

**The State that World War II Built:
Turning Point in the Aleutian Islands**

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Paper

Where was the only invasion of United States' soil during World War II? Most people are confused by this question. Weren't World War II battlefields confined to Europe, Africa, and Asia? In fact, thousands of troops fought and died within the borders of the United States. Fifteen months of treacherous land, air, and sea battles were fought in Alaska's Aleutian Islands. This campaign, nicknamed the Thousand Mile War (Garfield), was for control of the thin, sprawling archipelago that forms a bridge between Asia and North America. Given the scope of World War II, it was a tiny campaign (often reduced to parenthetical references in history); yet military preparations for the battles, and the battles themselves, significantly altered the course of the War, and shaped the Alaska territory into one of the United States.

As the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Alaskans heard false reports: "...They heard a Tokyo announcer boast that Alaska, too, had been hit: that Dutch Harbor and Kodiak were in flames; that Sitka and Anchorage had been captured; that 3,000 civilians had been killed in the bombing of Fairbanks alone" (Potter 9). Alaska seemed to be too far away from World War II theaters to be important, but maps tell us otherwise (see *Attachment A*). Sitting atop the Pacific Ocean, it borders Canada and is only 57 miles from Russia. Stretching west from the mainland are the Aleutian Islands — a thousand mile long chain of 120 islands "aiming like a curved sword at Japan" (Gilman 8). The westernmost island is just 700 miles from Japan.

Strategically, the Aleutians were attractive to both the Allies and Japan. The Allies needed them to protect North Pacific shipping, which carried U.S. war equipment to the Soviets (Allard 7). Also, Japanese occupation of the islands could mean disaster: "If they took Alaska, they would be within 3 hours bombing distance of the great Boeing bomber plant and Bremerton Navy Yard at Seattle. In the other direction, they would be within point blank striking distance of the Soviet Union" (Garfield 16).

Likewise, the Allies could strike at Japan from the Aleutians, but in 1940 there was practically no Alaskan military. "Weather was the biggest obstacle," observed veteran James Polley. The warm Pacific breezes from the south and the frigid Bering Sea blasts from the north clash over the Aleutians, creating relentless fog. Frequent gale force winds called *williwaws* keep trees from taking root; they flip airplanes

over and rip tents and buildings apart. Williwaws inspired sayings like: “If the wind ever stopped, everybody would fall on their face” (Mills 88).

The Aleutians’ volcanic terrain is mountainous and barren. Muskeg, a thick spongy bog, covers the lowlands, making travel and building difficult. One soldier said: “When I get to hell... there’s only one thing I’m afraid of. That [devil] may toss me in muskeg instead of fire” (Morgan 30). This inhospitable environment kept all except the native Aleuts away. In 1940, there were no roads or airfields. In fact, the islands’ interiors were largely unmapped, and Russian surveys from 1864 were used for naval charts of Aleutian waters (Garfield 15).

Though the Alaska Territory’s official flower was the forget-me-not (Driscoll 15), the main reason there was no military was that Americans rarely thought about Alaska. Its Congressional delegate, Anthony Dimond, worked to convince Washington legislators that Alaska was not a “frozen waste” (Potter 35). He was certain Alaska would have a role in the War (Dimond A8). Consequently, Major General Simon Buckner, Jr., was appointed as the first Alaska Defense Commander in August 1940.

Buckner faced tremendous challenges. Alaska was virtually an island — there were no land routes into it (Lindley 28). This isolation kept people and industry away. General Buckner was resourceful and determined. He soon had military forces building roads, runways, and bases throughout Alaska, spending nearly \$1 million daily (Alaska at War). March 1942 ended Alaska’s isolation from the continental U.S. — Buckner began building the first road that would completely link them, the Alaskan-Canadian Military Highway (ALCAN, now called the Alaska Highway). Initially, the Canadians opposed the road because they would be vulnerable if Japan invaded Alaska. The Japanese fleet’s dominance in the Pacific, however, threatened Canada’s west coast water routes. A road would provide an alternate supply line, so Canada agreed to let construction begin (Gilman 62-6). Ifron Burns, then a resident of Edmonton, remembers: “It was all big news. It changed our lives.”

It was a mammoth project. Military and civilian engineers worked every day, through a mosquito-filled spring and summer and a frigid autumn and winter. African-American and white units worked together, a rarity during the segregated 1940’s. Canadian Indians led reconnaissance parties to choose the



Alaska (ALCAN) Highway (Garfield 51).

best route (Rainey 153). “The pioneer road, stretching 1,450 miles, was carved out of a massive wilderness in the phenomenal period of eight months and twelve days. To complete the Highway, the engineers built 133 bridges and 8,000 culverts” (Smith 23).

The Alaska Highway, once called “the road that couldn’t be built,” carried 70,000 tons of military cargo per month during the War, and people eagerly anticipated the impact it would have on post-war trade (Rathbone 264). It is still the only highway into Alaska.

Desperately needed airfields were also built quickly. When concrete for runways wasn’t available or conditions wouldn’t allow its use, steel mats were linked together and anchored to the ground. First used in the Aleutians, these runways could be built in a few days (Alaska at War).

As the Allies prepared for the Japanese, they battled the resident enemy: the weather. Navigating foggy coastlines was literally done by feel — soldiers, held by their ankles, dragged their hands in the water, feeling for rocks (Garfield 219). Fog coated everything with thick ice. New procedures were needed to keep equipment running. Pilots had to be trained to fly by instruments when fog blinded them. The Cold Weather Experimental Air Station opened, and experienced Alaskan pilots taught the military their tricks (Gilman 33-6). As they learned to tackle the harsh conditions they shared their knowledge, which helped Allied soldiers in other theaters.

