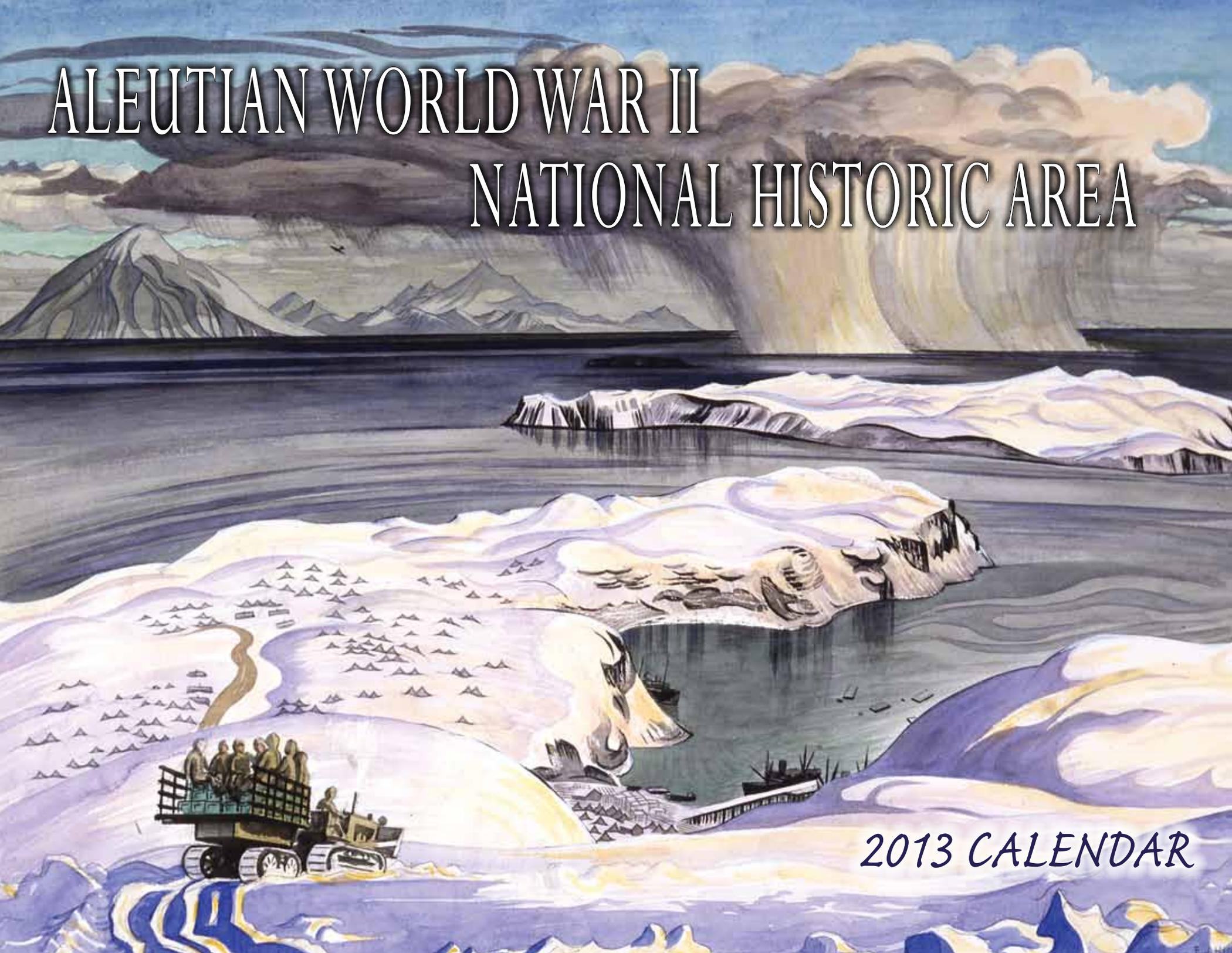


ALEUTIAN WORLD WAR II NATIONAL HISTORIC AREA



2013 CALENDAR

During World War II the remote Aleutian Islands, home to the Unangan (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 Unangan 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

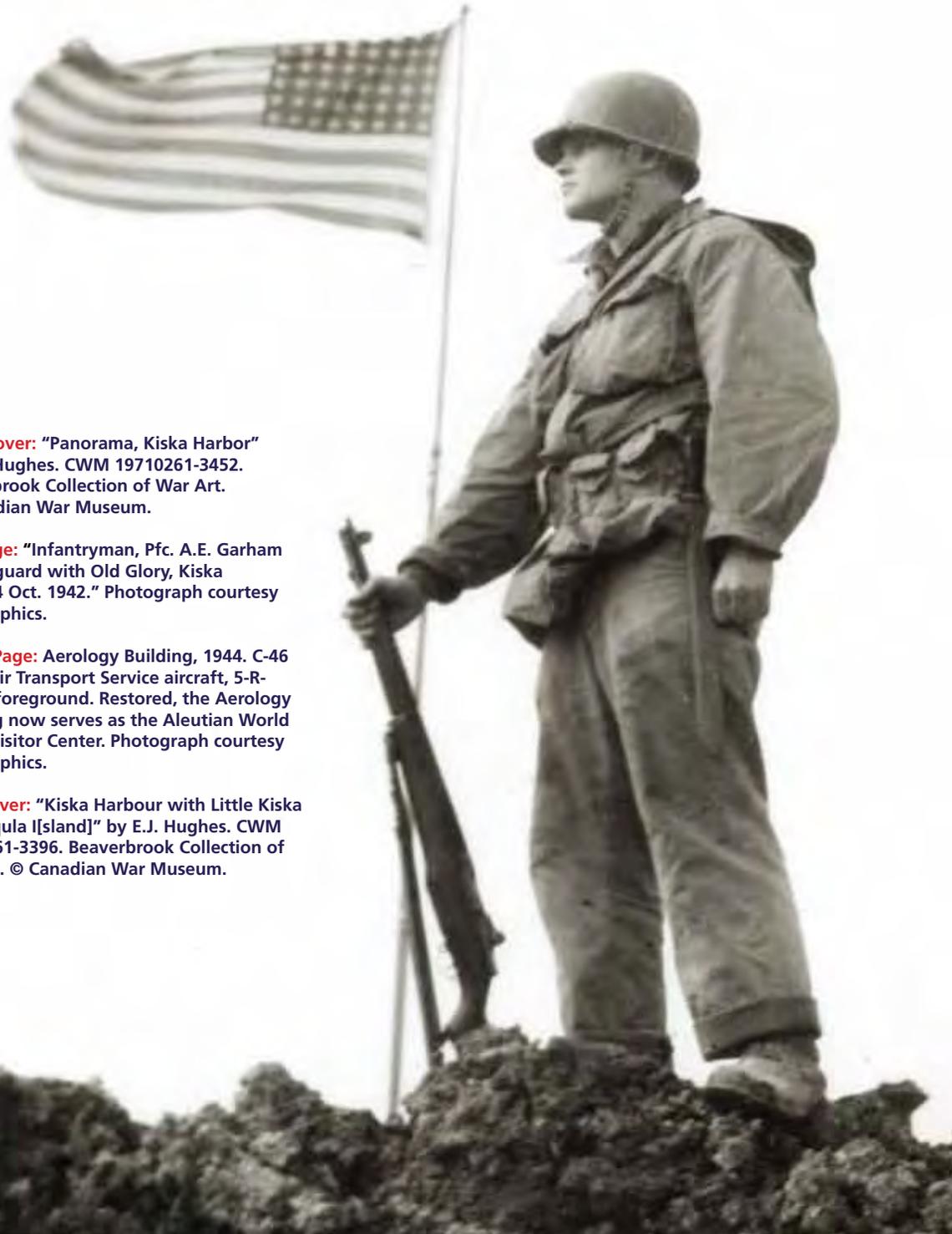
Calendar research and design was funded by the National Park Service Affiliated Areas Program in support of the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area, in cooperation with the Aleutian Pribilof Heritage Group.

Front Cover: "Panorama, Kiska Harbor" by E.J. Hughes. CWM 19710261-3452. Beaverbrook Collection of War Art. © Canadian War Museum.

