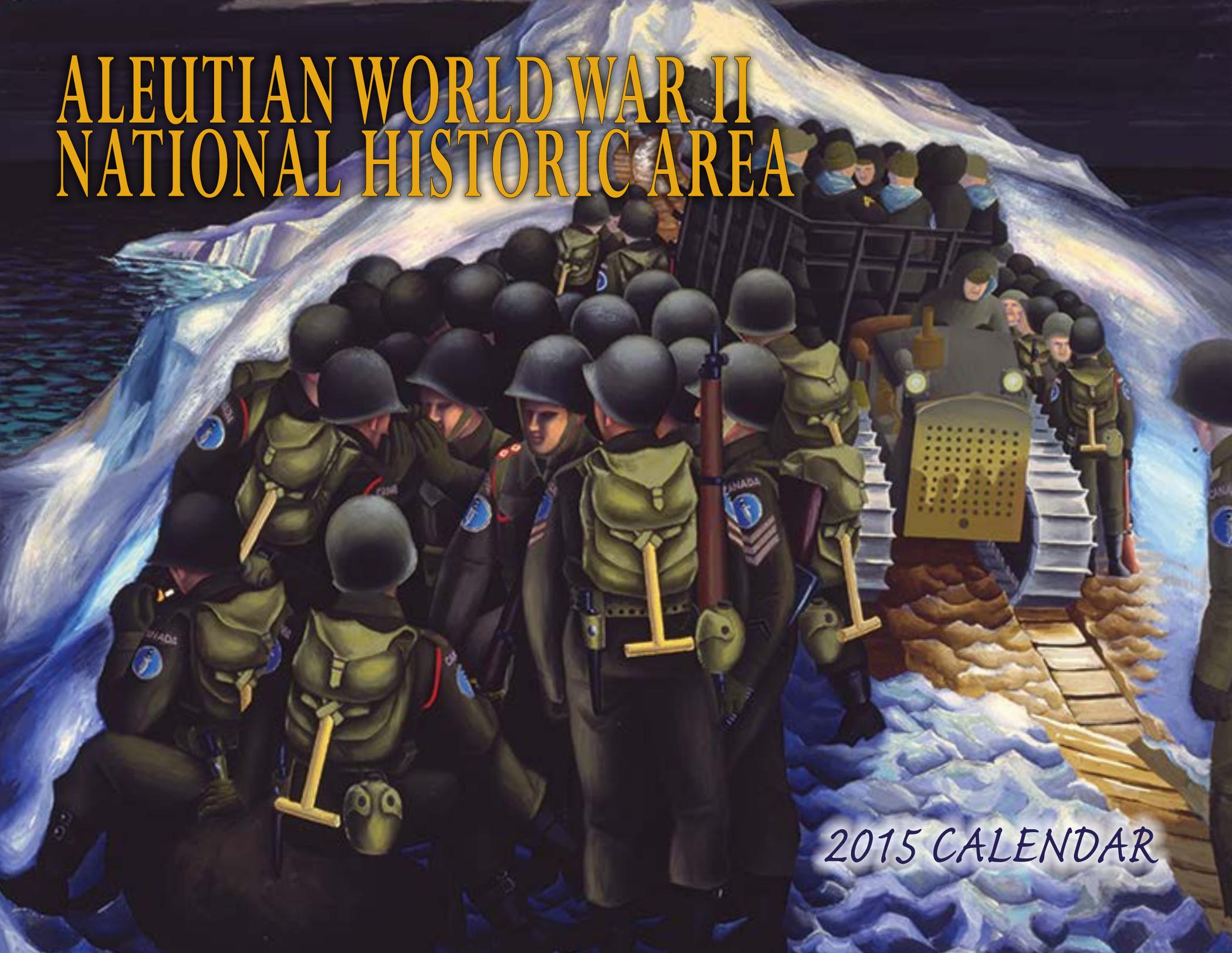


# ALEUTIAN WORLD WAR II NATIONAL HISTORIC AREA



2015 CALENDAR



VS-49 Pilots in Aerology Building  
H. Marion Thornton  
Photographs, 1942-1945.  
ASL-P338-1663.

**D**uring 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/](http://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

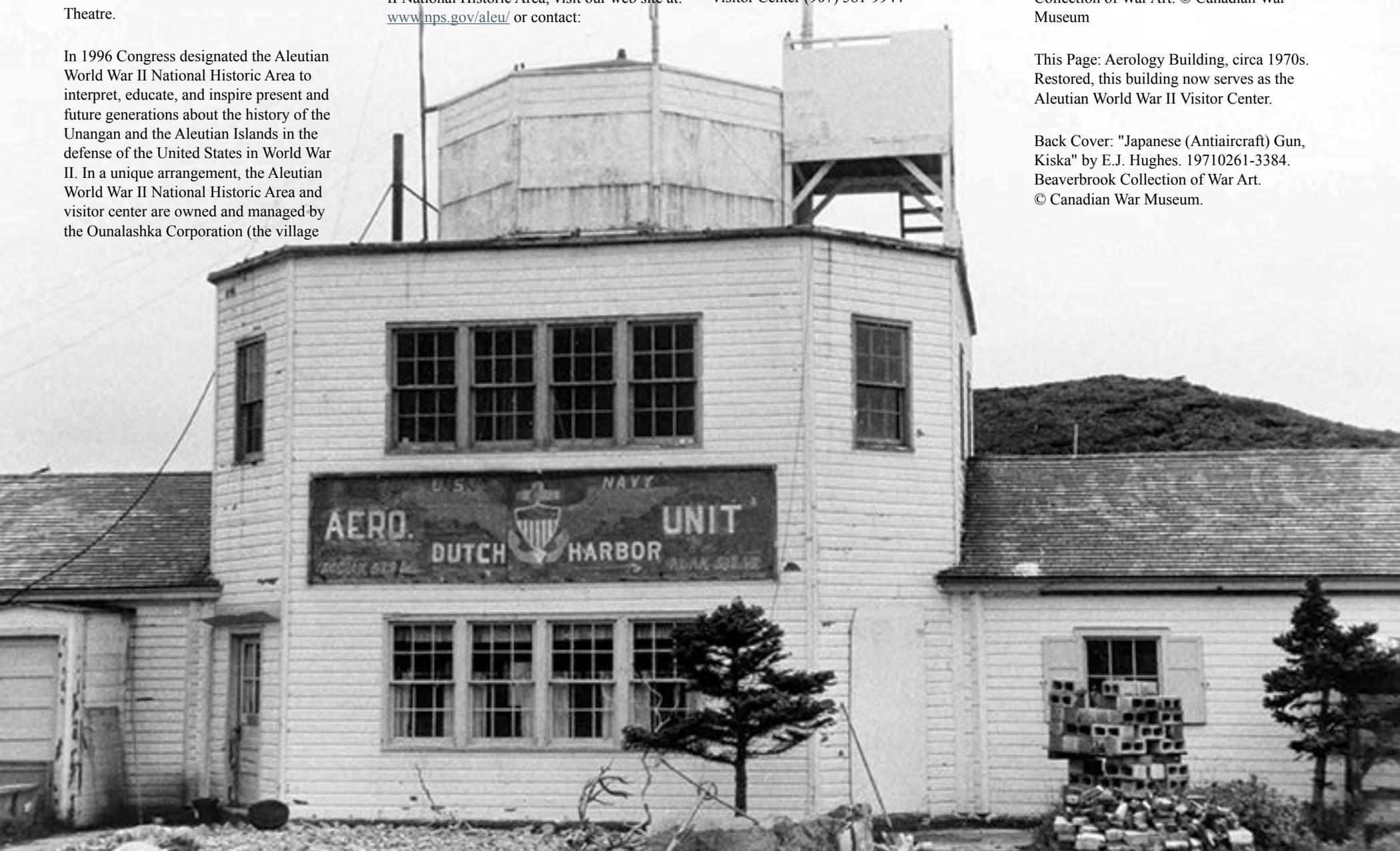
Visitor Center (907) 581-9944

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.