As the military explored Alaska’s vastness, it became apparent they couldn’t protect it all. So Governor Ernest Gruening and Major Marvin Marston traveled 6,000 rugged miles to ask the Eskimos to help (Gabriel 22). Eskimos were informed of their rights as American citizens (e.g. to vote, hold office).

Then they were asked to join the home guard: the Alaskan Territorial Guard. Nearly every able-bodied Eskimo, aged twelve to sixty, joined and refused any payment for their service (Cheney, 128). This gesture demonstrated that, despite cultural differences, Alaskans were willing to unite to defend their country.

Alaska feverishly prepared for war as the list of Japanese conquests grew. By mid-1942, every American Pacific battleship lay at the bottom of the ocean, and Japan controlled the western Pacific (Garfield 5). The Allies couldn't hold them back. Despite this, the Japanese had two concerns: a surprise American air raid on Tokyo and the Allies' phenomenal wartime production. In April 1942, Jimmy Doolittle's bomber squadron took off from the *U.S.S. Hornet* and launched the first raid on mainland Japan. They inflicted no major damage except to Japanese morale. The Japanese guessed the attack came from the Aleutians because bombers had never flown from carriers before (Earle 103).

The Japanese war staff argued about their next move. Their victorious admiral, Isoroku Yamamoto, believed they could only win a short war because the Allies had manufacturing superiority. He wanted to crush the American Pacific fleet in one stroke. Others thought Australia should be taken. Doolittle's raid convinced them that Yamamoto was right: it was time to destroy the American fleet and to eliminate attacks from the Aleutians (Rice 26). Yamamoto's plan was to pretend a major attack on the Aleutians, expecting the American fleet would rush northward to protect Alaska. The real target was the American Midway Islands in the Central Pacific, halfway between the U.S. and Japan. The Japanese would conquer Midway and wait there for the Americans as they returned to counterattack (Sauvain 12).

The Americans also had a brilliant admiral: Chester Nimitz. He was the Navy's best strategist — and perhaps the luckiest, because while the Japanese prepared their fatal stroke, the U.S. cracked a top-secret Japanese code. Now Nimitz knew the main target was Midway, so he sent his strongest naval forces there. Unfortunately for Alaska, Nimitz didn't consider it a strategic priority. He sent only what he could spare: five cruisers, fourteen destroyers, and six submarines to add to their tiny fleet of World War I vintage destroyers and wooden fishing boats painted navy gray. The Air Force had about 45 bombers scattered throughout Alaska (MacGarrigle 6). The Japanese anticipated a large battle in Aleutian waters,

so they sent a strong force — two aircraft carriers, the *Ryujo* and the *Junyo*, carrying 82 attack planes, accompanied by an armada of other ships (Garfield 1). An even stronger force with four carriers sailed to Midway. In June 1942, Alaskan forces bravely waited for the Japanese fleet to appear, while Nimitz waited at Midway.

On June 3, the Japanese attacked the Dutch Harbor Naval Station on Unalaska Island (eastern Aleutians). The battle was neither glorious nor decisive. For two foggy days, both sides scored only sporadic hits (Office of Naval Intelligence 4-8). In spite of its tiny force, Alaska impressed Japan with its defensive strength — especially the unexpected airfield on Umnak Island, 100 miles west of Dutch Harbor. On June 5, the Japanese disappeared from Dutch Harbor.

During the Dutch Harbor battle, cumbersome American patrol bombers, *PBY's* (Hald), fought the most nimble and deadly planes in the war: Japanese Zeros. The *PBY's* took a beating; but one defeated *PBY* caused a major turning point in World War II aviation. As a Zero pilot cruelly strafed the *PBY's* survivors, an American gunner shot a well-placed bullet into the Zero, and its oil pressure plummeted. The Zero was forced to land on uninhabited Akutan Island, snagging its landing gear on the swampy muskeg. The plane flipped, killing the pilot. It lay undiscovered for a month.

The U.S. military was desperate to study Zero technology, but battle-mangled pieces were all it could recover. Ironically, a *PBY* pilot found the Akutan Zero. Allied aviators rebuilt and tested it. They discovered its shortcomings, such as no armor and poor high altitude performance (Reardon 73). From this, they developed better dogfighting techniques such as “The Thach Weave” (Reardon 7), and better equipment. Zero casualties soared as Allied fliers learned their secrets. In a 1944 battle nicknamed the Grand Marianas Turkey Shoot (Ethell 616), Americans shot down 90 percent of the Zeros while suffering only 10 percent losses. This lone Aleutian Zero led the way to Allied air dominance.

In the meantime, on June 4, 1942, the Midway battle raged. Within thirty hours, all four Japanese carriers and one American carrier had sunk. During the battle, Yamamoto signaled the two carriers in the Aleutians for support, but neither could come (Garfield 41). By June 5, Yamamoto was in retreat. It was the first American victory in the Pacific theater, and demonstrated that aircraft carriers were essential in

modern warfare (Lehrer 20). Two powerful Japanese carriers had been detained by a tiny Aleutian force. Had the Japanese attacked Midway with two additional carriers, the outcome might have been different. These carriers with their clouds of Zeros would at least have inflicted heavier Allied losses. Instead of floundering in Aleutian fog, the *Ryujo* and *Junyo* might have won the Battle of Midway for the Japanese.

