's a down on hands and knees deal; I did not have time to crawl into the collapsed corner nearest the stream because we were ordered to

return to the ship. After a 'very well' and 'thank you' I was dismissed. The transit has probably graced his den for years, a memento of the Battle of Attu.

Casco had anchored. It was still quiet in Massacre Bay. We wondered what was going on but the low peninsula between our cove and that beach prevented us from observing activities there. Apparently, the large scale landings had been unopposed because no firing was heard. Ceiling and visibility had continued to improve since dawn in Massacre Bay but it was still foggy at sea.

About 1330 hours a lookout observed a group of men in single file crossing a snow field from our left to right at 500 foot altitude and three miles inland. Struggling in thigh deep snow and making slow progress the fifteen men were just below a steep ridge top. They were traveling in a northerly direction toward the head of Massacre Valley. This was believed to be the Japanese party flushed from the draw. Cut off by sea, they were attempting to rejoin their main forces by the inland mountainous route.

Casco's two 5.38 calibre turret guns on the bow opened fire. The first salvos landed short and slightly to the left. These exploding shells left dark blotches on the pure white snow. Black, ant-like figures in the snowfield changed direction, headed west and climbed for the nearby rooster-comb ridge. Our next salvos were much closer but still low and this time slightly right. Two thirds of the figures had disappeared over the ridge when the third round of shells appeared to land close among the remaining, scrambling targets. Powerful glasses could not detect any bodies or further movement. Targets having all disappeared, Casco's guns were ordered to cease-fire for the second time that day. We seemed to be the only ones shooting on Attu.

Later that afternoon a motor whaleboat was lowered. A group of officers including the X/O accompanied by a photographer and small armed guard went ashore to inspect the enemy tent camp.

It wasn't until after evening chow at about 1800 hours that the first firing was heard from near the head of Massacre Valley. It began with a sound like pop-corn exploding. A short time later the chatter of machine guns joined the pop-popping of rifle fire. Soon, the Whoomp! Whoomp! of mortars was added. We knew then that our combat troops had finally engaged the enemy on Attu.

What we did not know was the result of our isolation and the radio silence maintained by ships of our invasion fleet. Because of dense fog the main landings at Massacre Bay had been postponed from 0940, first to 1230, then to 1530 hours. Even this last H-hour was missed by an hour because assault craft had to grope their way in from 19,000 yards offshore. The first combat troops did not set foot on the Massacre Bay landing beaches until 1630 hours.

Colonel Verbeck and about thirty Alaska Scouts went ashore at Massacre Bay about the time Casco's "Commandos" returned to the ship.

It is not one of the brighter pages in the annals of the U.S. Navy but three dozen crewmen from Casco made an assault on Attu, captured an enemy position, tracked a party of Japanese, traipsed about in the snow and fog for two hours then returned to the ship five hours before the combat troops hit the beach at Massacre Bay.

One small draw and a cluster of tents was not a major objective but it pleases me to think I took part in the recapture of the first American soil in the Aleutians. Whether by foggy accident and with pure dumb luck makes no difference.

The D-day Landings

Like a steaming fungus rising from the sea the clinging, wet Aleutian fog had caused delays and problems at all landing beaches. By evening of D-day, however, 3500 troops were ashore at the three proposed locations on Attu and the invasion had proceeded mostly according to plan. One exception was that dense fog had prevented the proposed large scale pre-assault shelling and aerial bombardment. It was fortunate the Japanese had chosen not to defend the beaches. Of course this was not known beforehand and the landings, in the pervasive fog, had been made with great apprehension.

A total of four hundred men were ashore at Scarlet Beach, four miles northwest of Holtz Bay. The 7th Scout Company of two-hundred eighty men, under Captain Willoughby, had gone ashore in rubber boats from submarines Narwhal and Nautilus early in the morning.

The 7th Division's 17th Infantry's Reconnaissance Troop, minus one platoon, was to be put ashore from destroyer USS Kane shortly afterward but Kane lost her

bearings in the fog and these troops were not landed until nearly noon.

Eleven hundred men were ashore at Red Beach six hundred yards west of the entrance to Holtz Bay. A reconnaissance party of Alaska Scouts and Company A of the 17th Infantry under Colonel Frank L. Cullin, Commanding Officer of the 32nd Infantry, accompanied by the U.S. Navy's LCDR Carl "Squeaky" Anderson had probed its way ashore at this location in early afternoon. So little was known about Red Beach that their mission was to report the feaseability of landing the remainder of the Northern Force at this location. This force, under command of Lieutenant Colonel Albert E. Hartl, was Battalion Combat Team (BCT) 17-1 built around the 1st Battalion of the 17th Infantry.

Red Beach was found to be a rocky shelf only one hundred yards long. Seventy-five yards inland from the steep beach, sheer cliffs rose to a height of two-hundred and fifty feet. Red Beach's rock-studded approach prevented more than two or three landing craft from coming in at one time. It was such an unlikely landing place the enemy had no defenses there. Accordingly,the remainder of the Northern Force was landed later on the afternoon of D-day.

Two thousand troops were ashore at Massacre Bay. The bulk of these, at Beaches Blue and Yellow, were the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 17th Infantry. Unopposed, BCT 17-2 moved inland approximately 2500 yards up the right hand side of a hog-back ridge along the exposed floor of Massacre Valley. BCT 17-3 progressed slowly up the left side of Massacre Valley on the opposite side of the hog-back bisecting the valley floor.

Yamasaki's dug in troops watched with interest from postions along the foggy ridges. When these two BCTs neared the head of Massacre Valley the Japanese opened fire. Caught in a withering cross-fire on the spongy wet, exposed valley floor, both BCTs were pinned down. These were the shots heard by those on Casco late on the evening of D-day.

Several platoons had been sent out to secure the ridges above Massacre Valley: Gilbert Ridge on the right and Henderson Ridge on the left. One of the two Gilbert Ridge platoons from the 7th Reconnaissance Troop landed at Alexai Point halfway out the northern

arm of the bay toward Chirikof Point and about four miles east of Massacre Bay's main landing beach. Its mission was the establishment of outposts between Alexai Point and Sarana Bay to the north, and to reconnoiter the ridge to the west between Lake Nicolas and Massacre Bay and eastward to Chirikof Point. No Japanese were encountered and this platoon was out of contact with the main landing force for two days.

The other flanking platoon sent up Gilbert Ridge was from Company F 17th Infantry reinforced with a light machine gun section and a 60mm. mortar squad. This platoon went up into a steep pass leading to Sarana Beach. Its mission was to seize the pass and the high ground along the right flank, clear the ridge of enemy and establish defensive positions from which fire could be directed down on the Lake Nicolas-Sarana Beach area. It was also to assist BCT 17-2 ,if practicable, in the capture of the important pass at the head of Massacre Valley by firing on enemy positions at the western end of Gilbert Ridge.

This platoon climbed all night and reached the Sarana Bay
side of Gilbert Ridge the following morning. It immediately came under heavy attack and its progress was stalled. This patrol fought off enemy attacks for two days as it was forced back until it rejoined the main force where BCT 17-2 had dug in for the night on D-day.

Flanking platoons of the Massacre Bay Southern Force sent out to secure Henderson Ridge on the left side didn't fare any better. A platoon of Company I, 17th Infantry, ran into difficulty with rough terrain along the lower slopes. When fog and darkness descended, they were 700 yards short of being abreast of the position at which BCT 17-3 had dug in for the night. A week later, on May 18, this platoon had advanced only an additional 500 yards.

Farther out on the left flank, south and west of our seaplane tender in "Casco Cove", Company F of the 32nd Infantry achieved Temnac Cove on the south side of Attu. They surprised a few enemy troops, killed them and destroyed a small Japanese installation late evening of D-day.

They were ordered on their second mission the following morning, to move northeast toward Holtz Bay and clear the ridges of enemy along the left flank of the main U.S. forces in Massacre Valley. Snow covered cul-de-sacs of the interior mountains stopped this

platoon and it was orderd to retrace its steps to Massacre Bay.

Late on D-day, U.S. Army 105 mm. howitzers, mired down in the mud a few yards inland from Massacre Bay's beach, opened up at approximately 2030 hours. The heavy artillery fire was directed at dug in Japanese positions along the fog line of the ridges near the head of Massacre Valley. From the vantage point of the Casco's anchored position we watched as the exploding 105 mm. shells blossomed orange when they hit and left dark blotches where they struck patches of snow.

This barrage had been called for by BCT 17-3 pinned down at the head of Massacre Valley. They were under mortar, rifle, and machine gun fire from ahead and from each flank because the ridges had not been cleared of enemy. The barrage lasted about twenty minutes. When it ended, BCT 17-3 attempted to advance but withering fire from the heights drove it backward. The men had no choice but to seek shelter for the night in their shallow, icy wet, fox holes.

Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, COMNORPAC was in command of the operation from his headquarters at Adak. Admiral Rockwell, the Assault Force Commander aboard battleship Nevada was directly under Kinkaid in the chain of command. General Brown assumed tactical command of the Landing Force once it was ashore.

General Brown came ashore the evening of D-day. Although most elements had run into fierce opposition and were stalled it was believed our forces had reached or were close to almost all major first day objectives.

When dawn of D-day plus one arrived, it was discovered, however, that BCT 17-2 in Massacre Valley was not 1000 yards from its objective, (the pass leading to Sarana Bay), but 1500 yards from it. Meanwhile, BCT 17-3 had mistaken blind Zwinge Valley for Holtz Bay pass and was 2000 yards south of its objective rather than the 600 yards reported on D-day evening.

On the north side of the island BCT 17-1 had dug in for the night on what it believed was Hill X. BCT 17-1 discovered the next day that the hill it was on was 900 yards short of their objective and during the night the Japanese had occupied Hill X.

Captain Willoughby and his Provisional Scouts who had been landed at Scarlet Beach, climbed all D-day in the fog and had reached an altitude of 2500 feet as darkness fell. Their maps were blank beyond this

point. Rather than risk venturing farther into the mass of peaks, ridges, and cliffs ahead they bivouacked in deep snow for the night.

Although the overall situation on the evening of D-day was not quite clear it was not apparent we were faced with a long drawn out bitter struggle to recapture Attu.

Weathermen Afloat and Ashore During the Battle of Attu

In clean comfortable working conditions aboard Casco it seemed unreal a bloody battle raged nearby where men were suffering and dying under the harshest conditions imaginable. As if it were a peacetime exercise we continued the routine Calderon and I had established upon reporting aboard at Adak. Two synoptic weather maps were entered each day. Calderon and I took turns analyzing maps and preparing a daily local and flight sector forecast. This procedure enabled us to build a map sequence in preparation for air operations.

Weather reports from Amchitka based PBY's and PV-1's were
received by radio from CAerM Herold. These gave the weather west of Attu and enabled us to check the accuracy of our map analysis and forecast.

Calderon, Hill, and I also took hourly observations, four synoptics, and had two scheduled daily upper air soundings to determine winds aloft. Balloon soundings were few because of fog and low ceilings.

The lot of four COMALSEC navy weathermen ashore at Attu was in brutally sharp contrast to our life aboard Casco. LTJG William G. "Wild Bill" Lindeman, CAerM Richard D. "Dutch" Ackerman,
AerM1c Jesse H. Vowell, and AerM3c Sandor "Count" Podmanski had been sent from Fleet Weather Central Kodiak to establish a navy weather station on Attu. The four had gone ashore from an attack transport late evening of D-day.

These weathermen had enjoyed eighteen months of rather plush living and spotless working conditions at Kodiak. In some shock, they were on a muddy beach and busier than we were but not in weather work. They were laboring either in ice-cold surf unloading landing craft or in knee-deep mud moving supplies inland.

They had come ashore with only a portable aneroid barometer, sling psychrometer, and ten gallons of pure

grain alcohol Lindeman thoughtfully brought along from the Aerological Supply Depot at Kodiak. Crated gear for an aerological unit was buried in the bowels of a ship at Adak and would not be unloaded for over a month. Guns, ammunition, food, medical supplies, sleeping bags, tents, and additional reserve troops were top priorities. It was difficult to place these vital supplies ashore among the usual wreckage of landing craft and small boats. Once ashore it joined the conglomeration of supplies bottlenecked on the beach. In the nightmare confusion and conditions on the landing beach, the utter lack of facilities and proper communications, and fierce fighting a mile away, it was impossible to even consider weather observing, recording, or transmitting from that location.

Even the artillery was still mired in the mud 75 yards inland. From this location the field of fire was impaired because the heavily defended, narrow passes leading out of the head of Massacre Valley were at right angles to the valley.

Landing craft continued to bring supplies in from ships hove-to far offshore in the outermost bay. Many craft were smashing into each other on the beach or in the fog or striking reefs and sunken rocks. Many landing craft and small boats sank. It was reminiscent of the Adak landings and I wondered if this were the norm for all amphibious operations. This time, however, the island was defended by well trained and cleverly positioned enemy troops.

The situation was further complicated by the necessity of using combat troops to carry vital ammunition and food to those pinned down at the head of the valley.

Scores of wounded and frost bitten cripples were being helped or carried back to the beach by stretcher bearers. As these human burros traversed the 2500 to 3000 yards of open ground along the valley floor they came under enemy machine gun, rifle, and mortar fire and occasionally, mountain artillery.

Conditions were so bad at the head of the valley a man could not wiggle without drawing concentrations of fire. Some wounded could not be reached for hours. Other wounded could not be evacuated to the beach for periods of up to thirty-six hours.

On the beach, it had rapidly become not so much a question of when Lindeman, Ackerman, Vowell, and Podmanski would set up their weather shack but whether

or not we could recapture Attu. If the Japanese had launched a large scale counter-offensive from Paramushiro, only 650 miles away, Massacre Bay might well be doubly named.

How Casco Cove Was Named

Because of this situation ashore, Casco was the official source of Attu weather information and a vital communication link during the battle and for many weeks thereafter. In connection with this and how a place on a map derived its name there occurred a little known, obscure, whimsical footnote to history. It was not some lofty admiral, as one might assume, who in honor of our seaplane tender bestowed the name Casco Cove to our anchorage.

Calderon and I had told Carl Hill, S1c to 'hold down the fort' while we went ashore with Casco's Commandos at H-hour. Hill took the first weather observation at Attu on D-day morning. He encoded the report on a radiogram and took it to the radio shack. Origin was USS Casco but not knowing what to type in the address space for Place of Origin he'd left it blank.

"What shall I put down for location?" asked the radioman. I've got to have something.

"Oh, I don't know," replied Hill. "Why not make it Casco Cove, Attu."

PBY Operations Begin at Casco Cove

As ordered, Casco had placed a semi-circle of mooring buoys at the head of the cove. But instead of the enemy being annihilated and the island secured within forty-eight hours the whole issue was in doubt. Our ship was the only one in evidence. Our task force of warships was offshore on the north side of the island. Cargo ships were so far out in the Massacre Bay area they were basically over the horizon while we were anchored a quarter mile from the beach. I heard concern voiced the enemy might move mountain howitzers into position to bring Casco under fire. In this event the ship would be forced to clear the cove until things settled down. Submarines were also a nagging worry. This fear seemed more real than imaginary because Casco had been torpedoed nine months earlier while at anchor.

Under current conditions it was surprising when six PBY's, fresh from the states, and under command of Lt. Robert Donley, arrived the afternoon of 13 May. On schedule, as if the battle were going according to plan, air operations began the following day.

Donley's PBY's flew westward scout patrols and ASW screen
around the task force and cargo ships. As always, PBY's filled other roles. These included dropping surrender leaflets, flying army brass over battle sites, coordinating with the 11th AAF for P-38 strikes against "Bettys", and occasionally strafing enemy positions.

A PBY was used for most of one day to bring in desperately needed medical supplies and small arms ammunition from a cargo vessel far out in the roadstead. This was a high speed, 'on the step', shuttle operation that normally meant a three hour round trip by landing craft.

Calderon and I were to fly the weather on alternate days. Our shortage of manpower made this impractical. Calderon, Hill, and I were already bleary-eyed trying to maintain our twenty-four hour office schedule. We were doing double duty at peak load times to keep caught up breaking radio code and entering map signals. Calderon thought we'd better make an attempt to comply with Tatom's verbal orders or we'd surely get our tails in a sling. "My butt," I told him, "is in a permanent sling. When Tatom gets off his and sends office help I'll fly but not until then."

In spite of my objections and ridicule Calderon flew on a day he analyzed the map, forecasted and briefed. Carl Hill and I stood part of Calderon's watch, helped each other and had no trouble keeping busy all day. Calderon returned and without rest went on watch. By midnight he'd been up about 22 hours without sleep. He decided his experiment was a failure.

For the moment it was not critical we chose not fly the weather out of Casco Cove. PBY's and PV-1's based at Amchitka were flying as many as eighteen sector searches. We received accurate reports in the sector where weather was most in question. Donley's pilots and navigators were also supplying us with weather reports.

As though in answer to our silent prayers help arrived but from an unexpected source. A blue eyed,

sandy haired, eager young man, Robert Kerr, S1c, walked into our weather shack on the third day of battle. Kerr expressed the desire to become a striker.

While I spoke with Kerr, Calderon went to the personnel office to check out Kerr's qualifications. Kerr measured up in all respects. He was an animator at Walt Disney Studio when his number came up in the draft. I explained our manpower shortage to Kerr's division officer and he generously had Kerr transferred to the aerological department.

A streamlined curriculum was set up so that Kerr could assist in the shortest possible time. Kerr was extremely bright and he could type. We were pleased to discover that coupled with his intelligence he had an ingrained stick-to-itivness and an almost photographic memory. Without prodding he studied long hours and memorized weather codes. In addition he stood watches during which he was given instruction and oral and written quizzes. Kerr went long periods without adequate sleep. His pale blue eyes took on a reddish tinge but his good humor and wit never faltered. In a remarkably short time Kerr was qualified to make routine observations, encode and log data, and enter signals on a map. His background as an animator provided a bonus. Kerr's entries on maps and logs were more than legible: they looked as though they were made by machine.

Kerr continued his speedy learning. Within six months we had the satisfaction of seeing him pass the examination for AerM3c. By that time of WWII, graduation from primary aerographer's school was no longer a requirement.

Watching The Battle

By the fourth day of the battle, Squeaky Anderson had solved the complex problem of getting supplies and reinforcements through the bottleneck of Red Beach on the north side, up the 250 foot cliff and moving to the front line. He was ordered to unsnarl the mess at the Massacre Bay beach. With his vigor and special magic Anderson tackled the mountains of supplies and assortment of wrecked landing craft. He soon had things organized into a smoother operation of unloading, sorting, and stacking supplies. He could do little about speeding the movement of these supplies inland. That exhausting work was still being done by combat troops acting as pack animals.

Meanwhile, aboard Casco, we knew without being told that the Battle of Attu was not going well. This was especially evident at night because of the fireworks display of tracers crisscrossing the blackness. This fire exchange pattern between the head of Massacre Valley and the enemy on the ridges remained the same through five terrible days and nights.

We usually watched the battle through binoculars. One could see tiny figures attempting to advance upward across steep, snow covered slopes toward enemy positions. Figures would often be hit, crumple, and lie still. Occasionally, our theodolite was used to observe the action. Although this instrument had great magnification its narrow field of view made it less suitable.

During one U.S. attack Calderon had the theodolite's cross hairs on a soldier. This G.I. left the protection of jagged rocks and was angling upward across snow toward another outcropping. Calderon was following the G.I.'s struggles when the man was killed by a Japanese grenade. The soldier was blown backward and momentarily out of Calderon's viewplate. With entrails coming out, the G.I. slid a hundred yards down a precipitous slope before coming to rest in a heap.

"Jesus," said a shaken Calderon, "I feel like throwing up.
Take a look."

I could see the dead soldier. I followed Calderon's directions and slowly turned the control knobs. From where the grenade exploded, a dark streak in the white snow led downward to the still form. For some reason I could not pinpoint, I felt acute embarrassment. Perhaps it was my having exercised a forbidden right not mine to begin with. Theodolite power had enabled me to be an immune interloper on the killing ground.

The enemy made extensive use of grenades on Attu. It is an island that stands on end and they commanded the heights. While concealed a Japanese soldier could fire a rifle into the valley but he had to crawl out of his bunker to fire down a sixty degree slope in front of him. It was much safer and easier to activate a grenade then, while still hidden, simply toss it out. This rolling or flipping of grenades although mostly at random was nonetheless widespread and persistent enough, especially at night, to keep the

slopes swept of U.S. troops. The enemy also fired flares to illuminate the slopes. Steep terrain made the mortar an effective weapon for both sides.

In spite of the totally adverse situation some progress against the enemy had been achieved by the sixth and seventh days. Although U.S. attacks had repeatedly been broken and driven back there were usually a few G.I.s who gained precarious positions in the uneven ground and protection of rocks on the lower slopes.

Casco's turret guns went back into action the eighth and ninth days of battle. The ship was ordered to help destroy a Japanese position that had been blocking our troops for days. This entrenchment, designated Point Able, and believed to be a complex of interconnected bunkers and caves, was situated at the western end of Gilbert Ridge. This postion commanded the vital pass leading out of Massacre Valley to the heads of Sarana and Chichagof Valleys.

As often happens with enemy strongholds Point Able earned a mystique. Wild stories included the main cave being guarded by a steel door six inches thick. Official estimates set the strength of Point Able's defenders at a full company. Romanticism set the strength at one fanatic who'd promptly been dubbed, "Pistol Pete".

Long range naval shelling and its often imprecise initial salvos could not be used against Point Able because of the proximity of U.S. positions. The target was also on a reverse slope and could not be shelled effectively from sea or by 105mm.howitzers still mired in the mud near Massacre Bay beaches. Although far from ideal, Casco's guns could be brought to bear at a side angle of about 45 degrees, and at virtual point blank range, from a steady platform at anchor.

Our seaplane tender expended a large number of projectiles during a half hour barrage May 18. Casco was ordered to repeat the shelling May 19. Rock, snow, and earth erupted at Point Able both days. It seemed to us no bunker or living soul could have survived such a pulverizing. We were wrong. Point Able was not overrun and captured until the evening of May 21.

Colonel William O. Eareckson and His Kingfisher

In addition to our six PBYs Casco serviced other PBYs on an unscheduled basis. Most of these were Amchitka based and landed at Casco Cove because of

weather or low fuel reserves. After refueling and spending the night these PBYs were assigned sectors via radio communication from Amchitka. Almost daily there was also a PBY from Adak. These usually carried brass from the commands of Admiral Kinkaid or General Buckner. Casco provided a safe, comfortable, floating forward observation post. All of this air activity kept us busy in the weather office.

I've always viewed Casco's anchorage and air operations during the battle as being slightly bizarre. I've also wondered if Japanese defenders on the ridges had similar thoughts. With naked eye they could see our ship and air activity. In tactical control of the ground situation they could do nothing except view with frustration the operating seadrome in their lap.

Surely the most unexpected air operation from Casco, and most frustrating for the enemy, was that of 11th USAAF's intrepid Colonel William O. Eareckson. He had been flying a B-24 over Attu since the invasion began. Weather at his Amchitka base was generally poor for landing and takeoff. When Eareckson arrived daily over Attu to coordinate army artillery and naval shelling he found the island blanketed by fog or low clouds with an occasional peak jabbing through.

He decided to change this unsatisfactory situation. What he needed was a small, slow, maneuverable plane. He was flown by PBY from Amchitka to a battleship off Attu where he borrowed an OS2U Kingfisher. Eareckson flew this single engine, single float, scout observatioon plane over to Casco.

Starting May 16, and for over two weeks, Eareckson flew this aircraft daily, often two or three times, off the waters of Casco Cove. He flew under the fog, skimmed along the ridges, through narrow passes, and in and out of box canyons. He dropped small bombs from his wing racks and strafed enemy positions. With skill and daring he cruised along at eyeball level with enemy gunners while he radioed Japanese positions for artillery, mortar fire, ship shelling, and combat troops.

We marveled at Eareckson's courage, flying ability, and charmed life as he flew back and forth under intense enemy fire, often within view of the ship. Eareckson and his OS2U must have infuriated the enemy. He literally thumbed his nose at them. They tried their damndest to shoot him down.

When Eareckson returned from these hair-raising

flights it often took quick work by Casco's crew to keep the plane from sinking. Eareckson anticipated this and always landed extremely close to the ship. A quick power taxi brought him under the crane. A lowered hook plucked the plane from the sea. Water spouted from bullet holes and jagged rips in the pontoon. The Kingfisher was swung inboard and placed on Casco's deck. Aviation technicians went to work immediately to patch, service and rearm the plane.

Eareckson lived aboard Casco and made several daily visits to our weather office. He studied the latest map, any update on the forecast and checked current conditions. He also made a habit of checking the weather before turning in at night. Eareckson's intelligent questions indicated he understood a good deal about meteorology.

Midway through the battle General Buckner and Colonel Castner flew from Adak to the Casco. Buckner wanted to view, from the air and at close range, Japanese defensive positions and strength where his Alaskan 4th Infantry was engaged.

Buckner had succeeded in having 4500 of his troops added to the invasion force. Most likely the planners had accepted these troops to keep Buckner quiet rather than from a foreseeable need. Designated an additional floating reserve the troops were to be held at Adak aboard a chartered commercial ship. 7th Division floating reserves had to be committed early. Perhaps it came as no surprise to Buckner that in short order his men had also been thrown into the fray. It was table stakes and all our chips were in the pot.

Buckner and Castner crammed into the rear radio/gunner compartment of the Kingfisher. Eareckson took them on a shooting, rock-hopping, ridge-running inspection of enemy front lines. They returned in a well sieved plane. Ordnancemen always had to replace ammunition for Eareckson's forward firing guns. They were surprised to find most of the ammunition expended from the 30 calibre in the rear. Buckner had seated himself at that gun.

Three smiling faces had climbed out of the Kingfisher. To this trio the flight had been a swashbuckling delight. It was easy to liken these born leaders as being a modern version of the Three Muscateers.

This utter disregard for personal safety would cost Buckner his life. During the Battle of Okinawa

General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr. was Commander of the U.S. Tenth Army and all ground forces. He was killed by shrapnel from a Japanese artillery shell June 18, 1945 while at a forward observation post. The two and a half month battle ended four days later. Two months later WWII was over.

All Four Grumman F4F Wildcats Crash On One Mission

Attu was the initial combat in the Pacific for the Escort Class Carrier (Baby Flattop). This was another first for the Aleutian Campaign but one the U.S.Navy might prefer to forget. F4F Wildcat fighters from CVE USS Nassau went into action late D-day on Attu's north side.

Colonel Willoughby's Provisional Scout Battalion had come ashore in rubber boats at Beach Scarlet from submarines Nautilus and Narwhal. In case a retreat and evacuation were necessary the rafts were a means of escape. Willoughby's men had pulled the rafts high and dry then climbed into the snow covered mountains.

A section of marauding Wildcats arrived on the scene. In an inexplicable case of mistaken identity the rafts were strafed to shreds. While this was an inauspicious beginning for Nassau's Wildcats their first venture into Massacre Bay May 14 was a disaster.

Visibility was good under an overcast 500 ft. ceiling. Four Wildcats were sent in to drop small bombs and strafe enemy positions along Gilbert Ridge. Someone came into the office after taking a weather observation and reported Wildcats shooting things up on the far side of the valley.

I don't know how many passes had been made by the time I stepped outside. Perhaps one fighter had already crashed. Three were in sight. One was streaking in from seaward. A second was completing a banking turn to follow the first. A third was flying seaward after emerging from the valley.

I watched about two go-rounds. For the eye to flit from plane to plane was distracting like viewing a tennis match. I picked up and focused on a fighter midway through its run. After a sharp left bank and 180 degree turn at the head of the valley this fighter was so low it disappeared behind the hogback bisecting the valley. I'd shifted my gaze to the bay and picked up another incoming fighter. A split-second later, directly in my line of sight, there was an exploding ball of fire. Black smoke mushroomed like a fat

exclamtion point. I had not seen the first fighter emerge from behind the hogback but it had evidently crashed about a quarter mile short of the bay.

I ran into the office to get binoculars and shout that a fighter had crashed. For the next few minutes I was intent on watching the oily smoke roll upward into the cloud base. Perhaps five minutes elapsed after the crash during which time I forgot all about the other two fighters. When I looked for them they were gone.

Additional shock came several days later with an official announcement: all four fighters had been lost on the mission. Three were either struck by williwaws or flew into cloud obscured mountains at the head of the valley. A fourth crash-landed at sea short of Nassau but the pilot was rescued. No cause for this crash was given.

We were conditioned to military understatement but this seemed too glib an explanation for a multiple tragedy. Sometimes, official releases also contained distortions or discrepancies. In this case, the one crash witnessed was not at the head of the valley but near the bay. Two Wildcats evidently crashed into cloud enshrouded cliffs at the head of the valley and out of our sight. It would have taken great flying skill, judgement, and concentration not to crash. In a fast fighter it required split second timing to know when to execute the banking turn. If the planes had been struck by williwaws the pilots wouldn't have had a chance.

Three planes had been flying prior to the crash. It was hard to believe the other two had been lost within minutes. About ten days later a combat sergeant told some disturbing news about the Wildcats. His remarks added to the mystery of what actually happened that day in the valley.

The Tide of Battle Turns

In mid May, Western Defense Command, Lt. Gen. John L. DeWitt, flew from his San Francisco headquarters to Adak for a conference with Admiral Kinkaid and General Buckner to learn why the Attu campaign was bogged down. DeWitt was under pressure because he had promised the Joint Chiefs of Staff Attu would be retaken in not more than three days. It appeared to those not at the scene or in possession of

all the facts that the responsibility rested with Tactical Commander, Major General Albert E. Brown.

Because of our stalled offensive on all fronts and mounting casualties, Admiral Kinkaid made the decision to relieve Brown of command. The situation on Attu was not of Brown's making but he was superceded May 16, 1943 by Major General Eugene M. Landrum who had been in command of the Adak occupation landing force.

A major U.S. breakthrough was already in progress in the Holtz Bay area at the time Gen. Brown was relieved. This advance changed the tide of battle but came too late to save Brown his command. Holtz Bay had been captured by the evening of May 16. Part of this U.S. Red Beach Northern Force attacked the Japanese Massacre Valley pass defenders from the rear. On the night of May 17, in quiet order, Japanese Commander Colonel Yamasaki withdrew his troops from Massacre/Holtz, Massacre/Sarana passes toward the Chichagof Mountains and Valley and the main camp at Chichagof Harbor. He left Lt. Honna and his company of the 303rd Infantry Battalion to hold Point Able.

Colonel William H. Willoughby's Provisional Scout Battalion had landed at Beach Scarlet on D-day 420 men strong. A week of the bitterest hand-to-hand combat in fog, snow and icy crags had reduced the number to 165 men. They finally joined the U.S. Red Beach Force May 18.

Although two weeks of savage fighting under terrible conditions lay ahead, U.S. forces commanded most of the heights except for the heavily defended peaks areas of Fish Hook Ridge, Buffalo Nose, Sarana Nose, and the still untaken Point Able.

Slowly, relentlessly, the enemy was being compressed into the northeast corner of Attu as planned but the job would take three weeks instead of the estimated three days.

Lindeman's Boat Ride

After the tide of battle turned Lt."Wild Bill" Lindeman made an attempt to reach Alexai Point by small boat. He wanted to check progress on the fighter strip under construction by U.S. Army Engineers.

As the craft neared rocks off Alexai Point its engine quit. Lindeman told the coxswain to "throw out the hook." There was no anchor. He told the coxswain to use his light to signal a destroyer two miles away.

There was no light or semaphore flags, no Very pistol or spare coil of line.

The boat began to smash against offshore rocks. Occupants faced the possibility of drowning in the bay,--a fate that had already befallen others--.

"I can't think of anything more inglorious," Lindeman told me, "than to die because a boat doesn't have an anchor or signalling device."

A last frantic attempt to restart the engine succeeded. With extensive damage the leaking boat made it back to the Massacre Bay beach. In no uncertain terms Lindeman told his old friend Squeaky Anderson about the close call. He suggested that Anderson's boats all be equipped with anchors, signal flares, coil of line or at least a battle light.

"See George about it. I'm busy," said Squeaky.

'George' was George O'Brien the movie star. He was a rough, ready, competent and respected Seabee Lieutenant working under Anderson. Squeaky had recently put him in charge of small boat operations. O'Brien listened to Lindeman's suggestions and quickly remedied the situation.

Toward the end of the battle Lindeman met Father Hubbard the famed Glacier Priest. In a too little-too late gesture the army brought Father Hubbard to Attu in an effort to combat the great number of casualties from exposure, frostbite and trench foot. Father Hubbard was to instruct troops on the proper method to care for their extremities. It was too late to help those who already had fingers, toes, feet or legs amputated. It was too late to give instruction to those engaged in hand-to-hand combat up in the fog, snow and ice.

Even timely expert advice would have been scant help. The problem was with the almost criminally improper footgear and clothing issued at the San Francisco departure point.

A Sergeant and His Men

For a few days starting about May 24 small groups of G.I.'s temporarily relieved on the front line were shuttled out to Casco. Combat packs, webbed belts, helmets and rifles were left on deck under a seaman guard. The G.I.'s were given new dungaree shirts and trousers to wear while their clothes were run through the laundry. After showers the men were brought to the messhall for a good hot meal.

Later, they relaxed on deck while waiting for the boat to take them ashore. Several among the first group of two dozen were fair haired. The rest were swarthy and appeared to be American Indian and Mexican American. Many were chatting while enjoying the added luxury of relatively fresh sea stores cigarettes. A lean and leathery staff sergeant, obviously from Texas by his accent, seemed to be senior noncom.

I engaged him in conversation. In his opinion the southern force would still be trapped at the head of the valley had not the northern force made a break through forcing the Japs to withdraw from the Massacre Bay passes. It would have taken unlimited troops, attacking in endless waves at night to capture the passes.

"Your carrier fighters didn't help," he said.

"You mean that group that came in a week or so ago?" "Those are the ones I'm talking about."

I thought this most ungrateful and defended the navy. "Did you know that all four fighters crashed and three pilots gave their lives to help you?"

He gave me an odd look and took a long drag on his cigarette before answering with a soft question. "Did you know we shot two down ?"

I couldn't think of anything to say.

"We had to. They were bombing and strafing our positions. Because of some foul-up in communications we couldn't make contact with the planes or ship to call off the attacks. We had mounting casualties. Orders from the major were passed down the line to "Shoot the s.o.b's down."

This tragedy, if true, is understandable. Our troops were making repeated assaults on the two passes leading out of the valley. Just as repeatedly they were driven back. This plus a low ceiling and evidence not all coordinates on army and navy maps matched could have led the Wildcats into strafing the wrong troops. This in itself was not unusual. Similar mistakes occurred several times in the Holtz Bay area. Casualties occurred there, too, but no pilots or planes were lost.

In some ways the sergeant's claim made more sense than the official announcement. In another way it defied belief. Two days of ground fire had failed to shoot down a single Zero at Dutch Harbor. For ten days the Japs had been trying to shoot down Eareckson and

his Kingfisher. How could G.I.'s in Massacre Valley shoot down two fighters simply by receiving an order to do so?

Lost in such thoughts I remained silent. I intended asking several questions. Which planes had been shot down and when? What about the one that crashed near the bay? I missed my chance because the sergeant changed the subject with other surprising statements.

He said U.S. troops had gone ashore with orders not to take prisoners. It was assumed every Jap would fight to the death rather than surrender. This had not been an issue until the fighting was at close quarters up on the ridges. After being trapped in the valley for five days while being slowly cut to pieces the sergeant and his men were in a bloodthirsty mood and looking for revenge. They felt no qualm killing several badly wounded enemy.

A Jap hiding in a crevice must have known his unit's positions had been overrun. He was alone and about to die. He decided to take as many G.I.'s as possible with him. Waving a white rag he came out of hiding.

This was such a surprise the sergeant and his men didn't shoot. With pantomime the sergeant indicated to the prisoner he should raise both arms and clasp hands atop head. The white rag concealed a palmed grenade. This was activated when the Jap tapped it against his helmet. Before he could finish his throwing motion the semicircle of bunched G.I.'s cut him down "with so much lead the bastard would have sunk with two life jackets." The grenade was a dud.

"I felt bad," said the sergeant,"because my poor judgement could have cost lives. All I could think of was: Never give a sucker and even break. We'd been the suckers. I should have shot that sonavabitch the moment he cleared the rocks." We vowed on the spot never to be suckered again. Several men nearby murmured agreement on this while others nodded solemnly.

A grisly incident a day later at Point Able indicates the vow was kept. Although the sergeant didn't mention the date, this likely occurred May 21 the day that stronghold was finally taken. Six Japs in a bunker were cut off, out of grenades, almost out of ammo and surrounded. They surrendered, were rooted out, patted down for weapons, lined up and shot.

U.S. troops on Attu had evidently adapted the

brutal but practical Japanese method of waging war: Give no quarter, ask no quarter, no holds barred and screw the Geneva convention.

WWII battles for Pacific atolls and small islands such as Attu all share this characteristic of being particularly savage affairs. Battles fought on grander scale in the North African desert and Europe were also grim and bloody with greater casualties but there was a different flavor because of the options available. There were huge cities, civilian populations, well established networks of railroads, highways and secondary roads. In many areas there are wide navigable rivers with a spiderweb of interconnecting canals. There is scope, elbow room.

By contrast the Attu battlefield was remote and tiny. Both sides committed all available forces. Once the U.S. amphibious troops were ashore there was no turning back. Evacuation for either side was impossible or impractical. Attackers and defenders alike had their backs to the sea. It was like stuffing an angry badger and a wildcat in a burlap sack and tying the neck. Options were reduced to one: Annihilate or be annihilated. Can there be a more fertile ground for barbarism?

To my knowledge not a single GI was captured and held prisoner by the Japs on Attu. U.S. forces captured about one percent of the enemy defenders. These were taken on the last few days of fighting when the battle had already been decided. It is safe to say the sergeant was speaking the truth about receiving orders not to take prisoners.

His other statements made sense and I believed him. He and his men had that haggard, bone-weary look. He told his stories matter of factly with neither braggadocio nor apology. His manner was: This is the way it is, take it or leave it. I don't believe he was trying to impress a sailor. He had been told he and his men would be returned to the front lines after the trip to the Casco. A man in his boots walks with truth.

Another boatload of GI's came alongside. The sergeant and his group were ordered to gather gear and assemble for departure. Although the soldiers had stocked up on cigarettes they thanked me again for the two cartons I'd handed out for sharing. Goodbyes were said. All I could do was wish them good luck.

Japanese Air and Submarine Attacks

Nineteen Bettys loaded with bombs took off from Paramushiro May 13, 1943 and arrived over Attu. Fog and clouds obscured the island and surrounding waters. Unable to locate targets the Bettys returned to Paramushiro.

This time equipped with torpedoes, nineteen Bettys arrived over Holtz Bay May 22nd. They were searching for our fleet of warships reported offshore by Colonel Yamasaki. Again, the weather was poor but a break in the clouds revealed two U.S. warships. The Bettys dropped through the hole and attacked USS Charleston and destroyer USS Phelps. Twisting and turning at high speed, both ships evaded all torpedoes. Two enemy bombers were reported shot down, one by the attacked ships and one by U.S. Army anti-aircraft guns.

Flying at 14,000 feet, sixteen Bettys approached Attu the following day. They were intercepted by five P-38 Lightnings from Amchitka. Bombs were jettisoned when the P-38s attacked. In the ensuing dogfights at least six Bettys were shot down in the vicinity of Attu, three within the space of a few moments by P-38 pilot Lieutenant Frederick Moore. Of the sixteen bombers only seven made it back to Paramushiro. For Japan, this would be the worst air disaster of the Aleutian Campaign.

Two of the five P-38s were shot down but one pilot survived. He crash-landed his P-38 in Massacre Bay and was rescued by the pilot and crewman of a Kingfisher.

Enemy submarines had also been firing torpedoes at our ships but all had missed. Admiral Rockwell's flagship, Nevada, and Pennsylvania had fish fired at them while in the midst of a shore bombardment of Holtz Bay May 13th. Shortly after these attacks, U.S. destroyers Edwards and Farragut sank I-31 in the Holtz Bay area.

Again, on May 15 off Holtz Bay, Pennsylvania dodged torpedoes, and four fired at transport J. Franklin Bell missed. This enemy submarine was hounded out of the immediate area by destroyers.

About May 13, a Japanese task force under Northern Division Fleet Commander, Admiral Kawase sortied from Paramushiro, destination Attu. This force of heavy and light cruisers, destroyers, and the veteran Aleutian seaplane carrier Kamikawa Maru had been ordered to bring replacements and to provide naval support for Colonel Yamasaki and his embattled

troops. In addition, two battleships, a carrier, cruisers and destroyers of the Imperial Fifth Fleet based at Truk had recently been assigned to Kawase's command. This formidable task force had refueled at Tokyo and was making ready for sea at Paramushiro to join Kawase for the showdown at Attu. Kawase received orders to await the arrival of these forces at a rendezvous 300 miles south of the Komandorski Islands. Japanese plans were changed when Kawase received a report from Colonel Yamasaki that the U.S. Attu fleet included three battleships and an aircraft carrier. Kawase's fleet was subsequently directed to circle at the rendezvous point and await further orders.

Admiral Rockwell had received the U.S. Naval Intelligence report that a sizeable task force had sortied from Paramushiro toward Attu. By May 16, however, Rockwell's fleet had expended most of its heavy calibre ammunition in shore bombardment. Rockwell was in no position to engage even a small enemy task force.

Had the Japanese known our desperate situation and ordered Admiral Kawase's fleet to attack, our ships would have been forced to withdraw. U.S. troops ashore would have been cut off from supplies and trapped as the Japanese were. Instead, the Imperial High Command recalled Kawase's fleet to save it for fighting at a more appropriate time under better odds. They did, however, send a flotilla of large I-class submarines toward Attu in the hope they could evacuate the Japanese garrison. U.S. destroyers kept these submarines at bay.

A Wild Ending

Lieutenant Honna and his 2nd Company, 303rd Infantry Battalion had been killed to the last man when U.S. forces finally captured Point Able May 21. When Sarana Nose was captured the following day it removed the last strong Japanese defensive position on Colonel Yamasaki's southern flank guarding Chichagof Valley. His northern flank defenses crumpled when U.S. troops took Fish Hook Ridge and Buffalo Nose May 28. Driven from high ground, the noose tightened, and his back to the sea, Colonel Yamasaki had about twelve hundred men left by the night of May 29, 1943. Four hundred of these were hospital cases incapable of further combat.

His troops were exhausted and almost out of food

and ammunition. He knew that neither help nor evacuation was possible. Yamasaki's brilliantly conceived and executed delaying action had exacted a terrible toll from U.S. troops but now it was almost over.

Yamasaki chose to mount an all out attack in one last desperate gamble. His daring plan was to break through the weakest point in the American line in Chichagof Valley. Because U.S. troops commanded the heights on both sides, Yamasaki selected nighttime for his suicide charge.

His objective was the concentration of 105mm. howitzers that had been painstakingly dragged up to the head of Massacre Valley over a part creek, part mud trail laid out by the Army Corps of Engineer's. If Yamasaki could reach these guns he could turn them on the Americans and then raid and destroy the vast supply dumps in Massacre Valley. With food, guns and ammunition he planned to retreat into the southern mountains to continue the fight with whatever forces he had left.

Yamasaki ordered that all Japanese wounded who could not walk or fight be killed by injections of morphine or by grenades. Everyone else assembled for final orders and the attack began.

In a shrieking banzai charge the Japanese raced up Chichagof Valley in the dead of night and overran U.S. positions. Killing and being killed as they went, they swept through a U.S. aid station where the wounded were bayoneted in their sleeping bags. Yamasaki's wild onslaught carried to near the top of Engineer's Hill before it faltered.

This initial suicidal banzai charge during WWII temporarily demoralized U.S. troops. It was the 50th Combat Engineer Regiment that saved the night. They were the first to regroup and form a line that met and halted one final frenzied charge. In the terror filled night, small groups of enemy soldiers got over the top of the pass and descended to the Massacre Valley side. These enemy troops were cut down just before they reached the 105mm. howitzers.

This Banzai charge the night of May 29 ended organized enemy resistance on Attu. Many of the remaining Japanese chose to commit suicide with grenades rather than surrender. The deadly work of tracking down and rooting out individual Japanese continued for three months. The last known enemy defender was killed by a SeaBee road crew in the hills

southwest of Casco Cove about September 1, 1943.

Of the 2650 men Colonel Yamasaki commanded, all were killed with the exception of 29 prisoners, most of whom were taken on May 30, 31, and June 1, 1943. It was unfortunate that enemy prisoners had not been taken earlier for it might have prevented some American casualties. The few prisoners readily talked and willingly divulged much information. Because they were never expected to submit to capture or surrender they had not been instructed to remain silent.

Fifteen thousand U.S. troops had been committed to recapture
Attu. 549 were killed, 1148 wounded, and 2100 knocked out of action by disease or non-battle injuries. The bulk of these 2100 casualties was caused by trench or immersion foot, frostbite, and exposure.

There were most likely more toes, fingers, feet and legs amputated as a result of the Battle of Attu than any battle of similar magnitude in history.

The Battle of Attu is little known but in terms of men engaged versus casualties it was one of the bloodiest victories in the Pacific Campaigns of WWII. In this it ranks second only to the Battle of Iwo Jima. For every ten enemy killed on Attu almost seven Americans were killed or wounded. If one adds the other 2100 casualties, the ratio becomes costlier still.

A Japanese Medical Officer's Journal

Prior to his final Banzai charge the night of May 29, Japanese Commander Yasuro Yamasaki ordered all official records burned. That these documents were destroyed has deprived historians of the day-to-day details of the Japanese version of the Battle of Attu.

The few prisoners taken were mostly rear echelon cooks, hospital orderlies and conscripted civilians attached to a labor force. They could add little to the overall Japanese picture of the battle.

Fortunately, many Japanese soldiers on Attu were inveterate diary keepers. These recovered documents provide some grim details that took place behind enemy lines from May 11 to May 29, 1943.

The journal most often quoted is that of medical officer Lt. Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi. This diary most likely gained prominence through fascination with Tatsuguchi's personal history and because of the way he reportedly died.

A brief summary of his education and military service was found on the back pages of his journal. Translated into English by U.S. Army Intelligence we learn the following facts:

March 16, 1919, graduated from Kerjie Middle School
prefecture of Hiroshima.

March 2, 1923, graduated from Frazier English Academy. Septmember 15, 1926 to May 22, 1932, Pacific Union College,
Medical Department, Anqwin, California.

September 1, 1933 to June 1937- College of Medical
Evangelists.

September 8, 1938 received California Medical License. January 10, 1941, inducted into 1st Imperial Guard Infantry
Regiment.

May 1, 1941, Promoted to Superior Private. July 20, 1941, Ordered as Officer candidate. August 1, 1941, Promoted to Corporal.

September 1941, Entered Army Medical School.

October 1941, Graduated Army Medical School.

October 1941, Promoted to Sergeant Major- Ordered as
Probationary Officer.

December 1941, Acting Officer, Japanese Medical Officer.

Additional facts about Paul Nobuo Tatsuguchi came to light after the war. Friends who knew him well while he studied in the U.S. report he was born and raised in Hiroshima, Japan. His father was a dentist. His mother was organist at the Seventh Day Adventist Church. During his American studies, he fell in love with Taeko Miyake, a Japanese girl studying in the U.S. They married and returned to Japan where Tatsuguchi became an Adventist medical missionary. he was a pacifist loyal to Japan but fond of America. The Tatsughchis planned to return to the U.S. to raise their family and live out their lives.

Translation of this diary by:

Headquarters Landing Force
Office of Asst. Chief of Staff G-2
Massacre Valley, Attu Island
June 1, 1943

Northern 5216 Detachment (Extraction of Diary)

Nebu Tatsuguchi
North Sea Defense Field Hospital

"5/12 - - 0155

Carrier based plane flew over--fired at it. There is a low fog and the summit is clear. Evacuated to the summit. Air raids carried out frequently until 2000. Heard land noise. It is a naval gun firing. Prepared battle equipment.

Information: American transports, about 41, began landing at Hokkai Misaki. 20 boats landed at Massacre Bay. It seems that they are going to unload heavy equipment.

Days activities: Air raid, naval gun firing, landing of U.S.
forces.

5/13 - - Battle

The U.S. forces landed at Shiba Dai and Massacre Bay. The enemy has advanced to the bottom of Nisumi Yama from Shiba Dai. Have engaged them. On the other hand, Massacre Bay is defended by only one platoon but, upon the unexpected attack the AA machine cannon was destroyed and we have withdrawn. In night attacks we have captured 20 enemy rifles. There is a tremendous mountain artillery gun firing. Approximately 15 patients come in the field hospital. The field hospital is attached to Arai Engineer unit.

5/14 - - Battle

Our two submarines from Kiska assisting us have greatly damaged 2 enemy ships. Lt. Suyuki died by shots from rifle. Continous flow of wounded in the field hospital. In the evening, the U.S. forces used gas, but no damage was done on account of the strong wind. Took refuge in trenches in the daytime and took care of the patients during bombardment. Enemy strength must be a division. Our desperate defense is holding up well.

5/15 - - Battle

Continuous flow of casualties to our field hospital caused by fierce bombardment of enemy land and naval forces. The enemy has a great number of Negroes and Indians. The West Arm units have withdrawn to near Shitagata-Dai. In the raid, I was ordered to

West Arms but it was called off. Just lay down from fatigue in barracks. Facial expression of soldiers back from West Arms is tense. They all went back to firing line soon.

5/16 - - Battle

If Shitagata-Dai is occupied by the enemy, the fate of East Arms is decided. So, burnt documents and prepared to destroy the patients. At that moment, there was an order from the Hqx. to sector units. Proceeded to Chichagof Harbor by way of Umanoso. 0100 in the morning, patients from Ind. Inf. was lost so accompanied the patients. There was an air raid so took refuge in the former field hospital cave. The guns of a Lockheed spitted fire and flew past our cave.

5/17 - - Battle

At night, about 1800, under cover of darkness left the cave. The stretchers went over muddy road, steep hills of no man's land. No matter how far or how much we went, we did not get to the pass. Was rather irritated in the fog by the thought of getting lost. Sat down after every 20 or 30 steps. Would sleep, dream and wake up again. Same thing over again. The patient on the stretcher who does not move is frostbitten. After all the effort, met sector commander Colonel Yamasaki. The pass is a straight line without any width and a steep line toward Chichagof Harbor. Sitting on the butt and lifting the feet, I slide very smoothly and change direction with the sword. Slid down in about 20 minutes. After that, arrived at Chichagof Harbor ward after straggling. The time expended was 9 hours for all this, without leaving any patients, opened new field hospital. Walking is now extremely difficult from left knee rheumatism which reoccurred on the pass.

The results of our navy the submarine and special underwater crafts in the vicinity of Chichagof Harbor since the 14th: Battleship, Cruisers 3, destroyer, air-borne troops, transport 7, by the favorable turn since the battle of East Arms, reserves come back. Off-shore of Shiba-Dai, 6 destroyers are guarding one transport.

5/18 - - Battle

The Yenegawa detachment abandoned East and West Arms and withdrew to Umanoso. About 60 wounded came to

the field hospital. I had to care for all of them by myself all through the night. Heard that enemy carried out a landing in Chichagof Harbor, everybody did combat preparation and waited. Had 2 grenades ready. 2nd Lt. Omura left for the front line on Hokuchin-Yama. Said farewell. At night a patient came in who engaged a friendly unit by mistake and who had received a wound on the wrist. The counter sign is Isshi Heke.

5/19 - - Battle

At night there was a phone call from Sector Unit Headquarters. In some spots of the beach there are some friendly float-type planes waiting. Went into Attu village Church- felt like someone's house- some blankets were scattered around. Was told to translate a field order presumed to have been dropped by an enemy officer in Massacre Bay. Was ordered to evaluate a detail map sketch of Massacre and Holtz Bay which was in the possession of Captain Robert J. Edward, Adj. of Colonel Smith. Got tired went to sleep. 1st Lt. Jhiio is also in charge of translation.

5/20 - - Battle

The hard fighting of our 303rd En. in Massacre Bay is fierce, and it is to our advantage. Have captured enemy weapon and have used that to fight. Mowed down 10 enemy closing in under the fog. Five of our men and one Medical NCO died. Heard enemy pilots faces can be seen around Umanese, the enemy naval gun firing near our hospital ward is fierce- drops around 20 meters away.

5/21 - - Battle

Was strafed when amputating a patient's arm. It is the first time since moving over to Chichagof Harbor that I went in an air raid shelter. Enemy plane is a Martin. Nervousness of our C.O. is severe and he has said his last word to his officers and NCOs-- that he will die tomorrow, gave all his articles away. Hasty chap---this fellow. The officers on the front are doing a fine job. Everyone heard this became desperate and things became disorderly.

5/22 - - Battle.

0600- air raid again. Strafing killed one medical man. Medical man Okayaki wound in right thigh and fractured arm. During the night a mortar shell came awful close.

5/23 - - Battle

17 friendly medium naval bombers destroyed a cruiser offshore. By naval gun firing, a hit was scored on the pillar pole of the tents for patients and the tent gave in and 2 died instantly. From 0200 in the morning to 1600 stayed in fox holes. Days ration 1 go, 5 shakers (1.5 lb.) Nothing else. Officers and men alike in front. Everybody looked around for food and stole everything they could find.

5/24 - - Battle

It sleeted and was extremely cold- stayed at Nisumi barracks alone. A great amount of shells were dropped by naval gunfire and rocks and mud flew all around the roof and falls down. In a fox hole about 5 yds. away Hayaska, a medical man died instantly by penetration of shrapnel through his heart.

5/25 - - Battle.

Naval gun firing, aerial bombardment, trench warfare- the worst is yet to come. The enemy is constructing their positions. Bn Commander died. At Umanose they cannot fully accomodate all patients. It has been said that at Massacre Bay district the road coming to Sector Unit Headquarters is isolated. Am suffering from diarrhea and feel dizzy.

5/26 - - Battle

By naval gun firing, it felt like the Nisumi Barracks blew up and things shook up tremendously. Consciousness becomes vague. One tent burnt down by a hit from incendiary bomb. Strafing planes hit the next room, 2 hits from 30 calibre shell, one stopped on the ceiling and the other penetrated. My room looks like an awful mess from the sand and pebbles that came down from the roof. Hirose 1st Lt. of medical corps is also wounded. There was a ceremony of Granting of Imperial Edict. The last line of Umanose was broken through. No hope for reinforcement, will die for the cause of Imperial Edict.

5/27 - - Battle

Diarrhea continues. Pain is severe. Took everything from pills, opium, morphine, then slept pretty well. Strafing by planes. Roof broke through. There is less than 1000 left from more than 2000 troops. Wounded from coast defense unit, field hospital headquarters, field post office; the rest are

on the front line.

5/28 - -

The remaining ration is for only two days, our artillery has
been completely destroyed. There is a sound of trench mortars--also AA gun. The company on the bottom of Attu Fuji has been completely annihilated except one. Rations for about two days. I wonder if Commander Yenegawa and some of the men are still living. Other companies have been completely annihilated except one or two. 303rd Bn has been defeated. Yenegawa Bn is still holding Umanose. Continuous case of suicide. Half of the Sector Unit Hdqts. was blown away. Heard that they gave 400 shots of morphine to severely wounded and killed them. Ate half-fried thistle. It is the first time I have eaten something fresh in six months. It is a delicacy. Order from the sector commander to move the field hospital to the island, but it was called off.

5/29 - -

Today at 2000 o'clock we assembled in front of Headquarters. The field hospital took part too. The last assault is to be carried out. All the patients in the hospital were made to commit suicide. Only 33 years of living and I am to die here. I have no regrets. Banzai to Emperor. I am grateful that I have kept the peace in my soul which Ehkist bestowed upon me; At 1800 took care of all the patients with grenades. Good-bye Taeke, my beloved wife who loved me to the last. Until we meet again, greet you God-speed, Misaka, who just became 4 years old, will grow up unhindered. I feel sorry for you Tokiko, born February of this year and gone without seeing your father. Well, be good. Matsue, (brother) Kochan, Sukechan, Hasachan, Mittichan, Good-bye. The number participating in this attack is a little over 1000, to take enemy arillery position. It seems that the enemy is expecting an all out attack tomorrow. I have no regrets dying for the Emperor and Christ....."

Die he did: not with hundreds of others on the nighttime banzai attack at the head of Chichagof Valley but alone, the following day at the headquarters area of Chichagof Harbor. A G.I.witness states Tatsuguchi came running out of the field hospital cave. He was waving a bible and shouting,

"Don't shoot. I'm a Christian." Another GI farther away shot him. Because of strong winds he did not hear Tatsuguchi's plea.

Some of the information stated in the diary was inaccurate but believed by the writer to be true. U.S. forces did not use gas but numerous smoke bombs or shells were dropped for the purpose of directing artillery and naval gun fire. Some of our ships were attacked by enemy aircraft and submarines but no damage was reported.

Civilians Engulfed In All-out War Suffer

What was the fate of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Foster Jones and the forty-three Attuans who chose to remain on the island rather than be evacuated by USS Casco in May 1942?

In answer to this question we have the story of Innokenti Golodoff. Innokenti's account was filmed and recorded for historical purposes by a U.S. Navy television crew in May 1979. This was during a reunion held at Adak to celebrate Armed Force's Day and graduation exercises at Robert C. Reeve Senior High School, Adak, Alaska. Present at the reunion were Innokenti, his brother Willie Golodoff, Steve Hodikoff, Jr, (all young men when the Japanese invaded their home island of Attu and who now reside at Nazan Bay, Atka), and William Charles House, the U.S.Navy AerM1c who held out for forty-nine days on Kiska. House and the three natives lived together for a time in the forward hold of Nagata Maru, the ship that took them to POW camps in Japan.

On the morning of June 7, 1942, Innokenti recalls a stir of excitement in the village when four large ships appeared outside Chichagof Harbor. He grabbed field glasses and with other natives went to the point to make further observations. The group saw many small landing craft coming toward shore. He believes the time was around 0900 hours.

The natives returned to the village and reported their observations to Mr. Jones. Jones told them the ships were undoubtedly Japanese. Since nothing could be done to change the situation and because it was Sunday, the natives went to church until 1100. After church, Innokenti could see figures moving in the hills and coming toward the village but they were too

far away to identify.

A group of Japanese soon came into the village from the hills to the west. A short time later a second group appeared in the hills and fired into the village before they entered. Innokenti recalls that Anne Hodikoff sustained a bullet wound in her leg.

When the firing started there was great confusion and
Innokenti ran away to the east. A bullet passed very near his head and knocked him down and unconscious. The Japanese had small hand-drawn cannon and it was later believed it may have been a near miss by a cannon shell that felled him. Innokenti was believed dead. When he awoke he fled into the hills and hid.

"The Japanese in the village were shouting and I thought I heard screaming," Innokenti recalls. "I thought that the people in the village were being tortured and when I stood up to get a better look some Japanese soldiers with fixed bayonets surrounded me. After I was searched for weapons the soldiers returned me to the village and put me in the schoolhouse with some other youngsters."

Most of the other Aleuts had been herded into the church except for nine young men who'd fled. The Japanese tried to find them but failed. However, with the forced help from Aleuts, the nine were located and brought back to the village. All the Aleuts were held in the church for about half a day until allowed to return to their homes.

An air of mystery still clings to Mr. Charles Foster Jones's last eighteen hours on Attu. His body was brought out of the hills by Japanese soldiers the day after the invasion. The natives were told Jones committed suicide by slashing his wrists. A small group of natives, (Innokenti could not recall who they were), was allowed to see the slashed wrists. No other wounds were visible because the body was wrapped in a blanket.

How Jones came to be in the hills is not clear. Mrs Jones survived POW camp in Japan. She stated that on the day Attu was invaded she and her husband were locked in the schoolhouse and beaten. Later that day, Japanese soldiers took Mr. Jones away and she never saw him again.

Mr. Jones's body was disinterred in August 1947 and reburied with military honors in Anchorage. Frank Lakinoff and Alex Proffokoff, Attu Aleut POWs, accompanied Colonel T.C. Franks, Grave Registration

Officer, to Attu to reclaim the body. Lakinoff, whom the Japanese had forced to help dig the shallow grave, was able to recognize its exact location. Jones's skull had a bullet hole behind the ear. The angle at which the bullet entered proved it could not have been self-inflicted. Evidently the Japanese shot Jones then slashed a dead man's wrists to make it appear a suicide.

When the natives told Etta Jones that her husband was dead she slashed her wrist in a suicide attempt but was saved by a Japanese doctor. The Japanese had two Aleut women stay with her at all times until she was sent to Japan in July 1942. There she was interned in a convent with eighteen POW Australian nurses. Repatriated at the end of WWII, Mrs Jones never believed that her husband would take his own life and she maintained until her death that the Japanese murdered him.

The Japanese allowed the Aleuts freedom about the village at Attu but fishing had to be conducted within the harbor. All boats had to be back before 1800 hours or the fishermen would be shot. Innokenti stated that the Aleuts lived an otherwise normal life in their homes until about September 12, 1942 when the Japanese ordered them to pack all their belongings and food and move onto a ship. The Japanese also packed their gear, burned the houses and buildings they had built but did not burn the Aleut
buildings. All preparations were made during daylight hours. When darkness came the Aleuts were taken out to a small ship and the Japanese boarded three larger vessels. These four ships departed Attu for Kiska about September 15, 1942. [2]

The Aleuts were transferred to the Nagata Maru in Kiska Harbor September 17, 1942 and were joined by AerM1c House, also a POW. On September 22, 1942, the 10,000 ton, coal burning Nagata Maru sailed for Otaru, Hokkaido Island, Japan.

A story surfaces periodically that the Japanese shot Mike Hodikoff, chief of the Attuans, in order to prevent organized resistance by the Aleuts on Attu. This story is untrue. Charley House and Chief Hodikoff spent many hours in conversation in the forward hold of the Nagata Maru. House was impressed with Chief Hodikoff's intelligence and the fact that he was fluent in four languages: Russian, Japanese, Aleut, and English.

The Aleuts disembarked at Otaru. After

interrogation they were taken to a large building which would be their POW home for the duration. This building was partitioned into separate rooms including quarters for a resident Japanese policeman who was both a guard and supervisor. Except for those who worked in a nearby clay pit, the Aleuts had little freedom from house confinement. Innokenti remembers that the policeman who lived with them for over three years, treated the Aleuts with some kindness.

Coal stoves provided heat in the winter. Hot baths were available whenever the Aleuts wanted them. Plenty of blankets were supplied and the Attuans slept on the floor on the standard Japanese Tatumi mats. Their food ration was rice three times a day, with occasional fish and vegetables such as potatoes, onions, carrots, seaweed, and Misu, a soya bean paste.

A monthly doctor's visit for sick call, routine examinations and innoculations constituted the prisoners' medical care. In an emergency, the policeman would contact the doctor who would then make a house call. Hospitalization was provided for the very sick.

No Red Cross aid was provided to the Aleuts during the entire war while other Allied military prisoners in Japan received food parcels, some clothing, and medicines for their camps on the last two Christmas's.

Only about half of the Attuans survived the war. Four infants born in Japan died there. Most of the deaths occurred during the last year of internment. It was during this period that food rations were reduced to starvation levels. Malnutrition, sickness, and disease followed quickly. Some of the Aleuts claim that many of the deaths occurred shortly after the very sick received needle injections.

Chief Michael Gorga Hodikoff was one of those who didn't make it.

There is some disagreement among the Aleuts about the number of natives present on Attu at the time of the Japanese occupation, the number that left Attu, the number transported to Japan, and the number during POW confinement. The figures vary between thirty-nine and forty-three. Those surviving Attuans, older than Innokenti at the time of the enemy occupation, report that Mr. John Artumenoff died during the Japanese shooting attack on the village and a Mr. Mike Prossoff

died on Attu August 15, 1942. Anicia Prokopioff, age about thirty-five, reportedly died on the ship enroute from Attu to Kiska in September 1942. She was buried at sea in a cove on Agattu Island. Additionally, there were two Elizabeth Golodoffs, both infants, one of whom was born in Japan and died there.

At the end of the war the resident Japanese policeman took the survivors to the Otaru airport to board a U.S. Army plane for Okinawa. At Okinawa the Aleuts were examined in a U.S. Army hospital and kept in an army camp for two weeks before being flown to Manila.

Having spent five days in Manila the Attuans were placed aboard the U.S. Navy transport Brewster for the long voyage to San Francisco. Mrs Etta Jones visited the Attuans at San Francisco during their two day stay under Red Cross supervision. After a train ride to Tacoma, Washington, the Aleuts were given a thorough physical examination at the Indian Hospital then transferred to Seattle.

While at Seattle, the Attuans learned they would not be allowed to return to Attu because the survivors would not make a self-supporting economic group, that their homes, church and schoolhouse had been destroyed during the battle in May 1943, and that the habitat for fur bearing animals on which they depended for cash income had been destroyed and would take more time to recover.

The natives of Atka generously offered to let the Attuans incorporate into their village at Nazan Bay. Over the past several hundred years the Atkans and Attuans had their often bitter differences. Because of the distance which separates their islands they also spoke different dialects. There was an economically sound mutual benefit to a merger: incorporation would allow the two peoples to pool their valuable rights to trap blue fox in the western Aleutians.

The Attuans were transferred to Adak, then by power barge to Nazan Bay, Atka on December 11, 1945. Resettlement was not easy but has been accomplished by a resourceful, intelligent, adaptable people. Forty years later, the few surviving Attuans, and their descendents are still at Nazan Bay. In many ways it is tragic that the surviving residents of the only U.S. home soil on which a battle took place during WWII were never allowed to return to their home island. While the possibility remains as remote as Attu, if

given the chance at this late date it is not known how many would choose to be resettled again to start life anew at Attu.

Had the Attuans chosen to be evacuated by USS Casco in May 1942 it is doubtful they would have fared better. This is the real tragedy.

After the Japanese attacks on Dutch Harbor in June 1942, the Aleuts of Atka, Umnak, Unalaska, Sedanka, Akutan, and the Pribilof Islands were evacuated. They had no choice and were removed to detention camps in southeastern Alaska where they existed under conditions that at times were far worse than the Japanese POW building in Otaru. The mortality rate was about the same.

Their rights and privileges as U.S. citizens ignored, about 800 Aleuts were interned. The largest group was from the Pribilof Islands of St. Paul and St. George. These Aleuts were taken to an abandoned cannery at Funter Bay near Juneau. Here as at other camps, the Aleuts suffered unimaginable neglect, deprivation and hardship from June 1942 until mid-to-late 1945 when they were finally returned to their home islands.

These Aleuts comprise an unsung and little known group. The other group whose rights were ignored with resultant internship during these years being the U.S. citizens of Japanese descent.

There was, however, a vast difference in the way the U.S. government treated the two groups. Why the Aleuts were treated worse, in most cases, than the interned Japanese has never been made clear. Perhaps it was because there were many more Japanese,--enough to notice--, and they were interned in more obvious places geographically. Who would ever know or care about a few Aleuts conveniently tucked away at remote locations in southeastern Alaska?

A native corporation, the Aleutian-Pribilof Islands Association, has been conducting extensive research into this tragic episode of Aleut (American) history. The natives are presently involved in seeking reparations from the U.S. Government for loss of property and loss of life. The association's March 1979 report contains a lengthy article written by Mr. Patrick Pletnikoff, Executive Director of the corporation, entitled "The Aleut Holocaust".

Mr. Pletnikoff writes, "During the course of our research, the many people we talked to had very vivid recollections of the events, and in many cases did not wish to recall the situation and the conditions to which they were subjected. This is totally understandable, as people generally do not wish to recall painful events. However, we pressed on and will continue to research as we feel that this era must be documented from the Aleut point of view and must be understood by all concerned. This story has never been told and is one which must be dealt with properly by the responsible governments and individuals involved.

Nowhere in recent U.S. history has such a tragic occurrence taken place in regard to its citizenship. One need only ask the question, "why?' Why did so much tragedy take place? The simplest answer is that there was a war effort on. Then the next question is: why did the U.S. Government wait so long before returning the people to their homes after the threat had sufficiently passed? There is no good answer, as the documents we have reviewed certainly do not give any indication. Yet it was during the year prior to returning home that the greatest tragedies occurred and the record of deaths sharply rose. I submit that there are no easy answers; however, I am convinced that the Government was totally negligent in regard to our people. There is every indication, from reports and documented evidence, that this tragedy might have been averted or at least diminished if the Government had acted properly and with concern for the people for whom they were responsible. Apparently responsibility was not foremost in the minds of government officials when their decisions were made about the Aleut people."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in some cases and the Bureau of Indian Affairs in others, had direct responsibility for the administration and support of the interment camps. At least some of these officials were concerned with the problem as evidenced by one document Mr. Pletnikoff's research turned up. To quote further from the, "Aleut Holocaust": "On October 28, 1943, a Mr. Frank W. Hynes wrote a letter to Mr. Ward T. Bower of the
Fish and Wildlife Service, calling attention to the extremely urgent necessity of drastic and positive action to improve conditions affecting the Pribilof natives at Funter Bay. A portion of that letter reads:

"Being closest to the scene, this office naturally bears the brunt of criticism and it is becoming more and more difficult to defend our position. Scarcely a day passes that some well-meaning person does not descend upon us with recriminations for our heartless methods. Censorship has kept the press off our necks thus far but this line of defense is weakening rapidly. A few days ago we were advised by one of the physicians who had inspected the camps and aided in emergency work there, that he was preparing a report to the Surgeon General of the United States and also to Secretary Ickes and had no intention of 'pulling any punches'. He warned that it was only a question of time until some publication such as Life Magazine would get hold of the story and play it up, much to the
disadvantage of the Service and the Department of the Interior as a whole. He pointed out that the value of this year's fur seal take from the Pribilofs would nearly equal the original purchase price of Alaska, yet the people who had made it possible are being herded into quarters unfit for pigs; denied adequate medical attention; lack of a healthful diet and even facilities to keep warm and are virtually prisoners of the Government, though theorectically possessing the status of citizenship." The letter goes on to say: "It has long been apparent that the camps were not operating successfully, even as temporary refuges, and we are convinced that unless adequate measures are taken to improve conditions before the arduous winter months begin there is more than a possibility that the death toll from tuberculosis, pneumonia, influenza and other diseases will so decimate the ranks of the natives that few will survive to return to the island."

Other reports describe living conditions in detail. It is not a pretty picture. While reading the "Aleut Holocaust" the following excerpt caught my eye because it has the chilling overtones of a coverup. To further quote Mr. Pletnikoff:..."Other
records related to the internment at Killisnoo, Burnett Island and Ward Cove are not readily available. During the course of our research we found that most of these records were in fact destroyed by the U.S. Government as "non-essential documents"".

