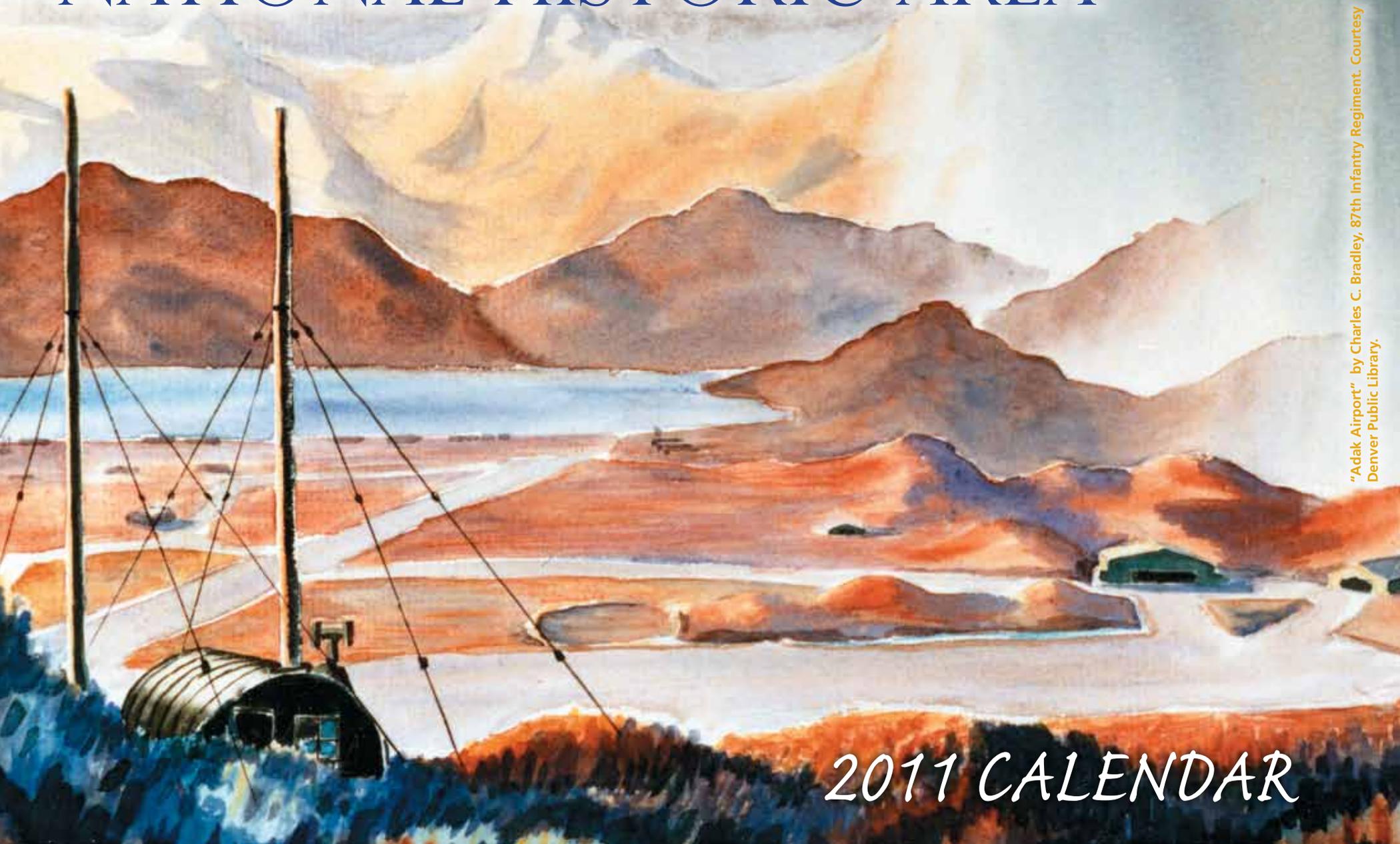


ALEUTIAN WORLD WAR II NATIONAL HISTORIC AREA



"Adak Airport" by Charles C. Bradley, 87th Infantry Regiment. Courtesy Denver Public Library.

2011 CALENDAR



During World War II the remote Aleutian Islands, home to the Unangax (Aleut people) for over 8,000 years, became one of the fiercely contested battlegrounds of the Pacific. This thousand-mile-long archipelago saw the first invasion of American soil since the War of 1812, a mass internment of American civilians, a 15-month air war, and one of the deadliest battles in the Pacific Theatre.

In 1996 Congress designated the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area to interpret, educate, and inspire present and future generations about the history of the Unangan and the Aleutian Islands in the defense of the United States in World War II. In a unique arrangement, the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area and visitor center are owned and managed by the Ounalashka Corporation (the village corporation for Unalaska) and the National Park Service provides them with technical assistance. Through this cooperative partnership, the Unangax are the keepers of their history and invite the public to learn more about their past and present.

For information about the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area, visit our web site at: www.nps.gov/aleu/ or contact:

Alaska Affiliated Areas
240 West 5th Ave
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(907) 644-3503

Ounalashka Corporation
P.O. Box 149
Unalaska, Alaska 99685

Visitor Information (907) 581-1276
Visitor Center (907) 581-9944

Front Cover: Charles C. Bradley [87th Infantry Regiment] often sent his wife Maynie watercolor sketches in lieu of letters. Within these he gave clues to his location that otherwise would have been cut by Army censors. At Unalaska, Bradley did a quick rendering of the *Church of the Holy Ascension* and mailed it to his wife. "One of my first and worst attempts at watercolor," he called it. Maynie found a similar pencil sketch by John Muir in a clipping from the *New York Times*. Muir's drawing also featured the cathedral at Unalaska, but from the opposite viewpoint of Bradley's. Charles said of Muir's sketch, "It was worse than mine..." But Maynie, a historian and archeologist, deciphered Bradley's clue. In this manner, through paintbrush rather than pen, husband and wife secretly communicated.

Back Cover: Before joining the U.S. ski troops, Walter Prager was a Swiss world champion and coach of the Dartmouth College racing team—the New York Yankees of collegiate skiing in the 1930s. Lt. John Woodward, commanding officer of the 87th at Fort Lewis, Colorado, said of Prager: "With ten or fifteen of the world's top skiers in the [87th] Prager might have been the only man with the ability to keep all of the greats in line." The elite 87th would first taste battle during the invasion of Kiska. (See month of November, this calendar).

Author's Note:

Close to thirty years ago I met Mr. Drafin “Buck” Delkettie (See month of July, this calendar) at a small bush airport. With little preamble he began to tell war stories. Mr. Delkettie was gregarious and self-effacing—his talk often broken by laughter. I don’t believe he mentioned the Alaska Scouts and if he had, I would have had to feign that I knew who they were.

I remember Mr. Delkettie to this day though, in part because of his wonderful name, but mostly because he was simply not a man easily forgotten. One thing Mr. Delkettie said in particular I recall:

Those Japanese planes flew so low over us, when they dropped their bombs I had to poke them away with my bayonet.



Bayonet, U.S. Army Springfield Rifle 1903.
Object courtesy Museum of the Aleutians.
Photograph courtesy Archgraphics.

This is my small personal history with the man, but is it “history?” Would I wish my decades-old remembrance of what he had said to be written down as fact? Certainly nearly every part of my “story” has been skewed by the passage of time. But even if I had written of it only hours afterward, it would still be a distortion of what had happened. A written record, even one jotted down as the event occurs, is the putting to paper of memory...and each of us remembers to some extent what we want to remember and each of us sees through our own personal lens.