Defeat at Midway demoralized the Japanese. At first, Yamamoto was going to cancel the Aleutian campaign too; after all, it was only a ruse. But Japan wanted a victory, no matter how minor, to boost morale. So on June 6, the Japanese occupied the far western Aleutian Islands of Attu and Kiska. Attu, 900 miles from Dutch Harbor, was inhabited by a missionary, his wife, and thirty-nine Aleuts. A ten-man U.S. Naval Weather detachment was on Kiska (Webber 58). With barely a struggle, two Aleutian Islands were in Japanese hands. Thousands of troops began building bases on both islands. When the fog lifted on June 10, 1942, the Americans found the Japanese firmly entrenched on their soil.

Now America was worried. U.S. leaders wanted to evict the Japanese, but wouldn't send invasion troops because other theaters had higher priorities. For eleven months, the tiny Alaskan forces bombarded Attu and Kiska. They bombed night and day, from land and sea, through the worst winter in years. Fog hid approaching planes, but the Japanese pointed guns at holes in the fog and shot down planes as they dived through. Quickly, pilots learned to bomb blindly using navigation and a stopwatch. They flew below radar, as low as fifty feet, to hit their targets (Thorburn 79-83). It was perilous duty, and the mountains were soon covered with broken planes. "There were plenty of Japanese planes flying around up there, too. We lost more [U.S. pilots] than we saw again," said James Polley, veteran of the seaplane tender *Casco*. They were a tenacious bunch; in fact, so many Alaskan naval aviators earned the Distinguished Flying Cross that they nicknamed it the Aleutian Service Medal (Thorburn 84).

This phase of the Aleutian campaign was heavily censored. The U.S. military wanted people to believe that "In Army and Navy circles, the Japanese landings were viewed as nothing to arouse concern" ("Silence" 1), while in private arguing about the best way to evict the Japanese (Morton 421-33). During the eleven month Japanese occupation of the Aleutians, the *New York Times* had only a few articles about



Editorial cartoon from Minneapolis Morning Tribune (Carlisle A4)

what was happening there. Most were short reports saying many bombs were dropped on the Islands, with no U.S. casualties reported.

Using the Aleutians as steppingstones, Alaskan forces crept toward Attu and Kiska. They speedily built air bases: an airfield on Adak (250 miles from Kiska) was operational in only ten days (Webber 84). The relentless bombing wore the Japanese down and tied up valuable military resources. Even the Japanese Navy questioned the wisdom of staying, but the Army to refuse to budge, primarily because of political rivalry (Simons 65).

Early in 1943, the Japanese started an airfield on Attu. This threat finally compelled U.S. military leaders to evict the Japanese (Gilman 150). First, Attu's supply lines from Japan were cut (War Dept. 2-7), and on May 11, fifteen thousand Allied troops landed on Attu. They had no accurate maps of the island's interior, but guessed it would take two days to evict the Japanese. Instead, it took eighteen days of deadly combat. Army Engineer Gaylord Tapp remembers: "...The kid I was sleeping with; they [the Japanese] chopped a bayonet in the tent and killed him right next to me." The outnumbered Japanese refused to surrender — they believed it would dishonor them. Instead, they fought to the death, or committed suicide. Over 2,350 Japanese died; only 28 were captured. The American casualties were high: 550 killed, 1000 wounded (Snyder 22), and many more weather-related injuries because many of the troops had been outfitted for African battles ("Part II").

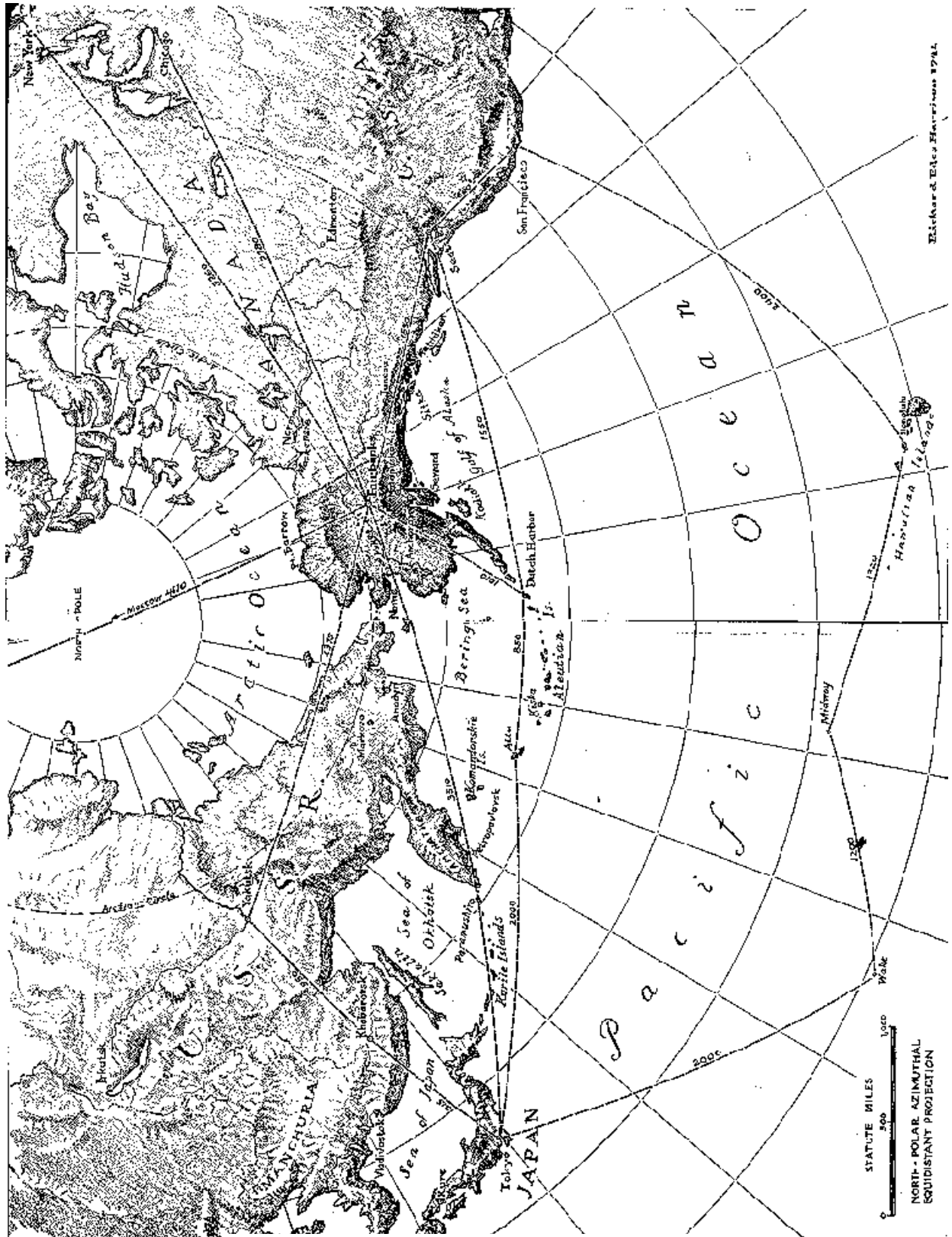
The Americans wanted Kiska back, too. From May through August, they bombed it with thousands of tons of explosives. On August 15, Kiska was invaded by 29,000 Americans and 5,500 Canadians, but it was deserted. Five thousand Japanese had escaped under the fog three weeks earlier