This Page: "Infantryman, Pfc. A.E. Garham stands guard with Old Glory, Kiska Island, 4 Oct. 1942." Photograph courtesy Archgraphics.

Facing Page: Aerology Building, 1944. C-46 Naval Air Transport Service aircraft, 5-R-156, in foreground. Restored, the Aerology Building now serves as the Aleutian World War II Visitor Center. Photograph courtesy Archgraphics.

Back Cover: "Kiska Harbour with Little Kiska and Sequla [Island]" by E.J. Hughes. CWM 19710261-3396. Beaverbrook Collection of War Art. © Canadian War Museum.





51100

TRANSPORT SERVICE

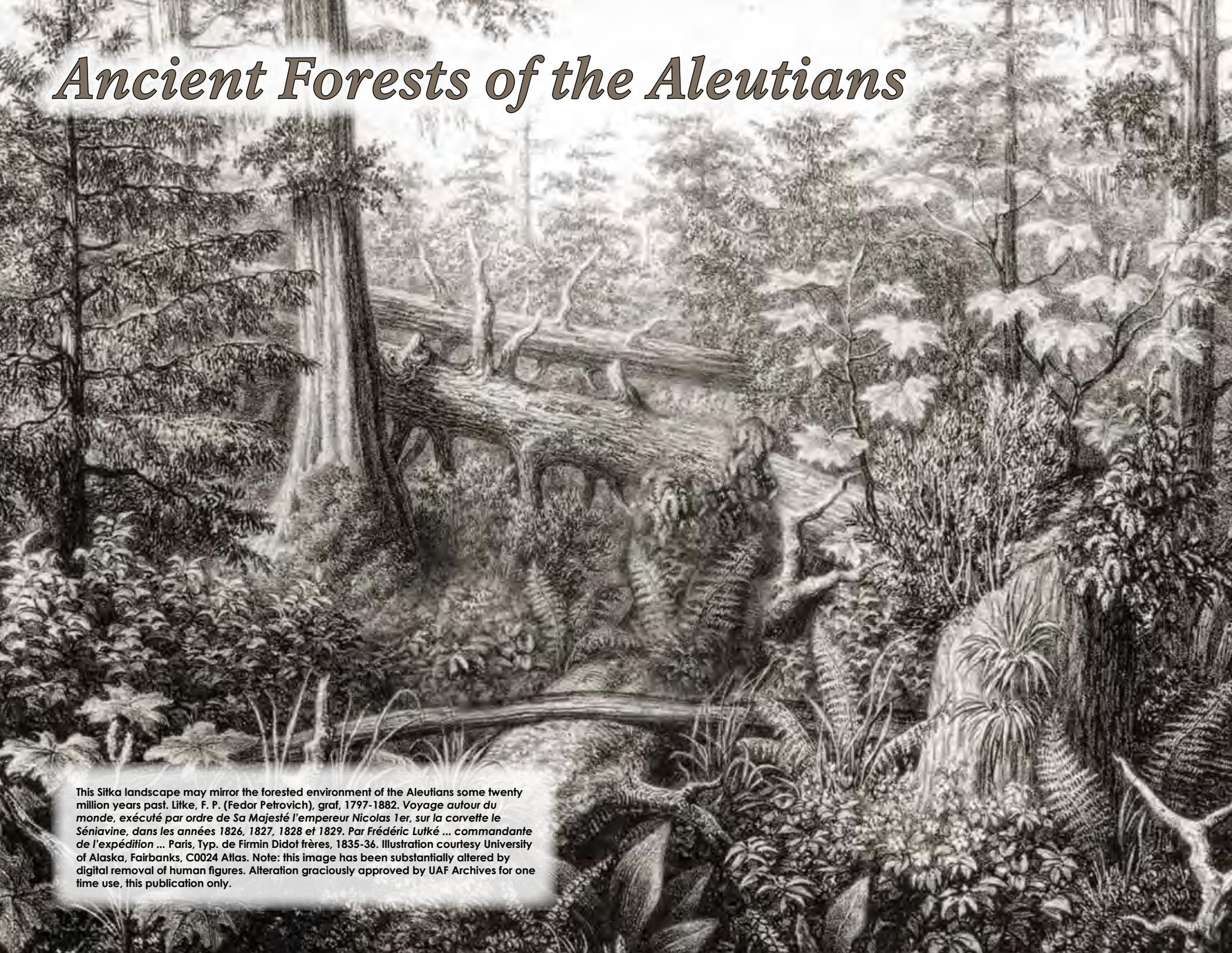


TRANSPORT SERVICE
DUTCH HARBOR

NO SMOKING
WITHIN 100 FEET
OF AIRCRAFT

Alaska Veterans Museum Archives.

Ancient Forests of the Aleutians



This Sitka landscape may mirror the forested environment of the Aleutians some twenty million years past. Litke, F. P. (Fedor Petrovich), graf, 1797-1882. *Voyage autour du monde, exécuté par ordre de Sa Majesté l'empereur Nicolas 1er, sur la corvette le Sèniavine, dans les années 1826, 1827, 1828 et 1829. Par Frédéric Lutké ... commandante de l'expédition ...* Paris, Typ. de Firmin Didot frères, 1835-36. Illustration courtesy University of Alaska, Fairbanks, C0024 Atlas. Note: this image has been substantially altered by digital removal of human figures. Alteration graciously approved by UAF Archives for one time use, this publication only.

January 2013

The (Aleutian) islands west of Kodiak produce (no) tree of any kind: this I can positively assert.

—Martin Sauer, Billings Expedition 1785-1794

You Are Now Entering And Leaving The Adak National Forest.

—During World War II, the U.S. military planted thousands of trees in the Aleutians in hopes of improving troop morale. A copse of thirty-three stunted survivors located on Adak Island was designated, tongue in cheek, "Adak National Forest" sometime in the early 1960s.



Image courtesy National Park Service.

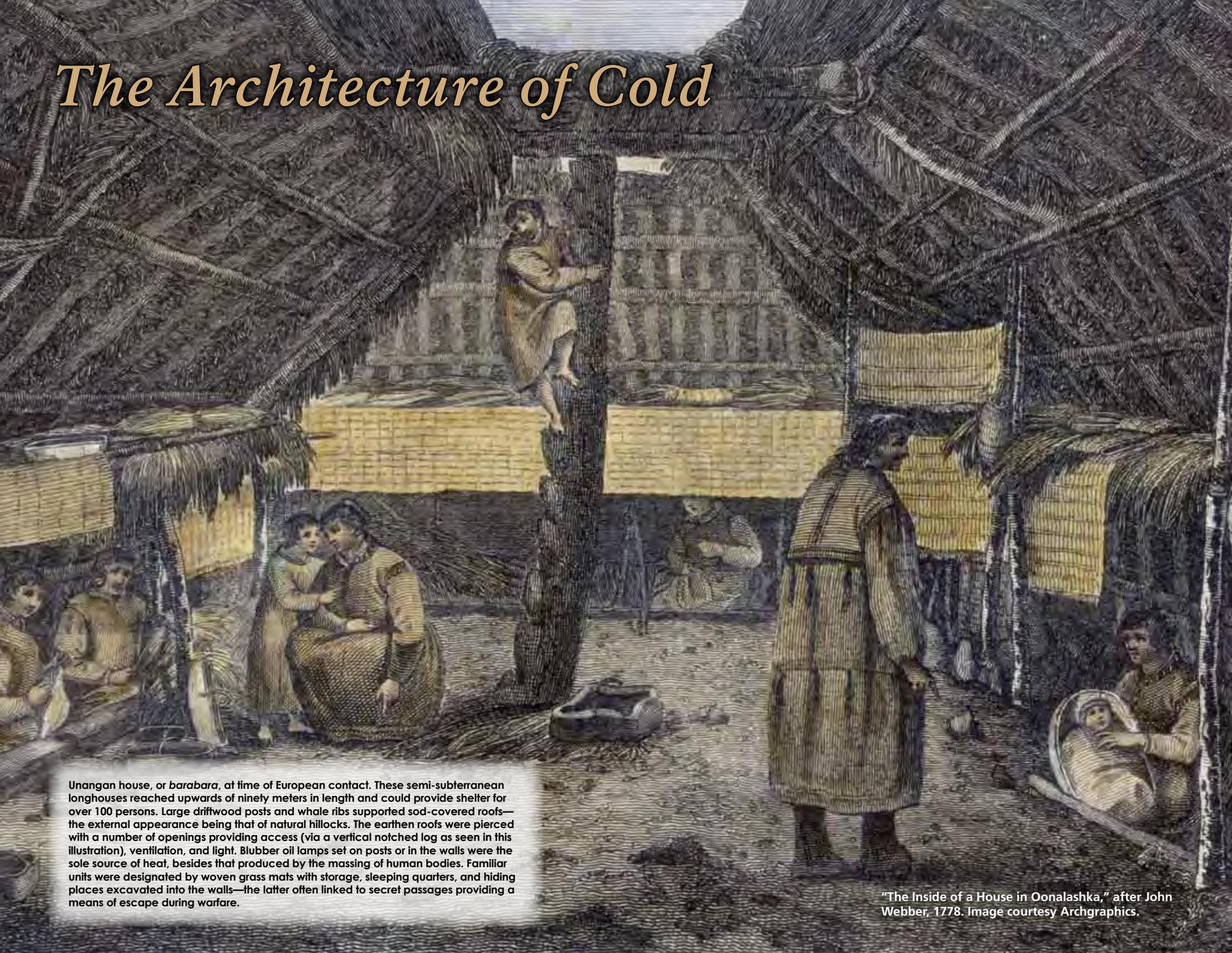
Fossilized tree trunk washed by incoming tide, Unga Island. Mineralization has turned the trunk a vibrant red-gold.