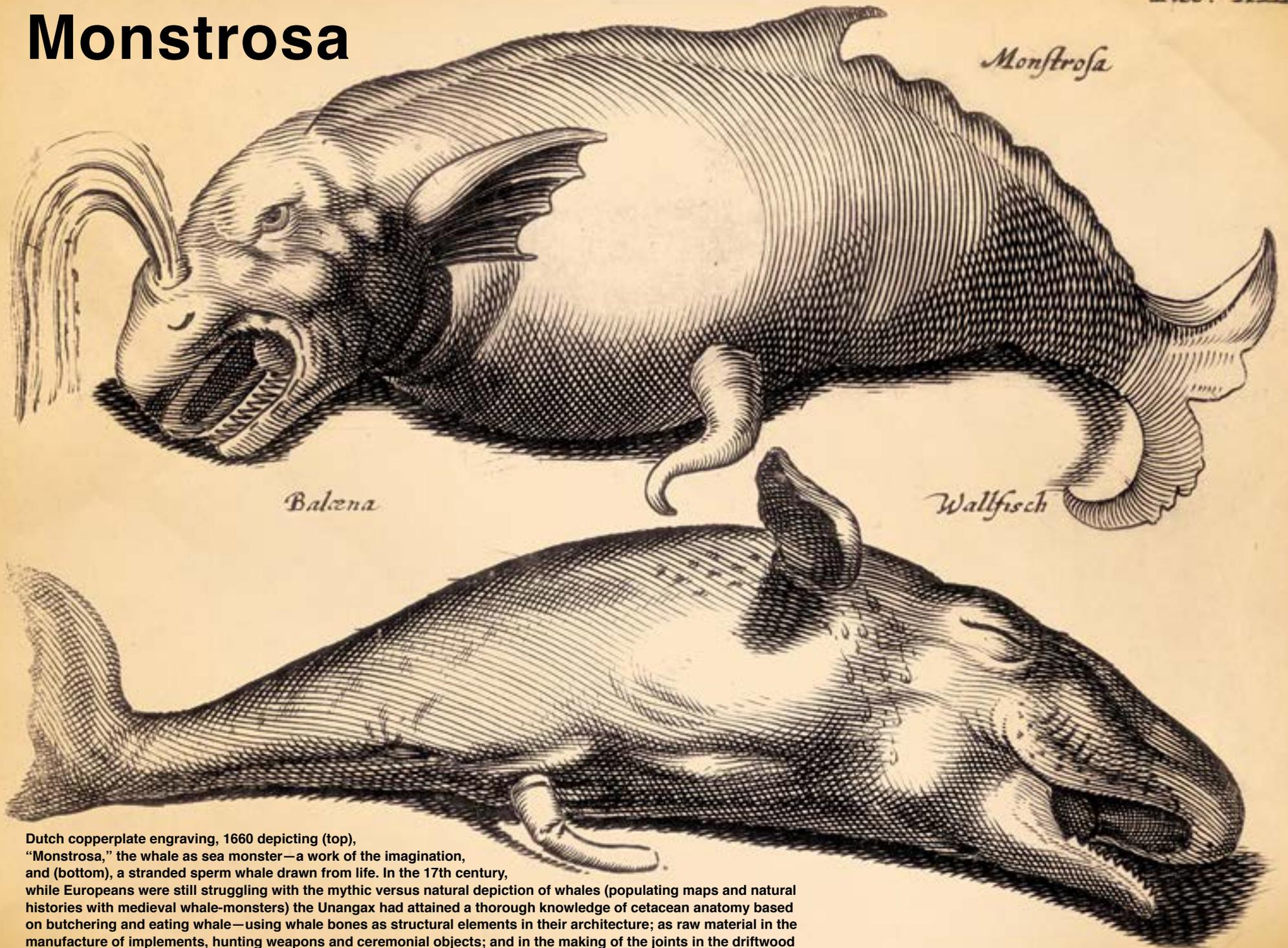
Front Cover: "Ten Minutes Rest-Kiska," by E.J. Hughes. 19710261-3873. Beaverbrook Collection of War Art. © Canadian War Museum

This Page: Aerology Building, circa 1970s. Restored, this building now serves as the Aleutian World War II Visitor Center.

Back Cover: "Japanese (Antiaircraft) Gun, Kiska" by E.J. Hughes. 19710261-3384. Beaverbrook Collection of War Art. © Canadian War Museum.



# Monstrosa



Dutch copperplate engraving, 1660 depicting (top), “Monstrosa,” the whale as sea monster—a work of the imagination, and (bottom), a stranded sperm whale drawn from life. In the 17th century, while Europeans were still struggling with the mythic versus natural depiction of whales (populating maps and natural histories with medieval whale-monsters) the Unangax had attained a thorough knowledge of cetacean anatomy based on butchering and eating whale—using whale bones as structural elements in their architecture; as raw material in the manufacture of implements, hunting weapons and ceremonial objects; and in the making of the joints in the driftwood skeleton of the hunting kayak. Image courtesy Archgraphics.

# January 2015

*...[whales] are no more fish than are horses and cows. Whales and all their relatives, such as porpoises, grampuses, and narwhals, are mammals — warm-blooded creatures which bring forth their young alive and suckle their offspring like any four-footed land mammal.*

—A. Hyall Verrill, *The Real Story of the Whaler: Whaling, Past and Present*, 1916

*Misshapen images and ill-informed descriptions of whales created an unfounded multiplicity of variant species that pile up one upon another, unchecked by empirical corroboration.*

—Stuart M. Frank, *Whaling Literature*



Image from “Evolution of Whales from Land to Sea” by Philip D. Gingerich in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol 156, No. 3, Sept. 2012.

Roughly the size of a modern wolf, the Pakicetus is widely regarded by paleontologists as the most basal whale. Fossil finds in Pakistan indicate that it had four functioning limbs, a distinct and flexible neck, a typical complement of teeth used for tearing and grinding, and nostrils located at the tip of the snout—all attributes of the terrestrial mammal. In addition, it possessed closely-set, upward-facing eyes (which allowed it to see while nearly completely submerged in water), and most importantly—a specialized, thickened skull bone, the auditory bulla, that modern whales utilize for underwater hearing. (In the Pakicetus this bulla was non-functioning.) It is this hybrid morphology that defines the Pakicetus as the oldest semi-aquatic ancestor of the modern whale. Illustration by John Klausmeyer, University of Michigan Exhibit Museum.



The architecture of a mammalian skeleton is readily apparent once one looks beneath the modern whale’s sleek, fuciform exterior. Within the front flippers are the bones of the mammalian arm and hand, altered, but recognizable—the radius and ulna shortened; the wrist bone flat and disk-like; the multiple phalanges elongated. At the base of the spine, whales may carry a vestigial pelvis and the splinter-like remnants of hind-limbs—atavistic femora and tibiae buried in the whale’s musculature. During gestation, embryonic whales temporarily acquire body hair, rudimentary ear pinnae, and olfactory lobes (all traits of terrestrial mammals that are absent in adult whales). All fetal whales have teeth (simple cones or pegs), even the baleen whale. The nostrils of the fetal whale begin at the snout as in land mammals, then “drift” to the top of the skull becoming blowhole(s)—two in baleen whales; one in toothed whales. For centuries scientists have attempted to trace the path of the whale from terrestrial to aquatic mammal through the fossil record. With new finds, theories change—the theories themselves in evolution.

It is theorized that hippos and whales shared a common semi-aquatic ancestor roughly 60 million years before present. This hypothesized ancestral group likely split into two branches roughly 54 million years before present, with one branch evolving into cetaceans, and the other into the anthracotheres (see illustration above), a large family of four-legged beasts, the earliest of which would have resembled gracile hippos with small, narrow heads. Unlike the terrestrial anthracotheres, the protowhale identified as Pakicetus (see rendering upper right) and other early whale ancestors eventually underwent complete aquatic adaptation, foregoing land for the sea and evolving into the modern whale. Of the terrestrial anthracotheres, all became extinct during the Pliocene except that which evolved into the Hippopotamidae.

# They Hunted Them from Kayaks

*In the months of June and July the whales begin to make their first inshore visits to the Aleutian bays, where they follow up schools of herring and shoals of Amphipoda, or sea-fleas, upon which they love to feed. The bays of Akootan (Akutan) and Akoon (Akun) were and are always resorted to more freely by those cetaceans than are any others in Alaska, and here the hunt is continued as late as August. When a calm, clear day occurs the [N]atives ascend the bluffs and locate a school of whales; then the best men launch their skin-canoes, or bidarkas, and start for the fields. "Two-holed" bidarkas only are used. The hunter himself sits forward with nothing but whale-spear in his grasp; his companion, in the after hatch, swiftly urges the light boat over the water in obedience to his order.*

**—W.H. Elliott, *The Arctic Province*, 1886**



## THE WHALE FISHERY.

Aleuts planting glass, obsidian, and jade darts in a school of humpback whales, Akoon Island, Bering Sea. (Sect. v, vol. ii, pp. 61, 62.)

Drawing by H. W. Elliott.

# February 2015

"An Aleutian Mummy [Unrolled from its cerements.]" by W.H. Elliott, The Arctic Province, 1886.



Deceased whalers of great skill were often mummified—an embalming process practiced on every continent and indicative of both the utmost respect of the dead and an intimate knowledge of human anatomy. In the Aleutians, it was believed the "dried ones" could communicate with whales, and prior to the hunt, a whaler would visit a mummy cave. There, with the spirits of past whalers, he would perform rituals intended to bring a favorable end to his endeavors. In a society where persons often lived into extended old age, whalers died young—the result of their dangerous pursuits, and it has been conjectured, their association with the dead.

The [N]ative hunter used, as his sole weapon of destruction, a spear-handle of wood about six feet in length; to the head of this he lashed a neatly-polished socket of walrus ivory, in which he inserted a tip of serrated slate that resembled a gigantic arrow-point, twelve or fourteen inches long and four or five broad at the barbs, and upon the point of which he carved his own mark.