(MacGarrigle 23-6). The U.S. military immediately put the reclaimed islands to work for them. They became bases for bombing runs to the Japanese Kurile Islands. This tied up precious Japanese war resources as they struggled to keep the Americans away from Japan.

Americans, enthusiastic about the Aleutian victory, called for more resources in the Pacific theater so that other territory lost to Japan could be reclaimed (Costello 406-9). This led to a series of Pacific campaigns that assured victory over Japan.

When World War II ended, the face and spirit of Alaska had changed. It was no longer a mysterious, isolated territory. The military had mapped it in great detail, including its 34,000 mile coastline (Garfield 303). Airfields, telephone lines, and the Alaska Highway connected it to the rest of the continent. The war had brought 500,000 people to Alaska; some stayed, raising the population by 75 percent in the forties and the fifties (Barabba *table 1-50*). More people meant businesses could grow. People were interested in Alaska, so its first Associated Press office opened in 1956 (Tobin). In 1959, recognized as an important part of our country, Alaska became the forty-ninth state.

History usually passes over the Thousand Mile War in a paragraph. The contributions of this campaign deserve more. Alaska diverted important Japanese war resources from the Battle of Midway. For the rest of the war, like a bad headache, the Aleutians kept the Japanese from fully concentrating on other theaters. This campaign was a headache for Americans, too. Impossible geography, lousy weather, and inadequate training, facilities, and equipment were all standard issue in the Aleutians. Still, the tenacity and ingenuity of the American troops prevailed. They not only fought the Japanese, they defeated intolerable conditions by developing new strategies that could be used throughout the war. With a bit of luck, they found the key that gave the Allies the upper hand in the air. They built runways and roads at Blitzkrieg speed, finally connecting Alaska to the rest of the United States. Today's thriving state of Alaska is the legacy of the Aleutian Campaign.



Attachment A: Map of North Pacific (Potter, endpapers).

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources:

Alaska at War. Dir. Laurence Goldin. 1993. Videocassette. Alaska Video Publishing: Alaska Historical Commission, 1993.

This video contains actual footage of Alaska before, during, and after World War II. This is important because it shows what Alaska was like before World War II. As Hank Eaton said, "Times went by seasons, not by hours." It also contains footage of Marston and Gruening inducting Eskimos into Alaska's Territorial Guard, and wartime construction.

Alaska International Airport. "Airport Statistics Overview: Reported Activity." Online posting. 13 Mar. 2000. <<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/external/aia/aia/statover.htm>>.

This lists the past 5 year totals for passenger and cargo service at the Alaska International Airport. It shows that nearly 5 million people and 17.4 billion pounds of cargo used AIA in 1999. This is important because reflects how strongly Alaska is connected to the rest of the world.

"Attu Wounded Want to Fight Japs Again." Minneapolis Morning Tribune 4 Jun. 1943, morn. ed.: A3.

This article tells how snipers and bayonets had killed and wounded U.S. soldiers. This is important because it shows just how elated the soldiers were for their victory. This article probably raised the public's morale, too.

Bergh, R. Q. Editor. The Forgotten Squadron. Havre, MT: R. Q. Bergh, 31 July 99.

This book is privately published by a history teacher who collected memories of Aleutian veterans fifty years after the war. It is important to my project because it highlights the lasting effects that war had on these people.

Braun, Victor. Oral history. We were the Lucky Ones. St. Paul: Minnesota Public Radio, 1985. Minnesota Historical Society Collection, St. Paul, MN. A-V Collection Audiotape 40.

This is a recording of a radio program that told the World War II stories of New Ulm, Minnesota residents, both on the home front and the battlefields. Mr. Braun, a veteran of the Attu invasion told his story of the final attack of the Japanese. He had trouble understanding the Japanese mass suicide. It is important to this project because it conveyed how terrible this battle was.