Trees turned to stone lie on the beaches of Unga Island near the Alaska mainland and offshore Amchitka Island near the westernmost terminus of the Aleutian Chain. These petrified remnants of ancient forests, located near opposite ends of the archipelago, suggest trees may have once covered the breadth of the arc from east to west. Thought to be Sequoia, or a variant thereof, Unga's trees measure up to 10 feet in diameter round the bole, with trunk fragments reaching sixty-seven feet in length. Dating to the early Miocene—20 million years past—these ancient woodlands succumbed to climactic change long before the arrival of humans, leaving tenacious grasses and dwarf plants—the dramatic, treeless landscape we see today. In 1805, the Russians attempted to reforest the chain, planting Sitka Spruce seedlings on Amaknak Island. A few of these trees still stand today, dwarfed and knotted, bearing little resemblance to their old growth parents in the rainforest environs to the south. Five hundred miles from their closest relatives on Kodiak, Unalaska's spruce have withstood roughly two centuries of fierce winds, limited sunshine, and cold soil. Their remarkable adaptation, however tenuous, lends credence to scientific predictions that Sitka Spruce from Kodiak could migrate naturally to Unalaska four to five thousand years from today.

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

In this view of the Harbor of St. Paul, Kodiak Island, circa 1814, trees stand as if in formation against the skyline. Today it is the furthest west natural extent of their range.

The Architecture of Cold



Unangan house, or *barabara*, at time of European contact. These semi-subterranean longhouses reached upwards of ninety meters in length and could provide shelter for over 100 persons. Large driftwood posts and whale ribs supported sod-covered roofs—the external appearance being that of natural hillocks. The earthen roofs were pierced with a number of openings providing access (via a vertical notched log as seen in this illustration), ventilation, and light. Blubber oil lamps set on posts or in the walls were the sole source of heat, besides that produced by the massing of human bodies. Familiar units were designated by woven grass mats with storage, sleeping quarters, and hiding places excavated into the walls—the latter often linked to secret passages providing a means of escape during warfare.

"The Inside of a House in Oonalashka," after John Webber, 1778. Image courtesy Archgraphics.

February 2013

Late in the summer of 2003, [Archeologist] Rick Knecht perched on a steep hillside overlooking the North Pacific, marvelling at a strange labyrinth of stone emerging from an old marine terrace.

—*Archaeology*, Volume 60 Number 3, May/June 2007



Image courtesy Museum of the Aleutians.

An Amaknak Bridge Site house. Hearth (#1) in foreground left; sub-floor heat channels (#2,3) inside dwelling in rough “Y” shape. On this treeless island, archeologists found abundant charcoal remaining in the stone hearths.

Four thousand years before present, the earth inexplicably grew cold, and the Bering Strait closed with ice. Those sea mammals that yearly migrated north to the Pribilofs and Arctic Ocean were cut off from their summer rookeries and feeding grounds. To adapt, they established resident populations in the open Bering Sea to the south. This massing of animals in close proximity to the Aleutian Chain would be a great harvest for the Unangan... for nearly all their material goods and sustenance came from such beings. But to reap this harvest, the Unangan too must adapt to the sudden cold—*The Neoglacial*. On Unalaska, they reacted by adopting an architecture unique in the world—small, stone-lined structures, butted one against the other. And outside these semi-subterranean “apartments” — stone hearths with chimneys and vents to draw combustible air. From the hearths extended stone duct work into the rooms, with heat radiating upwards through the floors. For 1000 years, the Unangan lived in such heated, aggregate dwellings, not merely surviving, but thriving, leaving behind an archeological record of not only sophisticated architecture, but social experimentation, technological invention, and fine art.

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

Amaknak Bridge Site in foreground right during excavation. First recorded during World War II by naval officer and vocational archeologist, Alvin Cahn, the site (designated “site F” by Cahn) dates to ca. 2500-3600 B.P. (before present). “Before Present” is generally accepted as 1 January 1950, but is also interpreted as “Before Physics,” that is, before the proliferation of nuclear weapons testing altered carbon isotopes in the atmosphere. Image courtesy Museum of the Aleutians.

Soft Gold

[The sea otter is] a beautiful and pleasing animal, cunning and amusing in its habits... They prefer to lie together in families... Their love for their young is so intense that...when taken away from them, [the females] cry bitterly...and grieve so much that...after ten to fourteen days they grow as lean as a skeleton...

—Georg Wilhelm Steller, 1742



Sea Otter (*Enhydra lutris kenyoni*). Engraving after John Webber, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*, 1780. Image courtesy Archgraphics.

March 2013

...the *promyshleniki* pressed farther along the Aleutian chain, leaving a trail of devastation and death... When one island was stripped of its otters, the plunderers moved on to ravage another. The [Unangan men] were enslaved and forced to hunt night and day... while the Russians lived ashore with their women. If the islanders rebelled, they were clubbed as callously as the otters... The fur stampede had become a war of invasion and conquest.

—Corey Ford, *Where the Sea Breaks its Back*

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

Sea otter skull, *Fur-bearing Animals: A Monograph of North American Mustelidae* by Elliott Coues, 1877. Aleutian sea otter pelts were first introduced to Russian fur traders by survivors of Vitus Bering's shipwrecked crew. During their stranding on Bering Island the winter of 1741, the castaways hunted sea otters and used the skins as currency while gambling. The 1000 pelts they brought back to Siberia commanded high prices—32 times that for sable. Among those returning to Russia was Georg Steller, the first naturalist to scientifically describe the sea mammal.



Image courtesy Royal Academy of Arts.

The Chinese Emperor Hongli (1711- 1799). The Mandarins were the catalyst for the sea otter harvest, prizing its pelt as trimmings for robes and hats. Payment for a single skin was 80 to 100 rubles—roughly the annual wage of a Russian fur laborer in the North Pacific.

One million hairs per square inch, blue-black and dusted with gold—the fur of the sea otter. When stretched, an otter pelt could reach a third again its size, and still a finger could not be forced through the hair to touch the hide. It is this dense fur that allows the sea otter to swim the Bering Sea without an insulating layer of blubber; this pelt, not gold, that drew the *promyshleniki*—Russian fur hunters—eastward along the Aleutians beginning in the mid-1700s. So hungry were the hunters for otter, they braved the Bering Sea in crude flatboats—*shitikas*—green planks bound with hide thongs. “Rough and unruly...ready to face death,” the *promyshleniki* saw the Native Unangan not as human beings, but solely as weapons in the otter hunt. Tortured, murdered, decimated by disease and starvation, the Unangan population plummeted from an estimated high of 20,000 to 2,000 persons within 45 years after Russian contact. And the sea otter—once thought to number upwards of 300,000 from Baja California to northern Japan—would be reduced to a few thousand animals living in isolated colonies. No longer were they the gregarious animals Georg Steller had first noted in 1742, but deathly afraid of men.