—W.H. Elliott, *The Arctic Province*, 1886

The hunter who speared the whale would have to cut the spear out of the animal and leave some of the meat still on the spear. He would cook the meat and fat over an open fire. The hunter would have to eat the meat first. Nobody would touch the whale until the next day to see if that guy was still all right...because the people used poisoned tips\*\* for hunting the whale. You couldn't tell who was using it or what was being used, so they let the hunter eat it first.

—Nick Galaktionoff, *Lost Villages of the Eastern Aleutians: Biorka, Kashaga, Makushin* (coming from NPS, fall 2014)



Wounded (the whale) makes for the open sea, where "it goes to sleep" for three days, as the [N]atives believe;† then death intervenes...if the waves and currents are favorable, it will be so drifted as to lodge on a beach... The business of watching for these expected carcasses then became the great object of everyone's life in that hunter's village; dusky sentinels and pickets were ranged over long intervals of coast-line... But the caprices of wind and tides are such in these highways and byways of the Aleutian Islands, that on an average not more than one whale in twenty, struck in this manner by native hunters, was ever secured... The lucky hunter who successfully claimed, by his spear-head mark, the credit of slaying such a stranded calf or yearling (old bulls and angry cow-whales were far too dangerous to hunt) was then an object of the highest respect among his fellow-men, and it was remembered well of him even long after death.

—W.H. Elliott, *The Arctic Province*, 1886

\*\*The Alutiiq of Kodiak Island to the east laced their stone lances with aconite, a poison derived from the dried root of monkshood—a plant associated with witchcraft in medieval Europe. It took roughly three days for the poison to do its work. It is known the Unangax rubbed secretions of the human body, as well as human body fat, on their whaling points. Whether these substances were ingredients in a poison, talismans, or both, is uncertain.

Above: detail, skeleton of humpback whale (Whale #68 "SNOW") showing #1 skull, #2 the bones of the flipper (in forefront), and #3 ribcage. SNOW, a 46-foot long adult female, was struck and killed by a cruise ship in Glacier Bay in 2001. Her bones rearticulated, she is now on display at Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. Photograph by Kim Ney. Image digitally "isolated" from background.

†The whaler secludes himself in a house where he too remains, without food or water, for three days. There he imitates the sighs and groans of an injured whale to effect its death and stranding. Emerging from seclusion on the fourth day, the hunter joins in the search for the harpooned whale. If the whale fails to appear, the seclusion ritual is repeated.

# The Bell Ringer



Nicholai Lekanoff in the bell tower of the Holy Ascension of our Lord Cathedral, Unalaska.

# March 2015

*[Nicholai Lekanoff] has been the little backbone that has kept [the Cathedral of the Holy Ascension] standing... He loves that cathedral and especially those bells. It is obvious when you see or meet him.*

—Okalena Patricia (Patty) Lekanoff-Gregory



Jet Lowe. NPS, HABS AK, November 1984.

Bells, Holy Ascension Cathedral.

Nicholai Lekanoff climbs the steep bell tower stairs, then four rungs of a ladder to stand atop a small platform. He waits for a nod from below, his signal to begin, and then sets in motion the bells of the Holy Ascension Cathedral. Nicholai's body moves rhythmically. He "dances" with the seven bells that hang before him, swinging them with his feet, his knees, and hands. It is a quiet day, the tower windows open, and the toll of the bells, the deep vibrato of ringing metal, carries over Unalaska City. 22 July 1942, Nicholai, his wife Polly and her parents Mike and Dora Kudrin were taken from their Unalaska home and interned at an abandoned fish cannery in southeast Alaska. There, in the tower of a handbuilt church, Nicholai rang three small bells brought from Unalaska. Upon his return to Unalaska in 1945, Nicholai was made "Starosta," or caretaker, of the Holy Ascension Cathedral. Under Nicholai Lekanoff, the bells of Unalaska rang through relocation and return. Their sounding now proclaims not only the Unanga's deep love of God, but gives voice to the people themselves, declaring loud their place in their ancestral home. Today, at the age of 90, Nicholai Lekanoff no longer rings the bells at Unalaska. His daughter, Okalena Patricia Lekanoff-Gregory, is one of three who toll the bells these days. In Sunday dress and high heels, she works the heavy bronze bells. She rings them for God, she says, and prays for those who have gone before.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 Seward's Day	31				

Nicholai Lekanoff, Sr. at Makushin, August 31, 2009. Nicholai returned to his birthplace village as part of the Lost Villages project, a joint collaboration between the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Unalashka Corporation. The project is described in detail in the upcoming NPS publication *Lost Villages of the Eastern Aleutians: Biorka, Kashega, Makushin* by Ray Hudson and Rachel Mason, NPS anthropologist (expected publication date Fall 2014). In 2005 Nicholai's daughter Patty wrote of her father: "[Nicholai] has always talked about going back down to southeast and see where he was (interned) for almost three years, and now, he wants to put a marker on his brother Steve's grave down in Burnett Inlet... He said he will get a marker for his brother Lazar who died here in Unalaska shortly after the bombing. He said it was a tough four years, his mom died (maybe TB or heart, he wasn't sure) in 1940, his dad in 1941 (kidney stones), his little brother Lazar from TB in 1942, and his other brother Steve in Burnett Inlet in 1943." (Written communication: Patty Gregory/calendar author.)

# Raid Dutch Harbor

*I tried to get into a foxhole, but the guy in there told me I couldn't get in because he was from Alabama and I was Black. With the Zeros strafing us, I wasn't about to leave that foxhole, and I told him so.*

—*Johnnie Jenkins, USN Mess Steward*



Val, type 98  
#25 bomb.

**P**anorama of Japanese aerial bombardment of Dutch Harbor, Amaknak Island taken 4 June 1942 from the foothills of Mount Ballyhoo. The view is looking south, from the seaplane hangar towards Fort Mears.

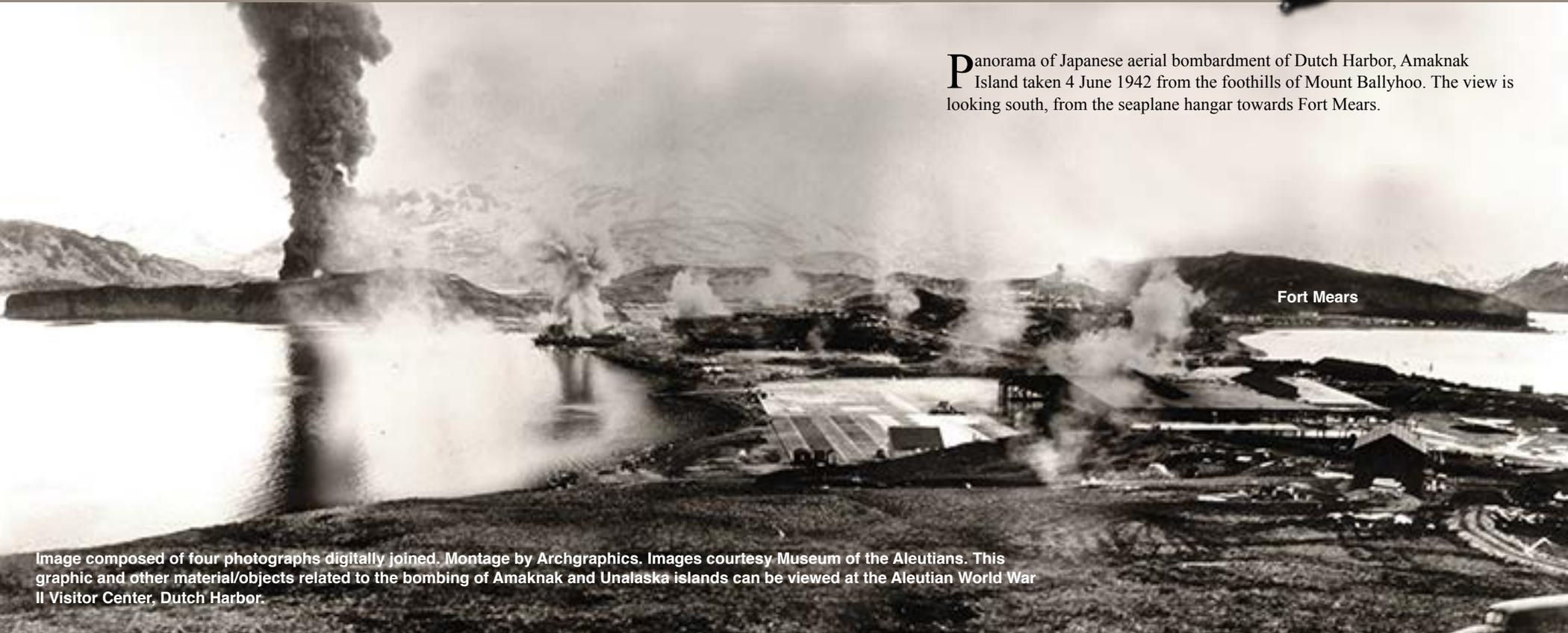


Image composed of four photographs digitally joined. Montage by Archgraphics. Images courtesy Museum of the Aleutians. This graphic and other material/objects related to the bombing of Amaknak and Unalaska islands can be viewed at the Aleutian World War II Visitor Center, Dutch Harbor.