Burns, Ifron. Personal interview. 8 Mar. 2000.

Mrs. Burns was a Canadian war bride of Staff Sargent John Francis Burns from St. Paul, MN. She was a Canadian citizen living in Edmonton, Alberta during the construction of the ALCAN. Her memories of the building of the Alaska Highway ("It was big news."), and of her husband's service in Alaska ("He was given North African gear.") provided another viewpoint of this event.

Carlisle (editorial cartoonist). "Pacific War Isn't Completely Neglected." Editorial Cartoon. Minneapolis Morning Tribune 29 May 1943, morning ed.: A4.

This wartime political cartoon shows that the Aleutian campaign was keeping the Japanese occupied, and caused them a bit of discomfort. It is included in the paper to show how important the Aleutian campaign was to the rest of the war effort.

Dimond, Anthony, J. "Alaskans Expected Jap Attack on Dutch Harbor." Minneapolis Tribune 4 June 1942, morning ed.: A8.

Anthony Dimond was the Alaskan delegate to Congress during World War II. This article was written the day of the Japanese attack on Dutch Harbor. Its theme is that Alaskans knew Japan would attack sometime. It reflects the feelings of Alaskans at the time of the war — that they recognized their importance in the global war.

Driscoll, Joseph. War Discovers Alaska. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1943.

This book was written by a man in Alaska who believed that Attu and Kiska should be retaken from the Japanese as soon as possible. He dispels rumors about Alaska (such as: wild beasts attacking people, constant winter, etc.), and he believes Alaska is “a prize to fight for.” He notices the irony of the territorial flower being the forget-me-not, which I used in this paper.

Ford, Corey. Short Cut to Tokyo: The Battle for the Aleutians. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1943.

This book is a first hand report about the American airmen who were trying to bomb the Japanese off of the Aleutians Islands, prior to the Attu invasion. The author talked to many airmen, and found that the morale of the soldiers was high in spite of the dangers they faced. Since it is a wartime book, its positive point of view was probably intended to boost American morale.

Gabriel, Gilbert W. “Eskimo Minutemen.” Collier’s 5 June 1943: 22.

This is a wartime article on the efforts to enlist the Eskimos (Inuits) in the Alaskan home guard during World War II. Governor Gruening himself traveled 6,000 miles to recruit. This is important because it shows how World War II unified the Alaskan people.

Gilman, William. Our Hidden Front. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, Inc., 1944.

This book was written by a reporter who covered the war on location in Alaska and the Aleutians. He went on bombing runs, sailed on war ships, and participated in the Attu invasion. His first hand reports on war preparations and politics, and on the battles are important to my report.

Hald, Rod. Personal interview (inside a Consolidated Catalina Patrol Bomber *PBY*). 22 Apr. 2000.

Mr. Hald is the PBY Coordinator for the Confederate Air Force (Southern Minnesota Wing at Fleming Field, South St. Paul). He restores and flies PBY’s for air shows. He was happy to let me climb into a PBY at the museum, and told me all about the PBY, the primary plane used in the Aleutian campaign. It was much larger than I expected (it carried a crew of 8) — no wonder a Zero could out-manuever it! He impressed me with his dedication to the history of these planes.

Haley, Arnold. 1997 Revisit to Attu. Rec. 3-7 June 1997. Videocassette. Attu Island, AK.

This video is from the Aleutian Islands Veterans Collection of Al King. It was recorded on a trip to Attu by the veterans (coordinated by Mr. King). It is important because shows what it is like to be on Attu: brisk wind, trenches, muskeg, etc. Mr. Haley gives a wonderful tour, even climbing down into a Japanese trench facing Engineers Hill (not bad for someone nearly 80 years old).

Handleman, Howard. “Attu Troops Suffering in Silence.” Minneapolis Morning Tribune 28 May 1943, morn. ed.: A5.

This is an eyewitness account of the Attu battle. It is important because it tells of the terrible conditions and casualties.

Handleman, Howard. Bridge to Victory: The Story of the Reconquest of the Aleutians. New York: Random House, 1943.

This is a book written during wartime by a reporter, right after the Aleutians were regained. It is a first-hand account, so it is a clear view of the events, the Aleutian conditions, and the people.

Huston, John, dir. Report from the Aleutians. Narr. John Huston. United States War Department: Army Signal Corps. 1943. Videocassette. Al King Aleutian Islands Collection. 2000.

This was filmed during World War II while the Japanese occupied Attu and Kiska. John Huston, now a famous film director, made this documentary himself. He flew fifteen bombing runs over Attu and Kiska, and was almost killed twice. This film was an Academy Award nominee. It was important for this report because it shows Aleutian soldiers both in battle and in everyday life.

“Jap Planes Smash Twice at Dutch Harbor, Alaska” Minneapolis Morning Tribune 4 June 1942, morn. ed.: A1.

This is the first headline of the Dutch Harbor invasion. A subheading is “West Coast Cities Ready for Attack.” This is important because it shows the mood of the U.S. at the time. Also, very little information is given about the attack. In subsequent days’ newspapers, Midway dominates the headlines, so the Aleutians fade out of the public eye.

King, Albert. E-mail interview. 4 Mar. 2000.

Mr. King is a post-World War II Navy veteran who served in the Aleutians beginning in 1946. He now coordinates various Aleutian Islands veterans groups, and collects artifacts, books, and films. He not only shared his impressions of the Aleutian Islands during his service, he also sent me films, books, photos, maps, and contacts for this report. He also coordinates veteran trips to revisit the Aleutians, most recently Attu in 1999. He has been a valuable resource on all aspects of the military campaign in the Aleutians.