One surprising document Mr. Pletnikoff's research yielded was a report of the Japanese invasion of Attu

written by war correspondent Mikizo Fukuzawa. It was Fukuzawa who while on Kiska the previous year had been escorted by a Capt. Kanazaki to view the skin and bones thin Charles House, AerM1c, USN the day after he ended his forty-nine day holdout. Fukuzawa's report filed in Tokyo in 1943 and entitled, "Attack on the Aleutians", corroborates much of what Innokenti Golodoff and other natives recall about the enemy occupation of Attu.

Fukuzawa stated: "The troops split into two parties, a forward scouting party and the main force. Both groups were to move into Chichagof. However, the forward scout party became lost due to poor maps, and marched to a hill overlooking Massacre Bay. The mistake was immediately realized and the party returned to Chichagof, arriving at West Peak, overlooking the village, at about 7:30 the same morning. The main force had already reached the village.....From the flank of West Peak, the forward scouting
party opened fire on the village with light and heavy machine guns, as the cannon had been abandoned because of the rough terrain....The village of Chichagof consisted of a white church,
a gray school house and ten or more houses. At the entrance of the school, the Japanese flag was seen to be flying. It was then realized the main force had arrived and already occupied the village. When the Imperial Army first came through the snow into the village, the native inhabitants were thrown into panic by the sudden turn of events, and ran about in quite a confused manner."

Surviving Attuans state that a few Japanese soldiers in the village were killed and others wounded during the shooting spree by the advance scout party. In light of the negative aspects of the imprecise invasion of Attu I'm surprised Fukuzawa was allowed to file his report. It has been painfully evident throughout this book that both sides made mistakes, often tragic, during the Aleutian Campaign of WWII. I feel no true satisfaction knowing the enemy also died on occasion from friendly fire.

A Change In Air Operations Out of Casco Cove

At the end of May Mr. Tatom sent CAerM Max White and additional office help from Adak to Amchitka. White relieved CAerM C.C."Williwaw" Herold who

received temporary duty orders to the Casco at Attu. At the same time eight VP-61 Amchitka based PBYs were transferred to Attu to relieve the six PBYs under command of Lt. Donley. Herold and the planes arrived June 2,
1943.

For several months the Amchitka based PBYs of VP-61 along with PV-1s of VB-135 had been flying the long-range sector searches west of Attu. During the battle for Attu Lt. Donley's PBY's had been engaged primarily as ASW screen for ships of our task force. With Attu secured it was time for this island to play a more major role as a patrol base. Casco Cove is 260 miles west of Constantine Harbor, Amchitka. Attu based PBYs could extend patrols this distance while carrying the same fuel load. Amchitka's planes would continue to search the southernmost sectors while Attu's PBYs patrolled the area toward Kamchatka and Paramushiro.

A few days after Herold arrived Lt. Donley and his planes returned to Whidbey Island. They became a major part of VP-45 a new squadron being formed under command of Lt.Cmdr. Carl H. "Bon" Amme, Jr. Donley would become Amme's X/O.

Three months of twenty-two hour days on Amchitka had taken a frightful toll on Herold. Calderon and I hardly recognized him. He had lost forty pounds. Much of this must have been from the waist up because he looked oddly pear-shaped. A considerable amount of the remaining one hundred twenty-six appeared to have settled in his grotesquely swollen legs, ankles, and feet. Haggard, red eyes stared out of a sunken-cheeked countenance that had the pallor of death. We told him he looked "like hell".

"I feel like I'm dying," he replied.

Clean working and living conditions aboard Casco, better food, regular eating habits, and more rest all worked wonders on Herold's health. Within a few weeks he was gaining weight, the swelling in his lower extremities decreased rapidly, color returned to his cheeks and he was soon his old feisty, argumentive self.

Herold attributed his health breakdown to being on Amchitka so long without adequate help. As further proof he was a victim of discrimination, Herold would later point out he was a chief before coming to the Aleutians and remained one until after he left: At the same time his motley crew of kids all advanced from S1c to AerM1c and were on the verge of making chief.

Meanwhile, most of those who'd made chief the same time he did had received commissions as Warrant Officer, Ensign, or Lieutenant (jg).

Sector searches began the day following Herold's arrival. Calderon and I flew on alternate days while Herold took over the early morning map analysis, forecast, and briefing. Each day either Calderon, Herold, or I analyzed the evening map. Herold always checked our work and discussed the map with us before he turned in. We were fortunate to again be under his demanding but excellent tutelage.

Patrol flights out of Casco Cove took us much closer to the large enemy installations on the islands of Paramushiro and Shimushu in the northern Kuriles to the southwest of Attu, Russia's Siberian Kamchatka Peninsula to the southwest and west, and the Russian Komandorski Islands to our northwest.

On Casco, Herold had the first chance to implement a pet project he'd thought of while at Amchitka. Most of the cloud pictures in our Circular S, (Cloud Atlas), had been taken from ground level before aircraft gained importance. Many low and middle cloud formations look different when viewed from an aircraft. Herold believed it was high time aerial photographs of clouds be taken and incorporated in an updated Circular S. Accordingly, he had me check out a K-20 hand-held aircraft camera from the ship's photographic department. I was given a short course of instruction. Herold's orders were to take the camera along on each of my patrol flights and photogragh classic cloud types and any unusual cloud formations encountered.

A waterproof bag protected the camera from being damaged by crashing spray during open boat trips to and from anchored PBYs. During flights the camera, bulky and surprisingly heavy, usually nestled among parachute packs on a bunk. Twice I forgot to retrieve the camera from this resting place and had to return by boat to the PBYs. Responsibility for the camera was a nagging concern. I took a number of photographs while flying parallel with or looking down at the top of cloud decks. There were stretches of two or three patrols during which there were no favorable photographs to take. On other flights I missed a number of good photos. By the time I unstrapped, reached the camera, got it out of the bag, took the lens cover off and returned to the waist the plane had burrowed into a cloud bank.

When the first roll, long in the camera, was developed I had trouble identifying some of the cloud types in the photographs. From that point on I kept a notebook on photographs taken to correspond with film in the camera.

In two months I shot five rolls of film. Herold seemed pleased with about forty percent of the photos. The others brought forth a "What the hell is this supposed to be?" or "Why did you waste a shot on this?" He received a prompt reply as to what he could do with the camera.

Casco Cove wasn't the best of the dozen or so places we'd operated out of over the years but it did have one advantage: During the summer fog season that was upon us, with its attendant prevailing winds between storms being from the southwest to west, the mountains of the interior caused orographic lifting. This usually provided us with a few hundred feet of ceiling and a mile or two visibility for takeoffs and landings.

In this respect, Attu was a far better location for air operations than Amchitka. Amchitka's flat topography left the island socked in with fog much of the summer. There was also no shelter from strong winds, whatever their direction.

On the other hand, the waters of Casco Cove were unprotected from east through southeast storm winds and open ocean swells from this quadrant. The area was also plagued by williwaws rushing down from the peaks and passes of the other quadrants.

Fighter Cover At Attu

About a week after the island of Attu was officially secured on 8 June 1943, the first P-40 fighters flew in and landed at the Alexai Point airstrip. Construction of this steel mat runway had been started while the battle was in progress. To have our own fighter cover was a great comfort.

All kinds of construction projects were under way by both army engineer units and navy Seabee battalions. On May 21, during the height of the battle, a detachment of the 23rd Seabee Battalion had been landed. The 22nd and 68th Seabee Battalions had arrived shortly thereafter. In August 1943 half of the 8th and all of the 66th Seabee Battalion would arrive. One more strong base, the last stepping stone to the Northern Japanese home islands, was rapidly being

built.

The Japanese took no counter measures for sometime and the P-40 fighter cover had nothing to fight. Our patrol flights were routine with little to relieve the boredom except the pressure of flying in foggy weather punctuated by summer storm systems.

After flying twice the first week of June 1943, I made four
patrol flights in eight days. Diary entries are as follows:

"6/11/43- 51V3 - 3.5 hours.
6/12/43- 51V? - 13.0 hours.
6/14/43- 51V? - 11 1/2 hours."
6/18/43- 66V225 - 7.8 hours.

Salvaging A Rufe Float Fighter

Calderon flew the weather June 23, 1943. After the last PBY was safely off the waters of Casco Cove the ship weighed anchor in the dawn and proceeded around to Chichagof Harbor. The purpose of Casco's short trip was to salvage a Japanese float fighter believed to be resting on the bottom.

Information about this aircraft came from one of the Japanese captured at the end of the battle. This POW had witnessed the crash. The plane sank but the pilot's floating body had been recovered.

Casco had been assigned this salvage job because she was equipped with a swinging crane and had a navy hard-hat diver aboard.

Inside Chichagof Harbor the ship anchored alongside a small marker buoy. This had been placed at the estimated position of the sunken plane as indicated by the POW. The diver was helped into his suit and heavy helmet then descended slowly amidst a patch of air bubbles. After about half an hour a small, yellow rubber float popped to the surface. The diver had located the plane within 100 feet of the spot indicated by the prisoner. Slowly, the diver was brought to the surface and helped aboard. While he rested and enjoyed a cigarette the ship repositioned over the wreck for recovery operations.

An hour later the diver descended again. After he secured a cable hook from the crane to the hoisting ring on the plane he was brought up again.

Every square foot of the ship's weather decks on the side of the recovery operation was jammed with onlookers. All eyes were on the emerging, dripping

cable as it came up from the depths. The plane broke the surface and was lifted free. There was excitement for the aircraft was a deadly Rufe.

Flight Petty Officer Tadayoshi Koga's Akutan carrier fighter was the first Zeke Zero captured intact during the war. The Chichagof Harbor Rufe would prove to be the first seaplane version of the famous A6M2 Reisen Navy Type Zero carrier fighter flown by Koga.

Torrrents of water cascaded out of the plane as it was carefully swung inboard and gently lowered to the deck. A final wiggle-jiggle as the plane's weight settled caused a last surge of water to pour out of the damaged float. With the water came a small rock fish that gasped and flip-flopped on deck. A crewman picked up the fish and dropped it over the side where it swam away.

Although portions of the plane appeared to be well crumpled the total damage was considered to be minimal. Part of the plexi-glass canopy was missing; the remainder damaged. About five feet of one wing tip was crumpled, the single float was ripped open in several places and twisted, the tail assembly had sustained some damage and the fuselage had several jagged holes.

Officers and men crowded around the Rufe. There were admiring comments about the aircraft's flush aluminum riveting; an innovative method to reduce wind drag.

People started stripping the plane for souvenirs. I was among the early culprits and pried the manufacturer's brass nomenclature plate off the lower right hand corner of the cockpit instrument panel. A deck officer and a chief bos'n put a stop to the scavenging. An area around the plane was roped off and an armed guard posted.

Several officers made a close inspection of the plane and a photographer snapped pictures from various angles.

An hour later a barge tied up alongside and the Rufe was swung out and lowered onto the barge. Barge and plane headed for the beach where the plane was dismantled, crated, and shipped to the states for further study.

Casco weighed anchor and sped back to Casco Cove. As mother of her Cats she had to be on hand when her brood

returned.

Tragedy At Casco Cove

June 1943 was marred by one fatal plane crash on the waters of Casco Cove. It was toward the end of the month and I'd just returned from a long search patrol. Calderon was plotting my in-flight hourly weather reports on the latest map as Carl Hill called off the data. It was a warm day under a hazy sun. The steel door to our weather office was open. Other returning PBYs had been landing, taxiing to Casco's stern for refueling and servicing, then moving off to their respective mooring buoys.

These hustle-bustle sounds of routine activities was shattered by a series of violent, spine-chilling noises. Frantic shouts followed as figures ran about. Calderon and Hill dropped their work and we stepped out on deck. We looked aft in time to see the last flying fragments of a PBY smash into the water and sink. Except for two floating bodies and scattered debris, nothing remained.

Witnesses said the plane had come in for a landing with everything looking good. It had touched down lightly as it skimmed along past Casco's stern. Inexplicably, the PBY had veered and a wing tip float dug in. This buried the bow. The plane cartwheeled spectacularly as it disintegrated.

My mind rebelled in silent protest. It seemed grossly unfair that men should die so quickly and unexpectedly after a long patrol flight, in good Aleutian weather, a supposedly safe return to base, and an almost completed routine landing.

We Witness Cyclogenesis

June 1943 was not quite through with us yet. Our sector flights had taken off at first light June 30. Calderon was flying that day. Carl Hill and I were decoding a batch of weather signals while Herold was catching up on sleep in one of the two office bunks.

At 1000 hours I continued to break code while Hill took the
hourly observation. He came in from outside and said, "Paul, you'd better take a look. I don't know what the heck's going on."

When I followed him out on deck I observed the three reserve PBYs at anchor facing in three different

directions. Like cannon fire, short, sharp 20 knot gusts were coming from all points of the compass. Ominous clouds were swirling and churning like the rolling boil of water. Since midnight the weather had been calm with a low overcast, light variable winds, and a steady barometer. Even after a year and a half in a region noted for violent changes in weather, I'd never seen anything like this. I had the uneasy feeling a catastrophic natural event was at hand.

I awakened Herold. He took a long look then went inside to check the barograph. This instrument's trace had dropped an incredible amount, almost vertically, during the past several minutes.

In some awe, Herold said, "We are witnessing cyclogenesis right here in Casco Cove. I doubt if any weathermen have ever before had this privilege." He turned to me and said, "Get your camera and take as many photographs as you can. If you run out of film get more."

I broke out the camera from a filing cabinet and began shooting pictures of the pinwheeling planes, wind gusts striking the water from different directions at the same time, whirling anemometer cups, berserk selsyn wind vane, and the black menacing clouds whipped to a frenzy in a devil's cauldron. Only a movie camera loaded with color film could have captured the apocalyptic scene.

Hill finished his observation but had no idea what wind direction to log. Herold told him to watch the selsyn recorder for several minutes and choose the most frequently observed direction.

Meanwhile Herold prepared a special storm warning alert. His emergency forecast predicted winds to fifty knots by noon with gusts to sixty knots. This special warning was encoded with the additional notation of cyclogenesis and the report was transmitted about 1020 hours by Casco's radio to all ships and stations.

With paternal care we tracked our baby eastward. Proudness changed to alarm when, like an unruly child throwing a tantrum, it deepened rapidly into a full-fledged storm gaining adulthood and momentum as it swept through the Aleutians. Casco's weathermen and office became more akin to Dr. Frankenstein, staff, and laboratory with a domineering monster on the loose. We plotted the storm on into the Gulf of Alaska and across where it finally battered itself into a weakened system against the mountainous glacier ranges of southeastern Alaska.

In weather parlance, the Aleutians are referred to as, "The Birthplace of Storms". At Casco Cove, Attu in the summer of 1943 we had the unique experience of witnessing this axiom's meaning.

USS Hulbert Goes Aground

June would feel remiss were she not to deal one more, hurried, spiteful blow before handing us over to July. Our AVD Hulbert, with Don Livingston the lone aerographer's mate aboard, had arrived Attu June 22, 1943. In carrying out her orders as plane-guard ship she anchored off Alexai Point to stand by in case needed for search and rescue of downed aircraft. Within eight days the ship and Don came to grief.

On cyclogenesis day, Hulbert a few miles away from Casco, received Herold's storm warning alert. A ship's radioman delivered a copy to Livingston for which he signed with time and date received. A copy was also delivered to Hulbert's O.O.D. about 1020 hours June 30, 1943.

That afternoon, as Herold had forecast, the wind increased to over forty-five knots with higher gusts. Around 1600 hours Hulbert dragged her anchor and was swept onto the beach off Alexai Point. Like a huge grey whale she remained stranded for three weeks until refloated July 21. When Hulbert's anchor failed to hold in storm lashed Massacre Bay she had cold iron; i.e., her boilers were unlit and she did not have steam to get underway.

Several weeks later a U.S. Naval board of inquiry was convened at 13th Naval District Headquarters in Seattle to investigate this disaster. Hulbert's captain, executive officer, O.O.D., radiomen, and Don Livingston were flown to Seattle to testify.

It appeared for a time that Livingston would be made the scapegoat. Don's appointed defense council subpoened copies of Herold's storm warning from Casco's communications department. These clearly showed the warning to have been transmitted almost six hours before Hulbert went aground.

Council also produced the copies received and receipted for shortly after 1020 hours by Don and Hulbert's O.O.D. There was no excuse for Hulbert not having steam up under the circumstances.

With authority comes responsibility, with both comes accountability. When Livingston was exonerated of all blame the board's focus of attention was forced

to proceed up the ladder. The ship's O.O.D had the responsibilty and was clearly negligent on the day in question but the ultimate responsibility rests with the captain who in this case happened to be ashore when Hulbert went aground.

The board of inquiry handed down the decision that Hulbert's grounding was caused by, "The Hazards of the Sea."

In other areas of the Pacific that last day of June 1943, MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Forces made landings on undefended Woodlark and Kiriwina Islands and at Empress Augusta Bay on the northeast coast of New Guinea. This was a dual operation during which Admiral Halsey's South Pacific Forces began landings on the New Georgia Island group in the Central Solomons to capture the Japanese airfield at Munda. It would take a month of jungle fighting for 32,000 U.S. soldiers and 1,700 U.S. Marines to defeat 5,000 Japanese defenders and capture the Munda airfield.

In mid 1943 our priorities were still in Europe and the shortage of ships, planes, and trained men in the Pacific continued. MacArthur's landings on northeast New Guinea, for example, had been delayed until June 30 because Rear Admiral Daniel E. Barbey's Seventh Amphibious Force did not have enough ships.

These end of June 1943 operations by MacArthur and Halsey were the first steps of a plan agreed upon by the Combined Joint Chiefs of Staff which called for a simultaneous advance by MacArthur's force up the north coast of New Guinea while Halsey's force advanced through the Solomons. These parallel pushes were to converge on Mindanao, southernmost of the Philippines.

No further major advances beyond the initial June ones by MacArthur and Halsey could be undertaken until a Central Pacific Force built around a U.S. Fifth Fleet under command of Admiral Nimitz had been established and made ready for action. This Central Pacific Force would then thrust into the Marshall and Caroline Islands toward the heart of Japan. This would exert additional pressure on the enemy and also protect Halsey's vulnerable right flank. The Fifth Fleet was being assembled at Pearl Harbor but it would have to rely heavily on new construction for the majority of its ships. Additional ships, planes, and men would also become available for Central, South,

and Southwest Pacific Forces after Kiska was recaptured.

The Good Beginning of a Bad Month

July 1943 began routinely. The first two entries in my diary
state:

" 2 July 1943 - Missed a flock of flights- must remember to
write them down. 68V225 Lt. Wehmeyer, 8 hrs. 10 min.
5 July 1943 - Lt. Thorpe. 11 1/2 hours."

My entry for July 7, 1943 is of some historical significance. It reads:

"Watched B-25's takeoff to bomb Paramushiro. They hit target and returned safely."

The B-25s took off toward us from the Alexai Point strip across Massacre Bay. Each B-25, heavily laden with fuel and bombs, struggled for altitude to clear the Murder Point plateau just east of Casco and begin the 700 mile overwater flight to target. I believe this was the first bombing attack launched against the large enemy naval base at Paramushiro Bay in the Kuriles.

We Fly With "Bon" Amme Again

Lt. Carl H. "Bon" Amme, Jr. was XO of VP-43 on its second tour of Aleutian duty. VP-43 had flown out of Adak from October 11, 1942 until March 1943 when most elements were transferred to Amchitka. This tour ended when the squadron flew back to the states in mid April.

After a thirty day leave Amme reported back to NAS Whidbey Island, WA., was promoted to Lt.Cmdr. and received orders to take command of VP-45 a new squadron being formed. Veteran Aleutian pilots and aircrewman from VP-43 were the nucleus of VP-45. In addition to Amme these pilots included Evans, Jordahl, Carpenter, and Earhart, ex-APs, plus Everett, Ashcraft, and Bud Hagen. In addition were Amme's XO, Lt. Donley and his pilots who'd flown from the USS Casco during the battle.

Equipped with new PBY-5 flying boats, VP-45 departed Whidbey June 30, 1943, arrived Casco Cove July 5, 1943 and relieved VP-61 of patrol duties a few days later.

Like Amme, many of VP-45's pilots and aircrewmen

were on their third tour. It was reassuring to fly again with these familiar pilots and crewmen.

It took Amme a scant five days to get back into the swing of things. Not to be outdone by the 11th USAAF and its B-25's, Amme led a section of three PBY's on the U.S Navy's first bombing raid of Paramushiro July 10, 1943. Weather was poor and targets obscured by fog and low clouds. Bomb loads were dropped by radar and results could not be determined. Japanese anti-aircraft fire was heavy but inaccurate. Fog, clouds and poor visibility also prevented fighters from locating and attacking the Catalina "horizontal bombers".

The Beat Goes On

The animal-strong male sex drive of young men in the prime of life, in good health and 1000 miles from the nearest female companionship found relief from tension in two primary ways. "Wet dreams" are nature's built in safety valve. Many a man, it was said with great truth, falls asleep with a problem on his mind and wakes up with the solution. Masturbation was the most widespread form of relief. Relief in this manner, without getting caught, was a far more difficult pursuit than one might imagine because there is scant privacy aboard a crowded warship.

A young communications officer, whom we shall call 'Derkin', found himself temporarily alone one night in the radio shack. He became aroused while thumbing through a girlie magazine. He decided his self-gratification could not wait until he was in the semi-privacy of his bunk in a darkened compartment. He locked the door to the radio shack.

On all ships in commission a year or more one can find countless small diameter holes drilled through interior bulkheads and which no longer serve their original purpose. These peep holes attract the curious. Day and night, like sidewalk superintendants peering through knotholes at a fenced construction site, men stopped briefly for a variety of reasons to peer through Casco's holes. The radio shack had several.

A passing sailor slowed his walk and stopped in front of the radio room. From inside he could hear the faint strains of his favorite tune being played over a stateside frequency. He tried the knob but found the door locked. He thought this odd but instead of

knocking he resorted to habit. He put his eye to a half inch diameter hole and saw the communicator playing with himself. Other men coming through the passageway were given a look.

I'd come off watch at midnight and had to fly that day. I was asleep in my lower bunk in the office when raucous laughter by Calderon and Kerr woke me two hours before it was time to get up. They were deciphering a radio weather sked but one would start to laugh so uncontrollably it was infectious. When I grouchily asked what was so funny, Calderon told me to go back to sleep. He'd tell me later. Although I was tired, sleep from that moment on was impossible. I got up and dressed. As I picked up my toilet kit the spontaneous laughter erupted again. It did not end until both men were sobbing with side aches. Again I asked what was so funny but neither man could speak without convulsing.

Finally, between gasps for breath, Calderon choked out, "Someone caught 'Derkin' flogging his bishop."

I asked why this was so hilarious?

"I don't want to spoil it for you by telling more. Swing past the mess deck bulletin board on your way back from the head," Calderon said, "and you'll see why."

A dozen men were gathered around the bulletin board. They, too, were laughing uproariously and I learned why. A space had been cleared in the center of the bulletin board for a sheet of paper. In bold black print were the words of a crude but quick-witted poet which proclaimed:

THAT THING'S FOR FERKIN DERKIN NOT JERKIN

A half hour later Herold entered the office to analyze the early morning map. Calderon told him what had happened but Herold didn't convulse with laughter until he was shown a copy of the rhyme. Herold's laughter set the rest of us off. He had to remove his glasses to dry the tears streaming down his face. He was wiping his glasses when he suddenly grew serious.

"That poor sonavabitch," said Herold and he was right. As long as 'Derkin' stayed in the navy he could travel to duty stations at the four corners of the earth but the story would always precede his arrival. That he would travel was inescapable fact. His position aboard <u>Casco</u>

was untenable. He received transfer orders three days later.

A Close Encounter of the Jap Kind

My July troubles began about this time during a short visit ashore. Lt. "Wild Bill" Lindeman and his group had finally received the crated equipment to set up a weather station and had it in operation. Cramped for space in one corner of Squeaky Anderson's Massacre Bay beachmaster hut, Lindeman had moved to Casco Cove and into an equally humble shack.

Casco still possessed the best weather communications while Lindeman had more man-power. In addition the weathermen ashore did not have to fly. Ralph G. Rayburn and Charles S. Patterson, both AerM1c's, had arrived at Attu in early June aboard the old transport S.S. Chaumont to join Lindeman, Ackerman, Vowell and Podmanski. Casco was anchored about three quarters of a mile from the weather shack ashore. With proper planning the almost side-by-side, navy weather groups could avoid much duplication of effort. Through coordination we could attain streamlined efficiency while providing the best weather data.

Lindeman also wished to assist the 11th USAAF by supplying our latest weather information. He'd sent word that he had a hand-crank field telephone link with the air force operations tent at Alexai Point. This was a beginning but inadequate to pass along voluminous data such as Casco's received weather skeds, PBY weather reports, upper air soundings, flight forecasts etc. Lindeman had made an urgent request for teletype equipment but weeks of delay were expected. A road was being built to Alexai Point. Jeep messenger service appeared to be a possible stopgap in the near future. Transportation of any kind was difficult to obtain but Lindeman hoped to have a jeep by the time the road was completed.

At Lindeman's request Herold had written a list of suggestions on how we in Casco could best contribute to this weather triumvirate. With PBY's out this day Herold would not leave the ship until they had returned. He sent me ashore to deliver the letter to Lindeman, get his reaction, and return with any agreement, changes, or further thoughts Lindeman might have on the subject. Herold told me not to be in any

hurry.

"Take the day off. Stay overnight if necessary. The change will do you good."

I caught a launch and renewed friendships with the weathermen ashore most of whom I'd not seen since March 1942 at Kodiak. Lindeman scanned Herold's letter and put it on his desk. He had to leave to take care of some other matters and would not return until late that afternoon. His reply to Herold's letter could not be written until evening. If I could not wait Herold could send someone over tomorrow.

"Is Wild Bill still in the cloak and dagger business?" I asked Rayburn after Lindeman left.

"It's just like it was at Kodiak." Rayburn replied, "He's not telling but we're sure he spends half his time on naval intelligence work."3

Don Livingston wandered in during the forenoon. He had visited Casco briefly after Hulbert was swept aground. Although he was still ship's company on the grounded AVD he had few duties and he had not yet flown to Seattle to testify before the board of inquiry. Herold had been unsuccessful in his efforts to have Don transferred to Casco. Authorization and orders had to come from Tatom at Adak. Herold had not received a reply to his request.

When Don learned I had some time off he suggested we hike over to Holtz Bay. Although there was a rumor that a few aerographer's mates from Adak had been sent there to set up a weather reporting station, Lindeman's group had received no word of this and doubted if any weathermen were there.

Even so, Don thought a nice walk in that direction would be good exercise and we might pick up some Jap souvenirs. The weather group ashore had hiked to the pass areas where the fighting had taken place and returned with Jap equipment including one treasured Samurai sword found by Rayburn. He'd guessed wrong in a poker game and the sword was presently owned by Chief Ackerman.

It was the middle of summer, daylight was long and our leisurely stroll began in mid afternoon. Neither of us realized we were ill prepared physically or properly equipped for the journey, for journey it was, not the short hike it appeared on a map. Don and I were both wearing woolen watch caps and alpaca lined navy foul weather jackets. Although we both carried

the aircrewman's perennial sheath knife, we had no food, sleeping bags, shelter half, or even a flashlight.

We slogged along Casco Cove's muddy main road to where it crossed an airstrip under construction. At this point we struck off up the left side of Massacre Valley's central, hog-back ridge. The rough terrain and muddy going proved tough. I began to feel like an ant on a molasses coated treadmill. With legs out of shape from shipboard living our rest stops became more and more frequent. Chats with soldiers at various gun emplacements and tent bivouacs also caused the hours to slip by.

Near the head of Massacre Valley a soldier told us we'd be hard-pressed to reach any souvenir grounds on the high ridges before dark. He added that most of the "good stuff" had been gleaned weeks ago.

"Betcha din't know there was 'Gold in them thar hills', for awhile," he said. "Din't need no prospector pan neither, just somethin' to hammer with." He hadn't been lucky but many had including his best buddy who'd found two gold teeth in the mouth of one dead Jap. "Course," he added, "most all the bodies have long since been buried."

After we walked away, Don, visibly upset said, "I wonder how many sets of dead Jap lips that ghoul and his buddy had to stretch before they struck pay dirt?"

"Maybe they were on a burial detail," I said.

"What kind of an excuse is that?"

"No excuse. I was wondering about the odds of their finding any gold teeth."

We pushed on over several low but steep finger ridges even though knowing we'd have to turn back soon. About 2100 hours we reached a point midway up a canyon that led to Holtz Bay Pass. We stopped and gazed about. It was inconceiveable that men had advanced under murderous crossfire up such incredibly steep ground.

What form of madness possesses the boy/men of war and spurs them on to such feats? Do you really believe it has anything to do with patriotism, mom, apple pie? I suspect, rather that it is because most youths pass through a period of temporary 'insanity' during their late teens and it is this wild age group that is conscripted to do the dirty work. Old men who start wars and are aware of this built-in 'madness' count heavily upon it to take the "high ground" against often impossible odds. Livingston and I turned around

to retrace our weary steps.

Like a heavy wet quilt the evening fog had oozed back into Massacre Bay. Hemmed in by towering mountains on the other three sides, our area had quickly been cut off from any light from the slanting rays of the sun's settling toward the western sea. Gloomy shadows darkened and deepened as though a dimmer switch had suddenly been turned down. Woolen stocking caps and jackets that had been too warm attire a few moments ago now seemed barely adequate to ward off the damp chill in the air.

In the fast fading light we scampered and stumbled over one small ridge at the head of the valley and short of breath, had stopped to rest 50 yards below the crest of a second one. Ankles that had been strong enough to walk a few steps a day on the decks of a ship were swollen and sore. Thousands of unaccustomed steps over uneven ground had also caused chafing and blisters even though my heavy GI shoes had previously felt as comfortable as slippers.

Because of the steep ground, Don and I were more nearly reclining than sitting. In silence, we were lost in thoughts. I was thinking about food because we'd missed evening chow. I wondered when Casco's boat made its last trip from the beach.

An almost imperceptible sound I could not identify caused me to turn my head far to the right toward Massace Bay. I heard no further sound and was about to turn away when I saw him...a hurrying, bobbing, weaving figure choosing a path that kept him well below the ridge top. Although the man's behavior seemed odd I felt no immediate alarm because there were dozens, perhaps hundreds of U.S. soldiers close by, the nearest cluster of tents less than a quarter of a mile.

For a second or two I watched and wondered idly why the man would be running toward the interior western mountains when it was almost dark? His course would take him through the narrow space between us and the crest. As he drew closer he became silhouetted against the dim skylight and a cold, prickly chill shot up my spine. It was clearly a Japanese soldier.

I heard Don stir beside me. Without turning my head I reached over with my left hand and clamped his right forearm in a vise grip. Still unaware of our presence, the Jap kept coming. With long overcoat flapping around below his knees and in a half crouch he was moving at a good clip with a curious,

ground-eating lope. Over his left shoulder, like a Santa Claus bag, hung a bulging sack. His right hand held what at first appeared to be a long pole but frightenlingly materialized into one of those overly long, Japanese rifles.

My right hand started a snake-like glide for my knife but I was lying on it. Like silent Siamese twins Don and I had melted down into a prone position and in slow-motion unison had rotated our bodies to keep the furtive figure in constant view. Flattened as we were, our pale green jackets and black caps acting as camouflage, we must have blended into the darker darkness of the draw below to become part of the landscape. With his eyes intent on seeking the best footing, the Nip soldier had not seen us.

When he was almost directly above and less than fifty feet away he dislodged a grapefruit sized rock that came bouncing crazily down the slope. This whizzed past, missing Don's head by inches. Don didn't twitch a muscle.

As fleetingly as some bad dreams come and go the enemy soldier vanished into the dark along with the fading sounds of his muffled steps. Other than exchanging one long, wide-eyed stare, Don and I neither spoke nor moved for several minutes.

When Don nudged me with an elbow my heart skipped a beat. I thought he had heard or seen the Jap returning but it was only to suggest, in a whisper, "Let's get the hell out of here." We got to our aching feet and casting off all caution shifted sore muscles into high gear.

After several headlong spills during the next five minutes, we burst into the first U.S. tent camp and pantingly blurted out what we thought was our startling story. The soldiers, jaded members of an engineer outfit, seemed almost indifferent. In a voice drenched with boredom, a sergeant said he'd tell his lieutenant who would pass the word on to an infantry outfit in the morning.

"In The Morning?" said Don, incredulously.

"Nothin' ta get excited about," said the sergeant wearily. "There's still a few running loose. Your Jap probably snuck into the valley last night and he's been holed up all day in the middle of some supply dump. They steal food but don't do any killin'. Patrols try to find their mountain hideouts during daylight but can't do nothin' about it at night." Don and I were miffed and pondering the army's blase'

attitude when the sergeant added, "Last couple rooted out didn't have weapons. Could you tell if this one was armed?"

"Hell yes," I answered peevishly, "with a f----n' rifle that
looked ten feet long."

"There was something else odd," said Don. "Near the end of the barrel it wasn't slim and straight but bulky with a break in the line. I had the impression there was a bayonet attached. This would account for the ungainly length. I caught no gleam of steel. It may have been wrapped with a rag or still in a scabbard."

"Unless there was good reason," said the sergeant, "our friend would not be sneaking around with such an unhandy piece. My guess is your Jap intends to die fighting."

The sergeant seemed to take greater interest at that point. He fetched a map and had us indicate the approximate position of our encounter, direction the Jap came from and direction he went. This done he thanked us for the information and went to find his lieutenant.

Hitching a truck ride partway, we arrived at the Casco Cove weather shack, shaken, exhausted, and hungry. After wolfing down the offered field rations Don and I had to endure a chiding over our misadventure.

I'm sure it was in jest when someone asked why we didn't try to capture the Jap. "You could have snuck up behind," he said, and tackled him. You'd be heroes.

"Who gives a damn about being a hero, especially a dead one?"
Don wanted to know.

"You were lucky," said Ackerman, "and did the right thing.
Nothing."

"You should know by now, Don," Rayburn said, "that it's not good for your health to hang around the Black Irishman. Weird trouble dogs him like the plague."

If Rayburn expected a caustic remark from me he was disappointed. His statement seemed to be fact. Why did strange things continually happen to me? Did I unconsciously look for trouble? That had not been the case in this instance. What were the odds of crossing paths with a lone Jap in what was practically the middle of downtown Massacre Bay?

It was late. Conversation ended and men hit the sack. Don and I were given blankets and we dropped off to sleep on the deck near the office stove.

Early next morning, in mud caked clothes, I caught the first boat out to Casco. When I hobbled painfully into the office and handed Lindeman's letter to Herold he looked at me with disbelief.

"Holy Christ! I let you out of my sight for twenty-four hours and you return a cripple. What the hell did you do get run over by a truck?"

"Would you believe that Don and I almost got run over by a Jap?"

Visions of a Firing Squad

Broken blisters and sore muscles had a chance to mend during a patrol flight the following day. Then, less than forty-eight hours after my sojourn ashore I became unexpectedly involved in another but totally different kind of near panic situation. Any faint hope that July might still prove to be a vintage month for me vanished when "Bon" Amme threatened to mash me along with the grapes in his efforts to get his own way.

In the wee hours of the mid July morning Bob Kerr and I were decoding and entering the final signals on the map. Calderon, whose turn it was to fly, was half awake in his office sack. Herold was asleep in chief's quarters. It was almost time to awaken him to analyze the map and prepare the forecast.

Kerr and I had alternately been taking weather observations since coming on duty at midnight. Our weather was poor with fog, low ceiling, and restricted visibility.

Originally, Wing Commander Gehres issued a directive that zero-zero conditions were no excuse for not conducting patrol flights. A rash of fatal crashes over the months since the summer of 1942 had caused him to issue a more recent directive establishing new ceiling and visibility minimums for plane operations. Still less than humanitarian he had raised the figures to 200 feet and one half mile. The ceiling, since the previous evening's nightly fog rolled in, had been hovering near 100 feet accurately measurable by the known height of several ridges close to the anchored ship. Visibility

fluctuated between zero and three quarters of a mile. Kerr had taken the last observation. He was logging it when Commander Amme, as was his custom early every morning, entered the office.

He read the current hourly weather report which was well below both minimums and told Kerr to change it, -- to increase ceiling and visibility to above minimums--. Kerr turned silently to me for help. I told Amme he was asking the impossible because the report could not be changed if these were conditions at time of observation.

Amme ordered me to alter the weather report. I replied that we had strict BuAer. rules which would not allow me to do so. Calderon was wide-awake by this time and I asked him to, "Get Herold. Hurry!"

As Calderon went out the door, Amme fixed me with a cold look and asked bluntly, "Are you refusing to obey my direct order?" My God, I thought, he must be joking. This has got to be a nightmare. The penalty for refusing to obey an officer's direct order in wartime, especially in a combat zone, is death.

I was still trying to talk myself out of the mess when Herold came bursting in. He and Amme stepped outside to discuss the situation. After a few minutes Herold reentered the office. Amme had departed. I asked Herold if Amme intended to have me shot at sunrise?

"Hardly," he replied. "You know Amme is a riverboat gambler. He was running a bluff. It's all taken care of and you can forget the whole thing."

Our weather remained socked in and our PBYs did not fly that
day.

Thirty-six years later, 1979, after I'd begun this book I learned from Amme and Herold what transpired during their short discussion on the weather deck outside Casco's office. Retired U.S. Navy Captain Carl H. "Bon" Amme, Jr. does not object my quoting from his letter that deals in part with this long ago incident.

".....I remember ordering the ship's company striker to alter the report in the incident you speak of and clearly recall discussing the matter with Herold. It was my job to be up every morning to see the patrol flights underway. I looked at the weather and it was the kind of weather that I would have gladly flown in. As you will recall, I had had a lot of experience reading weather maps by that time, and

I was not about to let a striker make command decisions. I may have been annoyed, to be sure, but I do think you misremember slightly when you say I threatened you with a court-martial! It is true, I've threatened all sorts of dire things, but only those things that I had in my power to deliver. Looking back, I remember that when Herold arrived on the scene, we went outside on deck to discuss the weather. It had deteriorated since I had last looked at it and the two of us concurred that we should not fly. I had a lot of confidence in Herold's judgment. Although we used to argue a lot, if I could not sway his judgment, I would give in. But, as you know, few weather forecasts turn out exactly the way the forecaster says. Incidentally, today I fly only when the sky is blue!"

The Arrival of Help Brought a Menagerie of Sounds

It was a back-breaking work load for five men to maintain a twenty-four hour office watch coupled with Calderon and me flying alternate days. Frequently, as was the case with Hill and Kerr, we had to stand sixteen hour shifts. With equal frequency, Calderon and I had to stand a night watch then fly with little sleep or fly all day then stand the 1600 to mid watch. Sometimes Herold stood our day watches. Other times he spelled us flying.

We were disappointed and Herold was angry when Mr.Tatom transferred Don Livingston to Amchitka. There he joined Max White, Lester Roberts, and Jack Parlier who were most likely in need of help as badly as we were in Casco.

In the mid July, shortly after Commander Amme almost became
an aerological office watch stander, we did receive help. Rolfe, AerM3c, new both to the Aleutians and FAW-4, reported aboard.

Blue-eyed, blond, short and stocky, the square-jawed Rolfe was an excellent watch stander conscientious and meticulous in his work habits and personal grooming. He was blessed with boundless energy and enthusiasm coupled with supreme confidence. These qualities produced a chesty individual.

While cockiness can be almost intolerable it was not an annoying trait in Rolfe. He was too likeable, too happy, too ready to tackle any job, too efficient, too willing to shoulder more than his share of work,

always ready to poke fun at himself and with his great sense of humor almost too good to be true.

Rolfe's cocky nature could not be ignored because we found it somehow comical. With equal good humor Rolfe accepted our good natured kidding. Several times Herold called him 'our banty rooster'. In spotless dungarees Rolfe strode briskly into the office one evening to relieve Kerr. In rapid fire he began asking for a report of Kerr's watch, status of the logs, if a certain weather sked had been decoded yet, etc. With a smile Kerr looked at him and said, "Well if it isn't Napolean looking like he just stepped out of a recruiting poster and all set to relieve me fifteen minutes early whether I'm ready or not."

Shortly after Rolfe joined us Calderon said to him, "Except for your blond hair and blue eyes you remind me of Edward G. Robinson."

Although Humphrey Bogart also had dark hair and eyes, was much slimmer and did not physically resemble Rolfe in the slightest he was also a take-charge guy. Within a week Kerr nicknamed Rolfe 'Bogey' and the moniker stuck.

For all the sterling qualities stated Rolfe would have been a welcome addition anywhere. However, I believe he was so quickly accepted in our circle because of his crazy sense of humor. That he brightened our lives can best be illustrated by one of Rolfe's brainstorms.

Within a few watches Rolfe invented a gimmick to use while decoding endless weather skeds that streamed into our office from the ship's radio shack.

Rolfe's drudgery reliever was the substitution of a variety of sounds for the figure zero. These pseudo zero utterances varied from day to day but always included the basics, BRISK, BRAFF, CRIFF, CRAD, and CRUD. Interspersed were an occasional dog's bark RUFF, a pig's OINK, a cat's MEOW, and BLUB, BLOB, FLUB or anything else that came to mind that could not be mistaken for a regular number.

This was fun, kept us alert, did not slow us but did cause people who dropped into our office while we were decoding to look upon us as a couple of cuckoos.

Herold walked in the first time Rolfe and I were using this method while breaking the Russian book. Rolfe called out, "Dirty, two, Criff, four," then barked like a dog. Herold was befuddled. He glanced over my shoulder as I wrote down 02040.

"How the hell do you know....," he began.

Rolfe continued to call out numbers and gibberish. Herold perceived what was going on.

"Were you going to say something C.C.?" I asked.

"You guys are looney" he replied, "but go ahead on 'er."

PBY's Bomb Paramushiro Again

Amme led a second PBY bombing attack on Paramushiro July 19. Weather conditions, bombing runs, and unknown results were identical to the first raid July 10. Again, Amme's "slow boats" to the Kuriles avoided being located and shot down by land based fighters. Twice he had brashly poked a small stick into a large hornet's nest and escaped.

It should be noted that Herold made certain neither Calderon nor I participated in Amme's two July bombing raids of the large enemy installations at Paramushiro Bay.

Japan Attempts To Evacuate Kiska By Submarine

Our naval and air blockade had prevented the enemy from supplying Kiska by surface vessel for sometime. Japanese records indicate the last ship arrived safely at Kiska in February 1943. The enemy had used a fleet of I-class submarines for the Kiska supply run from March onward.

This, too, proved a costly venture. Of Japan's original beefed up northern fleet of thirteen I-boats in March 1943, only eight remained when the Battle of Attu ended in June. One was known to have been sunk at Attu off Holtz Bay May 13 and four were missing in action after leaving Paramushiro.

The loss of Attu caused Japanese Imperial Headquarters to reorganize their defensive strategy. Japan was forced to divert men, planes, ships, and supplies intended for the South, Southwest, and Central Pacific and deploy them throughout the Kuriles to defend against an expected U.S. invasion from the western Aleutians. This redeployment weakened the far flung Japanese defenses in other theatres of the Pacific.

The bold, early July air raids on Paramushiro by B-25's and PBY's, followed closely by two heavy bombing raids by Attu based B-24's helped to convince

Japan an American invasion of the Kuriles would be mounted.

The Japanese High Command decided to evacuate the 6,000 man Kiska garrison, if possible, and use these troops to defend the home islands rather than have them annihilated as their Attu troops had been.

Accordingly, orders had been issued to the Japanese Commander of the remaining I-boats to begin evacuation of the troops from Kiska in early June 1943. Would there be time? Japan expected a large scale U.S. invasion of Kiska near the end of July 1943. Even with luck and the cooperation of the expected foggy weather for concealment, it was doubtful the eight I-boats could accomplish the feat. It would require a great number of round trips. Each I-boat, although huge, could carry only one hundred-fifty troops per trip.

Evacuation by submarine began but during the twelve day period from June 10 to June 22, three of the eight boats were sunk in the vicinity of Kiska and Attu by U.S. destroyers or patrolling subchasers.

Of the 820 Kiska troops evacuated, 300 had gone down with the three I-boats. With only five boats left and the expected U.S. invasion of Kiska a month away, the Japanese abandoned this method of evacuating the trapped garrison of over 5,000 remaining troops.

From our bases at Adak and Amchitka, 11th USAAF bombers and fighters and U.S. Navy PV-1 Venturas continued to attack Kiska day and night. Heavy strikes were carried out all during June and July despite foggy weather and frequent storms. 11th USAAF planes dropped over 800,000 pounds of bombs on Kiska during this period.

Kiska was shelled by a U.S. Task Force of four cruisers and four destroyers under command of Rear Admiral Robert C. Giffen, USN on July 6, 1943.

A Desperate Enemy Plan

Early in July, the Japanese High Command approved a bold plan in a desperate attempt to save their Kiska garrison. This plan had been proposed in early June about the time evacuation by submarine began. Under command of Rear Admiral Masatomi Kimura, IJN, a force comprised of his flagship light cruiser Abukuma, light cruiser Kiso, destroyers of the 1st Destroyer Division, transport Asaka Maru, an oiler, and transport Kunajiri in reserve would attempt to

evacuate Kiska. Kimuras's force included the recently commissioned experimental high speed destroyer Shimakase, the only ship in the Japanese Navy at that time equipped with the latest model radar.

Kimura's orders were to proceed to a location about 500 miles southwest of Kiska, skirt outside the southernmost dogleg sector of U.S. PBY searches out of Amchitka, and await foggy weather for the evacuation attempt. Japanese on Kiska were alerted to standby for H-hour departure date scheduled for 1600 July 11,1943, dependent, as always, on Aleutian weather.

The evacuation force sortied from Paramushiro July 5th, arrived on station, refueled destroyers, circled and waited. Weather did not cooperate. By July 12 fuel was running low and weather prospects were dim. Kimura was forced to return to Paramushiro.

The dare-devil evacuation plan was not abandoned, merely postponed while ships were refueled and replenished. The force sortied from Paramushiro again July 21. This time it consisted of cruisers Tama, Abukuma, and Kiso, oiler Nippon Maru and eleven destroyers. Tama flew the flag of Vice Admiral Shiro Kawase, C-in-C of the 5th Fleet who was along as an observer to judge Kimura's actions.

The fifteen ships were to proceed to the same location there to await thick fog for the dash to Kiska. Kimura's force would receive weather reports from Kiska and from several I-boats stationed along the route.

Seven Enemy Mystery Ships

On July 22, the day after Kimura's force sortied from Paramusiro, one of our Casco Cove based PBY's made radar contact with seven unidentified surface vessels. Seven blips on the screen were proceeding on an eastward course from Paramushiro at 17 knots. Because of dense surface fog there was no visual sighting. Radar contact was maintained for six hours until 1825 hours when the PBY's fuel reserves dictated the plane head for home.

My diary entry for this date reads:

"22 July 1943 - 65V225 Lt. Wehmeyer- missed some-all off
Casco Cove. Amme a lot."

July 22, 1943 was a busy day in the Aleutians. Kiska was shelled heavily again. This time by a combined task force of seventeen warships under Rear Admirals Robert C. Giffen and Robert M. Griffin. Battleships Idaho, Mississippi, and New Mexico; cruisers Louisville, Portland, San Francisco, Wichita, and Santa Fe, and nine destroyers hurled over 400,000 pounds of high explosive shells into the enemy stronghold. Half an hour after the shelling forty U.S. planes bombed and strafed Kiska.

Immediately after the shelling ended Admiral Kinkaid at Adak sent radio orders to the U.S. task force to speed to intercept the seven enemy ships reported by the shadowing PBY far to the southwest.

By July 24, no contact had been made by the opposing surface fleets. Our search planes failed to make further contact with the elusive enemy surface force.

Admiral Kinkaid recalled the Giffen-Griffin task force back to its assigned patrol area about sixty miles southwest of Kiska. Kinkaid also ordered destroyer USS Hull to speed from Adak to patrol the area on the north side of Kiska.

I made a patrol flight far to the southwest of Attu July 25 but failed again to note the pilot's name or plane number. The weather, most likely at the farthest point reached, was so unusual for that time of year that I did note this along with the position.

At 49 degrees-30 minutes North- 159 degrees East, which is about 120 miles southeast of the Japanese base at Paramushiro Bay, the weather was: sky clear, temperature 68 degrees F., wind southwest 4 mph, light haze, ceiling and visibility unlimited.

Meanwhile, the Japanese evacuation fleet had passed that area and safely reached a position about 400 miles southwest of Kiska. At the same time, the U.S. task force had returned to waters about 60 miles southwest of Kiska. The two fleets were within 300 miles of each other on the night of 25 July 1943.

It is extremely difficult to keep any large scale operation secret. U.S. Intelligence had noted a great deal of activity in the Kuriles and at Kiska. It was known that a Japanese task force had sortied from Paramushiro. A U.S. fleet was at sea. The increase in intercepted radio traffic by both sides was in itself an indication something major was afoot.

Scuttlebutt ebbed and flowed throughout all U.S. ships and bases in the Aleutians. Aboard Casco our

rumor factory was cranked up to high-speed production. One could choose between dozens of, "Now this is the straight poop. I got it from a guy who just came off watch in the radio shack. The Japs are gonna..." Some maintained that because most U.S. combat troops had been withdrawn from Attu the wily Nips were going to make an attempt to recapture Attu. Others thought the reported enemy fleet was going to make an attempt to fight its way through and land supplies and reinforcements on Kiska. We did not know of the Japanese plans to evacuate Kiska and could only assume that Kiska would have to be retaken. If Attu were any barometer, Kiska could easily prove to be costlier.

A lot of billowing smoke usually indicates a fire of some sort could erupt any moment. In the hit or miss fortunes of war only a fool worries himself sick over whether or not he will be engulfed by the flames.

Aboard Casco the morning of July 26, 1943, the Official word was that a large naval surface action with seven enemy ships had taken place south of Kiska during the night. Evidently, our task force had finally found the seven slippery enemy ships reported heading east from Paramushiro four days earlier by a PBY.

At the early morning flight briefing the ACI officer told all PBY search crews to keep a sharp lookout for the enemy ships because contact with them had been lost after the engagement. Search patrols that day from Adak, Amchitka, and Casco Cove found no enemy ships or evidence of a naval engagement the previous night. A Phantom Naval Battle

What became known as the "Battle of the Pips" remains a mystery.

Shortly before 0100 hours July 26, 1943, the U.S. task force patrolling about eighty miles south of Kiska picked up seven unidentified pips on radar. Contact was first made by battleship Mississippi's radar at a distance of fifteen miles to the northeast. The seven targets were traveling at seventeen knots on course 140 degress. At the time, the Japanese evacuation fleet was three hundred miles to the south.

It was believed that the seven radar pips were quite possibly the same seven enemy ships speeding east at seventeen knots that a PBY had made radar contact with July 22 and the same ships for which the U.S. task force had searched in vain from July 22 to

July 24.

The U.S. task force went to battle stations and the night erupted in the flames and concussions of full salvos while a number of destroyers sliced toward the targets to launch torpedo attacks. Twenty minutes later, the seven radar targets reversed course to 340 degrees and zig-zagged. U.S. warships fired as they gave chase. This high-speed maneuvering and firing continued for another ten minutes until the radar blips became weaker and finally disappeared.

No fire had been returned by the seven targets. When the moon rose shortly after 0200 hours, a catapult plane and several destroyers searched the target area. Even under the illumination of numerous star shells no debris or evidence was found that a surface engagement had taken place.

What, if anything, had our ships fired at for half an hour? Experts have offered explanations ranging from mass radar malfunction, to ionized cloud layers, to bent-beam reflections off distant mountain peaks. Others argue that these educated guesses do not appear valid because the reported radar ranges and bearings from the logs of widely scattered ships all pinpoint the same location.

None of the destroyers had made radar contact. This was at first attributed to the low elevation of their antennae. Battleship USS Idaho, however, with radar antenna positioned at a much higher elevation also reported she had not picked up the seven targets and she had not fired a single shot. Idaho's failure to make radar contact was believed to have been caused by the fact she was farthest from the action and therefore beyond the line of sight range of her radar.

The log of cruiser USS Wichita would appear to refute the explanation of bent-beam reflections from distant mountain tops. While blasting away at the seven moving radar targets, Wichita's radar screen also had a clear echo off Kiska's unmoving volcanic peak seventy-six miles away.

One possible explanation voiced is that the seven targets were Japanese I-class submarines. This theory is also shaky because the Japanese had only five submarines. Furthermore, the five were not bunched but supposedly strung out in a long picket line between Kiska and the evacuation fleet. One theorist even suggested that one or more submarines could have been flying attached balloons to which were hung a number of radar

reflectors. There is no evidence on the Japanese side to support such a theory. Japanese naval historians are equally perplexed by the phantom sea battle.

The five I-boats in the area were I-21, I-169, I-171, I-175, and I-2. Only the I-2 survived the war. Her captain, Commander Mituba Ikatura, IJN, recalls that he was on station south of Kiska 22 July, 1943 when he received orders to start taking weather observations for the evacuation of Kiska. However, several days later, (he could not recall the exact date), he received orders to return to Paramushiro. Ikatura heard distant heavy guns firing off the southeast end of Amchitka and saw the flashes in the night. He submerged to avoid being hit.

Captain James S. Russell, USN. placed in command of an Air Technical Intelligence Task Force immediately after Japan's surrender, also interrogated Vice Admiral Shigeyoshi Miwa, IJN, Japanese Submarine Fleet Commander. Admiral Miwa stated that Northern Force submarines patrolled without fighting the American enemy although a few of the submarines were subjected to enemy attack. Miwa also recalled that in Aleutian operations the Japanese Navy found out that American radar was very good because Japanese submarines received much gunfire from American ships.

Of no mystery is the fact that the high speed run by the U.S. Task Force to intercept seven targets reported by the PBY, the subsequent failed two day search, the run back to Kiska, and thence the high speed maneuvering during the phantom night battle had consumed huge amounts of bunker fuel and left the force low on ammunition.

As a result, Admiral Kinkaid ordered the task force to proceed one hundred miles east, away from Kiska, to rendezvous with the navy oiler USS Pecos. This rendezvous took place on the 27th and all ships were refueled by July 28, 1943. This left the door wide open for Kimura's evacuation fleet.

Meanwhile, after having flown the weather July 25, I was
scheduled to fly again July 27.

Takeoff Crash

Weather at Casco Cove was good with an overcast ceiling of 1,000 feet, visibility four miles and light variable winds the morning of July 27. Of concern was

an open ocean swell about two and a half feet in height surging into the cove. This undulating bulge swept by at fourteen second intervals.

To check conditions with this swell running Amme's PBY was first to takeoff. I was in another PBY on the water and did not see Amme's lift off. Late that evening I was told he became airborne off the swell at precisely the right moment but was lucky to remain aloft and not retouch the water.

No one I've contacted can recall with certainty the pilot who attempted the second takeoff. Retired Cmdr. Milton H. Tappan, Amme's administrative assistant hazards a guess it may have been Lt (jg) Helmar Jordahl.

Pilot of this plane gunned his engines to takeoff power. He had the PBY on the step when it roared past Casco's fantail. Before takeoff speed was reached the plane became airborne off the swell. PBY lifted briefly, touched down as briefly then soared drunkenly for a second or two. The nose came up, the tail dropped and like a shot-gunned goose the PBY pancaked in with terrific force. There was the unmistakable ripping sound of aluminum. The tail went up as the PBY slammed to a stop. The plane settled back on an even keel or on what was left of her bottom.

Water was immediately up to the knees of both blister gunners. A second later it reached their waists. There wasn't time to struggle with rubber life rafts. Both gunners went out an opened blister, inflated their "May Wests" and joined the rest of the crew on the wing.

The pilot had had the presence of mind to throw the bomb switches to safe before leaving the cockpit. None of the crew had been injured. Within seconds a coxswain brought his crashboat alongside. As the plane gurglingly sank from under them pilot and crew stepped off the wing into the boat.

One hundred seconds could not have elapsed from the moment the pilot opened his throttles until the plane disappeared beneath the surface. Calderon witnessed the crash. His description later made it seem strangely reminiscent of the way a flat rock thrown across a pond skip, skip, skips before suddenly plopping to a halt whereupon it quickly sinks.

After the PBY came off the swell, Calderon was certain it must have taken superhuman effort by pilot and co-pilot to prevent burying the bow or digging in

a wingtip float."

I did not see the crash. My PBY was busy slewing around while describing "S's" during engine power checks. All other flights off Casco Cove were temporarily postponed. We were ordered to taxi to respective buoys and remain in the planes. Nap time. Several hours later the swell had decreased to a safe height and we took off on patrol.

Amme returned late that afternoon upset over the loss of a valuable plane but greatly relieved there had been no injuries or fatalities.

A salvage tug and divers raised the PBY from ten fathoms in early August. Little was considered salvageable after a week under salt water.

I believed July 1943 had been a bad month for me. We had only glimpses of future weather in our crystal ball and it was fortunate I could not foretell August 1943.

My last diary entry for July reads: "Preparations are being made to take Kiska. I set the date about the middle of August. This being the case I wonder whether I'll go over to the beach here at Attu or go with the ship and be in on all the gory details. I want to go with the ship since Kiska is the thorn in our side and has been. With it in our hands we'll go on over to Paramushiro and the Kurile Islands--then Japan proper and get this over."

23

"Take 'Er Down"
Special Mission of USS S-35(SS140)
(August 4, 1943 to August 30, 1943)

Strangely Worded Orders Left Me Little Choice

I didn't have long to wonder where I'd go. A few evenings later, after a 9.7 hour patrol flight, I was sacked out in my office bunk. Calderon and Hill were entering the latest signals on the map. Herold was waiting to analyze it. With a knock a radioman came in and held out a clipboard for Herold's signature. After scanning the message from Wing Headquarters at Adak he whistled what was clearly an exclamation mark.

"Ohhhh boy!" he said handing me the radiogram, "I believe this is for you." It read:

SEND CARRIGAN, PAUL E., AERM2/c USN, 224-09-48, OR

OTHER QUALIFIED VOLUNTEER TO USS S-35 FOR TEMPORARY

DETACHED DUTY XX

My heart sank. The unusual wording shafted me. I passed the radiogram to Calderon.

"Any OTHER volunteer? I asked.

"Hell no, not me." he replied, "Not on an old S-boat. Especially not that one."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"I mean that's the boat that caught fire off Amchitka last winter during a storm."

"The one that was lucky to reach Adak last New Year's Eve?" "Christmas Eve. She was gutted."

"How about, Rolf," I asked Herold. "He's a Wing AerM."

"He could probably do the job," said Herold, "whatever it is but I'm sure Tatom would prefer someone with more Aleutian experience. And, he did finger you."

The "Black Irishman" had acquired a reputation

and the situation in which I unhappily found myself challenged that reputation. Tatom's long arm had again reached out for me.

I told Herold I'd go.

A message was sent to Wing Headquarters at Adak that Carrigan had volunteered. The ship received a reply that I was to be given a thorough physical. If the doctor found no problems I was to take along a portable aneroid barometer, an extra supply of spare thermometer tubes for the sling psychrometer, and a sleeping bag.

The sleeping bag raised questions. Was I to take observations on the submarine or was S-35 a means of transportation to place me on some rocky, lonely shore again? Another sea lion cave?

There had been no mention of my old side-kick on such adventures, Wing radioman, Red Corcoran. He could have received separate orders at Adak. Someone noted there are radiomen on submarines. Calderon wondered if Tatom planned to have me put ashore on Kiska. This frightening idle thought was out of the question because there were 6,000 Japs on the island. Someone suggested S-35 might slip into Kiska Harbor where weather could be observed through the periscope.

Herold's common sense and experience prevailed. Weather at Kiska could be observed from aircraft. Weather far to the southwest, however, would be most vital for staging an amphibious assault on Kiska. Herold believed the most logical spot for S-35 to position herself would be off the Kuriles or Hokkaido. This would place her in the path of any destructive swells or storms heading for the western Aleutians.

I passed the physical the following morning and orders were being cut transferring me to the WWI vintage submarine. During the night S-35 had arrived from Dutch Harbor to pick me up. She was anchored a short distance from Casco.

My diary entry for August 4, 1943 reads in part:

" Today orders came to S-35 (Yes, a submarine, no less) Me or Other volunteer. Tatom again. I haven't been told but my job will be sending back weather reports for operations at Kiska. Regardless, it will be a new experience. Don't know how long I will be gone, probably no longer than a month. As Daniel in the lion's den cried out, "What Ho!""

I'd stuffed extra clothes in a hand bag along with my toilet kit and gathered up several dozen extra thermometer tubes and packed them against breakage. A

month's supply of AirMetCo's and some of the less familiar codes within the synoptic weather code, homemade plexiglass plotting board for working up true winds and which fit in my pocket completed my trappings. I was ready to go.

With members of Casco's weather gang I looked across the short stretch of water at tiny S-35. None of us could believe I was going on a submarine. The whole business had an unreal quality about it. This would be one of only two known instances in WWII that a weatherman was sent on such an assignment.

"She's so small," said Calderon. "She reminds me of a WWI U-boat."

His casual observation was closer to the truth than any of us realized. U-boats had proved to be an advanced design superior to Allied submarines of WWI. The U.S. Navy copied the design with its S-class boats. In the case of S-35 and a number of others built in the early 1920s this similarity extended to the German M.A.N.N. diesels. Following WWI these engines were built in the U.S. under patent agreement.

Calderon's remark, "Especially not that one," came back to haunt me. He was referring to a patrol of the S-35 seven months earlier in Aleutian waters. Known as the Fire and Ice patrol it is recorded in the annals of U.S. Submarine Warfare as a monument to the never-say-die courage of a skipper and crew to save their doomed boat against all odds.

Fire and Ice

Under command of Lieutenant Henry S. "Hank" Monroe, USN, S-35 was patrolling south of Amchitka the afternoon of December 21, 1942. In an attempt to charge her depleted batteries the boat was running on the surface in a howling blizzard accompanied by mountainous seas. Even at one third speed heavy seas were engulfing the plunging bow and surging aft at the height of the bridge. During late afternoon the storm intensified.

Around 1800 hours a geysering sea buried the bridge and a torrent of water poured through the open hatch to the control room far below. Monroe ordered the hatch closed but before this could be done a second gigantic sea engulfed the bridge and hurled

Monroe halfway through the open hatch. With painful arm and leg injuries, he was helped below to his quarters.

An unfortunate set of circumstances led to Monroe's injuries. There was a junior officer aboard for training. He'd been having difficulty maintaining balance in such seas. Monroe demonstrated the proper handhold/leg brace. He'd released one hand and turned sideways to make room for the officer to assume the correct position just as the sea engulfed the bridge.

Monroe had been in his bunk a short while when at 1830 the dread cry of "Fire in the control room" rang out. The injured captain, hardly able to stand, reached the control room to be greeted by an alarming display of pyrotechnics. Blue flames and white-hot flares of electric arcs leaped out of the main power cables from the forward battery.

Salt water had apparently soaked into the cables causing a short which ignited insulation. Added to the crackle of sparks was the hiss of burning rubber and acrid smoke soon filled the control room. The first fire in the back starboard corner of the control room was extinguished only to have a new one erupt in the forward starboard corner. No sooner had this been extinguished when shorting wires caused additional fires and sparks in the forward battery compartment. Deadly chlorine gas and choking fumes drove the crew from the forward part of the boat.

This forward section back to the control room was abandoned and sealed off. Monroe had the forward battery-breaker power switch on the main board in the control pulled to cut off the electrical load forward. With power off, the sparking and arching would cease and with the forward section sealed from oxygen it was hoped the fires would go out.

The crew waited. Suddenly, fires erupted again in the control room but they could not be controlled with the last two fire extinguishers. Poisoned gases and thick smoke drove the crew into the stern section of the boat. The engines were shut down and the control room sealed off.

With fires unchecked and smoke and moisture contamination causing large grounds, a series of short circuits leap-frogged throughout the boat. All electrical circuits, including those needed to operate the electric steering system, radio communications, gyro compass, engine-order-annunciators, and bow and stern planes for diving, were knocked out. Fires

burned a hole in the top of number two ballast tank and the lines from number one and number five air tanks were burned through.

The boat appeared done for but anything was better than abandoning the gutted hulk and taking to rubber life rafts. In the icy wind and huge seas, rubber boats would not last long. Lieutenant Monroe never considered abandoning ship even though the situation appeard hopeless. They were caught in a storm during the worst winter recorded in the Aleutians and with radio communications out, no one knew of their plight.

They fought on. Several electricians and motor "macs" volunteered to don smoke masks and reenter the control room. They were driven back. The masks were then charged with oxygen and the volunteers returned to the control room where they flooded the magazines to prevent an explosion. To counter-act flooding of the magazine a ballast tank was blown to maintain trim on the boat and to raise her higher in the water. While this was being done, others donned oxygen charged masks and with blankets fought the stubborn fires.

The crew continued to smother fires all night while fifty
foot seas slammed the boat and crew unmercifully.

Motor mechs succeeded getting one diesel running early on the morning of December 22, 1942. It was imperative, if possible, to get clear of the treacherous rocks and reefs of Amchitka which had claimed S-27 earlier that year. Fires were brought under control and S-35 struggled slowly toward Adak, the nearest place help could be obtained.

At 0700 hours on the 22nd fires erupted again. The chlorine gas and smoke fumes were too much this time. Monroe was forced to shut down the engine and order everyone topside.

There is scant room on the bridge of an S-boat; barely enough under normal conditions for the O.O.D, quartermaster of the watch, and the three lookouts. As many as possible had to jam themselves within the enclosure of the bridge shield while others packed tightly behind the stanchions and safety cables of the catwalk that encircles the superstructure. Men even climbed up and clung to the periscope housing. Those with precarious perches were tied with line so they would not be swept overboard. Icy seas and spray soaked everyone to the skin. The wind chill factor

numbed senses.

Monroe had closed all hatches and vents, thereby denying oxygen to feed the fires below. After two hours, the smouldering fires were again brought under control. The entire crew topside could not have endured much more. At about 0900 hours some crewmen went below and started an engine.

The ordeal was far from over. That afternoon fires erupted again, the engine was shut down and everyone ordered topside into the icy hell. This alternate torture routine was repeated the next morning and twice the following day. Finally, after four days and nights of suffering, Monroe brought S-35 safely into Adak on Christmas Eve, 1942. Adak was a base he had never steamed into. Unknowingly, Monroe brought S-35 directly through Adak's newly relaid mine field which had partially blown up during a November storm. So new was this protective mine field that it was not indicated on Monroe's charts when he'd departed Dutch Harbor. When Monroe was later told about the mine field he suggested that perhaps it wasn't working.

Monroe moored his crippled submarine alongside our seaplane tender Gillis. AerM2c Carey and others aboard Gillis at that time recalled that most of S-35's crew were rushed to the base hospital. All were suffering from exposure, many from smoke inhalation, burns, and bruises. A few were tended to in Gillis's sick bay and these men stayed aboard for Christmas dinner the following day.

With the assistance of a tug, in case of emergency, S-35 proceeded to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard at Bremerton,Wa. for a complete overhaul and refitting. In addition, she was given some of the latest electronics gear, including radar.

Lt. Monroe was promoted to Lieutenant Commander. With most of the same crew he set sail for the Aleutians arriving at Dutch Harbor in mid May 1943. Captain Monroe took S-35 on another historic patrol in June and July 1943,--the story of which will be related in due course. After returning to Dutch Harbor in mid July S-35's crew had two weeks R and R while the boat had minor but extensive battle damage repaired. Monroe received orders near the end of July to proceed to Attu and pick up an AerM for a special mission. My part in this venerable submarine's adventures was about to begin.

Casco's O.O.D. called away a boat and crew. It

was time for goodbyes. We shook hands and to cover our true feelings some flippant remarks were exchanged. We didn't know if we'd see each other again.

Dressed in fleece-lined leather flight jacket and boots, and the aircrewman's sheath knife on my belt, I went to the boat station and down into the waiting launch.

As the launch chugged away from Casco's side I didn't look back but instead studied the obsolete submarine, a relic of another era.

A Good Omen

As the launch drew near I noticed ,**OLD BLACK MAGIC**, in large white block letters freshly painted a few feet below the coal black bridge shield. So that was her nickname. This was a good omen because Jean and I considered this "our" song[1]. For the Black Irishman to be going aboard Old Black Magic could only be a lucky charm.

Amid stares from the topside watch, I saluted and handed my orders to the O.O.D. An AerM reporting aboard was as strange to the crew as it was to me. The O.O.D., a pleasant Lt(jg), greeted me with a smile and a most unexpected handshake.

"Welcome aboard, Carrigan. Lay below and report to the chief of the boat. After he gets you squared away report back to me."

As I replied, "Aye, Aye, sir." I noticed he was eyeing my flight jacket and boots. I think he was envious.

He turned to his messenger and told him to lend a hand with my gear and lead me below. The sailor took my sleeping bag while I hung onto my travel bag and precious instruments. When we had everthing gathered up, the sailor smiled and said,"Follow me, Airdale."

He disappeared down the hatch faster than a frightened prairie dog into its hole. I peered over the coaming and was shocked.

I'd had no idea how far down it was to a submarine's innards. If a guy slipped he could get killed. The thirty-five or forty feet straight down passed through several tiny compartments. Various landings were connected by narrow, vertical, steel-runged ladders. From the bridge one descends to the conning tower(a misnomer in an S-boat because it cannot be conned from there), radar compartment,

passes the radio room, and lastly into the control room.

When I slowly and carefully arrived in the control room Chief Electrician's Mate F.J. Barbero, chief of the boat, greeted me with news the boat was so overcrowded there was no bunk for me.

"You'll have to sack out in the torpedo room until we can make other arrangements. Bring your gear and follow me."

I tailed the chief forward through the jammed, sleeping compartment of the enlisted men. This was also the forward battery room with batteries below deck. There didn't seem to be breathing space,--Sardines in a can--.

Equally crowded was the torpedo room. S-35 carried twelve torpedos in two racks. Chief Barbero waved his hand vaguely between the port and starboard racks and said, "You can spread your sleeping bag on the deck here but it will have to be fore and aft." This part wasn't necessary. It couldn't have been five feet between the racks of gleaming torpedoes. He found a nook to store my sleeping bag and hand bag. Tucked here and there in the scant space above the torpedos, racks and chain-hoist tracks used for moving torpedoes about were bunks suspended from the overhead. Several torpedomen roused from naps were propped on elbows gazing down at the newcomer to their compartment.

My instruments would have to be kept in a safer, handier place. Chief Barbero led me back to the control room and found space in the bottom drawer of a desk.