Dense black smoke boils up from four burning oil tanks filled to capacity only three days earlier. One tank ignited by a Japanese bomb strike rises a hundred feet in the air, the concussive blast of 187,000 gallons of fuel so great it can be heard at Fort Glenn, Umnak Island, sixty miles distant.

See "The Secret Airbase," month of August, this calendar.

A direct Val dive bomber strike on the beached steamship S.S. Northwestern sends a plume of oily black smoke into the sky. For three days the smoke will rise to stain the fog above.

See "The S.S. Northwestern," month of June, this calendar.

Japanese dive bombers target antiaircraft positions on Power House Hill and the surrounding foothills, killing seven. (Of thousands of U.S. antiaircraft rounds fired skyward, only one .50 caliber round finds its mark—severing the oil line of the "Akutan Zero.")

See "The Prize," month of October, 2013 calendar.

A Japanese bomb explodes on the roof of the PBV seaplane hangar still under construction.

Japanese high-level bombers drop heavy explosives on Fort Mears. The bombs first splash harmlessly in the harbor, then step across the fort, falling on barracks, warehouses, and Quonsets.

See "Underground Hospital," month of May, this calendar.

# April 2015

*“I...was pulling off my flight boots when the first stick of bombs straddled across the...houses...where we flyers lived. I dove through the side door and jumped into the trash pit...anyplace to dodge the bombs!”*

—Jack Kassel

Image courtesy Museum of the Aleutians.



Dutch Harbor gunner with M1917 Browning water-cooled, belt-fed heavy machine gun. The weapon's initial design dates to 1910, the gun seeing limited use in World War I; widespread use in World War II—continuing into the Korean conflict and to a limited extent in Vietnam. The bulky sleeve on the barrel is the water jacket. In the Aleutians, antifreeze was needed to keep the coolant from freezing.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3 Good Friday	4
5 Easter	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		

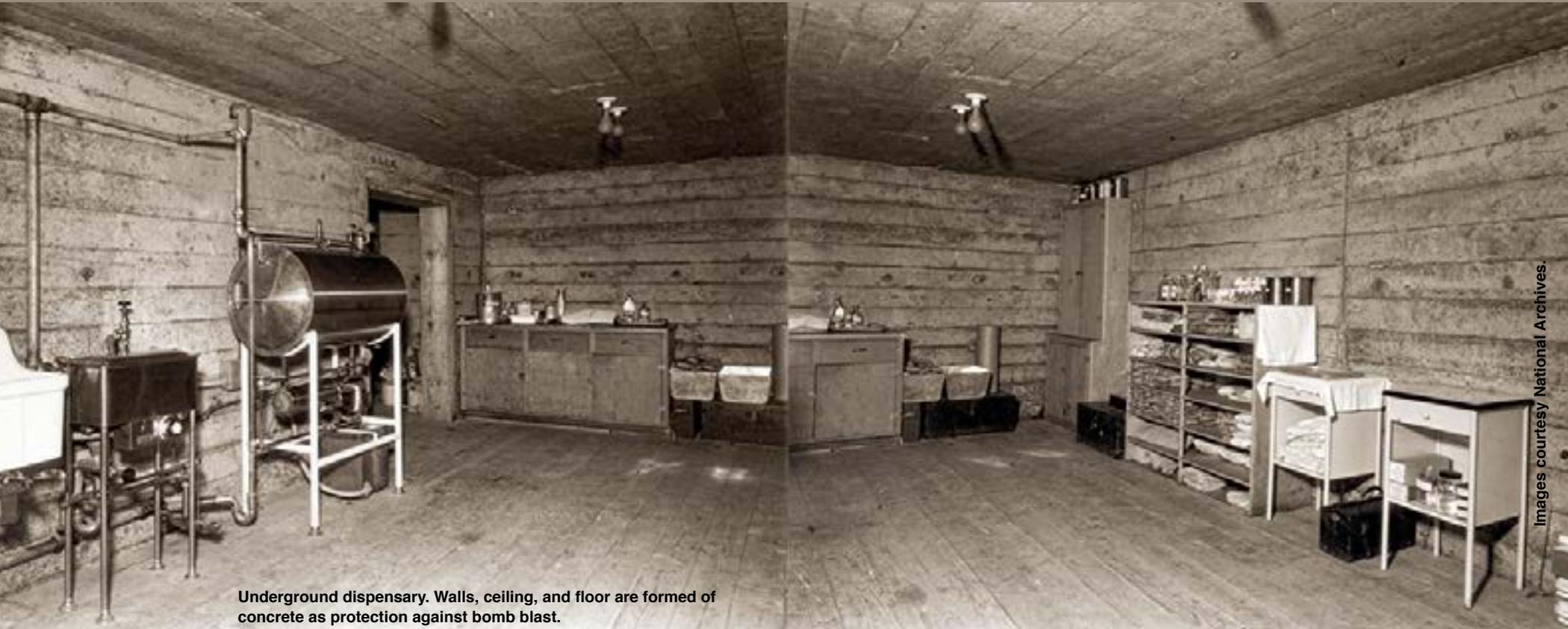
Soldiers stand at attention on open ground, Fort Mears. Here the greatest loss of life will occur during the Japanese raid on Dutch Harbor. Image courtesy Museum of the Aleutians.

Japanese intelligence considers the islands of the western Aleutians—only 650 miles distant from northern Japan—as possible launching sites for U.S. long-range bomber strikes. Plans to occupy the islands are dovetailed into the M-1 Midway operation, “... in order to prevent enemy forces from attacking the (Japanese) homeland.” By occupying the islands of the western Aleutians and Midway simultaneously, Japan could secure a defensive line that stretched unbroken from the Aleutians to the far south Solomon Islands. But before an invasion of the western Aleutians could begin, Japanese military strategists believed it necessary to neutralize the airbase at Dutch Harbor, Amaknak Island. The Japanese envision destroying U.S. aircraft parked on their runways as they had done at Pearl Harbor. In fact, no runway exists at Dutch Harbor. American engineers had considered the monetary cost of carving a field out of Amaknak Island’s mountainous landscape as too high. On 3 and 4 June 1942, Japanese attack aircraft launched from the carriers *Ryujo* and *Junyo* search in vain for Dutch Harbor’s airfield, finally turning to secondary targets in their frustration.

# Underground Hospital

*“As I entered the eerily lit room, there were no casualties in sight. The newly made beds, starkly arrayed around the foundation walls, were unoccupied, awaiting their first occupants...I could see a group of four nurses. I marveled at their calm, immaculately clean appearance. Shyly I approached a nurse and asked for a couple of aspirin. She casually observed to no one in particular, ‘I never thought I’d be dispensing aspirin on a day like today.’”*

*—Navy Radioman Lee Zoll, 3 June 1942. Only later does Zoll realize that his “headache” is the result of the detonation of a Japanese bomb only 50 feet from his position.*



Underground dispensary. Walls, ceiling, and floor are formed of concrete as protection against bomb blast.



*“I think we were lucky...”*

*—Pfc. Robert J. Milam*

Wirephoto copy to image at left reads: SEATTLE, July 6 TEETH BOMBED OUT—Pfc. Robert Milam, Chicago, Corp. B. Richardson, Hot Springs, Ark., and Corp. R. Prentice, Bokechito, Okla., show where teeth were blown out when Jap[anese] bombed Dutch Harbor, Alaska.

The wounded are carried to dispersed medical facilities—to an underground hospital built of concrete and fitted with a surgery. Approximately fifty are injured. Private Elmer H. Brents suffers a broken eardrum. Shrapnel strikes Millard J. “Red Nose” Smith. The concussive blast of a Japanese bomb hurls Corporal Bruce B. Richardson and Pfc. Robert J. Milam thirty feet through the air (see image to left). Teeth are knocked from their heads, but the two are otherwise unharmed. Other men fare worse. New troops off-loaded midnight 2 June from the ship *Fillmore* gather in the early morning in front of Barracks 864 and 866. They stand in formation on open ground, ready to be marched to their shelters. Two Japanese bombs fall amidst their ordered ranks. Barracks 864 and 866 are blown apart, then catch fire, sending sooty-black clouds skyward. Wounded men crawl, coughing, from the smoking debris. Twenty-five others lie dead—seventeen men of the 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry and eight from the 151<sup>st</sup> Combat Engineers. They had been on the island roughly six hours.

# May 2015

*“There were some casualties, most of which definitely could have been avoided...”*

*– John W. Fletcher, Mayor of Unalaska*

Dutch Harbor operating theater. Despite the ever-increasing power of weapons to maim and kill, 97 out of 100 men wounded in WWII will recover. This is due to both improved and expedient field treatment and an arsenal of new drugs: tetanus toxoid that prevents "lockjaw," the convulsions of the jaw and muscles that often ended in death in WWI; penicillin, "mold juice," a still experimental drug that targets infection of the peritoneum, the membrane that lines the abdomen and covers the organs and is breached in belly wounds; and plasma (of which the first revolutionary transfusion took place in 1938, a mere four years before the bombing of Dutch Harbor). Plasma, the liquid portion of blood, can be stored for long periods and administered regardless of blood type. On the battlefield, it can often sustain a wounded man until evacuation to a medical facility where whole blood transfusion is available. In World War I, no such liquid existed and the majority of the severely wounded simply bled out.