Lanks, Herbert C. Highway to Alaska. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1944.

The author of this book received a special license to drive on the Alaska Highway during wartime. He describes the scenery and the people he met along the way. This is an important resource because he also describes how the military operates the highway. For example, drivers would only drive back and forth on a certain stretch of road, turning the vehicle over to another driver at a “relay post.”

Lindley, Ernest K. “Alaska: Strategic Step-Child of the Continent.” Newsweek 16 Mar. 1942: 28.

This article discusses the strategy of building the Alaska Highway. It is important because it showed the enthusiasm people had for this project as it started.

McNeil, Earl. Construction of the Alaska Highway, 1942. Minnesota Historical Society Collection, St. Paul, MN. Collection number I.38.

This is a collection of 28 photographs personally taken by Mr. McNeil between August 1942 and November 1942 (some were undated). These photographs changed my perspective of the Alaska Highway. It is not a smooth, sturdy highway. These pictures show that the bridges were made of logs, and the roads were churned up mud.

Morgan, Murray. Bridge to Russia: Those Amazing Aleutians. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1947.

Written by an army veteran who states that he is probably the only one who will admit that he doesn’t hate the Aleutians in print. His book is a colorful and often humorous look at Alaskan life, and his war experiences. His williwaw stories are particularly interesting.

New York Times. 3 Jun. 1942 - 21 May 1943, late city ed.: 1-10.

I looked at the first ten pages of every day’s newspaper for articles on the Aleutian campaign, from the time of the Japanese Dutch Harbor invasion to the American Attu invasion. I found there weren’t very many articles. Most were short summaries about bombing Attu and Kiska; they said there were no American casualties on these bombing runs, which wasn’t true. It is also interesting to see that news was often delayed days or even weeks. This is important because I learned that the American public wasn’t well informed about the battles in their own country.

“Part I: Interdiction and Blockade.” World War II with Walter Cronkite: The Pacific Perimeter. Narr. Walter Cronkite. Videocassette. CBS News. New York: Columbia House, 1983.

This source shows pre-World War II footage of adolescent Japanese boys training for battles on their school playground; the glory of dying for your country was emphasized. The information about the Japanese attitude toward war, and death before surrender is important to this project.

“Part II: The Frozen War.” World War II with Walter Cronkite: The Pacific Perimeter. Narr. Walter Cronkite. Videocassette. CBS News. New York: Columbia House, 1983.

This source shows Japanese footage of their 1942 landing on Attu. Several Japanese Aleutian Island veterans are interviewed about how they felt about the Aleutian campaign. This is important because it presented first hand knowledge about the other side of the war.

Polley, James M. Telephone interview. 7 Mar. 2000.

Mr. Polley was in the Navy stationed in Dutch Harbor from Dec. 1941 to Mar. 1944. He was on the sea plane tender *U.S.S. Casco*, a ship famous for its fine service to the pilots of the Aleutians. He earned a Purple Heart when his ship was torpedoed by the Japanese in Nazan Bay, Atka Island. He provided valuable information about the harsh realities of the Aleutian weather and the war, and the toll that it took in planes, ships, and young men.

Potter, Jean Clark. Alaska Under Arms. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942.

This is a wartime produced book by an author who actually went to Alaska. The theme is how Alaska is preparing for war — the day the book was finished, Dutch Harbor was attacked. It is an important resource on how the war was changing Alaska. The end-papers are used as an attachment because they contain the map that best shows the strategic importance of the Aleutian Islands (even though it isn't the clearest). A quote about the Alaskan reaction to Pearl Harbor is also used.

Rainey, Froelich. “Alaskan Highway: an Engineering Epic.” National Geographic Feb. 1943: 143-68.

This article was written during and shortly after the construction of the Alaska Highway. It is an first hand account of how it was being built, and the people who were building it. He discusses how African-American and white units work together, and the importance of the Indian guides. It is important to this project because it demonstrated how cooperation gets things accomplished in record time in the face of war.

Rathbone, A. D. IV. “Miscellany: New Key to the North: When Peace comes the Alcan Highway will Unlock Nature’s Rich Storehouse of the Great Northwest.” Scientific American Jun. 1943: 262-264.

This article was written soon after the Alaska Highway was put into operation, and is about how useful the highway will be when World War II ends. It is important to my research because it shows significant changes were anticipated in post-World War II North America due to the highway, which demonstrates that its construction would have lasting impacts.

“Silence Shrouding Fight in Aleutians.” New York Times 13 Jun. 1942, late city ed.: 1.

This article was the first report to the public that Japanese might be on U.S. soil. This is important to my report because it demonstrates that the public was not being told very much about the Japanese Aleutian Islands invasion.

Tapp, Gaylord. Telephone interview. 8 March 2000.

Mr. Tapp was 20 years old in 1943, and an Army Engineer who landed on D-day for both the Attu and Kiska campaigns, as well as the Marshall Islands and Okinawa campaigns. He shared his vivid and terrifying memories with me. He was part of the Engineering unit that stopped the final desperate attempt of the Japanese to break through the American lines.

Thorburn, Lois and Don. No Tumult, No Shouting: The Story of the PBY. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1945.

This book is about the slow PBY (patrol boat) plane, its role in the Aleutian campaign and how it was made in wartime plants in San Diego (mostly by women!). It was written in wartime, and it is important because it details bad weather aviation, and the Aleutian workhorse, the PBY.

Tobin, William. E-mail interview. 9 March 2000.

