



**Sitka Naval Operating Base and U.S. Army Coastal Defenses National Historic Landmark
Sitka, Alaska**

The Sitka Naval Operating Base was the Navy's first air station in Alaska, playing a key role in the defense of North America during World War II. When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, Sitka had the only major military base in Alaska. Established as an Advanced Seaplane Base in 1937, the base's designation changed several times before becoming the Naval Operating Base in 1942. To provide for defense of the base, the U.S. Army Coastal Defenses were built on the islands west of Japonski Island. After Pearl Harbor, PBY aircraft from Sitka patrolled southeast Alaska and far into the Gulf of Alaska. The Sitka base supported operations throughout most of the war but was decommissioned in 1944 following the successful Aleutian Campaign. Today, many of the WWII structures are used and maintained by multiple owners (Illustration inspired by 1943 photo from the Sitka Historical Society and Museum).