"That takes care of that," he said, "Now for the important things."

The Head

So help me, the first thing I was taught in the S-35 was how to flush the toilet! This small head was without adequate room to stand upright except at the single, toilet seat. The cramped compartment was against the curved side of the starboard hull forward of the control room.

Every square foot of space against the cold, condensation beaded hull and forward bulkhead was packed from deck to overhead with stacked hams and sides of bacon. I hadn't seen this much meat in all of

my time in the Aleutians. Happily, I realized all we'd ever heard about the great chow served on submarines must be true.

I had but a second to contemplate the fine eating stored in such a strange place. Barbero got my instant attention.

"Carrigan, if you don't do this exactly right you can sink the boat! We'll go through the procedure until you're certain you have it down pat."

"I'm all ears, chief," I said in awe.

An S-boat's toilet was a tiered, squat, tower of three chambers. The operation involved about twenty-three steps and went something like this: First, all valves and levers were checked to assure they were in proper starting position. Double sea cocks on two water lines were opened to (1) allow a sufficient amount of seawater to be run into the upper chamber so paper wouldn't stick to the bowl sides, and residue would be liquified, and (2) to flood the discharge line. The sea cocks were tightly closed. Upon completion of one's business, a trapdoor handle was operated and the contents fell into a lower chamber. This handle was then pushed past center into a positive lock position thereby creating an airtight pressure seal between these two chambers. An air pressure valve was opened and then another lever operated until twenty pounds per square inch of pressure registered on a gauge. The next few steps had to be done almost simultaneously and one needed three hands. Double sea cocks on a discharge line had to be opened, the twenty pounds of pressure built up in chamber two was released by operation of a blowout handle moved to the open position while another lever was operated at the same time and the contents discharged with a blast. All valves and levers were moved to original positions and double checked especially the sea cocks, and the adventure was over until nature called again.

If one were astride this gadgetry surrounded throne today, one would surely have the feeling of being perched on the nose of a personal rocket about to be launched into orbit.

The Panel

It probably has a technical name but I can only call the second stop on my indoctrination tour, the

"Panel." To me it was a monster that rivaled the "Head." It was located aft of the control room on the starboard side just inside the entrance to the messhall. The huge, electrical board was festooned with dials, gauges, a Christmas tree assortment of lights, and the usual array of circuit breakers and fuses of various sizes. Near the lower center of the panel and under the largest dial, was a black-handled knife switch of giant proportions.

"Don't worry about all the other stuff on this board," said the chief, "just this light, this large knife switch, and this dial. If you're ever walking past or sitting closest to these and bells start to ring, and this red light comes on, rush here and grab this black handle. Watch the dial closely. As soon as the needle reaches zero,AND NOT BEFORE, pull the knife switch out and slam it closed in the opposite position. This will happen each time we dive and each time we surface. It means the boat's propulsion system is switching from diesel to electric battery power or vice-versa." He paused while I digested this, then added the frightening warning, "If you attempt to close this switch before that needle reaches zero, it will probably break your arm and you'll be thrown across the boat and up against that other bulkhead. Understand?" I found out this was true. It was also critical for the safety of the boat not to delay too long AFTER the needle reached zero.

I began to wish with all my heart I hadn't "volunteered." Life had become extra complicated overnight to find myself in a position whereby I could drown us all if I went to the head and break my arm if I went to chow.

For three days I practically ran past the panel and chose a seat as far away from it as possible. I was also constipated. Still, I went to the head several times a day to practice so that I wouldn't forget the twenty-three steps.

The chief turned me loose but before I could report to the
O.O.D. as ordered, the captain, Lieutenant Commander Henry S.
Monroe, USN, came back aboard from business ashore. After a brief conversation in the control room with his Executive Officer, Lieutenant H.L. Grant, Monroe disappeared into his quarters. Shortly, the loud speakers announced in no uncertain terms, "Now hear this. Special sea detail report to your stations. Make

all preparations for getting underway."

Before the last sounds died there was a bustle about the boat. Men rushed to their stations and much of the traffic seemed to pass through the cramped area of the control room. On the port side forward I found an area out of the way. Here there was a small, built-in, padded bench. I sat and observed activity as the anchor was taken in topside, the diesel engines started, and 800 tons of steel made ready for sea.

S-35 gathered way on the surface and headed slowly for the entrance of Casco Cove. Slowly but not quietly for a surprising thing happened. Dinah Shore's rendition of Old Black Magic began to blare over the loud speakers including one on the bridge. Volume was so loud that G.I.s over at Alexai Point must have heard it. This platter, the boat's theme song, was being spun on orders from Captain Monroe. With the band's first downbeat smiles sprang to the faces of all those in the control room. Clearly, it was an instantaneous morale booster. Clearly, it was a thumbing of the nose at the world. Jauntily, almost defiantly, Old Black Magic was off on another adventure into the great unknown.

I Meet the Skipper

The watch changed and the Lt(jg) O.O.D. who had greeted me when I came aboard was relieved and came below. He too disappeared forward but soon returned and told me the captain wanted to see me. The Lt(jg) led me to Monroe's cramped cubicle, introduced me then left.

In a rough and ready deep bass voice Monroe welcomed me aboard and we shook hands. It struck me as odd. No officer in the navy had previously offered his hand but since coming aboard S-35 it had happened twice within an hour. The captain had a good firm grip and I liked him immediately. His dark eyes surveyed me with interest. Six foot four, ruggedly handsome, lean and tough looking, determination written all over his face and accented by the line of his strong jaw, he reminded me of Colonel Verbeck. The comparison went beyond physical appearance as Monroe's handling of the S-35 under extreme emergency conditions bore evidence. He was a born leader who could make correct decisions under great stress.

Monroe had considerable experience fighting the Japanese before he came to the Aleutians. In the late

1920s the Boston reared Monroe served an enlisted hitch in the navy before his appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy. Upon receiving his commission with the Class of 1933, Monroe volunteered for and completed submarine training. At the outbreak of WWII he was serving in an S-boat based in the Philippines. Overun by the Japanese onslaught the U.S. boats fell back and operated for a time from an abandoned Dutch base in Java. In February 1942 Monroe received orders as third officer (diving officer) under the colorful Wreford G. "Moon" Chapple. Lt.Cmdr. Chapple had been given command of the modern fleet boat Permit(SS178), a reward for having skippered the S-38 with daring initiative during the Jap landings in Manila. Monroe became Chapple's X/O and experienced considerable action in USS Permit. Much of this action took place in March 1942 when Permit was ordered to evacuate Gen. Douglas MacArthur from Corregidor.* In August Monroe was returned to the states and took command of S-35 at Dutch Harbor in September 1942.

As I met the penetrating gaze of the towering figure before me I could not help thinking Monroe fit my concept of what a tough, seasoned submarine skipper should look like.

The captain asked me to have a seat. I sat in the only chair while he sat on his bunk. Monroe didn't waste words. He and his officers and crew were not particularly pleased to be assigned to a top secret weather mission. He thought it possible I might know more about the whole thing than he did. He asked what I'd been told about my duties.

"Nothing, sir." I had to admit. "However, I've been sent on several isolated assignments with portable weather gear."

"We'll both know soon enough. I have sealed orders but they won't be opened until we reach a certain position tonight. I can tell you we are heading southwestward."

I mentioned that we in the Casco believed the most logical place for weather reporting would be somewhere off the Kurile Islands. Monroe agreed. His next words were like a sledge-hammer blow to the side of my head.

"I wish," he said, "to get back into the Sea of Okhotsk as soon as possible and raise some more hell." This hinged on whether or not he was secured from the

weather mission in time. He had been granted contingent permission to continue on a war patrol, the time element being the key. For this reason he had taken on as much fuel and stores as the boat would hold to see him through an extended patrol. Monroe felt it was only fair to tell me because the crew was already aware of the possibility.

Monroe studied my face. I have no idea what it showed but my mind was numb. He must have been assessing me and wondering how I might act in an emergency. What if this non-submariner happens to get caught on the bridge with his weather instruments when I have to crash-dive? How much will his presence and work jeopardize the safety of my command? I had not said a word.

"That's all for now, Carrigan." Monroe finally said. "I'll call you after I read my orders and we can take it from there."

"Yes, sir," I replied and left his quarters.

I could tell by our motion the boat had passed out of the sheltered waters of Casco Cove and rounded Murder Point. Soon we were well past Temnac Bay and headed westward along the southern shore of Attu. Chow was piped down and I feasted on the best meal I'd eaten during my seventeen months in the Aleutians: pork chops, green beans, mashed potatoes, cream gravy, apple sauce, fresh baked bread, and ice cold milk. I could go back for seconds if I still had room. Coffee and a chocolate sheet cake with white frosting for dessert topped off the meal. Stuffed and happy I went back into the control room, squeezing quickly past the "Panel".

My First Dive

Within a few moments of my return to the control room all hell broke loose. Without warning, someone had pushed the General Alarm button. The dreaded Bong...Bong...Bong...echoed throughout the boat's steel hull. At high speed, men moved to their stations and began performing tasks. The bridge was cleared and the hatch dogged. We shifted from diesel to battery power amid more buzzers and clanging bells than I thought possible. We dove. Trapped like a rat!"

The thought of being on a submerged submarine had brought

cold chills for years. This dread stemmed from my childhood when the USS Squalus sank while on a training cruise off Newport, RI. New York papers carried front page headlines and related the horrible details of the trapped drowned men. A daily report filling many pages told of the rescue attempt to save crews members still alive in one of the compartments. It was a dramatic and successful race against time and a dwindling air supply.

What a thing to recall at a time like this. Damn John Tatom to hell. Damn my own false pride. I became aware that the seeming chaos about me had ceased. The helmsman seated a few feet away appeared perfectly calm as he repeated an order given to him. Those probing fingers of panic that had been reaching out for me, retreated. Controlling my voice, I asked him, "What's going on? What happened?"

"Relax, Airdale," he smilingly said, "It's just a practice dive. We're checking the integrity of the boat before we get too far from Attu."

"Oh."

More at ease, I let the sensations flow. I'd been conscious of a considerable pressure on my ear drums at one point. I realized that the atmosphere in the boat would have to be increased to counter-act the growing pressure on our hull. Someone had announced, "We have a green board." Other quiet orders concerned the angle of the bow and a depth to be reached. I did not understand most of the strange terminology being used. The boat was levelled off at a depth of eighty feet. An eerie silence had enveloped the submarine and it was now riding smooth as silk. Gone was the rolling and pitching experienced a few moments before on the surface. This undersea world wasn't too bad.

After a few minutes, Monroe ordered, "Bring 'er up to forty-five feet." This I found out later was standard periscope depth for S-35. When this depth was reached the order, "Up scope," was given. The periscope motor whirred and the tube came sliding up out of the deck. Monroe pulled down the handles and as the eye piece of the periscope broke water he took a quick 360 degree elevated look for aircraft and then twice searched the horizon. Satisfied, he ordered, "Down scope."

He gave orders to surface the boat and apparent chaos again descended. Bells rang, panel lights blinked on and off, knobs were twisted, levers pushed or pulled, and the boat began her ascent. Orders were

given to blow certain ballast tanks and another order dealt with a main induction valve. The boat surfaced and the changeover from electric to diesel propulsion was completed. Monroe and the quartermaster of the watch went up the ladders and opened the bridge hatch. A WHHHOOOOSH went out of the boat and fresh air came into the control room. Shortly after, the order came down, "Lookouts to the bridge," and three men ascended the rungs to take their respective stations. I had survived my first dive.

"Nothin' to it," the helmsman said with a grin.

"Right," I answered with a confident smile. I believed I had passed an unexpected test with rather calm coolness until I realized my forearms were aching. A glance downward showed that my grip was making deep indentations in the leather-covered cushion. S-35 plowed ahead as the darkness of August 4, 1943 came down like a black curtain.

About two hours later over a cup of coffee in the messhall I was asking and answering questions with a group of off watch crew members. The dreaded sound of general quarters rang throughout the boat and everyone took off on the dead run. I asked a sailor hurrying aft from the control room if this was another drill.

"Hell no, radar has a contact."

I stayed put, clutching my cup. After what seemed ages, the boat was secured from general quarters. I was about to burst from curiosity. People came drifting back into the messhall and reported the radar contact was a picket boat patrolling off Cape Wrangell, the western tip of Attu. After the proper exchange of recognition signals S-35 and the picket boat went their ways.

The following facts, procedures, and observations, dealing primarily with the diving/surfacing routine, will give the reader a clearer understanding of duty aboard a vintage, diesel S-boat.

To begin with, S-35 displaced only 854 tons. Her length was 219 feet with a 20 foot beam. By comparison, modern fleet boats of WWII displaced between 1500 to 2000 plus tons, were generally 320 feet in length and had a beam of 27 feet.

All accomodations in an S-boat were cramped including the bridge occupied by five men while rigged for surface running. In addition to the O.O.D. and

quartermaster of the watch, three lookouts were ordered topside immediately upon surfacing. These three took up positions aft of the bridge: one on the port side, one to starboard, and one facing aft directly behind the periscope housing. These positions did not have the partial protection of the chest-high bridge shield.

O.O.D.s and quartermasters stood four hour watches. Lookouts were relieved every two hours. Each lookout held large, heavy binoculars and was required not to take the glasses from his eyes. This wasn't practical in heavy fog and the rule was not enforced. All lookouts were conscientious in searching the sky and horizon. I noted no sky-larking by S-35's bridge watch. This differed considerably from lookouts posted on some of the navy vessels I served in.

Lookouts, O.O.D.'s, and quartermasters were the only crew members allowed on the bridge during the twenty-seven days I was aboard S-35. Cooks must have been allowed topside at various times to dispose of weighted garbage sacks which could not be permitted to accumulate. These men must have used a different hatch.

The topside watch had an alloted six seconds to clear the bridge during a dive. Later, when I'd get trapped on the bridge while taking an observation, I was the sixth man. In the beginning, the six seconds was prolonged. My inexperience and handful of weather instruments added a few precious seconds to the vital maneuver. In this respect the "Airdale" was a bottleneck, undoubtedly a pain in the butt, and a jeopardy to the boat. Before disaster could overtake us, however, word spread that the, "Black Irishman is learnin' fast 'n' gettin' quicker".

Under normal diving conditions the O.O.D. ordered, "Lookouts below", "Clear the bridge", pushed the dive alarm button, and ordered, "Dive-Dive" followed by a depth. Sometimes, in an emergency situation, "Lookouts below" and "Clear the bridge" were eliminated.

After the conning officer (O.O.D. on the bridge) gave the order to dive, the following sequence of events/orders took place: The dive order required the helmsman in the control room to put the rudder amidships. The diving officer in the control room opened the flood valves and vents on the main ballast tanks while the engine room secured the engines and shifted from diesel to motor/main battery propulsion.

The control room closed the main ventilation valve, the largest in the boat. While these steps were being carried out the planesmen in the control room were rigging out the bow and stern planes and putting them on hard dive, then levelling off at the depth ordered by the conning officer. Monroe was always shooting for less than sixty seconds to get the boat under. "A few times," he reports, "when you were with us we came close to thirty seconds but that could get a bit hairy, everything considered."

"Green Board" reported by the diving officer indicated that all hull openings were in closed position as shown by all the lights on a panel being green. "Pressure in the boat" was reported as soon as the gauge needle held steady after bleeding into the boat a little additional air from the main air manifold.

Orders to the motor room when diving were to control the boat's underwater speed and dealt as to whether or not the batteries/motors were to be in series or parallel. Angle orders to the planesmen controlled the angle of the dive. Orders to flood or blow various ballast tanks were given by the diving officer as he adjusted the overall trim of the boat.

All watertight doors were shut and locked upon any routine dive or whenever word was passed to , "Rig for Depth Charge." After a routine dive the doors were opened to provide access throughout the boat.

The activity which took place in the control room during a dive/surface order amazed me. Two men would come running into the control room from someplace aft. Each man carried a large, long-handled steel brace. They fit these tools into holes in the deck plates at different locations. Each would crank vigorously, much as would a carpenter if he were in a great hurry to drill a hole. The men were either opening or closing recessed valves that could only be operated in this manner.

Surely the busiest station was the propulsion control center at the portside aft bulkhead of the control room. A man sat facing aft in front of a large panel and narrow table top. Panel and table were crowded with an array of lights, dials, bells, buzzers, knobs, switches, wheels, and levers. Whenever the order was given to dive or surface this man appeared to need four extra arms. By leaning far to his left he could see aft through the messhall into the engine room when the doors were open. At times he

exchanged wig-wag hand signals with someone there.

Sealed Orders Opened

When the boat crossed the International Dateline that night at a prescribed latitude, Captain Monroe opened his sealed orders. My first inkling came when he strode into the control room and ordered a change in course and increase of speed. He then asked me to follow him to his quarters. This room was no more than six by eight feet. It contained a bunk with lockers below and a hanging locker above. A built in desk, a chair, a fold-down chart table, a small wash basin and mirror, a shelf containing books, and a small safe completed the furnishings. The room was separated from the passageway by a curtain.

Monroe read the parts of his orders that pertained to my role. These orders directed S-35 to proceed at optimum speed to position 47 degrees-oo minutes north latitude,--155 degrees-30 minutes east longitude. This location would position us slightly over one hundred miles due east of the Japanese central Kurile Island of Shimushiru. S-35 was to remain within one degree (sixty miles) of this position and I was to take four synoptic weather observations daily, if possible, at the local time zone hours of 0200, 0800, 1400, and 2000. These reports were to be prepared in the new, abbreviated, weather code included in the orders, re-encoded in the top secret radio cipher provided, and transmitted until "rogered" for, conditions permitting. These weather reports were to continue until further notice and every possible effort made to maintain schedule within the safety of the boat. This would be left to the captain's discretion.

It wasn't difficult to cut through the staid naval phraseology. The orders said, "Surface four times a day in the Jap's front yard. Open up your radio transmitter and keep sending until you're certain the weather report has been received. You decide what constitutes danger and we'll review you're actions later." To any U.S.Naval officer this amounted to orders to carry out the mission at all costs.

The killer was the stipulation that Monroe must remain within a sixty mile radius of the designated position. The Japanese were about to be handed a license to shoot fish in a barrel. Us.

When the skipper had finished reading this part

he looked up
and asked, "So far, so good?"

"Boy, oh, boy!," I answered in un-military fashion. Before I could ask why we had to stay within sixty miles of a certain position, Monroe had sorted through the packet and handed me the weather code. The reason became apparent immediately. To cut down transmission time, the first two five digit numeral groups had been eliminated. These would ordinarily give the month, day of the week, octant of the globe, and latitude and longitude. The date/time of our weather observation would be known from the transmission time.

I scanned the remainder of the code. Simplification was followed throughout. The code included current weather, pressure, barometric tendency, temperature, dew point, humidity, wind direction, wind force, sky condition, cloud cover, cloud types, ceiling height, visibility, sea condition, swell height and direction, time between crests, and an optional group for special weather phenomena such as frontal passage, wind shift, etc..

Although it differed in arrangement of data, the code
resembled our Aircraft Meteorological Code (AirMetCo). For example: in the Synoptic Code, wind direction (DD) was in two digits. This way the wind can be reported to close points of the compass, ie, 322 degrees would be reported as 32. In AirMetCo and this special code there was only one digit(D) for wind direction. Numeral 1 equaled north, 2 northeast etc. and a 322 degree wind was represented by figure 8. A great amount of weather information could be transmitted in the shortest possible form.

Equally special, the weather code and radio cipher were top secret. According to Monroe's orders there were only four copies of each extant and these were in Washington,D.C., Moscow, USSR. Adak, and on Old Black Magic. Monroe and I were the only ones in S-35 who handled these codes. Between observations they were locked in his safe.

Monroe outlined the procedure we would follow for taking, enchiphering, and transmitting our weather reports. He told me to study the weather code while he read through his orders again. Fifteen minutes later after an exchange of questions and answers he dismissed me.

Monroe ordered drills the following day while

maintaining a southwesterly course. Boat and crew practiced crash diving, loading torpedo tubes, manning the deck gun, surfacing from periscope depth, simulated damage and fire control, and Battle Stations both surface and submerged. Monroe summoned me to the bridge prior to one dive so that I could learn the "Clear the bridge" routine. In the event the boat was forced to dive during my weather observation, I was to be the first man down the hatch.

Normal peacetime complement for an S-boat was four officers and about thirty-eight men: wartime complement varied. In 1943, submariners were often packed in wherever there was space and the proper level of experience for training. Overcrowding in our seagoing sardine can was compounded because on this patrol S-35 carried six officers and seventy men.

Part of this manpower was of permanent nature to operate radar and other sophisicated electronic gear installed for the first time after the boat was gutted by fires at the end of 1942. In August 1943 S-35 was the only S-boat equipped with radar. Other men were onboard on a temporary basis for additional training, to learn new skills, and to gain combat experience. In these ways, the fleet provided the nuclei of combat trained personnel for boats coming from new construction.

Training was an ongoing routine. Each man of the permanent crew had to continue learning skills in order to advance in his chosen rating. Each time a submariner was transferred to another boat he had to requalify on the new boat. Some in S-35 fell into this category. Others were recent graduates of the submarine school at New London. Men were also being trained in duties other than their ratings in case of casualties. The ultimate goal was to have each man capable of performing any task in the boat.

Stop watches timed every phase of all drills. Even with trainees aboard the boat was efficient but there is always room for improvement. It was generally felt that given sufficient practice valuable seconds could be shaved off the times of all drills. Instead, time was chopped either under combat conditions or other emergency situations from then on because even our voyage out to station was not uneventful. This set the tone for the entire patrol.

S-35 Encounters A Japanese I-class Submarine

The first incident occurred late in the afternoon of the second day outbound from Attu. In a moderate swell and two foot wind chop S-35 was making about ten knots on the surface. Radar reported an intermittent contact dead ahead at extreme range but closing. S-35 went to Battle Stations. There were no other U.S. vessels in this area and we were approaching enemy controlled waters.

Monroe dove the boat. His salty command for this, delivered in a basso profundo, was always, "Take 'er Down," rather than the prescribed order, "Dive-Dive." If it was a crash dive he would add, "Emergency."

When the boat was under, Monroe altered course slightly to starboard then ordered S-35 leveled at periscope depth. No doubt because of the moderate swell, no approaching vessel came into view. I'm not certain about the sequence of events that were crammed into the next ten minutes. It seems we blew partial ballast several times to raise S-35 high enough to operate the radar. Radar had contact again then lost it. At one point, the hydrophone operator reported screws and machinery sounds at moderate range. Monroe asked the operator to place his receiver in audio mode so everyone in the control room could listen. I heard the heavy, rythmic throbbing and lighter clanking noises described as the screws and machinery of a large vessel moving on the surface at moderate speed. There seemed to be unanimous agreement that the sounds were not the characteristic thrashings of a deadly destroyer. Whatever was up there was drawing close enough to be seen through the periscope.

I vividly recall when first the periscope, then the radar found an empty ocean where a vessel had to be. It was "Take 'er Down - Emergency -80 feet!," followed quickly by a flock of other orders. I mean, we really "pulled the plug."

After diving in a steep curving descent, Monroe leveled the boat. Electric propulsion was shut down and I heard the skipper say, "It must be a Jap sub." Our underwater listening gear could not pick up any screw or machinery sounds this time. Monroe ordered, "Silence about the boat." All was deathly still.

The Japanese submarine had apparently made contact with us, also, and when we partially surfaced, she dove. Both were now submerged and silent. Neither knew exactly where the other was or how close. Neither submarine dared make a sound.

The only enemy submarines believed to be

operating in the North Pacific at that time were the huge I-class boats. These leviathans displaced upwards of 5000 tons and were six times the size of our little old pig boat. I could understand this ratio but it was difficult to conceive of a submarine that displaced twice the tonnage of the Casco. Some I-boats were equipped to carry several midget submarines on deck while others carried a float plane housed in a deck hangar. One such I-boat plane dropped incendiary bombs on Oregon timber land early in WWII. An I-boat shelled installations near the mouth of the Columbia River about the same time. On February 23, 1942, I-17 pumped twenty-five 5.5 inch shells into the Ellwood Oil Refinery near Santa Barbara, CA.

Old Black Magic had to continue on her mission. No matter how much desire Monroe might have had for S-35 to play David against Goliath, he had specific orders not to take any offensive action and avoid enemy contact, if possible, until secured from the weather mission. Monroe was duty-bound to break off the contact but how? It had to be assumed the enemy submarine would keep hunting and tracking us.

It is easy to look back to that moment thirty-seven years ago. My research indicates this was an I-class submarine, quite possibly the I-2 under Commander Mituba Ikatura, IJN. I-2 was the only I-class boat operating in the Aleutians at that time that survived the war. Whichever I-boat it was, the Japanese captain probably found himself in the same situation we were. He most likely was on a special assignment to the Aleutians and by a stroke of bad luck he'd run into an American submarine on war patrol. Because of what followed, he must have reasoned that it was one of the new, powerful, U.S.Fleet boats American shipyards were turning out. These large, hunter/killer boats had been raising hell in the Pacific for sometime and were even penetrating into Japanese home waters. The Japanese captain perhaps wondered how sensitive our new listening gear might be, or whether we might be equipped with a rumored, new magnetic homing torpedo. How could he have known he was up against a boat built in 1923 and so small he could have almost carried it on his deck?

About six hours of "Hide and Hide" not hide and seek followed. We played freeze out the first two or three hours. The enemy submarine was in front of us, in the direction we had to go. This was essentially the same problem confronting the Japanese captain.

S-35 could not outrun her adversary either surfaced or submerged. Top speed of an S-boat under good sea conditions was about fourteen knots. Normal submerged cruising speed with batteries in parallel was four to five knots. Under emergency conditions for high speed underwater maneuvering the batteries were switched to series. This doubled the voltage, increased speed by several knots but completely depleted the batteries in an hour.

It seemed an eternity before the Japanese submarine broke the silent deadlock. Our hydrophone watch picked up electric motor and propeller sounds. The bearing was still in front of us. Monroe started up S-35's motors under silent running and turned to starboard. Hopefully, the sound of Japanese machinery would camouflage our own noises. After some minutes we shut down and listened. All was silent. The enemy submarine had also stopped running but we could not be sure when or how long the enemy might have been listening to our noises. Was it long enough to get a fix on our position?

What kind of electronics did the enemy submarine possess?
Would they fire torpedoes? Everybody was starting to sweat, figuratively and literally. We had been down some four hours and I thought the air in the boat was noticeably worse. This cat and mouse game continued for a couple more hours.

Short, slow, pussy-footing runs followed between silent pauses with all ears straining to catch the least sound. Suspense was so great a few times that I forgot to breath and had to inhale deeply. I wondered how long my clothes had been saturated with perspiration? The Japanese sub was heard once, briefly, forward of our port beam.

More silent runs and more listening. The enemy was then heard unmistakeably toward our port quarter. S-35 put her nose down and slowly ghosted deeper all the while heading away from the last bearing. Fifteen minutes later, Monroe brought the boat up to sixty feet and shut everything down to listen. All was quiet.

Satisfied, after listening for a quarter of an hour, the skipper ordered periscope depth. It was foggy and the sea had calmed with only a gentle swell running. The boat was brought up for a radar search. When the radar sweep showed no blips, Monroe surfaced the boat.

What a relief to hear the Whooosh when the bridge hatch was opened and pressure went out of the boat. Fresh, life-giving air flowed into the control room. Diesel engines roared to life and the boat was steadied on her base course. Purring engines were putting a charge into our batteries. Once again, Dinah Shore's 'Old Black Magic' came over the speakers.

Full Ahead-Both Engines was rung up and the boat quivered. We
were behind schedule but we'd given the Jap sub the slip. Cooks were preparing a feast. There was a happy feeling throughout Old Black Magic.

The Black Fish Fin

On S-35's patrol into these Kurile Island enemy waters a month earlier, Monroe had noticed large numbers of black fish, small whales with dorsal fins about four feet high. He came up with an ingenious idea. Upon the boat's return to Dutch Harbor he'd had the base machine shop make him a black fish fin. Monroe had given the idea considerable thought and had designed the fin to fit over the periscope.

The fin was a beautiful piece of workmanship. Its frame was made of welded re-bar steel, pieces of galvanized pipe and aluminum flat stock, all covered with black rubber and with three stainless steel clamps painted black. The fin fit snugly against the periscope tube. The persicope's eye piece, the only part that revolves, fit into a socket at the top front of the fin. It looked real even from close range. Monroe had received orders for a special weather mission before he'd had an opportunity to test his creation.

Twenty-four hours after our encounter with the enemy submarine, S-35 was still running on the surface. Visibility was ten miles with occasional light fog patches, a broken deck of altocumulus clouds and an oily ocean with little wind or swell: a decent day for August. Training exercises were in full-swing. It was a perfect time to test the fin. Monroe ordered it broken out and installed.

With the fin in place we dove. Monroe scanned sky and horizon through the periscope. He reported that the fin worked well but there was room for improvement. He had some of the other officers take a look. All agreed the blind spot aft was too great for

safety. We surfaced.

An inspection was made and a machinist,(we called them metal-benders), was summoned to the bridge. He trimmed the fin with hacksaw and shears. S-35 submerged for another test. There was improvement. Monroe experimented and discovered that by changing course a degree or so to port and starboard the sky and horizon immediately astern could be viewed. He surfaced.

Additional work was done on the fin in trying to narrow the width immediately behind the socket. A check also revealed that two of the clamps had loosened and they were tightened. During the fin tests we continued to head for our designated weather reporting station and were within a few hundred miles of the Kuriles.

On the final dive to test the fin, trainees had been rotated and two new men were operating the bow and stern planes. This station was on the port side of the control room close to my favorite cushioned seat. Planesmen sat on a long bench. In front of each man was a large brass wheel about three feet in diameter and similar to a ship's helm without spokes. In addition each planesman confronted a panel with lights, a depth gauge and some other dials, including an instrument that looked like a carpenter's level of giant proportions.

In all this activity I was trying to concentrate on the book, "Beau Geste", lent to me by a crew member. About the time I became aware our angle of descent was steeper than normal, a chief hollered at a planesman, "Where's your bubble?"

"I haven't got any," replied the planesman.

By then we were not only plunging deeper but began curving off to one side to such a degree I was thrown from my bench and pitched into a corner. Bell's were ringing and loose gear was crashing to the deck. Under Monroe's urgent orders officers and crew were carrying out emergency procedures. Apparently, the bow planes had been moved too far, too quickly and they were stuck at maximum dive.

Our corkscrewing descent was arrested and the boat leveled but not before it reached a reported depth in excess of three hundred and twenty feet. S-boats were designed for a maximum test depth of two hundred feet. One older crewman remarked later that it was, "a damned miracle our hull had not busted like an egg shell." Another man said it hadn't ruptured

because U.S. boats are, "built hell for stout." The author had the recent opportunity to discuss this frightening dive with retired Rear Admiral Henry S. Monroe. "I believe," he said, "that we must have set an S-boat depth record when you were with us. The figure that sticks in my mind after all these years is 328 feet. I cannot conceive of an S-boat going much deeper and surviving."

It was fortunate S-35's captain, officers, and crew had the experience to know precisely what to do in order to stop our alarming plunge to the black depths.

Monroe ordered all departments to check for damage and report. While this was being done, S-35 was brought up to periscope depth. During the ascent, someone on the far side of the crowded control room drew a few mirthless chuckles. He paraphrased part of the boat's theme song by crooning, "down and down we go, round and round we go...in a spin..."

No serious damage was reported; only a few trickles of water and a few leaking lines. Monroe made a periscope search then swung the scope to the stern. After peering intently for a second or two he swore, ordered the boat surfaced and a radar sweep started. He also passed the word for the metal-bender to report to the bridge, "On the double".

Two of the three clamps had broken and the fin was being dragged sideways through the water. Instead of a graceful dorsal fin and its feather wake, we were plowing a barn door sized furrow on the sea's surface.

The machinist was attempting to unbolt the clamp that had held but had been twisted into a pretzel when radar reported a plane contact. General Quarters sounded. Monroe ordered the machinist to cut the fin loose and let it go. When the bridge was cleared and S-35 dove, the fin slipped overboard, filled with water and sank from sight forever. The enemy aircraft, a four-engined Kawanishi flying boat, was several miles inshore from us and apparently its crew did not detect our presence because we were not attacked.

S-35 had been submerged for several hours during the day and we were approaching our weather reporting position. It was imperative she obtain a full charge on her batteries. After dark the boat was brought to periscope depth. When Monroe was satisfied the sky and ocean in our vicinity held no threat, he ordered radar depth. When this search proved negative S-35 surfaced and chugged along in the night.

This had been one helluva day; in fact, the last several had. There were twenty-four more to go and the excitement was just beginning. I was exhausted from tension and hadn't taken even one weather observation.

The loss of the fin was a bitter disappointment for Monroe. He had planned to use it on the patrol, especially after entering the Sea of Okhotsk. Anything slicing slowly through the water would draw attention but a periscope LOOKS like a periscope, whereas a dorsal fin is a common sight in those waters. By raising and lowering the periscope(fin) slightly above and below the surface, Monroe was confident he could have closely simulated the way a black fish cruises.

For years I had wondered if Monroe abandoned his invention after this one experiment. The fin's one weakness could have been remedied by using heavier clamps. Thirty-seven years later, almost to the day, my question was answered by Monroe. He never had the opportunity to have another fin built.

"I've always believed," said Admiral Monroe, "that the black fish fin had a definite place in our war-locker even if it were only to put an element of confusion in the mind of the Japanese ASW team. It was a pity that our fin died a-borning that day and had to be abandoned."

Adoption, Impressions, Explorations

By the time S-35 was well into her fourth day out of Attu her crew had accepted me and my presence onboard. While my interest in this strange experience encompassed the entire crew, and the boat, their curiosity focused on me.

They had heard little about air operations in the Aleutians and pressed me for information on this phase of the fighting. In turn, everything in and about the boat fascinated me and the crew answered my hundreds of questions. Many in the crew had been on the previous patrols of S-35 and they recounted those voyages.

One under the sea: the other in the air, the submariners and I could not have come from two more diverse branches of the naval service. This dual exchange of information brought about greater awareness and a mutual appreciation of the daily problems each branch faced.

For better or worse, I had been dropped into their midst. I

was the ophaned one so they adopted me.

When a crewman asked if I had a nickname, I'd answered, Black Irishman. This produced the same reaction among the crew as my delight upon first seeing Old Black Magic painted on the boat's bridge shield. After four days of harrowing experiences I'd begun to wonder if I were a Jonah in more ways than one. Evidently, the crew took an opposite view and considered me a lucky charm.

S-35's officers and crew seemed an unusually happy friendly lot, not just where I was concerned but among themselves, too. This camaraderie was similar to that of our flight crews but to an even higher degree. There was an absence of peevish bickering so often present among crewmen aboard ships. I was told that fights occasionally broke out on submarines but when they did it was usually toward the end of a long, uneventful patrol. Boredom and the cramped, sunless life exposed a few nerves now and then.

I learned that submariners are heavily screened and tested. Only certain personality types are accepted. They had to"Fit". Others, no matter how well qualified, were turned down. A submarine is no place for a guy who can't get along with others. Those selected must be confident without being overly aggressive. Stability must have been high on the list. Cheerfulness and optimism must have been in there, too. All of these traits were evident in the men around me. They had then been welded by the crucible of combat into one of the finest groups of officers and men with whom I've ever had the privilege to be associated with. They were indeed a "rare breed".

All were helpful in patiently answering my questions. I'd become friends with many in the crew including Torpedoman Second Class Lou Parcells. Big Lou bunked in the torpedo room and was a fountain of knowledge about his profession. Danna C. Jensen,MM1c spent hours explaining the complexities of a submarine's dual propulsion system. While outbound from Attu I had wandered around the boat whenever possible. From the messhall through junior officer's quarters and the control room to the forward torpedo room, where I'd been trying to sleep, was familiar country. I began to explore toward the stern.

In the engine room I struck up a friendship with Harry Tong another MM1c. Both 600 horsepower diesels were spotlessly clean. Grated catwalks with brass railings went around each engine. A main passageway

ran between the twin power plants. Coming out of each engine's large reduction gear box was a massive eight inch diamater solid steel alloy drive shaft. During surface running, the room was all noise. There was the characteristic hammering clatter of a diesel power plant, whir of generating turbines, reduction gear boxes, and auxillary engines. All was silent by comparison when the boat was running submerged.

Always warm and cozy, the engine room was well lighted. I had scouted it out as a possible place to move my sleeping bag but there wasn't space.

My discovery of the machine shop came as a great surprise; surprise because I had not thought of a crowded submarine having one. Although small it was completely equipped to make or repair almost anything on the boat. S-boats did not have an after torpedo room or stern tubes. The machine shop was located at this tapered end where the boat's hull became very narrow.

Every square foot of space in the boat was utilized in some way. Built-in storage was everywhere even below the steel deck. My sleeping bag had not been planned for in the S-35's design.

My sleeping 'compartment' wasn't working out. To begin with, the lights seemed to be on all hours of the day and night because a crap game was often in progress. Men coming off watch would take the place of people going on duty. Because the messhall was small, the crew ate in shifts so that even chow call didn't interrupt the game.

With my sleeping bag fore and aft between torpedo racks my body blocked most of the passageway. These were so narrow throughout the boat that two sailors could not pass without both turning sideways. Men in the almost endless stream of traffic going to and from the crap game could not step over my six foot frame. Each would place a foot close to my head or feet and the next step usually fell someplace in between. Even though I was often rolling from side to side with the motion of the boat, the feet seldom missed the moving target. Sleep was impossible.

The first time General Quarters sounded while I was trying to sleep I got trampled in a stampede. Although I was awake, I couldn't get the bag unzipped in time and everyone ran roughshod over me.

This setup was dangerous for the boat's safety and certainly dangerous to me. I acquired two spare blankets and covered myself with these while sleeping

on top of the doubled bag. This was an improvement in that it freed my body so that I could get up quickly. It also made the deck a little less hard. It still didn't solve the basic problem. Sleep.

I'd try to sleep but give it up. I'd roll up my bag and blankets and stow them, go to the control room and sit, or go into the messhall for a cup of coffee and sandwich. Day or night, submariners had access to a huge refrigerator crammed full of goodies. Snacking anytime one wished in the ship's messhall was unheard of in the navy I was accustomed to and I'd quickly taken advantage of this privelege.

When drowsiness overcame me I'd put my arms and head on the messtable and cat-nap. I figured, what the heck, in a short while I'll be taking an observation every six hours around the clock. I'd sleep when and where I could. For the past eighteen months in the Aleutians we'd been standing day and night watches in addition to flying. So what was new? I'd merely traded a plane for a submarine.

S-35 Arrives On Station

Shortly after midnight August 9, 1943, XO, Lieutenant Grant, who was also the navigation officer, notified the skipper that we had arrived at our designated position off the Kurile Island of Shimushiru. I looked at the chart and even though I was elbow-to-elbow with seventy men there was a pang of loneliness. This feeling was heightened when Lt. Grant, tapping his pencil eraser on our position, said to me, "We're just about equadistant between Tokyo and Attu." We were, indeed, a long way from home in an antique submarine. It was difficult for me to visualize there were likely thousands of Japanese a half hour away by plane. I could only hope they were sound asleep.

S-35 was running on the surface and had been most of the day and the previous one. There was a moderate swell. This had been the sea condition during the past twelve hours. We had submerged briefly for noon and evening chow to take advantage of the smoother comfort at sixty feet. Few vessels ride as hard or roll so unmercifully as an S-boat in rough seas. A long, narrow cylinder, the lines of which are broken only by the conning tower, they do not possess the pronounced chine of a regular vessel's hull. It is as though one were riding in an oversized cigar topped with a sewing

thread spool.

Because of the arrival time on station, the 0200 hours synoptic observation would be the first I would take. This would be in darkness. The next hour crawled by as it neared the moment I would earn my keep.

I wished I'd asked permission to come to the bridge several times during the outbound trip. This would have allowed me to become more familiar with the exact layout. It had seemed there weren't many opportune moments and I didn't want to be a bother.

At 0140, I was granted permission to come to the bridge. I wanted to get topside early to let my eyes get accustomed to the darkness. Twenty minutes was a bit long for this adjustment but I hadn't seen sky or sea for several days.

While gathering up my gear, it dawned on me that ascending the series of vertical steel-runged ladders wasn't going to be simple. The best method I could think of, and never changed, was to hang the aneroid barometer over one shoulder, put the small bottle of distilled water, "Ouija" board,(small plastic plotting board), red-lensed flashlight, pencil and pad in various pockets, and slip the delicate sling psychrometer up inside the left sleeve of my flight jacket. This freed both hands for the climb.

Having just come from the control room, I was blind when I
poked my head out of the bridge hatch. Quartermaster Second Class Scott Horton's voice in the dark said, "Here, let me help you." He steered me to the bridge shield. I clung to this while bracing myself against the roll and pitch until I could see.

Scott Horton had become a good friend in a short time. Quartermasters must record the weather for the ship's log. He was eager to learn all he could about weather observing. Horton was one of the crew who asked more questions than he answered. He said he was sorry he'd neglected to tell me about the night glasses and where they were kept. All bridge watchstanders wear these dark-lensed, night vision glasses for a few minutes before going on duty.

While I was still momentarily blind I slipped the sling psychrometer out of my sleeve so that, like my eyes, the thermometers would become acclimated.

Soon, vague blobs of black close to me became the O.O.D. and Horton. Outlines of the pig boat's deck stretching forward became distinct. When I looked over the side I could make out the white foam of the sea

slipping past our hull. I was shocked at the closeness of the water for it appeared I could almost reach down and touch it. Aft, a few steps away, I could see the starboard lookout. Wearing heavy night glasses, he slowly searched the horizon. With ten minutes until observation time, I could clearly make out the various cloud layers and I knew visibility was at least ten miles. It was a bright night on the Northwestern Pacific.

I must confess to being filled with some measure of importance at that moment for I was about to begin the work which was the sole purpose of S-35's top-secret mission. This is an excellent example of weather's importance in wartime. My value was put in proper perspective when I realized any qualified AerM could easily accomplish the work I was to do. It was basic, the only requirements being sufficient experience to take a complete observation with accuracy while using only a few instruments. Eighteen months of Aleutian flying had honed this skill because in those days an aircraft's only weather instruments were the outside air temperature indicator and the altimeter.

At 0200 hours I began my observation as quickly as possible under the circumstances. The first step was to read the dry bulb of the sling psychrometer, then get a wet bulb reading. The instrument could then be tucked back up my sleeve where it would be safe should the need arise to bail off the bridge in a hurry.

With the dry bulb noted, I brought out my jar of distilled water and immersed the wick of the wet bulb. My main concern, even in daylight and calm weather, was to avoid breaking the thermometers as I twirled the instrument. Two consecutive wet bulb readings were obtained and with great relief, I slipped the instrument up my sleeve.

Course and speed of the boat were given to me by Horton. Using this data along with the observed apparent wind direction and velocity I would later be able to work up true values with my "Ouija" board. S-35 was not equipped with a three-cup anemometer or a selsyn wind direction indicator.

With the rest of my on-deck observation completed, I thanked the O.O.D. and Horton for their help and disappeared below.

Monroe was waiting in the control room. He wanted

to know how long it would be before I was ready to encode my weather report. I told him it would be only a few moments while I worked up some data and put my scribbled notes in order. He told me to come to his quarters the moment this work was finished. Of all the data that went into the report or was used in its preparation, only S-35's course and speed, barometric pressure, and two temperature readings were taken from instruments. Everything else was entrusted to my best estimate.

Monroe was waiting with the two secret codes when I knocked
and entered his quarters. We went to work.

First, I converted each observed weather reading into the proper number(s) of the weather code. When this transposition had been completed, I had six five numeral groups. These had to be reincoded in the top secret radio cipher. As I called off my set of numbers, Monroe transcribed them into the radio message. When this was completed he locked the codes in the safe. Monroe picked up his slip of paper and said, "That's done. Let's get this off right away." I followed him to the radio shack where the transmitter was warming up. Monroe handed the message to the radioman.

Rhythmic dots and dashes came out **beep, beep, beeeeep** on the loud speaker. After a seemingly long time the radioman paused, adjusted his receiver and turned a small dial slowly back and forth. He had sent the message once. There was no "roger". He put his "fist" on the key to send again. Before he could begin, his receiver crackled and **beep-beep-beeepedy-beeped**. He copied. With a look of mild surprise he turned to Monroe.

"Auckland, New Zealand rogered, skipper. They'll relay it on
to San Francisco."

"That's fine." Monroe replied. "Now secure that transmitter." Two strides brought Monroe to the control room where he
ordered a ninety degree course change to port and full speed ahead. S-35 hot-footed it out of the transmission area. About an hour later, Monroe ordered a reduction in speed because the boat was taking a pounding. Radar had no contact and we remained surfaced. By 0730 hours we were fifty miles from our transmission position.

The messenger of the watch awakened me from a

head-on-arms posture at the messtable. I gathered my paraphernalia and went topside to take the 0800 hours observation. It was far easier in daylight. I couldn't believe my good luck when I looked at the tiny zone in which I'd whirled the sling psychrometer in the dark.

The same procedure was followed. This time there was no immediate "roger". After a waiting period, our radioman transmitted the weather report again. Auckand rogered this time the moment our radioman stopped sending. Our transmitter was shut down as before, Immediately! To avoid falling into a pattern, Monroe changed course with a zig of fifty degrees to starboard and it was "All ahead full". Seas had calmed and S-35 maintained top speed.

The first enemy plane found us two hours later!

Honey Draws Flies

The Mavis came winging directly toward us. Although we had been expecting this there wasn't much warning because the flying boat was at extremely low altitude.

With our first transmission, Japanese monitoring stations had taken a fix on the clandestine transmitter that had opened up in their front yard. Two stations each took a bearing on our signal; where those two lines intersected, it was X marks the spot.

They waited. When our second, longer transmission came from the same general area, an alerted Mavis either took off or was already airborne on patrol. Shore stations got another positive fix and the plane was vectored to an intercept. Bingo! Here it came.

Monroe crash-dived. There was momentary cavitation as the screws came out of the sea and the whole boat shook. Nobody had a stopwatch out but an S-35 record must have been set for clearing the bridge.

There was time for S-35 to claw her way downward while making a sharp turn before the depth charges exploded. I thought the first two went off right on top of us but the crew said they weren't even close. The final four, which exploded several minutes later, seemed a considerable distance away even to me. They must have been dropped as an added welcome to Japanese home waters.

Submerged, we slunk along and missed the 1400 hours

observation. About 1900 hours, Monroe ordered periscope depth for a look-see. Coming up from the depths after long submergence was always a time of tension because of the surprise that might be lurking on the surface or in the air.

When periscope and radar assured us no immediate danger was present we surfaced. The boat was aired and a charge began to flow into our batteries.

At 2000 hours I took another observation and it was transmitted. Auckland was on the job again. The vagaries of radio reception were brought home to me on this patrol. Auckland rogered for ninety-eight percent of our weather transmissions, San Francisco the other two. Neither Seattle, Kodiak, Dutch Harbor, Adak, Attu, nor the Casco intercepted any of these reports even though they were monitoring our frequency. We continued to run on the surface the remainder of that evening and on into the night with no further enemy contact. The 0200 observation was taken, transmitted and rogered for again by Auckland. On station twenty-four hours, we had missed only one out of five weather reports.

The Japanese knew our mission by this time. They probably guessed correctly we were restricted to a small area. It would not be difficult to find us as long as we continued transmitting weather reports.

In spite of two occasions when radar reported long-range contact with an aircraft, we maintained our weather schedule during the following thirty-six hours. How long could this luck last?

It was during our second day on station that Chief Barbero told me new sleeping arrangements had been worked out for me. With seventy men in a boat designed for forty most of the crew were "hot bunking". When a man came off duty he crawled into the bunk of the man who'd just relieved him. The chief said that anytime he was on watch, I could unroll my sleeping bag on his sack. When he came off watch I could transfer my bag to the bunk of the chief who relieved him. Similar arrangements had been made with a third chief. This appeared to be an order rather than an offer. Although there may have been some consideration for my comfort I think the main concern was to get me out from between the torpedo racks should S-35 be forced to fight.

Even though I was roused at odd hours because my observations did not coincide with the boat's watches, the availability of one out of three bunks made it

possible for me to sack out in darkness, quiet, and comfort for several hours at a time. There was a standing order for the messenger of the watch to awaken me one half hour prior to observation time. With three bunks involved the messengers sometimes found themselves playing eenie, meenie, minee, moe.

Our third day off Shimushiru brought another pleasant surprise. A shelf on the forward port bulkhead of the messhall held two jars of different color vitamins. The crew called these "sunshine pills". Above the shelf was a roster/date sheet. Each day, each man was required to take his dosage then make an X in the box opposite his name for that corresponding day.

On Wednesday, August 11, 1943, I made my X and the date puzzled me for a moment. It was my twentieth birthday.

"Hey! Today's my birthday!" I said to no one in particular.

A radioman passing by said, "Happy Birthday, Carrigan. What are you about thirty-six?"

"No," I replied, "Only twenty but I feel as though I've aged sixteen years in the past week."

At evening chow the following day the cooks sprung a surprise. They produced a cake complete with candles and the crew sang a typical off-key Happy Birthday. The cooks apologized for the delay. They had found out belatedly and other circumstances had prevented their baking the cake sooner. I was deeply touched by this display of sentimentality.

We tuned to Tokyo Rose later that night. This was done whenever possible to learn of the war's developments, even though it was the heavily propagandized Japanese version, and to also listen to American swing music. Although we were certain the enemy knew all about S-35, we were, nonetheless, surprised to hear Toyko Rose place us under her magnifying glass. She referred to us as, "The doomed American weather reporting submarine operating off our northern islands."

There was no lack of things for me to worry about. After the first few weather observations I became concerned over the vulnerability of my aneroid barometer in its desk drawer stowage. In haste and excitement someone might throw a heavy object in on top of it. The main body of the aneroid had a sturdy metal ring at the top which protruded through the heavy leather case. Almost a year earlier, by a

similar ring, I'd suspended an aneroid from an Adak tent pole. On S-35, I hung the barometer on a metal hook welded to a control room overhead beam. This eliminated one worry but created another.

Because of the necessity to take my observations as quickly as possible I was always ready and waiting. This was especially true whenever we surfaced specifically to take a weather observation because I was called to the bridge with the three lookouts.

I reached for my hanging barometer one such day, and for the first time, was looking at the dial when the hatch was opened and pressure whoooooshed out of the boat. My eyes bugged as the needle fluctuated wildly back and forth in almost complete circles before finally coming to rest.

So many things had been happening it wasn't until a short time later I had the opportunity to view the needle on the boat's aneroid during surfacing. Built by a different manufacturer, this large aneroid was permanently mounted. Although its needle also gyrated extremely the instrument had been specifically designed for submarines.

I had no idea whether my delicate portable could take such sudden, violent changes in pressure over and over without being thrown out of whack. It was designed to indicate the slow, gradual increase or decrease of nature's pressure changes. Apparently, it was constructed well enough for it didn't blow up with a "Boinnnnnnggg" like a cartoon alarm clock. It was not until the end of the patrol, however, that I learned my worry could have been eliminated. When I ran a calibration check against Casco's mercurial barometer my aneroid was found to be accurate.

Our thirty-six hour respite ended when a Mavis found us. Whether by accident or design this flying boat came at us from the east or seaward. Lookouts saw the low flying bomber in time for Monroe to dive and take evasive action. One of the few assets of an S-boat was its ability to turn on a dime whether surfaced or submerged. In this case, smallness was an advantage.

The Mavis pressed home the attack and dropped six depth charges. None did any damage but all were close enough to jar the boat. S-35 stayed submerged the remainder of that afternoon and evening. The 2000 hours observation was missed because we surfaced in darkness well past this time.

I climbed the ladders to take the 0200

observation and stepped out into a warm, pleasant night. My eyes went to work evaluating weather while my ears tuned lazily and contentedly to the murmuring chuckle, gurgle, blub, blub, blub of the boat's engine exhaust. After the observation was transmitted we made an oblique zig in heading and continued at 8 knots on the surface.

An hour and a half later an enemy ship came charging into our immediate area. When our radar blip indicated a surface contact at extreme range but closing rapidly S-35 dove.

Arrival of this latest tormentor was most likely the result of the contact reported by the Mavis twelve hours earlier. In fact, the ship was coming from the general direction of that depth charge attack. It came as no surprise. After we'd escaped from the Mavis, Monroe had cautioned the watch to, "Stay on your toes. I expect we'll have more company before long." S-35's 0200 weather report handed the enemy an updated position currently only an hour and a half old and a scant twelve miles away.

The ship was identified as a destroyer after we dove. Destroyers are sub killers: killers that make a feared but characteristic sound. The noise above grew awesome. Our hydrophone on audio picked up high speed thrashing of screws coupled with a pounding throb. Added were clanking, banging vibrations from every moving part all transmitted through a steel hull and magnified by water. There was also a strange sound as though barrels of nuts and bolts had been dumped into a massive grinder. The total din gave the impression complex machinery was running wild and about to disintegrate.

We were safe for the time being. A destroyer makes só much noise at high speed it cannot detect a submarine. The destroyer sped several miles beyond us before it slowed to start a grid search. In trying to guess our whereabouts the enemy had come uncomfortably close, overshot the mark and got no cigar.

Monroe waited until sounds of the destroyer faded gradually with distance. He turned S-35 in the opposite direction and under silent running eased away.

It becomes a deadly game when one is the mouse with no hole. Gladly, we would have traded two additional groups of numbers for several thousand square miles of ocean. Any transmission breaks the silence. Events proved our shortened broadcasts were

long enough to transfix us. The misguided wisdom behind our code and orders was meant to minimize danger not increase it. Too late now. A noose was being tightened around Monroe's neck. He was also handcuffed by orders not to take aggressive action until secured from the weather mission.

This restriction was particularly galling in the destroyer incident. Unsuspecting, it had come charging toward us. Monroe had been forced to pass up a golden opportunity to sink a Jap tin-can. His few remarks indicated the target would have been a small angle, simple setup and an ideal shot with a spread of four fish.

Tokyo Rose Reports S-35 Sunk

I've had my share of scary experiences. Nothing is as
indelible as being depth charged.

Enemy planes and ships continued to try to sink us and the Japanese grew increasingly clever in these efforts. They began sending out small sub-chaser vessels. How many is not known but they seemed to be everywhere. Dark was the most likely time to catch us on the surface while trying to charge batteries. The enemy also knew from our transmissions that S-35 was sending synoptic weather reports. Therefore, they knew what times we would be topside.

The enemy came close to being successful one night when curiosity nearly killed the mouse. S-35 was forced to dive an hour after transmitting a nighttime report when radar reported a surface contact. Two subchasers at high speed and running nose to tail or side-by-side came toward us.

While still some distance away, one subchaser shutdown and coasted to a halt to bob silently. This action was masked by the overwhelming noise of the oncoming ship. Our hydrophone tracked this vessel as it passed and continued on until all sound faded.

When all was silent for half an hour Monroe ordered the boat surfaced. The enemy hydrophone operator, about a mile away, must have had his ears blown off when S-35 blew ballast. This time we heard the deadly "ping" of Japanese sonar bouncing off our hull.

The second subchaser was called to the scene. Enemy ASW teams coordinated their efforts and S-35 took a pounding. Depth charges exploded much closer

than during any other attack. Monroe's evasive action would gain a temporary reprieve only to be impaled again by probing sonar.

S-35 was kept down for almost twenty-four hours. Each time she poked her head up radar picked up either a ship, a plane, or both. Air in the boat became foul. Breathing became difficult. Although we spent a great deal of time either shutdown or on slow, silent running, thereby not consuming much juice, our batteries became drained. With exhausted air and batteries, Monroe was forced to surface. He ordered the boat up and "Battle Stations-surface". It was night and there was blessed fog. Radar indicated an empty ocean and sky.

Life-giving air gushed into the boat. With diesels drumming S-35 headed northeastward. An inspection showed we had suffered damage. This was mostly bent plates and railing on the bridge area and considered minor. Of most concern was damage to the top portion of the periscope housing but if given time this was repairable. We did not take or transmit a weather observation but remained prudently silent. This was the only time we cleared out of our too confining area and reached a point about fifty miles beyond.

It had taken Monroe's skill and experience to bring us safely through this ordeal. Typically, he credits Lady Luck with being our ultimate savior.

On her broadcast that night, Tokyo Rose announced....."We regret to inform the American Naval Command in the Aleutians that combined Imperial Japanese Forces sank the American submarine which had been sending weather reports from the vicinity of the Central Kuriles. The submarine's brave officers and crew all perished. They were warned this would be their fate as you have been warned, time and time again, that death will be your only reward. The fight you wage is hopeless. You have already lost the war. Your brave soldiers, sailors and airmen are dying like flies. You have very few planes or ships left. The truth is being withheld from you. Your soldiers and marines in the South Pacific are trapped and will be annihilated. Would it not be much wiser to surrender now before it is too late? Think about this." ...Her silky, seductive voice continued to purr...."Think about all that
you are missing. Think how wonderful it would feel to be back home with the girl of your dreams in your arms

dancing to this tune." Then she spun Glenn Miller's, "Moonlight Serenade".

All ships and bases in the Aleutians tuned to Tokyo Rose. The fact we hadn't transmitted a weather report in over thirty hours would appear to substantiate her claim. When our batteries neared full charge, Monroe said it was high time we got back to work. I took an observation and it was transmitted. As the only weather report in that vast area it would make no difference once it was entered on the maps that it was taken fifty miles beyond our designated position. Mainly it would let the U.S. command know we were still alive and scurrying about. S-35 would also be thumbing her nose at Tokyo Rose.

After transmitting our weather report following our thirty-hour silence, Monroe began to double back to our tiny designated area. From the position of our latest transmission he hoped the enemy would assume that S-35 was shifting operations northward closer to Paramushiro.

Our next transmission would blow that theory but Monroe would have gained six hours and one more weather report. He steered a generally southwesterly course and crossed to the southern border of our area. The Japanese would have to guess where we'd pop up next.

Monroe always seemed able to stay one jump ahead of the Japanese. To further confuse the enemy he made seemingly random but calculated and hopefully unpredictable course changes after each transmission. Headings were at right or oblique angles and sometimes he reversed course. He also varied speed.

Of great concern to Monroe was the possibility the enemy might send a submarine to hunt us. Had roles been reversed this is what he would have done. Accordingly, Monroe also used the anti-submarine zig-zag. A plot of all these radical moves by S-35 would resemble the fits and starts of a mouse scurrying in a maze.

During a lull one night, Monroe made a different analogy. He asked how things were with me and what I thought of submarine duty. I wondered if he were surprised by the amount of Jap activity?

"Not in the least," he replied. "We're not a threat here on station but we have become an intolerable pest like a persistent fly. The Japs keep missing us with the swatter. Killing the fly has become an obsession. It has reached the point where

the only way they can save face is to sink us. If a Jap sub kept popping up day and night in the same general area off Attu we would mount the same effort."

Once, that we know of, the enemy sent out three fighters. Although this may have been a training flight, it might have been an attempt by these smaller, faster aircraft to come upon us suddenly and attack before we had time to dive. For whatever reason radar did not detect these aircraft but an alert lookout did. He spotted them low on the horizon streaking in and out of clouds far off our starboard bow. They evidently did not see S-35 and we submerged.

Talk Turns To Fleet Boats and The Sea of Okhotsk

Some crew members were growing restless. They were getting tired of this weather patrol and wanted a chance to fight back, to go on the offensive and show me what real submarine duty was all about. Talk turned frequently to fleet boats and what they could accomplish compared to an S-boat. Discussions also dealt with the greater creature comforts of fleet boats including air-conditioning and a better heating system. A crewman who'd been on the "Fire and Ice" patrol said he hated the thought of another Aleutian winter in S-35.

Winter patrols produced concussions, broken bones, bad bruises and smashed faces. I could picture the five men of the bridge watch lashed to the boat in order to keep from being swept overboard. S-boat duty anywhere wasn't good and neither were the odds an S-boat would survive an Aleutian winter patrol. We could be thankful it was August.

Although the U.S. Northern Submarine Force was destined to fight the Aleutian Campaign primarily with a few S-boats, namely: S-18, S-23, S-27, S-28, S-31, S-32, S-34, and S-35, fleet type submarines did make a brief appearance in the summer of 1942. In a five week period they achieved remarkable success.

On June 28, 1942, USS Growler(SS215), in service only four months, arrived at Dutch Harbor as a welcome addition to Captain Colcough's hard-pressed, dinky fleet of S-boats. Growler was soon joined by Triton(SS201), Finback(SS230), Trigger(SS237), Grunion(SS216), Gato(SS212), and Tuna(SS203). In mid August 1942, Halibut(SS232) was ordered north and Cachalot(SS170) and Dolfin(SS169) arrived at Dutch Harbor in October 1942.

It took less than a week for these sleek new hunters to register some stunning victories. Off McDonald Cove, Agattu Island, on Fourth of July, Triton, under command of LCDR C.C.Kirkpatrick, slammed two torpedoes into the 1600 ton Japanese destroyer Nenohi (New Year). The destroyer went down swiftly with the loss of two-hundred men but thirty or forty swam ashore.

Growler, skippered by Commander Howard W. Gilmore,USN, crept into Kiska Harbor on 5 July for some day late fireworks. In the mists, Gilmore found three Japanese destroyers at anchor in Reynard Cove. In short order, he fired fish at the sitting ducks. 1850 ton Arare (Hail) went to the bottom, 1900 ton Shiranuhi
(Phosphorescent Foam) broke almost in half but did not sink, and 1850 ton Kasumi (Haze) had thirty-five feet of her bow all but
blown off. Growler slid back out of Kiska Harbor unharmed. The Japanese, however, located her and she was attacked and depth charged for three days before Gilmore could shake loose and return to Dutch Harbor.

Two Japanese destroyers sunk and two severely damaged in a twenty-four hour period by two U.S. submarines is an astounding accomplishment.

On that 5 July morning when Growler came into Kiska Harbor, Charley House, AerM1c was into his twenty-eighth day of avoiding capture on Kiska. From his hiding place on the island's north side he heard the tremendous explosions when Growler's torpedoes struck the three enemy destroyers. The ground shook. House looked skyward. Because there were no U.S. planes overhead he assumed that a Japanese ammunition dump had blown up.

The boats continued to prey in their new hunting grounds. Thirteen days later, Grunion under the command of LCDR Mannert L. Abele, found the Japanese sub-chasers PC-DAI 25 and PC-DAI 27 patrolling off the entrance to Kiska Harbor. Abele sank both 300 ton vessels and damaged a third. After a routine early morning report on July 30, 1942, Grunion was not heard from again. Postwar examination of Japanese records indicate a destroyer dropped depth charges on a submarine contact in the vicinity of Kiska on or about that date.

An S-boat got in its offensive licks later that fall. S-31
commanded by Lt.Cmdr. R.F. Sellers is credited with

sinking the
2800 ton Japanese transport Keizan Maru near Paramushiro.

Our retaliatory efforts against the Japanese on Kiska and Attu, beginning on June 10, 1942, had been the first offensive thrusts against the enemy in the Pacific. In August we took the second big step on the long road back. Our forces landed on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands on August 7, 1942, the same day the Indianapolis led task force shelled Kiska for the first time.

U.S. Marines became pinned down and were in a precarious position. Japanese supply ships were pouring in men and a mountain of materiel in an attempt to push the marines back into the sea. Every available ship, plane, and submarine was needed in the area immediately. North Pacific Submarine Division was stripped of all its newly acquired fleet boats. Patrol Wing Four was reduced by one squadron of PBY's, and Admiral Theobald's North Pacific Force, less than formidable to begin with, was cut to the bone by removal of light and heavy cruisers and a number of destroyers.

In the Aleutians, we had found ourselves right back where we started. We had a handful of rinky-dink equipment on the water, under the water, and in the air with which to try to contain the Japanese or destroy them. Now, a year later, August 1943, we were still fighting the Japanese with the surviving S-boats. I was on one of them and the crew was just aching to take me on an offensive sweep into Japan's Northern Inland Sea.

In order to fulfill the crew's desire S-35 would first have to survive the weather mission and second, be secured while she still had sufficient fuel and stores for an extended patrol. In the crew's present frustrated, aggressive mood, I did not dare suggest that perhaps we'd already had enough war and patrol.

Whale Talk--Whale Slaughter

On about 16 August, radar contact was made with two ships astern and inshore from us. Monroe dove the boat, changed course, and slipped away on silent running.

Ten minutes later, the ocean was ripped apart by

an awesome depth charge attack. These explosions were miles away on the relative bearing of the two ships. This depth charging continued for almost an hour. The only plausible explanation was the Japanese mistook one or more whales for S-35.

During much of our patrol the hydrophones picked up an incredible amount of "fish talk". Whales, porpoises, other sea mammals, and fish communicate with other members of their particular specie. Whales and porpoises, especially, are chatterboxes. They whine eerily, grunt, groan, screech, whistle, squeak, burp, moan, murmur and make click,click sounds. One whale will say something and from a different direction will come an answer.

Experienced hydrophone men and many of S-35's officers and crew who worked in and around the control room could distinguish between the sounds of various species of whales, porpoises and fish. One old timer with thousands of hours of hydrophone watches suspected there was also limited communication between different species of whales and porpoises.

Following this probable whale slaughter, Tokyo Rose's broadcast two nights later concerned us. Halfway though her program she announced dramatically....."The American submarine that has been reporting weather in northern waters has been sunk for certain this time...." This drew laughs from the crew.

There were no other narrow escapes while on weather reporting station although a few daytime and nighttime observations could not be taken because of enemy ships or planes in our area.

I treasure the haunting memory of one exquisite night off Shimushiro. We had surfaced and when I arrived topside, the boat was gliding slowly along in a partially flooded down condition with the bridge barely out of water. The placid surface was at the same level as our feet and I thought, 'Rub-a-dub-dub, six men in a tub'. A faint breath of air forward and a ripple aft were the only hints of motion. The reflection of a full moon on the glassy surface was brilliant. In the warm, balmy air the magical scene had an enchanting aura about it. It was one of those rare moments that I wished would go on forever.

S-35 Secured From Weather Mission

About August 21, S-35 received the following radio dispatch: CONGRATULATIONS ON JOB WELL DONE XX YOUR SERVICES CONTRIBUTED
GREATLY TO SUCCESSFUL OPERATION XX PROCEED AS PER REQUEST XX
GOOD HUNTING X

This was joyous news to officers and crew. It was not the congratulatory part but more the fact we'd been released in time to continue on a war patrol into the Sea of Okhotsk. I wished only to go 'home' to Attu.

The dispatch indicated the amphibious assault on Kiska had been successful. Because of the fine weather since our departure from Attu, I knew that neither bad weather nor heavy surf could disrupt the Kiska landing operations and had expected this phase to go well. Not knowing anything to the contrary, it was assumed the message also meant the battle was going well. Based on our knowledge of the fierce struggle to recapture Attu, we believed that the same bloody, hand-to-hand combat was taking place on Kiska's rugged ridges.

Morale soared with the certain knowledge the boat was secured from the detested weather mission. I could sympathize and clearly understood why the crew felt this way. A submarine's strength lies in its ability to move about silently and unseen: its purpose to attack. For almost three weeks, S-35, her captain and crew, had been forced to operate in a manner completely contradictory to this prescribed submarine doctrine.

In the crew's enthusiasm to prepare me for that which lay ahead, the story of their adventures in the Sea of Okhotsk came pouring out.

On The Loose In A "Lake"

S-35's previous patrol began at Dutch Harbor in mid June
1943. Monroe's bold suggestion he be permitted to attack enemy
shipping in the Sea of Okhotsk met with approval.

Okhotsk is bounded on the east by the Kurile Islands and
U.S.S.R. Kamchatka Peninsula; on the north by Siberia; on the
west by Siberia and Sakhalin, a large island, divided then between Japan and the U.S.S.R. Northern Manchuria

is within four
hundred miles of Okhotsk's western shores. Hokkaido, northermost of Japan's home islands, formed the sea's southern boundary.

Okhotsk is a large body of water with a rough, north-south dimension of thirteen hundred miles and an east-west width of eight hundred miles at the widest point.

Enemy shipping inside the shielding Kuriles had not been attacked. Monroe's prey would feel safe and as a result probably would not be sharply alert. He anticipated the complete surprise he would spring on the Sons of Heaven.

This decision to enter the Sea of Okhotsk was a risky one, especially with an S-boat. Monroe would first have to con the boat between guarded islands while using outdated charts and publications.

Intelligence had not been able to add much late information. It was believed the Japanese had as many as nine airfields on Paramushiro. Intelligence could only offer the considered opinion that Japan could be expected to have powerful forces at strategic locations along the entire chain because she feared invasion from the Aleutians.

Similar in many ways to the Aleutians, the six hundred mile Kurile chain contained many islands both large and small in addition to countless rocks and reefs, many of which were uncharted. From Hokkaido northeastward to the tip of Kamchatka the main islands are: Kunashiri, Etorofu, Uruppu, Black Brothers, Shimushiru, Ketoi, Rashuwa, Matsuwa, Shasukotan, Onnekotan, Paramushiro, Shimushu, and Araito.

Monroe arrived off the Kuriles then spent several days reconnoitering the coast. He had studied all available charts and the North Pacific Coast Pilot for this area. Various small ports, towns and fishing villages were listed in the Coast Pilot along with data on population, industry, climate, topography, and sailing directions which included channel markers, lighthouses, buoyed reefs etc.. Although useful, much of this data was outdated. Islands listed as uninhabited or having only a small fishing village could be bristling with radar, sonar, patrol boats and airstrips.

Of major concern were the strong tidal currents reported to exist between most islands. Were the larger channels mined? Were submarine nets stretched across the narrower ones? Were sonar buoys anchored in

channels which would sound an alarm as S-35 approached?

Whichever slot Monroe chose, it had better be the right one. His decision would certainly contain the basics for playing a wet version of Russian roulette.

Monroe selected a wide channel between two islands neither of which appeared to have signs of habitation. At periscope depth, S-35 crept closer to the channel entrance. Within a few miles of the coast, Monroe took his final navigational bearings for a hoped for safe, albeit blind and submerged transit.

S-35 started through. One, two, three hours passed without mishap. Monroe felt certain he'd conned the boat far enough into the Sea of Okhotsk so that his periscope could not be seen from shore. When Monroe took a look he was shocked to discover that S-35 was in roughly the same position as three and a half hours before. Strong, tricky tidal currents had been equal to the submerged speed of the S-boat.

Currents would slacken then hopefully reverse with the change of tide. Monroe was more determined than ever to carry out his plan. His second run at the channel was successful. Clear of the two islands, Monroe continued on into the Sea of Okhotsk for several more hours until land was no longer in sight.