There are a number of paintings in this year’s calendar and there is talk of how the early European artists’ renderings of

their American subjects were influenced by not only their own personal way of “seeing” but by the ethnocentric viewpoint they carried with them. There is no doubt that their images are distortions of true landscapes or the physiognomy or dress of a people, but are they “wrong?”

We say that “words fail us” when we try to explain some dramatic, altogether foreign event. We must resort to similes...“it was like this or that,” because there is no word for what we have just seen—it simply doesn’t yet exist.

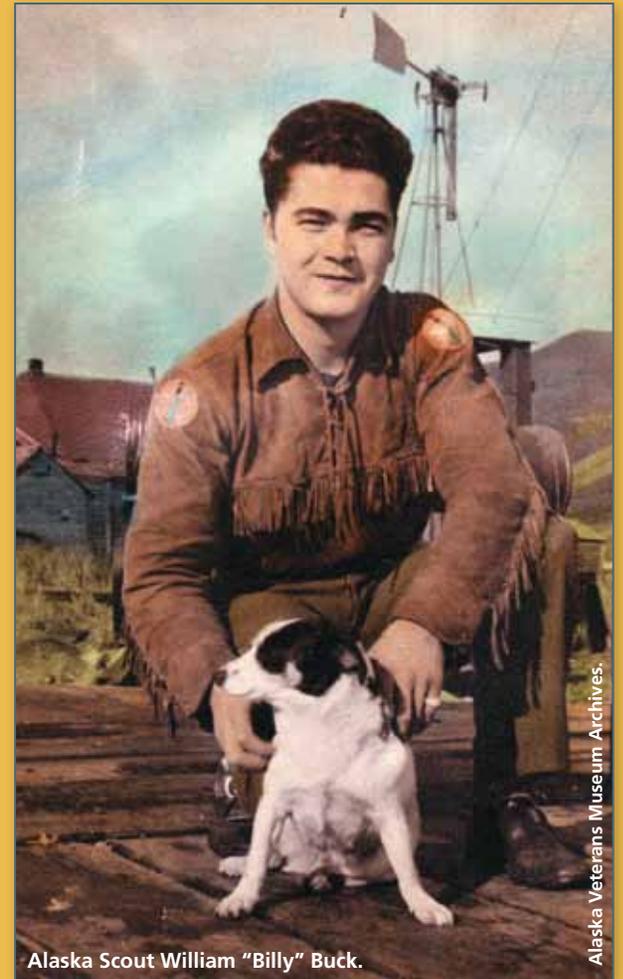
So too must the brush fail at times and the artist need call up the rolling hills and trees of home to fill in his landscape, drape the “foreign” people he sees with the marble clothes that cover the classical statues he had so often sketched. The true color of the scene cannot be found on his palette no matter how he mixes the pigments because he has not seen this color before.

But are we as “modern” observers any better? Look at the “Defense of the Aleutians” (see April, this calendar) painted nearly two centuries after the earliest pictorial depictions of the Aleutians in this calendar. The sky is blue when in fact on that day it was clouded and grey. The men have on desert gear instead of the great woolen overcoats they wore against the wet cold, and the copse of trees...the trees...there are no deciduous trees in the Aleutians, only evergreens and these were planted by the Russians nearly a hundred and fifty years earlier than the scene depicted. Even today they are few in number and little more than twisted bushes. No one owns a rake in the Aleutians.

But there is a deeper reality to this painting. Look at the men’s faces. Some look to the sky, others are bent under the weight of the shells they feed their gun, but one can see the intensity in their eyes. And there is a tautness in their frames as if they are struggling to move against the air itself. These are men in battle and the sky swarms with the enemy. So what if the trees are wrong; the emotions are right. (And then there’s that smoking Zero, but that’s another story).

So yes, there are a lot of paintings in this calendar. Many of the artists are famous men like John Webber and Henry Varnum Poor. And the paintings were chosen specifically because of the artists’ vision, their interpretation of what they saw. It was the emotion we were looking for.

Mr. Buck Delkettie and all the other Alaska Scouts (including William “Billy” Buck seen on this page) are being celebrated in this calendar. So too the Alaska Territorial Guard, the 206th



Alaska Scout William “Billy” Buck.

Alaska Veterans Museum Archives.

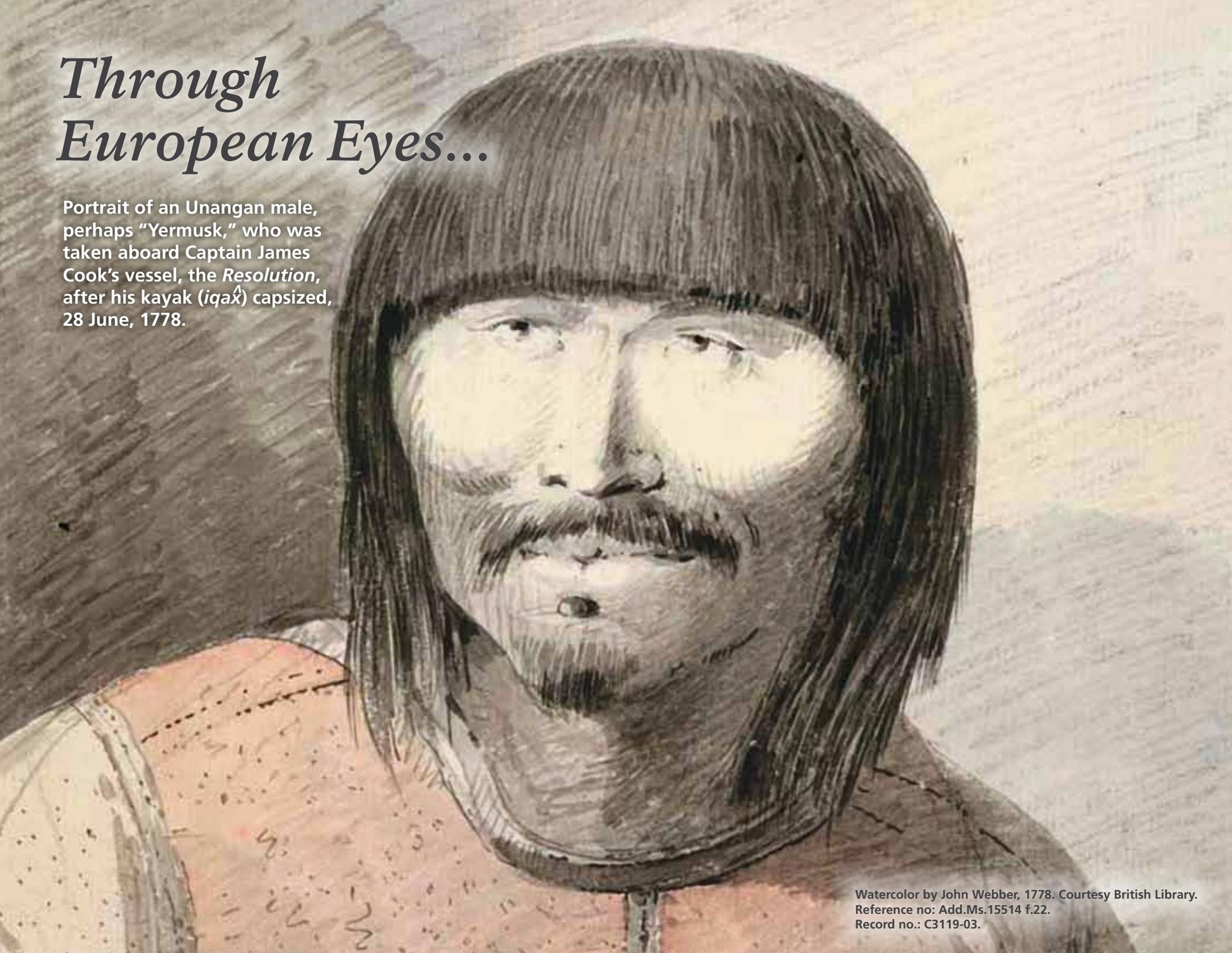
Arkansas Coast Artillery, and the 87th Infantry Regiment. The great loss of the Attuans is recognized and the bravery of the men in the plywood PT boats. There is even a nod to dogs. Soldiers especially love dogs. They remind them of home.