Mr. Tobin was the Associated Press Correspondent who opened the first wire service bureau in the Alaska Territory in early 1956 to cover the arrival of statehood to Alaska. He provided a history of the news and broadcast media in the Alaska Territory through today. It is important to my paper because it showed there was a growing interest in Alaska after World War II.

Twichell, Heath. Letters to family. 4 March 1942 - 14 March 1943. Heath Twichell Letters, P2175. Minnesota Historical Society Collection, St. Paul, MN.

These are typed copies of letters written by Col. Heath Twichell that were presented by his mother, Mrs. Luther Twichell. The original letters were written during the time he commanded a regiment of engineers building the ALCAN (Alaska) Highway. The letters provide a personal view of what it was like to build the ALCAN, and the problems that were encountered.

The War Department. The Capture of Attu: As Told by the Men Who Fought There. Washington: Infantry Journal, 1944.

This book is in two parts: a detailed description of the battle of Attu, and a collection of stories written by the men who fought there. This first hand information provides a vivid picture of what an infantry battle in a terrible environment is like, and how it affects the people that fight in it. The description of battle strategy is also important to this project.

Secondary Sources:

Allard, Dean C. "North Pacific Campaign in Perspective." Alaska at War. Ed. Fern Chandonnet. Anchorage: Alaska at War Committee, 1995. 3-11.

This article is about the strategic value of Alaska and the Aleutians. It discusses why the Aleutian battles were important, and what they accomplished.

Allen, Thomas B. "Ghosts and Survivors: Return to the Battle of Midway." National Geographic Apr. 1999: 80-103.

This article gives the details of the Battle of Midway (and the Aleutian feint), and shows actual pictures of the sunken carrier Yorktown. It has great maps to illustrate how the battle progressed.

Archabal, Nina, Editor. "Minnesota During World War II," Roots. Minnesota Historical Society, Winter 1986.

This book is a glimpse of what Minnesota was like during World War II. In particular, it shows a letter from a soldier that was censored (page 15) so the receiver really had no information about where the soldier was. Minnesotan Myrtle Fortun's diary is featured; she had a friend in Alaska whose letters were heavily censored. It also provides information about World War II resources available at the Minnesota Historical Society.

Barabba, Vincent, Director. "United States Summary: Section 1., Table 9" 1970 Census of Population: Volume 1 Characteristics of the Population, Part 1. U.S. Department of Commerce, Social and Economic Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census. 1973.

This census lists population figures for the State of Alaska, so the change before and after the war could be analyzed. Alaska's population grew by 77% in the 1940's and by 75% in the 1950's.

Cheney, Cora. Alaska: Indians, Eskimos, Russians, and the Rest. New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1980.

This book is used for information on the Alaska Territorial Guard. It contains important details on the willingness of the Eskimos to join the Guard during World War II. They were proud to help defend their country. Interestingly, the guard is still in operation.

- Cohen, Daniel. Spotlight on American History: The Alaska Purchase. Brookfield, CT: The Millbrook Press, 1996.
This book provides background on Alaska history: Seward's purchase, Gold Rush, etc. It is important to this project because it lists World War II as one of the major factors that influenced Alaska's development (oil was the other factor).
- Costello, John. The Pacific War. New York: Rawson, Wade Publishers, Inc. 1981.
The subtitle of the book is: "The newly revealed history of the origins and conduct of World War II in the Pacific based on hitherto secret archives." It is a thick book filled with political and military strategies in the Pacific region starting back in the 1800s (Alaska and Midway's purchase were both done by Seward). It contains information about how the Attu victory was viewed by Congress as a reason to divert money from the European front to the Pacific, and how upset this made Churchill. This helps show the importance of the Aleutian Campaign.
- Cross, Robin. World War II: Technology of War. New York: Thomas Learning, 1994.
This book is about various technologies of World War II. The information on code-breaking is especially valuable. It details breaking the Japanese code, and how it benefited the Allies.
- Dod, Karl C. United States Army in World War II: The Corps of Engineers, The War Against Japan. Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army. 1966.
Chapter 7: The Far North (276-339) gives a detailed history of Army Engineers before and during the war. It is important because it shows the extensive, complicated work to be done to prepare for battle, and the determination and ingenuity they used to get the work done.
- Dolan, Edward F. America in World War II: 1942. Brookfield, CT: The Millbrook Press, 1991.
This book summarizes the events in World War II during 1942. This is used as background information for the war, especially on the Battle of Midway and Admiral Nimitz.
- Dolan, Edward F. America in World War II: 1943. Brookfield, CT: The Millbrook Press, 1992.
This book summarizes the events in World War II during 1943. This is used as background information for the war, especially the Allied eviction of the Japanese from the Aleutians.
- Earle, George F. "Kiska: Birth of a Division." Alaska at War. Ed. Fern Chandonnet. Anchorage: Alaska at War Committee, 1995. 103-107.
This article provides information about the Allies' Kiska invasion. This article also gives a reason for the Japanese confusion about the origin of the Doolittle raid — bombers had never taken off from aircraft carriers before.
- Ethell, Jeffrey L. et. al. The Great Book of World War II Airplanes. New York: Bonanza Books, 1984.
This is a study of all the planes used in World War II. The section on the Japanese Zero is helpful to this project.
- Fradin, Dennis Brindell. From Sea to Shining Sea: Alaska. Chicago: Children's Press, 1993.
This is a book about Alaska geography, history, and cultures. The Aleutian geography and climate (williwaws) is good background information. The Aleutian Campaign is also described here.
- Garfield, Brian. The Thousand Mile War: World War II in Alaska and the Aleutians. New York: Bantam Books, 1969.
This book describes the entire Aleutian campaign in great detail. Its descriptions, summaries, maps, pictures, and quotes are very helpful, and it is usually cited as a major source of information on any Aleutian article written since 1969. The phrase "Thousand Mile War" is Garfield's invention, but now it is a commonly used nickname of the Aleutian campaign.