“Hell Roaring Mike”

When I am in charge of a vessel, I always command; nobody commands but me. I take all the responsibility, all the risks, all the hardships that my office would call upon me to take. I do not steer by any man’s compass but my own.

*—Captain Michael Augustine Healy,
spoken during his court-marshal in 1896*

Captain Healy, with his pet parrot, on the quarterdeck of the Revenue Cutter *Bear*, circa 1895. Courtesy United States Coast Guard, U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

April 2013

"Capt. Mike Healy is a good deal more distinguished person in the waters of the far Northwest than any president of the United States... He stands for law and order...and if you should ask in the Arctic Sea, 'Who is the greatest man in America?' the instant answer would be 'Why, Mike Healy.'"

—*New York Sun*, January 1894. Healy's career was not without controversy, however. A great friend of Alaska Natives, Healy also participated under orders in the punitive bombardment of the Tlingit village of Angoon in 1884. Greatly admired by his crews and charged with enforcing alcohol laws, a court marshal in 1896 found him guilty of seven charges, among them "Tyrannous and abusive conduct to inferiors," and "Drunkenness to the scandal of the Service." Seven years later he was restored to captain and given command of the cutter *Thetis*. No figure such as Healy can live life so large without confrontation.



Image courtesy United States Coast Guard, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

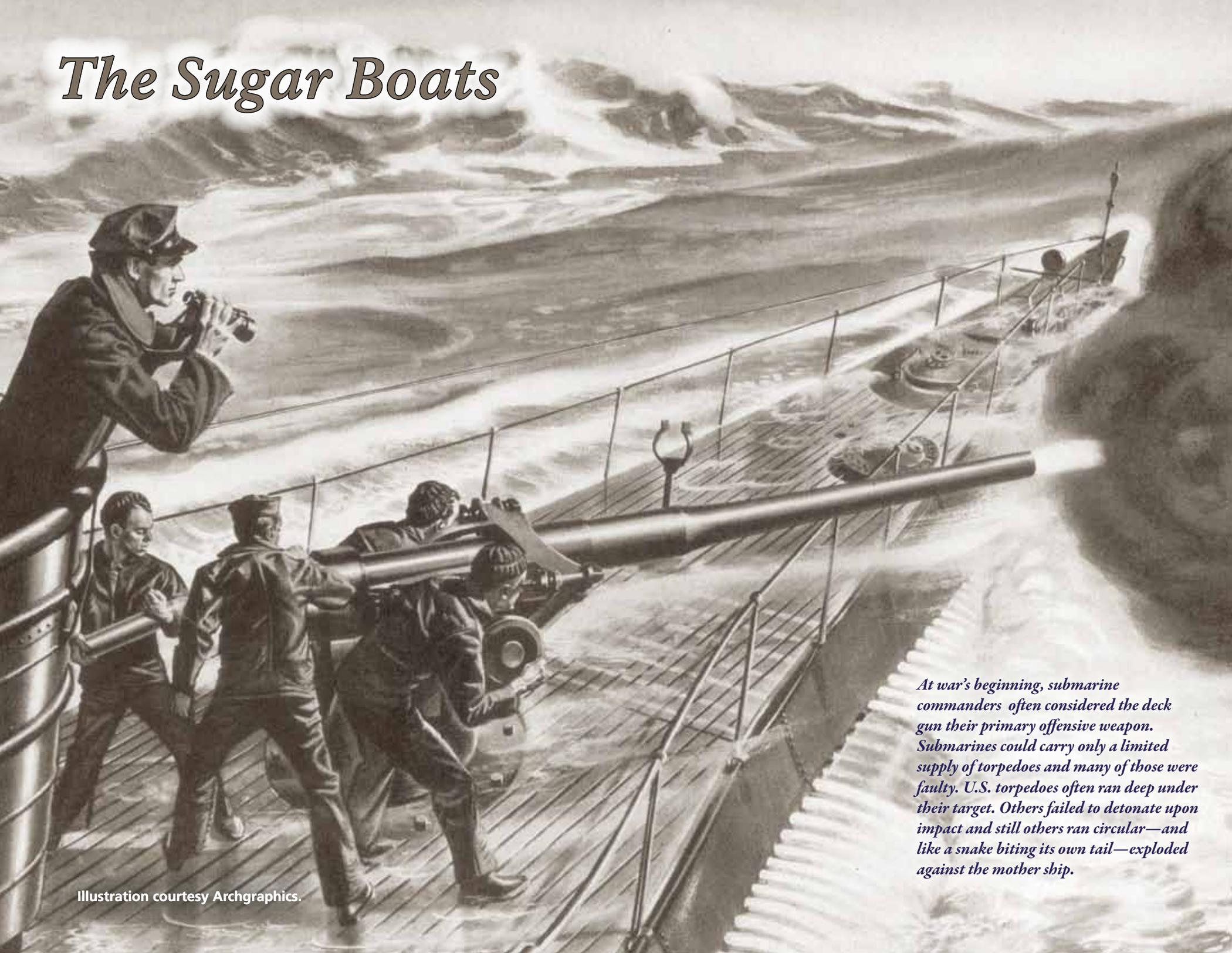
"The U.S. Revenue Cutter Bear, Bering Sea and Arctic Cruise 1900."

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 Easter	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	32	33	34

Armed force of the Revenue Cutter *McCulloch* engage Japanese seal poachers, Attu Island. Refusing to surrender, four Japanese were felled on the beach and twenty-two taken prisoner. Two hundred seal skins were seized. "This bloody incident led to complications between the Emperor of Japan (du mikado) and the Government of the United States." (Translation from the French by Linda Cook). The Cutter *McCulloch* was one of five Revenue Cutters commanded by Captain Michael A. Healy during his career. Image from *Le Petit Journal*, 28 August 1906. Courtesy National Park Service.

Born one of nine children of an Irish immigrant father and enslaved mother, Michael A. Healy rose to become the first man of African-American descent to captain a vessel of the United States Navy. Given command of the flagship of the U.S. Revenue Bering Sea Force—the Cutter *Bear*—in 1885, Healy was charged with patrolling northern seas from the otter hunting grounds at Kodiak to far western Attu; north to the sealing islands of St. George and Paul; and onward north to Barrow and the whalers in the Arctic Ocean. "Woe to any mutineer, seal poacher, or liquor trader who fell to Healy's tender mercies. In law enforcement he preferred the instant and strong correctives of the frontier..." Healy was also a man of great empathy, in particular for Alaska Natives whose very survival was then in jeopardy. "Never make a promise to a [N]ative you do not intend to keep to the letter," was Healy's standing order. In turn, Native Alaskans came to respect Healy and his "Fire Canoe," the steam-driven *Bear*. For twenty years, Healy served the Arctic—a place far removed from his birthplace in Georgia. In that time, he and the *Bear* became the stuff of legend.

The Sugar Boats



At war's beginning, submarine commanders often considered the deck gun their primary offensive weapon. Submarines could carry only a limited supply of torpedoes and many of those were faulty. U.S. torpedoes often ran deep under their target. Others failed to detonate upon impact and still others ran circular—and like a snake biting its own tail—exploded against the mother ship.

May 2013

Heavy sea over bridge. All hands on bridge bruised and battered. Officer on Deck suffered broken nose. Solid stream of water down hatch for 65 seconds. Put high pressure pump on control room bridges; dry after two hours... Barometer 29.60; thirty knot wind (moderate gale).

—The log of the S-23, 13 February 1942, seventh day at sea on her first war patrol out of Dutch Harbor. After jettisoning torn sections of her superstructure, the sub continued patrol of the great circle route from Japan. She would be at Dutch Harbor on 3 June to off-load injured crewmen when Japanese carrier aircraft attacked.