We also honor Mrs. Anfesia T. Shapsnikoff, the woman who helped save the holy pictures of Unalaska—the Russian Icons of the *Church of the Holy Ascension*—images that are said to be “written,” not painted.

Francis Broderick

Through European Eyes...

Portrait of an Unangan male, perhaps "Yermusk," who was taken aboard Captain James Cook's vessel, the *Resolution*, after his kayak (*iqax*) capsized, 28 June, 1778.



January 2011

His light paddle in hand, his weapons before him, maintaining his balance like a horseman, he speeds over the mobile surface [of the ocean] like an arrow.

–Description of Unangan kayaker by Adelbert von Chamisso, botanist, voyage of Otto von Kotzebue, 1815-1826

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 New Year's Day
2	3	4 New Moon	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 First Quarter Moon	13	14	15
16	17 Martin Luther King Day	18	19 Full Moon	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 Last Quarter Moon	27	28	29
30	31					

"View of St. Paul Island in the Sea of Kamtchatka (with sea lions)" by Louis Choris. Courtesy Alaska State Library Historical Collections.



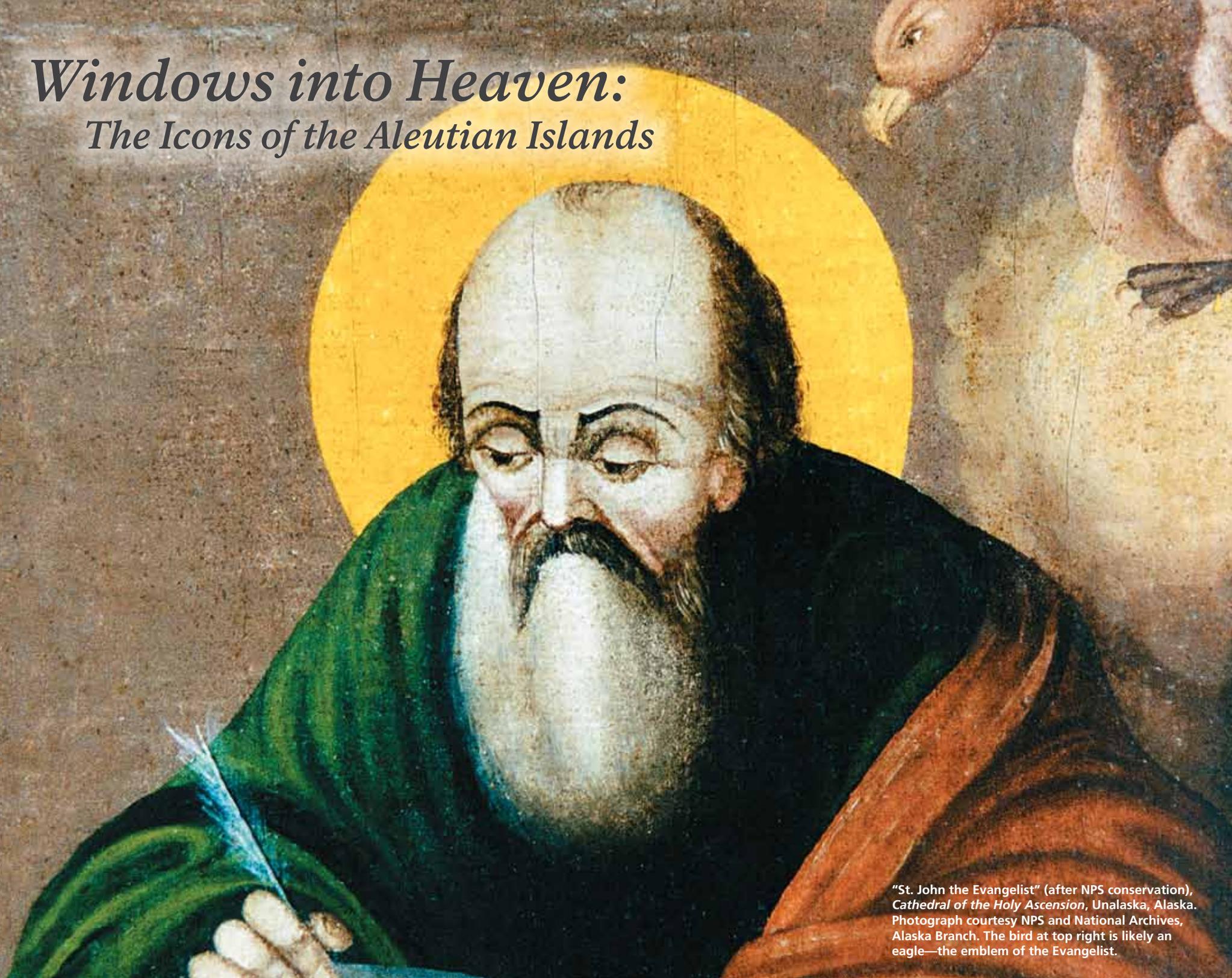
"A Woman of Unalaska wearing a tubular cloak and standing on the top of a house." Watercolor by John Webber, July 1778.

The [Unungan] people are... plump and well shaped, with... swarthy chubby faces, black eyes, small beards, and straight long black hair...

Captain James Cook, 1778

The earliest European depictions of the Native peoples of the North American continent, however striking they may be, were often distorted representations—images rendered through the ethnocentric lens of foreign artists, engravers, and colorists. In these images, Native American physiognomy and dress were often altered to imitate that of Europeans. The subjects' poses mimicked classic European statuary and the coloring, often applied by craftsmen far removed from the original environment, reflected the European fashion of the times or bordered on the fanciful. Nonetheless, these centuries-old images *are* important primary sources—the first, if flawed, pictorial records of the Native people of North America from Unalaska, Alaska to Roanoke Island, North Carolina.

Windows into Heaven: The Icons of the Aleutian Islands



"St. John the Evangelist" (after NPS conservation), Cathedral of the Holy Ascension, Unalaska, Alaska. Photograph courtesy NPS and National Archives, Alaska Branch. The bird at top right is likely an eagle—the emblem of the Evangelist.

February 2011

[It is said that] the first icon, “The Savior not Created by Human hands,” was made by Christ himself—his image miraculously transferred to a cloth used to wipe his face.

—Heaven on Earth



Senator Bob Bartlett and Mrs. Anfesia T. Shapsnikoff of Unalaska.

University of Alaska-Fairbanks-1969-95-312.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 New Moon	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11 First Quarter Moon	12
13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16	17	18 Full Moon	19
20	21 President's Day	22	23	24 Last Quarter Moon	25	26
27	28					

In defiance of U.S. military order to bring no religious articles during evacuation, Anfesia Shapsnikoff, together with the Church Committee, secreted the icons of Unalaska’s *Church of the Holy Ascension* south to the internment camp at Burnett Inlet. There the paintings were hung in a small church built by the Unangan. When weather permitted, the Unangan aired the icons. They coated them with 3 in 1 machine oil, the only “preservative” that could be scavenged. But still the ever-present damp of the rain forest permeated the canvasses. The icons began to mold, then flake. Brittle oil paint—centuries old—cracked and curled and fell away. In desperation, the Unangan applied shellac to slow the icons’ decline, but the mix of machine oil and shellac darkened the once glowing paintings and they began to recede into the dusk.