Museum of the Aleutians.

Litter bearers carry a wounded man into an underground medical station. This facility is believed to have been located in Pyramid Valley.

Through the years, the underground medical facilities at Dutch Harbor have attained an almost myth-like quality, with rumors circulating as to the number and location of the structures. During the king crab boom of the late 1970s, when Amaknak and Unalaska islands were overrun with outsiders, men searched the landscape for the buried buildings, crawling into underground tunnels and digging pits in fruitless search of WWII-era narcotics. (Personal communication: Rick Knecht, Archeologist/calendar author.) What is known is that three subterranean medical structures were constructed during World War II: one in Pyramid Valley, one on Strawberry Hill, and the third on Airport Beach Road—now an interpretive way-stop courtesy of the Corps of Engineers. An associated wooden building once stood in front of this latter structure. The frame building was razed, and the Unalaska Fire Department burned the last pieces of lumber in the mid-1980s. Under the direction of then Fire Chief David Gregory, the exposed concrete hospital was used by the fire department for search and rescue exercises. Old furniture and dummies were placed in the dark interior to simulate a residential setting and the two large rooms and smaller secondary compartments were filled with smoke. The exercises were described as “frightening” in their realism.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 Mother's Day	11	12	13	14	15	16 Armed Forces Day
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 Memorial Day	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Museum of the Aleutians.

# The S.S. Northwestern

For 34 years, the S.S. *Northwestern* runs the Alaska Route as passenger and transport ship. She lays telegraph cable from Unalaska to St. Michael and Nome. In her hold, she carries copper ore from Kennecott, livestock, and railway track. The steamer ferries gold from Nome; transports mail, coal, and salmon pack. Bound to a schedule, the *Northwestern* sails, summer and winter, through bad weather and dirty seas. There are few buoys in the Alaskan waters of the early 1900s, few navigation lights. Often the vessel is lost in fog, relying upon ship's whistle and depth soundings to find its way. In its career, the *Northwestern* runs aground 14 times. She strikes other vessels 10 times—rams docks; drops propellers, a rudder, and an anchor. Time and again, newspapers incorrectly announce the ship's loss and salvage for scrap, but it is not until October 1940, when the *Northwestern* is far gone in years, that she is brought to Dutch Harbor, Amaknak Island. There in service to the Siems-Drake-Puget Sound Company—civilian contractors charged with construction of the nascent Naval Operating Base—the aged ocean liner is purposely grounded to shore where she is to spend the last of her working years as a beached hotel, mess hall, and powerplant.

To read more about the S.S. *Northwestern*, see the National Park Service publication "The S.S. *Northwestern*: Sailing Sheltered Seas."

July 25, 1933, 2:38 a.m., the S.S. *Northwestern* strikes at full speed a reef off Sentinel Island in Lynn Canal, twenty-five miles north of Juneau. The vessel is beached on the sandy bottom of Eagle River to prevent sinking, and 180 passengers are put in lifeboats and lowered over the side. At low tide, salvage crews hurry to staunch hull leaks with concrete. After it is apparent the ship will remain upright, passengers are reboarded and at the return rush of high tide, the ship is floated. The *Northwestern* turns south for the five-day trip to Seattle—to dry dock and repairs totaling \$65,000.



Image courtesy Archgraphics. PSMHS,  
Ordway photo, Williamson Collection,  
Negative No. 1783-1.

Postcard view of S.S.  
*Northwestern*.

# June 2015

*"[The Japanese] set the Northwestern on fire and it burned, killing one million rats."*

—Sergeant Robert M. Proffitt

*"That was the day [the Japanese] got the Northwestern, a hotel ship tied to the dock. Some of us were aboard having lunch. It was beautiful big pork chops, and I never got to eat one! We bailed off the ship and took cover where we could..."*

—Walter R. Strong, Siems-Drake civilian worker

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6 D-Day
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 Father's Day	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Bomb damaged remains of the S.S. Northwestern. While other ships at Dutch Harbor put out to sea to evade Japanese bombers, the Northwestern remains rooted to her berth.

June 4, 1942, two Japanese dive bombers armed with 550-pound bombs target the beached S.S. *Northwestern*. One bomb misses its mark, damaging the Dutch Harbor dock. The other strikes the ship squarely, piercing the forward port deck. The blast ignites the ship's fuel and fire sweeps across the vessel. For three days, the S.S. *Northwestern* burns furiously at her landing, the intense heat fusing machinery and melting paint off the twisted steel hull. Fire crews flood the engine room to save the ship's boilers and battle to bring the blaze under control. Within a week of the attack, workers re-fire the *Northwestern's* boilers, and its 200-kilowatt generators are once again producing heat, steam, and electricity for the Naval Operating Base, Amaknak Island. "Tokyo Rose," the Japanese propagandist, broadcasts, "that the Japanese bombers destroyed a warship at the Dutch Harbor pier," but scarred and fire-blackened, the aged steamship survived the attack.



Object courtesy Museum of the Aleutians, Dale Dorsey Collection. Photograph by Archgraphics.

Engine room order telegraph salvaged from the S.S. *Northwestern* shipwreck. Two of these devices were used to communicate desired speed and direction (forward/reverse) between the pilot on the ship's bridge and the engineers in the engine room. This object may be viewed at the Aleutian World War II Visitor Center, Dutch Harbor.

# Dead Reckoning

*...my first patrol, I was green...and it scared me...flying 50 feet (altitude) not knowing where we were. On the way home after half a day over the Pacific we flew back and forth along the Chain, trying to recognize something, trying to tell one fog-decapitated island from another. It took us four hours to find Priest Rock... I was all ready to pack and go home, right then.*

—William S. Webster

PBY image and navigator's compass courtesy Museum of the Aleutians. The compass, together with other objects related to "dead reckoning," can be viewed at the Aleutian World War II Visitor Center, Dutch Harbor. Aeronautical chart, showing Umnak and Unalaska islands, 1942, courtesy Archgraphics. Digital montage by Archgraphics.

Priest Rock



# July 2015

*Distance = Speed x Time*

*His computer is the instrument on which he stakes his life... Don't ask for his computer, for he'd sooner lend his wife.*

—Navigator's Song, 1943

*Oh you know, I reckon I'll get us back or I reckon we'll be dead.*

—Navigator's quip on the phrase "dead reckoning"

Object courtesy Museum of the Aleutians.  
Photograph by Archgraphics.



The AN-5835 flight computer—the 1943 version of the original E6B "whiz wheel" developed by Naval Lt. Phillip Dalton in the late 1930s. (Dalton will die in a plane crash in 1941.) A form of circular slide rule, these cardboard/plastic computers were used to calculate ground speed, fuel burn, and time of arrival. The back was designed for wind correction calculation—determining the effect of wind on aircraft speed and course. In popular culture, the E6B appears in three episodes of the mid-1960s television series *Star Trek*.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			<b>1</b> Canadian Independence Day	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Independence Day
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	

There are no navigational aids in the Aleutians, no radio-ranges or homing devices. Pilots/navigators must fly by "dead reckoning." To fix position, they take bearings on landforms; at night, they may turn to the stars for direction. But the stars are often hidden above overcast skies, and the ground below—the Aleutian Islands—are small, fog-shrouded stones lying between two great oceans. Flying blind, gale force winds can drive a plane 100 miles off course, slow its ground speed by 100 miles per hour. Pilots/navigators look to the ocean for bearing correction, watch the wind-whipped wave crests to judge wind direction and speed. Course changes are made swiftly, altimeters reset every few minutes to compensate for unexplained variations in atmospheric pressure. Bearings are set by compass. But compass needles in the Aleutians often lie—deflected by massive underground magnetic mineral deposits. Many airmen find themselves hundreds of miles off course, their engines drawing only fuel vapors. Lost in the grayness, they fall into the ocean, their lives passing without witness. It is only the best, or blessed, who survive, those who can fly by the "seat of their pants," their internal compasses set for home.

PBY navigator using compass to plot location or course. Image courtesy Museum of the Aleutians, Ensign H.H. Fort collection.

# The Secret Airbase



P-40 Warhawk, 11th Fighter Squadron, Fort Glenn, Umnak Island. The Bengal tiger nose art postdates the June 4th dogfight over Fort Glenn. Photograph courtesy Eleventh Air Force, Office of History.

**B**lair Packing Company—a fish cannery. That is how the secret Fort Glenn air base, only 60 miles west of Dutch Harbor, is disguised. In 4 short months, January to April 1942, the 807th Army Engineers scrape out of the Umnak Island tundra a 5,600-foot airfield. Only 2 weeks before the Japanese aerial raid on Dutch Harbor, the first aircraft arrive at Umnak: P-40 Warhawk fighters (see above); a grab bag of twin-engine bombers; and Navy flying boats—the latter including a PBY piloted by Jean C. Cusick with Wylie Hunt as navigator and Carl Creamer (see inset below, left) and Joe Brown as crew members.