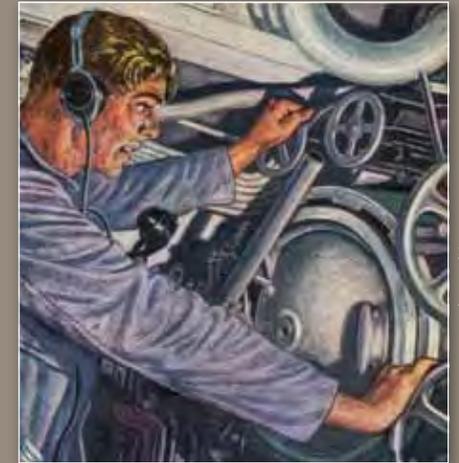


Image courtesy Archgraphics.

S Class boats carried 12 “tin fish”—eight stored in the torpedo room and four ready to run in the tubes.

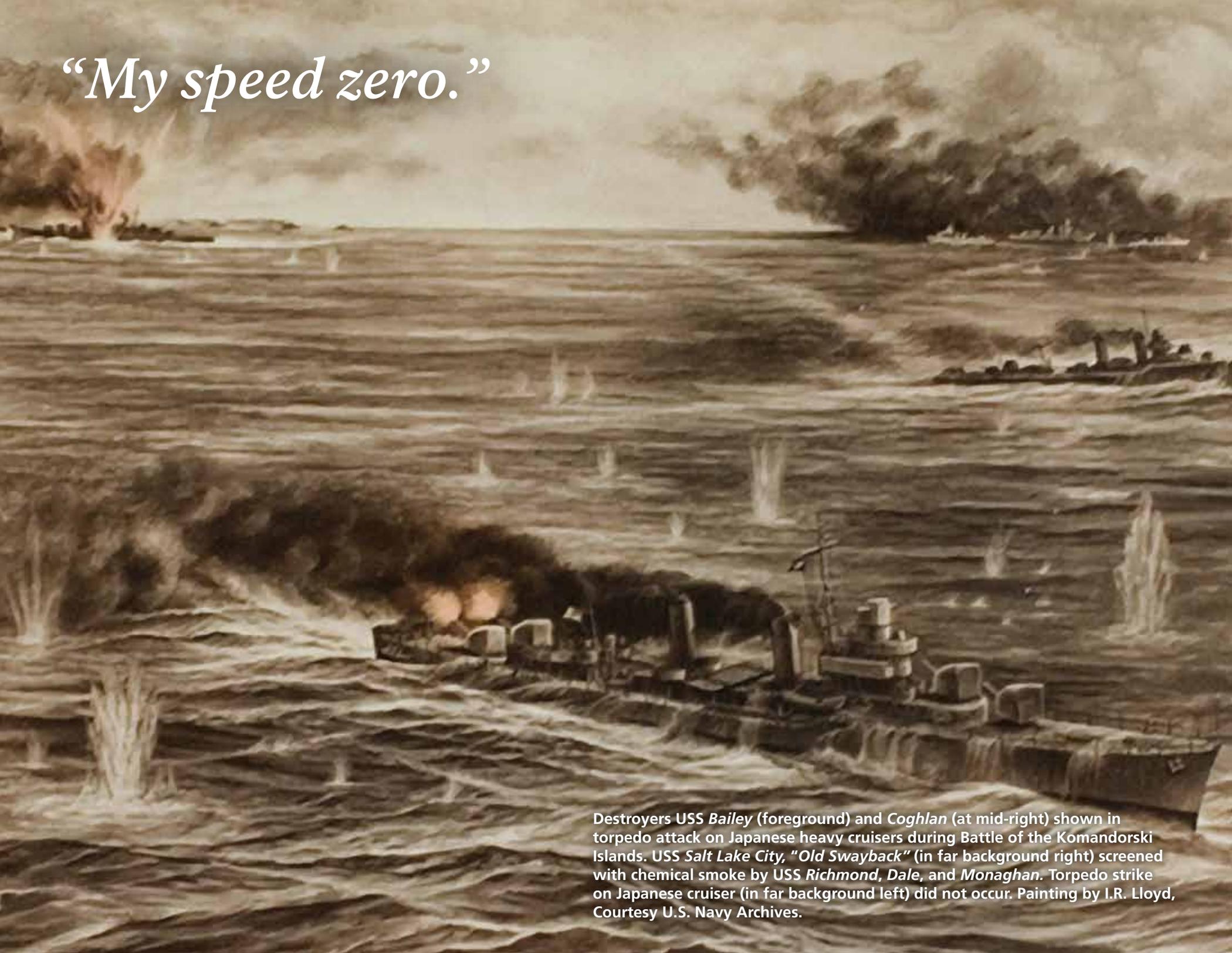
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Mother's Day						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
	Memorial Day					

The S Class—“Sugar Boats” the submariners called them. Laid down in the early 1900s, they measured only some two hundred feet in length, twenty or so at the beam. Designed as offshore patrol vessels charged with protecting the eastern seaboard of the United States, the S Class were pressed into service in the Aleutians in 1942—a desperate stopgap against Japanese naval aggression. These small undersea boats were never meant to work open blue water like the Bering Sea. There they were tossed about like driftwood, superstructures torn away by breaking waves, control planes and propellers damaged, rudders fouled. Even at periscope depth, the boats’ fatigued hulls leaked. Seawater shipped aboard shorted electric lines, the cables burning red like candlewicks. Flooded batteries put off poisonous chlorine gas, driving all crewmen topside in heavy, broaching seas—the ship left to follow its own course unmanned. And the battered submarines dove only to hide or do battle. Submerged, the air was a sour perfume of exhausted oxygen, sweat, and diesel fuel. From the steel walls a steady, strange rain fell, condensation from body heat and breath. Surface sailors both feared and mocked the submarine, calling them “sewer pipes, pig boats.” They were likened to assassins striking in darkness with a knife, then quietly slipping away undetected.

5 July 1942, in her first action at sea, the Gato-Class USS *Growler* closed on three Japanese destroyers in Kiska Harbor. Her first torpedo went awry, but three others struck home, severely damaging the *Kasumi* and *Shiranui* and sinking the *Arare*. This single action accounted for the majority of enemy vessels damaged or sunk during Aleutian submarine operations in 1942. In 1943, *Growler* was refit in Queensland and nicknamed the *Kangaroo Express*, her bow decorated with kangaroos. On her 11th patrol, 1944, out of Australia, she was sunk in a wolf pack attack on a Japanese convoy. There is no conclusive evidence for the loss of the *Growler*. She may have been depth-charged or fallen victim to the circular run of one of her own torpedoes. Image: USS *Growler*, May 1943.

Painting by McClelland Barclay courtesy the Navy Department Library.

“My speed zero.”



Destroyers *USS Bailey* (foreground) and *Coghlan* (at mid-right) shown in torpedo attack on Japanese heavy cruisers during Battle of the Komandorski Islands. *USS Salt Lake City*, “*Old Swayback*” (in far background right) screened with chemical smoke by *USS Richmond*, *Dale*, and *Monaghan*. Torpedo strike on Japanese cruiser (in far background left) did not occur. Painting by I.R. Lloyd, Courtesy U.S. Navy Archives.

June 2013

This day the hand of Divine Providence lay over the ship.

—USS *Salt Lake City* log, 26 March 1943, *Ens. F.R. Floyd*. It has been said some 2000 shells were fired at *Old Swayback* during the Battle of the Komandorski Islands, but only 4 struck home. In the end, the heavy cruiser steamed away under her own power. She would fight for the remainder of WWII, then in July 1946, she would be anchored off Bikini Atoll as a test vessel. *Old Swayback* survived two atomic bomb bursts... then finally sunk, 25 May 1948, as a gunnery target hull.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21 Flag Day	22
Father's Day	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Dawn, 26 March, 1943, 100 miles south of the Russian Komandorski Islands, the Japanese Fifth Fleet and U.S. Task Group 16.6 met by happenstance. Outgunned, the light ships of the U.S. Task Group attempted to retire, covered by the 8-inch guns of the heavy cruiser *Salt Lake City*. *Old Swayback* struck first, sending two shells into the bridge of the Japanese flagship, the heavy cruiser *Nachi*, at twenty miles distance. But after roughly three and one-half hours of continuous battle, *Swayback*, her hull breached, boilers flooded, lay dead in the water. The U.S. destroyers hid her in smoke, then in desperation made a torpedo attack on the Japanese heavy cruisers.