Left destitute by their long internment, the Unangan were unable to afford conservation of the icons after returning to their home islands in 1945. For 55 more years, they would watch as the icons, their “windows into heaven,” continued to decay.

Detail of Saint Venerable Evgeniya (Eugenia) after NPS restoration. In 1996, the World Monuments Watch designated the Aleutian and Pribilofian icons as among the world’s 100 most endangered sites. The National Park Service had organized conservation as early as 1990 as part of its inventory and documentation of the icons and furnishings of the Holy Ascension Russian Orthodox Church National Historic Landmark. Photograph courtesy NPS and National Archives, Alaska Region.

The Territorial Guard: Major Marston's "Tundra Army"

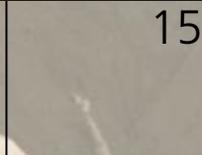
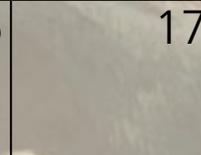
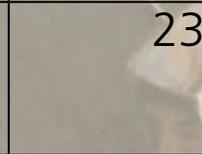
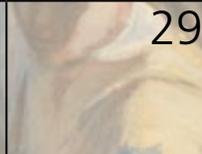


"Sign up for the Alaska Territorial Guard at the School on Little Diomedede Island"
by Henry Varnum Poor. Image used with permission of the artist's son, Peter Poor.
Major Marston stands in background, center, under U.S. flag.

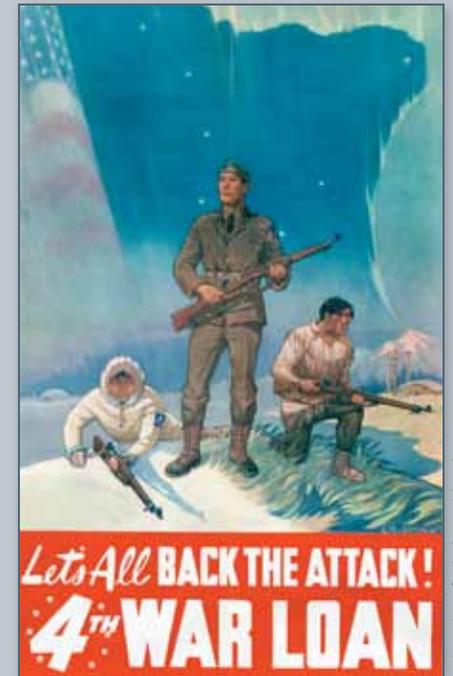
March 2011

I called upon you...to organize, to arm, to prepare to defend your home, your children, your women...every able-bodied [Native Alaskan] joined on first call...I salute you, the tundra army for what you have done...your willingness to do your part in defending the shores of Alaska.

—Army Air Corps Major “Muktuk” Marston, 2 September 1945, V-J Day, Nome, Alaska

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 	2 	3 	4 New Moon	5 
6 	7 	8 	9 	10 	11 	12 First Quarter Moon
13 Daylight Savings Time Begins	14 	15 	16 	17 	18 	19 Full Moon
20 First Day of Spring	21 	22 	23 	24 	25 	26 Last Quarter Moon
27 	28 	29 	30 	31 		

“Alaska Territorial Guard Maneuvers” by Henry Varnum Poor. Image used with permission of the artist’s son, Peter Poor.



Alaska Territorial Guard recruitment poster.

From Nome to Metlakatla and west to the Pribilofs, over 6,000 Alaska Natives enlisted in Major “Muktuk” Marston’s “tundra army”—the Alaska Territorial Guard (ATG). There were 78 guardsmen on the Aleutian island of St. Paul, 46 from St. George. There were guardsmen at Belkofski, on Unga, and at King Cove. Native men and women alike, aged 12 to 80, served in the defense of the coast of Alaska. They were issued World War I uniforms and single-shot Springfield rifles with little ammunition. There was no pay.

In 1947, the guardsmen were disbanded without government recognition. Even so, most members continued to drill and patrol. In 2000, Alaska Senator Ted Stevens sponsored a bill to issue Honorable Discharges to all who served in the ATG. It is thought surviving members now number only in the hundreds.

The 206th Coast Artillery: The Boys from Arkansas



...the antiquated equipment and ammunition we had in the Aleutians couldn't have shot down a plane if it had been standing still.

– John W. Weese

*"Defense of the Aleutians" by Dominic D'Andrea.
Courtesy National Guard Heritage Series.*

April 2011

My God, what are we doing here?

—Donnel J. Drake, 1941, on arrival at Dutch Harbor

We had our backs to the wall, there was no place to go, we were there already.

—Sgt. Cleo J. Eason



Photo courtesy James Perdue.

Corporal Emon C. Perdue, circa age 21, 206th Coast Artillery Regiment, Arkansas National Guard. Photo booth image most likely taken at Fort Bliss, or Juarez, Mexico prior to deployment to Dutch Harbor.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 New Moon	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11 First Quarter Moon	12	13	14	15	16
17 Full Moon	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 Easter Last Quarter Moon	25	26	27	28	29	30

Corporal Emon C. Perdue, 2nd from right, and other members of the 206th. Image taken prior to deployment of the Arkansas Guard to the Aleutians, circa 1941. Photo courtesy James Perdue.

Arkansas boys...cotton farmers, collegians, “pool-hall sweats.” They were a product of the Great Depression, of the droughts of the 1930s and the “black blizzard” of ‘35 when the dry earth rose up in boiling dirt clouds and raced across the great plains. They volunteered for the Arkansas National Guard because the unit was made up of family, fellow townsmen, and ministers. They were patriots, but they did not thirst for war. To be a Guardsman was a job, a one-year stint at one-dollar-a-day drill pay. With the Depression so close behind their backs, that cash may have made all the difference in their lives. On 2 June 1942, they stood in hillside trenches above Fort Mears. They believed 65,000 Japanese troops would strike within hours. Their artillery was poor, antiquated; their rifles were single-shot, bolt action—fine game rifles for hunting deer in the pine forests of Arkansas, but little better than a stick against attack by aircraft. This was how they faced the Japanese aerial bombardment of Dutch Harbor.

The Plywood Squadrons: PT Boats in the Aleutians

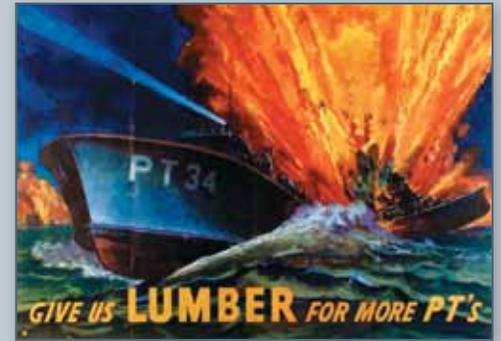


Patrol Torpedo Boats (PTs) nested to the tender U.S. *Gillis*. Tenders provided food, water, and electricity for heating the PTs, but winds above 25 knots necessitated the small boats to clear off or risk "pounding themselves to pieces alongside." Forced to moor to inadequate seaplane buoys, the boats dragged in high winds and dangerous seas. *Assessment of PT mooring, Aleutians, 8 November, 1942*. Image Courtesy Eleventh Air Force Office of History.

May 2011

...side planking from deck to waterline smashed in, nine tranverse frames broken...watertight bulkhead smashed, four by six foot section of deck carried away, forward living compartment taking on water, the keel... broken forward...the rudder controls damaged beyond repair.