Japanese POW photograph of Carl E. Creamer, 7 June 1943, roughly one year to the day after his capture. Creamer is imprisoned for over three years on the Japanese mainland, surviving the Little Hollywood POW camp, and the incendiary bombing of Tokyo and Yokohama by U.S. B-29s. With Creamer are Walter Winfrey and G.T. “Mike” Palmer, members of the Kiska Island Weather Detachment, captured 6 May by the Japanese. All will survive the war.

**J**une 3, 1942, 4:47 AM, Jean C. Cusick's PBY is 200 miles southwest of Dutch Harbor in search of the Japanese carrier attack force. In heavy overcast Zero fighters drop on the recon aircraft. Machine gun and cannon fire kill the PBY's right engine and the wing catches fire. A tracer round tears through Cusick's arm. Together with co-pilot Clark W. Morrison, Cusick manages to land the crippled plane on choppy seas. Pocked with bullet holes and hatches open, the aircraft fills quickly with seawater and sinks. Ensign Wylie Hunt launches a two-man raft and helps Cusick aboard. Carl Creamer and Joe Brown join them. Morrison hangs onto the side, and the raft drifts away from the remainder of the eight-man crew. An hour in the icy water and hypothermia claims Morrison. Cusick dies shortly afterwards. Hunt, Creamer, and Brown continue to drift, waiting for death. *(continued...)*

# August 2015

Mrs. Lola Creamer Hatch:

The Navy department deeply regrets to inform you that your son Earl Edward (Carl) Creamer aviaton (sic) Ordnance man third class US Navy is missing...

—Rear Admiral Randall Jacobs telegram dated 24 June 1942, three weeks after Creamer is pulled from the Bering Sea by the Japanese cruiser Takao.

Photograph courtesy Carl E. Creamer.



“Carl (Creamer), taken in Idaho shortly after his return from Japan.” Flying home from Japan after release, Creamer looks down on the fire-bombed cities of his imprisonment: Tokyo and Yokohama, noting the “bare black looking place(s).” In all, Creamer is held prisoner for 1,183 days. Upon his return to the United States, he receives \$1,183—one dollar for every day of his captivity.

After roughly 5 hours in the small raft, the Japanese heavy cruiser *Takao* approaches, and the three airmen taken aboard. Initially they are treated with kindness. June 4th, Hunt, the senior officer, is sequestered and interrogated. Later he writes (abridged here):

“...a Japanese Lieutenant Commander began asking me questions. He told me that he was from one of the aircraft carriers that had participated in the attacks on Dutch Harbor. I gathered that he had been on the flight which was jumped by army fighters over Umnak [Island]. He appeared enraged over this. He started out by cuffing me about the head several times and striking me with a stick he carried.”

Hunt is then bound and blindfolded. Topside, a weight is tied around his waist and he is threatened to be dropped overboard. \*This is no idle threat. 4 June 1942, at the Battle of Midway, downed torpedo bomber pilot Ensign Wesley Osmus is pulled from the ocean by the Japanese destroyer Arashi. Osmus is questioned, struck with a fire axe and dropped into the sea.

Still Hunt feigns ignorance of the Umnak airfield. He asks for a priest, and the Japanese relent.

Brown and Creamer also deny knowledge of the airbase from which they flew. All will live to see the end of the war in the hands of the Japanese.

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 Aleut Independence Day	29
30	31					

Lieutenant John S. Chennault (right), commander of 11th Fighter Squadron and Lt. Kenneth Ambrose in cockpit. On 4 June 1942, Chennault's Warhawks will surprise Japanese aircraft regrouping near the secret Fort Glenn airfield after the 2nd Dutch Harbor attack. In all, 8 of Chennault's P-40 fighters join the swirling dogfight. The Fort Glenn audience watches as Chennault's pilots send a Zero fighter and 2 Japanese Val bombers tumbling from the sky; 2 more Vals, mortally wounded, limp away to crash into the North Pacific. The remainder of the Japanese bombers struggle south towards the carrier Junyo, unaware of the origin of the U.S. attack. The dogfight will earn the 11th the name, "The Aleutian Tigers." Photograph courtesy Eleventh Air Force, Office of History.

# Petty Officer House: Into the Mountains

*In about 300 yards we reached the cover of fog and were not visible to the [Japanese] gunners. I scrambled madly up the hill until overcome with exhaustion and lay on the ground... The sound of footsteps seemed to be closing in. I pressed my ear to the ground and listened to the rhythmic beat and realized it was my heart...*

*On the 48th [day in hiding] I was on my way to the creek for some water when I fainted...if I remained here I would certainly die. I wrote my name on an old canvas hunting jacket that I was wearing so that my remains would be identifiable... If I surrendered to the Japanese they might kill me, but it was my only lease left for life. Surrender with its chance of execution, surrender with its shame and humiliation, and surrender with its uncertainties was the only option.*

*—Chief Petty Officer William C. House*

Fog-shrouded Kiska shoreline. For fifty days, William House will subsist largely on the vegetation in foreground.

Photograph by Robert Webster.

# September 2015

*I had a pencil but nothing else to write on, so I kept track of time by making a mark on the pencil every day, and every seventh day was a larger mark. What does one do with all that time? Think of how I might get out of this situation...think of my wife and young daughter...wondering if I might ever see them again...thinking with some satisfaction that I had taken out the maximum amount of government life insurance on them...*

—Chief Petty Officer William C. House

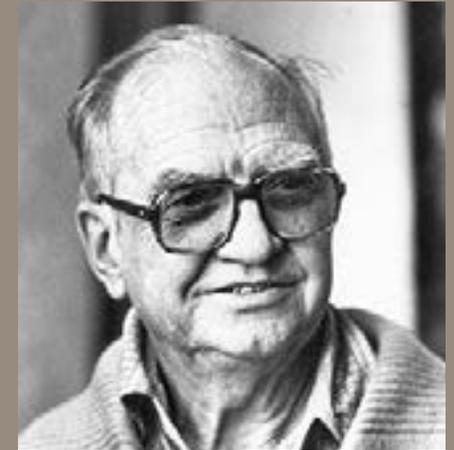


Image courtesy Archgraphics.

William C. House, 1981. Verso of photograph reads: "He Survived. A Lucky Man."

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Labor Day	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Members of the Kiska Aerological Detail being questioned by the Japanese after their capture. All members of the detail will survive the war as POWs. Image courtesy Archgraphics.

On 6 June 1942, an elite 500-man Japanese landing force wades ashore at Kiska Island. June 7th, they march around North Head and assault the U.S. Aerological Detail stationed at Kiska Harbor. Thirteen-mm machine gun slugs splinter the Detail's three shacks. Senior Petty Officer William C. House and his nine-man crew burn code books, then take to the hills. Within days, the Japanese capture eight crewmen, including two wounded. Alone, Petty Officer House, aged 29, pushes farther into the mountains. He retreats from any evidence of the Japanese—the telltale hobnailed imprint of their boots, their crushed cigarettes. House finds a cave by a lake and streams. There he stays fifty days, eating grass and tundra plants, scavenging angleworms during the night. His body withers to eighty pounds, his thighs no bigger than a child's arm. July 28th, House ties a cloth scrap to a stick and approaches the Japanese. He is treated well, nursed back to health and set to work. The Japanese respect a man who so despises surrender.

[Click here to download](#) a PDF transcript of House's correspondence with CDR Neil F. O'Connor, Naval War College, describing his evasion of Japanese forces on Kiska.

# The Coffin Boats

*This life is not my own. Swallow once. Follow me. To the bottom of the blue ocean...*

*—Send-off song, Special Attack Forces*

*(Ko-hyoteki submariners). Of the twenty Japanese sailors manning ten boats in three midget sub raids during World War II (Pearl Harbor; Sydney Harbor; Diego Suarez, Madagascar) only one crew returned alive to their mothership after severely damaging a transport. Ironically, only these two survivors, who had successfully carried out their mission and returned, were not honored with the title "Warrior-God."*



Bow view (amidship) of Type A Ko-hyoteki HA-34 Japanese midget submarine showing conning tower flaring and damage to hull by Japanese-placed explosives. In this 200 photograph, the sub base slipway and rails have been reclaimed by vegetation and the maintenance shed (once standing at rear, center) has given way to a fine view of Kiska Harbor. Photograph by Dirk Spennemann, NPS/USFWS Kiska Gun Survey, 2007.