There was already a triumphant feeling of accomplishment among these courageous pioneers for their's was the first U.S. submarine to enter this Japanese "lake". Monroe figuratively licked his chops. He was in the chicken coop.

Several days and nights were spent trying to determine the
main shipping lane laden vessels used on their supply runs to Paramushiro and other bases along the Kuriles. A number of small cargo ships and coastal barges were seen and one small oiler heading south after delivering her load of fuel. S-35 carried only twelve torpedoes and Monroe was after larger, loaded ships.

A variety of small fishing vessels were observed during the following two days as Monroe took S-35 southwesterly and closer to shore.

On the fifth day, Monroe's search for bigger game was rewarded when he found a large ship anchored in only seventy feet of water. This vessel, estimated at 7000 tons, was a floating fish cannery or processor ship. Sinking this would hit the seafood eating Japanese right in the old bread-basket.

No other vessels were in sight. Monroe crept

closer taking periodic peeks through the periscope while he kept the target broadside to S-35's bows. Four of the boat's old style WWI Mark X torpedoes 3 had been made ready and tubes loaded. Monroe closed the distance to 1200 yards, fired two fish, and ordered the boat taken to sixty feet.

Stop watches timed each torpedo's run. The man at the underwater listening gear reported, "Torpedoes running hot and true". The predicted time to target passed and nothing happened. Monroe had missed. He was embarrassed. Because he'd never fired at a stationary target before he'd not taken into account the swift offshore current. Both torpedoes had "gone downstream".

A corrected plot was worked out. Monroe fired "three" and "four" at the close range of 800 yards. At the predicted run time there came two tremendous explosions that rocked S-35. As Monroe ordered "Up scope", several additional explosions occurred. When the scope broke water, Monroe viewed a scene straight out of Dante's Inferno. The processor ship was a mass of towering flames and black smoke. She was already beginning to slowly settle.

Monroe asked his Executive Officer, Lieutenant H.L.Grant to take a look for verification. When Monroe returned to the scope he was horrified to see a Japanese destroyer emerge from the dense smoke engulfing the torpedoed ship. This destroyer had been moored to the opposite side of the factory ship and hidden by the sheer bulk of the larger vessel.

This was a case of, "Take 'Er Down-EMERGENCY!" Luckily, the destroyer had to first clear the burning ship. This caused her to speed away at a right angle before she could circle to S-35's position. Instead of turning tail, Monroe took S-35 almost directly under the torpedoed ship. He hoped this would be the maneuver least expected. Noises from the ship's breaking up and sinking would also cover the movement of S-35.

It worked for a short while. A man can walk about as fast as a submerged S-boat. The destroyer's sonar soon located S-35 and the old boat was subjected to a fearful pounding. Other anti-submarine vessels as well as aircraft were summoned to the scene. Initially, S-35 was trapped on a shelf in shallow water. Monroe slowly worked his way into deeper water and put her on the bottom at 200 feet. Depth charges continued to rain down. Some exploded so close the submarine was

bounced off the bottom.

Occasionally, S-35 escaped only to be ferreted out again by the ever searching, "pinging" sonar. After a forty-eight hour ordeal, Monroe escaped the trap. With considerable minor damage, S-35 arrived back at Dutch Harbor in mid July 1943. Two weeks of R and R followed. With repairs made and the boat provisioned, Monroe had received orders to proceed to Attu and pick up an AerM for a special mission.

Monroe and S-35 are officially credited with sinking Banshu Maru #7, a fish processing ship of 5430 tons on July 2, 1943 in the Sea of Okhotsk. Japan admitted this vessel had been sunk but Tokyo Rose credited the work to a U.S. submarine "wolf-pack".

This daring patrol into shipping lanes Japan considered safe must have had great impact. Undoubtedly it forced Japan to divert additional anti-submarine ships and planes to the Kuriles to protect vessels making supply runs.

Here I was, a month and a half later, stuck on the same boat, with the same wild crew, and we were heading back for the Sea of Okhotsk.

Breakdown

S-35 was running on the surface through fog patches and under a low overcast sky. Monroe had set a course to put us off the island channel he had traversed when entering the Sea of Okhotsk. The boat had closed to within forty miles of the alien coast when it happened without warning.

Coupled with a violent shaking came the sounds of a diesel trying to come apart at the seams. Men on watch in the control room looked about with puzzled expressions. Bells rang and lights flashed on the propulsion center control panel. The man on duty there went into frantic activity and the diesels were shut down.

Solid steel alloy and eight inches in diameter, the drive shaft of the starboard engine had broken in two. The chief machinist attributed it to old age resulting in crystallization of metal. Constant small vibrations during the shaft's millions of revolutions had brought the metal to the end of its life span at which point it had snapped like candy cane.

There was understandable concern about the life expectancy of

the port shaft.

A temporary repair by either a sleeve or bolted coupling was discussed. It was agreed that, with the materials on hand, it would be virtually impossible to make these strong enough to withstand the torque of the engine.

Word spread that the crippled boat would head for home. Although being broken down in our present location could hardly be considered good news, I received this word with some relief. Lately, I'd longed to once again be able to fight the enemy in the air, on the surface, or on the ground if need be. 'Hell's bells,' I'd rationalized, 'if I'd wanted to fight underwater I would have volunteered for submarine duty.' Then with some shock, I'd realized this was precisely what I'd done.

A course was set for Attu and Old Black Magic began the long voyage home. Almost immediately, our port engine started to act up as though it was somehow in sympathy with its long-time mate. For reasons unknown, it began to vibrate and run rough. Lookouts reported we were making a great deal of smoke. What next? If this engine gave up the ghost we'd be dead in the water within spitting distance of the Kuriles. No one said much and everyone went quietly about his duties.

Without anyone's posing the question, each man knew that if the remaining engine quit the U.S.Navy would not, could not, risk sending a ship to tow us. S-35 was much too close to heavy concentrations of enemy land-based aircraft and fleet units. If we could make it halfway home before breaking down completely a towing effort would be assured. The boat was nursed slowly toward home with a midpoint our immediate goal. Meanwhile, with extra loving hands, the machinists worked on the contrary engine.

I started a silent prayer but stopped. I wondered if God might not be getting sick and tired of hearing from this chicken-hearted mortal, a fair-weather type who seldom gave Him a thought when things were going well.

Monroe ordered a reduction in engine revolutions. Vibration diminished and the amount of black smoke decreased. Even running at this compromise it was comforting to know each hour put us several miles further from the enemy. Darkness soon enveloped us safely in its folds.

No Japanese ship or plane had spotted us after

we'd been secured from the weather mission. Monroe could not risk detection now and dared not break our twenty-four hour radio silence to report our plight. The possibility our whereabouts might be discovered by enemy patrol craft, especially planes, would be a constant worry for many days.

For the next four days and nights we ran mostly on the surface. Monroe submerged from time to time so the remaining diesel could be shut down and worked on. The trouble was never found.

Machinists did everything but dismantle the engine in their attempts to repair it. Fuel lines were taken off or loosened to either be cleaned or blown out. Fuel filters were replaced several times. Valve clearances were checked. Rumors abounded. At various times I heard that a blade of the propellor was bent, a fuel tank was fouled, there was a restriction somewhere in the fuel lines, the engine was about to throw a rod or swallow a valve, a main bearing was shot, a connecting rod bearing was gone and so on. I watched machinists pour new babbitt for one connecting rod bearing. Despite these and other trouble-shooting techniques, the engine still had a bad vibration which increased markedly with each increase in engine rpm. At higher speeds the amount of black smoke that poured out the exhaust was greater instead of less.

We limped along without further complications and about August 25, 1943 had reached a position halfway between Paramushiro and Attu, and approximately one hundred miles south of a direct line.

Contact With Speeding Enemy Ships

General Quarters sounded in the forenoon. Radar had blips on the screen. Soon, the skipper and bridge watch had visual contact. Three large ships, turning up about twenty-five knots, were hull down on the horizon off our starboard bow. These ships were speeding away from the Aleutians toward Paramushiro. On their present course they would cross our bows but far beyond torpedo range.

Largest of the three ships was identified as a 20,000 ton modern type Japanese ocean liner converted to a transport. Another was a class of heavy cruiser and the third a class of light cruiser or heavy destroyer. It was not known whether additional ships were out of radar range or sight below the horizon. Only the upper halves of the stacks and the top hamper

of the warships could be seen but the transport was visible from her main deck up.

A coded contact report was transmitted with the addition that S-35 would attempt an intercept and attack. Monroe gave target bearings, range, course and speed to the plotting officer in the control room so that an intercept course and speed could be computed.

This information was quickly relayed to Monroe and he came around to the heading and ordered, "Flank speed" on our surviving balky engine. This shook the boat from stem to stern. From where I sat in the control room I could plainly hear the screaming hammer of the protesting diesel as it tried to comply with the demand. After about fifteen minutes the complaining engine was slowed by degrees until it turned over just enough to give us steerageway.

The Japanese ships had crossed our bows and disappeared from
view. At no time were we able to get within range or firing position. Monroe was both furious and frustrated.

Lookouts reported later that he had jumped up and down like a man possessed trying to urge more speed out of the broken-down museum piece he commanded. Results most likely would have been different had Monroe had two sound engines under him or one of the new fleet boats.

At flank speed the soot black smoke belching out of our exhaust trailed behind for miles and rose hundreds of feet. This smoke must have been clearly visible to those in the Japanese ships but they chose to ignore it.

Shortly after our contact report was sent we received the following radio signal from Admiral Kinkaid's Headquarters at Adak:

YOUR CONTACT BELIEVED TO BE SHIPS THAT EVACUATED KISKA

That Kiska had been evacuated by the Japanese was news to us. Neither the stateside broadcasts from San Francisco that we'd caught nor those of Tokyo Rose had mentioned this fact.

A Tragedy Narrowly Averted

On the black, foggy night of 29 August we had

reached a point off Cape Wrangell, Attu's western tip. When radar picked up an unidentified ship we went to General Quarters.

600 pound watertight doors were slammed shut and dogging wheels spun to lock them. Monroe ordered, "Battle Surface." Torpedoes were set and loaded. Outer doors were opened to flood the torpedo tubes. All stations reported "manned and ready". One stays put during GQ and it was advantageous to be caught in the control room. This was the only place in the boat in which I could half-way figure out what was going on. Other compartments received orders without explanation.

The unidentified ship failed to answer our repeated requests for a recognition signal. It continued to move about for several minutes then came directly at us. A second before Monroe gave the order to fire torpedoes, the ship identified herself. She was a destroyer escort which had been sent out to escort S-35 into Attu.

I have no idea what her problem was in not answering our signals sooner but we came within a hair's-breadth of firing fish at one of our own ships. This would have been a tragic way in which to end our patrol.

Return to Casco Cove

With our escort cavorting around us we crawled along Attu's southern shore. Early the following morning we rounded Murder Point and chugged into Casco Cove. Monroe dropped the hook near Casco again. Our twenty-seven day adventure came to an end. I gathered my gear and prepared to leave S-35. A signalman sent a blinker to Casco requesting she send a boat for me.

Our weather patrol had been tame in comparison to two other Aleutian war patrols of S-35 but it had provided me with thrills to last a lifetime.

While waiting for Casco's boat, Old Black Magic's crew and I chatted happily. Much good natured kidding took place on both sides. Officers and crew, including skipper "Hank" Monroe, recalled most of my blunders. One incident in particular drew hearty laughs. A radioman insisted on relating this story even though everyone had heard the damned thing a dozen times.

This radioman had the night watch when I'd come stumbling sleepily into the control room. A messenger had followed standing orders and awakened me from a

sound sleep for the 0200 hours observation. Everyone was busy and paid no attention to me except the radioman. He had watched me gather up my instruments and groggily start up to the bridge.

"What in the world do you think you're gonna do?" he'd asked as I passed near him.

"That's an idiot question," I answered in irritation. "What the hell does it look like I'm going to do?"

"Hey," he'd hollered to those on duty, "check this out. Carrigan thinks he's gonna take an observation."

Everyone laughed.

I demanded to know what was so funny?

"We're at sixty feet," said the radioman, "and there's a Nip tin-can topside."

During this voyage-end chit-chat someone remarked, "Well, Black Irishman, I'll have to admit you're a pretty good wind-guessor but you're sure a lousy poker player."

This, too, drew guffaws. A crew member recalled the night I'd lost one hundred-fifty dollars in an hour and a half without winning a hand and taking part in only a few. This happened in a no limit game with a five dollar ante for each player each hand. Some clown would open on a pair of Jacks and bet fifty dollars. I'd fold. I couldn't get my mind geared to poker on that plateau. I'd be damned if I could see plunking down that much to draw four cards to an ace. That took more hair than I had. The cards had not fallen right for me that night. With ultra conservative play I had anteed away my loss. When this tale was retold, one guy laughed so hard his sides ached. These occasional nighttime card games in the messhall were played with chips so the money wasn't in evidence.

The watch called down that Casco's boat was coming alongside. It was time to leave but we did not say our goodbyes. Instead, I said, "See you all tomorrow." I owed crew members one hundred twenty-five dollars and had promised to raise the loot on Casco and return the next day. I couldn't complain. Anyone would be willing--delighted in fact--to pay that amount for a twenty-seven day Pacific cruise featuring excitement, entertainment, fine cuisine, and sleeping arrangements.

Casco never looked so good. She seemed huge. There was no brass band waiting to strike up a rousing march as I climbed aboard. In fact, things seemed strangely quiet. I was disappointed that none of the AerMs were in sight to greet me. Nevertheless, I had a happy feeling of satisfaction that I'd made a contribution and done a good job under trying circumstances.

After saluting the colors and the O.O.D. he told me to report to the ship's personnel office for a new set of orders. I went to the weather shack first to find out from Herold what was going on and found Carl Hill alone in the office. Hill had news of many changes. Shortly after I'd sailed in S-35 Herold, Calderon, and Rolfe had moved ashore to the new weather office Quonsets alongside the recently completed runway. Bob Kerr had joined the others ashore after Herold had him transferred to the Wing. Carl Hill, ship's company, had remained aboard. My new orders directed me to join the Wing AerMs on the beach.

I noted in my diary that S-35 dove eighty-seven times. The crewman who gave me this figure said that diving a 20 year old boat that often in twenty-seven days was, in itself, crowding luck. That many dives would normally cover three patrols over a six month period. I recall being surprised at the high number. Evidently, a dive had become routine.

Conversely, I guessed the number of depth charges as being near one hundred. Monroe said it was closer to fifty. He was sure I would agree that was more than enough.

A final entry mentions the crew's disappointment at not being able to take me on an offensive patrol into the Sea of Okhotsk.

24

Assault On A Deserted Island Fortress

How, one may wonder, could the Japanese evacuate Kiska in theface of such great odds and without our knowledge?

Early on the morning of July 26, 1943, the Japanese evacuation fleet of fifteen warships began its high speed 400 mile dash for Kiska in the dense fog conditions for which it had been waiting. Five ships became involved in a chain reaction collison much the same as befell our Indianapolis-led task force, in the same waters, one year to the day earlier during our initial attempt to shell Kiska.

Two Japanese ships were damaged so badly they were sent back to Paramushiro. The other thirteen proceeded toward Kiska and on the night of July 27, 1943, they passed directly through the area of the previous night's phantom sea battle,--The Battle of the Pips--. Meanwhile, the U.S. task force was a scant one hundred miles to the east and halfway through refueling operations with oiler USS Pecos.

The enemy fleet slowed fifty miles south of its destination to await heavy fog at Kiska. Kiska reported light fog but added that saturation bombing raids by great numbers of American planes during the previous few days gave every indication an amphibious assault was imminent.

Rather than come so close and fail, the evacuation fleet started for Kiska again around noon on July 28, 1943 under a thin veil of fog. Cruiser Tama took up a rear guard patrolling station twenty miles south of Kiska while the other twelve warships went around the west end of Kiska and along the northern shore to enter Kiska Harbor from the Bering Sea.

Kiska's 5183 man garrison had gone through seven dress rehearsals for evacuation during the past weeks.

Again they had been alerted and were massed on the beach. Cruiser Abukuma felt her way into Kiska Harbor. In swirling mists she mistook an outcropping of Little Kiska Island for a U.S. ship and fired four torpedoes while a second warship fired shells at the foggy shape. These explosions did nothing to calm the frazzled nerves of the 5183 men packed on the beaches a short distance away.

Rear Admiral Kimura had been provided with the barest minimum number of vessels for his evacuation attempt. His ships would be dreadfully overcrowded. Kimura's evacuation plan called for embarkation of 1200 troops in cruiser Abukuma, 900 in cruiser Kiso, 500 each in four late model destroyers, and 400 men each in three older destroyers. The remaining destroyers were to be employed in a protective screen. Loss of two ships in the mass collision had caused a further shortage of critical space. The enemy soldiers were ordered to throw their weapons, ammunition, other portable equipment, and personal belongings into the bay before boarding the small boats and barges that sped them out to the waiting warships. The entire Kiska garrison was evacuated in less than an hour.

The evacuation fleet slipped out of Kiska Harbor and into the fog of the Bering Sea to skirt the north side of the island. USS S-33(SS138) was patrolling this area on the surface. Unlike S-35 she was not equipped with radar. Destroyer Shimakase's radar reported a contact, distance 1500 yards. Kimura's fleet turned away. S-33's bridge watch did not see the evacuation fleet pass by less than a mile away. Safely south of the Aleutians Kimura's fleet split into two groups and undetected by U.S. ships, submarines or patrolling aircraft, returned to Paramushiro. Japanese records indicate that all units of the evacuation fleet were safely back in Paramusiro by August 1, 1943, three days before S-35 sortied from Attu on her weather mission.

The enemy fleet of three ships encountered by S-35 and sighted visually by Monroe and his bridge watch is a great puzzle. Why were these ships speeding away from the Aleutians three and a half weeks later?

The radio dispatch S-35 received that our contact was believed to be the "ships that evacuated Kiska" was a poor guess but understandable. It was not until August 22nd that the Allied High Command in the Aleutians learned or was convinced that Kiska had been evacuated.

Veteran Aleutian pilots, including Colonel Eareckson and his ACI officer, Captain Lawrence Reineke, believed that Kiska had been evacuated early in August. No ground fire was observed by seasoned aircrews during bombing runs. Vehicles and barges had remained in the same locations for days. However, the issue became confusing when other less experienced pilots insisted they had received anti-aircraft fire as late as a few days prior to the Allied assault.

Kiska had been invaded on schedule. The Japanese could be playing possum, holed up in underground bunkers high on Kiska's fog-bound ridges and waiting to defend the island as they had Attu earlier. The only way to find out was to storm Kiska. Even if the enemy had pulled out, an amphibious assault would provide a valuable training exercise.

The Allied Kiska assault force totalled over 34,000 men which included 5,000 highly trained Canadian troops. This joint venture was complicated by the fact that many of the Canadians spoke only French.

The first waves of troops waded ashore on Kiska's rocky, deserted beaches on August 15, 1943. Landing on unoccupied Adak the previous year had resulted in casualties and this proved to be so on Kiska. Platoons probing inland up steep draws into dense fog began firing at each other. Twenty-four soldiers died in the shooting, four others were killed by mines and booby-traps, fifty were wounded by these means and scores were wounded in various accidents. Casualties totalled 313. Included in this figure were over 125 cases of trench foot in spite of the bitter lessons learned on Attu.

Sporadic firing in the fog which continued day and night, led to the illusion that Japanese defenders were lurking in the ridges. Several days passed before the entire island could be covered and U.S. and Canadian field commanders could be certain that the Japanese had abandoned Kiska without a fight.

The U.S. Navy also suffered casualties. Destroyer USS Abner Read struck a Japanese mine and sank. Many crewmen were rescued including thirty-four injured but seventy-one died and were listed as "missing in action".

Defended by the enemy or not, the price for landing on an Aleutian island came high.

For two weeks prior to the invasion deserted Kiska had been pounded unmercifully day and night by aerial bombs and by high explosive shells from our

task force. Censorship had been relaxed and many correspondents were with the fleet and bomber crews to cover these events. When it became known that we invaded an abandoned enemy stronghold this large, expensive Aleutian mistake received world-wide attention. After a year and a half of obscurity, the Aleutian front suddenly received a great amount of publicity, all bad. Foggy Aleutian weather had once again played a major role.

An important fact was overlooked in the furor created by that which most outsiders considered a major military blunder. With the recapture of the western Aleutians, Allied forces won the first theatre-wide victory over the Japanese in WWII.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff discussed preliminary plans for an Allied invasion of the Kuriles via the Aleutians but these plans were shelved for the time being. The Soviet Union had not entered the war against Japan. Use of Soviet Siberian bases was condidered a necessity for a successful large scale Allied assault on the Kuriles. Logistics would also be a problem because of Aleutian weather. Until the U.S.S.R. joined us in the war against Japan it was deemed more important to drive toward the Philipines and Japan by way of the Central, South, and Southwest Pacific. This strategy would cut Japan off from a flow of vital raw materials from the Philipines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Indochina. Supply lines for these Allied efforts were of far greater distance but weather was not a constant problem.

In regard to Aleutian weather and the invasion of Kiska, it should be noted here that a member of U.S.Naval Aerology was singled out for praise. Commander William R."Lefty" Franklin,USN, was Staff Aerological Officer of Admiral Kinkaid's North Pacific Force. Kinkaid and his staff were based at Adak and Franklin worked out of the Joint Army-Navy weather office. CDR Franklin was charged with the responsibility of preparing the weather forecast for the large scale amphibious assault of Kiska.

Franklin's meticulously detailed forecast proved to be exceedingly accurate and has been described as a masterpiece. Franklin was awarded the Legion of Merit Medal with Combat V for his splendid effort.

Earlier, our FAW-4 boss, Lt. Cmdr. John F. Tatom,USN, Wing Staff Aerologist, had been awarded the Air Medal. Tatom received his award for numerous flights as a weather observer over a period of many

months in a combat zone.

Lt(jg) William G. Lindeman; CAerM Richard D. Ackerman; AerM1c Jesse Harding Vowell; and AerM2c Sandor Podmanski, had each received a Navy Letter of Commendation(one notch below the Air Medal) for their work on the landing beach at Massacre Bay, Attu, during the period May 11, 1943 to June 1, 1943.

It was gratifying to know that some U.S.Navy weathermen's Aleutian efforts were receiving official recognition.

Three August 1943 events of note took place in other theatres of the Pacific and two had an Aleutian connection. On the night of August 6-7, about the time S-35 arrived on weather station, U.S. and Japanese ships fought the night Battle of Vella Gulf in the Solomon Islands. This battle resulted in the first victory by U.S. surface forces fighting Japanese warships in darkness. Improved radar and the development of the Combat Information Center (CIC) helped beat the Japanese at their our game. A force of U.S. cruisers and destroyers using torpedoes and gunfire sank three enemy destroyers without suffering damage.

Using Kinkaid's method of attacking Attu instead of Kiska, Admiral Halsey's South Pacific Force bypassed heavily defended Kolombangara to make an amphibious assault on lightly garrisoned Vella LaVella in the Central Solomons. This operation took place the same day that Allied forces landed on Kiska.

By the end of August 1943, the Central Pacific Force had been assembled and was ready for action. Nimitz placed his Chief of Staff, Admiral Raymond A. Spruance in command of this new Fifth Fleet. Nimitz reached out to the Aleutians and selected Rear Admiral Charles H."Soc" McMorris to replace Spruance as his Chief of Staff.

25

Activities on Attu
August to November 1943

The U.S. Navy Weather Organization at Casco Field

After I came ashore in USS Casco's boat August 30, 1943, a short walk and hitch-hiked jeep ride brought me to Attu's new U.S. Navy weather station. The two and a half Quonsets, connected to form an "H", were near midpoint close to the south side of the 4500 foot steel mat runway. Designated Casco Field, Attu, it had
been named after our FAW-4 seaplane tender.

I was delighted to find T.O. "Rebel" Hollihand, AerM2c in the office. We'd not seen each other since Dutch Harbor in early summer of 1942. One weatherman had departed since my last visit ashore. Lt. Lindeman had sent Charles S. Patterson, AerM1c on temporary duty orders to nearby Shemya Island to set up a weather office.

USS Casco's FAW-4 weathermen had been ordered to the beach August 10, 1943. Calderon, Rolfe, and Kerr moved to the new office but Herold had been sent to Alexai Point. Until the last week in August he lived and worked out of a tent while forecasting for squadron VB-135. Under the command of Lt.Cmdr. P.C. Williams, USNR, VB-135 had been transferred from Amchitka and was the first PV-1 squadron to operate from Attu.

Using his considerable influence Lindeman had a teletype line laid from the Casco Field office so that Herold could receive the latest weather signals. These Alexai Point operations lasted about two weeks at which time VB-135 and Herold had been ordered to Casco Field. These PV-1 Venturas and Amme's PBYs were operating from Casco Field when I came ashore.

Although there were hundreds of vehicles of all

kinds churning up the mud around Massacre Bay and Casco Cove, transportation had been difficult to acquire. Lindeman, with his stock in trade, his 190 proof "alky", obtained two precious jeeps from the navy motor pool. Wheels were necessary to deliver daily forecasts and to transport us between our weather office, assigned mess, and barracks hut. Our enlisted mess was near the beach at Casco Cove but our barracks Quonset was nestled in a revetment high on a hillside southwest of the cove and airfield. The three locations formed a triangle the sides of which were a half to a mile long.

NAF Attu and FAW-4 weather personnel were standing watches and working smoothly together. We were top-heavy with experience and the higher ratings. This imbalance enabled us to run the twenty-four hour schedule at a high level of efficiency with few people.

Chief Herold was analyzing the early morning map, preparing the forecast, and briefing flight crews. Calderon was standing watches and had been bearing the brunt of flying. He was spelled by Herold or, infrequently, by one of Lindeman's NAF weathermen. At the time, office chief "Dutch" Ackerman was the only NAF weatherman with a set of flight orders. Ackerman was able to talk either Ralph Rayburn or Jesse Vowell into occasionally taking his scheduled flight although neither was paid a dime for their trouble.

As "acting aerological officer" and senior FAW-4 weatherman on Attu, Herold had a set of flight "skins" issued to me for September. Calderon and I began flying on alternate days as we'd done from the Casco. So what else was new? Although I'd had limited duties during the month-long patrol of S-35 it had hardly provided me with the opportunity to catch up on sleep.

Ackerman placed me in a watch section and issued me a mess pass. When the off-going watch went to evening chow I went with them. Afterward, the jeep snorted and gnawed its way up the mud ruts of the twisting mountain road to the barracks hut. I took one of the sixteen bunks, stowed my gear, and like a wandering Gypsy rejoined my family.

It was from these old shipmates that I borrowed the money owed various crew members on the submarine. The next day I caught a boat out to Old Black Magic and paid off my poker debts. S-35 was making preparations to return to her base at Dutch Harbor. Her crew greeted me warmly, especially those to whom

I owed money. They had wondered if they would ever see that "Black Irishman" again.

Hazardous Duty Pay

Two days after this trip out to S-35 I got into a brief beef with a FAW-4 yeoman at the Headquarters Squadron (Hedron) personnel office. During the month of August 1943 I had the unique experience of having flown and made a submarine combat patrol. Both rate extra hazardous pay. In an attempt to recoup my gambling losses I made an honest effort to collect double hazardous pay for that month.

The first yeoman with whom I spoke, a third class reserve, had never heard of such a thing. My flight log and copies of the orders to S-35 and a set detaching me from the submarine proved my claim was true. The yeoman wasn't certain what to do and went for help. He came back trailing behind a salt encrusted chief yeoman. With his arm hung heavy with hashmarks, and a deepening scowl the chief cut me off halfway through my story.

"Get lost."

I argued but he pointed out that whether or not I'd flown and been on a submarine during the same month made no difference. There was a navy regulation that prevented a man, officer or enlisted, from collecting more than one hazardous duty pay in any given month. Hazardous duty pay was just that, no matter how one earned it. Period!

Flexible Battle Stations

Herold had me check out another BAR. My first one was still hidden under my old bunk at Adak, I supposed. I'd not had time to check it back in when I received hurried orders to board Casco that night in early May.

Everyone in the Attu weather office was armed to the teeth. Two Thompson submachine guns had been checked out, one by Chief Ackerman. Most of the other men had rifles but mine was the third BAR.

Tokyo Rose had recently started spouting propaganda that the Japanese were going to attack the Western Aleutians, particularly Attu. Weather O-in-C Lindeman had ordered each man to dig a fox hole. These were spread at intervals around our weather/radio

Quonsets. Ackerman suggested I dig mine near his which was west of our front door and closest to the runway and the four-sided, plywood windscreen enclosing our theodolite.

Our Battle Station orders were simple. In case of air attack we were to seek shelter in our fox holes. If the Japanese landed on the beaches, Lindeman's orders were, "Take to the hills," in a more or less 'every man for himself' manner. In this event, Lindeman cautioned us to take plenty of ammunition, warm clothing, a change of woolen socks, all the field rations we could carry, and our sleeping bags. This would hinge on how much warning we would have. Lindeman decided that a guerrilla action would provide us with the best chance for survival and the best opportunity to raise a bit of hell with our arsenal. Although we numbered only a baker's dozen our five automatic weapons gave us considerable firepower. It was better than no battle plan at all.

Air Operations Out of Attu

Once again we were flying the weather in PBY's and PV-1's. PBY's flew regular long sector searches that fanned out from Attu. The Venturas were mostly assigned to anti-aircraft patrols toward the northern Kuriles. Several Mitsubishi, twin-engined, naval, land-based, attack bombers had been sighted recently flying between Paramushiro and Attu. These aircraft were carrying out the same kind of photoreconnaissance/weather patrols as our Attu based planes. A PBY was no match for a formidable "Betty" but a PV-1 Ventura was more than equal to the task.

Our weather flights in PBY's and PV-1's during the month of September 1943 were considered routine. This term encompasses flying through strong weather fronts, experiencing various and sundry electrical, electronic, mechanical or hydraulic problems, being lost in fog for a time, getting "weathered out" and landing somewhere else, and landing downwind at Attu in a PV-1.

Because landing in a PV-1 anywhere was an "experience", coming into Casco Field was particularly exhilarating. The maneuver required flying into a small box canyon. The proximity of high mountains on three sides precluded any approach other than directly in over the bay regardless of wind direction.

At the end of a mid-month PV-1 patrol we circled

for over an hour between Attu, Agattu, and Shemya waiting for the ceiling and visibility to increase. As late afternoon approached and conditions had not improved, the pilot decided to make his landing attempt at Shemya. The runway there was not only longer but if for some reason the approach and letdown had to be aborted the pilot could "pour on the coal" and circle for another attempt because the tiny island was flat. We made it safely down at Shemya and spent the night.

On one of Calderon's routine September flights his PBY could not make it in to either Attu or Shemya because of fog. The pilot was directed to try for Amchitka where conditions were better. By the time they arrived conditions were poor but the pilot set the "Cat" down safely for an overnight stay.

Emmett Smith joined our FAW-4 weather group at Attu near the end of September 1943. He was issued a set of flight orders for October and immediately spent a night elsewhere.

Smitty's PBY could not land at Attu, Shemya, or Amchitka because of dense fog. The pilot headed east with darkness falling and fuel reserves registering the critical point for making it to Adak. Weather conditions improved east of Amchitka and the pilot put the PBY down on a short emergency army landing strip on Ogliuga Island.

Ogliuga, one of the Delarof Islands, is 360 miles east of Attu and 100 miles west of Adak. Three miles in length and a half mile in width, tiny Ogliuga is probably the lowest and flattest of all Aleutian Islands. In July 1943, U.S. Navy Seabees constructed a 100 by 3000 foot, steel mat emergency airstrip at Ogliuga for the 11th USAAF. I had not been aware that Ogliuga had a runway until Smitty landed there.

Ogliuga's only building was a single Quonset that housed four soldiers. Having few visitors these army men were glad to see someone; anyone. They had a great stock and variety of food but most surprising was a fine supply of liquor. The party that ensued that night to celebrate the occasion lasted until the wee hours.

Very late the following morning, several hundred gallons of aviation gasoline from a supply of drums was hand-pumped into the PBY's wing tanks. After many thanks and fond farewells, the PBY crew took off and returned to Attu.

When Smith related his adventures we all agreed

that although it lacked dancing girls and bright lights, Ogliuga sounded like a good place to spend the night. If we ever found ourselves in Emmett's circumstances and were asked our opinion of an alternate field we vowed to suggest Ogliuga, weather and fuel reserves permitting.

Those Who Survived Had a Tale to Tell

Reconquest of the Aleutians brought about a change for FAW-4's PV-1 squadrons. From the time of their arrival at Adak in April 1943 through the Battle of Attu and assault on Kiska these aircraft had been employed extensively in bombing/strafing attacks on enemy installations. Based at Attu after mid-August 1943 the PV-1's resumed the role of search and anti-aircraft patrol. A surprising and accidental discovery of a PV-1's additional capability in late December 1943 would usher in a new era and send this plane back on the attack but this was four months away.

PBY aircrews noticed scant change in operations with the reconquest of the Aleutians. After many months of being used as horizontal, dive, torpedo bombers, and fighters early in the campaign they had resumed their primary role of advance scouting force. In contrast, 11th USAAF operations experienced an early, opposite and dramatic change.

From June 1942 until the amphibious assault on Kiska in mid August 1943 the 11th USAAF had been busy beyond belief. With the Aleutians back in our hands operations for this outfit sputtered then came to an abrupt halt for one very good reason.

At the beginning of the Aleutian Campaign 11th USAAF bombers faced a 650 mile overwater flight from Umnak to Kiska. Kiska had been defended by intense anti-aircraft fire but opposition by "Rufe" float fighters had never been heavy. After U.S. bases had been established at Adak and Amchitka our fighters regularly shot down "Rufes" as fast as Japan could ship them in. As our blockade became increasingly effective the number of "Rufes" steadily decreased to a negligible point. In spite of all her effort Japan never succeeded in completing an airfield at either Kiska or Attu. 11th USAAF bombers based at Attu from mid August 1943 faced a similar length overwater flight to the nearest targets on Shimushu and Paramushiro Islands. Unlike Kiska, Paramushiro was one

of the world's great naval bases during WWII and defended accordingly. Unescorted U.S. bombers arriving over Paramushiro could expect to be attacked by squadrons of landbased "Zekes" from upwards of a dozen airfields. The great roundtrip distance from Attu precluded even long-range P-38's from accompanying our bombers. After fourteen months of combat the 11th USAAF found itself back at square one but with the huge difference of facing land-based fighters.

After the surprise hit-and-run raid on Paramushiro by B-25's based at Alexai Point, Attu in July 1943 several weeks passed before a second mission was mounted. This took place August 11th and was carried out by B-24's from the new airfield at Casco Cove. This attack also achieved some surprise, resulted in damage to installations and encountered heavy but generally inaccurate flak. Homeward bound the B-24's were jumped by many fighters. These attacked in uncoordinated, every-man-for-himself fashion. Attacks were not pressed home aggressively and the bombers suffered little damage. This action had taken place while S-35 was 300 miles to the SSW of Paramushiro and I was gulping "sunshine" pills on my birthday.

One month passed before the next 11th USAAF bombing mission. In this interim Japan evidently transferred combat experienced pilots from the South Pacific to defend the Northern Kuriles. As a direct result of this move the mission to Paramushiro by B-24's and B-25's on September 11, 1943 turned into a disaster. Only seven of thirty bombers made it back. A few were flying wrecks. Some carried dead or wounded crew. No further bombing missions were attempted until November 1944, fourteen months later.

S/Sgt. Vale Weldon Wright, in Capt. Jerome J. Jones's B-24 of the 404th Bombardment Squadron was one of the survivors. So heroic and unusual was the experience of Capt. Jones and crew that an account written by U.S. Army Staff Correspondent, Georg N. Myers, was a feature article in the December 1943 issue of
YANK magazine.

The ensuing forty-three years have turned Wright's thatch of hair and mustache silver giving him a distinguished look befitting his position. My banker for thirty years, Wright is also the man who in 1980 knew the whereabouts of ex M/Sgt. Roy Donaldson. In a taped interview, December 10, 1985, Wright scanned his

faded copy of the YANK article. He found Meyer's account most helpful in its listing of full names. As seems to be the case with most survivors time does not otherwise dim the memory.

"This article is well written and essentially accurate but either because of limited space or censorship some important parts of the story were omitted. You have to remember that in December 1943 there was still a war going on."

"Start at the beginning and fill in the missing pieces." "The names are correct. We had a great crew. Lt. Raymond K. Underwood was copilot. Capt. James S. Elliot our navigator and Lt. Roy L. Lemons bombardier. Along with Capt. Jones, they were all fine officers. Our crew chief and flight engineer was T/Sgt. Dwight C. Lambe. S/Sgt. Walter E. Rodd manned the top turret and
S/Sgt. Jack K. Leffler was tail gunner. S/Sgt. Charles W. Beech was a waist gunner. T/Sgt. John Stroo was first radioman. He and I were crammed into the same compartment. I was radar operator and also second radioman. T/Sgt. Alex D. Ciurczak was cameraman.
We had several of these in our squadron. They weren't regular crew but Ciurczak had flown with us several times. He had been assigned to our ship for this mission."

Ques. Had your regular crew been together long?
Ans. "Oh, yes. We were a close-knit team. As this story mentions it was our thirty-sixth combat mission. We'd been over Kiska and Attu thirty-four times and it was our second run to Paramushiro."

Ques. What was different about the September 11th mission?
Ans. "Not much until we turned for home. We'd taken off from
Attu in the dark before dawn so as to hit the target about 7 a.m. Paramushiro time which was just after dawn. Of course, we took off on Saturday but crossed the dateline. Same dawn but we bombed on Sunday while our watches said it was 2 p.m. Saturday. On our approach to the target Stroo left his radios and went to the waist to man the other gun there. We maintained radio silence during the bombing. Ciurczak had gone to the camera port in the belly. My radar was shut down because it wouldn't be needed until we neared Attu on our return. I followed Ciurczak down into the belly,

across the catwalk and back behind the bombbay. This was where his camera port was located. After he shot his film and removed the camera I manned a portable .50 calibre gun there.

The harbor at Paramushiro was full of ships. We made our bombing run at 18,500 feet. Major Gash, our flight leader, was flying the lead plane in the "V" formation. Our ship was next in line on Gash's right. We flew directly over the ships on our way to the target just beyond. This was the airfield complex and army staging area at Kashiwabara. The weather was good and we could see our targets clearly. We flew through a lot of flak from the ships and shore batteries."

Ques. Could some of your planes been shot down at that time or damaged so badly they headed for Kamchatka?
Ans. "They might have been. The anti-aircraft fire was both heavy and accurate but we were maintaining radio silence so I couldn't say."

Ques. What happened next?
Ans. "Our 500 lb. GP's released okay and landed in the target area but there was a hangup with the incendiary clusters. Lambe came to the bombbay. He climbed out on the catwalk over the opened bombbay doors and had to practically kick these bombs loose. By that time we'd passed the target area and the incendiaries landed on a fish cannery. When Ciurzak finished taking photographs he removed his camera from the port. I placed a .50 calibre at that position. This gun had a ball and socket mount with the barrel protruding out the camera port. Vision and field of fire were so narrow through this peephole it made an almost worthless gun position. It was mainly for morale purposes and to let the Japs know there was a gun there. Our ships were B-24-D's. They didn't have nose or belly turrets. We were vulnerable in the belly and the portable gun was manned to give some protection in this area until the pilot could dive and level off just above the ocean. To give us some protection in the nose two remotely controlled .50 calibres were installed in the bombbardier's greenhouse. We could carry but a small amount of ammunition to feed these guns because of limited space. A circle and cross hair was painted on the pilot's windshield for a gun sight. To aim, the pilot pulled the ship's nose up slightly, dropped it and

when the enemy fighter reappeared in the sight fired the guns. It was primitive but effective."

Ques. When did the fighters attack?
Ans. "Not for some time although a few were seen. I think the first was a float fighter probably from that seaplane base on the west side of Shimushu. We were already streaking for home and right off the water when at least fifty land-based fighters began to overtake us. It wasn't mentioned in this article but there were at least six to eight float fighters also involved."

Ques. Explain how the enemy attack method differed from your previous mission?
Ans. "The fighters overhauled us quickly enough as before but instead of attacking immediately they flew past on our right well out of range. When they reached a position several miles ahead they peeled off one at a time and came at us head-on. They attacked from both the eleven and one o'clock positions out of the rising sun. We noticed immediately that these pilots were much more aggressive and skillful. So determined were their attacks that we thought, at first, they intended to ram us. At the last possible second the enemy pilot would stand his plane on one wing. Holding this quarter roll he would slice through our formation. In doing so he barely missed the tail of one bomber and the wing of the following one. After each pass the figther would fly off to our right out of range, overtake our formation and come at us again. Oddly, it was the slightly slower half dozen or so float fighters that raised a lot of hell. After they broke through our formation they went into a tight banking turn. With guns blazing wide open they flew a circle inside our formation. Our gunners could not get off many bursts at these fighters because our own planes were in line of fire."

Ques. This moving ring-around-the-rosy aerial battle continued for a long time. When did your plane get hit?
Ans. "We were in the vanguard behind Major Gash and we
received our share of attacks. We took hits on many of the passes, estimated at fifty or more, but sustained no serious damage until near the end of the hour-long battle."

Ques. Did you see any bombers or fighters shot down?
Ans. "I saw several fighters shot down. Capt. Jones got one. This fighter came out of the sun and Jones didn't see him until the last second. I think this enemy pilot either intended to ram us or else he misjudged his closing speed. He was almost upon us when Jones got him. This fighter disintegrated as it went in. It was so close we flew through debris."

Ques. Your top turret and tail gunner were also each credited with shooting down a fighter. When did this happen?
Ans. "Our intercom was shot out early and there was so much going on I couldn't say."

Ques. What about bombers?
Ans. "There must have been many but the only one I saw shot down was Major Gash's. When his plane got hit there was a bright flash of white light on the flight deck. Gash tried to keep the nose up but the plane crashed into the sea. The tail gunner was still firing when the plane hit the water and the tail section broke off. Jones dropped out of formation to circle where Gash went in. We could not tell if anyone got out but if they did we intended to give them covering fire to try and prevent the Japs from strafing them in the water. This was when we really got it."

Ques. Did anyone get out of Gash's plane?
Ans. "I doubt it. I think it sank too quickly. But, turning around made us sitting ducks. What was left of the squadron kept going and we were alone. The Japs concentrated on us. Within minutes our ship was a shambles. Our oxygen tanks were destroyed as was the deicing fluid tank. All the rubber life rafts were riddled, our vertical stabilizer was chopped to hell and our radios destroyed. The 20mm. shell that destroyed our radios came up through the bombbay. This happened when we were banking to circle. This shell also must have been the one that ruptured the deicing tank. Fluid from this was running into the bombbay. We also had an insulation fire in the radio compartment but this was extinguished. Fragments from this one shell or others knocked the handle off the escape hatch in the radio compartment. Fragments rattled around inside the armor plate of the top turret but Rodd was not hit.

With all this going on Jones did not see a fighter coming in head-on until it was too late. Even though we were almost skimming the water, Jones put the nose down to throw off the aim of the enemy pilot. A 20mm. cannon shell shattered the windshield and exploded in Lt. Underwood's face. Fragments slammed into Jones's right arm, hand and face. Lambe, standing behind the pilots was struck in the face by flying plexiglass from the windshield. Jones's right hand was on the throttles when he was hit. The shock drove his arm back partially closing the throttles. This almost pitched the ship into the sea but Jones opened the throttles in time. Immediately, his arm and hand went numb and hung useless. Lambe wasn't seriously hurt. He helped the badly injured Underwood from his seat. Underwood was still conscious as Lambe helped him back to the flight deck. Ciurczak came forward to help. Underwood's face was a mass of blood and he was losing blood rapidly from a deep wound in the neck. This flow was stopped and Ciurczak gave him a shot of morphine to ease the pain. Stroo, who didn't have any radios left, came forward and took over the copilot's controls." Ques. Why Stroo and not your navigator or bombbardier? Ans. "Capt. Elliot had to navigate home and Lt. Lemons was helping with the wounded. Besides it didn't much matter. Nobody except Jones and Underwood knew how to fly."

Ques. How did Stroo manage?
Ans. "Stroo kept the battered ship in the air by following instructions from Capt. Jones. Lambe helped Jones from his seat to the flight deck where his wounds were tended as best we could. All the while Jones kept giving instructions to Stroo."

Ques. What were the Jap fighters doing all this time?
Ans. "About the time Underwood was hit they broke off the attacks and headed for Paramushiro. They must have been out of ammo and low on gas. If they'd made another pass or two we most likely would have been shot down."

Ques. You were losing fuel rapidly. Was it about this time that Lambe tried to locate the shot up fuel line and make repairs? Ans. "Yes. It was while Stroo was flying the ship that Lambe tried to correct the fuel problem. That part of this article is off. We were not hit in the fuel lines or tanks and we weren't losing

any gas. We knew we had a fuel problem before we dropped our bombs. The procedure as we neared the target was to transfer a small amount of gas from the extra tanks in the forward part of the bombbay to the wing tanks. This was done to allow for expansion. Transferring too much fuel would leave vapors in those tanks and increase the chance of explosion if we took a hit there. When Lambe activated the pump switches to do this we could all smell fumes and he shut the pumps off immediately. Repair or maintenance work had been done in that area and when Lambe checked he found the transfer pumps had been hooked up backwards. Instead of transferring fuel from the bombbay the pumps were sending fuel from the wing tanks out an overflow. After we got shot up Lambe tried to fix this problem but it was not something he could do in the air. This was our most serious problem. Those bombbay tanks had been added to give us a safety margin to get home on. After determining there was nothing he could do about the fuel situation Lambe climbed into the pilot's seat to give Stroo a breather. Stroo had been at the controls about three hours."

Ques. Lambe hadn't had any flight training?
Ans. "Not a lick but being our flight engineer he was familiar with all the controls. Jones coached him, too."

Ques. Tell me about the landing.
Ans. "Our fuel gages had been registering empty for about an hour as we neared the Aleutians. Our ships had glass tubes to check the fuel level. No fuel had been visible for a long time. We had to land somewhere in a hurry. Under the shot up condition with both pilots wounded we could not attempt a landing on Attu. Somehow, my radar had not been hit. Each island transmitted an identifying radar signal. The first island I picked up was Shemya and we headed there. Jones got back in the pilot's seat because he was the only one who could land the ship. Lambe assisted by holding Jones's right hand on the throttles and controls."

Ques. The runway at Shemya was being extended for heavy bombers but wasn't operational. Did you know this?
Ans. "Yes but it didn't matter. We didn't have enough fuel to try for anyplace else. We landed safely but by

the time we got stopped there wasn't much island left. Ours was the first heavy bomber to land there."

Ques. Did Underwood live?
Ans. "Yes but he lost one eye completely and about 85% of the vision in the other. Jones recovered after fragments were removed. Lambe's cuts weren't serious."

Ques. When did you learn that only seven bombers made it back? Ans. "Within a couple hours. Shemya had radio communications with Attu. We didn't realize we'd also been hit in the prop until after we landed and checked the plane over. And here we had a bullet hole through a blade. It was so centered we had no vibration in that prop whatsoever. If it had been off center it would have unbalanced the prop. This vibration could have torn the prop off or even the engine if we couldn't have gotten the prop feathered. We were lucky but not as lucky as some. We also found out later that a couple of the seven ships had only a few bullet holes. This seemed incredible to us. Our ship was so riddled the holes could hardly be counted. We also had numerous gaping holes and jagged tears made by 20mm. cannon shells."

Ques. How did you make it back without that extra fuel in the bombbay tanks?
Ans. "I have no idea. When the wing tanks were measured to see how much fuel remained the stick came up dry. Our engines hadn't missed a beat. They must have been running on just the fuel in the lines to the carburetors. A few minutes longer and we'd have gone in the drink. I had an odd experience in 1944 when I got back to the states. The Air Force had taken over a couple hotels at Miami Beach. I was sent there for R and R. I walked into the lobby one afternoon and didn't know whether I was seeing a ghost or what. Here was a fellow we thought had been shot down in this raid on Paramushiro. But, he was one of the lucky ones who made it over to Russia. The Russians, being our allies at that time, let him go through Europe and he made it back to the U.S. It was sure a strange feeling to see this fellow you were sure had been killed in action."

Violations of Neutral Russia's Air Space

Because our patrol flights out of Attu took us close to Russian territory it was inevitable that incidents with our Soviet ally increased. Russia was still not at war with Japan and through diplomatic channels vigorously protested our violations of her airspace. The Soviets were especially sensitive about any flights over or around the Komandorski Islands 250 miles northwest of Attu.

Wing Commander Gehres had issued orders to stay outside the three mile limit while conducting patrols in the vicinity of the Komandorskies and along the east coast of Kamchatka Peninsula. Most PBY pilots of Commander Amme's VP-45 had at one time or another violated neutral territory in the Komandorskies.

Lieutenant Stitzel, for example, flew over the Komandorskies and took intelligence photographs. When Stitzel's pictures got back to Wing Headquarters at Adak, Gehres blew his top. The photographs could only have been taken as the plane was over land. Gehres ordered Amme to give Stitzel an unsatisfactory fitness report. An officer's promotion depended on marks received in this monthly report. Amme knew that Gehres had no way of enforcing the order or of checking with compliance. Occasional rule-bender Amme, instead, gave Lt. Stitzel top grades.

Rescue From a Komandorski Lake

In September 1943 a VP-45 PBY experienced engine trouble while on sector patrol near the Komandorskies. The pilot knew he couldn't make it safely back to Attu. Rough sea conditions enroute drastically decreased odds for a safe landing at sea or for survival.

Accordingly, the pilot headed for the Komandorskies and the one small port with a sheltered bay. The Russians opened up with anti-aircraft fire as the PBY made its landing approach. Flak hit the engine that was missing badly and knocked it out of commission. With anti-aircraft fire bursting around him, the pilot banked away sharply and fought the plane down to a safe landing on a lake in the interior.

The PBY's radioman had gotten off several transmissions indicating the plane was in difficulty, their intent to land in Russian territory, the Russian anti-aircraft fire, and lastly the landing on the lake.

Amme ignored the standing order of the Wing about violating Russian territory and radioed Wing Headquarters that he intended to rescue his downed aircrew. Amme sent ex NAP Lieutenant (jg) Robert A. Evans, one of his top pilots, on the rescue mission. Evans was to remove the confidential publications, Norden bomb sight, then sink the PBY. Amme viewed the Soviets as being a dubious ally. And regardless of how a lend-lease policy bureaucrat might later view his action he preferred not to let a repairable PBY fall into Russian hands. He also ordered Evans to maintain radio silence and ignore any countermanding orders from Gehres at Adak. Evans was to communicate with our base at Attu only if he were in trouble or after the rescue was effected.

Then in a move that "upset" our communications people at Attu, Amme stayed in the radio room to see that no one used the transmitter. All messages, including FAW-4 orders to recall Evans were received but not acknowledged.

Evans landed on the lake, picked up the crew and sank the damaged PBY just as some Russian soldiers were paddling a boat out from shore. After a safe takeoff Evans radioed that the rescue had been effected.

At this time, our radio transmitter on Attu was "fortuitously" put back in commission and the Wing at Adak informed of the successful mission.

"Bon" Amme's neck was out a mile and draped over the chopping block on this one but orders or no orders, he'd be damned if he would sit idly by and have one of his flight crews interned by the Russians. "My strategy," Amme says, "resulted from reading the story of Nelson at the Battle of Cophenhagen when he put his blind eye to the telescope so that he could not read the fleet commander's signal to withdraw. Instead, he attacked and won a victory."

Wing Commander Gehres paid a visit to Attu the following week. Gehres was given VIP treatment commensurate with his rank, and a salmon barbecue. The rescue was not discussed. Topic closed.

Radiosondes On Attu

Launching radiosondes, seldom an easy task in the Aleutians, was a particularly trying operation on Attu. High mountains on three sides, swirling winds, and frequent Williwaws caused the puncture of many

balloons and breakage of instruments.

Rayburn and Hollihand were the assigned radionsonde section in September 1943. Observations were scheduled twice daily at 0230 and 1430 hours local time.

Rayburn was of medium height and slender. Diminutive Hollihand was affectionately known as the "Pensacola P--s Ant"; together, they weighed barely two hundred fifty pounds. In strong winds an inflated radiosonde balloon, six feet in diameter, was a formidable opponent for the two bantamweights. They logged considerable time and distance being bodily dragged around the balloon release area while their collective heels dug into the tundra in a concerted braking action.

One black stormy night, Hollihand called out frantically to Rayburn for help. Wind pressure had stretched the balloon into an elongated sausage fifteen feet in length. Like a huge bird of prey it was trying to carry "Rebel" Hollihand aloft. Rayburn, all one hundred-thirty pounds of him, came to the rescue. Both men were pulled across the uneven ground and into a water-filled swale. Shocked by the icy cold water, they let the ballon go. Hollihand had gone in headfirst and was momentarily underwater. It was fortunate he could touch bottom because even wading was difficult in his water-logged heavy clothing.

When Chief Ackerman walked into the office later that morning Floridian Hollihand jumped him.

"Chief," he said, "If yo gonna keep me on the Raob section ah demands at least half a set of flight skins. Ah believe ah got mo flight time this month than you do."

Rayburn and Hollihand's job was further complicated when we ran out of helium near the end of September. At Attu, as at other large bases, we were equipped with a hydrogen generating set. The dangerous process of making hydrogen was even more difficult at Attu. Having been unloaded in the surf, near the end of the battle to retake the island, some of the caustic soda had been contaminated by water. Numerous batches of hydrogen were made that either failed to generate or generated too quickly or excessively. Safety valve blowouts were more frequent than earlier at Adak. Because of the uncertain characteristics of individual cans of caustic soda, the only method for Rayburn and Hollihand to pursue was to place the standard amounts of various ingredients in the tank,

shake them, then observe the mixture to make certain it was working before they screwed the cap on the tank.

One day Hollihand lost count of the amount of caustic soda he placed in the tank. When the tank was rocked the agitated mixture reacted at a violent rate. He had put in plenty of caustic soda! In alarmed haste he then got the heavy metal cap cross-threaded. As he struggled with it, he told Rayburn to run for safety. The cap had become jammed and Hollihand could neither screw it tighter nor remove it to start over. He finally gave up wrestling with the cap and sprinted for the door of the balloon inflation shed. He was too late. The heavy cap, not the small safety plug, blew off the tank and like a 75mm. artillery shell, went through the roof. Lye water splashed over Hollihand but missed his eyes and face. Other than minor burns on his hands and a destroyed jacket, he escaped unharmed.

At such times, those on the radiosonde section had three priorities: 1. Arrival of the new supply of helium tanks. 2. Leave. 3. Mail from home.

At Attu we repeatedly heard a rumor about an aerographer's mate who had become "rock happy" at Kodiak. Allegedly, this man made an attempt to go "over-the-hill" by means of a cluster of radiosonde balloons.

Each inflated balloon would carry aloft an instrument package weighing ten pounds; over-inflated, considerably more. The story (unconfirmed) was that this man had inflated about a dozen balloons and was in the process of securing them to his donned parachute harness when he was stopped. In his reported state, he believed the winds aloft would carry him safely across the Gulf of Alaska to freedom.

When we discussed this reported incident we unanimously discounted it as a wild rumor, not because it was such a crazy idea, for we knew it was technically possible, but because we refused to believe anyone could object to Kodiak, a comparative paradise.

Max Jack Relieves Wild Bill Lindeman

Lieutenant Max C. Jack received orders September 6, 1943 transferring him from Nazan Bay, Atka to Attu. He proceeded to Adak via air transportation, then boarded the USS Charleston for Attu. He arrived on the

wet, blustery evening of September 14th and was assigned a bunk for the night in the transient officer's barracks.

Soaked, cold, and miserable, Jack arrived at his temporary bunk about 2100 hours, plunked his luggage down, peeled off his wet outer garments and sat disconsolently on his bed. He decided that what he needed, to get the chill out of his bones, was a good stiff drink.

He dug a full bottle from his baggage. Jack noticed a fellow officer sitting quietly on the edge of a bunk a short distance away. He offered this lonely looking man a drink which was gratefully accepted. They had a couple more nightcaps for good measure, then turned in. Max Jack attended church services the following Sunday and was both surprised and embarrassed to learn that his drinking buddy was the new chaplain.

The morning after his arrival, Lt. Jack checked in, then reported to the weather office. On September 20,1943, Jack officially relieved Lt(jg) William G. Lindeman as O-in-C of the U.S.Navy Weather Station, Casco Field, Attu.

Lindeman returned to the U.S.Navy Weather Center, NAS Kodiak. Later, Captain T.J.Raftery,USN, head of naval aerology under Commander Alaskan Sector (ComAlSec), would send Lindeman on the ultra secret KULA expedition to the arctic east of Point Barrow, Alaska. The purpose of KULA was oil well test drilling on the U.S.Navy Reserve Petroleum Field Number Four at a location on Cape Simpson, a short distance from Prudoe Bay.

Headquarters for Operation KULA, including Lindeman's weather work, was aboard an old transport ship. This vessel furnished pipe, fuel, food and other supplies for the drilling crews on the beach.

The U.S.Navy had been doing exploratory oil reserve surveys since shortly after WWI to insure that its warships would always have an adequate supply of bunker fuel in future wars. It had been noted that many arctic lakes in the Point Barrow region contained a film of oil from natural seepage. In some instances the oil was so thick that ducks landing on these lakes and potholes were unable to takeoff because their wings became covered with oil. This area is now the famous north slope oil fields.

Life in Attu's Weather Barracks Hut

Barracks Quonset activities on Attu were similar in most respects to the existence aerographer's mates experienced earlier at Dutch Harbor, Adak, and other exotic places. The location of our Attu hut, however, somewhat altered our habits. Unlike Adak and Dutch Harbor, our Attu hut was far removed from both the place we worked and our assigned mess.

Personnel going, coming off, or on watch used a jeep to get to the messhall. Off watch people in the barracks hut sometimes trudged down off the mountain to mess.

To leave the warm confines of the hut and dress against rain, snow, sleet and winds for the long round trip to the mess hall usually wasn't worth the effort.

Instead, we prepared meals from cases of field rations. This canned food was heated on top of our oil stove. Periodically, someone would forget to puncture his can lid to release the internal buildup of steam pressure. The resulting explosion plastered the stove, bulkhead, overhead and any individual within range with the can's contents.

Everyone in the hut had several cases of various kinds of field rations under his bunk at any given time. We were extravagant. All chose their favorite items and either traded or threw the rest away. Whenever someone's supply ran low he told our "commissary chief". This hut mate kept us supplied with field rations he gleefully pilfered during nocturnal visits to a nearby army supply tent. This man repeatedly refused our help. He preferred to go about his stealthy business in his own way at times of his choosing. I've always been puzzled by this man's willingness to do this for it seemed out of character. Perhaps it was an attempt on his part to seek the approval of his peers.

There was little to do when not on watch or flying. What time we had was spent sleeping, reading anything we could find, writing letters, attempting to study, and sitting in on the nightly card game or infrequently craps. Some nights the preferrence was poker;other nights it was black-jack.

There was usually about a thousand dollars floating around the hut. The money continually changed hands ending up in the pockets of various current winners. Not infrequently, two nightly winners matched stacks of greenbacks and cut cards to determine that night's overall victor. After five or six hours of painstakingly smart poker we did not consider this a

dumb way to end the session. This instant riches-instant poverty stunt provides insight into our overall "what the hell" attitude.

Card games would cease or be penny ante for awhile when a big winner slipped off to the post office and sent money orders home. Although we had all done this and the losers acknowledged the wisdom of the move they at the same time considered it an extremely horse---- act.

Smack Dab in the Middle

Many of the navy weathermen on Attu had known one another prior to Pearl Harbor. Most had been in Alaska a long time, a few almost two years dating back to Oct. 1941. Most had flown missions and experienced combat. It was fortunate these factors contributed a measure of understanding and tolerance to our comaraderie. The many months, the many islands, the many dangers along the way associated with a thousand mile advance to westward had taken a toll in wear and tear on nerves.

Under crowded living conditions a person's habit can become increasingly irritating to others. Short fused tempers were sometimes on display but generally resulted in no more than a sharp exchange of words. Most of these flareups were brief and soon forgotten. Two were not.

Both incidents involved Jesse Vowell and Sandor Podmanski. They were good friends, having been together more than a year at Kodiak before taking part in the Battle of Attu. Like a puppy, Podmanksi could usually be found tagging along behind Vowell.

Jesse Harding Vowell was from Tennessee. Well built on the lean side he could also get a little mean when his violent temper got the best of him. Jesse was well liked because of his fine sense of humor and his intelligence. He did not, however, take kindly to his sometime nickname, "Hillbilly." Podmanski seemed to delight in calling Vowell, "that crazy hillbilly".

Sandor Podmanski, called "Count" or "Pod", was a blond, blue-eyed young giant standing six foot five and weighing about two hundred-twenty pounds. In contrast to his imposing size, his temperament was meek and mild. Although he said he'd been highly educated in arts and letters by private tutors and in select schools in Europe and England, he was naive about many earthy subjects. "A babe in the woods" was

a frequently used phrase to describe Podmanski.

He often recounted his blue-blood Polish lineage and expoused his thoughts on operas, classical music, literary classics, etc., topics that didn't interest most of us. After listening to the persistent Podmanski for two years Vowell had finally grown impatient. Increasingly, of late, he'd been telling the Count to, 'Shut up. My ears need a rest.' These words led to one incident.

Podmanski solemnly replied, "Unless you take an interest in the finer things of life, you'll always remain just a dumb hillbilly."

Jesse invited the "Count" to step outside. Podmanski would not fight even though he was almost twice Vowell's size. He drew himself up to his towering height in front of a clench-fisted Vowell and disdainfully said, "Only ruffians scuffle in the dirt." Jesse would not slug a man who would not defend himself. Livid, he stomped out of the hut to cool off.

The second incident a week later was deadly serious and could have been extremely messy. By chance I was caught in the middle. Vowell cannot recall what started the argument on the day of the big blowup. He does remember throwing a knife that missed Podmanski, hit the bulkhead and clattered to the deck. Podmanski picked up the knife and started toward Vowell. Vowell grabbed his rifle, worked the bolt and slammed a live round into the chamber. In a panic, Podmanski dropped the knife, turned, and ran pell-mell out of the hut. He swore later that his only intent was to return the knife and admonish Jesse. While this statement may appear incredible to outsiders those who knew Podmanski believe it to be true.

I was climbing the hill that late September afternoon and was 50 feet from the hut. When I heard a commotion and looked up, Podmanksi was charging downhill toward me. Jesse had a 30.06 and was hot on his heels. It was some distance over open ground to shelter. Podmanski knew he couldn't outrun a bullet no matter how long his legs were. He reached me and in terror pleaded,"Save me." He then leaped behind me and wrapped his huge arms around my chest thereby pinning my arms at my sides.

Vowell stopped running. Holding the cocked rifle at hip level, he advanced at a calculated walk. Podmanski was still pleading for me to save him and begging Vowell not to shoot. Vowell halted in front of us with the muzzle almost touching my belly.

"Get out of the way," Vowell ordered in a strained, shaking voice. "I'm going to kill that big, dumb, phoney sonovabitch."

"I can't move, Jesse. He's got ahold of me."

"Either get out of the goddamned way or I'll shoot you first."

"Put the gun down, Jesse, you're not going to shoot anybody." "For the last time. Get outta the way."

"You'll hang. Look at all the witnesses behind you. You going
to shoot them, too?"

Vowell stepped back and off to one side. He glanced at the four men who had followed the antagonists out of the hut. When Vowell moved, Podmanski turned me in the same direction keeping me between him and Vowell.

I didn't dare attempt to twist free from the "Count's" bear hug. If I failed to extricate myself quickly and cleanly Vowell might shoot and hit me. I had no noble thoughts about saving Podmanski's life. I wanted to save my own hide and I kept talking to buy time.

"You can't shoot all your friends, Jesse, just because you're pissed off at the Count."

Podmanski began begging pathetically, "Please Jesse, don't shoot me. Oh, God-, please don't shoot me."

"Jesse isn't going to shoot anybody," I told Podmanski. "Stop whining like a big baby and for Christ's sake turn me loose."

With lightening-like speed that surprised me, Podmanski transferred his grip from around my chest to my waist thereby freeing my arms. I kept asking Jesse to "Give me the gun" and took several struggling steps toward him with Podmanski crouched behind me and hanging on for dear life.

Vowell unexpectedly handed the rifle to me. Over my shoulder I told Podmanski, "Get the hell out of here." He scurried downhill over the uneven sections of raised, wooden boardwalk and was soon out of sight.

A most uncomfortable moment of silence followed.

"Would you have shot me, Jesse?" I asked.

"I didn't," he replied, "so the answer is,'no', but sometimes he makes me so f-----g mad I hardly know what I'm doing." After a pause he added, "It frightens me."

"I'll tell you no lie, Jesse. I was frightened,

too, and I'm not pleased about it."

"Give me the rifle."

Vowell had spoken the words in a tired, resigned tone with a touch of disgust and shame. This and the look in his eyes were clear statements the incident was safely over.

I handed back his rifle with the suggestion he unchamber the live round before he took the gun into the hut for, "We wouldn't want to have an accident, would we?" After Jesse walked away, Ralph Rayburn and other hut mates who'd witnessed the scene gathered around me. They were an ashen-faced, subdued group. A few offered apologies for not helping in some way but they'd felt powerless. It was best that none had interferred. I lit a cigarette and was not surprised my hands trembled.

My sympathies were with Vowell. I was furious at Podmanski. So furious that I must confess when Vowell handed me the rifle I had to supress a fleeting urge to wheel and fire at the fleeing Podmanski. I did not see the Count until I walked into the weather office shortly before midnight.

He hurried toward me with a wide grin and gushingly thanked me for saving his life. He was so grateful he attempted to give me another bear hug. Viciously, I drove my opened palms into his chest. Wide-eyed and open-mouthed he staggered back a step.

"What's the matter," he asked incredulously.

"Don't ever touch me again,"Pod", or I'll kick your nuts so far up into your guts I guarantee you'll be the last of your long line of Counts."

"Why are you mad at me? You saved my life. I know Jesse, he would have shot me."

"Let's get something straight. I was trying to save my life, not yours."

"You're just saying that. I know you really like me." "Not enough to lift a finger to save your butt if there's a next time. There's a helluva difference between saving a man's life by throwing him a line if he's drowning and sacrificing one's life by stopping a bullet. You're a fool to needle Jesse."

Vowell and Podmanski were equally frightened by the experience and some soul-searching took place. Vowell had always been a little on the quiet side and Podmanski became so.

Dear Diary

My neglected diary did not keep a record of all these goings on. September 1943 entries deal mainly with card games in the barracks hut, to wit:

"Sept. 21, 1943- Since getting back I have lost over one hundred dollars playing cards- plus the $125.00 on the sub makes me losers somewhere in the crumby neighborhood of $230.00. Don't know what the hell has happened to my luck. In between the times I've been losing many things have happened. I see I wasn't born to keep a diary."

A psychiatrist would surely view a following entry as showing signs of mental stress. "One thing I've noticed in particular is that the Ring Ass creeps upon me more frequently. I get terribly depressed for several days at a time. I don't particularly give a damn. It's strange- I find it very difficult to write letters anymore. Oh-yes, there were some Jap bombers messing around the other day. Climbed another mountain, flying every day we can get out- in other words doing the same damn things I've done for over a year and a half in these @*?%+&@ islands."

The mood could swing just as quickly to the happy side. "Sept. 28, 1943- Hooray! I won $275.00 playing blackjack and
with Bobby's new cards. Back on the gold standard again."

Then, in an apparent attempt to catch up some loose ends from early September these notations close out the month:

"9-4 64V27 Bu# 08361 Lt. Ashcraft 9.5 hours
9-5 #26 5455 Lt. Thorpe 7.9
? 7.5
? 5.5
? 3.2
? 8.7
9-19 72V29 08410 Lt. Bucklew 9.6
Just can't keep track-I always forget."

A Few Weather Personnel Moves

In October 1943 our Wing weather boss, Cmdr. John F. Tatom, USN was relieved at Adak by Lt. Cmdr. Russell H."Ken" Maynard,USN. Tatom received orders to the states.

My old "sparring partner" Warrant Aerographer Walter Scott Hassell came to Attu from Adak. In his usual fashion he attempted to completely reorganize the office and run things his way but achieved little

success.

Hassell did obtain the majority of the cloud pictures I'd taken during patrol flights. In the opinion of some folks this was Hassell's greatest accomplishment during his two short tours on Attu. These three rolls of prints included exceptional photographs of Williwaws striking the waters of Casco Cove and all the photographs taken on cyclogenesis day.

I'd made the mistake of bringing these photographs to the office so that Lt. Max Jack and Chief Ackerman could view them. Scotty Hassell was also in the office. He assured me that he would send the photographs to the U.S.Bureau of Aerology in Washington,D.C. I was reluctant to turn the photographs over to him. His request became a demand. Because Hassell was a FAW-4 weather officer and the whole idea from the start was to have the pictures appear in a new Cloud Atlas, I handed them over. In a way I was glad to be relieved of further responsibility for them. To my knowledge, no weatherman of my acquaintance has seen the photographs since that day. Chief Herold was furious when he found out I'd given the photographs to Hassell. He attempted to get them back but Scotty said he'd already mailed them. That ended my short career as a photographer.

USS S-44(SS155) Sunk

USS S-44, under command of Lt. Cmdr. F.E. Brown, was running on the surface in the northern Kuriles the night of October 7, 1943. Contact was made with that which was believed to be a small cargo ship. S-44 went to "Battle Surface" and at close range opened fire with a 4 inch deck gun. Instead of a small Maru, the vessel was a Japanese destroyer which promptly returned rapid fire will full batteries. Seven direct hits smashed into S-44's control room and conning tower and she sank.

There were only two survivors. Chief Torpedoman's Mate E.A. Duva and RM3c W. F. Witemore were plucked from the sea by the crew of the destroyer and made POWs. They worked at forced labor in a copper mine until freed at the end of the war.

With the loss of S-44, Rear Admiral C.A.Lockwood,USN, Commander Submarines Pacific (ComSubPac), wisely recalled all remaining S-boats from Aleutian-Kurile patrol and turned them over to

the training command.

It had been only thirty-seven days since S-35 had returned to Attu from the Kuriles. I had taken part in one of the last war patrols by an S-boat in those waters during WWII. Tokyo Rose and Her Nightly Broadcast

October 1943 brought an increase in Tokyo Rose's referrences to Attu during her nightly radio broadcast. The last American attempts to bomb Japan from Attu had been repulsed with such heavy losses, she reported, that no further foolish attempts had been made since the second week in September. This we knew to be true. Sixteen B-25's, seven B-24's, and 123 men failed to return from that mission.