—Damage assessment of PT 22 after being rammed by PT 24, 6 January, 1943 in the vicinity of Unga Island. Conditions: night, no moonlight, visibility very limited, wind gusts to 40 knots, temperature 15 degrees, deck of PT 22 iced over, stern light extinguished by ocean spray. Four PT boats attempted to keep in V formation by flashing spotlights at five minute intervals.



U.S. propaganda poster, 1943.

Courtesy of Northwestern University Library.

A sharp “V-shaped” hull, a racing boat hull constructed of Mexican mahogany secured by thousands of rivets and screws. Three Packard Motor Car modified aircraft engines—taken together the same punch as those on a B-17 bomber. Speeds up to fifty knots. Four torpedoes, machine guns, cannon... whatever the crew could scavenge and bolt to the deck. In time, these boats would become night fighters in the South Pacific. Strike fast against Japanese destroyers and cargo craft. Metals were in short supply and these small wooden boats were cheap to make. Some would say they and their crews were “expendable.”

In the Aleutians, in sub-freezing temperatures, flying ocean spray could coat the topsides of PTs with ice four inches thick. Searchlights, compass, torpedoes, machine guns, and cannon were rendered useless; radio antennae snapped. The officers conning the boats were rimmed with ice making navigation impossible. And below, the hull was so slick with frozen condensation sailors had no footing. Radio receivers were shorted, water systems frozen, and faulty mufflers choked boats with carbon monoxide gas. “Plywood coffins” some called the PTs. These boats would bravely wage battle in the Aleutians, but their enemy would not be the Japanese, but the wind and cold and the Bering Sea. Their victory was survival.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 New Moon	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 First Quarter Moon	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 Full Moon	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 Last Quarter Moon	25	26	27	28
29	30 Memorial Day	31				

PTs running at high speed in V formation during exercises off the U.S. East Coast, 12 July 1942. Courtesy U.S. Navy.

“Explosion” and the Dogs of Kiska



A dog, at middle right, greets Allied troops landing unopposed on Kiska Island. "Kiska Raid" by Edward Lanin. Courtesy U.S. Army Center of Military History.

June 2011

*We dropped one hundred thousand propaganda leaflets
[on Kiska], but those dogs couldn't read.*

—Eleventh Air Force Pilot



U.S. propaganda paper leaflet with Japanese text. Courtesy Museum of the Aleutians. Photograph courtesy Archgraphics. This object may be seen at the Aleutian World War II Visitor Center, Dutch Harbor, Alaska.



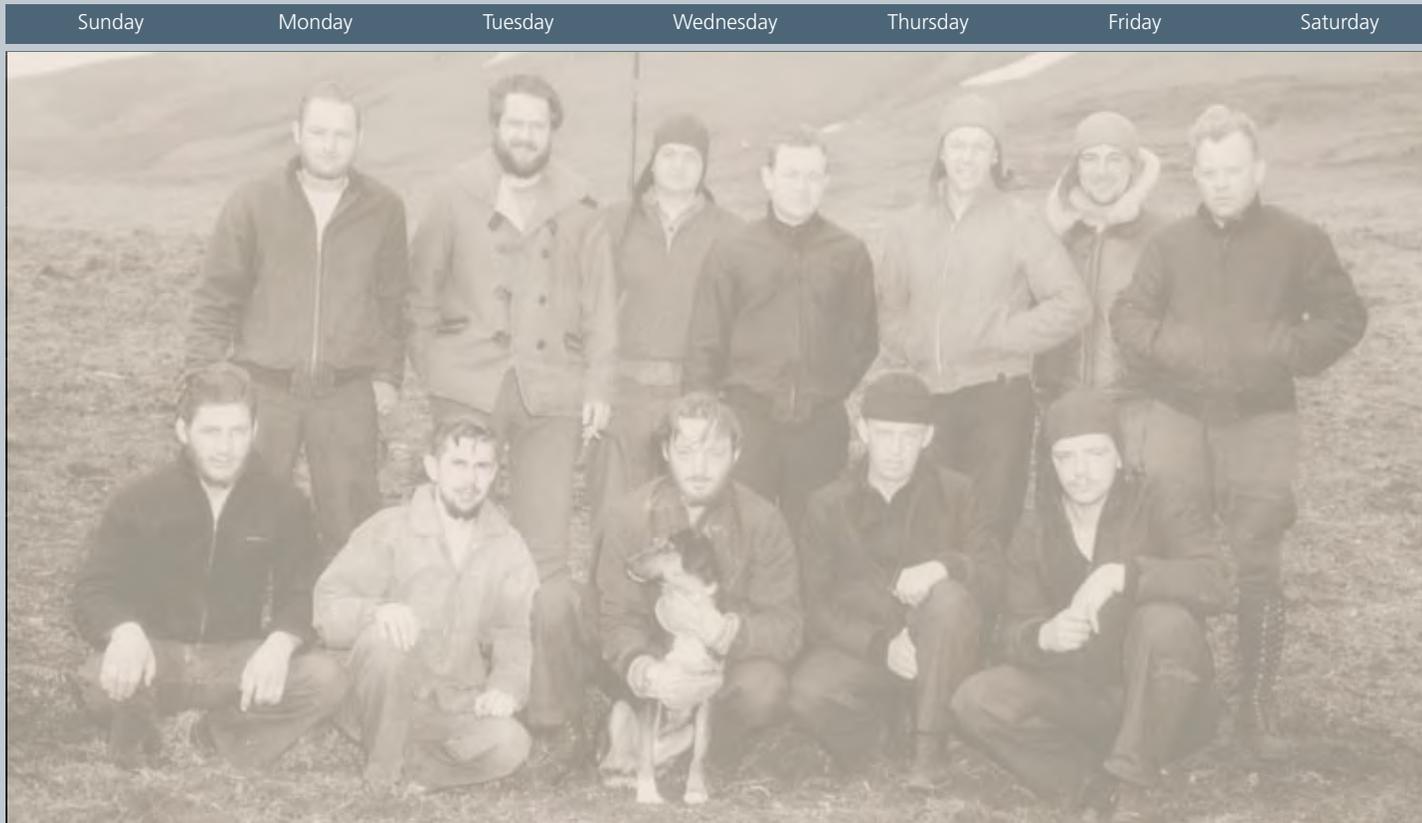
Courtesy National Archives.

Explosion reunited with Allied troops. An Army censor has scratched the “Long Knives” shoulder patch from the soldier’s shoulder.

TALES OF KISKA

*O here’s to mighty ComNorPac
Whose kingdom lay at cold Adak
Whose reign was known in fame for fog
And capture of two couple dogs*

It was not the Japanese, but a handful of dogs that met the 7,300 Allied troops wading ashore at Kiska Island, 15 August, 1943. A brown and white mutt, tail wagging, greeted Ensign William C. Jones. Stunned, Jones recognized the dog as *Explosion*—the same pup he had given to the ten-man Kiska weather crew 15 months prior. Born at Dutch Harbor the night a small dynamite shack detonated, *Explosion* remained true to her name. Cared for by the Japanese after the U.S. Aerological crew were taken prisoner, she had survived the relentless Allied bombardment of Kiska to reunite with Allied forces.



On 7 June 1942, the Japanese invaded Kiska. Within days, they captured the nine crewmen of the U.S. Aerological Detail stationed on the island. Only Petty Officer William C. House, aged 29, (top row, third from left) eluded capture. He climbed into the mountains and found a cave by a lake and streams. Here he stayed fifty days, eating grass, scavenging shellfish and angleworms. His body withered to eighty pounds, his thighs no bigger round than a child’s arm. On 28 July House tied a cloth scrap to a stick and surrendered. All members of the Aerological Detail survived the war as POWs. The detail’s pet, the dog *Explosion*, bottom row. Courtesy National Archives.