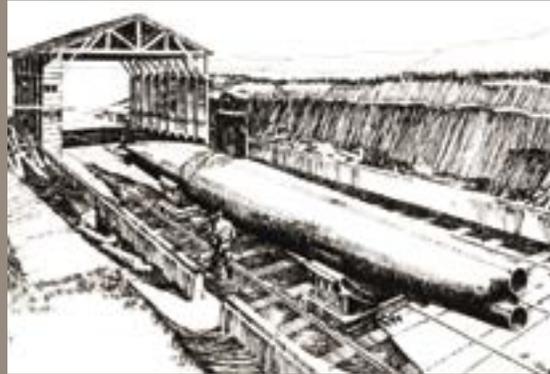
# October 2015

*It must take courage of the very highest order to go out in a thing like that steel coffin... Theirs was a courage which is not the property or the tradition or the heritage of any one nation. It is the courage shared by the brave men ...*

*—Admiral Muirhead-Gould,  
response to criticism for according the  
Ko-hyoteki crews that attacked Sydney Harbor,  
May 1942, military honors at their cremation.*

*Upon return of the crew's remains to Japan through a neutral country,  
the submariners were proclaimed new Warrior-Gods.*

From the U.S. intelligence document *The Enemy on Kiska*.



Sketch of slipway, standing repair shed, and HA-34 resting on wheeled cradles in foreground (appearing undamaged in this view). Note torpedo tubes in bow. Subs HA-29 and HA-32 are not present in this view.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 Columbus Day	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 Halloween

Type A *Ko-hyoteki* two-man midget submarine—79 feet from stem to stern, a mere 6 feet at the beam. A 600 horsepower electric motor turns two tandem screws on a single shaft, the motor drawing power from 192 battery boxes. Submerged speed: 19 knots (roughly 21 mph); battery charge: 55 minutes. The *Ko-hyoteki* carries two Type 98 torpedoes in muzzle-loading tubes one atop the other. Not one will be fired in action in Aleutian waters. Above: Midget submarines HA-34 foreground (still extant) and HA-29 and HA-32 in background. Sub base shows damage from air raids. Rents in sub hulls are from Japanese demolition charges.

July 5, 1942, roughly 7 months to the day after the Pearl Harbor attack, the Japanese offload at Kiska: 6 Type A *Ko-hyoteki* midget submarines and crew, 150 sub base personnel, a construction battalion detachment, and 200 tons of cement. Immediately work commences to build a sub base. August 8, after shelling by U.S. cruisers, the mini subs are dispersed—three moored in the harbor by buoy, the other three winched up the sub base rails. Despite this setback, crew training and diving exercises begin. April 1943, U.S. P-40 fighters disable 2 mini subs, and continued U.S. aerial attacks force cessation of sub activity at Kiska, May 1943—a short ten months after the boats arrival.

Five Type A *Ko-hyoteki* mini subs had participated in the attack at Pearl Harbor, with four subs lost, one captured, and 9 of 10 crewmen killed. The dead were deified in Japan as the “Nine Warrior-Gods of the Shōwa Era” (the era of Emperor Hirohito—himself a living god). No such honors were given to the *Ko-hyoteki* submariners of Kiska. They were evacuated to Paramushiro a week before the remainder of the Kiska Garrison stealthily withdrew from the island. Those *Ko-hyoteki* not swamped or stranded in the harbor or damaged beyond repair in air raids were disabled by the Japanese with explosives—one with its own warhead.

Special thanks to Janet Clemens, NPS Historian, for image research and providing data (courtesy Dirk Spennemann) specific to midget sub operations at Kiska.

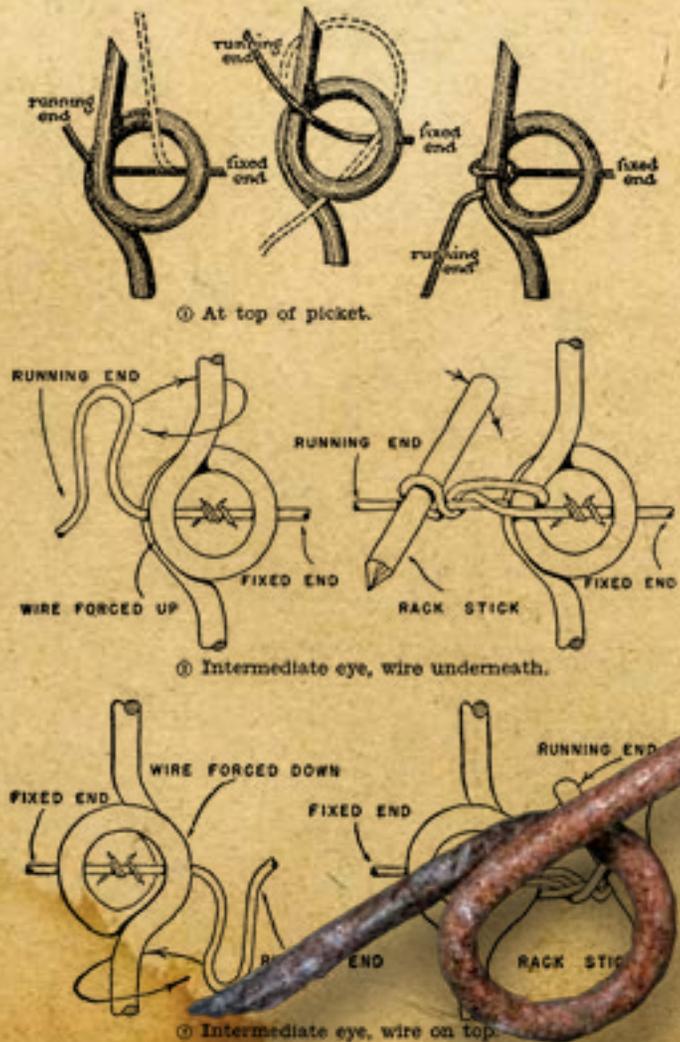
# Piggly-wigglyes

A Dutch Harbor colloquialism for picket stake. Name mirrors the WWI French slang for the object: "queue de cochon"—pigtail.



173. Camera Goyriahi reserved AN ATTACK BY A WIRING PARTY GOING FORWARD "Daily Mail" Official Photograph

World War I postcard reads: "An attack: A wiring party going forward." Verso reads: "When new ground has been won, a wiring party speedily goes forward to protect it by wire entanglements." Daily Mail Official War Photograph, Series 22, No. 173.



Background illustration: "Proper method of fastening wire to screw pickets." Courtesy National Park Service.

Foreground: A short (1' 10") length of screw picket removed from the Dutch Harbor landscape. Object courtesy Museum of the Aleutians. Photograph by Archgraphics.



A soldier uses a "barbed wire anchor spike" to emplace a picket stake, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1942. Library of Congress.

# November 2015

*Nobody ever defended anything successfully, there is only attack and attack and attack some more.*

—General George S. Patton



Cartoon by Oliver Pedigo, staff artist of The Adakian, editor — Dashiell Hammett. Image courtesy Museum of the Aleutians.

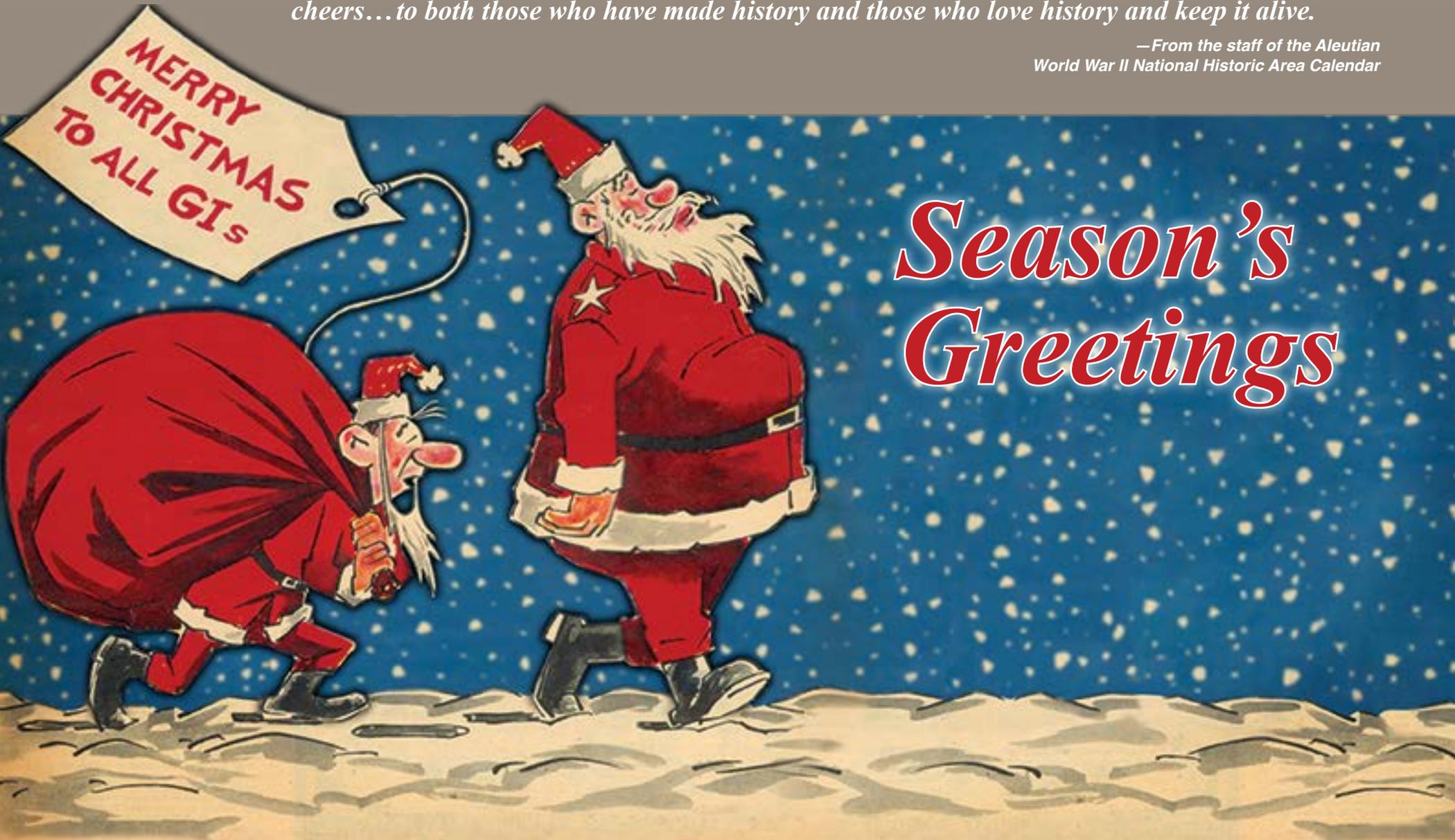
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Veterans Day	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Thanksgiving	27	28
29	30					