USS Bailey closed to within 10,000 yards, then launched a spread of five torpedoes. In turn she was hit twice by Japanese fire. Believing the battle lost, the sailors of Task Group 16.6 watched in disbelief as the Japanese fleet suddenly retired westward, its ammunition nearly spent, and left the battle. Image courtesy Archgraphics.



Photograph courtesy National Archives.

Officers in the ward room of the *Salt Lake City* plot a tract chart of the Battle of the Komandorski, 29 March 1943.

At 10:00 am, roughly one and one-half hours into battle, the first armor-piercing shell struck, tearing a hole in her hull, flooding the engine room... the propeller shaft. Another shell hit the forward main deck, 260 pounds of high explosive, tearing down through decks, exiting below the waterline without detonation—a dud. Somehow the *USS Salt Lake City*—*Old Swayback*—kept up 30 knots of steam... two heavy Japanese cruisers stalking 10 miles back, “laddering” salvos, trying to find their gunnery range. Preternaturally, the *Swayback*’s Captain Bertram Rodgers swung the heavy U.S. cruiser from starboard to port and back again, “chasing the salvos,” searching for safe waters amidst the giant spouts kicked up by the Japanese bombardment—at times 15 shells fired in unison. Rodgers was fighting a “retiring action.” In retreat he could only bring to bear *Swayback*’s two after turrets—Rodgers five guns in answer to a Japanese broadside of twenty. And the continuous percussive blast of *Swayback*’s after guns tore loose her own rudder stops, then ammunition and powder for the guns grew exhausted. At 10:59, *Old Swayback* was struck again, amidships. At 11:03 another serious hit to the hull, rupturing oil tanks, bulkheads. At 11:50 white smoke poured from the cruiser’s stacks, sign that the ship’s boilers were extinguished by sea water. The signal officer raised “My Speed Zero,” as *Swayback* lay dead in the water. A Japanese shell carried the signal flag away a second after it was raised.

Cannikin

This site was selected—I underscore the point because of its remoteness and the zero likelihood—virtually zero likelihood of any damage.

—James R. Schlesinger, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission. Schlesinger travelled with his wife and two daughters to Amchitka to personally observe the nuclear detonation and demonstrate his belief that the Cannikin test was safe. He stated: “It’s fun for the kids and my wife is delighted to get away from the house for awhile.”

...the island [Amchitka] is actually part of a small crustal block being torn apart by oblique subduction — the entire western Aleutian arc is being sheared and extended. The arc is not a stable, unchanging feature, but rather one undergoing rapid internal deformation...and is therefore one of the least stable tectonic environments in the United States.

—Geotimes, March 2002; Authors: John Eichelberger, Jeff Freymueller, Graham Hill, and Matt Patrick

Infrared photograph, Cannikin test site, Amchitka Island, September 1971. Healthy vegetation presents as false-color “red” using this photographic method.



July 2013

The Cannikin detonation threatens possible destruction or most serious harm to the lives, property, commerce and culture of the Native people living in the Aleutian Island area.

—Iliodor Philemonof, President, Aleut League

I hear that there is going to be a blast on Amchitka in the fall of this year. Nobody from the Federal Government has talked with me about it. I am against the blast because I think it will destroy the food.

—Steve Mike Hodiakoff, 40-year-old resident of Atka and subsistence fisherman,
August 13, 1971 (the Aleut League v. the Atomic Energy Commission, U.S. District Court of Alaska).



Courtesy Atomic Energy Commission.

Workers lower the Cannikin W-71 warhead mounted in Spartan Missile body into borehole. This weapon test, the largest conducted by the U.S., was considered too great for the Nevada testing grounds.

President Richard Milhous Nixon calls via White House hotline 6:30 am, November 6, 1971, giving the shot a thumbs up. At 11 am, a 5-megaton W-71 nuclear warhead, designated *Cannikin*, detonates at the base of a 6,150 foot deep borehole drilled in Amchitka Island. Immediately, the rock adjacent to the exploding warhead melts and vaporizes. An underground cavern forms, magma puddling on the floor. A first wave of fractures reaches out into distant rock. A second wave collapses the cavern roof and a “chimney” is blown to the surface. Most radionuclides remain within the magma pond which turns partially to glass, but others travel with vaporized rock to settle within the chimney. Above ground the blast lifts the island’s surface 15 feet in elevation as far as 2000 feet from the borehole. From newly formed faults, groundwater is violently expressed, and a crater forms a mile wide and 40 feet deep. In two days, waters from White Alice Creek, dammed by faulting, will fill the crater, forming Cannikin Lake. “A good fishing spot, really large trout.”* The blast measures 7.0 on the Richter scale.

*Teleconference: DOE Nevada Official/calendar author, Francis Broderick, prior to archeological survey of Amchitka Island, 1985.

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

Verso of above image reads. “Headquarters Alaskan Air Command (AAC). Night portrait of Aleutian DEW Line (Distant Early Warning) site.” Image circa mid-to-late 1950s, the latter date reflecting a decline in Aleutian AAC DEW Line activity as the Soviets switched from atomic bomber aircraft to intercontinental ballistic missiles, necessitating development of a Ballistic Missile Early Warning System (BMEWS). The Cannikin W-71 nuclear warhead was part of a nascent anti-ballistic missile defense system briefly deployed in the 1970s. The 3,500 member strong Aleut League filed a lawsuit to stop the test. The Supreme Court approved the shot 4-3. The warhead was detonated five hours after their decision. Image Courtesy Archgraphics.

The Thugs

I still think with special horror how little history for the Force there would have been had the Jap[anese] still been on Kiska. I think few realize how close to a suicidal assignment our part of the operation was.

—Member, First Special Service Force

August 2013

These men...these erstwhile undisciplined brawlers and malcontents, these formerly undistinguished farm boys, teachers and choir singers...had been conditioned to look upon the Force as their home, the Forcemen their only peers...

—*The Devil's Brigade*; Authors: Robert H. Adelman, George Walton

We had our screwballs—maybe more than our share. Screwballs they may have been, but they were damn good screwballs and fighting screwballs. I was proud to be part of the Thugs. The enlisted men were superb (U.S. and Canadian), every damn one of them.

—Colonel Robert M. Stuart



CWM 19710261-3334. Beaverbrook Collection of War Art. © Canadian War Museum.

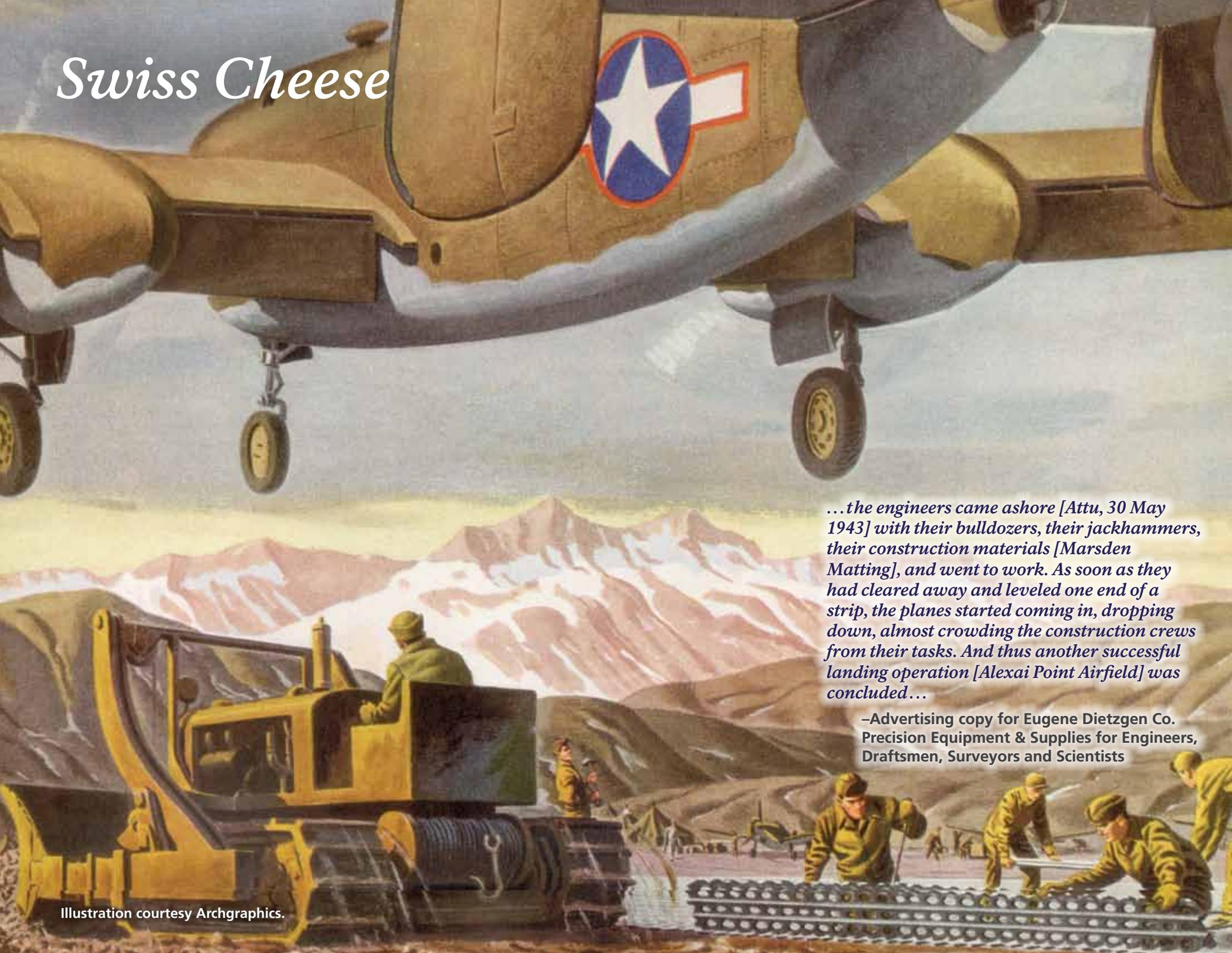
“Corporal in Battle Order” by E.J. Hughes.