“Castner’s Cutthroats”

So we had to use little rubber rafts to go ashore...all we had was a little oar about three feet long. We had a rough time going ashore. Offshore wind, cold...

– Drafin “Buck” Delkettie, Alaska Scout



“Castner’s Cutthroats,” the Alaska Scouts, landing on Attu. This is the only known combat photograph of the Scouts in operation in the Aleutians. Courtesy Alaska Veterans Museum Archives.

July 2011

We taught [the Army instructor] how to do things our way. How to take bear out of the woods, how to make our own snowshoes, how to go into the woods and catch your own food, how to just plain survive...

—Drafin “Buck” Delkettie, Native Alaskan Scout, “Castner’s Cutthroats”

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 New Moon	2
3	4 Independence Day	5	6	7	8 First Quarter Moon	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 Full Moon	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 Last Quarter Moon
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 New Moon
31						



Alaska Veterans Museum Archives.

Alaska Scout Drafin “Buck” Delkettie. In March 2007, roughly 62 years after his service ended, Buck was awarded the Combat Infantryman’s Badge, Bronze Star, Good Conduct Medal and the World War II Victory Medal. He passed away later the same month.

Unangan, Eskimos, and Indians, sourdough prospectors, hunters, trappers, and fishermen. Sixty-five men selected by intelligence officer Colonel Lawrence V. Castner as the Army’s reconnaissance scouts in the Aleutians. They were hardened, dangerous men—”Bad Whiskey Red,” ”Aleut Pete,” and ”Waterbucket Ben.” They chose their own weapons, their own “uniforms,” and foul-weather gear. Their leadership was based on pragmatism, not rank. Whoever had the most experience in a situation, he was the one who led. The “Cutthroats” scouted Adak, Amchitka, Attu, and Kiska, coming ashore in rubber rafts off-loaded from submarines, amphibious aircraft, and ship. Small parties of men, five or so in strength—an unorthodox army—lightly-armed, mobile, living off the land and searching out the Japanese.

Alaska Scouts in the mountains. The men wear heavy, rubber waders and their faces are blackened against snow glare. At left bottom are two “Trapper Nelson” packs with folded sleeping bags at top. Courtesy Alaska Veterans Museum Archives.

Chow...*

*We are now getting fresh food. Morale has hopped up 100 percent.
We existed for two months on canned and dehydrated foods.*

—Alaska Defense Command censorship program postal intelligence analysis, Officer,
Alaska's Hidden Wars, Secret Campaigns on the North Pacific Rim, Otis Hays, Jr.

*The phrase “chow down” originated in the U.S. military during WWII in reference to the Chinese practice of consuming dog (in this case, the Chow dog)—a millenniums-old Chinese norm. U.S. servicemen in WWII, however, perhaps felt that eating military rations was as repugnant as consuming one’s own pet, or “chow.” In fact, the term “chow” used in association with food predated the naming of the Chinese canine, but such is the convoluted origin of slang.



August 2011



Courtesy National Archives.

*A soldier stood at the Pearly Gate.
His face was wan and old.
He gently asked the man of fate.
Admission to the fold.
“What have you done,” St. Peter asked.
“To gain admission here?”
“I’ve been in the Aleutians
For nigh unto a year.”
Then the gates swung open sharply
As St. Peter tolled the bell.
“Come in,” said he, “and take a harp.
You’ve had your share of hell.”*

Warrant Officer
Boswell Boomhower, 1943



Photograph courtesy Archgraphics.

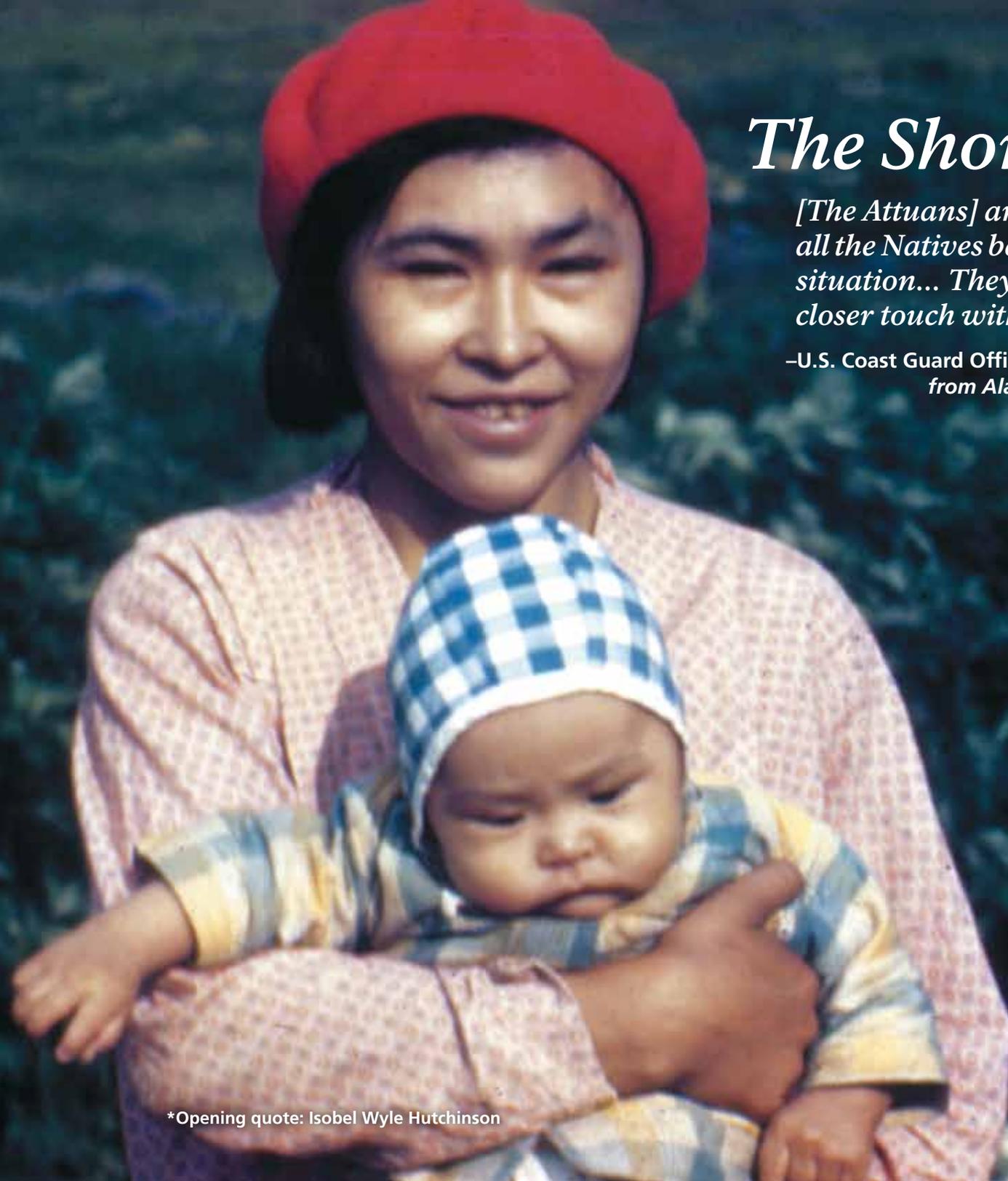
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6 First Quarter Moon
7	8	9	10	11	12	13 Full Moon
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 Last Quarter Moon	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 New Moon	29	30	31			

A 1941 C ration, B Unit (bread/dessert portion): three biscuits, chocolate fudge, three sugar cubes, and small tin of instant coffee. In 1943, a ration board reviewing soldiers' medical examinations after long-term use of C rations recommended they be used as sustenance no more than five continuous days. Image courtesy U.S. Army.