For the first time she mentioned that the initial attack against Attu would be made at night by thousands of Imperial Japanese paratroopers. These fearless, elite troops would drop out of the black skies on the sleeping American soldiers and sailors of Attu.

Hundreds of innocent, young American boys would be killed silently and quickly before they knew what was happening. She went on the say that all American installations and supplies would be destroyed in the darkness and confusion. This would pave the way for the amphibious assault to follow. The paratroopers were impatiently awaiting orders and eager to die for their beloved Emperor.

The Americans on Attu were now desperately concentrating on building up their weak defenses for the full scale Japanese attack which would soon begin.....

Her sweet lilting voice was incongrous with the grisly picture her words painted.

Toyko Rose's repeated statement about Japanese paratroopers dropping out of the night sky on Attu was a clever propaganda tool. Each night's arrival brought uneasiness. I don't recall worrying about enemy paratroopers during night office watches. The bright lights, chatter of teletype machines, endless hustle and bustle of routine put the thought far back in our minds.

It was a different matter, however, in the barracks hut high on a hill near the edge of Attu's civilization. Here we discussed the possibility at some length and agreed that such a bold stroke by the Japanese might achieve enough success to be worth the

effort.

The enemy paratroopers would be killed to the man but the Battle of Attu had proved that Japanese soldiers were capable of mass suicide. Disturbing, too, was the knowledge there were no longer any front line combat troops on Attu. Although there were thousands of U.S. soldiers, sailors, and SeaBees most were attached to support commands. If, as Tokyo Rose predicted, the paratrooper commando raid were followed quickly by a major assault landing, we on Attu would find ourselves in great trouble.

Tokyo Rose, strange as it may seem, was a sex symbol to us. In the barracks hut we discussed her personally much more frequently than her propaganda. There was also the question of her nationality. Was she Japanese? English? American? A combination of mixed bloods? There was unanimous agreement that her voice, the only female voice we heard nightly, was the sexiest, most seductive sound to caress our ears in endless months. We were also certain that God, the master creator of perfection, had blessed her with face and form to match.

Because the mystery surrounding her left so much to the imagination, Tokyo Rose was an even greater sex symbol to our active young minds than the Hollywood starlets whose leggy pin-ups adorned hut walls.

One night, for example, she was detailing how the Imperial Japanese paratroopers would slip silently into our huts and slit our throats while we slept. In the midst of her talk, one aerographer's mate announced in a loud, longing voice, "Boy, I'll bet she's got luscious knockers and great legs."

Enemy Bombers Attack Attu

Beginning about the first of October 1943, we had been officially alerted at Attu for increased Japanese air activities. This included the possibility of an enemy attack by paratroopers. Obviously, Tokyo Rose's broadcasts were listened to by all echelons of the U.S.Military.

Enemy air activities had definitely increased during the first week in October 1943. This lent some credence to the statements made by the dulcet voiced Tokyo Rose.

On the evening of October 13, 1943, my section had the 1600 to midnight watch. Shortly before 1800 hours I heard the unmistakable wicked sound of long

barrelled, army 90mm. anti-aircraft guns.

Chief Ackerman, writing a letter at his office desk, lookedup in surprise and asked, "What the hell's that, Heapo?"

"I've heard that song before," I replied, "Jap planes must becoming in."

Ackerman, Lt. Max Jack, who was also in the office, and the watch ran into the storeroom to grab weapons, ammunition, and helmets.

The brief scene which ensued was like a Chinese fire drill. In haste, men were grabbing the wrong helmets and rifles and fumble-fingering equipment.

"Hey, let go,"someone hollered, "That's my rifle." "What the hell's the difference," he was told,"Take another one. They're all the same."

I took my BAR from the corner, put my helmet on and gathered up two of the heavy belts of 20 round clips. Ackerman, short, blond, and heavy-set, ended up with a helmet adjusted several sizes too large. He'd buckled on a webbed belt with everything imaginable hanging from it including a small first aid kit, bayonet and scabbard, rifle ammunition, canteen, and full mess kit. He clutched his Thompson submachine gun and an extra drum of ammunition.

"I'm ready," he said. "Let's go."

I almost laughed aloud. In his outfit he looked just like a fat "Keystone Kop" in one of those old movies.

Outside, we looked to the southwest. Over the mountains of the interior we could see ten bombers approaching in a V at high altitude. Army anti-aircraft fire was bursting below and behind the oncoming enemy planes.

The twin-engined Bettys were headed directly over our weather-radio shacks, center of the runway, and the twenty or more cargo ships anchored in Massacre Bay.

"Dutch" Ackerman and I ran for our adjacent fox holes but stopped short of leaping in. They were filled with icy water. We would have been soaked but safe from shrapnel. Instead, we took cover at the four-sided screen surrounding our theodolite. Why we chose a half-inch thick sheet of plywood for protection against bombs is beyond me. At the time it seemed preferrable to standing neck deep in freezing water.

Strings of bombs came raining down. I was looking directly overhead and could see the enemy planes

amidst black blossoms of ack-ack. The first bombs hit and exploded. I was conscious of at least four erupting across the runway from us and between it and Massacre Bay. The closest landed perhaps 400 feet away.

Without warning, my left ear drum was almost shattered by hammering thunder from Ackerman's Thompson. He'd never fired the weapon and it ran away from him. He did not know that pressure had to be exerted to keep the muzzle down because it had a strong tendency to rise. Ackerman had been knocked back into the plywood by the gun recoil. The too large helmet had been driven far down over his ears and eyes. In this blind state his finger was still squeezing the trigger. The muzzle of the bucking weapon was pointed skyward but had gone past vertical. It was as if Ackerman had ahold of a runaway jackhammer that was trying to drive him into the ground. I didn't laugh until later.

"For Christ's sake, Dutch," I hollered above the din,"let go of the trigger." When he'd done this and had gotten the jammed helmet back up off his eyes, I added, "You can't reach those planes with that thing. They're too high."

I turned and looked toward Massacre Bay in time to see three large geysers of water thrown up by bomb misses.

"Well that Nip sonavabitch isn't too high," Ackerman shouted. This time his Thompson cut loose with the muzzle eighteen inches from my nose. I looked to my right in the direction he was shooting and was further startled to see a P-40 in a banking climb. This was one of several that took off from the army fighter strip at Alexai Point to engage the enemy formation.

Ackerman's latest target was flying through a hail of lead and tracers from dozens of trigger-happy gunners around the bay and Casco Field. I shouted for Ackerman to stop shooting because it was one of our planes.

After the bombing attack, Lt. Max Jack chewed out Ackerman for needlessly wasting ammunition on the high flying bombers. Jack was not aware nor was he told that Ackerman had also fired at a P-40. Ackerman sheepishly admitted he'd become slightly carried away. From that day on his nickname was changed from "Dutch" to "Ack-ack".

The enemy bombs missed all shore installations,

including the runway. Our PV-1's and PBY's also escaped damage even though they were lined up in neat rows because plane revetements had not yet been constructed. No ships were hit but several sailors in a crowded 50 foot motor launch reportedly were wounded by fragments from a near miss.

Our teletype weather line to Alexai Point took a direct bomb hit. The thirty foot break along the rocky beach was found and repaired.

Attu's fighter air cover apparently did not shoot down any of the enemy bombers. The other P-40's that scrambled aloft from Alexai Point did not reach the enemy formation's altitude in time to do battle. As all those present can attest, these P-40 pilots were lucky not to have been shot down by "friendly" fire.

Furtive Sounds In The Night

Although ineffective, the Japanese bombing attack proved that enemy planes could reach Attu and loose their bombs in daylight. This made Tokyo Rose's oft-repeated threat of a night attack by Japanese paratroopers a more distinct possibility.

As a result we kept weapons handy, especially at night. Guns were oiled and checked, some for the first time. Ammunition clips were inserted and other clips removed from pouches and kept within grasp. Bayonets and sheath knives were honed. Some men slept with a naked bayonet within arm's reach. We weathermen were nervously ready and slept lightly.

It happened on the night following the Japanese bombing attack. Sleep was difficult in any barracks weather hut from evening until after midnight. Evening card games and tall tale sessions continued until the midnight to 0800 (mid watch) dressed and left for the weather shack at 2330 hours. Men coming off the 1600 to midnight watch returned to the hut a half hour after
midnight.

On this night most of us had sacked out but were still awake when the off coming watch and their jeep arrived. The usual stir and bustle followed as these men stomped their boots in the outer storm vestibule and shed heavy jackets. They soon climbed into their sleeping bags. After about fifteen minutes all grew quiet in the blackness of the hut.

About 0230 I found myself wide-eyed awake staring blindly in the dark, ears straining. Something, a

different, furtive sound had alerted me. I heard a snorer but this hadn't been it. Then unmistakably, our outer door clicked shut. I raised up on one elbow and listened. Was that a stealthy footstep? Was it my imagination? The man who'd been snoring had stopped. I heard a light thump from the direction of the vestibule. I believed that I was the only one awake. Should I sound the alarm by hollering, "JAPS"?

The BAR under my bunk was out of reach unless I got up and made a commotion dragging the heavy weapon out. I reached instead for the bayonet under my pillow and carefully slid it out of its scabbard. The scraping sound this made seemed deafening.

The inner door of our hut could be heard as it was slowly opened. I slipped silently out of my sleeping bag. With the bayonet grasped tightly I crouched barefoot alongside my bunk while my heart tried to pound its way out of my chest. I was startled by the loud, metallic clack, clack, clacking of two rifle bolts being worked in the darkness, one directly across the aisle from me and one at the back of the hut. Someone flipped the main light switch on.

Immobilized between mincing, tip-toeing, stockinged steps and frozen rigid in the sudden glare of light was Sandor "Count" Podmanski. Pale blue eyes open in shock and heavy boots held in one hand, he gazed in horror at the arsenal of guns and gleaming cold steel pointed at him from all directions. Everyone in the hut was awake.

"What's going on?" Podmanski asked in astonishment. "We thought you were a Jap paratrooper," someone replied angrily but with obvious relief.

"What the hell you doin' sneakin' in at this friggin' hour for anyway?" demanded another.

"I stayed at the office to study. I didn't want to awaken anyone so I was being as quiet as possible," offered Podmanski.

"Goddamnit, next time let somebody know what the hell you're gonna to or at least talk loud or sing or something so we know who the hell it is."

"I'm sorry," apologized the Count.

"You sure as hell might have been," came a reply.

Podmanski had placed himself in a no win situation regardless of how he might have entered the hut.

Brushes With <u>Bettys</u>

Four days after the 13 October bombing attack Japan sent twelve Bettys winging toward Attu. This raid was repulsed when fighters intercepted, scattered the formation and forced the bombers to flee toward Paramushiro. October 1943 also produced a number of encounters by PV-1's and PBY's with lone Mitsubishi Bettys.

A PV-1, some 500 miles out toward Paramushiro and nearing turn around point of its patrol, picked up a Betty on radar. The enemy attack bomber was speeding homeward from a reconnaissance of Attu. With throttles opened wide the Ventura gave chase and gained on the Betty.

The enemy plane was nearing its home base while the Ventura was drawing further away from Attu. In the gas-gulping chase the Ventura's fuel reserve was being drastically reduced. The pursuit was abandoned after fifteen minutes. The enemy bomber was still out of gun range when the PV-1 pilot, Lt(jg) Connors of VB-136, reluctantly reversed course for home.

Ralph "Blue Baron" Rayburn, AerM1c, was involved in a much closer encounter with a Betty in mid October 1943. He and CAerM Dick "Ack-Ack" Ackerman had the two sets of NAF Attu flight orders for the month. Ackerman was scheduled to make a PV-1 anti-aircraft-weather patrol that day but he had a long awaited dental appointment.

Ackerman, admittedly, had no great desire to fly while he was stationed in the Aleutians but in this instance he had a good excuse. He sweet-talked Rayburn into taking his flight.

About halfway to Paramushiro, Rayburn's PV-1 intercepted a Betty heading for Attu. A typical aerial battle ensued between the two fast, agile, attack bombers. At one point, the high-speed maneuvering reportedly included a barrel roll executed by the PV-1 pilot, Lieutenant S.H.Dinsmore of VB-136.

The Betty was getting the worst of the furious dogfight and broke for home with Lt. Dinsmore in hot pursuit and the terrified Rayburn hanging on for dear life.

A Betty's armament included a fixed, remotely fired 20mm. cannon in the tail. Whenever Dinsmore drew close he came within potshot of this weapon. Dinsmore's .50 calibre machine guns had much greater range than the Betty's cannon stinger so he throttled back and used his bow guns and top turret fifties.

The dogfight and running battle lasted twenty

minutes, a long time for an engagement between two aircraft. In the stern chase, Lt.Dinsmore inflicted additional damage on the fleeing Mitsubishi but in the process he burned out the barrels of his forward firing, fixed, .50 calibre bow guns and the action had to be terminated.

Dinsmore's PV-1 returned with numerous bullet holes but no crew member had been hit. Twenty minutes later, a still shaken, white-faced "Blue Baron" entered the weather office. He announced that henceforth we could address him as the "Red Baron".

A Few Remarks About Flight "Skins"

There had been a dramatic but understandable change in attitude among aerographer's mates toward flight orders in a relatively short period of time. In prewar days a set of flight "skins" had been eagerly sought. After the war began and especially after we arrived in the Aleutians, a set of flight "skins" was considered by some to be a plum that could fall off the tree and rot.

At most U.S.Naval Air Bases, even with a complement of a couple dozen weathermen, there were usually only one or two sets of flight orders per month issued to base weather personnel. These orders were separate from those issued to Wing personnel.

If one set was issued, it went to the highest rated senior petty officer, usually the office chief. If a second set was available the chief rotated it on a monthly basis among his two or three leading first class aerographer's mates. Quite frequently, this second set was split with two men each receiving a half set. The lone requirement to earn flight pay was to log a minimum of four hours during the month.

When war came, a man issued flight orders could no longer simply wait for a clear-sunny day to take a short, sight-seeing hop to get his time in. He flew whenever he was ordered to which was often. In a combat zone, particularly in the Aleutian weather factory, a set of flight orders suddenly became a steed of a different hue.

The few who declined the offer of flight orders were not considered by the rest of us to be cowardly individuals; just smart. To them the few extra dollars,(half of one's meager base pay), wasn't worth the risk. Because flight pay was a fixed amount, the

more one flew, entailing greater risks, the less one earned per hourly basis.

FAW-4's aerographer's mates, who flew all the time, could do little but continue to fly if we hoped to live comfortably with our consciences.

In a related situation I know of two instances in which pilots turned in their wings during the Aleutian Campaign. I happened to be present, embarrassingly so, in the squadron commander's office when one such incident took place. This pilot told his CO that he simply could not fly one more day while not being able to see his wingtips. He feared for the safety of his crew because of his present mental and physical state. This officer was taken off the flight duty roster but later resumed flying. The flight surgeon will usually note symptoms and ground a flyer before stress reaches such a point.

Diary Entries

In early October I took my exams for first class petty officer. I noted that I passed the working part with a 3.6 average. This was a tough test supplied by the Bureau. The written portion had to be mailed to Wash. D.C for grading. It would be months before I learned the results.

Other diary entries covering this period on Attu include the following:

Oct. 14, 1943	Another alert-Japs flying around but no raid. 9.7 hour flight.
Oct. 16, 1943	They said there were two false alarms today. 8.6 hour flight. Met Betty, photo-weather mission no doubt.
Oct. 17, 1943	Twelve Mitsubishis spotted 30 miles out, coming in, fighters intercepted. Herold got his stateside orders today and Porky has already left. By the time I get out of this hell hole I'll be too old to get a .....etc.".

This Pilot Was No Dummy

Chief C. C. Herold had recently returned from a week at Shemya. He'd been sent there to await the

arrival from the states of VP-43. Because of increased Japanese air activity around Attu there was a probability VP-43's PBYs would operate from Shemya. This way the Wing would not have its two westernmost squadrons concentrated at Attu in the event of enemy bombing attacks.

Delayed by storms enroute VP-43 had reached Attu but was not deployed immediately to Shemya. Herold felt that his forecasting ability was being wasted. To find out what was going on he hitch-hiked a ride to Attu in Wing Commander Gehres's comfortably appointed PBY. Gehres, who early in the Campaign had earned the nickname, 'Custer of the Aleutians', was on one of his patented, shiny-pants, whirlwind inspection tours of the forward areas and had landed for a brief stop at Shemya.

Shortly after takeoff the radioman intercepted a message that Attu was being bombed. Gehres said he'd been shot at and torpedoed but never bombed. He ordered the pilot to speed up and hasten to Attu.

Herold reports that the pilot obediently opened the throttles but being no fool, "mistook" Agattu Island for Attu. An irritated Gehres noted the error but the circuitous route caused the PBY to land at Attu after the bombing attack of October 13.

Heroes cannot be manufactured. Herold, others involved and those who learned of the incident, viewed Gehres's lastest action with disgust.

VP-43's Preparations For A Third Tour

VP-43's second tour in the Aleutians had ended in April 1943 when the squadron was ordered to the states from Amchitka. The squadron was reformed at Whidbey Island in early July. Several Aleutian combat experienced pilots and senior aircrewmen from old VP-43, VP-41 and VP-42 were the nucleous for new VP-43. A dozen experienced pilots from two South Pacific PBY squadrons were added. The appointment of LT. Marshall C. Freerks as X/O of VP-43 was a large plus. Wise to Aleutian weather, awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross during his extensive combat experience with VP-42, Freerks was an outstanding leader and superb pilot.

Jack O. "Ole" Haugen, a plane captain and experienced AMMIc, USN, wrote an unofficial "The Story of VP-43" published in March 1967. From Haugen's squadron history, and in condensed form, we

learn details of VP-43's preparations for its third tour and its day of departure for the Aleutians.

.....During this formation period and the early phase of training at Oak Harbor the squadron was under command of Lt. Cmdr. Gerald E. Pierson; a pilot with long experience flying in the Aleutians. During part of this training period the squadron also operated from NAS Tongue Point, OR. Lt. Cmdr. Pierson turned over command to Lt.Cmdr. John A. Horton, Jr. and the squadron returned to Oak Harbor to complete the training program.

Misfortune first struck new VP-43 August 30, 1943 during this final phase of intensified training. A crew was practicing night bounce hops off the water. On one of these touch-and-go landings the PBY hit so hard it broke in half killing Emmett L. Covey, ARM3/c.

VP-43's departure for the Aleutians from Ault Field at Oak Harbor was postponed four days because of bad weather. On the morning of Oct. 4, 1943 the twelve plane squadron was ordered north and took off in the face of a developing storm. First leg of this return trip to the Aleutians was a ten hour flight to Yakutat, Alaska. Only ten PBY's arrived; the other two having been lost within a few hours of takeoff.

Both were in a four plane section and troubles began while flying westward in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. In worsening weather the four PBY's flew into a severe squall. Lt.(jg) Norwood M. Cole put his PBY into a climb and broke free of the extreme turbulence within the black squall. With radar out and radio damaged, Cole landed in the the strait to await better weather. In attempting a rough water takeoff later to return to Ault Field for repairs Cole's PBY was slammed down by a savage gust. With the hull ripped open and the plane sinking Cole opened the throttles and headed for shore. One hundred yards from the beach the plane was impaled by a rock. The crew made it safely ashore in rubber rafts.

Lt.(jg) Charles Essig was not so lucky. Caught in the same squall, Essig's PBY crashed into a mountain near Pysht, WA. Only two survived, radioman Blair and R.C. Peterson, AOM3/c. Killed with Lt. (jg) Essig were Ens. Edgar E. Anderson, Ens. John A. Erdwing, AMM3/c Hilliard Mullenix, AMM3/c Garland W. Knight, ARM3/c Richard J. Buschle, ARM3/c Bernard J. Lauer and ARM3/c Roy J. Highsmith.....

It was an ominous way for VP-43 to begin its third tour. With ten planes, VP-43 arrived at Attu Oct. 10, 1943 to relieve Lt. Cmdr. Amme's VP-45. VP-45 was being rotated back to the states after having flown almost six months of patrols out of Attu. The bombing attack by Bettys on 13 Oct. convinced Gehres it would be prudent for the time being to have VP-43 operate from Shemya. As noted in my diary, Chief Herold was leaving for the states. I received orders at the same time. Mine came from Cmdr. Tatom at Adak and were dated a few days prior to his departure for the states. Tatom ordered me to Shemya in Herold's place to forecast for search patrol operations of VP-43. Instead of the longed for states, my orders meant another island and great responsibility. The number and variety of mostly unpleasant surprises lurking around the bends continued to amaze me. I was barely twenty years old. My completed exam for AerM1c was still on its way to Wash. D.C. Without warning it was as though the weight of Attu had been dropped on my back.

My Credentials Were Skimpy

Map analysis, forecasting and briefing pilots had not been my job. In one way it was fortunate that during the past twenty months there had been a chronic shortage of aerological officers in PATWING FOUR. During our advanced operations Chiefs Max White and Chuck Herold had done most of the forecasting. This shortage coupled with our far-flung seaplane tender activities made it necessary at times for the younger AerMs to analyze maps, forecast and brief pilots. My meager experience early in the campaign could be ticked off on the fingers of one hand. In each instance Chiefs White or Herold had made the patrol flight, were weathered out from the tender and had to spend a night elsewhere. Limited experience had been gained later during two months in a tent at Adak. Lastly, knowledge had been added while sharing the duties with Calderon aboard the Casco during the battle of Attu before Herold's arrival from Amchitka.

Herold decided I could use a vote of confidence. He drew me aside for a long talk. When he learned that I had confidence in my ability to forecast with reasonable accuracy he was not overly surprised. He attributed it to his expertise as a teacher. Little would have been gained by pointing out that Max White,

Ed Hudson, Boyd Omany and others had also passed on valuable knowledge over the years.

Without a formal background of studies in physics, chemistry, math, thermodynamics and related sciences I would have been at a loss to explain the physical processes at work in a weather factory. On the practical side I had one vital plus enjoyed by few forecasters. Herold touched on this in concluding our talk.

"You'll do fine. You have more experience flying the weather than anyone out here."

This was the key to my confidence. Consider: For twenty months I had been flying the weather. In many cases I had entered the signals on the map. I had watched men like Herold and White analyze the map, listened to them explain the reasons for the analysis, read the forecast, sat in on the briefing, taken an observation every hour during the patrol, compared the weather with the forecast, flew into tomorrow's weather and returned, discussed comparisons of weather encountered with the forecast, observed any necessary changes in past map analysis to conform with actual conditions, listened to various reasons why certain assumption are incorrect. It is no wonder some knowledge of Aleutians weather patterns became subconciously imprinted.

What confidence I had was a most recent revelation. This happened quite by accident in August during the submarine patrol. Oddly, this was a period when I had no map to analyze, no weather reports other than my own, only a few instruments, and no forecasting duties.

While slicing through fog early in the patrol a crewman asked, "Hey, cloud chaser, what's the weather going to be tomorrow?"

Without hesitation I'd predicted a change to good weather with dissipation of fog, increased ceiling and good visibility, a wind shift to northwest, and scattered to broken clouds. In my mind's eye I could see this scenario unfold.

This torpedoman offered to bet five dollars it would still be foggy. He hadn't poked his head topside in the week since leaving Attu and would not during the voyage. He based his prediction on the report of a lookout who'd just come off duty and said it was so foggy the bridge watch couln't see a hundred feet. It was ludricrous. The torpedoman was willing to gamble on his ability to forecast even though he was certain

most weathermen were wrong far more than right. I told him to save his money because I did not wish to be put in the position of taking candy from a baby. He upped the wager to ten bucks. I accepted. Word spread there was easy money to be made off the 'airdale'. Others wanted a piece of this new action. In less than half an hour I'd accepted enough small bets to total fifty dollars.

In this instance, and most others that followed, I looked upon it as almost a sure thing rather than a risky gamble. During my latest observation I'd noted a subtle thinning of the fog. There were small breaks which hadn't been the case six hours earlier. Through these holes I'd observed a scattered band of altocumulus. In the pale blue above there were no signs of cirrus. Our light south to southwesterly winds had been fluky and were trying to swing into the northwest. The barometer was rising. There was good natured kidding and grumbling from the crew next day when I collected my winnings. To a man, the losers attributed my success to pure dumb luck. Bets were placed for the following day.

Betting on the weather was a once in a war opportunity for the crew to gamble on something other than poker, ace-deuce, rummy, cribbage, and craps. A similarity to craps evolved in that I held the dice and was coming out. Some bet against me while others rode with me. The weather pool had the added attraction of twenty-four hours' anticipation to learn results. Forecast accuracy averaged about 75% and my winnings were considerable. There were rare nights when I also ended up way ahead in poker or craps. Unfortunately, I could not send money orders home from a submarine. Easy-come, easy-go I ended up losing all these stakes at poker and craps. The day I left S-35 a crewman made referrence to this when he said, "Well, Black Irishman, I'll have to say you're a good wind guessor but you're sure a lousy poker player."

Accreditation as a forecaster bestowed upon me by the faculty of the U. of "Old Black Magic" was shaky, indeed. If VP-43's pilots had known of my limited qualifications they most likely would have voiced a collective, 'God, help us all.' In any event they had no choice.

In October 1943 the shortage of Wing aerologists was still critical. White was at Amchitka but would soon leave for the states. Herold was leaving. Tatom had departed the Aleutians and his relief, Lt.Cmdr.

Maynard, was at Adak with Gehres's staff. Scotty Hassell was temporarily at Attu. Tatom, too, had been faced with little choice. My being sent to Shemya was a case of necessity.

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Sent To Island X (Shemya)

The tiny island of Shemya is 40 miles east of Casco Field but only 28 miles from Attu's easternmost tip at Cherikof Point. Shemya is the largest and farthest east of three islands which comprise the Semichis. Nizki is in the middle, and Alaid, the smallest, is 18 miles from Cherikof Point.

Shemya is about 4 miles long and 2 miles wide with a roughly NW-SE axis. Cliffs rise from the sea to 250 feet on the northwest side but to only about 50 feet on the southeast end. Shemya is one of the few flat islands in the Aleutian chain.

Code named Island X, Shemya figured prominently in the U.S. High Command's offensive strategy. Shemya was the most suitable location on which a 10,000 foot runway could be built to accommodate the new, experimental B-29 Super Flying Fortress. Island X was to be used eventually as the secret base from which massive B-29 raids would takeoff for the bombing of Japan's home islands.

While fierce, hand-to-hand fighting raged on Attu's high, snow covered ridges, U.S. troops occupied Shemya on May 21, 1943. A force under command of Brigadier General John E. Copeland, USA, consisting of 4th Army Infantry and Colonel Benjamin B.Talley's 18th Engineers went ashore on the northwest corner of the island during a storm. Construction of an airfield began immediately. By 22 June a short airstrip for fighters became operational.

Although Shemya was an army base, the U.S.Navy had a small but extremely important facility dating from occupation of the island. The main naval function was the planning, organization, supervision, and the actual work of supply for the large U.S.Army Air Base. There were no docking facilities. Everything from paper clips to trucks, and bulldozers to beans had to

be brought in through the surf.

A small indentation on the northwest coast was designated as Shemya's harbor. The area was both shallow in depth and configuration which forced cargo ships to anchor far offshore in an open roadstead. Because of the island's small size and flat topography the "harbor" and anchorage were at the mercy of wind and waves.

Cargo had to be off-loaded into barges and landing craft which were then run through lines of surf and unloaded on the exposed beach. This dangerous work was done by the naval personnel. To stake a claim in defiance of nature means trouble-lots of trouble-. Circumstances often made it necessary for this work to progress in high winds, snow, freezing temperatures, and in hazardous heavy surf and swell conditions.

The naval facility was on the northwest corner of the island between the runway and supply beach to the west. A few of the larger buildings, such as headquarters and air operations, were of wood frame construction. Quonsets and winterized tents served as barracks for officers, CPOs, and enlisted personnel of the base, machine and repair shops, maintenance and storage, recreation hall, sick bay, and messhall. Our air operations shack was alongside a steel mat aircraft parking area connected to the runway by a short taxi strip. A small space in the air operations building had been partitioned off for the weather office. I was assigned a spare bunk in a barracks Quonset. Less fortunate, VP-43's aircrews and PATSU personnel were housed in winterized tents erected hastily during the past few weeks.

By mid-October 1943 Shemya's runway could accomodate heavy bombers. Some supplies were being flown in by these aircraft and also by C-47's of the military air transport command. Until VP-43's arrival the naval air traffic was an occasional PBY or PV-1 that could not land at either Attu or Amchitka because of weather. Map analysis, forecasting, hourly and synoptic observations, and balloon soundings were being handled by 11th USAAF weathermen. Their well equipped and staffed office was on the opposite side and near the other end of the runway.

Routine Established

Shemya's navy weather office had a large and

small desk with a chair for each, map desk and high stool, a shelf which held a small library of weather text books, a large supply of blank weather maps, mercurial barometer, barograph, hygrothermograph, selsyn wind indicator, 3 cup anemometer, thermoscreen with psychrometer, typewriter and other office supplies, crank field phone, virtually an empty file cabinet, and Royal Gould,AerM3c.

In his early thirties and well educated, Gould was of medium height and stocky build with pale blue eyes and thinish receding blond hair. His scholarly inquisitive mind was coupled with a professor's occasional absentmindedness. Gould was industrious and neat but not always cheerful.

Royal Gould viewed my coming and that of the squadron with mixed emotions. He was thankful to once again have some direction and specific weather tasks. At the same time he hoped this activity would not cut drastically into the time he normally spent beachcombing, archaeological probing, and other leisure pursuits.

"We'll try not to let the war disrupt your life style," I said sarcastically because I thought he must be kidding.

"Thank you," Gould replied in all seriousness. We had a lot to learn about each other.

Gould and I established the following routine: About 0200 hours,(while I slept), Gould would jump in a jeep and drive to the army weather shack. He would obtain a copy of the army's latest forecast, coded synoptic weather reports, and the latest Aleutian hourly weather observations. Gould would also make note of where the army forecaster had positioned his pressure systems and weather fronts on the latest synoptic chart.

Upon his return, Gould decoded the synoptics and entered them on a map. All weather in the northern hemisphere moves from west to east and most of the weather signals were east of Shemya. Exceptions were Attu's and the often unreliable Russian reports from Siberia. This wasn't much to go on.

Gould would complete this work by around 0400 hours and awaken me. I would scan the army material and draw (analyze) my own map. From this I prepared the daily base and flight forecast. As soon as I had finished this, Gould would begin to type carbon copies. We needed about twenty, one for each plane crew, one for the office bulletin board, one for air

operations, and several for the base naval facility. After early chow, the flight crews readied the planes for takeoff and the pilots and navigators gathered at the operations building for briefing.

These briefings were normally routine affairs. The squadron commander read the day's orders which included plane and sector assignments, and any latest orders or directives that might have been received during the night from Wing Headquarters at Adak.

The ACI officer would then take over with any late information of general interest to our operations. Occasionally, a pertinent item was mentioned such as:"A plane from Attu spotted a Mavis in sector 13 yesterday at 1247 hours at this position. This is far to the south and east of their normal search pattern. We don't know if this search is a new, long-range one recently begun or whether it was just a one-shot deal. We must learn if there is a pattern to this search so southern sectors should keep a sharp lookout for this aircraft. Any questions?" "Okay. Let's hear the weather."

Having sat in on over a hundred briefings I knew what was expected of the weatherman placed on trial thusly. A man is innocent until proven guilty so I proceeded with confidence knowing my forecast would be accurate unless proven otherwise. Each navigator was given a copy of the forecast. I tacked up my analyzed map and began by reading the synopsis. As each high or low pressure center and weather front was mentioned I indicated its position with a pointer. Next came the detailed sector forecasts followed by conditions expected in the Shemya area that evening. This ended the briefing unless there were some questions. At this point I would request to fly with the pilot assigned to the sector in which I expected the storm center or the worst frontal weather to be encountered.

The briefing completed, we'd file out to the waiting planes and takeoff. Each hour, out and back, I'd take a weather observation. It was a perfect way to check my forecast. Upon landing, there was a short debriefing. Pilots and navigators would tell me where and when they had encountered frontal weather, wind shifts, icing, turbulence, or unusual weather conditions. They would also tell me if my forecast for their particular sector had been right on, off, or half correct. Any necessary corrections or notations were then made on my early morning map. I would phone the army weather office and pass along this latest

information to the forecaster on duty. A mutually beneficial discussion usually followed, especially if my latest in-flight weather information did not fit the army forecaster's map analysis. Royal Gould would make a copy of my flight reports and jeep them down to the army weather shack.

While I'd been flying, Gould would have entered the signals on that afternoon's map. I would enter my in-flight reports and analyze this map. Sometimes I would let Gould draw this map for practice. We then went to evening chow and turned in early about 2000 hours. The process would be repeated the following day.

Shortly after my arrival on Shemya I was given an added forecast responsibility by Lt. Cmdr. Thayer,the naval facility commander. He asked me to include with my daily base forecast a detailed section on the surf and swell conditions he could expect for his supply unloading operations. I didn't tell him I'd never forecasted surf and swell conditions but I did tell him a white lie by saying I'd be happy to supply the information.

Lt. Cmdr. Thayer, USNR., a man of medium height and build, with greying sandy colored hair, blue eyes, and about 55 years of age, was also the Harbor Master and Beach Master. There was great pressure on this officer for it was his responsibility to see that this an endless mountain of materiel was unloaded off the ships, brought through the surf, then moved off the rocky shelf of beach.

The times I had occasion to stop by Thayer's office his phones were ringing off their hooks. A steady stream of U.S.Army officers trooped in and out. Each lieutenant, captain, and major clutched a ship's bill of lading in his fist. Each officer wanted to know where his vital supplies were and when he could expect to receive them.

While Thayer had the pressure, the navy personnel working on the barges, landing craft, and on the beach went through their own special icy hell.

Fortunately, one of the weather office text books provided a great deal of information on the theory of wave generation, movement, and characteristics. Initially, I was utterly dismayed. Every page seemed to be half filled with complicated algebraic formulas that I could not comprehend. I was able to glean enough from ample illustrations and the rest of the text for a basic understanding of surf, swell and sea

condition forecasting.

The height, period,(elapsed time between passing crests), and characteristics of wind generated waves can be accurately forecast if certain facts are available and a formula applied. Stated simply: Wind velocity X duration,(time that it blows), X fetch, (distance over which it blows), = wave height. As these waves move out of the generating area as bulges or ripples on the ocean's surface they decrease in height and their period lengthens. Once these undulations are set in motion as open ocean swells they continue until they strike a shore whether it be 100 miles distant or 10,000. This action can be likened to that which occurs when one throws a rock into a pond. In both cases, the larger the rock (stronger the wind) the greater the ripples. The falling rock though, exerts force outward in all directions whereas a wind blowing from a prevailing direction creates waves which travel only in that same direction.

Local winds create short, steep, choppy waves which determine the local sea conditions. This is a separate problem from open ocean swells that are generated by a distant storm. Local seas often run counter to ocean swells which creates the dangerous conditions of a confused sea.

The type of surf created by waves when they strike a beach is determined primarily by the contour of the ocean bottom at any particular location. The shallower and more gradual the bottom slope the gentler the surf; the steeper the bottom the more pronounced is the wave build up as it approaches shore and therefore the more violent the action when it breaks.

Although new waves are sassy befitting their youth and old ones lengthen out and are more comfortable, it is generally the unexpected arrival of old more powerful ones that cause the most surf problems for a supply beach operation. With the sparsity of weather signals and limited map area it was impossible to predict far in advance the possible arrival of heavy swells that might have been generated a week previously by a typhoon or other major storm system off Japan or the Philippines. Open ocean swells of this type and origin can be detected from the air and this usually gave us at least short advance warning at Shemya.

I "busted" a number of surf, swell, and sea

condition forecasts during the first two weeks. Each day either Royal Gould or I would check the actual surf and swell conditions and get reports from the boat coxswains on sea conditions out in the roadstead. With experience I was able to improve my forecast accuracy to a passable level.

With the severest winter weather still to come activity at Shemya was at a high level. The main runway was completed but two short runways and additional taxi strips were under construction. Dozens of other building projects were being hurried to completion before much of this outdoor work would have to be curtailed because of winter storms.

Late October and early November 1943 saw a steady stream of cargo ships arrive at Shemya. At times several were anchored in the roadstead while their crews waited impatiently to discharge cargo and be gone from the bleak place. Later in the winter, cargo ships might reach Shemya but lightering could be impossible for weeks on end. Shemya had to lay in enough supplies including food to last until spring.

LCDR Thayer often walked over to operations during this busy period to check on the latest weather. On his short visits this efficient officer was always pleasant, cheerfully optomistic, patient with me, and appeared to me completely unruffled. He had found a way to live in a pressure cooker.

On days when the weather was so bad that planes could not fly I still analyzed two maps to keep abreast of the rapidly changing weather. Gould would also deliver copies of the daily forecast to various base offices. When this routine work of non-flying days was done, we had no other duties.

On these occasions, when there were no new books to read, beachcombing was the order of the day. As mentioned, Royal Gould had a very inquisitive mind. His father was a curator at the San Diego Zoo in 1943 and I believe Royal leaned in this direction also. He was fascinated by the seabirds,fish, and the area's mammals of the sea. Looking at all the little "critters" in, on, and around the piles of kelp and seaweed consumed many hours of his free time. Gould had read numerous books about the Aleuts and northern Eskimos. He was a delightful sidekick.

Digging For Fosil Ivory

One day, early in my stay on Shemya, word spread

like wildfire that fossil ivory tusks had been found! During construction of a new road which angled down the cliffs to the beach in our area a bulldozer's blade had cut through a stratum of shells. What followed was reminiscent of the Klondike days when some grizzled old Yukon prospector raised his arms and eyes to heaven and shouted, "GOLD!"

The rush was on. Picks, shovels, sticks, boards, and anything else that could be used for digging were pressed into service by the mob that descended to the spot halfway down the cliff. Some men were lucky and found treasured walrus and sea lion tusks but most ended up with only blistered hands to show for their back breaking work. Royal Gould and I were among the few die-hards who continued to dig.

From the outset of the discovery, Royal was excited but much dismayed by the frantic, crude digging. To Gould the site was too important archaeologically to be torn asunder by shovel wielding soldiers and sailors. If it had been within his power he would have fenced the area and put up "No Trespassing" signs.

Sometimes Gould and I went to the "digs" together although we both preferred to go alone. I was purely and simply driven by greed. I couln't resist the temptation and lure that my next scoop might turn up a walrus tusk. I'd start out slowly but would always end up digging feverishly like a terrier about to bury a bone. This infuriated Royal Gould.

By contrast, Gould would kneel in the same spot for an hour. With painstaking slowness(that drove me mad) and a small stick, he'd pick at the layer of shells while examining carefully each speck that came out of his midget excavation. Because of the vast amount of ground I unearthed I found about a dozen tusks while Gould found only one. Of far more importance to Gould, he found some items that I would not have even recognized as being artifacts. One was a small, broken, slim piece of whalebone which had been worked down into some sort of tool or instrument. Royal found other small fragments of bone and ivory that showed signs they had been fashioned and used by the natives.

While digging alone one day, Gould unearthed his pride and joy. When I returned from the flight that day he proudly held up the perfect skull of an infant. Of great significance was a half inch diameter hole in the skull centered an inch above the eye sockets.

Gould surmised there were five possible explanations for the hole: 1. That is was accidentally inflicted; 2. That it could have been made by a sharpened stick, spear, or harpoon point: 3. The child had been sacrificed in a hostage situation; 4. A mercy killing might have occurred although if the child had been born deformed, Gould believed the natives would have probably drowned it; 5. Most likely it had been a case of murder and the hole had been made by a heavy calibre bullet.

It puzzled Gould that he'd unearthed the skull in our digging area because this was not a burial ground, he said, but more a kitchen midden site. This was a very unusual place for the Aleuts to leave a human skull. In Gould's opinion this suggested the Aleuts had either been forcibly taken away or had fled in a hurry and never returned.

Royal finally settled on his murder-bullet theory because it seemed to fit best. If this guess were accurate, it fixed the date of the site at about 200 years old. This was roughly the date the first Russian explorers in search of furs had come to the Aleutians. The Russians had guns and they were ruthless. Massacre Bay and Murder Point on nearby Attu both got their names as a result of an early Russian visit. To Royal Gould the skull was priceless.

Ancient Village Site

Another discovery was made that related to the ivory strike. About 150 yards southwest of the digging site there was a small shelf or plateau. This area was perhaps 100 yards long and 50 yards wide, and stood about 60 feet above the beach. Several times during beachcombing expeditions Gould and I had been forced to skirt the beach in this area because the cliffs were almost vertical. We did so by climbing up from the beach and walking across the small plateau then descending to the beach again. There was nothing of interest on the sawgrass covered shelf so we'd never stopped while crossing it. Inland from the shelf the cliffs again rose perpendicularly for another 200 feet.

One day Gould walked to a location along the upper cliffs from which, for the first time, he could look straight down upon the grassy shelf. From his height of 200 feet he could clearly discern four, perfect circles, evenly spaced in a row across the

field. They were about 30 feet in diameter. Gould gazed at the circles for a long time not believing his eyes. He back-tracked along the cliffs, climbed down on the way to the field and walked past several busily digging ivory hunters. On the same level as the circles and standing among them, Gould could see no sign of them. He climbed back up and looked down again and the four circles were still there. It wasn't a dream. Gould had accidentally found the site of an ancient Aleut village. The four circles marked the outline of four dwellings. He kept the secret for a long time.

It wasn't until just before I left Shemya that Gould told me of his discovery, swore me to secrecy while I was island, and showed me the circles. Gould said he would have told me sooner but after seeing the way I had madly excavated like everyone else at the ivory diggings, he was afraid I'd start human bulldozing at the circle site. During the time he'd sat on his secret he had rarely walked across the area and had never lingered while crossing. It was bad enough that the ivory diggings were fairly close by but most of all he lived in fear that someone else would discover the circles from the cliff and a new ivory rush would be on.

To Royal, the discovery was of major scientific interest and should only be worked over by a trained team. His fervent wish was that after the war he could interest a university into undertaking an expedition to Shemya and that in some capacity he would be a member of the group. Thirty-nine years have passed. Are the circles, untouched, still there?

Royal Gould's Extinct Fish

Royal and I were beachcombing one December 1943 day toward the end of my tour on Shemya. We had gone our separate ways when I heard him hollering from the far end of a stretch of beach. I couldn't hear his words but he was vigorously motioning for me to join him. When I arrived, he pointed to a fish at his feet.

"Do you have any idea what this is?" he solemnly asked. "Sure, it's the ugliest fish I've ever seen."

"No,no,no," he said in great agitation, "It is a **COELACANTH!**" "So?"

"My God, you don't understand. This fish has been extinct for
millions of years."

"It sure took its sweet time to wash up on this beach." "Don't joke about it. This is the find of the century." "You're crazy, Royal. Throw the bug-eyed bugger back in. It's
dead and nobody will eat it."

"Eat it!" he almost screamed, "I've got to get this to my Dad."

He scurried down the beach with the extremely ugly fish craddled tenderly in his arms. I though he was kidding, of course and I continued to beachcomb while wondering if Royal had finally gone "rock happy".

Gould was still excited about his find when I returned to our hut several hours later. I asked him what he'd really done with his crumby, ex-stinko fish. Incredibly, to me, he had wrapped the fish in waterproof paper, packed it in a heavy cardboard box, placed this in a wooden box in which a machine shaft had been shipped and which was long enough to accomodate the fish that was almost three feet long. A contact at the army officer's club had supplied enough dry ice in which to pack "coelacanth". Through another sympathetic friend at the post office, Gould bypassed inspection and censors and the crate was mailed to his father in San Diego.

I left Shemya before learning the final result of this beachcombing expedition.

Yehudi Menuhin

Late one foul winter afternoon an unexpected, distinguished visitor landed at Shemya. World famous concert violinist, Yehudi Menuhin, walked into our air operations hut. He was scheduled to give a concert that evening at Attu but weather had prevented the plane from landing there. Menuhin would have to spend at least the night on Shemya.

Mr. Menuhin, his small entourage, and the flight crew clustered around the warmth of our stove. Yehudi Menuhin clutched his violin case and expressed some concern about the weather's affecting his precious violin. The naval facility commander and his executive officer came over to greet our celebrity and welcome him to Shemya. By this time, the group in operations had grown to perhaps twenty people.

Having pictured Menuhin as being a man in his sixties, I was surprised at his youth and boyish charm. When he visited Shemya I guessed his age to be

thirty-five but found out recently that he was only twenty-seven at the time. I had also expected a concert violinist to be somber and quiet but Menuhin talked and laughed with the small group around him. He began telling humorous stories about his experiences while entertaining troops. Lashed by snow, with storm winds setting it aquiver, our operations hut seemed the last place on earth to find a person like Menuhin but he was cheerfully making the best of his situation.

Our stove had been turned up and soon the arrivals started to shed heavy overcoats, parkas, gloves and scarves. Menuhin flexed his fingers over the stove for awhile and then removed his violin from its velvet lined case. He plucked a few strings and tuned them. Then he rosined the bow and began to play.

That night, for over an hour, Yehudi Menuhin treated twenty men to an impromptu violin concert. He played some pieces with his eyes closed and went from one selection to the next without saying anything. Spellbound, we listened. I was shocked with the realization that classical music devotees might not be crazy afterall.

When he had finished, we all clapped with enthusiastic appreciation and thanked him. The party put heavy clothing back on and were escorted to the messhall then to overnight quarters. Around noon the following day, Yehudi Menuhin took off for his day late concert at Attu. Shemya had not been on his itinerary and we had been fortunate, thanks for once, to Aleutian weather, to have had the rare opportunity to hear this famous virtuoso perform. An equally treasured memory was the personal touch of pleasant, informal conversation; something that a large audience would miss.

During all the time that I spent in the Aleutians, Yehudi Menuhin was the only celebrity entertainer or personality whom I saw, and this was by accident. I'm certain that if I had been at or Attu I would not have taken the trouble to get bundled up and struggle through miles of mud to sit through a two hour violin concert.

Recounting Yehudi Menuhin's visit to Shemya has caused me to ponder these U.S.O. sponsored tours in the Aleutians during WWII. I know that relatively few shows were viewed by the majority of U.S.Navy aerographer's mates during the first year and a half of the campaign. It was not that we were

unappreciative but more a case of either lack of opportunity or a matter of priorities.

U.S.O. troupes, for example, did not give performances at places such as Bogoslof, Sanak, Nikolski or other exotic rocks where aerographer's mates had been deposited. Entertainers also did not visit seaplane tenders operating from isolated bays out in no-man's-land. Later, at a large, newly established base such as Adak there were other limiting factors. One of these restrictions was the nature of weather work which required personnel to be on duty around the clock. Most sailors and soldiers on the base worked during daytime hours from 0800 to 1600. Accordingly, U.S.O. shows were held in the evening so that the majority of personnel were free to attend. As a result, some aerographer's mates missed shows because they had the watch. Others, those of us who flew in addition to standing watches, missed shows because we considered sleep more important.

Army personnel also far outnumbered navy personnel on major Aleutian bases. The shows were therefore presented in the army area which was often a considerable distance from navy town. On Adak it was an additional distance to our weather station hilltop.

My Pet Eagle

An intense winter storm with accompanying winds in excess of eighty knots had been lashing Shemya and the western Aleutians for thirty-six hours. Although the weather was moderating it would be another twenty-four hours before our PBY's would be able to takeoff. After the base forecast had been prepared and delivered, Royal Gould and I decided to go beachcombing. Although the weather was miserable anything seemed better than to stay cooped in a Quonset hut. Dressed in warm clothing under our foul weather gear we descended the cliffs to a stretch of beach.

It was always exciting to beachcomb during or immediately after a storm. These are the best times to find unexpected treasures among the flot-sam and jet-sam. Even if nothing new has been brought in, the wild wind and waves rearrange the old material and present it to one's eyes in a totally different disarray.

Gould and I had separated, walking slowly in opposite directions. While gazing at a huge pile of

kelp, my eyes caught a slight, foriegn movement within the tangled mass. I walked closer and peered at the spaghetti like pile of kelp and was surprised to see what appeared to be a large bird. The creature was still alive. It was lying upside down. As I carefully tried to get it loose, more and more of the bird's body bagan to materialize. When I saw the bird's eyes, talons, and the hooked yellow beak, I knew it was an eagle.

The eagle's outstretched wings and legs were completely entwined in kelp and the bird was helpless. Its feathers were all ruffled and some were bent back and broken. The eagle was soaking wet and appeared half drowned. When I first touched it while pulling on kelp it hissed weakly and struggled briefly then lay still. I hollered to Royal Gould for help. Together, with my holding the bird while Gould cut kelp with his sheath knife, we freed the eagle.

When I set the eagle on the beach its legs collapsed and the wind almost blew it over. It just sat in the wet sand with each wing partially spread for support. We stared at it and it stared back.

On the beach, in the storm and the condition it was in, the eagle would surely die. I've always been fascinated by eagles and decided to take it to our hut and try to nurse it back to health. I walked around behind the forlorn creature and carefully folded its wings inward against its body. The eagle turned its head and looked me in the eye for a second but made no other movement as I tenderly picked it up. My heavy clothing would protect me from the razor sharp talons and I kept the beak away from my face just in case. The eagle was a lot larger than I had first imagined and by the time I reached the hut he had grown a lot heavier. I placed him in a large, paper-lined cardboard box at the back of the hut. He(she?) was content to just sit in a more or less crumpled fashion. After a few hours he appeared at least warmer and drier if not perkier.

Royal guessed that it was a young bald eagle, perhaps a year old. bald eagles are a motled, dark brown until about four years of age at which time they develop the characteristic white head, neck, and tail feathers with maturity. Admittedly, it would have been difficult for us to tell the difference between an immature bald eagle and a young golden eagle. Royal's guess was based on the fact that bald eagles were much more numerous.

We tried to figure out how the eagle had gotten himself into such a mess. After a few days, when it became apparent that it didn't have a broken wing, hadn't been shot, and had no serious injury, the answer was clear. Much the same as our PBY's and PV-1's trying to get home to roost, the eagle had gotten caught in the storm and flew itself into exhaustion. We could only guess at the valiant, losing battle it waged ending in total collapse and the lack of strength to keep from being rolled up in the kelp.

How long had the eagle been entangled? When had it last eaten? I figured that the eagle had to be hungry so I bummed some raw hamburgher from the navy cooks. I really didn't expect the eagle to eat, for at the time, we figured the eagle was probably injured and dying. It was also extremely weak and undoubtedly scared to death. It had been throught the exhausting and shocking experience of the storm. Within an hour's time it had been extricated from the kelp, handled by humans, and now found itself within the frightening confines of a building. With scant hope of success, I placed a golf ball sized portion of meat on the paper in front of the eagle. The eagle didn't move and ignored the offering. I picked up the meat, pushed it slowly but firmly onto the eagle's beak and held it there. For a second or two nothing happened. Then, probably to keep from suffocating, the eagle started to twist its head from side to side and up and down. I could also feel his beak opening and closing. During this moment he must have gotten a taste of raw meat. He began to swallow, then peck, and finally voraciously gulp what was left. I dropped some meat trying to save the palm of my hand. The poor thing was on the verge of starvation and any fears were overruled by hunger and a weakened condition.

"The heck with what I've been through, where I am or where this good chow came from," the eagle clearly stated by his actions,"I'm alive and starved. Let's eat."

I got the remainder of the meat and he also wolfed this down. This last fist sized portion of hamburgher disappeared so quickly I started after somemore. Royal Gould stopped me and suggested the eagle had enough for the time being. I then offered the eagle some water but he refused to drink.

Each succeeding day Butch grew stronger. My hut mates named him Butch, a name I didn't care for. If they were willing to put up with my pet it was only

fair that they should name him. Butch recovered his strength rapidly and seemed to quickly grow larger. His recuperation and growth were in well remembered stages.

First, he jumped out of his box and was found strutting and hopping around inside the hut. A larger, deeper box solved this problem for several days but he then started to jump out of this. Next, I nailed a piece of broom handle across a back corner of the hut for a perch. This proved too small and he teetered a bit. The broom handle was replaced by a beveled piece of 2 X 4 set on edge. This was nailed higher up and the eagle seemed to like this perch. He would sit for several hours seemingly content to watch our activities. Butch then began taking off from his vantage point in a half-fly, half-glide, the length of the hut. Once on the deck, he either could not or would not fly back up to his perch and had to be picked up and placed on his 2 X 4. I don't believe he was being contrary. It was more a case of his not having sufficient taxi strip or takeoff room.

I've observed many eagles in Alaska since Butch and I've noticed that they need a lot of runway to get airborne unless there is a stiff breeze. Also, when an eagle takes off from a high snag or limb, it launches itself by diving out and downward. When the eagle gains enough momentum it spreads its wings and either glides or starts flapping. An eagle's great size and relatively slow beat of its huge wings must have something to do with this. I don't know if this holds true throughout birdland but it seems that the smaller the bird, the faster the wing beat.

It was a daily chore, (mostly by Royal Gould, voluntarily), to keep clean papers under Butch's perch. This led to the realization one day that the eagle was house-broken, a natural trait apparently. As a result, without even being aware of it, I'd had no need to potty train him. Besides, where and how would one spank a bird? This was fortunate for if Butch's habits had not been good I'm certain the majority vote would have been to oust him. It was also fortunate there were only seven of us living in the hut and Butch had back half all to himself.

Butch tolerated everyone living in the hut and seemed to have a slight fondness for me, probably because I fed him. Others also gave him tid-bits between meals. He would eat raw meat and dug into beef, fish, or chicken with seemingly equal relish.

His table manners were not the best but they were efficient. When he tackled a large piece of meat he simply clamped one or both huge talons on the meat and began to rip and tear at it with his beak.

I made a deal with the chief cook for a daily supply of raw meat but it cost me most of my fossil ivory tusks. As Butch's appetite kept increasing, the cook kept insisting we renegotiate our agreement. I was able to keep the cook appeased with a small, weekly allotment of 190 proof alcohol which I had requistioned from the aerological supply pool at Kodiak. This five gallon tin was thoughtfully airfreighted to me by CAerM "Bing" Omang on high priority as a box of essential, delicate weather instruments.

Royal Gould came to my rescue. He had been on the island some time and had made a lot of contacts. In his wandering he'd run across several soldiers who were avid fishermen and quite successful. Royal talked them into donating a small, fresh fish or a piece of a large one whenever possible. We supplemented Butch's diet in this way. The eagle would peck at cooked oatmeal but not rice. Vegetables in any manner, shape, or form were out. He would drink a little water and this was kept in an aluminum pot half filled with rocks to prevent his tipping it over. On the ground, Butch was a little on the clumsy side.

The eagle became a celebrity. Officers and enlisted men, both army and navy, frequently dropped in to, "See that eagle". There was only one person that Butch at first did not like, and then quickly began to hate. This guy was the leading chief boatswain's mate of the naval facility. He began teasing the eagle and the chief and I almost came to blows over it. From the beginning, the chief seemed to be jealous of the bird. This speaks volumes for the chief's character. This chief often dropped by our hut in the evening while I was trying to sleep. In a loud grating voice he'd tell the youngsters wild sea stories about the China Station, the Yangtze Patrol days, and 'How it was in the OLD navy.' He told the same stories over and over. The kids in the hut would interrupt the chief to tell him something Butch had done that day. This threw the chief off stride and ruffled his feathers so be began to ruffle Butch's.

I found out later that the chief had stopped by our hut several times during daylight and teased the eagle while I was either in the weather office or

flying. My hut mates had not told me this because they were afraid of what I might do.

For sometime, we had all been playing a little game with Butch. One could hold a yellow pencil out to him and he would clamp onto it with his beak. His grip was so great there was no way to get the pencil back. One could try and twist the pencil, slide it, pull it, all to no avail. While this was going on, the eagle would counter balance one's motions with his body while his talons dug into the 2 X 4 and he clamped down harder on the pencil. If one stopped the tussle Butch would either drop the pencil or snap it in two as though it were a match stick. He never tired of this game and would keep it up as long as one were willing to play and/or the supply of pencils held out. Butch seemed to enjoy the fun and it was good exercise for him.

I was sound asleep in my sack one night. The chief was back with Butch playing the pencil game. All hell suddenly broke loose and the chief ran through the hut and out the door. The slamming door stopped Butch because he was right on the chief's tail. I woke up at this commotion and asked what had happened.

"The chief was holding out a pencil," said a hut mate,"and whenever Butch reached for it the chief pulled it back. Then he started tapping Butch on the beak with it. The last time Butch reached for the pencil the chief really rapped him hard and Butch attacked him."

I slipped on my boots, threw on a jacket and went looking for the chief. When I entered the CPO barracks hut he was telling the other chiefs in his salty, raspy voice, all about being attacked by the eagle.

Never pleased when interrupted while in the midst of a story, he looked up and demanded,"What the hell do you want?"

With a tight grip on my temper I told him slowly and quietly,"If you ever tease the eagle again I'll break your goddamned neck."

He stood up, looked me straight in the eye and said,"The only thing you'll do if you're fed regularly is shit."

I've never come so close to slugging someone in my life. I hesitated knowing it would not be worth spending my next twenty years at hard labor in a military prison. The chief was just daring me to hit him and he knew why I was hesitating. It was clearly my move.

Seconds ticked by. My thoughts turned to a dark night, the nearby cliffs with rocks and ocean below, no witnesses. The chief's death would look like an accident. Our eyes were locked in a penetrating stare. He must have clearly read my mind.

"I'm not looking for any trouble with you," he said,"and if you love that vicious bird so much why don't you set it free?"

I couldn't argue with this reasoning.

"I'll think about it," I said, "Meantime remember what I told you." I turned and started for the door. He reverted back to form.

"Besides," he said,"If I was horse-shit, I could put you on report. It's against Navy regs to keep a bird aboard ship."

I was on Butch's side. We both hated that S.O.B.

During the next few nights the chief came to our hut, not so much as a peace offering on his part, but to check and see if Butch were still there. As soon as the chief opened the door Butch uttered a high pitched screeking sound and rocketed from his perch and attacked. He wouldn't let the chief in the hut.

Then a really spooky thing happened that I hope some bird expert will explain to me someday. This occurred three times, once during the daytime when I wasn't present and twice in the evening when I was. I'd been told that the chief had tried to come in the hut that day. That evening we were all sitting or lying around when Butch started to raise hell.

"The chief's coming," said a hut mate. "How do you know that?" I asked.

"I don't but Butch does," he replied. "He acted the same way
this afternoon."

My mind wrestled with what my ears had heard. "That's impossible," I said.

"Impossible or not, Butch knows. Wait and see."

Sure enough, several seconds later the chief tried to enter the hut. Right on cue and on target, the eagle flashed across the room from his perch. The chief swore, backed out and slammed the door as Butch crashed into it. The eagle then stood facing the door with his wings arched in a very aggressive manner as he made a hissing noise. This happened two nights later in much the same way.

I'll reconstruct the steps my hut mates and I went through trying to fathom this mind-boggler. As each theory is explored then dismissed you will end up

as we did with a spine-chilling mystery.

Let's consider visual sighting first. Science agrees that the eagle possesses phenomenal eyesight but it is not x-ray vision. The end of our hut was made of solid material with a windowless door, and a small window blacked out with plywood. There was no way that the eagle could see the approaching chief.

How about hearing? From the moment of Butch's first agitation, fully fifteen seconds elapsed before the chief turned the door knob. Let's assume that the chief was some sixty feet from the hut and it took him fifteen seconds to cover the distance. To the sixty feet one must add the length of the hut, a total of at least one hundred feet. Even if an eagle's hearing is on a par with his eyesight, could one, inside a hut, hear approaching footsteps in the wind and mud one hundred feet away? Even if this were possible how could the eagle distinguish who's footsteps they were?

Could it have been habit or routine? No again. The chief did not visit our hut every night and he seldom dropped in at the same hour.

Someone advanced a smell theory but we won't go into that. "I've got it," someone said. "The chief must have been standing outside our door for sometime while listening to our conversation. That would be just like him."

This theory had to be the simple explanation for the phenomena we had witnessed. We had been so ready and willing to give our pet eagle some strange, mystical power. However, there was still the wind, the solid wall and the length of the hut to consider.

To check,(but figuring the chief would probably lie about any sneaky behavior on his part), I sought him out and asked if he'd walked directly to our hut and immediately tried to come in.

"Sure," he said, puzzled, "Why the hell wouldn't I and what the f---s that gotta do with anything?"

"Are you certain?" I insisted. He got mad and I tried to explain why it was so important. He could not have cared less and got madder still.

"For Christ's sake," he exploded,"I've about had it up to here with you and that goddamned eagle. If you don't believe me ask_____,"(another chief) and he stomped away through the half frozen goo.

I hunted up this other chief and asked him if he could recall exactly what had happened on the walk to our hut that night and the reason I wanted to know.

"Yeh," he answered matter of factly, "We just walked to your hut, separated and I'd only taken a step or two when he tried to enter."

This destroyed our last possible explanation for what had occurred and the tantalizing mystery remained. Returning salmon, lost cats, and migrating birds have a mysterious, unerring sense of homing or direction. We had witnessed a vivid demonstration of another power and Butch, I'm certain, was no special eagle except to me. I believe eagles have a highly developed awareness of a distant, unseen, unheard "presence."

Four days later I turned Butch loose. He didn't want to leave at first and would make short flights only to return and perch on top of our Quonset hut. We tried to shoo him away each time he returned and were afraid that someone might shoot him. His flights became longer and returns fewer. On about the third day he flew toward Attu and never came back. I'm sure he knew where his home was.

I don't know what has happened to my hut mates. Perhaps somewhere there's a small boy holding an old man's hand as they walk along. The child, gazing up at the sky, asks,"What kind of a big bird is that Grandpa?"

"That's a bald eagle, Timmy," answers the old man. Then with a faraway look in his eyes, adds,"Once, a long time ago, on a lonely island we had one for a pet and he lived in the hut with us for a short while. They are magnificent birds."

More likely, there's a grizzled, salty old fart with a loud, irritating voice saying to his cronies, "Now this is no crap but on Shemya there was this big half tough sonavabitch that had a goddamned eagle that hated my guts for no reason. A born killer to start with, this eagle became vicious from being cooped up in a hut and one night....."

All wars have one basic pattern that never seems to change. Combatants must endure long periods of intense boredom punctuated by relatively few short bursts of violent, chaotic action. It is often more difficult to suffer through the periods of inactivity Any small sidelight which altered the humdrum daily routine was a welcomed change, a cherished relief, eagerly pounced upon. Hunting for ivory tusks, the ancient village site, Yehudi Menuhin's unexpected concert, Royal Gould's extinct fish, and my pet eagle

all took on great importance. By unconsciously making such incidents seem larger than life our grim existence became more bearable and one could maintain mental balance.

Our Commodore Visits Shemya

While I was on Shemya we experienced one brief hour-long visit by our fearless leader, Commodore Leslie E. Gehres,USN. The Wing Commander and his small party dropped in rather late one afternoon on their way to Attu. It was another "quickie" inspection tour of the forward areas.

During a last minute stop at the weather-operations shack, just before taking off again, Commodore Gehres glanced at my latest weather map. It was an ugly-duckling analysis that the U.S.Army forecasters disagreed with but I had been carrying it for several days. In my opinion a whole flock of small, weak, low pressure systems were sliding by about two hundred miles south of the Aleutians. The wind kept veering and backing at Shemya and the clouds and barometric pressure pattern all fit the picture. A weather flight that day had further substantiated my map, at least to my satisfaction.

After studying my map for a moment, Gehres called his pilot, navigator, and staff officers over.

"Look at this map," said Gehres, "It explains perfectly the weather we've been flying through. Only map I've seen on this whole trip that makes a damned bit of sense." He then turned to me and asked,"What's your name, son?"

The party then filed out to continue on to Attu. Last of Gehre's staff to leave was Commander Charles E. "Cy" Perkins. During the year he'd been promoted from squadron commander to Executive Officer of FAW-4.

"Keep up the good work, Carrigan," said Perkins.

"Thank you Commander,"I replied, "I believe those are the kindest words you've ever spoken to me."

"You may be right on that," he chuckled,"but I meant every word. I've been hearing some good reports about you since you left Adak."

I appreciated the few words of praise from Commander Perkins. Although he'd been short tempered and impatient with me on numerous occasions during the campaign, he had also earned my grudging admiration and respect. In sharp contrast, I could not have cared less as to what Commodore Gehres thought about my map.

My feelings about Commodore Leslie E. Gehres were shared by most of the enlisted men of FAW-4 and I'm sure, by the majority of officers as well. Gehres's orders and directives had earned him the reputation, "Custer of the Aleutians". The comparison was colorful but inaccurate because Custer led his troops and died fighting with them. Gehres spent the bulk of his time during the Aleutian Campaign far from the action and in comfortable surroundings.

This made it impossible for us to be proud of our leader which in turn was damaging to our morale. Other Aleutian navy and army commanders had sacrificed creature comforts in the rear areas to fight with their men. These men would have followed their commanders to hell and back and they frequently did.

Having flown off carriers, Gehres considered himself strictly a fighter pilot. During all the years he commanded FAW-4 he thought it beneath his image to get checked out to fly a PBY. Many of the Wing's pilots resented this attitude.

Gehres's often pompous rhetoric also did not endear him to his command. In the early days of the Aleutian Campaign, a war correspondent at Kodiak Headquarters asked Gehres what he thought of the new, very fast "Rufe" float fighters being encountered over Kiska. Gehres boastfully replied that he wasn't afraid of them. Hell no, why should he have been? If I'd been in Terre Haute, Indiana I wouldn't have given them a second thought. If the commodore had been bombing Kiska in one of his lumbering PBY's or flying the sector patrols immediately to the north and south of the enemy stronghold he might have sung a different tune. I guarantee you the new "Rufe" scared the living daylights out of Gehres's aircrews.

Other early actions by Gehres also contributed to his unpopularity. He had flown out to the Casco at Nazan Bay, Atka on August 30, 1942 and was aboard just long enough to get torpedoed. He found enough slight bruises to award himself the Purple Heart. His later effort to reach Attu from Shemya in time to get bombed was viewed with disgust. Heroes cannot be manufactured. With a few notable exceptions, both army and navy, the only real heroes I know of during the Aleutian Campaign were either buried out there or took off on missions and never returned.

Whenever word had been received that our leader was going to visit one of the forward bases or a seaplane tender operating out in no-man's-land,

someone would invariably remark, "I hate to hear that s.o.b. is coming out. Trouble always seems to follow him." Such statements infuriated me because the speaker had placed the cart before the horse. Trouble did not follow Gehres in the Aleutians; he pushed it far out in front of him. No one doubted Gehres's courage but many questioned what appeared to be his self-serving motives.

Plane Down--Men In Rafts

VP-43 was ordered back to Attu in mid November 1943 while I remained on Shemya along with a skeleton ground crew in charge of an aviation chief machinist's mate. The sqaudron's departure ushered in a short but rather relaxing period for me because I did not have to fly. My daily routine included analyzing two maps and preparing a forecast for base operations, navy cargo planes, and for any PBY or PV-1 that happened to land at Shemya after being weathered out of Attu or Amchitka.

Then, around mid December 1943, a tragic event happened that far outshadowed everything else during my Shemya experience. Trouble began on the day a storm of giant proportions hit the western Aleutians.

Advance warning of this intense low pressure system's approach was provided by weather reports from navy patrol planes flying out of Attu, Amchitka, and Adak. It became apparent that the system was a bent-back occluded frontal type. The occluded front and warm front preceding the storm center were oriented almost parallel to the western Aleutians. As these fronts moved east-northeast all bases from Attu to Adak would become socked in solid within an hour or two of each other--a dangerous situation. A primary cold front trailing far to the southwestward would be of the severest kind but would miss us. However, a series of violent, secondary cold fronts or squall lines, fed by frigid arctic air from eastern Siberia could be expected to accompany a depression of this magnitude. After the low pressure center passed on its eastward track these secondaries on the back side would smash through our area in trip-hammer fashion.

Having finished noon chow the day the storm hit Shemya I went back to the operations shack to check on the latest weather conditions. They were deteriorating with a rapidly falling barometer, lowering ceiling and visibility, increasing southeasterly winds, and an

occasional spit of sleet.

In these worsening conditions, radio communications copied a report from a PV-1 that a PBY had crashed at sea off the western end of Attu. The Attu based PV-1 had been scrambling for home at low altitude ahead of the approaching storm when the crew saw a wing tip protruding from the rough sea and nearby, seven men in two lashed together rubber rafts.

Urgent communications traffic filled the air as rescue efforts began. At Shemya, a considerable amount of this intercepted radio traffic was garbled because of extreme static caused by the advancing storm. Although the situation was unclear, it was our understanding that a PBY was maintaining contact with the rafts and a destroyer had been dispatched to the crash scene.

Further confusion was added when PBY's and PV-1's from other bases began landing at Shemya just in advance of early afternoon's dusk. Our small operations-weather shack soon bulged with pilots and aircrewmen.

Obviously, a considerable number of planes from Attu, Amchitka, and Adak had not turned-tail for home soon enough after first encountering frontal weather. It was a clear-cut case of where discretion should have been the better part of valor. As a result, planes were forced to duck in and land anywhere they could and this meant they were scattered all over hell. Shemya, for example, ended up with aircraft from Attu and Amchitka, and even one from far off Adak.

Squadron commanders at these bases were trying to determine whether or not all of their aircraft had landed safely and where. Because of this radio traffic, the emergency rescue operations, and the static, it was sometime before all planes could be accounted for. At Shemya, there was considerable delay before it was definitely established that the men in the rafts were Lt(jg) Lefty Wyman and his VP-43 crew; a crew that I'd flown with during the squadron's recent operations from Shemya.

It grew dark about 1430 hours as the frontal activity hit Shemya in mounting fury. Sleet driven by 40 knot winds lashed our operations shack. An hour after dark the last plane landed at Shemya. This PBY was piloted by Lieutenant Marshall C. Freerks, Executive Officer of VP-43. Freerks had circled his sqaudron mates in their tossing rafts until low fuel and darkness forced him to leave the crash site. It

was a grim faced, sad eyed, and exhausted Freerks and crew that walked into the operations hut. As senior air officer present, Freerks took charge.

He asked that he be kept well informed on the storm's progress. He was not so much interested in Shemya's weather but wanted to know the moment conditions improved at the crash site. Freerks also told me to plot an estimated hourly position for the rafts. The present southeast winds and the northwest winds expected later would more than likely cancel each other. Drift rate would largely be determined by the average ocean current for that time of year. I was to use this factor unless the storm behaved abnormally at which time I was to notify Freerks immediately.