As did his forebears in the WWI battlefields of Europe, the Dutch Harbor soldier, June 1942, stands in a jagged trench line—to its fore, rows of wire entanglements—an "apron" of metal picket stakes and barbed wire. The pickets closest to the trench are 4 feet tall, the wire entanglements hung with empty metal cans to act as noisemakers. This entanglement is calculated to be beyond the throwing range of enemy grenades. The picket line furthest to the front of the defensive position consists of short stakes exposed 4 to 6 inches above ground level. Hidden in the dense Aleutian grass, these act as booby-traps, their sharpened points capable of causing severe injury to advancing enemy soldiers. Static defensive fortifications such as trenches and barbed wire entanglements functioned well during the large-scale infantry assaults of World War I, but with the advent of the German mechanized Blitzkrieg and the U.S. "Island-Hopping" offenses of World War II, even the strongest of static defenses—those formed of concrete and bristling with heavy weaponry—were either quickly overrun or at best simply ignored, left to wither on the vine as the advance continued. In the Aleutian Theater, the life of an army depended upon its mobility and ability to adapt—"to attack and attack and attack."

"Wiring party," Amchitka Island, Aleutian Campaign. Introduced ca. 1915, metal picket stakes saw extensive use in the battlefields of Europe in World War I, replacing earlier wooden posts which needed to be pounded into place, the noise often drawing enemy fire in the close battle lines. Metal corkscrew stakes could be silently and quickly twisted into the ground, then laced with barbed wire. Modern variants are used to temporarily "picket" dogs and other domesticated grazing animals, to secure tent lines, and to stabilize young trees. Photograph courtesy National Archives.

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

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



# *Season's Greetings*

# December 2015

*V-mail ensured that thousands of tons of shipping space could be reserved for war materials. The 37 mail bags required to carry 150,000 one-page letters could be replaced by a single mail sack. The weight of that same amount of mail was reduced dramatically from 2,575 pounds to a mere 45.*

—The National Postal Museum

Object courtesy Museum of the Aleutians. Photograph by Archgraphics.



"V-Mail" or "Victory Mail" airgraph form—"Merry Christmas, Alaskan Sector Command"[ALSEC], 1943."

Airgraphs were censored (see circular outline for censor's stamp, upper left), then photographed and transported as microfilm negatives to their destination where they were printed at 60% their original dimensions. Photography deterred espionage since photocopying did not reproduce invisible ink, microdots, and microprinting, making V-Mail the primary and most secure method of personal written correspondence during the war.

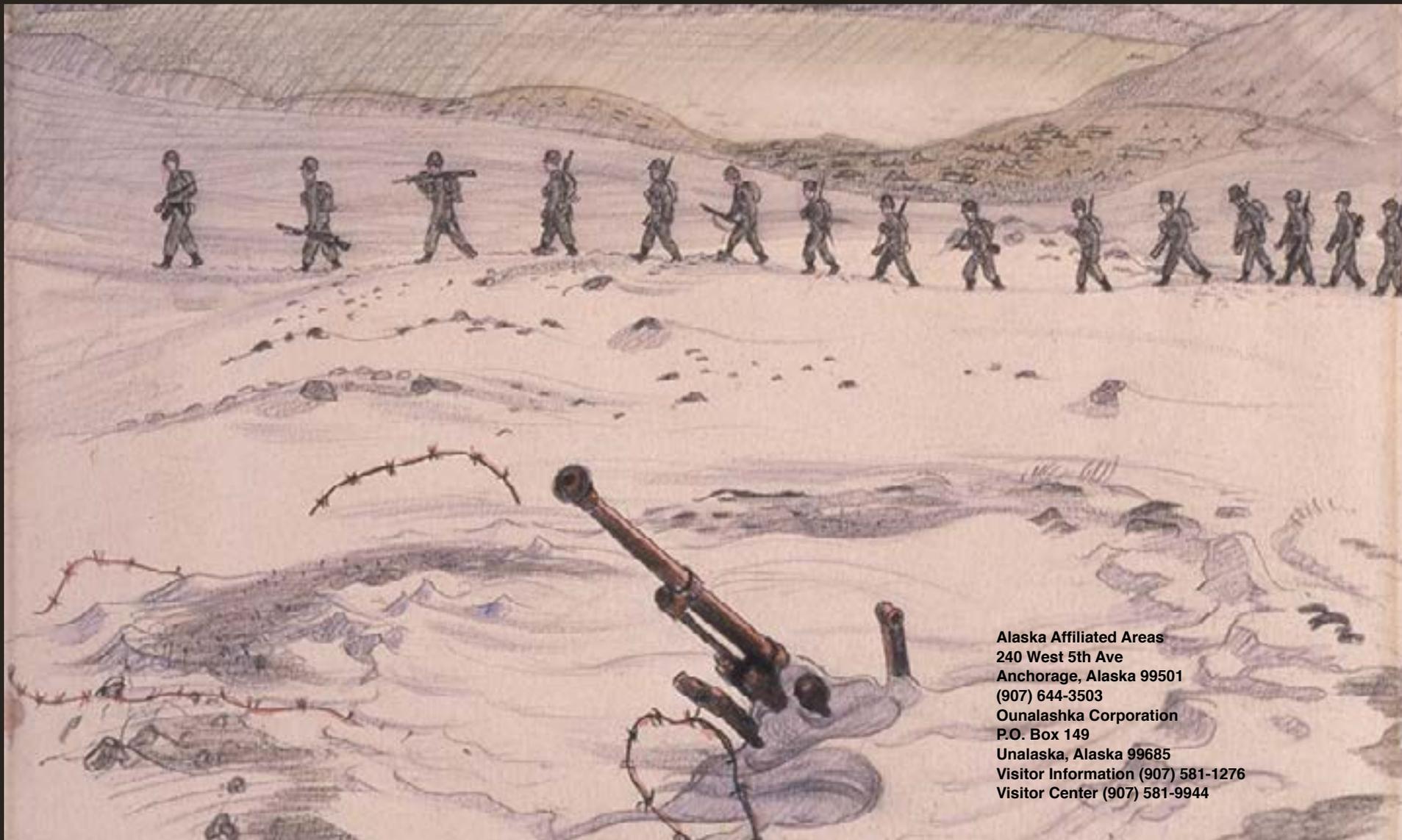
The men went out behind the camp and gathered armloads of brown-green tundra moss, and they fastened it together with baling wire in the shape of a tree. They sprinkled shavings from a bar of soap for artificial snow; and for Christmas-tree decorations they hung some empty 50-caliber shells, and they made cornucopias out of the red paper backs of film packs, and filled them with pieces of compressed chocolate and sea biscuit from an emergency ration kit. They fashioned a Star of Bethlehem for the top of the tree, by folding a red cellophane gas-mask cover; and someone produced a truly magnificent bell by cutting up a red-and-green tobacco tin and hanging a 30-caliber armor-piercing shell inside for a clapper.

—Collier's, 27 March 27 1943

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6 Start of Hanukkah	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance	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 New Year's Eve		

Verso of photo above reads in longhand script: "Mans best friend 'a Dog.' A Army Camp or Station is a paradise or Dog haven, where there is almost as many dogs as there are men. Each man has a dog or is part owner of one. Dogs in these places are much smarter than at home in the States, as men spend more time with them, teaching them tricks. T/A Claud O'dell—Memphis, Tennessee is shown, teaching his small puppy, what the snow is all about. The dogs usually follow their masters every where they go." Verso is stamped "Not Objectionable For Publication," and "Passed for Publication U.S. Army Press Censor." Image courtesy Archgraphics.

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