U.S. World War II Mess kit used to prepare C rations—canned combat meals consisting of precooked or dried foods. The upper half with handle (the *Meat Can Body*) was used to heat C rat meat and vegetables or to reconstitute breakfast foods such as powdered eggs. This object may be seen at the Aleutian World War II Visitor Center, Dutch Harbor, Alaska.

Day upon day—C rats—corned beef hash and watery navy beans, Vienna sausage, Spam, dried onions, dried potatoes, dried eggs. And for dessert “C-biscuits,” canned fruit salad, jam and canned butter. “Salve,” they called the ersatz butter. The yellow stuff wouldn’t freeze no matter how cold it got.

One, two years with nothing fresh to eat. It ruined the soldiers’ health. They succumbed to pneumonia, yellow jaundice, Aleutian “malaria.” Without vitamins their mouths abscessed. Some left all their teeth in the Aleutians like old-time sailors suffering scurvy.



*The Shores of Eden:**

[The Attuans] are by far the happiest and best of all the Natives because they live in such a remote situation... They don't want to be brought into closer touch with the world.

—U.S. Coast Guard Officer (unnamed), quoted in *Stepping Stones from Alaska to Asia*, Isobel Wyle Hutchinson 1937.

Attuan mother and child, perhaps Annie Golodoff (born 1919, Attu) and her baby, Victor. In 1940, Annie Golodoff married fellow Attuan Mike Borenin and bore their child Victor in March 1941. Victor died 2 November that same year, and Annie and Mike divorced sometime post June 1941. Annie then became Chief of Attu Mike Hodikoff's common-law wife. Their child, Anecia, was born and died in captivity in Japan circa 1943. Annie died in Japan that same year. Photograph by Malcolm J. Greany, July 1941, Attu. Courtesy Alaska State Library, Historical Collections, ASL-P306-2836.

*Opening quote: Isobel Wyle Hutchinson

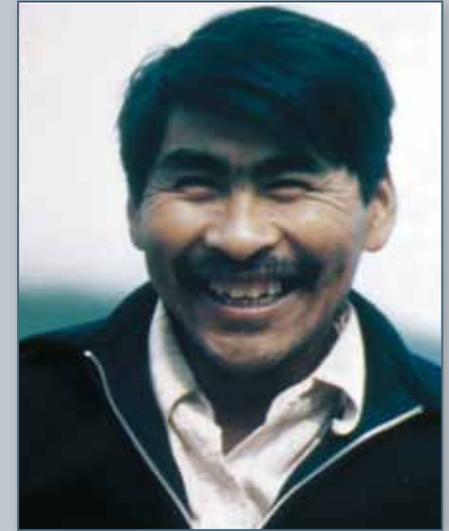
September 2011

Word came down yesterday that a (Japanese) landing had been made on two of the furthestmost and utterly useless islands.

–Assistant Secretary of War John McCloy

The less I remember the better.

–Attuan Villager and Japanese POW John Golodoff



Photograph by Malcolm J. Greany, July 1941. Courtesy Alaska State Library, Historical Collections, ASL-P306-2834.

Attuan Chief Michael Hodikoff (above) and son George died as captives of the Japanese in 1945, both driven to eat poisonous garbage to stave off starvation. In all, five of the ten Hodikoffs would perish as Japanese POWs.

Attu Island was rock, reef, and tundra, forty miles by twenty. From the 3000-foot crest of its highest point, one could see how it sat... a small, jagged stone falling away to the seas. To foreign eyes it was desolate and forlorn—"the loneliest spot this side of hell." But to 43 Native Attuans, the place was the heart of the universe. The Attuans were a true island people, their finite world charged with import, their sense of self deeply rooted in the landscape, the encircling sea, and wildlife.

On June 7 1942, the Attuans were taken by the Japanese as prisoners of war. It was the beginning of three years of extreme deprivation and sorrow. Nearly forty percent would die in camps in Japan and those that survived would never return to "the shores of their little Eden."

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 First Quarter Moon	5 Labor Day	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 Full Moon	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20 Last Quarter Moon	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 New Moon	28	29	30	

In the early dawn of 7 June 1942, Attu village stood ordered and neat—nine houses, a schoolhouse, and Russian Orthodox church (far left). The Attuans were busy readying themselves for Sunday service, the U.S. flag snapping from the village flagpole as Japanese troops descended from the hills above. Photograph by Dora Sweeney. Courtesy Alaska State Library, Historical Collections, ASL-P421-195.

Not forgotten...

Some said the fight for the Aleutians was a “vest pocket” affair, but for those who gave their lives, history will never record a bigger battle.



Verso of photograph reads: "With the playing of taps, a soldier is laid to rest atop a hill in Boot Hill Cemetery. Full military funerals are given soldiers who have died out here. There are seven soldiers buried here, mainly pilots. Umnak Island, Fort Glenn. 1942." Image courtesy National Archives.

October 2011

Rock of Ages

*While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyes shall close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See thee on thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.*

Augustus M. Toplady, 1740-1778



Photograph courtesy Archgraphics.

U.S. dogtags. Object courtesy Museum of the Aleutians.

On Attu, 549 American dead. They are undressed, their personal effects collected, tagged and sent to a Quartermaster depot in Kansas City to await next of kin. Swaddled in blankets, bodies are lowered into collective graves, eight to an excavation—the cruel expediency of war. Tractors scrape at the muck while Chaplains sing *Rock of Ages*. General Simon Bolivar Buckner and Governor Ernest Gruening place wreaths. Buglers play *Taps*. And on the grave markers—the crosses and Stars of David—a single dog tag is nailed.

In 1946, American remains on Attu are removed and reburied at Fort Richardson near Anchorage, Alaska, or in other locations as designated by relatives. Since then, the ground on Attu known as “Little Falls Cemetery” has been reclaimed by the tundra. No visible signs remain today.

Other U.S. servicemen, Navy men and pilots, received no burial rites. The Bering Sea is their grave.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 First Quarter Moon	4	5	6	7	8
9	10 Columbus Day	11 Full Moon	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 Last Quarter Moon	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 New Moon	27	28	29
30	31 Halloween					

Verso of photograph reads: Chaplain Ruben Curtis leads men in singing hymns at a burial service of U.S. soldiers killed in action at Massacre Bay, Aleutian Islands, June 1, 1943. ASL-P175-111.

The 87th Infantry Regiment

*“...wax on their skis
and bacon grease on their cheeks.”**

Tyrolean traverse over gorge, Instructor Sergeant Bob Niss, 87th Infantry Regiment, North Pacific Combat School (NPCS). The NPCS trained army infantry units in “amphibious, mountain and ‘muskeg’ combat techniques.” Unalaska Village at left. Photograph by Charles C. Bradley. Image courtesy Denver Public Library.

November 2011

Too beautiful a place to die.

—Harry Porschman, 87th Infantry Regiment, Kiska

We were exhausted, disgusted, and ashamed. And we knew we'd done all the [friendly] killing ourselves.

—Roger Eddy, 87th Infantry Regiment, U.S. “friendly fire,” Kiska

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
			First Quarter Moon			
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Daylight Savings Time Ends		Election Day		Full Moon	Veterans Day	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
					Last Quarter Moon	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
				Thanksgiving Day	New Moon	
27	28	29	30			

Soldiers of the 87th Infantry Regiment rest atop Kiska Volcano. October 1943. Photograph by Richard A. Rucker. Courtesy Denver Public Library.