Shemya was raked by the storm that night while the bottom dropped out of the barometer and the hut trembled as winds increased to sixty knots and kept climbing. The monster storm raged for over forty-eight hours during which time we recorded 85 to 90 knot winds with some peak gusts over 100 knots. It was impossible for planes to fly or for ships to put to sea.

Bits of information became known as everyone waited helplessly for the storm to pass. An intercepted ungarbled report the first night indicated that the rescue destroyer had <u>not</u> gotten underway from Attu. Two PT-boats reportedly tried to reach the crash site but this rescue attempt not only failed but almost ended in another disaster. Shortly after leaving the sheltered waters of Massacre Bay these two frail craft almost swamped when they ran into 50 knot winds and heavy seas. Badly damaged and taking water the boats were lucky to survive and make it back safely.

A VP-43 PBY piloted by Lt(jg) Don Norton was the first plane to reach the scene after the crash was reported by the PV-1 crew. Norton had landed at Attu from search patrol about the time of Wyman's crash. Norton's PBY was given a full load of fuel, no weight was jettisoned, and with a full crew he took off for the last reported position of the rafts. A radioman told me that when Norton arrived at the scene and made a low fly-by, someone, probably Wyman, gave the wave off sign, ie, Do Not Attempt To Land.

On the third night, forty-eight hours after the storm struck Shemya, the weather began to moderate behind the passage of a very sharp secondary cold front. Winds had shifted around to the northwest but

were still gusting to 50 knots. Air temperature had plummeted to about fifteen degrees above zero in the cold air mass that moved in behind the easterly tracking low. Turbulence, icing, and scattered heavy snow showers could be expected to continue for another twenty-four hours. There was no possiblity the seven men on the rafts could still be alive.

Marshall Freerks, accompanied by a second VP-43 PBY, took off in the early morning darkness on the third day in order to arrive in the area of the rafts at first light and begin a search. I prepared additional forecasts for the remaining planes from other bases then turned in. With the exception of catnaps at the map desk I'd been up for almost sixty hours.

Gould woke me around noon to tell me the rafts had been found not far from their last reported position. The destroyer had arrived after being directed to the scene by a circling PBY. The seven men in the rafts had died of exposure then the bodies froze and had become encased in layers of ice.

Retired Commander Marshall C. Freerks has always had misgivings about dramatizing the tragedies of war and it is with great reluctance that he discusses this incident. When Freerks learned that I intended to include Wyman's crash in this book he felt obligated to make the account as factually accurate as possible. There is no one more qualified.

Excerpts from two of Freerks recent letters are as follows: ".....The loss of Lefty Wyman and his crew was a tragedy that left its mark on all of us. Those of us who flew regularly on patrols knew that the chances of surviving an open sea landing in the North Pacific were essentially zero, particularly in winter. Pilots and crews knew that if they ever went down, that they would never be rescued. No one ever talked about it but the record was there to be seen. In the summer under fog conditions the surface of the ocean was amenable to landing with a power-stall but in the winter the conditions were always formidable.

Lefty landed just ahead of that big storm that broke within a couple of hours after he landed. There was a possibility that a rescue plane from Attu could have landed during this period. Actually there was no plane equipped to play this role and no pilots especially trained for this type of landing.

The rescue operation was being directed by Commodore Gehres from Adak. The "rescue" destroyer

involved was originally at anchor off Massacre Bay. Taking all this into account Fleet Air Wing Four took charge of the situation. It probably seemed so simple to order the destroyer standing off Attu to get underway and head for the scene, at least on paper.

You are right, I was very upset by the way the whole episode was handled, and I am sure that many different people have different versions. A key factor in the whole operation related to the time that the destoyer got underway. I investigated this later and learned that the orders to the ship did not proceed directly but went through San Francisco like the army weather data. Whether there was a communications jam or whatever, the orders were delayed by something like two hours. The rescue operation was being conducted on the assumption that the ship had plenty of time to arrive before dark. It also, being conducted from Adak, couldn't appreciate that the gathering "storm" had erased any chance that a rescue could be effected by a PBY from Attu. In fact no planes flew for the next forty-eight hours or so and by then it was too late.

"....We were the "junior" command on Attu. There were two senior PV squadrons. I think Red Welch was in charge of the rescue operations from Attu. Don Norton had been sent from Attu and was holding contact. I presume that he had been told not to land. This was the only period of time that a landing might have been attempted. I arrived on the scene from a patrol of a southern sector and Don took off for Attu. That is when the squall that preceeded the storm broke. We lost contact during the squall, and also had our engines acting up. This occurred when we were on instruments in the squall. We thought that we were about to join Lefty in the drink. Fortunately the motors "caught".

At this time we were ordered by FAW-4 not to attempt a landing but to hold contact and wait for the ship which was supposed to be an hour away. Actually we still had plans to attempt a landing. We were going to jettison as much weight as possible. At this time of course we didn't know where the rafts were because we were circling in the squall. As the sqaull cleared, we were fortunate enough to re-establish contact and settled back to wait for the destroyer. The wind had now increased and the chances of landing were gone. Even if one could have made it without ripping the bottom out, getting to the rafts in that wind and sea

would have been impossible. But the ship couldn't have been far away.

As time went on no ship appeared and now it was getting dark. I offered to attempt a landing at this stage if the crew would volunteer. They had seen the storm develop and knew that it would have been a sacrificial gesture. There was still the possibility that the ship would arrive since they had the position.

We had been in the air since before daylight and our gas was running short. No relief plane had been sent out to hold position. We had to either land or leave. The crew made the decision to leave. This was the right decision. My co-pilot Watkins took over the controls and we headed for Attu. It was a sad group in a state of shock. Watkins was headed for Attu on a course that would have taken us right into the mountains. I saw what he was doing and turned south. It was dark as we flew around the island. We didn't feel up to coming into Attu in the dark so we flew over to Shemya and landed...."

"....Since FAW-4 was running the operation out of Adak it was easy to see how everything went wrong. The people at Attu could have checked on the departure of the ship since they should have been able to see it if they went outside and looked. Then they could have broken radio security and sent the ship on its way. However, the "command post syndrome" set in and as usual every mistake possible was made.

I flew on the third day and was in the air watching the destroyer pick up the rafts. I had to write letters to the next of kin. There was an only child among the crew members. His mother actually made a trip after the war to see where her son disappeared. His body was never recovered. While I was in Jacksonville, FL. she visited me. I believe they were from Mississippi...."

The body Marshall Freerks makes reference to was lost overboard during the destroyer's raft recovery operation. Sea conditions were still dangerously rough and in the body transfer from wildly bobbing rafts to the ship, a line attached to this man's ice encased body slipped from the grasp of destroyer crewmen and plunged straight down out of sight.

On Shemya that December 1943 day when I learned how this three day ordeal ended I went outside and sobbed uncontrollably until my chest hurt. After almost two years of such incidents I had the feeling

that I was beginning to unravel and slowly come apart at the seams. I spent the remainder of the afternoon off by myself, pondering life. Everyone involved had worked so hard to no avail. Aleutian weather once again had played a major role.

My wandering brought me to the cliffs above the ivory diggings. It was much too late all the way around but I thought of one thing to do which seemed appropriate and returned to the barracks hut. This was the day I freed my pet eagle.

"Rotated" Back To Attu

My Shemya tour came to an end the last week of December 1943. Radio dispatch orders directed that I be detached from temporary duty at Shemya and report by first available air transportation to FAW-4 weather operations at Attu.

I packed my few belongings, said my goodbyes, then sat around for three days waiting for transportation. Shemya's only permanently based navy plane was a Grumman "Goose" amphibian. As far as I can recall, this small aircraft had been flown only once during my stay at Shemya. On that occasion it had made a quick round trip to Attu. The remainder of the time it had been securely lashed down.

My nap after noon chow was interrupted when Royal Gould roused me in great haste. An army B-24 was about to takeoff for Attu. Gould said that if we hurried he might be able to get me to the plane in time. We threw my gear into the jeep and with Gould at the wheel had a wild ride down icy roads and taxi strips to 11th Air Force Operations.

The B-24's engines were already warmed up and ticking over when Gould came to a skidding, broadside stop within ten feet of a whirling propellor. Someone opened the plane's belly hatch and I thrust my gear up to waiting hands. When I followed my bags, I found the inside of the B-24 jammed wall-to-wall with "dirt-pounders".

The plane's first sergeant crew chief showed me where to stow my gear then told me to follow him. On our way forward he explained that all of the soldiers were being transferred to Attu and the plane was overloaded and still tail heavy. He would have to redistribute additional weight forward before we could takeoff. As we neared the cockpit he told me to wiggle my way up into the plexi-glass nose and ride there. I

got past the open nose wheel doors and hunkered down in a comfortable position for the short flight.

After a bit, the brakes were released and the plane proceeded to bounce and lurch down the taxi strip to the southern end of the runway. I wished with all my heart that the plane was heading for Seattle instead of Attu but it would be good to see some of the old gang for a little while. My long-awaited leave and state-side orders would surely arrive any day now. The navy couldn't or wouldn't keep me up there much longer I reasoned. How stupid I was!

Admittedly, some frayed nerve edges were beginning to show. A feeling had begun to gnaw at my guts that my Irish Luck might be running out. Before, I'd always had a "What the hell" fatalistic attitude. I had adopted this outlook, which in turn had governed many of my past actions, because of the nature of my FAW-4 duties. There didn't appear to be any way in the world for me to get out of the Aleutians alive. Almost two years of close calls had somehow slipped by and I was still hanging in there. A seed was planted in my mind that I might make it after all. This caused a subtle change of attitude over a period of time. I'd first become aware of this change on S-35's patrol. I now wanted very badly to be a survivor. The raft incident also changed something deep down inside of me. A cursed little voice kept asking,"Exactly how much sand is left in your hour-glass?"

Since September 1943 I'd wrestled quietly with a doomsday type of fear each time I climbed into a plane. Now I found myself scrunched into the unfamiliar glass nose of an overloaded B-24 poised for takeoff. I said a little prayer that the pilot be a good one and asked God to please get us safely to Attu.

The tower gave us clearance and we started down the long runway. At first, I was fascinated by the view and sensation from my strange perch. As our speed increased and the runway, a scant few feet away, came rolling up toward me at incredible speed the sensation changed to one of stark terror. I hung on with a death grip as the B-24 bounced lightly once then became airborne. Whistling wind around the open wheel well directly behind me added to the nightmare effect.

It took a long time before the plane began to gain altitude. Without warning, all kinds of racket started happening behind me. I was afraid to look, certain that something had broken. It was the nose

wheel being retracted followed by the closing doors. Everything connected with this operation folded up and slowly filled the compartment. At least it was quieter without the shriek of wind and I felt safer without the yawning opening behind me.

A bank to port turned us toward Attu which I could see in the distance. When he turned to a southerly course toward Agattu Island I thought it was to get on course for our approach leg to Attu. However, we then swung eastward and continued to turn until I was looking at Shemya.

I thought, 'Oh No! Something's gone wrong. They're trying to get back'. All hell broke loose at my back again and the sudden noise almost stopped my heart. Nose wheel doors opened and the hydraulic gear that lowered the wheel went into action. I heard the familiar sounds as engine power settings and prop pitch were changed. Then I felt the shudder as flaps were lowered.

Shemya's low, southern cliffs came rushing at me as if I were operating the zoom lens of a camera. Unless the pilot changed his steep glide angle soon and applied more power we wouldn't clear the cliff. He did and we did. In fact he used up half the long runway before we finally touched down, or more accurately, **SLAMMED** down. The B-24 bounced high and slammed down several times. Each time I hoped the undercarriage would not collapse or I'd end up wearing the nose wheel.

My eyes became riveted on the rapidly approaching end of the runway. Instinct and experience told me the pilots would never get the damned plane stopped in time. 'God', I thought,'This is the way I'm going to get it, the first time I fly with the lousy army'.

"Coal" was poured to the four engines and we were airborne again. I was thankful the pilots hadn't locked everything up in an attempt to stop because we would never have made it. The engines sounded fine to me and I was relieved that the trouble must be of a minor nature because we were circling for another landing attempt. I decided to retract my eyeballs before they froze.

On the second approach, the pilot was going to allow himself plenty of runway in which to stop. In fact, he had to make a large correction, applying additional power and pulling the nose up while still a half mile out. This was another "slammer" as rubber tires screeched and shock absorbers squawked in

protest. I could see that we weren't lined up too straight in relation to the runway. We'd rolled barely long enough for the nose wheel to touch and I was frantically waiting for the pilot to brake one wheel before the plane ran off one side of the runway. Engines roared and we lifted off again. Had the extremely rough first landing ruptured the hydraulic brake lines? In a confused state of mind I turned around to see if this was the reason we couldn't stop. There didn't appear to be any damage or leaking fluid.

Then it dawned on me. Holy mackerel! The plane was making "touch and go" landings. They must have been checking out a shavetail. My white-knuckle, hitch-hiking ride continued and a total of six touch-and-go's was made. It was obvious from his lack of progress that the second lieutenant's aptitude tests had gotten mixed up with someone else's. Any army motor pool could have used his talents and he would have made an excellent tank commander.

The mad-hatter ordeal ended when the plane swung west at last. My sigh of relief was brief for I began to wonder if the first pilot might be foolish enough to let the clown sitting next to him attempt to set the crate down on Attu's runway? Suicide!

All pilots and crews hated coming into Massacre Bay's runway and they still do to this day. There is only one approach and this is from eastward in over the aptly named bay. There is no alternative but to make one's letdown into a box canyon; a trap ringed by 3000 foot jagged-peaked mountains. Winds are seldom right with either strong cross winds or tail winds. Plagued by fog during summer months and vicious, plane-flipping Williwaws in fall, winter, and spring there is no room for pilot error at this place. Final approach and let-down in a bomber must be done precisely because there simply is not enough room to pull up and circle for a second attempt.

In over Massacre Bay we came. I watched the familiar runway loom larger and larger. The B-24 was set down in a silky-smooth landing which I'm certain wasn't the work of the touch-and-go second lieutenant. By the time we had taxied to a stop and the kill switches had silenced the engines, I didn't have to relax; I was limp as a dish-rag. I was surprised my legs functioned as I went aft in search of the crew chief.

Soldiers were crowded around the hatch as they exited one by one. I gathered up my gear and waited

for the bottleneck to clear. When the crowd thinned I approached the sergeant. I held out my hand and he took it with a grin.

"Thanks for the joy-ride you sonavabitch", I said. "You can't say it wasn't a thrill", he laughingly replied. "Why the hell did you stick me up in nose?"

"You were the only swab-jockey on board. As my guest I thought I'd give you the best seat in the house. Have you ever flown before?"

"A little. Have you ever been up in that nose on a takeoff or landing?"

"Hell no. I'm not crazy."

"I was gonna feel sorry and worry myself sick over you. I was even gonna suggest you unload the co-pilot with the rest of the dog-faces and have him transferred to a mountain howitzer company." As he handed down my gear I added, "Instead, I've decided you can both go to hell".

"Don't worry about me, and that kid in the co-pilot seat will be okay after he gets a little more practice."

"Okay," I said,"Take care."

27

All This And Attu

A wholesale shuffling of weather personnel had taken place on Attu while I was on Shemya. Lieutenant Commander Russell H."Ken" Maynard,USN, who had relieved Lieutenant Commander John F.Tatom, USN as senior FAW-4 Staff Aerologist at Adak, was now at Attu. In addition to his FAW-4 duties, Maynard was O-in-C of the combined NAF/Wing weather office at Casco Field.

Maynard took over the reins at from Lieutenant Max C. Jack on December 27, 1943. Receiving stateside orders and thirty-day leaves at the same time as Lt.Jack were CAerM Dick Ackerman, AerM1c's Ralph Rayburn, Jesse Vowell, and Charles S. Patterson, and AerM2c Sandor Podmanski. Only Rebel Hollihand remained of this early group of NAF Attu aerographer's mates.

From our original pre-WWII FAW-4 group, Bob Calderon and Emmett Smith were still at Attu as was late arrival Rolfe. Bob Kerr, the ex-Disney cartoonist, had received stateside orders and departed. In my absence, Scotty Hassell had gone back to Adak for about a month but had returned to Attu.

Elzie B."Bones" Carey,AerM2c, another early member of our FAW-4 group, arrived in the Attu area about the time I returned from Shemya. Carey was aboard a tiny destroyer escort (DE) assigned to some of the worst duty imaginable: plane guard weather ship on station about 200 miles southwest of Cape Wrangell, Attu.

After the Williamson disaster in August of 1942, Carey had returned from leave and been assigned on temporary duty orders to the Gillis. He had remained on Gillis for over a year during which time the ship made one quick trip to a Seattle shipyard. Later, at Adak in October 1943, Gillis was again ordered to the states for additional overhaul.

Word was passed for all temporary duty personnel to lay up to the ship's office. Carey, the only aerographer's mate aboard, did not go. Each of the others got orders to FAW-4 Flag and went ashore at Adak in the first boat. Lieutenant Commander William Fitts,USN, Captain of the Gillis, made a last minute visit to the beach. When he returned, word was passed for Carey to lay up to the captain's cabin.

Fitts had had a run-in with Tatom who inisted that Carey be put ashore at Adak. Fitts was well pleased with Carey's work and because Carey had been aboard so long, Fitts considered him crew and as such wanted to take him back to the states for some leave. Captain Fitts had gone over Tatom's head directly to Commodore Gehres. Gehres told Fitts to take Carey back, give him ten days leave, then send him back to Adak immediately. In that stone-age of transportation it was forty-days before Carey returned to Adak.

When he arrived aboard the U.S.Army transport, S.S.Thompson, Tatom had already departed for the states having been relieved by LtComdr. Maynard. However, there was a set of orders awaiting Carey that assigned him to temporary duty with Escort Division 14. This recently formed command consisted of three of the first fifty, short-hulled DE's built for and then rejected by the British.

No one envied Carey his duty. Thirty days on station off Attu in the middle of winter proved to be a struggle of survival for the DE's of Escort Division 14. At the height of one storm, for example, it was necessary for the bridge to send the engine room an average of 180 annuniciator bells per hour over a period of several hours to keep the small vessel from foundering. These alternate orders of 'All Ahead Full/All Back Full' were required to enable the ship to first charge up the steep face of each towering sea to the crest, then arrest the soaring climb as the ship dropped into the yawning trough on the back side. This DE returned to Attu in a shambles with injured crewmen, a badly crumpled stack, and all ship's boats and life rafts either carried away or smashed.

Other FAW-4 replacement personnel who arrived Attu early in 1944 included Warrant Aerographer Jack Ingram, and from Amchitka, Jack Junior Parlier, AerM3c. Those who arrived for duty under NAF orders included Newton, Johnson, and White. These people were either second of third class AerM's and strangers to me.

Meanwhile, the war had heated up in other areas of the Pacific. On October 5 and 6, 1943, the new F6F Hellcat fighters saw their first action. Along with dive bombers from carriers of the newly formed Central Pacific Fifth Fleet, they carried out raids on the Gilbert Islands and six strikes against Wake Island.

On November 1, 1943, in SoPac, Halsey's Third Amphibious Force made landings at Empress Augusta Bay on Bougainville in the northwest Solomon's. Landings were also made in the Gilbert Islands on Betio, Tarawa Atoll, and at Makin Island on November 20, 1943.

In late November 1943, ComNorPac Rear Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, USN was promoted to vice admiral and at General MacArthur's request went to Australia to take command of the Seventh Fleet. Kinkaid was relieved as ComNorPac by Vice Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher,USN. Shortly after the Battle of Midway, Admiral Fletcher had been placed in command of the Northwest Sea Frontier and 13th Naval District with headquarters in Seattle.

Unscheduled Overnight Visit To Shemya

With typical military understatement most PV-1 flights out of Attu that winter of 1943-1944 were classified as routine. Within a few days of my return to Attu I made one such flight and spent the night on Shemya.

I flew that day with a persistent pilot who was determined to make a maximum sector search in spite of terrible weather. His efforts on the outbound leg included reversing course twice to escapte heavy turbulence and icing.

An <u>estimated</u> position close to the outer limit of our southern sector was reached but it had taken an hour and a half longer than normal. It was only our dwindling fuel reserve that convinced the pilot he should execute the turn for the short cross leg, at that point, then head for home. We had flown through, under, over, and around so much weather by then that I had more information than I knew what to do with.

Portions of our flight had been on instruments, at various altitudes, indicated airspeeds, ground speeds, and compass headings. Progressing in this ragged fashion had presented our navigator with special problems. Our current position and course for

home were best guesses. Pilot zeal had left us with precious little safety margin.

It was a trifle late to slam the barn door shut but the pilot requested that the navigator, with my help, figure out the most favorable altitude for our return flight. This seemed a strange request to me for the obvious place was on the deck. Outbound we'd encountered some unexpected favorable winds at higher altitudes and these had to be avoided. Close to the surface would also keep icing and instrument flying at a minimum. More importantly, the winds would be mostly on our starboard beam and by maintaining visual contact with the surface I could accurately estimate wind direction and velocity while the navigator could determine precise drift.

Meanwhile, the weather between us and Attu did not go from bad to worse, as some crew members suggested, it only seemed so. Our fuel situation forced us to fly direct from point "A" to "B" through weather rather than skirt it. Darkness also came early in the afternoon of that bleakest of winter days.

For all practical purposes we were without radio communications including RDF because of extreme atmospheric static. The radio receiver crackled, buzzed, and emitted howls and screeks which threatened to destroy the radioman's eardrums. This condition had existed since takeoff and the radioman had been able to copy only small portions of traffic much of which was garbled when decoded.

Our remaining fuel supply had reached the critical point before a radar fix was obtained on Agattu Island. We were far behind our ETA and slightly off course but after almost nine hours in the air and under the circumstances the navigator had done a good job.

One hundred feet of altitude had been maintained on our return flight. This kept us at a rough midpoint between the low cloud base and the foam streaked wave tops lashed by thirty knots of icy wind. Under present conditions a landing on Attu was not considered. The navigator plotted several course changes which would enable us to round Agattu's western cape then bring us into Shemya.

When the fix on Agattu was made the navigator had thanked God aloud that our radar, at least, was working. Fifteen minutes later, just west of Agattu's northeast tip, it quit. Adjustments were tried, pleas made and sweet threats hurled but the radar stubbornly

refused to function properly at this most inopportune time.

With fifteen miles still to go, the co-pilot's voice in the darkened cockpit said that our fuel gauges were registering empty.

"I know," said the pilot. He then ordered the crew to prepare
for a ditching . *

Wheels were kept in locked up position. As the bright beams of our landing lights raced ahead they illuminated a churned up angry ocean. From my position immediately behind the pilots it seemed we were flying through a well lit tunnel. Even this tiny linear world was blotted out and the visibility reduced to zero whenever we flew through patches of heavy fog. Everything hinged on locating the end of Shemya's runway within the next few moments.

"If we have to go in," said pilot to co-pilot,"we'll try to ditch as close to shore as possible."

Oddly, a strange calmness had enveloped me. I seemed to be viewing the event with complete detachment as though I was safe outside the plane. I also felt extremely tired; so tired that I was certain I'd fall asleep if I allowed my eyelids to close. We were emerging from another patch of fog.

"Lights! See them. There," said the co-pilot almost shouting. * Ditch- Make a forced landing in water in an aircraft that will not float.

Dark mists had parted and two rows of fuzzy lights had magically appeared almost dead ahead. The pilot made a slight course adjustment, applied additional power and ordered flaps down. We landed in gusty winds off our starboard quarter, bounced once, then rolled smoothly down the long runway.

At the end of the roll the pilot braked the port wheel and goosed the opposite engine so he could swing the plane around onto the short taxi strip to navy operations. This turn was half completed when both engines coughed and, completely out of fuel, quit. It had been that close.

Vehicles came hurrying toward the plane. We climbed out. Two of the crew bent down and tenderly patted the metal planked runway. When it was learned that we were out of gas someone sped away in a jeep to fetch a rig to tow the PV-1. Considerable quiet discussion followed with many questions directed at our pilots, navigator, and radioman. Someone noted

that heavy fog had rolled in behind us so closely that it seemed to follow our plane down the runway. The field was socked in again.

I'd not realized it upon landing but a great amount of extra lighting had been provided by the headlights of a hundred or more vehicles which had been lined up along both sides of the runway. As was usually the case in an emergency, the U.S.Navy and U.S.A.A.F had worked in harmony. FAW-4 Operations at Attu notified Air Force Operations on Shemya that a Ventura was overdue and could not be contacted by radio. Shemya was alerted to keep a lookout for the aircraft because under current weather conditions the pilot would land there if possible.

About the time we'd been given up for lost, radar on Attu and Shemya had picked us up. It did not seem possible that we could still be in the air because our flight extended almost two hours beyond our fuel load capability. While on instruments at various high altitudes outbound we must have unknowingly picked up favorable winds of unexpected high velocity. This was the only logical explanation for the duration of our flight. Our turn-around point must have been much farther southwest than estimated.

Our PV-1 was towed to the parking apron where the fuel tanks were checked and described as "damp". An army air force fuel truck arrived and aviation gas was pumped into thirsty tanks.

After being fed we were given blankets and assigned bunks. After a good night's rest and breakfast we thanked out hosts, I said one last goodbye to Royal Gould, and our PV-1 flew back to Attu.

Literally hundreds of similar Aleutian flights had been flown by army and navy aircrews up to this time and many more would follow. Though many ended in tragedy the majority ended safely as this one did. A small sampling of both kinds have been documented thoughout this book.

It would be difficult for each pilot or aircrewman, army and navy, who flew for any length of time during the Aleutian Campaign to count the number of times his flight had:(a) Lost radio communications; b)Radar malfunction; (c) An engine conk out; (d)Other electrical or mechanical problems;e)Become temporarily lost; or (f) Landed with little or no fuel remaining.

Why, one may ask, were there so many problems? Aside from the more obvious unique difficulties

connected with flight operations in a place like the Aleutians there were two lesser evils associated with operating in any northern maritime climate. One was the constant moisture which raised havoc with radio equipment and electrical circuits in general. The second was snow flakes which turned the radar screen image to just that: snow. There were a number of other reasons not the least of which was a chronic shortage of spare parts. Ground crews, those unsung heroes, kept planes flying as best they could and often in unbelievably bad working conditions. Picture aviation machinist's mates making repairs outdoors, at night, in freezing weather, with only a piece of wind-whipped canvas for protection against a howling blizzard straight out of Siberia. Heated, well lighted hangars with shelves full of spare parts were something to dream about.

Air Operations were carried out without benefit of sophisticated instrument landing approach systems although rather primitive radio range stations were in operation. Signals from these were often obliterated by static. Loran* stations had not yet been constructed to provide precise navigation.

* Loran- A system of long-range navigation in which pulsedsignals sent out by two pairs of radio stations are used by a navigator to determine his geographical position. The planes we flew were the finest our country could produce but by 1980 standards the aircraft and equipment were primitive. This can be put in perspective by noting that when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, it had been only fourteen years since Charles A. Lindbergh's historic Atlantic flight. The miracle was that so many of those 1942-1944 missions were completed safely.

U.S.Navy Commendation Medals

About a week after my tour at Shemya I received the U.S.Navy Letter of Commendation. Bob Calderon had received one a week earlier. When Commander Maynard handed me the sealed, official envelope I thought my long dreamed of stateside orders had finally come through. The Commendation is herewith reprinted:

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET

FLEET AIR WING FOUR

P15
Serial 27 6 January 1944

From: Commander Fleet Air Wing Four

To: Commander Headquarters Squadron,
Fleet Air Wing Four.
Subject: Commendation

1. CARRIGAN, P.E., Aerographer's mate second class, U.S.Navy, has been attached to advanced units of patrol plane operations from 30 May 1942 to 1 December 1943 during the Aleutian Campaign. He has made flights for weather reconnaissance in combat areas on many occasions and invariably in sectors where the most unfavorable weather was expected. CARRIGAN volunteered and embarked as special weather observer during the Kiska operations on board a submarine which penetrated deeply into enemy controlled waters. His conduct and devotion to duty have been in accord with the highest traditions of the naval service.

2. Commander Fleet Air Wing Four commends CARRIGAN,P.E., Aerograpaher's mate second class, U.S.Navy for his performance of duty, and directs Commander Headquarters Squadron to advance him in rate to aerographer's mate first class effective 1 January 1944.

Signed

L.E.Gehres

cc: ComAirPac.

Calderon's Letter of Commendation was similar in content with the exception of my patrol on S-35. In its place, his contained a paragraph which stated that while he was on advanced seaplane tender operations he had often been called upon to perform the duties of "acting aerological officer" and in this capacity he had earned the respect and confidence of the pilots with whom he worked.

Both Commendations also contained the order of

Wing Commander Leslie E. Gehres to advance us to the next highest rating. As far as anyone, apparently, knew from outdated records back at Wing Headquarters at Adak, this meant from AerM2c to AerM1c.

Three weeks before Calderon received his Commendation he'd been officially notified directly from the Bureau in Washington, D.C. that he had made AerM1c, having passed the written portion of his examination taken in late September 1943. If the long awaited test results had come through earlier, or word had reached headquarters at Adak, Calderon might well have been advanced to Chief Aerographer's Mate. His advancement to AerM1c was retroactive to 1 October 1943.

In my case, four days after my Commendation I received Bureau notification that I'd made First Class as a result of passing my written examination taken on October 17, 1943. My advancement was retroactive to 1 November 1943. In effect, Calderon and I both made AerM1c twice. This was about half a mile south of strange but typically Aleutian.

Emmett Smith viewed my situation in both a philosophical and practical light.

"Well, Black Irishman", said he,"you can really screw up royally now. They'd have a helluva time breaking you down to second class."

"If you're giving odds on that," I replied, "I'll take ten of it."

Our Commendations caused embarrassment rather than a measure of satisfaction. Not all members of our close-knit Wing weather group received awards. It was grossly unfair to single out a few when all had participated side-by-side throughout the tough months of advanced patrol plane operations during the campaign.

Deployment Of FAW-4's Attu Based Squadrons

By early 1944, FAW-4 had four PV-1 Ventura squadrons: VB-135, VB-136, VB-139, and VB-131. From October 1, 1943 until the end of the war in mid August 1945, two squadrons of PV-1's were usually continuously based at Attu while two were rotated back to NAS Whidbey Island, WA., for leave, training, and reformation. The exception occurred from December 1943 to May 1944 when VB-139 and PBY squadron VP-43 were based at Attu.

VB-136 had joined VB-135 at Attu on October 1, 1943 about three weeks before I was sent to Shemya. Both squadrons operated off Casco Field until mid November when VB-135 was rotated back to Whidbey Island. This pioneer U.S.Navy PV-1 squadron had conducted almost seven months of continuous operations since its arrival at Adak in early April 1943. They were ready for rotation and reforming because only four of the squadron's Venturas were flyable.

VB-139 arrived on Attu from Amchitka on December 10, 1943 and relieved VB-136. VB-136 also had over six months of continuous Aleutian missions when relieved.

After the original PV-1 squadron, VB-135, which was a twelve plane squadron, all PV-1 squadrons consisted of fifteen planes and eighteen flight crews. Ground crews worked valiantly to keep a sufficient number of aircraft ready for missions plus a number held in reserve. Six PV-1 sectors were being flown out of Attu and this allowed for planes to be serviced and repairs made while the crews flew one day and had two days off.

VB-139 was down to twelve planes when it arrived at Attu in December 1943, having lost three aircraft in operatinal crashes since arriving in the Aleutians in October 1943.

The Empire Express Is Born

A change had taken place in FAW-4 air operations out of Attu while I was on Shemya. Sector search and anti-aircraft patrols were still systematically flown but our aircraft resumed operations against enemy targets in the Kuriles. This phase began shortly before Christmas 1943.

Normal sector patrols for PV-1's out of Attu varied from 400 to 550 miles in radius. On November 16, 1943, a flight of great significance was made by Lieutenant H.K.Mantius of VB-136. Mantius extended his flight to a point within 30 miles of the southern tip of Paramushiro Island. This was the first PV-1 crew to catch a glimpse of the Japanese island.

Mantius landed back at Attu with 135 gallons of fuel after the nine and one half hour flight, the longest PV-1 flight recorded up to that time. This pioneer flight proved that the PV-1, along with all of its other capabilities, was a bomber with sufficient range to "round trip it" to Japan's Northern Kuriles.

Photographic intelligence of Japanese activities in the Kuriles was needed by CinCPac. Wing Commander Gehres gave the order for the Attu based squadrons to obtain this vital information. The first photoreconnaissance mission over Paramushiro, however, was not made by a PV-1 but by a PBY of VP-43. This flight on December 20, 1943, was a night mission flown by Lieutenant Riddle and his crew.

A number of these early night missions over Paramushiro were flown by PBYs of VP-43 in "Black Cat" fashion. Planes were painted black and their navigation compartments sealed so light would not be emitted. This modification had resulted in great success earlier in the Solomons area of the South Pacific where Black Cat PBY squadrons VP-12, VP-54, and VP-81 attacked Japanese ships and supply barges at night in close cooperation with PT boats.

For the initial Paramushiro night missions, magnesium flares for lighting, which were thrown out of the PBY's blister hatch, and hand-held K-20 aircraft cameras were used with fair results. Meanwhile, several PV-1's of VB-139 were being equipped with more sophisticated fixed cameras mounted in the nose at angles to obtain maximum coverage. Racks were installed against the port bulkhead just forward of the main cabin door to hold the high intensity one million candlepower magnesium flare bombs. These flares were dropped through a tube in the aft section of the cabin. Because of their great speed and manueverability it was not necessary to paint any of the Venturas black.

On January 19, 1944, three VB-139 PV-1's piloted by Lieutenants R.A.MacGregor, D.M.Birdsall, and T.H.McKelvey made the first night reconnaissance/bombing attack on Paramushiro. For the next four months this became the primary mission of VB-139 while VP-43's PBY's made the sector search patrols toward the Kuriles, Kamchatka Penninsula, and Komandorskiye Islands. After VP-43 returned to Attu from Shemya, Marshall Freerks was promoted to Lieutenant Commander and relieved LtComdr. John Horton as commander of the squadron.

These air operations were carried out--weather permitting, or often, in spite of the weather. Lest we forget, it was the dead of winter and operations took us within a few miles of Siberia.

From the beginning of the Aleutian Campaign, the

very nature of FAW-4's duties had always placed our outfit in the forefront. The PV-1 Ventura made it possible for FAW-4 to continue this role and carry the war to Japan's Kurile Islands. Instead of the Aleutians being a Japanese pathway to Alaska and the west coast of Canada and the U.S. they became our stepping stones to Japan, and Attu was the closest "rock".

This final step to the Kuriles was long and dangerous: 650 miles to targets on Shimushu and the north end of Paramushiro Island and over 700 miles to enemy airfields at the south end. These distances were over storm-ripped ocean in a twin-engined land plane with no alternate field between in case of emergency.

Accurate weather information enroute and over the target area was vital; so vital that a special early morning, high altitude PV-1 weather mission to Paramushiro was scheduled daily regardless of whether or not a bombing mission was scheduled for that night. As a result, the FAW-4 Aerographer's mates on Attu were ordered to "fly the weather" in PV-1's to the Kurile target areas. A second aerographer's mate was often sent in a PBY to search out a front or storm center in a more northwesterly or southern sector. NAF Attu aerographer's mates on flight status also took part in this latest phase of FAW-4 air operations.

Weather information gathered by the aerographer's mate on his early morning Paramushiro mission determined whether a scheduled night bombing strike by PV-1's should be mounted or cancelled. Many days the weather flight was made but the bombing mission scrubbed because the weather was so bad.

The Army Bomb Disposal Hut

Emmett Smith, Bob Calderon, and I were the three FAW-4 AerM1c's to first fly these special PV-1 weather missions to the Kuriles. Flying the weather in addition to standing an eight hour office watch had never worked out to everyone's satisfaction. Our double burden was lightened considerably by help from an unexpected quarter. At the suggestion of W/O Scotty Hassell, LtComdr. Maynard took Smith, Calderon, and me off regular office watch in the last week of January 1944 and we became a separate radiosonde section. In this way, two men took the twice daily scheduled raob while the odd man flew the Paramushiro weather

mission.

At the same time, the radiosonde receiver, balloons, instruments, and a supply of helium tanks were moved out of the Casco Field office to a new location in the hills southwest of the airfield. It was hoped that the new site would provide better reception of radiosonde signals and this proved to be the case.

This move resulted in a strange arrangement which added extra spice to our lives. An entire Quonset was not needed for our raob operation and we moved the receiver into the workshop-storage hut of an army ordnance bomb disposal unit. This outfit graciously cleared out a back corner of their crowded mountain hut. There was just sufficient space for our receiver, a small desk, and two chairs.

Bins and shelves lined each side wall of the hut. A back-to-back row of shelves and bins also ran down the center of the hut which left only a narrow aisle on either side. These bins and shelves literally overflowed with live, defused, and dud bombs, artillery and mortar shells, grenades, booby traps, rifle and machine gun ammunition, and weapons. Some of the ordnance was U.S. but most was Japanese.

The army bomb disposal experts worked from 0800 to about 1630 hours. Some spent their time cataloging, photographing, tagging, and writing reports. Others meticulously studied live bombs and such to figure out how best to defuse them. The "operating room" for this delicate surgery was a cluttered work bench on the right side near the front as one entered the hut. Taking apart explosive enemy devices to see what makes them tick has to be a very dangerous occupation; just being in the hut was nerve wracking to us.

Because of the obvious hazards, the hut was far removed from all other buildings and sat nestled in a deep revetment on one end of an otherwise unoccupied high ridge. This site overlooked Casco Field and the bay beyond. In a straight line it was about a mile from the runway but almost five miles by rutted, winding mountain road.

Because of the distance involved and the odd hours we worked, Commander Maynard obtained an extra jeep for our use. This enabled us to get from barracks hut to mess, bomb disposal hut, weather office, briefings, and revetments for flights.

Our helium tanks were lashed in a row outdoors against the west wall of the disposal hut. A crude

three-sided and roofed plywood windscreen was hammered together by us "expert" carpenters for a balloon inflation shed. A thermoscreen with a psychrometer was installed a short distance from the shed.

After a radiosonde instrument was unpacked it was checked for possible damage in shipping, its calibration chart was removed, a battery was installed and preliminary checks made to make certain the instruments radio transmitter was working. The instrument was then taken outside and placed in the thermoscreen for a suitable time so that the sensitive weather components could become acclimated for calibration and true ground checks prior to release.

Communication with Casco Field's weather office was by field crank phone. This was not a direct line and required going through an army switchboard operator. We used the phone to request the corrected atmospheric pressure in order to calibrate this element of the radiosonde instrument. Temperature and humidity for calibration were obtained from the psychrometer readings. The phone was also used to notify the weather office when the balloon and instrument launch was satisfactorily underway or to tell the watch that the balloon release would be delayed because of some problem. Difficulties could be multitudinous.

The duty forecaster often phoned to request we "pick off" specific data from the incoming radiosonde signals while the instrument flight was in progress. A call of this type was necessary whenever the balloon release had been delayed and the forecaster did not have our completed pseudo-adiabatic lapse rate chart to provide essential information.

When the observation had been completed the radiosonde receiver was secured, our area tidied up, lights were turned off, door locked, and we hoped the jeep would start for the snowy bobsled ride down off the mountain. When our data had been turned over to the duty forecaster and office watch, the two men assigned to the raob had no other duties between observations.

New "Live" Stuff

Whenever some dangerously touchy new ordnance was in the bomb disposal hut the army always left a pfc night watchman.

"So you sailors don't do something stupid," was the less than tactful phrasing used by the army lieutenant.

We hated to see a crack of light showing when we drove up in the night for we knew what it meant. The watchman was for our benefit but he was an unnecessary precaution. Although the hut housed a veritable treasure trove of Japanese souvenirs we were afraid to touch anything whether the watchman was present or not.

Upon opening the door one night, Smith and I were greeted by the private's cheery hello and his offer of hot coffee. With my hand still on the knob I'd been frozen into a statue. I was staring at a sinister Japanese torpedo pointed directly at me the warhead of which was about two feet from my stomach. Resting on its stand the instrument of death seemed to take up what little room there was at the front of the hut.

"Come in, come in," urged the private,"and close that door. The snow's blowing in."

Emmett, who's view was blocked, nudged me in the back with his shoulder which caused me to lurch forward. To keep from falling headlong into the torpedo's nose I was forced to grab the warhead with both hands.

"Jesus Christ," said the watchman,"take it a little easy or we might all go out fastern' we came in."

"Don't push again,Emmett," I warned,"I've got a contact pin and six hundred pounds of nitro about two inches from my belly button."

Having been on the Casco when she was torpedoed, Emmett Smith had a high respect for Japanese torpedoes. He asked the watchman how the army had come by such a thing and was told the torpedo had been found among some rocks near Holtz Bay. Apparently, a Japanese submarine had fired it at one of our ships during the Battle of Attu. The "fish" had missed and run up on the beach but failed to explode.

The watchman saw the new looks of horror this information caused. His attempt to put us at ease failed miserably.

"Don't worry," he chirped happily,"Some of your navy torpedo guys are coming up in the morning to take it apart to see why it didn't explode."

I could never determine in my own mind whether it was safer to be in the army hut at night in times like this when things were "quiet" or to be there for the

afternoon radiosonde when a lot of tinkering was going on?

All Balloons Did Not Rise

In some ways, being on the radiosonde/flying section was very good duty if one likes to rationalize. It was winter and frequently we were not required to even attempt a radiosonde because of excessive storm winds. This usually also meant that we didn't have to fly. However, radiosondes were often taken or attempted under seemingly impossible conditions. A considerable amount of helium and number of balloons and instruments were sacrificed in this manner.

During daytime soundings the failures could often be seen. Upon release, the balloon and instrument would be caught in a tremendous downdraft. Sometimes the balloon would be punctured as it slammed violently into the ground. Other times the balloon survived the contact but the trailing instrument package would be smashed. It was often a combination of both.

There was always an element of mystery connected with night failures although the reasons could be guessed. At these times the balloon and instrument would be released to disappear into the howling blackness. Upon hurrying into the hut we could tell at the door, long before we reached the receiver, whether or not the launch had been successful. The receiver was left in audio mode and the alternately introduced incoming signals for pressure, temperature, and humidity each had an indentifying sound. Baaaaaaaaaaaaaa-Deeeeeeeeeeeeee-Boooooooooo meant the launch had gone well. If the signals failed to alternate and remained stuck on one note or only rough static emanted from the speaker it meant that another good instrument and balloon had bitten the dust or in this case the snow.

In addition, failures occasionally resulted from lack of concentration. Human errors included disconnecting the instrument battery plug after ground checks to conserve power then forgetting to reinsert the pronged battery plug prior to release.

The number of attempts made depended on three things: The weather situation, the duty forecaster, and our pride. Generally, after two to four tries the office watch was notified that we were securing for

that particular scheluled radiosonde. The very last thing we wanted to do was run out of helium which would have forced us to brew hydrogen.

A Search For Gremlins

Certainly the strangest thing connected with Attu radiosondes occurred one crisp winter afternoon in early February 1944. Although it was cold and Attu was snow covered the weather was good. Shafts of pale light from the low winter sun slanted earthward through breaks in the scattered low and middle clouds. Winds aloft were moderate from a west-northwesterly direction but at the surface it was relatively calm.

Ground checks had been good which signified a healthy instrument and strong Burgess dry cell battery. No problems had been encountered in releasing the balloon and instrument. After release, the signals had continued powerful and steady. Fifteen minutes later it was obvious the balloon and instrument had passed through both cloud layers as evidenced by the trace marks on the receiver paper.

Calderon and I were picking off data, working the information through calibration charts, and plotting up the pseudo-adiabatic chart. Without preliminary hint of trouble the audio speaker began to blare harsh pure static and the bold, black print marks for pressure, temperature, and humidity which had been marching precisely up the receiver chart turned to hen scratchings. This was unusual. What could have happened so suddenly? It was much too early for the balloon to burst from expansion although an unseen flaw could have caused it. A radiosonde balloon gradually expands from internal pressure as it ascends through constantly decreasing outside atmospheric pressure until it bursts in the stratosphere. By then we have obtained the needed information from the balloon's instrument package and its passage through the troposphere*.

A radiosonde underway could be plagued by a variety of problems ranging from battery weakening prematurely; trailing antenna becoming wrapped around the instrument package by turbulence; excessively high winds aloft which carry the balloon beyond the power output range of the tiny radio transmitter; atmospheric static, etc.. These conditions were usually of a slow progressive nature. A complete,

sudden failure usually meant the balloon had collapsed.

We reported our failure to the weather watch and prepared another balloon and instrument for release after inspecting both with extra care. This sounding was underway and progressing nicely when at approximately the same altitude it too abruptly ended.

* The enveloping layer of atmosphere surrounding the earth that contains the temperature changes, moisture content, clouds and bulk of the oxygen that produces our weather.

In high frustration we notified the office of this failure then prepared and released the third sounding. This attempt met the same fate. By this time we were convinced a gremlin had captured us. We had either gotten into a shipment of defective balloons or batch of instruments that checked out perfect but failed beyond a certain point.

I phoned the weather office again with the perplexing bad news. The watch-stander on the other end thought I was playing a practical joke and the original sounding had been completed.

"Okay, let's cut the comedy,"he said. "When our you guys going to bring it down to the office? Ol' whatsizz name's gettin' anxious."

When the man realized I was serious he had the guts to suggest that if we'd gotten into a bad batch of something it was probably booze we'd found in the army hut.

"Go take a flying leap at a rolling doughnut," is the printable version of my heated reply.

There was no excuse for not obtaining a good radiosonde under the excellent weather conditions. This was one time when it became a matter of pride. In our determination and search for what we hoped was a good balloon and/or instrument, Calderon and I dug through our stacked supply of both. In doing this we ignored the normal procedure of using oldest balloons first and instruments in the manufacturer's numbered sequence.

In the midst of this selection process the field phone jangled.

"Just what in hell's going on up there?" asked the duty forecaster. "If you clowns aren't drunk you must be doing something wrong."

This wasn't the last straw that fractured the

camel's hump but it came close. The conversation was short but not too sweet and it was carried out in the tone chosen by the forecaster.

By this time it was dark. This fourth radiosonde was a picture of perfection. When the balloon and instrument passed through the altitude of the other failures it was attributed to either the balloon or instrument we'd selected but we didn't know which.

Our success,however, had nothing to do with the balloon and instrument but with the fact it was nighttime. U.S.A.A.F fighter air cover was maintained only in the daylight hours and the P-40's had landed. You guessed it: Fighters had shot down the first three balloons and instrument packages. The pilots believed they were destroying Japanese balloon bombs sent aloft in the hope they would drift to Alaska or the west coast of Canada and the U.S.. This explanation certainly proved that the pilots involved had elan. Attu's navy weathermen remained skeptical over the excuse.

Proper commands, both army and navy, were aware of scheduled radiosonde release times. Occasionally, special soundings were taken and this information was relayed prior to release . Whether our problems this day were caused by the recent arrival on Attu of a new fighter squadron, a few green replacement pilots, or because of a communication foul up was not made clear. It was suspected that one or more bored, frustrated fighter pilots in a "devil-may-care" mood had seized an opportunity to practice aerial gunnery. To my knowledge, none of our Aleutian radiosondes had been shot down prior to this and none were afterward.

Our first reaction of outrage cooled. It was far better to have had a few balloons shot down either accidentally or on purpose thereby solving our mystery rather than be faced with stacks of suspect balloons and instruments.

When the duty forecaster learned what caused the first three failures he apologized for doubting our radiosonde ability.

Problems=Modifications, Modifications=Problems

PV-1 Venturas we flew in out of Attu in early 1944 had undergone some modifications. A round trip to Paramushiro with a full bomb load was beyond the designed range of the plane. Extra fuel tanks were

installed to accomplish the missions.

As received from the factory, the PV-1's had three internal wing tanks on each side which held 40,115,and 132 gallons respectively for a total wing capacity of 574 gallons. Factory installation also included two external droppable wing pod tanks each holding 150 gallons.

Field modifications to increase the PV-1's range included installation of a 280 gallon fuel tank at the rear of the large bomb bay while leaving room for three 500 pound bombs. An additional 250 gallon fuel tank of self-sealing construction was installed in the cabin on the port side opposite the navigator's compartment and forward of the fuselage door. A small, extra oil tank was also mounted in the cabin.

These modifications were not uniform, some planes having as many as five extra fuel tanks installed including a second one in the bomb bay. The amount of fuel carried was dependent upon the aircraft's mission. Normally, the PV-1 assigned to the early morning Paramushiro weather flight carried either one 500 bomb or none. Instead, it carried all the fuel possible for an extended mission.

An additional fixed, .50 calibre machine gun was added to the two originally mounted in the bow. Along with the twin "fifties" in the Martin electrically operated top power turret, this gave the PV-1 the punch of five heavy machine guns.

The extra weight of tanks, fuel, and oil was mostly aft of the designed balance point and as a result the plane became dangeroulsly tail heavy. To partially compensate, all armor plate aft was removed. The twin .30 calibre tunnel guns, their 2000 rounds of ammunition and the gun mount had been removed from most of the PV-1's I flew in out of Attu.

These measures reduced the tail heaviness to some degree but still left us with the problem of taking off with an additional 3000 pounds ,or more, beyond the manufacturer's recommended gross maximum military overload.

Even with the installation of extra tanks, the fuel safety margin was still critical for Paramushiro missions with maximum bomb load. Fuel consumed in engine start, warm up, and taxiing was replaced from a fuel truck positioned at the end of the runway.

Takeoff became an especially hair-raising event. Every inch of Attu's 4500 foot sea level,(basically), runway was needed to get the tail heavy and grossly

overloaded airborne even in favorable winds and weather. If moderate to strong tail winds were occurring, the flights were delayed. If these conditions persisted beyond a deadline, the mission was cancelled.

Attesting to the extremely dangerous nature of these takeoffs, VB-139 lost a PV and crew in early 1944. This plane failed to stay airborne after takeoff and crash landed in the water. There was a tremendous explosion on impact which was believed to have been triggered by the magnesium photo-flash bombs ingniting the overload fuel tanks in the cabin.

Our daylight weather mission takeoffs were equally dangerous because our similar overload was in fuel rather than bombs. Occasionally, one of us was sent on a bombing mission and most of the aerographer's mates considered these night takeoffs more terrifying than daylight ones. I disagreed. At night it was difficult for me to tell how close we came to not making it. To me this was preferable to daylight takeoff when I could clearly see the bay and the end of the runway rushing toward me. It always came at an alarming clip while the wheels were still down because sufficient takeoff speed had not yet been reached.

Except in headwinds, every lift off was touch-and-go. Typically, the PV-1 wobbled along like a sluggish pig almost skimming the water for a considerable distance while it tried to make up its contrary mind whether or not to stay aloft. The first noticeable increase in air speed accompanied by the <u>controlled</u> gaining of altitude was usually followed closely by audible "Wheeooowws" expelled by those crew members who'd been hold their breaths. Only <u>then</u> was it good to have that overload of extra fuel onboard.

That these were sphincter-puckering takeoffs would be quickly verified by one earthy co-pilot who, following his "whew!", stated succinctly, "It's a damned good thing my rectum doesn't have teeth or I'd have chewed my way right down through this seat cushion."

Alternatives Were Brothers Grimm And That's No Fairy Tale

After crossing 700 miles of angry North Pacific Ocean, the first landfall was normally made by radar

on a 7073 foot volcanic cone near Cape Lopatka at the southern tip of Kamchatka Penninsula.

Only the open waters of six mile wide Shimushu Strait separates Soviet Cape Lopatka from Japanese Shimushu Island, northernmost of the Kuriles. Miyoshino airfield, one of the targets for our PV-1's was located on this relatively small ten-mile wide by sixteen mile long island.

A choice of several poor options was open to us in case of crippling damage from enemy fighters, anti-aircraft fire, or mechanical difficulty. These included making an emergency crash landing at a designated Soviet airfield on Kamchatka; parachuting to Kamchatka if we couldn't reach the field; attempt to make it back to Attu. The overwhelming choice among FAW-4 aircrews was to head for home even if the odds of reaching Attu appeared remote.

In addition to this never-say-die attitude several other factors influenced the choice of trying for Attu. Two PV's and crews were kept on fifteen minutes standby notice to meet and escort a crippled PV home by supplying radio, radar, navigation, or any other assistance they could. LtComdr. Marshall Freerks had a stripped PBY equipped with emergency gear for sea rescue also standing by at all times. A DE plane guard/weather ship had also been placed on station about 200 miles out from Attu along the Kurile route. If worse came to worse a pilot could ditch close to this ship but in those wintry seas the chances of surviving the crash were nil. None of our options were sure safeguards in winter but they gave hope and a morale boost.

By this time, I had begun to wonder if parachuting or landing on Kamchatka might not be the only way I would ever get out of the Aleutians? If I'd been forced to buckle on one of the stored, chest-pack parachutes to the harness each of us was required to wear, someone would most likely have had to push me violently from behind to get me out the PV-1's door.

I knew from map familiarity that Petropavlovsk was a fair sized Soviet port city located approximately 150 miles up the east coast of Kamchatka from Cape Lopatka. According to our maps, dozens of small settlements, mostly fishing villages, were scattered along Kamchatka's long coastline. This vague knowledge did not convey the character of Kamchatka.

My first look at the frigidly forbidding penninsula quickly dispelled any faint desire to visit

this Russian territory by crippled PV-1, silk and nylon shroud lines, or by any other means. From the air, and at a distance, Kamchatka looked like a huge Attu. It was a vast, snow-covered wilderness of massive, jagged-ridged, high peak mountains and volcanic cones in total disarray. No sign of civilization was visible. The stark harshness of this Siberian Penninsula's landscape was clearly evident and little muted by the intervening distance.

Japan's Kurile Defenses Were Surprisingly Strong

Information provided by FAW-4 night photographic/bombing missions produced some surprises. U.S.Naval Intelligence had known for many years that Paramushiro on the northern end of Paramushiro Island was a large Japanese naval base. This enemy base was the staging area and sortie point of Japan's Northern Fleet units. The Japanese Navy's land based, long-range Mitsubishi Bettys made their Aleutian raids from an airfield or airfields in the vicinity. The extent of Japanese installations came as a surprise.

The southern end of Shimushu Island is separated from the northwestern tip of much larger Paramushiro Island by a very narrow channel only a mile or two in width in some places. Night photographic missions by VB-139 in mid to late January 1944 had also pin-pointed the location of a second primary target, Kashiwabara, a large airfield with extensive installations, on the northern end of Paramushiro. Kashiwabara's two, long, crossed, cement runways were protected by surrounding anti-aircraft gun emplacements. Many of the latest type enemy fighters as well as Bettys were based on this airfield.

Paramushiro Island, 55 miles in length on its northeast-southwest axis and averaging 15 miles in width, was believed to possess other airfields. This proved to be an accurate U.S.Intelligence assessment when subsequent, persistent PV-1 photoreconnaissance missions located these thereby adding to the growing list of targets.

The majority of these newly discovered airfields were on the western, or Sea of Okhotsk side of mountainous Paramushiro. A prime consideration in constructing these airfields on the inland sea side might have been to conceal their locations as long as possible from U.S.patrol planes and snooping

submarines that reconnoitered along the Pacific coast of Paramushiro. These airfields would also be less vulnerable to shore bombardment by U.S. warships.

With the loss of Attu and the abandonment of Kiska in mid 1943, Japan had been forced into a crash program of construction to build airfields and strengthen defenses in the Kuriles. This was in anticipation of an invasion by U.S.Forces from the Aleutians. There was also the threat that the USSR might attack at any moment from Kamchatka and/or northern Sakhalin Island should she decide it was an opportune time to Declare War on Japan[1].

Construction included a network of radio and radar stations, coastal batteries, anti-aircraft gun positions, tank traps along expected invasion beaches, and enlargement of four old airfields and construction of sixteen new ones. Labor was provided by the military with the aid of Kurile fishermen during their off-season, and by Korean civilians.

In contrast to their deadly purpose Japan's Kurile airfields had liltingly intriguing names which seemed to roll off the tongue and please one's ear. Along with Miyoshino, and the airfield, naval base and seaplane facilities at Kataoka, a third airfield, Shiomi, was discovered on Shimushu. On northern Paramushiro was Kashiwabara while twenty-five miles to the southwest, on the Sea of Okhotsk side, was Kakumabetsu. About fifteen miles further south along this coast was Dago Zaki. A very large airbase was located at Kurabu Zaki on the Pacific side at the southern tip of Paramushiro. Later in 1944, other airfields discovered on Paramushiro included, Suribachi, Musashi, Kitanodai, and a large naval airbase at Horoshima on the southwestern coast on which thirty-six fighters and thirty-six Bettys were based. I recall hearing at one briefing toward mid 1944 that a total of nine operational airfields were located on
Paramushiro Island.

FAW-4's aerial strikes on Kurile installations, carried out by a handful of PV-1 Venturas operating in guerrilla fashion, made a tremendous contribution by keeping pressure on Japan forcing her to constantly divert a substantial percentage of a struggling economic war effort to the north.

PV-1 Weather Missions To The Kuriles

One should not be mislead by the fact that pilots, aircrews, and aerographer's mates referred to the early morning Kurile weather mission as the "milk run". This daily scheduled weather reconnaissance flight played the perilous game of lone, daylight intruder 700 or more miles from base and behind enemy lines.

In order to accurately determine the weather over enemy airfields targeted for bombing, our PV-1 pilots had to close within a few moments flight time of Japanese fighters based on those airfields. The weather situation often dictated that our flight streak southwestward the full length of Shimushu and Paramushiro. This brought our flight within close range of numerous enemy airfields and perhaps a hundred or more fighters. Again, the PV-1 with its combination of range, firepower, and especially its remarkable top speed was the only aircraft in our arsenal that could hope to successfully carry out these missions.

Bombing, photographic, and weather missions were rotated within each squadron. On any given day the PV-1 designated to fly the weather mission often had remote controlled cameras in the nose. Specific photographic targets were seldom assigned to the weather planes but pilots were expected to use the cameras to photograph airfields or coastal installations if weather permitted and/or the opportunity presented itself.

Whenever the weather was good and the coasts of Shimushu and Paramushiro could clearly be seen our PV-1 was not equipped with cameras; whenever I flew with a shutterbug pilot itching to use his cameras the weather was poor. This suited me fine for as early as June 1942 over Kiska I'd found I was allergic to the pollen from flak's black orchids.

Ideally, our weather flight approached the target area at an altitude between 12,000 to 17,000 feet. After our radar operator obtained a fix on the volcanic cone near Cape Lopatka the pilot closed to within twenty or so miles of Shimushu while the radar scanned ahead for possible enemy fighters. As long as fighters did not appear on the radar screen the pilot kept closing the distance. Meanwhile, the aerographer's mate took a detailed observation of weather conditions over the designated target area.

Particular attention was given to observation of the type of cloud formations, their levels and

amounts. If weather conditions were favorable for a bombing mission that night the clouds would determine at what altitude the photographic/bombing runs would be made. It was equally important that the aerographer's mate note the clouds on the southeast through northwest horizons to establish whether or not the leading edge of a high cloud shield was moving into the area. A high cloud shield indicated a storm system was approaching the northern Kuriles and course to target. If fuel reserves permitted and enemy fighters did not interfere, we always flew toward a high cloud shield to determine its orientation, wind direction and velocity at our altitude and on the surface, etc.. The forecaster would use this information to position the low pressure center and associated fronts on his latest weather map.

On occasion I requested that the pilot fly far to the southwestward paralleling the coast of Paramushiro so that I might verify whether or not some haze in the distance was, in fact, the advancing edge of a cirrostratus cloud shield. Our pilots were extremely cooperative in carrying out such requests for they knew the importance of obtaining accurate weather information.

One such request took us beyond Kurabu Zaki and across a forty mile strait to the east coast of Onnekotan Island. Here we flew under a classic leading edge of an advancing shield of cirrostratus oriented perpendicular to our course. Clearly, this lowered into ominously thick gray altostratus farther south so we reversed course for home. Based on this observation it was projected that the storm system would blanket the target and western half of the run to Paramushiro. That night's scheduled bombing mission was scrubbed.

It was only our marvelous long range ASD-1 radar which prevented a number of PV-1's from stumbling blindly into enemy fighters. Although it was not considered a close call, I can give one illustration of this type radar encounter. It happened on a weather flight down Paramushiro's east coast and just as we were about to turn around and head northeasterly for Attu. Radar detected four enemy fighters flying up the coast toward us on a northeasterly course. They were at an altitude of 8,000 feet and six miles at sea. Our PV-1 was barrelling along in the opposite direction seven miles farther out and through parallel bands of scattered altocumulus at 12,000 feet.

Mounted in the PV-1's nose cone, the ASD sending

unit scanned only the area forward to slightly aft of each beam. Facing aft, the top turret gunner's eyes searched the quadrants blind to radar. In order to maintain positive radar contact our pilot elected to stay on course rather than turn away.

There was an extensive broken deck of lower clouds the tops of which were 7,000 feet. Even though the enemy fighters should have been visible to the naked eye against this light background we never saw them. Shortly after the enemy planes passed our starboard beam they disappeared off the radar screen. A steep bank to port and course reversal reestablished radar contact. Four thousand feet above and behind the enemy fighters we followed them at a discreet distance. Our pilot edged farther offshore while maintaining radar surveillance on the enemy formation. Unaware of our proximity, the Japanese pilots continued up the coast.

A little additional spice was often added at the end of these "milk runs". As our PV-1 approached home it was "jumped" by fighters. These were "friendlies"; Attu's P-40 CAP (Combat Air Patrol). There were usually two. Having tired of shooting down radiosonde balloons, it was obvious they wished to play games with us.

Our radar operator picked the the P-40's up long before they were sighted visually so their simulated attacks were not a surprise. These mock passes were good practice for the P-40 pilots and for our turret-gunner.

Sometimes, the P-40 pilots clearly wanted to race. While the Ventura moved along at cruise settings they would come up on either side of us and waggle their wings just like a couple of hot-rod kids challenging a family sedan to an impromptu drag. All of the P-40 pilots, I'm certain, had heard tales about the rumored top speed of the U.S.Navy's pregnant looking PV-1 but they wanted to be convinced. The attitude of these U.S.A.A.F. wild blue yonder boys was: "Show me". We did.

Our PV-1 pilots were also young men and the majority could not ignore the tossed gaunlet. 4000 turbo-charged eager horses were at their fingertips. The PV-1 pilot would accept the challenge by first changing his power and throttle settings from normal cruise to combat cruise. The P-40's would speed up and keep abreast. Then our pilots would put the Ventura's nose down slightly, firewall the throttles and kick

the turbo into high blower position. Momentarily the P-40's stayed even then we were leavin'.

For practice, we also occasionally engaged in war games with one or more of the PT boats based at Attu. These were usually encountered off Temnac Bay on the southeast coast. When weather and sea conditions permitted, these small motor torpedo boats came out to patrol close inshore. As we made simulated strafing and bombing runs on them, their crews took necessary high speed evasive action while their gunners trained on the PV-1.

One of the most dreaded daily features of PV-1 weather missions to the Kuriles was the creeping, intense cold. Temperature decreases about five degrees with each 1000 feet of altitude. It was not unusual for the aerographer's mate to record outside air temperatures of 50 to 70 degrees below zero Fahrenheit. Upon landing, the aircrew was transported to sick bay where each man received a generous belt of brandy to get his circulation going. One could look forward in anticipation to this snort but it did not compensate for eight or nine hours of torture.

To my limited knowledge, Wing Commander Gehres had never rescinded a 1942 order that heaters in all FAW-4 aircraft were not to be used because any slight comfort derived might make the aircrew less alert. Although this order had been generally ignored, the heaters were barely sufficient to take some of the chill out of the cabin during winter or high altitude flights.

This intense cold caused tragic injury to a first class photographer's mate on one of the night bombing mission I was sent on. Our PV-1 was equipped with a couple of special cameras one of which was to be operated manually by the photographer's mate from the opened tunnel hatch. Our orders were to go in first, drop our flares and bombs, then pull off to one side and obtain oblique photographs as the other PV-1's made their runs.

We went in at 7800 feet just under the base of a solid cloud deck, dropped the bombs, and had turned away from the enemy runway. A sweeping searchlight caught our PV-1 and two other searchlights quickly converged to impale us in glaring cross beams. Our pilot went into a banking power dive and escaped the lights before anti-aircraft fire had a chance to become accurate or concentrated.

While this was going on, the photographer's mate,

a slender, wiry guy with brown hair and whose name I've forgotten, was busily shooting pictures. Something on the camera jammed and he pulled off his fur lined gloves for only a few minutes to work on the camera. On the flight back to Attu he kept clapping his gloved hands, something we all did from time to time, and mentioned that he had no feeling in his fingers. Nothing much was thought about this because everyone had the feeling his fingers were half frozen. It was a shock to learn a week later that several of this man's badly frost bitten fingers had become gangrenous and been amputated.

There Was No Soviet Welcome Mat Out At Petropavlovsk Either

One Ventura weather mission to the Kuriles was decidedly different. The winter day was sun filled with only scattered cotton puffs of fair weather cumulus below and unlimited visibility. Four startlingly white volcanic cones were visible on Kamchatka Penninsula as we approached at 13,000 feet on the blindingly bright day. A fifth cone, the most majestic of all, could be seen in the Sea of Okhotsk. This was Mount Alaid on Alaid Island and its symmetry rivals that of Mount Fuji.

There were no blips on the radar screen to indicate enemy aircraft and our pilot closed to within 20 miles of Shimushu. Weather conditions looked fine for a bombing mission that night. The pilot asked me if I'd seen enough weather and I told him that I had.

"Good," he said, "Then let's go sight-seeing. I want to get a look at this Petropavlovsk."

He changed course to the northwest and descended to 1500 feet for the 150 miles flight. A distance of ten miles offshore was maintained up the east coast of Kamchatka until we neared Petropavlovsk whereupon the pilot edged inshore to a radar distance of 5 miles.

Because of its utterly remote location, the size of
Petropavlovsk surprised us.

"Can you believe the size of those docks and buildings," someone remarked.

"That's nothin'," said another, "Look at the size of that bridge."

As we came up from the south, we were equally impressed by the number of docks, warehouses, and

large factory type buildings on the left or south side of the large harbor. The harbor's north side was also heavily settled but appeared more residential until farther in near the nead of the bay. Here there was a cluster of industrial buildings near that end of the bridge. This arched span crossed either a large river which emptied into the bay from the surrounding steep mountains or an arm of the bay itself. There appeared to a large park with scattered trees and open spaces just beyond the south terminus of the bridge.

Most of the crew, including the radar operator, were ogling these strange and wondrous sights when the turret gunner shouted a warning. Two Russian fighters thundered past: one to port the other to starboard. The simultaneous lightning quick passes had come from six o'clock high. Our turret gunner reported that at least one of the fighters fired a short warning burst because he saw muzzle flashes and tracers.

Our pilot dove for the deck, executed a sharp banking turn to starboard away from the harbor entrance, opened up the throttles, and headed for Attu. Having climbed high, the two Soviet fighters followed far astern of us. They continued to escort us for about ten minutes before abandoning this service and turning back toward Petropavlovsk.

It had happened so quickly we did not have an opportunity to clearly identify the type of Soviet fighter. Our turret gunner thought they could have been Lend-Lease Curtis P-40's. Another crew member who'd caught a flashing glimpse of the portside one thought it might have been a Bell P-39 Airacobra. One of our pilots wasn't certain but he thought the two aircraft were Russian Ilyushin 1-18's. I caught a peek of the starboard fighter as it made a climbing turn. I was certain only that this was not an airacobra for it did not have that aircraft's streamlined bubble canopy. All agreed that we'd been chased away by in-line engine fighters that closely resembled a P-40.

With this continuing Russian attitude of belligerency, we wondered how it would be possible to make a safe emergency landing in Kamchatka? Our sight-seeing had been conducted from beyond the 3 mile limit.

Our fears were not unfounded. Later in 1944 and 1945, a number of FAW-4 PV-'s were forced to land at airfields on Kamchatka after being shot up over Paramushiro and Shimushu. Included in this group was Lieutenant J.P.Vivian and his PV-1 crew who earlier

had taken Ralph Rayburn on his momentous ride during which they'd had a dog-fight with a Betty. Several of these planes were deliberately fired upon by Russian gun crews as the crippled planes made their landing approaches with wheels and flaps down.

All of these planes were impounded by the Russians who treated the U.S.Navy aircrews more like prisoners than allies. After receiving battle damage, VPB-131's Lieutenant John Powers and crew were forced to bail out of their crippled plane over Kamchatka. This crew was rounded up like escaped convicts by Russian Mongolian soldiers and locked in a building near Cape Lopatka's lighthouse for weeks before being transferred to Petropavlovsk. U.S. aircrews were eventually returned to the U.S. via circuitous routes in Asia and Europe. The aircraft were not returned.

Crash Landing On Attu

On an early February 1944 dawn weather mission to Paramushiro we lost an engine 450 miles outbound from Attu. It did not quit suddenly but began acting sick about the 400 mile mark. Its first mysterious misfire brought everyone to instant, stiff alertness. The power plant's subsequent burping coughs increased and the engine began to run rough. Oil pressure kept dropping. When all pressure was lost, the pilot killed the engine switch and feathered the prop. My heart died with the engine because I wasn't certain if a PV-1 could be flown stably or maintain altitude on one engine.

With great relief I learned that it was not only possible but the PV-1 would fly well on one engine as long as the pilot maintained sufficient air speed above the critical, single engine stall speed.

All crew members were ordered to remain in their present postions so the pilot could re-trim the aircraft for a proper level flight attitude. This was necessary to compensate for the loss of thrust and torque from one 2000 horsepower engine.

Instead of banking sharply, the pilot then made a very wide, flat turn to reverse course for Attu. It was a desolate feeling to stare out at that huge, motionless, three-bladed Hamilton propeller. The remaining engine of this land plane had to function perfectly in order to carry us safely back across hundreds of mile of frigid North Pacific.

Weight was not a critical factor as long as the remaining engine produced full power. In progressing to a point 450 miles out we had burned up perhaps twenty-five percent of our fuel weight. As a precaution, however, the pilot asked the plane captain to start figuring out what could be jettisoned to lighten ship.

Radio silence was broken and an encoded message sent which notified Casco Field of our situation, present estimated position, and intentions.

Outbound we'd barely skirted heavy snow showers. These were given a wide berth on our return to avoid turbulence and icing. Any chosen altitude could be maintained so the pilot had descended gradually from the point at which we'd lost the engine. When radar picked up Attu we were flying at 3000 feet. As we drew closer to Attu, only the rocky tip of a south central cape was visible to the naked eye. The island's location was evident by the huge buildup of heavy convective clouds over the mountain mass.