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

“Patrol Dismissing Camp [Kiska]” by E.J. Hughes. CWM 19870003-007. Beaverbrook Collection of War Art. © Canadian War Museum.

They came to Fort Harrison, Billings, Montana in summer uniform—Bermuda shorts and knee socks...in Highlanders’ plaid kilts, sporran, and bright white spats. They strutted down the street, and the local cowboys in Levis and big hats stared in disbelief. But the Billings girls loved them. *Canadians*—all volunteers in the First Special Service Force—the brainchild of an eccentric Brit named Geoffrey Pyke. Pyke (known equally for genius and bad hygiene) envisioned an elite commando unit dropped into Norway to attack oil facilities and hydroelectric plants. Problem was, he hadn’t figured how to get the men out... In Helena, the Canadians met their Yank counterparts in the Force, the Yanks proud of their reputation as jailbirds, thieves, and murderers—“Thugs.” After some “misunderstandings,” Canadian and Yank recognized each other as fighting men. Together, they were worked harder than any other army unit—trained to parachute, to ski, and the fine art of high explosives. They were saboteurs looking for something to blow up, but the Norwegians had bowed out, fearing the Force would destroy the entire infrastructure of Norway. Finally the brass settled on the Aleutians, but the Force would find only frustration in the invasion of Kiska.

Swiss Cheese



...the engineers came ashore [Attu, 30 May 1943] with their bulldozers, their jackhammers, their construction materials [Marsden Matting], and went to work. As soon as they had cleared away and leveled one end of a strip, the planes started coming in, dropping down, almost crowding the construction crews from their tasks. And thus another successful landing operation [Alexai Point Airfield] was concluded...

*—Advertising copy for Eugene Dietzgen Co.
Precision Equipment & Supplies for Engineers,
Draftsmen, Surveyors and Scientists*

September 2013

Gentlemen, we want you to build a good portable airport. It must be strong, light... safe and inexpensive. It must be so simple that it can be laid on any fairly level piece of land with a few days work. It must be so foolproof that if some parts are lost, it will still be useful. It must be safe for any type of airplane, under any weather conditions. It must be so light that it can be transported swiftly and easily to any spot.

—U.S. Army Air Corps



Image courtesy Archgraphics.

This segment of Marsden Mat was photographed on Gambell Street in Anchorage, Alaska. Set upright and welded to support poles, it serves as part of the property boundary for a local bar.

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

Pierced Steel Planking, Marsden Matting—“swiss cheese.” Each metal sheet of portable runway weighed roughly 66 pounds, measured 10 feet 15 inches on the long side. Cape Field at Fort Glenn, Umnak Island, required an initial 80,000 sections to complete. It was the first airfield laid in the Aleutians—expedient, crude, dangerous. The matting could bounce landing aircraft 30 feet in the air; tear the guts out of a damaged plane coming in nose down or trying to belly land—the spark of metal on metal igniting ruptured fuel tanks. Under the wheels of heavy bombers the flexible mats rode up in steel waves. Nonetheless, in the Aleutian Theatre, where nature and topography, above all, dictated the methods of war, Marsden Matting was quickly adopted. It would serve the Army Air Force well in its frenzied push westward in the Aleutian Chain—the foundation of airstrips at Adak and Amchitka. So successful was the matting it saw continued use in the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Even early NASCAR racing gave the mat a nod.

Unloading Marsden Matting, Amchitka Island, 12 October 1943. Roughly 2 million tons of Marsden Matting was produced during the 1940s. A truly utilitarian product, war surplus matting was used for road and bridge construction in the U.S.; by early southeastern U.S. auto racing teams; and in the Pacific, particularly Papua New Guinea, as fencing and roadway barriers stretching in some cases for miles. Photograph courtesy National Archives.

October 2013

The Akutan Zero was a treasure...no other captured machine has ever unlocked so many secrets at a time when the need was so great.

—Rear Admiral William N. Leonard, retired

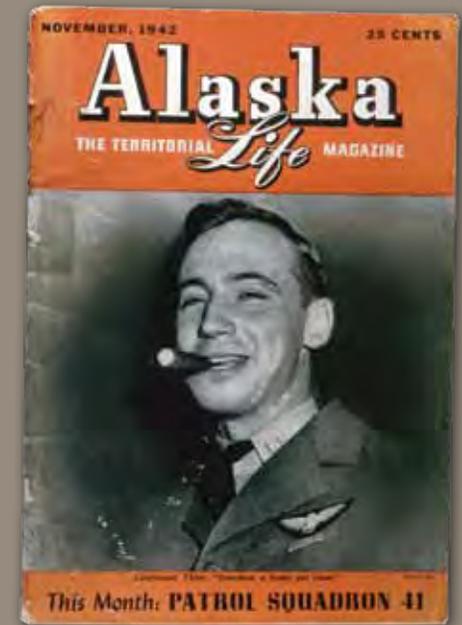
Never attempt to dogfight the Zero.

—U.S. Informational Intelligence Summary No. 85

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

Lieutenant William Thies (standing behind propeller with notebook) and the crew of PBV VP-41 examine the "Akutan Zero." Of the thousands of U.S. anti-aircraft rounds fired skyward from land and ships in harbor during the Japanese bombardment of Dutch Harbor, only one finds its mark—a .50 calibre shell that severs the oil line of a Japanese Zero piloted by Tadayoshi Koga, 4 June 1942. Recovered from Akutan, the aircraft was shipped south to San Diego, repaired, and test flown in mock combat. "We now had the answer for our pilots who were being outmaneuvered and unable to escape a pursuing Zero." —Test Pilot Lieutenant Commander Eddie R. Sanders.

Photograph courtesy Museum of the Aleutians. Images on this page may be seen at the Aleutian World War II Visitor Center, Dutch Harbor.



This object may be viewed at the Aleutian World War II Visitor Center, Dutch Harbor, Alaska. Photograph courtesy Archgraphics.

Lieutenant William Thies, ubiquitous cigar in mouth, on the cover of *Alaska Life, The Territorial Magazine*. Due to secrecy, no mention of the 10 July 1942 discovery of the "Akutan Zero" can be found within the covers of this November 1942 issue.