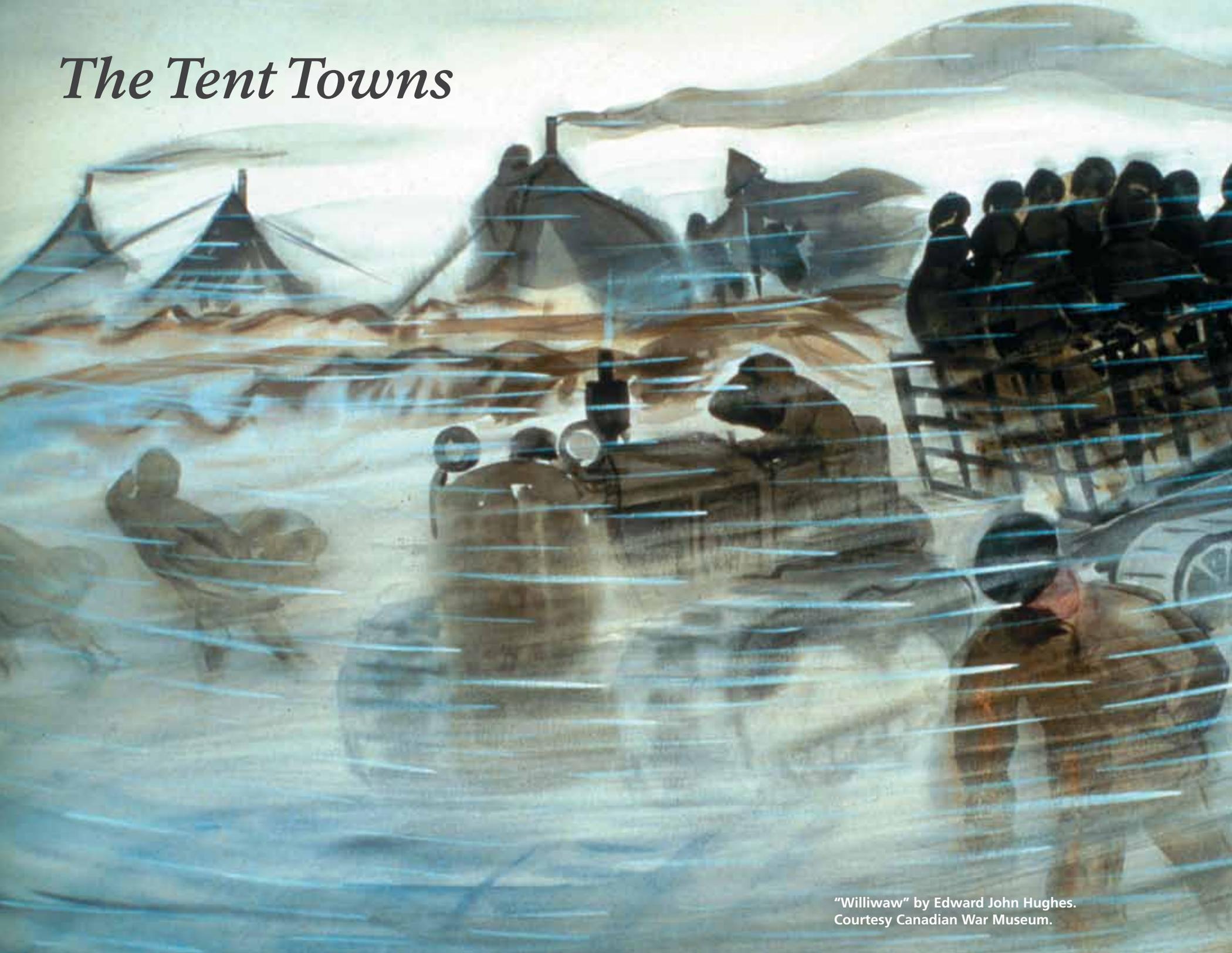


Courtesy Denver Public Library.

Cover, *The Saturday Evening Post*—ski trooper, 10th Mountain Division [formerly 87th Infantry Regiment]. Painting by Mead Schaeffer, 1943.

The 87th Infantry Regiment—the “ski club,” some called them in derision. At first membership was select and rarefied—Ivy League boys, ski champions, and top athletes. But in time the regiment would come to include all types of “rugged outdoor men...mountaineers, timber cruisers, (and) cowboys.” Before daybreak 15 August, 3000 of the 87th assaulted Kiska. Loaded with near 90-pound packs, they scaled an almost vertical cliff face on the island’s northern shore, then pushed to the top of Kiska’s 1800 foot mountain spine. The division arrived at their objective mid-morning, day one—no Japanese sighted. But during the night confusion descended. “There was a lot of rifle fire. Every time a helmet poked up through the fog, everyone let go...” In the morning, 17 U.S. soldiers were found dead, three times that many wounded—all from “friendly fire.” As tragic as the event was, U.S. brass had estimated nearly 100 percent casualties for the Regiment in actual combat on Kiska, but nobody had told the ski troops that.

The Tent Towns



"Williwaw" by Edward John Hughes.
Courtesy Canadian War Museum.

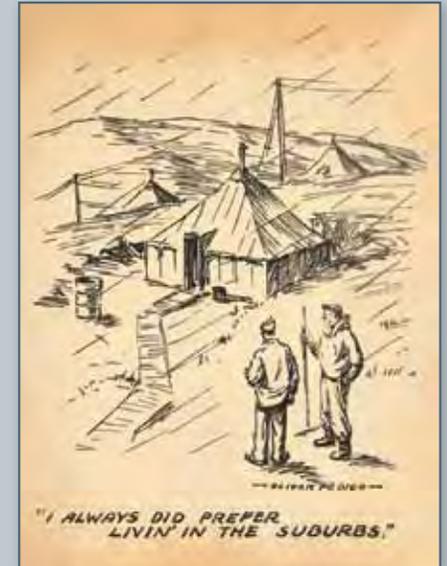
December 2011

Now and then a dreaded williwaw—Alaska’s unpredictable hurricane—would pour down the steep sides of a volcano like a snowslide, obliterating everything in its path. It...shatters [the soldiers’] nerves.

—Colliers Newspaper

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 First Quarter Moon	3
4	5	6	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	8	9	10 Full Moon
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 Last Quarter Moon
18	19	20	21	22 First Day of Winter	23	24 New Moon
25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29	30	31

Aleutian tent town. Courtesy Eleventh Air Force Office of History.



Cartoon from the *Adakian*. Artist: Oliver Pettigo. Editor: Dashiell Hammet.

When it grew dark, the soldiers lit candles for lack of lanterns and fed their little pot-bellied stoves—seven pounds ration of coal a day for each tent—just enough to warm the insides a little at night, and again in the morning. When the coal ran out, the soldiers tried and failed to burn the peat-like tundra. They burned their summer clothes for a few moments’ respite from the cold because the coal pile was guarded by armed men. And the wind beat against the side of their tents. It would grab them and shake them in its fist. The soldiers had dug revetments, scraped up the tundra, dug down through the crockery-like schist and coarse brown clay for protection. They had pitched their tents in defiles, along hillsides but there was no hiding from the wind. It beat down the tent towns, the soldiers huddled inside, close to the candles for warmth and light, their feet insulated in boxes of shredded paper, waiting for the long night to end.

Aleutian World War II National Historic Area



Sergeant Walter Prager (see month of November, this calendar), 87th Infantry Regiment, Bald Mountain, Sun Valley, Idaho. Image taken during production of an MGM Army mountain warfare training film. Courtesy Denver Public Library.

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