When the engine was lost I was up forward just behind the two pilots. I'd remained in this area between the cockpit and the radioman with the exception of one short trip back to the navigator to obtain two latitude and longitude positions to coincide with weather reports I'd taken on the return flight.

Radio silence was broken again as Cape Wrangell slid by on the port side. Casco Field tower was notified of our position, altitude, air speed, and ETA. The pilot also requested current weather conditions at the runway.

Ceiling and visibility were reduced to near zero-zero in a light snow shower and moderate blowing snow, the tower operator reported. Casco Field was closed. The heavy snow of the past few hours had ended. Ceiling and visibility were expected to improve shortly but wind direction would remain the same and velocities continue strong and gusty. Winds currently were 33 knots almost directly downwind of our final approach. Shemya had been closed down during the past hour.

Our pilot told the tower that he would swing to the southeast toward Agattu, make a wide flat turn, and a long, straight, gradual letdown on his approach. The tower operator replied that snow plows were presently attempting to clear the runway, two other aircraft were already circling awaiting landing

instructions, and we were to get into a holding pattern to await our turn and further instructions.

This caused our pilot to lose his fine composure.

"This is an emergency!" I repeat,"This is an E-Mer-Gen-Cy!", he told the tower operator. "You hold those other planes. I'm coming in on one engine, repeat, one engine. Get those ---------- snow plows off the --------- runway and have the emergency equipment rolling."

I'd guessed that landing safely with only one engine was going to be one hairy maneuver. There had been no discussion of this on the return flight and I had not asked questions.

Pilot and co-pilot began going over the single engine approach and letdown procedure they would follow. While listening to them discuss the situation, it became increasingly clear that a safe landing was going to be a delicately difficult operation. It was so dangerous in a PV-1 Ventura that it was never practiced.

On the approach and letdown the Ventura's air speed could not be allowed to decrease to the single engine stall speed. Full flaps, the only means of slowing down a PV-1 to safe landing speed, could not be used. What little flap that was to be utilized had to be applied gradually. At the same time a great deal of single engine power was to be applied to counteract any lowering of flaps. The plane would have to be literally flown into the ground to avoid a stall.

A most critical factor weighing against success was the strong, gusty, tail wind,--the very last thing needed. In addition, winter snow falls and plowing had turned Attu's steel mat runway into a glazed sheet of ice that would offer little or no braking action.

Although I did not hear the pilots discuss it, I believe they preferred to attempt the downwind landing at Attu rather than wait for conditions to improve at Shemya and try to land in heavy, gusty cross winds.

Falling snow had ended as we made our long approach. The runway could clearly be seen although visibility was still restricted at ground level by blowing snow.

The co-pilot had been calling off data from the landing procedure chart and while still some distance out I recall hearing, "wheels down and locked." He was also constantly reporting altitude and indicated air speed to the pilot whose total concentration was directed to control of the aircraft.

An altitude of "500" feet had just been announced when we passed over some shipping anchored out in the froth whipped bay. The PV-1 then roared over an anchored destroyer that was "blowing stacks". Thirty plus knots of wind caught the thick soot black smoke as it emerged from the funnels and laid it flat along our track. I don't know if this destroyer's actions were coincidence or if her captain did it to provide us with a form of wind sock.

As near as I can recall, events and words spoken during the next few moments were as follows: While still over the water between the destroyer and the end of the runway, the pilot ordered, "Jettison wing tanks." Shortly afterward he muttered something that ended with, ".....snow plows." Three of them were plowing abreast about 500 yards downwind from bay end of the runway. A second or two later they scattered like twenty ton quail, two turning off to their right, the third off the runway to the left.

Just before we flashed in over the end of the runway the co-pilot called out an altitude of 230 feet. This was immediately followed by his terse, "You're Hot and High!" This was quite obvious even to me.

Our weather office huts were near the midpoint of the runway and we must have been 60 feet in the air when we zipped past them. I was conscious of a bundled up group of seven or eight men standing outside the weather office door: The men on duty knew I was on that PV-1 and it was in trouble. I was also aware of the requested emergency equipment moving alongside the runway at what appeared to be a snail's crawl.

Over half of the runway had slipped by underneath our wing and we weren't down. The pilot put the nose down and eased off the throttle. The plane dropped like a rock, slammed down violently and bounced roughly several times. Brakes were applied, then locked but this seemed to have no effect whatever. A wooden barricade at the end of the runway came racing toward us.

"Oohhhh shit," said the pilot in a calm, matter of fact voice.

I turned and ran aft. When I reached the rubberized, self- sealing cabin fuel tank I sat down with my back against it facing the tail of the plane. I drew my legs up, wrapped my arms around them and placed my forehead on top of my knees.

With a splintering crash the plane exploded

through the wooden barricade. Our speed was still so great that several seconds of eerie silence followed as the Ventura sailed off the end of the runway and across a small, shallow draw toward the far upslope. I knew what was coming next and braced myself.

Of the actual impact I remember little; no noise or pain; only a huge burst of brilliant white light in my brain. Afterward, for a few seconds, I did not know whether I was still alive or dead. I was sitting in a stupor with my eyes and mouth agape. I was gasping and vaguely wondering why I couldn't breathe?

Air finally reached my lungs. While still in a hunched up heap I tentatively moved my limbs. Other than momentary unconsciousness and having the wind knocked out of me I was, apparently, unhurt. A crew member, helping another man toward the open cabin door, saw me move and said, "I smell gas. We've got to get out of the plane." Upon stepping out rather than down, the three of us sank into waist deep snow. One or two other men followed us out the fuselage door.

Both pilots had evidently exited from the cockpit for they were alongside what had been the nose section. Heavy smoke billowed out of the port engine naselle and the plane had a strange hunp-backed look. After a quick count showed that everyone was out of the wreck, the pilot ordered,"Get clear of her. She might blow."

A small muffled explosion ripped the plane as we struggled away through deep snow. Urged on by the pilot we found refuge on the backside of the slope. A series of explosions racked the PV-1 and machine gun ammunition exploded.

Like a bobsled that flies off the course, our plane had crashed, ploughed, bounced over a hump in the draw, then ploughed an additional 100 feet before careening to a stop. In its final resting place, crumpled and burning, the PV-1 was fully 200 yards from the end of the runway. Deep snow had helped to cushion our impact and probably prevented serious injury or loss of life.

Fire trucks and other emergency vehicles could not reach the scene and were parked helplessly at the end of the runway. Men manning these vehicles and other personnel who had sped down the runway in jeeps or command cars had started toward us but were stopped by exploding ammunition.

When things quieted down we headed for the runway and were met halfway by the rescuers. This group

included a navy doctor and several hospital corpsmen. There were only a few minor injuries in the nature of a sprained back here, twisted knee and ankle there, assorted bruises, and superficial cuts and abrasions. We were transported to sick bay, checked over thoroughly and treated.

Emmett Smith and Bob Calderon were among the large group of people who'd sped to the crash scene. They were also waiting in our jeep when I came out of sick bay.

"Well--you no good Black Irish s.o.b.," growled Emmett as he started the jeep,"let's go eat. We can't miss chow because of you."

One did not voice his true feeling at these times for fear of being branded a weak, sentimental slob. I understood and as Emmett shifted gears he averted his eyes so that I wouldn't catch a glimpse of moisture.

We three had been through a lot together since those innocent days of 1941. We knew that the law of averages was long overdue. Although it was never discussed, the dreaded, dark question mark hung heavily over our heads: Which member of our weather group is going to get killed first before this is over? This time the silent question had, once again, almost been answered.

The following morning I awoke with two purple--black--red eyes, the greatest shiners I've ever owned. Evidently they were the result of having my face on my knees on crash impact and undoubtedly the reason that all I could remember was a blinding light in my brain.

Four days later I tugged on my winter flight clothing to climb aboard another Paramushiro bound PV-1. Before I left the barracks hut I made the mistake of seeking some sympathy.

"Well," I said, "here I go again."

"No sweat,"someone replied, "Hell, it's just like fallin' off a horse. Ya gotta climb right back on."

28

Events During Our Third Year In The Aleutians

Nothing Remains The Same

In mid February 1944, Carey got off DE plane guard weather ship duty the hard way. While on station he became stricken with acute appendicitis. Because of strong winds and rough seas it was impossible to evacuate him by PBY. To save Carey's life the DE was ordered back to Attu. During the overnight run the ship's pharmacist's mate kept Carey packed in ice whic the weather office at Casco Field.

By the end of February 1944 there were no aerological officers and few aerographer's mates of the June 3-4, 1942, Dutch Harbor bombing attacks era still left in the Aleutians. The vast majority had long since been sent out on thirty day leaves then reassigned. Some went to stateside duty while others had been shipped overseas to bases or fleet units in the combat zones of the South, Southwest, or Central Pacific.

Three of the Aleutian "old guard", however, had returned north after leave. Boyd A. Omang, who'd made Warrant Aerographer, was stationed at Kodiak. Ralph G. Rayburn,AerM1c was also at Kodiak. CAerM Joseph A.Leahy, had gone on leave from Amchitka on 27 November 1943 then returned to Dutch Harbor as office chief.

Many changes had taken place at Dutch Harbor during the eighteen months that I'd been out west of that base. Most notably, Dutch Harbor had its own airfield. Air traffic, which had previously been restricted to seaplane operations, increased markedly. In its third location since June of 1942, Dutch Harbor's latest weather office was adjacent to the runway. This spacious office was in keeping with the overall growth of the base.

Air traffic, along with the wartime buildup of Dutch Harbor, required a much larger aerological department. In number of personnel this was greater than the days just prior to the Japanese bombing attacks when,for a short period, most of the navy's Aleutian aerological people had been stacked up at Dutch Harbor. This increase in Dutch Harbor's aerological staff can best be illustrated by the following, spring of 1944, weather office roster supplied by Joe Leahy:

AEROLOGY DEPARTMENT
NAVY #151
% F.P.O. SAN FRANCISCO
CALIFORNIA
DUTCH HARBOR

OFFICERS

E.T. Pitts	Lt USNR
R.D. Wade	Lt(jg) USNR
J.L. Kerr	Lt(jg) USNR
G.L. Beckstead	Lt(jg) USNR
M.L. Epplescheimer	Lt(jg) USNR
W. Green	Lt(jg) USNR
J.P. Brewer	Lt(jg) USNR
R.R. Bedwell	Lt(jg) USNR
R. (N) Lane	Aerog USN

MEN

J.A. Leahy	CAerM USN
K. Lane	AerM 1/c USN
L.C. Muschetter	AerM 1/c USNR
T.J. Ager	AerM 1/c USNR
W.K. Hawkins	AerM 2/c USNR
F.H. Smith	AerM 2/c USNR
J.N. Smith	AerM 2/c USNR
L.R. Mooney	AerM 2/c USNR
G.P. Wilkens	AerM 2/c USNR
H. Rosenthal	AerM 2/c USNR
E.F. Dahl	AerM 2/c USNR
L. Friedman	AerM 3/c USNR
H.C. Gaba	AerM 3/c USNR
B.W. Pye	AerM 3/c USNR
E.L. Schaut	AerM 3/c USNR
R.G. Kers	AerM 3/c USNR
J.W. Mader	AerM 3/c USNR

J.S. Deloach	AerM 3/c USNR
H.O. Snow	AerM 3/c USNR
R.W. Palm	AerM 3/c USNR
R.E. Rutherford	Sea 1/c USNR
G. Maddox	Sea 2/c USNR
F.P. Cook	Sea 2/c USN
J.R. Sherrer	Sea 2/c USNR
C.H. Schulte	Sea 2/c USNR
J.J. Gary	Sea 2/c USNR

In the spring of 1942 our number was so small that every member of naval aerology stationed in the Aleutians knew one another. The magnitude of change in two years, at Dutch Harbor alone, is staggering to me. Of the thirty-five officers and men, I knew only the two Lanes and Leahy. I'd not even heard of the other thirty-two. Over the past two and a quarter years since Pearl Harbor, navy weather schools had been cranked up to capacity producing an ample supply of qualified weathermen to meet global wartime needs.

In addition to Sea 2/c F.P. Cook, the three men on the Dutch Harbor roster that I knew were also the only regular navy men, the other thirty-one being naval reservists.

This early 1944 Dutch Harbor Aerology Department ratio of eighty-eight percent reservists to twelve percent regular navy was probably a good average for all of U.S.Naval Aerology at the time. It was also most likely about the norm for the rest of the U.S.Navy during WWII. A tremendous number of additional people are required to wage war, people who in peacetime chose careers other than the military.

A Few U.S. Navy Attitudes

Throughout the navy during the war many regular navy men, both officer and enlisted, arrogantly looked down upon reservists as being inferior in some way. This distinction was not always pointed out in subtle manner. Terms used to describe reservists included: feather merchant, ninety-day wonder, amateur, shoe clerk, soda jerk, etc.. It was as though some regular navy men, who considered themselves <u>professionals</u>, resented reservists trespassing in a private realm. This attitude was not so much ridiculous as obscene when nine out of ten men were USNR and enemy torpedos, bullets, and bombs made no such distinction.

Although regular navy, I did not subscribe to this attitude. Perhaps my ten months in the navy prior to Pearl Harbor, and the subsequent influx of reservists, had not been long enough for me to acquire such salty crust.

Another distinction was equally asinine to me. Deck ratings such as boatswain's mate, gunner's mate, quartermaster, and signalman had their origins in the sailing days of iron men and wooden ships. These ratings were right arm rates; the rate insignia and chevrons being worn on the right sleeve. Many of these people considered themselves the **Real** navy and looked down upon left arm rates as "Johnny-come-latelies". They had a lot of snobbery material at hand for a large number of other ship ratings, and all wing insignia aviation ratings, including aerographer's mate, were worn on the left sleeve.

Snowbound

Regular navy, reservist, right arm rate, left arm rate, didn't matter one iota because the snow flakes,too, fell on everyone. The Aleutians usually do not experience snows of great depth at sea level but exceptions occurred. One such snowfall paralyzed Attu in late February 1944 and caused ten deaths.

Just prior to this snowfall we had temporarily been caught short in manpower. Several people had finagled short leaves and one man had left but another's return had been delayed. Carey had not yet been released from the hospital following his emergency appendectomy. Emmett Smith's long awaited stateside orders and thirty day leave had come through and he'd departed Attu.

In a restructuring move to carry the extra work load our separate radiosonde section was disbanded. The radiosonde receiver, other equipment and supplies were removed from the army bomb disposal hut and reinstalled in the weather office. Calderon and I were each put in charge of an office watch section and the scheduled radiosondes were once again incorporated into the duties of the appropriate office watch.

The snowstorm was unusual for the Aleutians in that the winds were almost calm the first two days and from the very first,--the snow flakes were huge.

An outbreak of cold, relatively dry, polar air had slowly pushed into our region from continental

eastern Siberia. This wedge of dense air forced relatively warm, moisture laden Pacific Maritime air aloft where it was cooled to the condensation point. In weather parlance we were in a col area of weak pressure gradient and meandering isobars. In a peaceful, silent blanket, snow flakes one inch in diameter began falling from the leaden skies.

At the end of twenty-four hours the Casco Field weather office recorded a snowfall of one foot. This was considerable for the Aleutians but nothing to write home about. This rate of snowfall, however, continued and after forty-eight hours Attu was under a two foot mantle of white on top of the old, frozen six inches prior to the storm.

All available snowplows had been working around the clock to keep the airfield operational and essential roads of the base open. This work had started out in routine fashion but by the second day had taken on an air of some urgency as the heavy snow continued unabated.

With mounting difficulty our twenty-four hour office routine was maintained into the third day. Office jeeps with the help of their four-wheel drive were barely able to transport the watches between office and messhall. The hill road to our weather barracks huts had not been plowed and could not be negotiated after the first twenty-four hours. Our barracks huts were reached on foot through the ever deepening, single file rut along the raised wooden catwalks. A safety rope strung between posts was both a guide and a help to pull ourselves up the steepest sections.

In the zero-zero ceiling and visibility it was extremely difficult to keep one's bearings without a point of reference. Driving, even in daylight, became almost impossible especially if a road was being traveled which had not been recently plowed. The simplest way,--the only way--, was to keep the righthand bumper and fender scraping along the frozen snow bank. This became our blindman's white cane.

Night driving was worse. The man in the front passenger seat had to vigorously work the driver's manually operated windshield wiper so the man at the wheel could concentrate on the whereabouts of the right hand snowbank. Headlights reflecting off the falling snow threatened one's sense of equilibrium. It was like being imprisioned inside a novelty glass sphere snow scene that some unseen hand had shaken

into perpetual snow-motion.

Many vehicles collided but few injuries resulted because of the slow speeds. Some of these vehicles, nonetheless, were damaged enough so they couldn't be driven. Some were towed away but many were abandoned as were other vehicles which had become stuck, skidded off roads or taxi-strips, or were disabled through mechanical breakdown. These abandoned vehicles then became hazards and were struck by other vehicles, including bulldozers and snowplows. In essence, it was like a modern day, blindfolded, demolition derby.

At the weather office we knew that the worst was still to come. It would be only a matter of time until friction along the demarkation line between the two divergent air masses produced a cyclonic circulation and the formation of a low pressure cell.

The expected happened in due course and on the third morning a southeast wind sprang up as a low pressure system developed along a trough line far to our southwest. As the pressure began to fall, the gradient tightened with a gradual increase of wind velocity. Heavy snow continued but in wind-lashed, slanting fashion.

On this third day, after quite a struggle, my section made it to the office for the 1600 to midnight watch. All members of the watch section we had relieved made it safely to the barracks hut but we did not learn this until twenty-four hours later.

Attu had fought a valiant but losing battle with the suffocatingly heavy snow for over fifty hours. One by one, roads that had been considered vital had to be abandoned to the snowfall. A concerted effort was made, for a time, to keep the Casco Field runway cleared but this too became an impossible task. In the zero-zero weather all air operations had ceased anyway.

Insidiously, the snowfall was slowly strangling Attu. The network of still open roads steadily shrank that third day until all roads became impassable. Snowplows and bulldozers themselves became hopelessly stuck and were abandoned. By nightfall Attu was experiencing blizzard conditions. Winds howled across the base in a mournful concert of sound while piling the three feet of snow into huge drifts. Swirling winds eddying around buildings almost cleared some areas of snow while at the same time forming convoluted white sculptures in other areas.

The day watch had quit trying to keep the front

door of the office cleared. They'd decided to use only the rear door which led to the thermoscreen. This door was on the closed end of our revetment. I cautioned whoever took the hourly observation to make certain he spent adequate time on the end of a snow shovel to keep this doorway cleared.

Snowfall continued heavy and winds increased early that evening to the fifty knot range with gusts near sixty knots. The winds also backed from southeast through east to northeasterly as the low pressure system moved south of us on an easterly course.

By the 2300 hours observation we were recording a wind of fifty-five knots from the north-northeast with gusts to sixty-six, and sky obscured in zero-zero conditions of heavy snow and heavy blowing snow. Midnight rolled around and our relief watch hadn't shown up. As the hour approached we had discussed the likelyhood that under the weather conditions they probably wouldn't even attempt to reach the office. We were prepared to stay on watch until morning. When 0200 came and went without our relief we became resigned to spending sixteen hours on watch.

It was at the 0300 hours observation time that the man came to me with disturbing news.

"I can't get out the door," he said.

"What the hell do you mean, you can't get out the door? We've got to. That's the <u>only way out!</u>"

"It won't budge. It's stuck or something."

"Or something," I said in disgust as I went to the door with a half dozen anxious men at my heels.

Sure enough, the door could be opened only a fraction of an inch near the top.

"Who took the 0200 observation?" I demanded. "I did," a man answered.

"Did you shovel all the snow away?"

"As much as I could. When I went out, the door would only open about a third of the way but there was plenty of room to squeeze by." Quickly, he added, "I'd shoveled so the door opened almost all the way after the 1000 ob, the last one I took before the 0200 one."

So, two or three men, possibly more, had failed to shovel enough snow at observation time over a period of many hours. As a result we were neatly trapped in our weather office. What a helluva thing to live down. This was worse than the standard joke of the weathermen having their annual picnic rained on.

I could picture how it had happened,-- the scene on the other side of the door: a cramped space between

the hut and the steps to the thermoscreen,--the door forced open each hour as far as it would go against the snow which had fallen and drifted since last observation,--the hurried observation, the perfunctory shoveling in the blizzard's swirling darkness--, ...good enough 'til the next hour....., now for a cup of steaming coffee.....

I could understand it but that failed to cool my anger. I chewed out the guilty parties--up one side and down the other but I knew as I was doing it that I was angry mostly with myself. As section leader, it was my fault for not checking.

After my tirade I was silent for a moment weighing the situation and a few possible measures we could take. One of the culprits who'd recently been alergic to shovel work now grew energetically impatient.

"Well," he asked,"what are we waiting for? I'll get an axe and sledge out of the storeroom and bust the door down."

"Shut up you idiot," I spat. "That would serve no useful purpose right now."

"The hell it wouldn't. It's better'n being buried alive." With great patience I pointed out that we were in good shape for quite a while. We had shelter, heat, power, water, coffee, sugar, evaporated milk, and many cases of field rations. Small amounts of snow were spittingly being blown into the office through several roof vents and miniscule cracks. This snow melted quickly and the puddles were swabbed. Although this had been a nuissance since coming on watch it reassured me that we were not completely buried and fresh air was entering. Incoming air also helped freshen, somewhat, the rooms which were becoming fouled with a heavy blue-grey cloud of cigarette smoke.

The only thing we couldn't do was take a complete weather observation. A slant symbol would be substituted for any missing value in our weather reports. Our selsyn indicated that the wind had backed to north-northwwest. This coupled with a several degree drop in temperature and slight rise in pressure was a sure sign that steady, heavy snow had probably already changed to showers.

When we received the 0300 hourly weather report by teletype from the army weather office at Alexai Point, they were reporting blowing snow only. Conditions were improving, although our wind was still

gusting to fifty-five knots. We would wait out the storm. If, after a time, someone did not dig us out we could then seriously think about excavating ourselves.

Soon after our 0300 observation went out we were queried about our missing data by the army weatherman at the teletype over at Alexai Point. With great reluctance I sat down at our machine and banged out the news that we were trapped inside our weather office. After a long pause, the teletype sprang to life and printed, "Tee-Hee." Following another long pause, the army weatherman solicitously,(and somewhat smugly, I though), offered to act "as eyes and ears to the outside world for you efficient navy weathermen at Casco Field." This rapier thrust plunged so deeply I wanted to cry out, "Touche Hell. I've been stabbed!"

Around 0430, and into our thirteenth hour on watch, there came a holler from a man working at the far end of the office.

"Somebody check that damned stove. It's gettin' colder'n a witch's tit in here."

The fire had gone out. A check revealed that the oil reservoir tank on the back of the stove was empty.

"Well, don't just stand there," I said impatiently. "Fill it from the five gallon can and relight it."

"I can't. The five gallon can is empty, too."

"How can that be?" I wanted to know. "Didn't the other watch fill it?"

"I guess not," the man said. "When I topped off the tank about 2200 I emptied the can."

"Why didn't you refill it then?"

"Because I knew there was plenty to last out our watch and I was going to fill the can for the next watch before we got relieved. When they didn't show up at midnight,--I guess I forgot."

Again, we had been affected by the disruptive snowstorm. Again, I could understand what happened. The five gallon can of reserve oil was routinely filled by the off-going watch from a fifty-five gallon drum mounted on a stand **OUTSIDE** the office.

All were forced to don heavy jackets to keep warm. A new hue and cry arose to break down the door so we could dig our way to the drum of oil which undoubtedly was covered with drifting snow by then. Emphatically, I vetoed this idea and for a moment wondered if I was about to have a mutiny on my hands.

"We might be a little uncomfortable," I said, "but we're not going to freeze to death. I'll think

about it but we're not going to attempt anything until daylight. If it becomes necessary we might be able to remove the entire door and jamb without destroying everything with an axe and sledge."

My suggestion that we eat an early breakfast met with hearty approval. Everyone headed enmasse for the storeroom. Cases of field rations were opened and we took turns heating selections on the hot plate used for brewing coffee.

Meanwhile, office routine continued. Teletype communications had survived the storm although we had been without telephone communications since early the previous evening. All of the weather schedules were coming in by teletype and these had to be decoded, entered on maps, and filed. Scotty Hassell, who had the duty officer watch had not made it to the office so I drew the map and put out the forecast. This was done to maintain map continuity even though air operations had ceased and base forecasts could not be delivered.

When daylight came, the army weathermen at Alexai Point reported that bulldozers and snowplows were already busy and that Attu was slowly digging out from under an estimated snowfall of four feet.

"I did not think polar bears hibernated," he typed. "How are you boys doing anyway?"

"Just fine," I answered, "and thank you for all the help." I would have cut all of my fingers off plus my four thumbs rather than tell him our stove had been out for five hours.

About 1000 hours the teletype chattered with the good news that a few main arterials at Casco Cove and Massacre Bay were open to traffic. Snow removal operations were underway on the runway five-hundred yards from our weather office.

Chores were tackled with renewed vigor and much happy talk. Rescue was expected momemtarily. We did not realize that many, many personnel were also trapped in huts. Few people worked at night and therefore had not cleared <u>any</u> snow from doorways. Until around noon, the outside activity was hardly at the feverish level envisioned.

It wasn't until after 1400 hours that we heard commotion on our roof followed by the sound of someone's banging on a vent pipe.

"Are you all right in there?" a voice shouted down. Our rescuers were aerological personnel and they hollered

that they were starting to dig us out by the front door because there was far less snow at that entrance. The back door and entire revetment area at the rear was buried under drifted snow to a height only a foot below the peak of the curved roof. Even had we managed to get the door off we would have faced a terrible task of tunneling up to daylight. Tons of snow would have had to be shoveled into the office to get it out of the way.

The snow removal job at the front door took almost an hour. When this door could finally be opened we pushed out into the blinding brightness of glittering snow, brilliant blue sky, and scattered white cumulus. Gleeful backslapping took place with our rescuers. We'd been snowbound for not quite twenty-four hours but we felt like an Antarctic crew emerging from a winter at Little America. The unusual snowfall, our plight in the weather office, and the other storm related problems experienced by the rest of our weather group, all became enthusiastically recounted adventures.

It was not happily so throughout the base. Nine army men had died when the roof of their Massacre Bay hillside Quonset collapsed under the weight of drifting snow.

A navy enlisted man was missing from one of the barracks huts above ours at Casco Cove. He had disappeared after leaving his hut, alone, on the third evening at the height of the blizzard. This man's body was not found until late spring when melting snow was forced to give up its winter-kept, frozen secret.

The man had died a hundred feet below our hut, within fifty feet of another hut, and ten feet from the wooden catwalk. It had happened at a place where the walkway spanned a deep narrow draw cut by a small mountain creek. One could only surmise that the man lost contact with the guide rope then, disoriented in the blizzard, stepped off the catwalk and over his head into the deep new drift filling the draw.

As tragic as the loss of ten lives was, it could have been far worse. Many hut roofs had been on the verge of collapsing on sleeping occupants. Quite a number of roofs had sections partially caved in.

Where I was concerned, I had some explaining to do and thankfully this did not include an office full of snow or trying to justify smashing a door to pieces with an axe.

While a Siberian winter unleashed its fury on our

remote corner of the world, history making events were taking place on other fronts of the war wracked globe. In equally bitter winter conditions Allied forces were trying to advance up the mountainous spine of Italy against fierce German resistance.

Almost directly south of Attu but nearly 3000 miles away, Central Pacific Forces made an assault on Kwajalein in the western Marshall Islands on February 1, 1944. During the four day battle for Kwajalein 196 U.S. Marines were killed, 500 wounded while the U.S. Army suffered 177 killed, 1000 wounded. 7900 out of 8000 Japanese soldiers were killed. The remaining 100 were taken prisoner along with 165 Korean laborers.

On February 15, 1944, Admiral Halsey's South Pacific Forces landed nearly 6000 New Zealand and U.S.troops on Green Islands, 115 miles due east of the heavily fortified Japanese base at Rabaul. After a small skirmish the SeaBees moved in and built a fighter strip.

February 16, 1944 was another busy day for Central Pacific Forces. While amphibious forces made the assault on Eniwetok a strong carrier-surface force carried out massive raids on Truk in the Caroline Islands. This strike at Truk sank 15 enemy naval vessels including two light cruisers and four destroyers plus nineteen cargo ships and five tankers. In addition, 200 Japanese planes were destroyed.

Six days later, while Japan was still reeling from the blow against Truk, Admiral Marc A. Mitscher, USN, led two carrier groups deep into the Marianas for attacks against Saipan, Tinian, and Guam. Enemy installations were heavily damaged and 168 Japanese aircraft destroyed.

General MacArthur was raising cain about these rapid advances being made in the Central Pacific drive. He feared that his own slower, longer, round-about offensive along New Guinea through the Philippines was being overshadowed. Through General George C. Marshall, USA, of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, MacArthur sought to slow down the Central Pacific offensive and make it merely a supportive effort to his own campaign.

Personnel Shifts

March 1944 brought a few additional changes in weather personnel at Attu. Lieutenant Commander Roscoe

Devine, USN, arrived from Dutch Harbor to take over as O-in-C of the NAF Casco Field weather office. This allowed LtComdr Maynard to devote full time to his mounting duties as FAW-4 Staff Aerologist.

Devine had been O-in-C of the navy weather office at Dutch Harbor from March 1943 to March 1944. He had relieved Lieutenant Basil Frank. Frank had then come out to Adak that spring to assume duties as one of the watch standing officers at the Joint Army-Navy Weather Center. This move had taken place a couple of months before Bob Calderon and I left Adak aboard the Casco for the invasion of Attu in early May of 1943.

Devine brought with him two of his leading petty officers from Dutch Harbor: Charles Jason Lynes, AerM1c, USNR and James L. Ledbetter, AerM2c, USN.

Jim Ledbetter had arrived at Dutch Harbor about the same time as Commander Devine. This was near the end of CAerM T.J.Bliss's whip cracking reign as office chief. Lynes had come to Dutch Harbor a short time later but still in time for Bliss to make a lasting impression.

At Attu, Lynes was attached to NAF Casco Field's complement while Ledbetter was a member of FAW-4. Both were soon each issued flight skins and joined us in flying PV-1 missions to the Kuriles.

Lynes, who'd been a Chicago newspaper reporter prior to his entering the service, was in his mid thirties. Six feet tall of medium build with light brown hair and a pleasant, rather full boyish face, Lynes quickly became everyone's favorite. He was intelligent, witty, had a vast store of anecdotes, and he could obtain liquor even when the officers couldn't. C.J. Lynes had 365 reasons a year to throw a party. Wake him for the mid watch and his first remarks, without fail, would be--"It's a beautiful day in Chicago, just right for a party", or "We've got to celebrate because today is Buffalo Bill's birthday," or "Let's have a drink. Today is the founding of the W.C.T.U." One could get the World Almanac and check and darned if Lynes wasn't always right.

Ensign Jack Hovick,USNR, FAW-4 aerological officer arrived at Attu about this time. Hovick, a large, well built young man who wore wire-rimmed glasses, was somewhat of a celebrity. He was the brother or half brother of Gypsy Rose Lee, and dancer-actress June Haver and he received letters from them occasionally.

One day, with the help of boyish exuberance, I

earned another star on my Croix de faux pas. I was in the busy office, off duty, studying a new "girlie" magazine. Ensign Hovick had come in without my being aware of it. While thumbing through the magazine I came upon a full page photograph of Gypsy Rose Lee wearing only a few beaded silken threads.

"Hey, you guys!" I blurted out. "Here's a picture of Hovick's sister and she's practically bare----d."

I could not understand why there was no stampede or even the slightest response other than strange stares....until I slowly turned around. Hovick was standing behind me and had been looking over my shoulder.

This general influx of aerological personnel to Attu in early 1944 did not alter our routine in any noticeable way. Starting about the first of October 1943, the combined number of FAW-4 and NAF aerographer's mates on flight status on any given month had varied between four and six. By March 1944 this had been increased to seven.

Although we no longer were called upon, from sheer necessity, to individually fly the weather many days in a row as in the early years of the campaign, we were still logging considerable flgiht time. Two aerographer's mates were frequently sent out on the same day, one on the weather mission to Paramushiro; the second in a PBY or PV-1 on a sector patrol. This policy often shortened our expected, "on paper", scheduled rotation time of five or six days between missions to two or three. This raised the usual havoc with watch schedules and sleep. In spite of the fact that it had been going on for years, there was no way to condition one's self to either coming off watch at midnight then flying early that morning with little or no sleep, or, flying that day then standing the 1600 to midnight office watch.

Frequently, a man was designated to fly at the same time he was scheduled to be on watch. Because the weather flight took precedence it required the man to find a non-flyer who would agree to stand the office watch. This substitute had to be repaid on what would normally be our time or day off. The aerographer's mates were convinced that someone had decided early on that the Aleutian Solution was: Work.

For some time the navy had been using a point system to determine a man's eligibility for leave and/or rotation to a tour of stateside duty or reassignment to other sea duty. Points were awarded

for each month of overseas duty, sea duty, combat duty, etc. It was similar to a merit system in kindergarten because demerits could also be acquired. The system seemed to work well for some but poorly for others.

For example: Although Calderon and I had come north in late February 1942, three months prior to other members of our FAW-4 weather group, all had been rotated back to the states by March 1944 except the four "C's", Calderon, Carey, Carter, and Carrigan. Carey had lost accumulated points by slipping back to the states for leave on the damaged Williamson and again, twice on Gillis; the last time near the first of 1944. Carter, too, who was on Amchitka, rode Gillis back to the states several times. Calderon had been on leave and also back on Gillis once but had not been to the states for over a year.

I'd been west of Dutch Harbor since the summer of 1942. Although I was not quite ready for the funny farm I'm convinced that anyone who wasn't a trifle schizophrenic after two years such as I'd put in, simply wasn't thinking clearly. I'd also accumulated enough points to rotate two men and felt strongly that I'd earned, at the very least, a recess in the stateside playground. With the arrival of new people on Attu I decided it was an ideal time to submit a request for thirty day leave. Calderon joined me.

Our requests were denied by Commander Maynard. I didn't quite go berserk or succeed in testing Emmett Smith's theory as to whether of not there would be any difficulty breaking me down from AerM1c but it was close.

"Well, Commander," I began, "if you're saying screw the navy's own point system then I say screw..."

"That's enough!" said Commander Maynard, cutting me off sharply.

Although he was under no obligation to do so, he explained with great patience, that he simply could not lose his two senior Wing petty officers at that time. Our Aleutian experience was vital because of the Wing's stepped-up activities against the Kuriles. At the first opportunity he would send us back for a tour of stateside duty or reassignment to other sea duty and these orders would include thirty day leaves. With that we were dismissed.

We'd thanked Commander Maynard but as I walked away I wondered what for? He'd somehow turned things around. I'd been made to feel that I was almost trying

to shirk my duty and owed him an apology for putting in for leave. None of us wished to earn Maynard's displeasure because he was such a fine officer and gentleman to serve under. We all knew, too, that he was working under strain and pain without complaint. For quite a while he'd been wearing a special truss for double hernia. Wing Commander Gehres refused to let him take time off for corrective surgery. Although I felt bitter resentment I found it impossible to direct it solely at Maynard.

"Anytime," mused Calderon, "that someone in this man's navy tells me I'm indispensable he's pulling a snow job."

We Lose Jack Junior Parlier,AerM3/c, USNR

On March 13, 1944, Jack J. Parlier, AerM3/c, USNR and a VB-139 PV-1 crew was lost on a bombing mission to Paramushiro. The dreaded unspoken question, of which Aleutian aerographer's mate would get killed first, had been answered. Being well aware of the odds over such a long period of time did absolutely nothing to soften the shock and sadness. Perhaps it was deepened because we'd all begun to secretly hope that if fate had spared our group this long, we might escape altogether.

Most shocking was that it happened to Parlier. It was his very first weather flight. Jack had been given one of the four sets of FAW-4 flight skins after Emmett Smith left for the states. Parlier was all smiles and proud of his new status. He wanted to make five PV-1 Kurile missions in order to earn his aircrewman's wings. He also welcomed the opportunity to earn extra pay, small as this would be, for Jack was frugal with money. I can't remember his ever gambling at cards or dice in the barracks hut. Most of his pay was sent home via money order.

Carey and Parlier were both scheduled to fly, one on a sector search patrol, the other on a Paramushiro bombing mission. To determine who went where, FAW-4 Warrant Aerographer Jack Ingram flipped a nickel. The heads-tail result was that Jack Parlier went on the PV-1 Kurile mission.

Bob Calderon and I checked Parlier out on how to go about taking an aircraft weather observation in a PV-1. He knew the AirMetCo by heart from entering hundreds of such reports on weather maps. We told

Parlier where various instruments were located in a PV-1 so he could obtain a number of readings without bothering the pilots or navigator.

We went over the method used for estimating surface wind velocity by observing the amount and nature of whitecaps and foam streaks on the water. Until he became experienced, it was suggested that he consult with the navigator on surface wind direction and velocity and also the winds at flight altitude. Upon request, the navigator would also supply position reports to coincide with Parlier's hourly weather observations. Jack was also reminded to make note of anything pertinent such as icing, turbulence, the altitude of the base and/or tops of any cloud layers that he flew up or down through.

Parlier was so excited that I doubt if he got much sleep before his flight. With great enthusiasm he tugged on his heavy, fleece-lined winter flight clothing and climbed into a PV-1 Ventura that never came back.

Few details of Jack Parlier's first and last mission are known. Another PV-1's radar operator observed Parlier's plane head for Attu after the bombing mission but it had made a 180 degree turn on the radar screen and headed back for Paramushiro. A few nights later, Tokyo Rose directed a moment of her broadcast to Attu. She asked that we on Attu make note of her following list of "brave but foolish navy airmen who had recently and needlessly been killed." Tokyo Rose then proceeded to give the name, rank/rate, and serial number of everyone aboard Jack Parlier's PV-1. This was the only information she gave.

How they died would only be a guess. Was it at the hands of Japanese fighter aircraft? Engine trouble? Anti-aircraft fire? That the bodies and/or I.D. tags were recovered would indicate that the PV-1 crashed either on land or in shallow water but whether it was on Paramshiro or Shimushu will probably never be known.

Commander Maynard gave me the sad task of cutting open Jack Parlier's locker. After his personal belongings were inventoried by an officer I packed the contents for shipment home to Jack's mother. I can no longer recall the name of the town but it was someplace in Illinois south of Chicago. His mother refused to accept the fact that her son was dead. For many months she continued to write letters to him.

About two weeks after Parlier's death Commander

Maynard was forced to send Carey over to Shemya. Royal Gould had been left holding the sack when I was recalled to Attu. Any PBY's or PV-1's weathered out of Attu were still seeking shelter at Shemya. Wing Commander Gehres directed that Maynard send an aerological officer to Shemya or see that a senior petty officer with Aleutian experience was stationed there again.

Scotty Hassell had received stateside orders and Ensign Jack Hovick and W/O Jack Ingram were our only two junior FAW-4 aerological officers at Attu. Both were standing duty forecaster watches. Carey was Maynard's logical choice for Shemya's "acting aerological officer": a position he'd held for over a year on Gillis. Carey remained on Shemya until July 25, 1944 and was the last of our original group to leave the Aleutians.

Dick Carter, AerM1/c, had also been acting O-in-C of FAW-4 weather operations on Amchitka for many months. Six search sectors were still being flown out of that base. Carter had been doing such an excellent job of forecasting that the squadron commander recommended him for warrant officer. This promotion did not go through because Commander Maynard considered Carter too young to be a warrant aerographer.

Flight skins for Attu's aerographer's mates were reduced to five sets for April 1944 but air activities against the Kuriles increased. Once again, Calderon and I seemed to be caught up in the red-eyed swirl of madness between flights and watches without end.

FAW-4 Squadrons Rotated Again

Another rotation of FAW-4 squadrons took place on Attu the beginning of May 1944. LtComdr. Marshall C. Freerks and his VP-43 PBY's left for the states after serving almost eight continuous months of mostly winter flying. Elements of PBY squadron VP-62 arrived to assume the daily sector search patrol duties.

Our other Attu squadron, VB-139, was relieved on May 5, 1944 by VB-135, the pioneer PV-1 squadron back out to Attu for its second tour. On this go-round, VB-135 was under the command of Lieutenant Commander P.L.Stahl, USNR.

VB-139 had also endured almost eight months of harsh winter flying and had suffered the inevitable

loss of plane crews and aircraft as had VP-43. These losses included four men killed in a takeoff crash, a PV-1 and crew lost on a night bombing mission(Jack Parlier), and three PV-1's destroyed in operational crashes (one of them mine), in which all crew members survived. VB-139 had carried out 78 or 100 scheduled missions.

On June 17, 1944, VB-136 arrived at Casco Field to join VB-135 for a second tour. This time around, VB-136 was under command of Lieutenant Commander Charles Wayne, USNR.

It did little for my morale to note that I'd flown with VP-43 on all three of its tours beginning in early June 1942. I'd also flown with both VB-135 and VB-136 on their first tours, initially our of Adak then later when both came to Attu. The same was true of FAW-4's other squadrons on their various rotations. Personnel, too, seemed to come and go. Even Scotty Hassell, who'd been in the Aleutians a year at most, had gone stateside. Calderon, Carey, Carter, and I, along with the wave battered rocks and Aleutian weather, seemed to be the only constants. It was hardly surprising that by the first of June 1944 I'd amassed over 1300 hours flying in PBY's and nearly 400 hours in PV-1's.

VB-135 wasted little time after taking over from VB-139 on May 5, 1944. That same night it made a nine plane bombing-photographic attack on an enemy airfield on Shimushu. Night raids of four to eight planes were carried out against Paramushiro and Shimushu targets until June 12, 1944. During these night missions of a little over one month VB-135 lost three planes and crews.

It was on this date that a dramatic change took place in the manner FAW-4's PV's attacked enemy installations in the Northern Kuriles.

From Darkness To Daylight

Photographs taken during one of these early June night bombing attacks on a Shimushu airfield revealed that exploding bombs had ignited fires in several parked Betty bombers. U.S. Naval Intelligence was extremely interested in the location and strength of these attack bombers because the navy planned a large scale task force shelling of Shimushu installations. Intelligence reported they had received information

the Japanese had constructed another airfield on Shimushu where Bettys were possibly based. FAW-4 was ordered to locate this new airfield, a mission which could not be accomplished in darkness.

LT(jg) Blakeney and his VB-135 crew volunteered to make a daylight sweep of Shimushu to verify the intelligence report. Weather did not cooperate and heavy cloud cover prevented Blakeney from determining whether or not the new field existed.

Lieutenant J.P.Vivian, was assigned to make the daylight weather reconnaissance mission on June 11, 1944. You may recall that it was Vivian who, on his first tour with Ralph Rayburn, AerM1/c along, had engaged in a dogfight with a Betty. Conditions were much more favorable on June 11, 1944 and Vivian extended his weather mission for a full sweep over Shimushu. Photographs obtained on this flight revealed the location of the new airfield.

Bettys were,indeed, based there and some had torpedoes slung under their bellies. FAW-4 was ordered to neutralize this new field and its planes to minimize the possibility of their interferring with the planned task force shelling of Shimushu.

Wing Commander Gehres ordered a six plane strike to be carried out in daylight for maximum effectiveness. VB-135's Executive Officer, Lieutenant M.A."Butch" Mason, was subsequently ordered to lead the attack accompanied by five volunteer crews. On June 12, 1944, the six PV-1's departed Attu and arrived over the airfield only to find the target cloud covered. Bombs were dropped by radar and results could not be determined.

After the bombs were released, four of the six PV-1's turned for Attu but Lt. Mason and Lt. L.A."Pat"Patteson headed southward from Shimushu. They broke out of clouds and in clear skies went to battle cruise settings for a daylight photographic run the full length of Paramushiro. On the sweep they made several strafing runs on the airfield at Kakumabetsu.

Engign Richard J. Hanlon, Lt. Mason's navigator got some good, low level photographs of Kakumabetsu with a hand-held K-20 aircraft camera. These pictures were shot while hanging out of the tunnel hatch. An aircrewman sat on Hanlon's legs to keep the navigator from falling out.

Two days later, seven PV-1's piloted by Lieutenants Bone, Chapman, Mabus, Patteson, Schutte,

Sparks, and Vivian headed for the Kuriles. Patteson's PV-1 was specially equipped with five fixed cameras. While the other six Venturas made a diversionary bombing attack on Miyoshino airfield on Shimushu, Patteson would make a daylight photographic run down the entire westsides of both Shimushu and Paramushiro.

Japanese fighter planes were in the air and anti-aircraft gun crews were alerted when the seven Venturas came streaking in under CAVU * conditions. In the confusion of the wild melee which followed, Patteson broke free and sped away on his photographic mission.

Between Dago Zaki and Kashiwabara two enemy fighters went by flying in the opposite direction at the PV-1's altitude of 11,000 feet. Because it was broad daylight and so far behind enemy lines the Japanese pilots must have assumed they had passed a twin-engined Betty. They must have done a classic double take when the PV-1's true identity registered. Surprise had been so complete that a full minute elapsed before the enemy fighters whipped around and gave chase. A running gun battle ensued.

*CAVU-Ceiling and visibility unlimited.

To gain speed Patteson dove to 8,000 feet for the run from Dago Zaki across Paramushiro to the east coast and Pacific. Patteson had to battle his way through a swarm of fighters which had, apparently, taken off from the large base at Kurabu Zaki. By diving to the deck from 8,000 feet and firewalling the throttles, Patteson was able to escape seaward unharmed. The top speed of the Ventura was so great that Japanese fighters did not have sufficient overtaking speed to make a typical fighter pass from above and behind. The few fighters that attempted to make a stern chase out to sea were quickly discouraged by Patteson's turret gunner, AOMC2/c Floyd Jacobsen who was credited with a "probable". This daring flight produced excellent photographs of five major enemy airfields and provided much needed intelligence.

Night bombings suffered at the hands of the U.S.Navy's new twin-engined fighter/bomber were one thing but these nose-thumbing, daylight intrusions by lone Venturas must have been humiliating in the extreme. Commanders of airbases overflown and photographed by Patteson and his PV-1, and those

fighter pilots who'd pursued but failed to shoot him down must have squirmed uncomfortably. They had a lot of explaining to do. The PV-1's incredible contemporary speed had made it possible but this would not be accepted as an excuse. A few of those involved must have contemplated hari-kari while others dwelled on the ominous portent of this flight.

Unfortunately, two of the six planes, including Lieutenant Vivian's, which carried out the diversionary bombing attack on Miyoshino airfield sustained battle damage that forced them to land in Russian Kamchatka. The other four Venturas made it safely home to Attu, although two had damage received from anti-aircraft fire. All eight engines of the four planes had to be replaced because of excessive use of power.

In spite of these losses, daylight bombing and photographic results were considered so superior to nighttime missions that after June 12, 1944 until the end of the war in mid August 1945 almost all FAW-4 missions to the Kuriles were carried out in daylight.

This did not completely eliminate night takeoffs because missions were staggered to keep the enemy guessing. If the mission was scheduled to arrive over the target area at daybreak or early morning it necessitated a night takeoff from Attu.

Attacks also changed drastically from the earlier night missions in both character and method. Night attacks had been carried out at altitudes of 8000 to 15000 feet. Fighter opposition was seldom encountered and flak was usually inaccurate. Daylight tactics were changed to deck level attacks. This enabled the PV-1's to stay below Japanese radar detection until the last possible moment. This surprise element often hurried enemy anti-aircraft gun crews rendering their fire less effective.

Tactics against enemy fighters remained the same:Put the Ventura's belly right on the deck to eliminate being attacked from below while the top turret guns discouraged enemy pilots and the PV-1's speed was relied on to outrun pursuit.

Most daylight attacks were made from an altitude of 200 feet or less and included strafing with the bow and turret guns. Bombs were fitted with delayed action fuses so the PV-1's would not be caught in their own bomb blasts. General purpose bombs, anti-personnel(fragmentation) bombs were used along with incendiary clusters.

In spite of the delayed fuse safequard a number of PV-'s attacked so low they were caught in bomb blasts. One pilot literally shot himself down this way and was forced to land his crippled plane on Kamchatka. Another PV returned to Attu with a gaping hole in one wing in which was lodged a large chunk of Japanese sod.

These daylight intruder attacks soon became search and destroy missions. Targets included not only enemy airfields, parked planes and related installations but coastal freighters, tankers, fishing boats, canneries, docks, warehouses, radar stations and radio stations up and down the coasts of Shimushu and Paramushiro. Marauding sweeps were also made into the Sea of Okhotsk in search of shipping. Missions were usually carried out by PV's flying in two or four plane sections. If predetermined targets were cloaked in fog or low clouds the PV's simply struck elsewhere.

I wish to make special note here that from June 12, 1944 to the end of WWII the navy weathermen who flew out of Attu were assigned to these deck level attack missions as weather observers.

As a reference point in this world conflict, June 6, 1944 marked the Allied Normandy landings in France. On our side of the globe, Central Pacific Forces landed on Saipan in the Marianas on June 15, 1944. The Battle of the Philippine Sea was fought June 19-20, 1944. Japan lost carriers Shokaku and Taiho on the 19th and carrier Hiyo and two oilers on June 20th. Shokaku was sunk by fleet submarine USS Cavalla(SS244). Taiho, Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa's flagship and newest, largest carrier in the Japanese Fleet, was sunk by fleet submarine USS Albacore(SS218). Japanese carrier planes used Guam and Roto Island airfields as refueling stops on one way bombing missions. When this became known, U.S.carrier planes intercepted. Japan lost 365 out of 400 aircraft during this two day battle. Battleship USS South Dakota received one bomb hit.

The Palau Islands Campaign was mounted in mid September 1944. This island group lies about midway between the western Carolines and the east coast of Mindanao Island in the Philippines. Taking Peleliu Island was most costly with 10,000 U.S. casualties including 2000 killed in a month of savage fighting. Peleliu's captured airstrip was used but the island was not secured until November 25, 1944. This campaign was undertaken to cover the left flank of the Central

Pacific Force's push into the Marianas and MacArthur's right flank in the Southwest Pacific Force's drive toward Mindanao. In hindsight the Palau Campaign was considered a costly mistake because it proved to be strategically unnecessary.

With massivive protection provided by the U.S.Third Fleet under Admiral Halsey and Admiral Kinkaid's U.S.Seveth Fleet, both of which were comprised of many task groups, the U.S. Third Amphibious Force and its fire support ships put MacArthur's troops ashore October 17-19, 1944 on the Central Pacific Island of Leyte.

Japan's reaction was decisive and swift. She sent four powerful task group strike forces, which comprised the main bulk of her remaining sea power, to converge on Leyte Gulf.

The series of actions which followed on October 23-25, 1944, included the Battle off Samar, Battle of Cape Engano, Battle of Surigao Strait in southern Leyte Gulf, and the Battle of Sibuyan Sea near San Bernadino Strait. All became collectively known as the Battle for Leyte Gulf: the greatest naval battle in history.

U.S. carrier aircraft and submarines played important roles. Everything from PT boats to battleships were involved in surface actions. When it was over, Japan had lost 306,000 tons of combat ships sunk including 3 battleships, 4 carriers, 10 cruisers, and 9 destroyers. Superbattleship Musashi was a victim along with fleet carrier Zuikaku last of the Pearl Harbor attackers. In the latter part of June through the first week in July 1942 following the Battle of Midway, Zuikaku, along with carriers Zuiho, Ryujo, and Junyo had operated in the western Aleutians.

37,000 tons of U.S. combat ships were sunk: 1 light carrier(CVL), 2 escort carriers(CVE), 2 destroyers, and 1 destroyer escort. Many ships on both sides were heavily damaged. For the first time, land based Japanese aircraft carried out suicide Kamikaze * attacks during which they sank one CVE and damaged five others.

MacArthur's forces became bogged down on Leyte. U.S. carrier task forces were in desperate need or rest after months of continuous combat and were temporarily withdrawn. U.S.A.A.F fighter squadrons were brought in to take over flying from captured Tacloban airfield on Leyte. Japan rushed in fighters from Luzon via Formasa and wrested air supremacy.

Kamikaze attacks continued and hit 2 U.S. battleships, 2 cruisers, 2 transports, and 7 destroyers, one of which sank. Target dates for landings on Luzon, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa were postponed.

Meanwhile, FAW-4's Venturas pursued their private war against the Japanese Empire in the Kuriles. VPB*-131, under command of Lieutenant Commander Roland Hastreiter, USNR came north for its first tour and relieved VPB-135 at Attu on October 23, 1944. All of Hastreiter's PV-1's were equipped with wing racks for aircraft rockets, a new weapon. In addition, the chin-gun package had been increased to five fixed .50 calibre machine guns. When these were

*Kamikaze(divine wind). A name given to a typhoon which destroyed Kublai Khan's fleet in 1274 thereby saving Japan from invasion.

*VPB-On October 1, 1944, the designation of all PV squadrons was changed from VB(Bombing) to VPB(Patrol Bombing). The V denoted a heavier-than-air squadron as opposed to a lighter-than-air blimp squadron of which the navy had many during WWII. bore-sighted properly the concentration of fire was so devastating that it could cut a small ship in half. Enemy fighter pilots learned to stay clear of the nose of these PV-1's which chattered with the hammers of hell.

Other modifications to FAW-4's PVs, from mid 1944 on,included installation of new, top-secret LORAN receivers, more sophisticated radio direction finders, VHF radios, radio altimeters, and an improved oxygen system.

VPB-131's primary mission was strafing and rocket attacks. These PV-1's did not carry bombs and the bomb bay area was taken up by installation of a 480 gallon fuel tank. This enabled VPB-131 aircraft to stay longer over the target. For strafing purposes the twin .30 calibre tunnel guns were retained.

VPB-131's Venturas were so tail heavy in this configuration they sat poised at the end of the runway like a see-saw overloaded on one end. Even though all armor plate had been removed aft it was necessary to move all tunnel and turret gun ammunition forward into the radio compartment. The crew also crowded into this section for takeoff to more properly balance the see-saw. After takeoff and a stable flight attitude had been achieved, the ammunition was moved aft.

For the first ten days after arrival, VPB-131

assumed sector search duties. This enabled the crews to become acclimated to the rigors of Aleutian winter flying before they joined VPB-136 on Kurile attack missions. In addition to patrol duties, VPB-131 and VPB-136 continued hit-and-run attacks against Kurile targets throughout that late fall of 1944 and the winter of 1944-1945. These missions were often closely coordinated attacks with VPB-131 carrying out strafing and rocket attacks in one area to draw Japanese fighters while VPB-136 conducted bombing and strafing attacks against targets in another area.

Bombing Kurile targets had proved not only impractical but disastrous for the U.S.Army 11th Air Force and its slower bombers. Because of the 700 mile distance to targets it was impossible to send fighter escort. On the last daylight raid of September 11, 1943, only 7 out 25 bombers returned after being intercepted over Paramushiro by upwards of 100 enemy fighters. U.S.Army 11th Air Force B-24's and B-25's resumed attacks on northern Kurile targets in November 1944 after a fourteen month hiatus. First target selected for heavy B-24 bombing was the large airfield complex at Kurabu Zaki on Paramushiro's southern tip. B-24's of the 28th Bombardment Group carried out this high level bombing mission on November 4, 1944.

To reduce one of the many hazards of this daylight bombing attack by B-24 Liberators, FAW-4 sent four PV-1's of VPB-131, led by skipper Hastreiter, on a diversionary strafing and rocket attack to the north to draw off enemy fighters from Kurabu Zaki.

Having been on sector patrol duties since its arrival on October 23, 1944, this marked VPB-131's initiation to Kurile attacks. Targets selected were installations on Toroshima Rhetto. This group of small, rocky islands is located about ten miles off the east coast near Paramushiro Strait which separates Paramushiro from Shimushu.

This feint by VPB-131 was successful in that the B-24's obtained good results with minimum fighter opposition. Sadly, the large number of Hamp * fighters which attacked LtComdr. Hastreiter's four strafing PV-1's at Toroshima shot down Lieutenant Ellingboe's Ventura which hit the water in a fiery explosion that left only a burning gasoline slick.

For FAW-4 the price was high but on the cruel scales used to measure and balance war missions the joint venture was judged highly successful. Resumed air force efforts against the Kuriles brought members

of a U.S.A 11th Air Force weather group to Attu. Counterparts of FAW-4's aerographer's mates these men were trained to "fly the weather" on combat missions. They also stood watches with the aerographer's mates at the Casco Field office.

Two weathermen had already been killed in Aleutian operations against the enemy: one a civilian, Mr. Charles Foster Jones, the second a navy man, Jack Parlier. In November 1944, a third weatherman gave his life when a Sergeant Hastings of the U.S.Army 11th Air Force weather team was shot down in a B-25 raid over Paramushiro.

December 26, 1944 marked the date of a second joint army-navy Kurile air attack. This coordinated effort also proved to be the last. This time while FAW-4's Venturas drew enemy fighters to the south, 11th Air Force B-24's and B-25's were to strike targets on

*Hamp-Allied code name for the Japanese Mitsubishi A6M-3, Navy carrier or land based fighter which was a later model of the famed A6M-2 Zeke Zero. northern Paramushiro.

Although the PV-1's succeeded, once again, in attracting a swarm of angry hornets, the B-24's and B-25's were attacked over the Strait of Paramushiro by a great number and variety of enemy fighters. Bombers of the 11th Air Force were badly shot up in this raid.

A twelve minute error in timing, apparently, had occurred and it was never determined whether the PV-1's struck early or the army bombers arrived late or vice-versa. Undoubtedly, Japanese radar picked up the large, grouped formations of high flying 11th Air Force bombers while they were still far out at sea. Because of the number of enemy airfields on Shimushu and the northern end of Paramushiro the Japanese had more than enough fighters to chase the Venturas and also intercept the B-24's and B-25's. This fact is borne out by Japanese estimates that between mid 1943 to early 1945 she had been forced to send one sixth to one fourth of her total aircraft production to the Kuriles.

Whatever the reason--this joint army-navy attack was a dismal failure and it strained relations so badly that from that date on, FAW-4 and the U.S.Army 11th Air Force conducted their operations completely independent of one another.

Occasional rifts such as this had occurred

throughout the Aleutian Campaign but they were mostly at the higher echelons. FAW-4 and 11th Air Force pilots and aircrewmen had nothing but the highest respect for each other. Although we had little personal contact, a silent bond of the strongest fabric was formed that endures to this day: All flew in the Aleutians, something which must be experienced to be fully understood.

1944 neared its end with MacArthur's forces invading the Philippine Island of Mindoro on December 15, 1944. During this operation cruiser USS Nashville, veteran of the Aleutian Campaign, was hit by a Kamikaze. The butcher's bill from this suicide attack was 133 killed and 190 wounded.

1944 went out with a roar when a typhoon struck Philippine waters on December 18th. Admiral Halsey's senior staff aerologist, Commander George F. Kosco,USN, recommended a course change but Halsey chose to take Carrier Task Force 38 of his U.S.Third Fleet into the teeth of the typhoon. Three U.S. destroyers capsized and sank. Seven other ships were heavily damaged. 800 officers and men lost their lives. 186 carrier planes either broke their lashings and were blown over the side or were so badly damaged they had to be jettisoned.

Admiral Nimitz appointed a board of inquiry presided over by Vice Admiral John H. Hoover,USN. Admiral Hoover recommended that Admiral Halsey be court-martialled. Admiral Ernest J. King,USN of the Joint Chiefs of Staff concurred with Admiral Nimitz that Halsey was too popular a figure with the public and with his men to publicly censure because it would be too damaging for morale. The wording of Nimitz's reprimand, overly kind to begin with, was further softened by Admiral King. Part of the blame was shifted to insuffient weather data. A scapegoat was found in Captain Wilbur M. Lockhart,USN, senior member of U.S.Naval Aerology and Admiral Nimitz's staff aerologist at Pearl Harbor. Lockhart was never promoted to rear admiral.

Nimitz issued a Fleet Letter of advice for dealing with severe storms. In spite of this, Admiral Halsey took his carrier task force into another typhoon on June 5, 1945. This time, cruiser USS Pittsburgh lost her bow, 32 other ships were damaged and 142 aircraft were destroyed. Again, Vice Admiral Hoover was appointed to head a board of inquiry. Again, the board placed most of the blame on Halsey.

Again, for the same reasons, Halsey received only a reprimand but this second typhoon almost cost him his career*.

Headline news came early in the new year. U.S.Forces made landings at Lingayhan Gulf on Luzon, P.I., January 9, 1945. Tiny but strongly fortified Iwo Jima was invaded by U.S.Forces on February 19, 1945. More than headlines blazed the night of March 9-10, 1945. On that date B-29 super fortresses based in the Marianas carried out the first firebomb raid on Tokyo. 250,000 homes were destroyed, 83,793 Japanese men,women, and children were burned to death, and 1,000,000 left homeless. This single raid caused more total destruction than either atomic bomb dropped later.

*Source:Nimitz:E.B. Potter,Naval Institute Press, Annapolis,MD,1976. Pages-349-351 and 376-377. A New Plane For An Old Squadron--An Old Plane For A New Squadron

While Tokyo burned, VPB-139, this time under command of Lieutenant Commander Glenn A. David, USNR returned to Attu for its second tour and relieved VPB-136 on March 12, 1945. VPB-139 was equipped with a new plane--the PV-2 Harpoon--a modification of the PV-1 Ventura.

Wing racks for rockets, five gun chin package, extra fuel tanks, LORAN, VHF radio, radio altimeter, RDF, et al were the same as those of VPB-131's late model PV-1's. However, ten feet of wingspan had been added which provided greater surface area and less critcal wing loading per square inch. Width of the tail section had been increased by three feet and the two vertical tail fins were less elongated and more circular in shape than on the Ventura. These modifications improved the handling characteristics over that of the Ventura but at a cost of reduced top speed. In appearance, however, the PV-2 Harpoon so closely resembled the Ventura that it is doubtful the Japanese were aware a modification had taken place.

Like its predessor, the Harpoon had some teething problems. Most serious of these were the wing struts which were found to be inadequate under severe stress. The U.S.Bureau of Aeronautics issued an order restricting, somewhat, the use of the plane. This did not prevent the PV-2 Harpoon from carrying out rocket,

strafing, and light bombing attacks on Kurile installations while the problem of strengthening the wing struts was worked on.

Naturally, the aerological personnel on Attu also flew the weather in these Harpoons during deck level attacks on the Kuriles.

After an indoctrination period, VPB-139's Harpoons took over the attack role because of their longer range and the PV-1's of VPB-131 assumed the duties of sector searches. Both squadrons operated out of Attu until near the end of the war in August 1945.

August 1, 1945, two weeks before Japan surrended, VPB-135 equipped with the new PV-2 Harpoon, arrived at Attu for its third tour. About the time the war ended VPB-135 relieved VPB-139 of all duties.

At the same time, a new FAW-4 squadron, VPB-120, relieved VPB-131. VPB-120 was equipped with an old but modified aircraft, the B-24 Liberator. Modified for long range patrol bombing and designated PB4Y the navy had used large numbers of these aircraft with great success in the Central, South, and Southwest Pacific theatres during the final two years of the war. They were used for long range patrol duties in the Aleutians and aerological personnel also flew the weather in this aircraft.

29

Some Final Pieces Are Put In Place

It has not been possible, or necessary, to chronicle aerological activities during the latter stages of the war at rear echelon bases such as Dutch Harbor and Adak. The names of some aerological personnel who saw duty in the Aleutians are, therefore, missing from this account. I regret these omissions.

Additional information has been provided, however, on navy weather personnel and some of their activities at the forward area bases of Amchitka and Attu during the final year or so of World War II. This data comes from men who arrived on Attu about the time I left and helps to round out the U.S.Navy Weathermen's Aleutian story.

Russell "Jack" MaHood, AerM2c, USNR, came to Attu around the first week of June 1944. On November 24, 1943, his ship, escort carrier Liscomb Bay(CVE-56) was sunk in a colossal explosion off Makin Island, one of the Gilbert Islands of the Central Pacific. Liscomb Bay took a torpedo hit in a magazine. 650 officers and men out of her crew of 900 died in the disaster. MaHood, a third class at the time, W/O Lyle Blakely, CAerM Donald A. Cruse, AerM William Pinder, and one other man, the five aerological personnel survived the explosion. Adrift on rafts or debris they were later rescued from the sea.

After survivor's leave, MaHood reported to FAW-14 at NAS North Island, San Diego, CA. in January 1944. Here he met Chuck "Williwaw" Herold, Don Livingston, and Robert Kerr, all recently returned from Aleutian duty.

MaHood received orders to FAW-4 at Attu in late March 1944. It took over a month to reach Adak and another five weeks before Mahood arrived at Attu. He

recalls that he reported to Rolfe, AerM1c at the FAW-4 weather barracks hut and was assigned a bunk. I had apparently left Attu by then because MaHood states that Rolfe seemed to be senior enlisted man until CAerM Dietrich arrived in late June. FAW-4 Aerological Officer W/O Frank Kilmer arrived shortly after Chief Dietrich.

It was about this time that FAW-4 Headquarters was moved from Adak to Gehres's Point on the narrow penninsula that separates Casco Cove from Massacre Bay. The Wing Weather office also moved to this location and became separate from the NAF weather office at Casco Field. Commander Devine was still O-in-C of the Casco Field office. Commander Maynard had either been transferred to the states or was in the hospital recovering from his long delayed hernia operation because MaHood states that Lieutenant Jack Ingram was senior aerologist at the Wing office.

Jack MaHood did not fly out of Attu and was there only a few weeks when he was transferred to Amchitka. That summer of 1944, Amchitka was primarily a large U.S.Army 11th Air Force base, the sum total of U.S.Navy personnel present numbering about forty with most being attached to FAW-4. Dick Carter had left Amchitka and the FAW-4 weather office was in charge of a Lieutenant Hutchinson,(not to be confused with Commander Howard B. Hutchinson), a graduate of Washington University, St.Louis, MS.

There were five FAW-4 aerographer's mates in addition to MaHood, namely: Edward Sellinger, New York city; Edward Bacharz of Chicago; Fred Wood, Beach Creek, KY; Percy Kreigh from Lee's Summit, MS; and John Ryan of New York who was later sent to officer's candidate school.

Four additional U.S.Navy weathermen on Amchitka were all working with and on detached duty to the 11th Air Force. These four, all from California, were Stone(San Francisco); Bayer (Los Angeles); Frank Johnson (Long Beach); and Tucker (Porterville).

Weather schedules were copied by FAW-4 navy radiomen and signals were also received from Air Force communications via teletype. The four navy weathermen attached to the 11th Air Force came over to the FAW-4 weather office daily to analyze maps and gain other experience.

It was on Amchitka that Jack MaHood received his first set of flight skins and quickly learned the hazards of air operations in the Aleutians. In short

order he flew through his first weather front in a PBY and on another occasion got "weathered out" of Amchitka.

Aerological officer, Lt. Hutchinson, was also a thermodynamicist and was in charge of conducting experiments to dispel summer fog. On the day MaHood's PBY got weathered out, they had returned from a long patrol to find Amchitka socked in solid with fog. Lt. Hutchinson had lit his many kerosene filled cans strategically placed along both sides of the runway to burn off the fog. These fires were visible from above but they weren't dispelling any fog at ground level. The PBY pilot made three approaches and touched the wheels down each time but then hurriedly opened up the throttles and took off again because he could not see the end of the runway.

After the third hair-raising attempt to land failed, radio orders were received to land elsewhere. As was usually the case, most western Aleutian airstrips were also fogged in at the same time. The PBY finally landed safely at an isolated, emergency airstrip.

This place was manned by four army "coast watchers" who lived in the only hut and they, "sure had a lot of liquor". Jack MaHood didn't mention the name or location of this airstrip. It sounds too coincidental, though, to be anything but Emmett Smith's Ogliuga in the Delarof Islands. MaHood and his PBY crew were forced to accept the coast watchers hospitality for a whole week--presumably because of bad weather.

Lt. Hutchinson's fog dispelling experiments had failed in the field and he returned to the states for additional research. He was relieved as O-in-C of the Amchitka office by Lieutenant Charles Winter, USNR, a former school teacher, originally from Hoskins, Nebraska.

Living conditions and recreation facilities had improved greatly from the early days at Amchitka. Movies were shown twenty-four hours a day and there was plenty of beer. Each man had a case or more stashed under his bunk the way we used to keep field rations. While MaHood was stationed on Amchitka, the FAW-4 enlisted personnel built their own beautiful beer hall, the Golden Dragon, and MaHood became the secretary. USO troupes toured the Aleutians more often and Bud Freeman and his U.S. Army band and Tommy Tucker's band visited Amchitka the summer of 1944.

In keeping with three other oddball Aleutian dogs: Explosion, the mascot on Kiska; Felix, the armed sentry's dog on the dock at Sand Point in the Shumagin Islands; and CAerM Ralph Darr's dog, Rusty, at Dutch Harbor, Amchitka had "Boots", perhaps the strangest pooch of all.

Boots was a black and tan pup acquired by Charles Watters, FAW-4 aviation photographer's mate. Did you ever hear of a dog that absolutely would not eat anything except oranges? Unfortunately, Boots did not receive wide acclaim because he died at an early age from malnutrition.

MaHood was transferred back to Attu in late 1944 where he began flying with the other navy weathermen in PV-1 Venturas and PV-2 Harpoons. Sellinger and Bacharz also ended up on Attu. FAW-4 and NAF Attu navy weathermen stationed on Attu from late 1944 through 1945 included: aerological officers Lieutenant Rubel, who had been on the faculty at Stanford University, and Lieutenant Ralph Carmen, of Euclid, Ohio. Enlisted men included Guido Sartori, Kingman, Arizona; Clanence Mantooth, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Duncan Ross, Detroit, Michigan; Roger Thomas, Guthrie Center, Iowa; Alan McLeod, Montclair, New Jersey; Robert Wyman, Moscow Mills, Idaho; Karl Kipp, Los Angeles, California; Robert McEnroe, New York; and Anderson, AerM3c from Chicago.

To this list we must add Walter W. Babic, he of the large frame and huge appetite. Babic had left Dutch Harbor with Lieutenant Max Jack, Emil Beer, and others in September 1942 to set up the weather station at Nazan Bay, Atka. He had been stationed on Atka for a year and a half during which time he'd gone on several thirty day leaves. In mid 1944 Babic chose to return to the Aleutians and reported to Attu as an AerM1c shortly before I left for the states. Babic hadn't changed since I'd last seen him and readily admitted, "I'm buckin' for chief."