Roughly one month after the Japanese bombardment of Dutch Harbor, William Thies found himself flying south of the Aleutian Islands, lost in the arctic twilight. Thies flew by dead reckoning, the shifting winds slapping his lumbering flying boat off course, the rough North Pacific below him devoid of any landmark. At dawn, Ensign Robert Larson took a sextant shot of the low-lying sun. With location fixed over the Shumagin Islands, Thies reoriented and flew a direct route back to Dutch. He remembers second pilot, George Raptist, nauseated by the bouncing PBV, leaving the cockpit. Raptist made his way to the left waist observation blister to vomit. Below, on Akutan Island, Raptist saw the gray belly of an overturned airplane. Thies banked the PBV and descended, marking the location of a Japanese Zero in a field of tall, waving grass.

GAS!

...the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases, and of all analogous liquids, materials or devices, has been justly condemned by the general opinion of the civilised world.

—Third Geneva Convention,
17 June 1925

WWII U.S. Navy gas mask.

This object may be seen at the World War II Visitor Center, Dutch Harbor.
Photograph montage courtesy Archgraphics.



November 2013

In the evening the U.S. forces used gas, but no damage was done because of strong winds.

—Dr. Nebsi Tatsugochi, Battle of Attu, 14 May 1943



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poison_gas

Japanese troops in gas masks and rubber gloves during chemical attack, Battle of Shanghai 1937.

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

Although poison gas was not used in the Pacific Theatre during WWII, both Japanese and American believed the other willing to deploy the ephemeral killer. During the Japanese aerial bombardment of Dutch Harbor, 3 June 1942, some U.S. servicemen donned gas masks with the protective coverings still on the filters. Unable to breathe, they nearly suffocated in their panic. During the battle for Attu, Japanese diaries reported the use of gas-filled artillery shells by the United States. These were actually white phosphorous rounds, horrific weapons in their own right. At battle's end, many of the Japanese Northern Garrison's dead were found with gas masks in place.

Fear of poison gas was not unfounded however. The Japanese had made frequent use of mustard gas and the blister agent "Lewsite" against Chinese troops and civilians in the Second Sino-Japanese War. And the United States, appalled by casualties suffered during the battles for outlying islands, considered deploying gas during the planned invasion of mainland Japan, estimating that taking the home islands would cause 1.2 million U.S. casualties, with 267,000 deaths. It was thought the use of phosgene and chlorine against Japan's major cities, including Tokyo, "might easily kill 5,000,000,000 people and injure that many more."

The horror of gas warfare in the trenches of World War I was still strong in the minds of WWII military planners. It was the fear of reprisal, however, rather than moral aversion, that largely precluded such weapons to be employed in the second great war. "Gassed" by John Singer Sargent. Dressing station at Le Bac-du-Sud near Arras, 1918. Courtesy Imperial War Museum.

On Island X

*Quonset Home...the last word in modern design...
no corners for cobwebs...no wasted space...*

-On Island X



Illustration from *On Island X*,
Donald J. McKinnon Collection,
courtesy of Mary McKinnon

December 2013

Neither heroic nor spectacular... The working weather, while not good, did not hurt us because we were tough. We were cheered because we knew that our work was necessary...

—On Island X

...it was our foe, our implacable adversary, our relentless enemy...we picked up its gauntlet...its challenge, our battle... Williwaw.

—On Island X



Donald J. McKinnon Collection, courtesy of Mary McKinnon.

Donald McKinnon and his Christmas card to left.

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

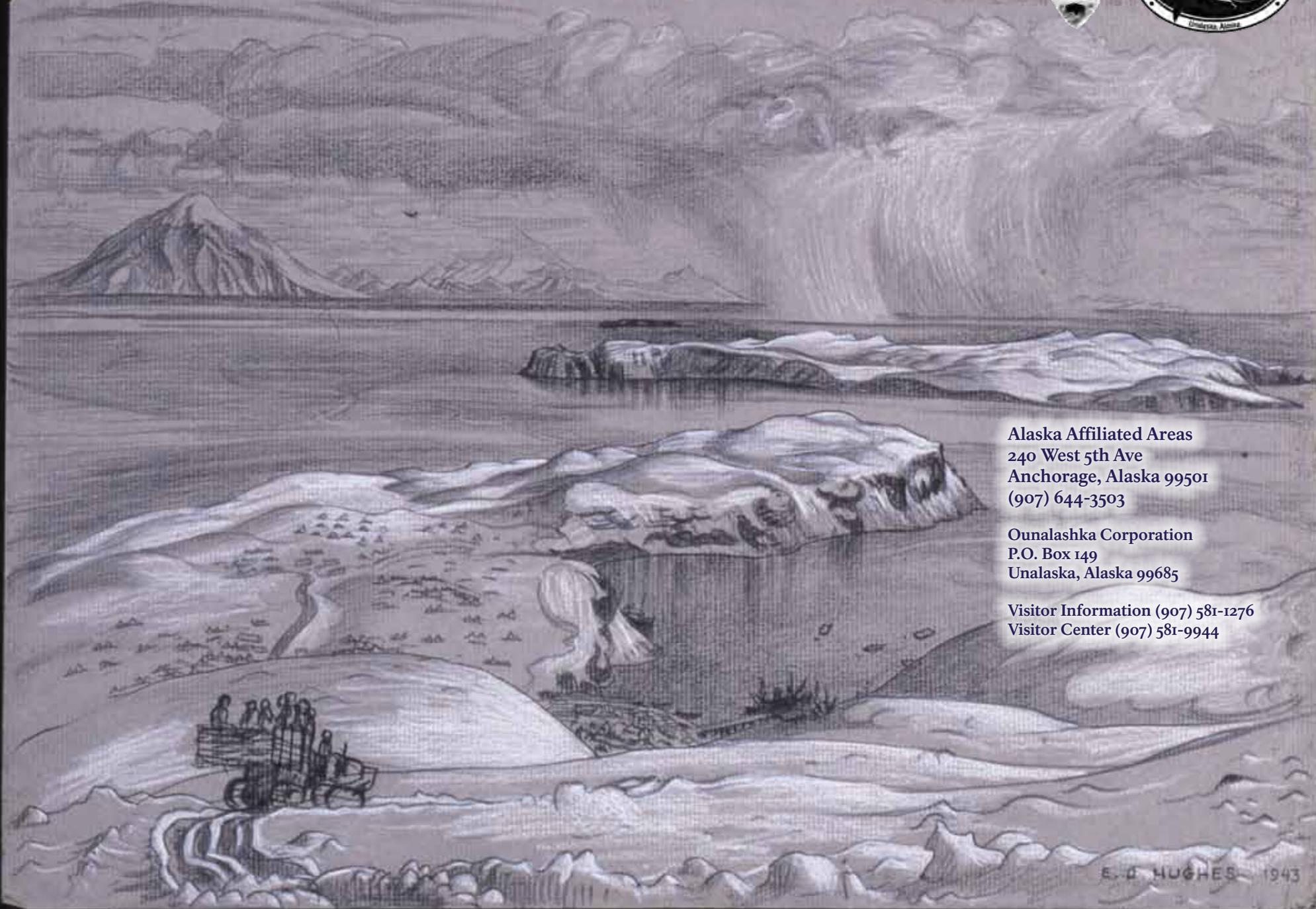
Donald J. McKinnon served with the 138th Naval Construction Battalion on Attu during WWII. After the U.S. had reclaimed Attu from the Japanese, in May 1943, the Seabees quickly set up a base to meet the most immediate needs. Beginning in 1944, the job to create and maintain a more permanent installation fell to the 138th Seabees—who “kept the ball rolling” through some of the worse weather conditions. After the war, the 138th captured their Aleutian experiences with an illustrated publication titled *On Island X*, with descriptive subtitles such as: “Destination Unknown; Seasick?; Confusion; Williwaw; Digging Out; Morning Chow; Maneuvers; Day’s Work; Skid Shack; Seabee Tools; Temple of Mercy; and the Aleutian Stare.”

Happy Holidays to all veterans of the Aleutian Campaign – Canadian and Yank. Best wishes to their families, and cheers... to both those who have made history and those who love history and keep it alive.

“Williwaw.” Illustration from *On Island X*, Donald J. McKinnon Collection, courtesy of Mary McKinnon. Special thanks to Janet Clemens, National Park Service Historian, Alaska Office for researching and writing the month of December for this calendar.

—From the staff of the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area Calendar

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E. D. HUGHES 1943