Many of these men along with the aforementioned Charles Lynes, Jim Ledbetter, and W/O Frank Kilmer went on the search and destroy missions to the Kuriles until hostilities ceased. A few of them earned the Air Medal on these dangerous attack missions, two being W/O Frank Kilmer and MaHood. Both were over Paramushiro Strait in a PV when it was hit by a shell fired from the deck gun of an unidentified submarine. A piece of shrapnel buried itself in Kilmer's posterior for which he also received the Purple Heart.

In addition to flying through concentrated flak in the Kuriles and engaging in running air battles with Hamps, Oscars*, and Tojos**, these late arriving navy aerographers also experienced the routine chills of Aleutian flying.

To quote from one recent letter: "I've been out when an engine conked out, when we were going to ditch, when the turret gunner was blasting away and I could only guess at what, when Attu was fogged in solid on our return, when we landed with wounded crewmen, when we landed with holes in the plane, and when we landed with only a thimble-full of gasoline left." Sounds familiar--doesn't it?

To make certain these navy weathermen never forgot where they'd served, Aleutian weather gave them a parting reminder in mid June 1945 when Attu clocked winds of 187 knots (216 mph). This was the same typhoon that struck Japanese waters earlier in the week(June 5, 1945), damaged many U.S. ships and sank an estimated one half of what was left of the Imperial Japanese Fleet.

Earlier that spring in the Central Pacific, massive U.S. carrier air strikes were launched on March 18th and 19th against enemy airfields on Kyushu preparatory to the Allied invasion of Okinawa scheduled for early April 1945. Japanese aircraft struck

*Oscar- Allied code name for the Nakajima Ki-43, Type 1 "Hayabusa" Army land based fighter.

**Tojo- Allied code name for the Nakajima Ki-44, Type 2 "Shoki", Army land based fighter. back damaging five U.S. carriers including the USS Franklin commanded by Captain Leslie E. Gehres, formerly commanding officer of FAW-4. Gehres had taken a reduction from his temporary rank as commodore to command the USS Franklin. He'd been her captain only a few weeks when disaster struck.

Rear Admiral Ralph Davison, USN, Commanding Carrier Task Group 38.4 had his flag onboard. Davison's Air Operations Officer was Captain James S. Russell, USN, former skipper of FAW-4 PBY squadron VP-42. Russell was in charge of planning the air attacks on Kyushu airfields.

700 hundred of USS Franklin's crew were killed and the ship was knocked out of the war. Gehres brought the crippled hulk home to the U.S.Navy

Shipyard in Brooklyn, N.Y. and received a heroes welcome.

The Allied assault on Okinawa took place on April 1, 1945. On May 8, 1945 Germany surrended. Japanese air attacks, particularly Kamikaze, reached a frenzied peak during the Battle of Okinawa. By the time Okinawa was declared secured on June 21, 1945, 26 U.S.Naval vessels had been sunk and 368 damaged. 4900 sailors had been killed and a like number wounded.

It was on Okinawa that General Simon Bolivar Buckner,Jr's utter disregard for personal safety cost him his life. Commander of the U.S. Tenth Army and all ground forces during the Battle of Okinawa, General Buckner was killed by shrapnel from a Japanese artillery shell on June 18, 1945 while at a forward observation post. The two and a half month battle ended four days later.

U.S.Fleet units cruised up and down Japan's east coast bombarding cities and installations through July. U.S.carrier planes attacked airfields, naval bases, docks, and factories and sank or damaged remnants of the Imperial Japanese Fleet. Waves of 500 and more U.S.Air Force B-29's based on Okinawa and the Marianas were destroying huge areas of Japan's major cities.

Heavy cruiser USS Indianapolis, veteran of many Pacific engagements and participant in the early phase of the Aleutian Campaign, came within two weeks of surviving the war. On March 31, 1945, a kamikaze crashed into Admiral Spruance's flagship. The bomb penetrated several decks and blew holes in her hull. Spruance shifted his flag to battleship USS New Mexico and sent Indianapolis to Mare Island Navy Yard where several months of repairs put "Snafu Maru" back in fighting trim.

After delivering uranium 235 for the atomic bombs to Tinian on July 26, 1945, Indianapolis was sent to Guam. Two days later she was ordered to Leyte Gulf. Proceeding on a steady course rather than a zig-zag one, Captain Charles Butler McVay,USN had his battle scarred heavy cruiser midway across the Philipine Sea on the bright moonlight night of July 29, 1945. Shortly before midnight she was struck by torpedoes fired from an I-boat. The ship sank so quickly an estimated 350 to 400 men out of a crew of 1216 went down with her. Precious time was lost before Indianapolis was reported overdue at Leyte Gulf.

Currents scattered the survivors. Some were able

to form groups by swimming to overcrowded life rafts. Others gathered floating debris and fashioned crude rafts. Some were alone in the water. Many were severely wounded and did not live long. 500 men survived the sinking but died in the water while awaiting rescue. Sharks took a gruesome toll. After four days and nights only 316 men were found alive. Among the listed dead was Edward S. Alvey, Jr., AerM2c, USNR.

By August 2, 1945 the component parts of two atomic bombs had been delivered to Tinian. At 0915 hours on August 6, 1945 the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. The USSR considered this the opportune moment and Declared War on Japan on the evening of August 8, 1945. The second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki at 1101 hours August 9, 1945.

Soviet armored divisions, troops, and aircraft had been transferred from the western European front to Siberia upon Germany's surrender in May of 1945. These Soviet forces attacked the Japanese Army in Manchuria along a wide front and also invaded southern Sakhalin Island. On August 17, 1945, after Japan had accepted our Peace terms, Soviet amphibious forces based at Petropavlovsk began conquest of the Kurile Islands with an assault on Shimushu Island.

Our long, bitter struggle with Japan ended with her unconditional surrender on August 15, 1945. In reviewing all that the U.S. Navy Aleutian weathermen had been through, during the forty-four and one half month war with Japan, it is incredible that Jack Junior Parlier was the only one killed. Until they were found alive in POW camps we thought that Charles House, James Turner, and Walter Winfrey had also paid the ulitmate price. Other aerographer's mates, also long believed dead were discovered alive in POW camps.

The importance of obtaining vital weather information in wartime placed members of U.S.Naval Aerology in harm's way. House, Turner, and Winfrey's presence far out on Kiska, 650 miles from the nearest help, is only one example. Others in vulnerable positions were either captured or killed in the early months of WWII when Imperial Japanese Forces overran almost everything is sight. The following lists are submitted as stark evidence:

SURVIVORS

CAPTURED

Bircher, Norman D.	Aerog2/c, USN	Guam
Cook, Walter J.	CAerog(AA) USN	Wake Island
Dixon, Floyd A.	Sea1/c USN('A'School)	Wake Island
House, William C.	Aerog1/c, USN	Kiska
Jones, Robert W.	Aerog2/c, USN	Guam
McConn, Donald W.	Aerog2/c, USN	Corregidor
Menna, William A.	Aerog3/c, USN	Corregidor
Miller, Howard D.	Aerog3/c, USN	Wake Island
Mullen,Jimmy "Moon"	Ensign, USN	Corregidor
Pinson, Barton F.	Aerog2/c, USN	Corregidor
Rhine, Lloyd R.	Aerog3/c, USN	Corregidor
Sager, William H.	Aerog1/c, USN	Guam
Suomi, Sulo W.	Aerog1/c, USN	U S S Huston
Tarnowski, Zemo C.	Aerog1/c. USN	Corregidor
Turner, James L.	Aerog2/c, USN	Kiska
Winfrey, Walter M.	Aerog2/c, USN	Kiska

Died While POW

Cook, Harry	Aerog1/c, USN	Executed Palawan
Jones, Luther	CAerog (A), USN	Executed on Guam
Payne, Harold K.	Aerog3/c, USN	Executed Palawan

KIA/MIA (Not POW)

Lee, Walter Glenn	Aerog1/c, USN	U S S Houston(CA30) 28 Feb/01 Mar. 1942 Sunda Strait.
Lentz, August W.	LtCmdr, USN	USS Wasp(CV7) 9/15/42 off Solomon Is.

Skyrum, William E.	CAerog, USN	Lost on flying mission Canton-Johnstone Island area 1943.

The foregoing information is courtesy of the Navy Weather Service Association and appeared in the November 1980 Aerograph, the quarterly publication of NWSA. The lists were compiled by Lieutenant Commander Bruce DeWald, USN who is continuining his research on members of U.S.Naval Aerology who were either POWs, or were killed or missing in action during WWII. Commander DeWald has recently been given the information about Jack Parlier, L. Rusek who was killed in that anti-submarine PBY takeoff crash near the mouth of the Columbia River in early 1942, and Edward S. Alvey, Jr., lost on the USS Indianapolis.

Many U.S.Marines went through weather school at Lakehurst. NJ with us. In my class, for example, there were six Marines. Two of them, along with classmate Floyd A. Dixon, were sent to Wake Island. They must have been killed or captured and DeWald is checking U.S.Marine Corps records to include such fellow weatherman in future lists.

In the Aleutians the U.S.Navy weathermen took part in one of the strangest campaigns ever fought. Actions took place along a chain of scattered islands the steaming volcanos, snow capped peaks, innumerable fiords, and torturously jagged terrain of which stretch a thousand miles across seas that are among the world's roughest. The campaign was fought in a savage climate and often under impossible conditions.

Overshadowed by events which received world-wide publicity, its many "firsts" and important contributions to victory in the Pacific cloaked in secrecy, the Aleutian Campaign of WWII slipped quietly into oblivion. This in spite of the fact it took place on the doorstep of the U.S. Pacific Northwest and included the only capture of U.S. home soil on North America by enemy forces during WWII. Man-for-man, U.S. troops fought the second bloodiest battle of the Pacific to recapture Attu.

Firsts included: recovery of a flyable A6M-2 "Zeke" Zero fighter; a "Rufe" float model of that aircraft; an intact Japanese torpedo; intact Japanese Mark IV contact mine; capture of five prisioners who were believed to be the first to arrive in the

continental U.S.; and theatre victory over Japan.

The first major Allied offensive in the Pacific began in early June 1942 with attacks against the entrenched Japanese on Kiska and Attu. On Attu, for the first time it its history, the U.S. Army made an amphibious assault on an island. USS Nassau was the first of the U.S.Navy's new escort carriers to see action during the Battle of Attu. The Battle of the Komandorskiye Islands was the longest surface engagement in naval history. Island hopping strategy was used for the first time when Kiska was bypassed to attack less heavily defended Attu.

From the standpoint of aviation history alone, particularly military aviation, the Aleutian Campaign should be remembered for it was also the initial combat of the P-38 Lightning, P-39 Airacobra, B-26 Marauder, and PV-1 Ventura. It was likely also the baptismal fire for the P-63 Kingcobra and PV-2 Harpoon because the nearby Aleutian front was a handy proving ground. Colonel Eareckson invented skip-bombing and developed this technique during attacks against Japanese ships in Kiska Harbor. Kiska's Japanese also experienced the first use of bombers and fighters combined attacking at deck level height: another idea of Eareckson's.

P-38 pilots of the U.S.Army 11th Air Force 54th Fighter Squadron were not only the first Lightning jockeys to see combat but they were the first to use single engine procedure to extend the P-38's range. At Attu in June 1943, the 11th Air Force had also equipped a number of B-25 Mitchell bombers with 75mm cannon mounted in the nose. I recall that one of these so equipped bombers crashed on takeoff from Alexai Point in early July 1943 while I was still on the Casco. I believe these two Aleutian firsts were claimed a year or so later as having been achieved by other U.S.Army Air Force squadrons operating in the South Pacific. This will give the reader some idea of how little was known about Aleutian operations even within the military.

During the Battle of Dutch Harbor U.S.Navy Fleet Torpedo Units, for the first time in WWII, rigged army bombers with this weapon. Lest we forget, it was also the first time PBY's were used as dive bombers and the first time navy weathermen, trained as aerial gunners, "flew the weather" as combat aircrewmen.

During the occupation of Adak and Amchitka and the amphibious assaults on Attu and Kiska, Lieutenant

Commander ,(later Captain),Carl E. "Squeaky" Anderson first perfected his skills used so successfully later on in campaigns in the South and Central Pacific for which he earned the reputation: Lengendary Beach Master of the Pacific.

Colonel Benjamin B.Talley, USA, who later achieved the rank of Brigadier General, was summoned to London for consultation in planning the Normandy landings. Engineering experience learned the hard way in the Aleutians, particularly in regard to how man-made structures were effected by strong wind and wave action, was put to good use. No docking facilities were available for Allied use along the French coast bordering the English Channel. Talley designed a floating pier that could to towed into position then anchored. After the initial D-day landings these piers made it possible to put men, heavy equipment, and supplies ashore quickly and safely where needed.

The Aleutian Campaign cost the U.S. and Canada about 500 aircraft and the Japanese 269 planes. Both Allied and Japanese Air Services estimate that sixty percent of their total losses were caused by weather.

Perhaps one of the highest tributes paid to U.S Aleutian airmen came from the enemy. Commander Shigefuso Hashimoto, IJN, attached to Japanese Naval Headquarters at Tokyo was interrogated after the war by Captain James S. Russell, USN. In referencce to the Aleutians, Commander Hashimoto stated that he, "Respected greatly that Americans flew and attacked in weather which the Japanese considered impossible for air operations." This was, indeed, high praise considering it came from a member of a race that places such great value on courage.

Even with knowledge of the reasons it is still difficult to comprehend how a campaign fought so closeby as Alaska and in which an estimated 10,000 men died and almost 800 aircraft were lost could be so little known. The Aleutian Campaign of WWII deserves greater recognition than the mere footnote accorded in most histories of World War II.

Few Americans, then or today, ever heard of the Aleutian Campaign: fewer still of FAW-4's twenty continuous months of PV-1 Ventura/ PV-2 Harpoon attacks against Japan's Kurile Islands,--a phase that could well be termed the unknown war within the forgotten war.

A new generation of American servicemen, civilian

construction workers, cannery workers, and fishermen, numbering in the thousands, is today scattered throughout the Aleutian Islands. They gaze in wonderment at the crumbling, rusting ruins of "our" war and ask, "What in the world happened up here, anyway?" This book should answer some of their questions.

Although considerable material for this book was contributed by officers including the commander of a submarine, three squadron commanders, a number of PBY and PV pilots and navigators, and aerological officers, it is not to be construed as an official U.S.Navy history of the Aleutian Campaign. I have attempted to let the reader share that unknown campaign primarily from the "working man's" standpoint through the eyes of a small group of navy aerographer's mates. Collectively they took part in every significant event, major to minor, from the beginning of the war to the very end. The story has been told with the realization that different participants view events from different perspectives. This is the way we saw it.

As in other theatres of WWII, the members of U.S.Naval Aerology who served in the Aleutians had no stereotype. They were killed, captured, shot at by enemy shore batteries, ships, enemy aircraft during aerial engagements, anti-aircraft fire, strafed, bombed, torpedoed, and depth charged,--Flying, Fighting, Weathermen.

Poem

There's a wild, lonely island chain
That curves toward Siberian Kamchatka
The Aleutians they're referred to by name
Near their midpoint's a rock known as Atka

Summer fog surrounds the whole group
Fierce winter storms are unending
Planes must grope through the "soup"
The volcanic peaks are unbending

Everyday life is a cliff hanging chore
The birthplace of storms is not forgiving
When this place was chosen for war
It meant "three strikes--you're out" for the living

Chapter XXIX

On land, sea, air, and one ocean
Opposing forces played hide and seek
The weather 'round rumbling islands in motion
Seldom gave more than one peek

High brass on both sides planned and plotted
An advantage to counter each loss
But many plans were scrapped or just rotted
'Cause Aleutian Weather's real boss

The living have buried the heroes a few
Williwaws still shriek and moan
But there's Peace on Kiska and Attu
Displaced Aleuts are once again home

Our lonely war's all but forgotten it's true
And it's best not to linger or dwell
But from Dutch to Adak to Paramushiro
We survived our cold corner of hell

The End

Chapter Notes

Chapter III

1. Dr. Francis W. Reichelderfer is more readily known as being
Chief of the U.S.Weather Bureau from 1938 until his retirement in 1963. However, his contributions to naval aerology are equally
impressive and predate his civilian career.

He received his commission as ensign upon graduation from the U.S.Naval Academy in 1918. That same year, Reichelderfer completed flight training at NAS Miami and Pensacola. His meteorological career began in 1919 when he was assigned to Lisbon, Portugal to support the first Trans-Atlantic flight by U.S.Naval aircraft. In September 1919 he received balloon training at Naval Air School, Akron, Ohio then participated in free balloon races at St.Louis 1919; Indianapolis, and Brussels, Belgium in 1923; Akron 1928; Pittsburgh 1929, and Huston in 1930. From 1922 to 1928 Reichelderfer was O-in-C of the Naval Aerological Service.
From 1928 to 1931 he was attached to the airship USS Los Angeles. In 1936, while Executive Officer of NAS Lakehurst, NJ, he served as observer aboard the ill-fated German dirigible Hindenburg.

In 1938, while Reichelderfer was at sea in USS Utah, Willis Ray Gregg, Chief of the U.S. Weather Bureau died. The Civil Aeronautics Authority(CAA), deeply concerned by the Weather Bureau's outmoded forecasting method at a time of rapidly expanding airline service, insisted that either Gregg's successor be someone outside the U.S. Weather Bureau with strong credentials in aviation meteorology or they (CAA) would start their own weather service.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Reichelderfer to the post because he was a natural choice. The Weather Bureau had been slow to adopt air mass analysis that Reichelderfer had intro duced to navy aerology in 1922,--and did not adopt until

Reichelderfer's appointment as Chief in 1938.

Reichelderfer had a choice to make because in order to accept Roosevelt's appointment he had to resign his navy commission. This he did and his appointment was quickly confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

Chapter XI

1.I-class submarines were an interesting development of the innovative Japanese. Huge in comparison with the submarines of other navies the I-boats displaced upwards of 5000 tons and were used for many purposes during WWII. In one application they carried up to three small float planes housed in a deck hangar. Capable of carrying several small bombs, these planes were used to scout ahead of the submarine or for other reconnaissance. Other I-boats were used as fuel tankers, supply, or troop transports. Japanese submarines primarily sought U.S. and Allied naval vessels as targets while German U-boats preyed on merchant shipping. Naval historians generally agree that this policy was a costly mistake on Japan's part.

2.Junyo was converted in early 1942 from the 27,000 ton Japanese luxury liner, Kashihara Maru. During the Battle of Santa Cruz Island in the Eastern Solomons on October 26, 1942, less than five months after the Dutch Harbor attacks, dive bombers from Junyo led by the same Lieutenant Shiga damaged the U.S. carriers Enterprise and Hornet. All efforts to save Hornet failed and she sank the following day. The Hornet had launched Colonel Doolittle's B-25 bombers for the attack on Tokyo and Yokohama on April 18, 1942.

Junyo survived the Battles of Santa Cruz and the Philippine Sea. She was finally hit west of Kyushu, southernmost of Japan's home islands on December 8, 1944, four years to the day of the Pearl Harbor attacks(Japanese time), by torpedoes fired from U.S. Fleet submarines USS Redfish(SS395) and USS Sea Devil(SS400). The heavily damaged Junyo remained at Sasebo Naval Base until the war's end and was scrapped in 1947.

Lieutenant Commander Masatake Okumiya, Admiral Kakuta's Air Operations Officer on Ryujo during the Dutch Harbor attacks later served aboard Junyo in the Battle of Santa Cruz Island and the Battle of the Philippine Sea. "She was a good ship," he stated.

Ryujo, a smaller carrier of 11,700 tons, was built

in 1933. On April 18, 1942 her flight deck was hit by a bomb from one of Dootlittle's B-25 Tokyo raiders but the considerable damage was quickly repaired. Planes from the U.S. carriers Saratoga and Enterprise sank Ryujo on August 241, 1942 during the Battle of the Eastern Solomons less than three months after she led the attacks on Dutch Harbor.

3.The Imperial Japanese Navy was the only navy during WWII to possess this unique and useful type of ship. The Kamikawa Maru and Kamikama Maru were identical both having been built by Kawasaki Shipyard, Kobe, Japan in 1937. Converted from fast merchant ships they had a speed of 17 knots and displaced 6,863 tons. Both were equipped with one or two catapults and the cargo derricks had been retained for hoisting and lowering seaplanes. They could operate with eight aircraft or carry up to twenty-four. These two seaplane carriers were active in Aleutian waters throughout the campaign.

Chapter XII

1. In 1932, after two years duty in BuAer., Lieutenant Commander Wilbur M."Red" Lockhart, USN requested and was ordered to sea duty as aerological officer of the USS Saratoga with additional duty on the Staff of ComAirPacFlt. Before leaving the Bureau, Lockhart's immediate superior, Commander Marc A. Mitscher, USN,(later to gain fame as a Pacific Fleet carrier admiral in WWII), called Lockhart into his office and asked for some recommendations as to where naval aerology was going.

Lockhart's first recommendation was that a Weather Survey should be made of the North Pacific including the establishment of at least three weather observing stations, one in the the middle Aleutians so as to collect reports and study weather in that area to prepare for possible war with Japan. At that time no daily weather reports were received from ships west of the 180th meridian and our only land reporting stations in that area were Dutch Harbor and St.Paul Island, both 1000 miles east of the westernmost Aleutian Island.

Lockhart returned from fleet maneuvers in early 1933 to learn that plans were underway to conduct the North Pacific Weather Survey and that he had been recommended by CinCPac to lead the survey. Lockhart reported to USS Argonne at San Pedro, CA. Argonne was the flagship of Commander Harry A. Badt, USN who had been designated to

lead a Survey of Adak Island for possible anchorages and airfield sites. This fitted into the proposed weather station site in the middle Aleutians where Com 13 in Seattle had arranged with the Kanaga Ranching Co. for the use of their buildings to house the six man team of 2 aerographers, 2 radiomen, 1 pharmacist mate, and 1 cook. It was decided to place two additional aerographer's mates on St.Paul Island as observers while the officer in charge of the Aero. Expedition would base at Dutch Harbor where the navy maintained a radio station.

Argonne and Commander Badt, who was designated Commander Aleutian Island Survey Expedition (Comalisex) were to spend from April until late August in the vicinity of Adak and could use weather forecasts in their daily work. Lockhart decided to ride westward in Argonne in order to gain valuable experience in forecasting during that summer and to oversee the setting up and early functioning of the weather station at Kanaga. Lockhart assumed the title of Commander Bering Sea Aerological Survey Expedition(ComBeraerosex).

Argonne spent a month in Puget Sound Naval Shipyard during which Lockhart and the weather group went through the General Supply Account Catalogues(Wish Books) and ordered equipment and such supplies as they could for a station that would be isolated for at least seven or eight months, except for occasional small vessels that supplied Kanaga Ranching Company's fox farmers. The food question came to the fore when it was discovered that the navy would have no way of providing for for these men unless they had a Supply Officer and could set up a regular Mess which in this case was out of the question. The solution was to have the men order all their 7-8 months food supply from a wholesale grocer in Seattle; have the men make out monthly Allotments to cover the cost and hope they would make it which they did.

Both expeditions and Argonne left Puget Sound in late March
1933 and arrived at Adak in early April 1933. They were greeted
by their first Williwaws and a minesweeper was blown aground.

By late April 1933 the navy weather station at Kanaga had been set up under Chief Aerographer's Mate Schnooberger, AerM3/c Henry Duncan "Red" Robinson, two radiomen, a ship's cook 1/c, and a chief pharmacist's mate. The weather station routine consisted of taking 3 hourly reports, twice daily upper air balloon soundings, intercept of Japanese weather broadcasts, and certain

Russian broadcasts from Khabarovsk covering Siberia all of which were relayed on to the USS Argonne and Dutch Harbor.

Chief Aerographer's Mate William G. Lindeman spent most of April and May flying between Dutch Harbor and Attu as photographer in a Loning, three place amphibian. The purpose of these flights was to obtain oblique photographs of the Aleutian Islands. This work was accomplished with the help of the USS Swallow, a Bird type tug and aircraft support vessel, which towed a roofed over barge in which the personnel lived and which housed the photographic laboratories.

In late May 1933, Lockhart sent Lindeman and AerM3/c Jimmy Shelton to St.Paul Island via U.S.Coast Guard cutter after an earlier attempt to reach St.Paul by the Swallow failed when she became stuck in the ice and had to rescued by a USCG cutter. Lindeman and Shelton lived and worked with the large navy radio crew already on the island. The weather routine on the Pribilof Island of St.Paul was basically the same as that carried out on Kanaga and all reports were relayed to Dutch Harbor.

In March 1934, the owner of the Kanaga Ranching Co. decided that he would terminate the lease on his building on Kanaga. No reason was given. Commander 13th Naval District in Seatle sent the USS Swallow north to decommission Kanaga. The Kanaga people and gear were removed, stopped briefly at Dutch Harbor enroute to the states while those on St.Paul and at Dutch Harbor continued work until mid-May 1934 when these two functions were shut down.

For several years a lull in Aleutian Naval Weather activity followed although there are reports lthat in 1935 or 1936 Willie Gruber, AerM1/c,USN who was also a naval enlisted pilot(AP), made aerial survey flights in the area.

1937-1938 Kanaga Weather Expedition

The Kanaga weather station was reestablished in 1937. Facilities used were the same ones leased from the Kanaga Ranching Co. earlier. These were located at the head of a small, horseshoe-shaped bay on the SSE coast fronting on Adak Strait.

Lieutenant Ross R. Kellerman,USN was in charge of this expedition. The group included aerographer's mates CAerM LaVeree Cowell,USN, and AerM3/c,USN Mason O."Moe" Irwin, three radiomen, a chief pharmacist's mate, and a first class ship's cook.

Tragedy struck this group on January 19, 1938 when Chief Pharmacist's Mate R.R.Gibson and Ship's Cook First Class Clyde C. Musick disappeared while on a hunting expedition. No trace of the men, rifles, tent, food supplies or hand-drawn sledge was ever found. Most believe that the two men and their equipment fell into one of the many sink holes on the island. A few theorize that the two men may have run into a clandestine operation by Japanese Naval Intelligence. Many Japanese "fishing" boats were in those waters and Japan had embarked on her expansionist empire building having already moved into Manchuria and part of China.

A month later disaster struck again when the venerable fleet tug USS Swallow, which had participated in the earlier 1933-1934 expeditions, hit the channel rock at the narrow entrance to the bay while bringing in supplies and replacement personnel. A newspaper account of that time states:

"FLEET TUG GROUNDED

The Naval fleet tug, Swallow, commanded by Lt. A.L. Main, USN, went aground on Kanaga Island, one of the Aleutian chain, on February 20 while taking replacements and provisions to the Naval meteorological station on that island.

Latest reports at the Navy Department say that the Swallow has been abandoned by her crew and is fast aground. The Navy Department announced that as yet no salvage operations had begun but that it was doubtful that the Swallow could be completely salvaged.

The Swallow's crew are believed to be enroute Sitka, Alaska. The replacements were to take over at the meteorological station for Clyde C. Musick, Ship's Cook 1c and R.R. Gibson, CPhm, who were lost on a hunting expedition on Jan. 19, 1938."

Trouble continued to plague this expedition when CAerM Cowell failed totally in an attempt at suicide with a double-barreled shotgun. A tug was dispatched from Seattle for the dangerous winter journey to remove Cowell and take him to the Bremerton Naval Hospital for observation and psychiatric examination.

Cowell had come within a few months of graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy. He was offered Chief in any rating and had chosen aerology. The naval hospital psychiatrist declared Cowell to be one of the sanest and most intelligent men he'd ever examined. The doctor recommended that Cowell be returned to active duty immediately,--in the states.

1938-1939 Kanaga Weather Expedition

This unit arrived at Kanaga aboard the cruiser USS Astoria on the evening of July 19, 1938. Astoria was available for transportation because she had missed fleet exercises having been ordered to take the ashes of a Japanese diplomat who had died in Wash.D.D. back to Japan. Moe Irwin, AerM3/c,USN who would one day retire as a Rear Admiral, was so glad to see his wild Kanaga tour end that he came out to the Astoria in a small open boat to greet his relief crew. "Boy, am I glad to see new faces," he said.

The new crew was in charge of Lieutenant Irwin F. Beyerly, USN, who wrote one of the text books in use when I went through primary aerographer's school at Lakehurst. CAerM William E. Skyrm, USN, and Robert D. Case, AerM1/c,USN were the other weathermen. Others in the group were CRM William Carson Jones, Jim Elder,RM3/c, Robert Harry Anderson, RM3/c, Pharmacist's Mate 1/c "Hoot" Gibson(same last name but no relation to the CPhm lost on the hunting trip), and Ship's Cook 1/c Ed Mallette.

That summer of 1938, Chief Skyrm and Bob Case made three dangerous trips by small boat out to the Swallow wreck on personal salvage expeditions. On the last trip Skyrm removed the brass helm which he presented to Lt. Beyerly. Heavy swells almost crushed the small boat against the slanting sides of the Swallow and after this narrow escape no further trips to the fleet tug were made. Subsequent storms totally destroyed the valiant Swallow.

1939-1940 Kanaga Weather Expedition

Officer in charge of this relief crew was Lieutenant Martin C. Burns, USN, accompanied by CAerM Henry D."Red"Robinson,(who'd spent 1933-1934 on Kanaga as an AerM3/c with Chief Schooberger), Virgil A. Starr, AerM3c,USN, plus three radiomen, a cook, and a pharmacist mate.

This unit was aboard cruiser USS Chester enroute to Kanaga when word was received that Kanaga would be decommissioned and gear and personnel moved to Dutch Harbor. At Dutch Harbor the men would set up a more elaborate weather station as part of a large Naval

Operating Base(NOB) for which $15,000,000 had recently been appropriated. Chester arrived Kanaga on July 7, 1939 where she anchored outside in an open roadstead. Station gear and personnel were shuttled out by launch. Many trips were required and it was a dangerous operation because of heavy swells that put launches far below dangling lines one moment then sent them soaring high above the deck the next.

USS Chester took the Beyerly, Skyrm, Case group to Bremerton after dropping off Lt. Burns, Robinson, and Starr at Dutch Harbor. It was this later group that set up the weather office on the boardwalk that was still in use in 1942.

Lt. Burns, Robinson, and Starr were relieved in August 1940 by Lieutenant George R. Stone, USN, CAerM Ralph P. Darr, USN. and Robert D. Darden, AerM3c, USN.

I became a link back to this succession of early Aleutian aerographers when I arrived at Dutch Harbor at the end of March 1942. Chief Darr was still there as well as Darden who'd made
AerM1c by then. Lieutenant Stone had been relieved earlier by Commander Thomas C. Thomas, USN.

Chapter XV

1.A short time later the body of Captain Thornbrough's radioman, still strapped in his seat, washed ashore and was discovered by a PBY crew returning from patrol. The Army 11th Air Force requested that LtCmdr. James S. Russell, skipper of VP-42, provide a PBY to take an army burial party to the site. It was feared that Alaskan Brown bears might eat the remains.

LT(jg) Lucius Campbell and his crew had been on light duty status for several weeks recovering from having been shot down by Zeros and later rescued from the sea by the USCGC Nemaha. Russell ordered Campbell to take one of two new PBY-5A replacement aircraft, fly the burial party to the scene, and put them ashore by rubber raft.

The burial party completed their work but found it impossible to get back through a rising surf to the PBY. Campbell thought the beach to be both straight and long enough for takeoff and the sand appeared firm. Rather than leave the burial party marooned ashore overnight without shelter or provisions, Campbell decided to taxi into the beach.

Campbell made it safely through the surf, which was higher than he had estimated from offshore, lowered his

landing gear, and taxied out onto the beach.

The army burial party climbed aboard and Campbell swung the PBY around into the wind and in line with the beach for a takeoff attempt. However, the sand was softer than anticipated and each time Campbell opened the throttles the nose wheel buried in the sand. After much hand shoveling, the PBY was manuevered around to face the surf.

At the water's edge the sand was firm so Campbell taxied out into the surf until he was in deep enough water to retract the landing gear. He gunned the engines to takeoff power and slammed into the first large breaker offshore. Rock-hard solid water hit both whirling propellors and the props and massive hubs were ripped from their shafts and sank. Campbell cut the engine switches and the disabled PBY drifted onto the sandy beach.

After the plane had been secured with lines to prevent further damage, Campbell radioed Russell for assistance saying only that he and his PBY were stuck on the beach with the army burial party.

Russell, with emergency supplies, took off on a rescue mission in the other new replacement PBY-5A. When he arrived and made a low fly-by over Campbell's PBY he was horrified to see two gaping black holes where propellors and hubs should be. Signal panels were dropped to the stranded men and they were asked to spread the appropriate ones on the beach. These signal would answer the standard questions: 1. Are there any injured? 2. Do you need medical assistance? 3. Do you need medical supplies? 4. Do you need food and water?

Need food and water, was the only panel spread when Russell flew low overhead a few moments later. These supplies were dropped. On the next pass Russell observed a few men on the beach casually wave while others did not even bother to look up as they busily ate food like they were on a picnic.

Russell dropped additional food, a couple of tents, sleeping
bags, a rifle and ammunition, and a message for the shore party to hike twenty miles eastward to Port Moller. Here a rescue could be affected on inside, sheltered waters.

Forty-eight hours later the men were picked lup at Port Moller and returned to Cold Bay. A navy salvage team and tug recovered Campbell's PBY and took it to Kodiak for repairs.

The airfield at Cold Bay was subsequently named Thornbrough Field in honor of the valiant 11th Air Force

Captain who gave his life in a courageous attempt to inflict damage on the Dutch Harbor attackers.

2. Theis and Larson had been on a long, overnight patrol out of
Dutch Harbor. The navigator had not dropped flares during the dark hours to check his wind drift. When daylight landfall was made it was discovered that the PBY had been blown far eastward almost to Cold Bay. With bearings established, a course was set directly for Dutch Harbor, a route PBY's seldom used, and this took Theis directly over Koga's crashed Zero on Akutan Island.

3. A6M2 Reisen Navy Type O, carrier model, Mitsubishi "Zero". The
U.S. code name for this aircraft was "Zeke". It was the standard carrier and shore-based fighter used by the Japanese throughout the war.

Specifications: 950 hp Nakajima engine, maximum speed 332 mph, cruising speed 207, range 1930 miles, time to 19,685 ft.(6000 m.) 7 minutes 27 seconds, service ceiling 32,810 ft., wing span 39'4 1/2 ", length 29' 8 3/4", armament: two 20mm type 99 cannon in wings, two 7.7mm. machine guns in upper fuselage.

The tail code on Koga's Akutan Zero was 08 for number of fighter, D represented the Fourth Koku Sentai(Carrier Division), I represented First Carrier (Ryujo), and I stood for carrier fighter.

Chapter XVI

1. French Frigate Shoal had been similarly used by the Japanese
as a refueling stop for two "Emily" Kawanishi seaplane bombers that conducted the little known second bombing of Pearl Harbor on March 4, 1942. A Japanese I-boat reconnoitered Pearl Harbor earlier, reporting that extensive repairs and salvage operations were being carried out on the damaged and/or sunken U.S. battleships. In order to disrupt this activity the night raid by the two Emilies was ordered.

Japanese cryptologists broke out weather code in early 1942 and their meteorologists had been using our weather reports to aid them in preparing accurate forecasts. We made a routine change in the weather cipher on March 1, 1942.

Without accurate knowledge of the existing weather over the target area the two Emilies took off from French

Frigate Shoal. They approached the Hawaiian Islands only to find them socked in with heavy rain clouds. The incoming planes were detected by the U.S. Army radar station on the island of Kauai, northwesternmost of the Hawaiian Islands. An alert scrambled Army P-40 Curtiss Warhawks which took off into the black night to intercept. No contacty with the Emilies was made.

The Emilies, hindered by the same bad weather, inaccurately dropped their bombs in the hills behind Pearl Harbor and in the sea. No damage was done.

When it was over, those in Hawaii were not convinced that a Japanese attack had actually occurred. The U.S.Army and U.S.Navy each pointed an accusing finger at the other. Each branch assumed the storm and darkness had caused faulty navigation which resulted in the other's planes jettisoning bombs over that which they believed to be open water.

The inter-service squabble died but the U.S.Navy, on the slim chance that the bombs had, indeed, been dropped by long-range Japanese seaplanes, deduced that the only possible place that could have been used as a refueling stop was French Frigate Shoal. Accordingly, the navy heavily mined the entrancel to the lagoon. Then with the Battle of Midway approaching, decided to use the French Frigate Shoal lagoon as a safe refuge-refueling base for our PBY's.

Had I-121 arrived on May 23, 1942, (three days earlier), she could have observed a defensive anti-submarine minefield in action for on that day the U.S. patrol boat, YP-277, ran on her own minefield and was blown up.

In effect, the March 4, 1942, second bombing of Pearl Harbor had a delayed boomerang result on the Japanese.

2. This Kawanishi flying boat bomber, code named "Emily" by the U.S. became operational in early 1942. It was a vastly improved design over the older Kawanishi "Mavis" the enemy employed in the Aleutians. It was also far superior to any seaplane bomber we possessed during the war. One Emily captured intact at war's end was flown and tested extensively and outperformed our somewhat similar four-engined Consolidated PB2Y-3 "Coronado" in every respect. The Emily is considered by experts to be the

finest, long-range, flying boat bomber ever built.

Kawanishi H8K2 Emily specifications: Four Mitsubishi 1850 hp Kasei/22 engines, maximum speed 290 mph at 16,400 ft., cruising speed 185 mph., service ceiling 28,740 ft., maximum range 4460 miles, empty weight 40,521 lbs., loaded weight 71,650 lbs. wing span 128' 8"(1722 sq.ft.), length 92' 4", height 30 ft.. The Emily carried a crew of ten. Armament consisted of 20mm cannon in the bow, dorsal, and tail turrets and two 20mm cannon in beam blisters plus four 7.7mm guns in cockpit, ventral and side hatches. Maximum bomb load was 4408 lbs or two 1764 lb torpedoes.

3. Nimitz had sent the Halsey Enterprise/Hornet task force speeding to the Solomons to help Yorktown and Lexington in the Battle of the Coral Sea but they had arrived too late.

4. The Battle of the Coral Sea was the first carrier-air battle of the war fought on a large scale. It too changed the course of the war because Japan was forced to cancel plans for a large scale amphibious assault on Port Moresby on the island of New Guinea thereby removing an immediate threat to Japanese invasion of Australia.

5. Yorktown was abandoned the afternoon of June 4, 1942 and lay dead in the water that night and the next day guarded by one destroyer. By noon on June 6, 1942, she was taken in tow by the tug Vireo, and guarded by six destroyers she was being towed back to Pearl Harbor. Destroyer Hammann was alongside supplying power and portable pumps. A salvage party was on board Yorktown and they were making progress in reducing her twenty-seven degree list.

The Japanese submarine I-168, one of about two dozen in the Midway area, arrived at the reported position of the abandoned Yorktown 150 miles northeast of Midway on June 6, 1942. I-168 came upon the towing operation and shadowed all that day trying to get into position to fire torpedoes. Finally, late that afternoon in spite of the six destroyer screen, I-168 fired four torpedoes, one of which hit Hammann amidships breaking her back and sending her to the bottom almost immediately. Two other torpedoes hit Yorktown but she stayed afloat until the next day before sinking.

Chapter XVII

1. AP or NAP denoted an aviation pilot enlisted man. Superior intelligence, character, and leadership were a few of the qualities necessary for an enlisted man to be selected for pilot training. Those AP's who were aviation machinest mates also had the practical knowledge and experience of having worked on the planes we flew. This included being able to tear down a Pratt-Whitney Twin-Wasp engine and put it back together again. Such pilots were usually better able to recognize the cause of a developing mechanical problem. It was not surprising that AP's were generally considered to be among the top pilots in our squadrons. Those with combat experience were quickly promoted to junior commissioned officer rank.

On this particular flight the Patrol Plane Commander(PPC) was an AP AVMM1c, his co-pilot was a Lt(jg) gaining experience, and the navigator was an ensign. Although this flight deck makeup may appear strange it was not an unusual one for that short, hectic period of the Aleutian Campaign.

Chapter XIX

1. Most of these B-17's were caught on the ground and destroyed at the Hickam Field U.S.Army Air Force base during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Chapter XX

1. It is a documented fact that over 250 survivors of the Casco torpedoing, plus some Williamson wounded, and PBY aircrewmen found shelter in the native houses at Nazan Bay, Atka for ten days beginning on the night of August 30, 1942. This may cause some controversy because it refutes the accepted story that all houses in the village were burned to the ground two a half months earlier on the night of June 13, 1942 when Gillis and Hulbert evacuated the natives and pulled back from Nazan Bay.

Chapter XXI

1. Japanese commanders who took part in the Battle of the

Komandorskiye Islands were impressed with the daring and skill with which Captain R.S. Riggs, USN, handled his small squadron of four destroyers: Bailey, Coghlan, Monaghan, and Dale. The Japanese were astounded at the accuracy of the U.S. destroyers' gunfire which accounted for hits on Japanese ships. The U.S.destroyers had to close within relatively short range of the Japanese cruisers in order for their 5.38 calibre guns to reach the enemy ships. The hits did not cause heavy, crippling damage because of the small calibre.

2. Rear Admiral John W. Reeves, USN assumed command as Commander
Alaska Sector (COMALSEC) on June 26, 1942. COMALSEC was a
separate command from COMNORPAC which was considered to be an offensive command while Reeves command received orders from Commander 13th Naval District in Seattle. Commander 13th Naval District's command encompassed all U.S.Naval shore based installations and their personnel in Alaska.

Chapter XXII

1. There remains an air of mystery on how Mr. Jones came to be in
the hills and precisely how he died. Mrs Jones stated that on the day Attu was invaded the Japanese locked her and her husband in the schoolhouse where they were both beaten. Later that day, Japanese soldiers took Mr. Jones away and she never saw him again. Some surviving Attuans claim that Foster Jones took off into the hills either before or during the confusion when the village was occupied. These natives are of the opinion that because of his additional duties as Attu's weatherman/radioman, Jones possessed vital information and did not want to be captured. Mrs Jones and the natives could both be correct for there is the possibility that Jones could have escaped after he was taken from the schoolhouse.

Charles Foster Jones body was disinterred in August 1947 and reburied with military honors in Anchorage. Frank Lakinoff and Alex Proffokoff, Attu Aleut POWs, accompanied Colonel T.C. Franks, Grave Registration Officer, to Attu to reclaim the body. Lakinoff, whom the Japanese had forced to help dig the shallow grave, was able to recognize its exact position. It was discovered that Jones's body had a bullet hole behind the ear. The angle at which the fatal bullet entered proved that it

could not have been self inflicted. This does not prove conclusively, however, that Jones was murdered in cold blood because it posses several interesting questions. Why would the Japanese bother to take Jones into the hills to shoot him when it would have been a far more impressive example to any rebellious natives to kill Jones in their presence? Why would the Japanese kill him then go to the trouble of slashing a dead man's wrists to make it appear a suicide? For what purpose would the Japanese resort to such initial subterfuge then do an about face, save Mrs Jones's life and insure that she would also not succeed in any further attempts to commit suicide?

The question possers offer one possible explanation for Jones's death. At some point he did escape into the hills with Japanese soldiers in pursuit. In the belief that he would most likely be tortured and killed anyway, he did slash his wrists. By the time the Japanese caught up to him he was beyond help and they administed the coup de grace. The Japanese were certainly guilty of committing atrocities during the war, as were others on both sides, and I'm not attempting to absolve them of blame in this instance. This theory deserves our consideration, at least, because it is consistent with Japanese treatment of Mrs Jones in particular and the Attuans in general.

This is an explanation of these extra pages.
They are not part of the original manuscript but have been added as I have gone through the author's notes and paper.

1: Copy of email from Frank Baillie, Retired US Navy, Lt.
During 1949 & 1950 Frank as an Aerographers Mate Second Class
Worked for Paul E. Carrigan then Chief of the weather station North Island,
San Diego, CA

2: Map of a portion of the Aleutian Islands

3: Photos of Akutan Volcano, two of Dutch Harbor and of a C.F.A. PBY-5A

4: Author's Biography

5: BOOK REVIEW by Norman Macomber, retired Master Chief Aerographer and past President of the Air Ship Chapter of The Naval Weather Service Association.

6: A COPY OF A PICTURE OF ADMIRAL JAMES S. RUSSELL,
THE AUTHOR PAUL E. CARRIGAN AND ADMIRAL HENRY S. MONROE.

7: A COPY OF A PHOTO OF ADM. RUSSELL, TOM SPITLER
PAUL E. CARRIGAN AND ADM. MONROE, REUNION 8/1980

8: COPY OF LETTER FROM LARRY REINKE, COL. USAFF, ret.
TO ADMIRAL RUSSELL
COL. REINKE WAS THE 11th ARMY AIR FORCE INTELLIGENCE OFFICER ON
ADAK AND IT WAS HIS IDEA THAT OUR AIRCRAFT
COULD REACH AND SUCCESSFULLY BOMB THE JAPANESE
KURILE ISLAND AND RETURN TO THE ALEUTIANS.

9: A COPY OF LETTER FROM ADMIRAL RUSSELL TO THE AUTHOR
PAUL E. CARRIGAN.

10: A COPY OF PAINTING "FLEDGLINGS" THIS IS THE SUBJECT OF
NUMBERS 5 AND 6 ABOVE.

11: & 12: COPIES OF LETTERS OF APPRECIATION FROM THE
DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORC AND THE NAVY

13: COPIES OF TWO PICTURES OF THE AUTHOR AND A CLIPPING FROM
THE OCTOBER 1944 ISSUE OF FLYING MAGAZINE.

1/22/06--Revised: 8/20/09 --4/8/10
Revised: 8/20/09===April 8,10

From: "Frank Baillie" <xwxguynavy@wavecable.com>
To: "bro Fred AGCM Baillie" <fredilu@bellsouth.net>
Subject: Excerpts from my NWS mini-history
Date: Thu, 18 Aug 2005 21:13:31 +0000

FYI - I am in contact with Cdr Zemo Tarnowski's widow, Lois. She plans to send me material about the early days breifly noted below. I hope to put together an essay for Aerograph (Naval Weather Service Association newslewtter) based on Cdr Tarnowski's material. New movie "The Great Raid" is based on the Cabanatuan POW camp. Zemo ended up WW2 as a POW in Japan.. bfn, Frank (Fred. I'll send this to Marines & Other military addressees with a FWD)

Corregidor Falls on 6 May 1942 - According to CDR Tarnowski there were no weather men in the Bataan Death March since they all moved to Corregidor. The March apparently consisted of men who were captured on the mainland. TSGT "Bob" Taylor USMC, assigned at MCAF Tsan Kou, outside Tsingtao, China in 1948 and 1949, was reputed to have survived the Bataan Death March. **Aerog 1/c Jimmy Mullen, Zemo Tarnowski and Harry Cook, Aerog 2/c Don W. McConn and Aerog 3/c Barton F. Pinson were all POWs.** S 1/c William A. Menna, Harold R. Payne and Lloyd R. Rhine were all assigned to the Navy Ground Defense Force and were captured and made POWs. **Harry Cook and Harold R. Payne were reported as killed while on a working party while confined at the Cabanatuan Prison Camp, Palawan Island. Data in this paragraph comes from CDR Zemo Tarnowski.**

Early Reverses - On 10 Dec 1941 the island of Guam surrendered to invading Japanese troops. Aerological personnel on board included Caerog Luther Jones who was beheaded by Japanese troops along with RM1 Weed when the men were captured in the jungle. Aerog 1/c William H. Sager, Aerogs 2/c Norman D. Bircher and Robert W. Jones were captured.

Wake Island Surrender - on 23 Dec 1941. Aerological personnel captured were Aerog 1/c Walter Cook who would return to Lakehurst as a commissioned Meteorology instructor in the mid 1940s, Aerog 3/c Howard D. Miller and S 1/c Floyd A. Dixon. Two marine aerographer's mates and A school class 22 classmates of S 1/c Dixon were also on the island according to X-AGC Paul Carrigan. No information on their fate is available

[Back]

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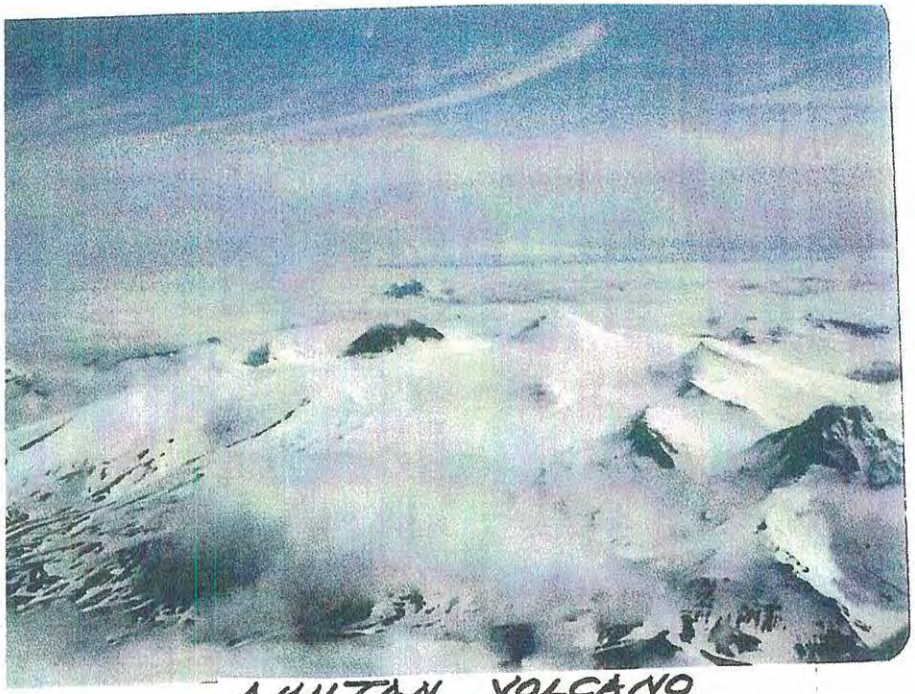
Cape Wrangell
ATTU
Steller Cove
Holtz Bay
Attu
Sarana Bay
Chinkof Pt.
NEAR ISLANDS
Agattu Str.
Alaid I.
Nizki I.
Sherman I.
EARECKSON A.F.S.
Agattu Island
Ingenstrem Rocks
Buldir Island
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
RAT ISLANDS
Kiska Volcano
Kiska Island
Cape St. Stephen
Kiska Harbor
Vega Bay
Little Kiska I.
Davidof I.
Segula Island
Khvostof Island
Rat I.
Little Sitkin I.
Anvil Peak
Semisopochnoi Island
Pochnoi Point
Sugarloaf Head
Oglala Pass
Aleut Point
Bird Cape
Chitka Point
Amchitka Island
St. Makarius Pt.
East Cape
Amchitka Pass
Gareloi Island
Tanaga Volcano
TANAGA ISLAND
Tanaga Pass
Tanaga Bay
Cape Sudak
Bobrof I.
Kanaga Volcano
Mt. Moffett
ADAK NAVAL A
Adak Str.
Adak I.
Kanaga Island
Little Tanaga Island
Umak I.
Kagalaska Island
Cape Vikak
Cape Ulak
Cape Ugamak
Cape Sarmik
Cape Chuniu
Beaver B.
DELAROF ISLANDS
Amatignak Island
Ulak Island
Ogliuga I.
Kavalga I.
Skagul I.
Unalga
ANDREANOF
TIMEIA



ARUTAN VOLCANO
NEAR DUTCH HARBOR
MAY 1985

DUTCH HARBOR

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DUTCH HARBOR

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Title: The Flying, Fighting Weathermen of Patrol Wing Four.
Author: Paul E. Carrigan.
Imprint: Regal-Lith Printers c2002.
Physical Description: Three volumes with 873 8 ½ x 11 pages 6 illustrations in total.
Printed as original manuscript/margin corrections included.
Bibliography: Includes working table of contents and fifteen pages of chapter notes.
Subject: Personal Paul E. Carrigan.

Born:	August 11, 1923	Little Falls, New Jersey
Died:	June 22, 2001	VA Hospital, Seattle, Washington

Education:

Elementary: Little Falls #1, Little Falls, New Jersey
High Schools; Montclair High School, Montclair, New Jersey
Passaic Valley High School, Little Falls, NJ

U S Navy:

Boot Camp:	Newport, Rhode Island	February 1941
Primary Aerographer's School:	Class 22, Lakehurst, New Jersey	
Fleet Air Wing Four:	Aleutian Islands, Alaska	1941 to 1944
N.O.B.	San Diego, CA	1944 to1946
N.A.B.	Kodiak, Alaska	1946-1947
Advanced Weather School	Lakehurst, New Jersey	1947
Chief, Weather Department	N.O.B. San Diego, CA	1948 – May 1950

Life after the Navy:

Rancher, Farmer, Logger, Logging truck owner-operator
Neff Ranch, Orting, WA From June 1950 to 1975

Commercial salmon fisherman, Pacific Ocean out of the Willapa Bay, Tokeland, WA. From 1975 to 1984
Keeper of the federal government tide gauge at Willapa Bay, Tokeland, WA
From 1975 to 1996
(Hopeful author From 1980 to 1996)

Subject: Corporate Name United States Navy Biography.
The Flying, Fighting Weathermen of Patrol Wing Four
Subject: Topical Term: World War, 1941-1945—Weather operations, American.
Subject: Topical Term: World War, 1941-1945—Naval operations, American and Japanese.
Subject: Topical Term: Campaigns — Alaska — Aleutian Islands
Subject: Topical Term: World War, 1941-1945—Personal narratives, American.
Subject: Topical Term: Aerographers, combat airmen, including pilots.
Subject: Geographic Aleutian Islands (Alaska) -- History

Book Review by Norm Macomber
The Flying, Fighting Weathermen of Patrol Wing Four

Author: AGC Paul E. Carrigan

Paul was born on 11 August 1923 in Little Falls, New Jersey. He died on 22 June 2001. The Roaring Twenties and The Great Depression, along with the urban environment of northern New Jersey shaped his formative years. If one has the perception that this situation was a rather tough setting in which to grow up, that perception would be totally correct. At age 8, Paul received a set of boxing gloves and headgear for Christmas. For the next few years, Paul spent a great deal of time learning the art of boxing. With a less than benign temperament and a growing ability to defend himself, Paul was occasionally on the wrong side of the law and saw the U.S. Navy as a means to see the world.

After Recruit Training at Newport, RI, Paul was sent to Primary Aerographer's School at Lakehurst, NJ and matriculated with Class 22.

BOOK: The book is a 3-volume set of the memoirs of Paul that chronicle W. W. II, primarily in the Aleutian Islands. Paul did extensive research utilizing the libraries of Admiral James S. Russell USN (Ret) and Captain Carl H. Amme USN (Ret), along with many other primary and secondary sources, plus the personal recollections of the many weather personnel and flying personnel involved in the Aleutian campaign from 1941-1945.

The book is very detailed about the weathermen (and others), chronicling them by name and exploits. For example, a few of the weathermen cited include: Max Jack, Max Mull, Lester Mallory, William Douglas, John McQuarrie, Burton Lindley, "L" "R" Upton, T.J. Bliss, Ralph Darr, Elzie Carey, Richard Carter, Richard D. Ackerman, Ralph Rayburn, Jesse Vowell, Charles Patterson, Claude Giles, Walter Zamorski, Sander Podmanski, Donald Livingston, Emmet Smith, Glenn Olson, William Stewart, Walter Babic, T.O. Hollihand and R.E. Vernon. This list is not exhaustive.

To give you a flavor of the writing style and some idea about the level of detail, here is a passage from Paul's memoirs: (Volume 1, Chapter 15, page 34) "The sunshine recorder was an instrument with a clock mechanism that drove a small cylindrical metal drum to which a chart was attached. A large magnifying glass mounted on the top of the case was supposed to catch the sun's rays and burn a pinpoint trace on the slowly revolving chart. No one could recall ever having seen a sunshine mark on any of the charts. The sunshine recorder sat expectantly on a post outside the weather office.

In addition to his regular duties, the task of changing sunshine recorder charts had been assigned to "L" "R" Upton upon his arrival at Dutch Harbor. Chief Darr held him responsible to see that this duty was performed without fail. Upton took quite a ribbing about all this and soon developed a hatred for the

sunshine recorder.

During the height of the second day's attack, with bombs exploding, Zeros strafing, and a great amount of firing taking place, Upton momentarily ran out of Zeros to shoot at. He searched for a target and spied an enemy, the sunshine recorder several hundred yards away.

He got off two shots and missed before a Zero came in on another strafing run at the radio shack. During the remainder of the raid Upton did not get a chance to take aim again at his secondary target. When the firing ceased it was too late. Upton had missed his golden opportunity. As a result he had to continue changing unmarked sunshine charts until he was transferred to Nikolshi on Umnak Island about the middle of June 1942."

AVAILABILITY: Chief Carrigan became ill and passed away before he had the opportunity to finish his memoirs. As a result, the final rough draft (#6) of the project remained dormant for an extended period of time. Recently his widow (Jean) decided that his work should be made available to those interested and enlisted Paul's brother Ralph to bring the project to print. Ralph Carrigan took the final rough draft and found a printer willing to publish it on an individual book basis (no mass production). This method is neither efficient nor economical, but the family does not want a large quantity of books gathering dust. The system will accommodate all of those individuals interested in acquiring this exhaustively researched and interestingly written book.
TO OBTAIN:Anyone wanting to read a copy of Paul's memoirs can obtain one by Contacting Ralph O. Carrigan, 5 Cutlass Way, Waretown, NJ 08758
(609) 693-9736 or by email rocarr28@comcast.net

It should be noted that the project is being presented with the idea of making the historical record available to anyone interested. It certainly is not being done as a means of generating profit. PS: June 2010, copies are or will be available at no charge as long as possible. Printing and mailing is being done by the U.S. Park Service in Anchorage, Alaska

Admiral James S. Russell Paul E. Carrigan. Ex Chief Aerographer's Mate Admiral Henry S. Monroe

Starting in February 1942 Paul flew with then Commander Russell. Skipper of VP-42.
For weather observation for the invasion of Kiska, Paul served aboard the S-35. This submarine was commanded by the then Lieutenant Henry S. Monroe. For this voluntary duty Paul E. Carrigan was awarded a letter of Commendation, which included advancement in rate.
11th Army Air Force Reunion held on the Island of Adak, August 1980. Admirals Russell and Monroe were invited to the reunion to represent the Navy. They agreed to attend if they could invite Carrigan.

AUGUST 1980 ARMY AIR FORCE / NAVY REUNION

REEVE ALEUTIAN AIR TERMINAL ON ISLAND OF ADAK, ALASKA

Left to Right: REAR ADMIRAL HENRY S. MONROE, USN (ret)
COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE USS -35

PAUL E. CARRIGAN, ex-CHIEF AEROGRAPHER

TOM SPITLER, REEVE'S ADAK STATION MANAGER

ADMIRAL JAMES S. RUSSELL, USN (Ret)
COMMANDING OFFICER OF SQUADRON VP-42

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COPY FOR PAUL CARLSON

7 Sept 1990

9/14/90

Dear Admiral,

I carried this reproduction to Anchorage for the 50th Anniversary and reunion. But you were not there.

Paul and I have been in correspondence since the 40th reunion... that wonderful time we had at Adak .. I keep encouragin him to get his book finished and published. His letters are so full of history .... on the ground, in the air, on the sea and under the sea. He has a remarkable story to tell.

He has such great admiration for you that I thought if you would autograph the reproduction with a personal message for Paul .. it would become an item of extreme importance to Paul.

Those of us who correspond with an Aleutian background call each other ALEUTS because like the Aleuts before us we are a vanishing breed.

Cordially,

Larry Reineke

ADMIRAL JAMES S. RUSSELL, USN (RETIRED)
7734 WALNUT AVENUE SOUTHWEST
TACOMA, WASHINGTON 98498

14 September '90

Dear Paul,

We missed you very much during the summer rendezvous of Pat-Wing 4, the last ten days of the month of May, when we went by excursion steamer of British registry to southeast Alaska, We visitied Ketchikan, Juneau, and Skagway, then into Glacier Bay, out into the Gulf of Alaska, and into Prince William Sound with a visit to College Fjord in which four glaciers terminate, The glaciers all have names of U.S. colleges. We then went into the very deep inlet on which Whitier lies. There, alongside the wharf of the WW II Army logistics base, we disembarked. Land access to Whitier is only by railraod. We boarded a train, and, after 7 miles of tunnel, came out at the end of Turnagain Arm, which the train followed to Anchorage. Halfway down the Arm we saw the tidal bore of the incoming tide, - a wall of water about 4 feet high. We spent a day in Anchorage then bussed to Denali National Park and Mount McKinley, where we spent the night. Arising early we toured with about a 60 mile bus drive into the National Park. There was all sorts of wildlife to be seen from the Park bus with a park ranger to tell us all about it, - from grizzly bears to mountain sheep. One more night we spent in Anchorage, then we flew home. It was a grand trip and I'm very sorry that you and Jean were not with us.

Having made the May trip with Pat Wing 4, we missed being with the Eleventh Air Force at their Anchorage-Elmendorf gathering about a month ago. Larry Reineke who did attend, sends his greetings via me along with a copy of an oil painting by Bob Benjamin of Olympia. Bob, inspired by my description of my 7 qualifying landings on USS LANGLEY (CV-1) in November 1929 off San Diego, painted a picture of the event. Larry Reineke clipped the copy from a calendar and sends it via me to be autographed to you.

Paul, I heartily concur with Larry that you should finish your personal account of Aleutian experiences and get it printed by, say, Stan Cohen of Missoula, Montana. Stan recently has done an excellent job on the Doolittle Raid. He will publish a two volume work by John C. Cloe soon. You will remember John C. Cloe as the official historian at Alaska Air Command at Elmendorf. I wrote an introduction, and proofed much of his text.

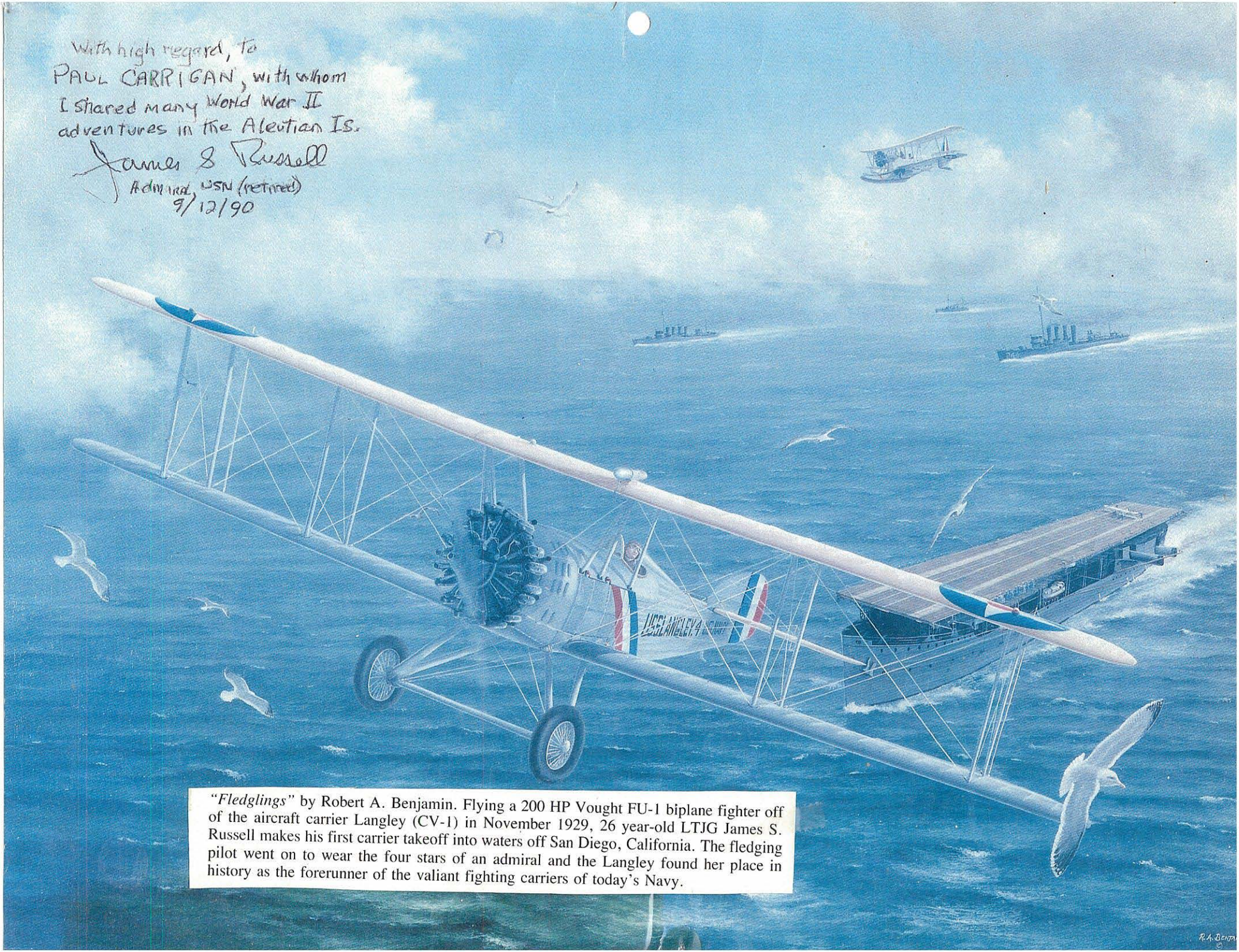
Come see us when you can, meanwhile,

All the best,

Jim Russell

Mr. Paul E. Carrigan
Star Route, Box 266
Tokeland, WA., 98590

With high regard, to
PAUL CARRIGAN, with whom
I shared many World War II
adventures in the Aleutian Is.
James S Russell
Admiral, USN (retired)
9/12/90



"Fledglings" by Robert A. Benjamin. Flying a 200 HP Vought FU-1 biplane fighter off of the aircraft carrier Langley (CV-1) in November 1929, 26 year-old LTJG James S. Russell makes his first carrier takeoff into waters off San Diego, California. The fledging pilot went on to wear the four stars of an admiral and the Langley found her place in history as the forerunner of the valiant fighting carriers of today's Navy.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
PACIFIC AIR FORCES

29 July 200

Office of History
Eleventh Air Force
1027 Kuter Ave Ste 320
Elmendorf AFB AK 99506-2630

Ralph Corrigan
5 Cutlass Way
Wanaetown
NJ 08758

Dear Ralph

Your brother's book arrived while I was on leave. I took it to our cabin this weekend and read most of Part I and paged through the rest. I plan to finish it when we return to the cabin on weekends. It is fascinating and I thank you for sending it to me. I met your brother briefly at a Eleventh Air Force Association reunion on Shemya in 1990.

I am glad you took the time to have it printed and distributed, it would have been such a great loss otherwise not only in the sense Paul put so much of his life into it, but also the loss of information it contained.

Larry Reinelt sent my copy of your brother's obituary, a very fitting tribute. I recently lost my older brother and surrogate father. He was about Paul's age and served with the combat engineers in the European and Pacific Theaters, mustered out at 21, obtained his degrees on the GI Bill, taught, worked in private industry and for the government, raised two children and retired at the age of 65. After his great adventure, he never went abroad again. I dare say, that was fairly common for the remarkable generation.

I am enclosing a copy of my book in appreciation—am still struggling with Part II. The death my first wife and my second marriage, plus other activities seemed to keep getting in the way.

Again, thank you for thinking of us. I plan to add your brother's work to our archives.

Sincerely

John H. Cloe
Chief of History

AUTHOR OF
ALEUTIAN WARRIORS
MY NOTE RALPH O. CARRIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER
805 KIDDER BREESE STREET SE
WASHINGTON NAVY YARD DC 20374-5060

IN REPLY REFER TO

5070
Ser LY/06403
16 Oct 2002

Mrs. Jean Carrigan
3181 Kindred Avenue
Tokeland, WA 98509-9733

Dear Mrs. Carrigan:

Your brother-in-law, Ralph Carrigan, recently forwarded a copy of *The Flying Weathermen of Patrol Wing Four 1941-1945* to the Navy Department Library. We were delighted to receive it and to have the important stories of Patrol Wing 4 as part of our collection.

Compiling this material is a tribute to your husband's abiding interest in preserving and telling the stories of his navy unit. We are pleased you chose to publish his work even though he was unable to finish it before his death. As the letters [illegible]

We are enclosing a [illegible] the form to the library as soon as possible. We will complete our portion and return a copy to you.

The Navy greatly appreciates the service of its veterans, and we are very pleased you chose to donate your husband's memoir to the Navy Department Library.

Sincerely,

JEAN L. HORT
Director, Navy Department Library

Orig: J.Hort

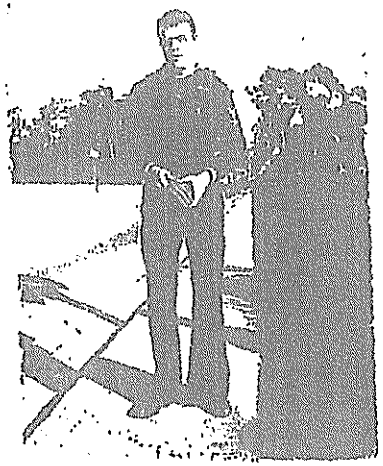
Cc: Ralph O. Carrigan

Oct. 1944 issue of Flying magazine

The names of the crew—Olson, Smith, White, Carey, Roberts, Carter, Livingston, Herold, and Carrigan—will be gratefully remembered in aerological circles. Typical of this ingenious company perhaps, was Paul Carrigan, of Little Falls, N.J., who was known to his shipmates as the "Black Irishman." After December 7, 1941, he laid aside his civilian occupation and eventually wound up in the Fleet Air Wing Four as an aerographer's mate. He was at sea with the Naval Pacific Force for the initial bombardment of Kiska. When Adak was occupied he was the first official weather observer on the island. Alone he sent reports, entered weather data on the maps, and flew to gather more information as it was needed. In fact, he played an important part in the campaign. With other aerographer's mates who came in later, he had set up an impressive weather shop long before the firing ceased.

Others had similar duties. Some were shot at, bombed, strafed, torpedoed, or depth-charged. When the rapidly shifting war developed new fields of operation, members of this team were always among the first to go.

Paul E. Carrigan returns to Attu after several months duty as the only weather forecaster and Flight briefer on the Island of Shemya. Welcoming and carrying sea bag is "Skip" Andersen, Paul is carrying the smaller sleeping bag after deplaning U.S. Army B-25



San Diego, CA
July 1944
Aerographers Mate 1/c

Flying Magazine article Oct. 1944
Correction:
Paul left high school to join the Navy in February 1941, ten months prior to Pearl Harbor and the start of World War II. His "civilian " occupation at that time was bare knuckle Prize fighting in smokers through out Northern New Jersey.