Glines, Carroll V., Jr. The Compact History of the United States Air Force. New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1964.

This book contains information about the Air Force's part in the Aleutian battles, and through the end of the war. It stresses the importance of the Aleutians in the victory over Japan, and the role that the Air Force played, which is important to this paper.

Kengor, Paul. "Forgotten Veterans of the Aleutian Campaign." Special Column. Detroit News, 21 Sep. 1995. Web site. 13 Mar. 2000 <<http://detnews.com/EDITPAGE/THU921/COLUMN.html>>

This column gives the grim statistics of the Aleutian Campaign and why it was important, and noted that not much has been done to commemorate the people who fought there. This echoes one of the main points of this project.

Lehrer, Eli. "Nation: World War II, Anniversary of Battle of Midway," Insight on the News 3 May 1999: 18-20.

This article about the Battle of Midway was inspired by the discovery of the Yorktown beneath the Pacific. The theme is how carrier battles of World War II shaped modern warfare. The information about the importance of carriers is helpful to this project.

Lenihan, Daniel J. "Aleutian Affair," Natural History June 1992: 50-60.

This magazine article was written by an archeologist who was on an expedition to examine the artifacts that remain in the Aleutians from World War II. This provides another view of the battles of the Aleutians, in particular, the large amount of bombing that occurred.

MacGarrigle, George L. U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II: Aleutian Islands. CMH Pub 72-6.

Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1992.

This government produced document has accurate numbers of troop and equipment strength in the Aleutian Campaign. It is important for comparing Japanese and American force strength.

Mills, Stephen E. Arctic War Planes: Alaska Aviation of World War II. New York: Bonanza Books, 1978.

This is a history of Alaskan aviation, and contains many photographs of aircraft, airfields, and Alaska weather conditions. It is important to this project because of the background and photographs, and because it tells how war aircraft changed Alaskan aviation, and made Alaska into the gateway of the air age.

Morton, Louis. United States Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific, Strategy and Command: The First Two Years. Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army. 1962.

Chapter 21 (419-33) describes the process the military used to devise the Aleutian Campaign strategy. It took many arguments, many compromises, and many changes before the various branches of military agreed on an invasion plan. It is important because it shows how difficult it was to approve a plan to evict the Japanese from the Aleutians.

Office of Naval Intelligence. The Aleutians Campaign, June 1942 - August 1943. Washington: Naval Historical Center, Department of the Navy, 1993.

This book was produced by the Navy for the fiftieth anniversary of World War II. It contains many details about the Aleutian Campaign, and is valuable background material.

Olesky, Walter. American Profiles: Military Leaders of World War II. NY: Facts on File, Inc., 1994.

This book is about the military leaders in World War II. Chester Nimitz, the U. S. admiral of the Pacific Theater, is included in the book.

Peterson, Ray. Personal interview. 22 Apr. 2000.

Mr. Peterson works at the Minnesota Air Guard Museum in St. Paul. He showed me steel mats similar to the ones used to build runways in the Aleutians, and a display of artifacts on the Doolittle Raid. He told about how the Minnesota Air Guard kept an air supply route open to the Aleutians during World War II. He named some additional area sources to contact.

Rearden, Jim. Koga's Zero. Missola: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, Inc., 1995.

This is an in depth look at the Zero that crashed on Akutan Island. It is important because it has many details on the Zero's features, and also dispels some rumors about it.

Rice, Earle, Jr. Battles of World War II: The Battle of Midway. San Diego: Lucent Books, 1996.

This book contains good background information about the Battle of Midway. It states that the captured Zero was an important outcome of the battle of Dutch Harbor.

Ross, Stewart. World War II: World Leaders. New York: Thomson Learning, 1993.

This book describes the world leaders during World War II, and talks about their significance in the war. It is good background information about the Japanese and U. S. leadership.

Sauvain, Philip. Great Battles and Sieges: Midway. New York: New Discovery Books, 1993.

This book contains information about the Battle of Midway. It is important because it describes the Japanese planning for Midway; however, very little is mentioned about the Aleutians.

Simons, Gerald. Japan at War: World War II. Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, Inc., 1980.

This book describes World War II from the Japanese perspective. How the Army and Navy were divided on what to do about the Aleutians is interesting to this project.

Smith, E. Valerie. "The Black Corps of Engineers and the Construction of the Alaska (ALCAN) Highway." Negro History Bulletin: African Americans and World War II. Washington: Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, December 1993: 22-35.

This article describes the building of the Alaska Highway under the direction of General Buckner. A quote about the highway and how long it took to build it is used in this paper.

Snyder, Louis L. Louis L. Snyder's Historical Guide to World War II. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982.

This book contains many facts and figures on World War II events. It is used as background information on many different battles in the war.

Steffoff, Rebecca. Celebrate the States: Alaska. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 1998.

This is a general information book on Alaska. It has information on the Thousand Mile War (it is even called by that name), and how it affected the post-war population.

Sullivan, George. The Day Pearl Harbor was Bombed: A Photo History of World War II. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1991.

This book contains vivid photographs of World War II, and brief and clear historical information, which provides a good overview of the war. There is a paragraph on the Aleutian battles, noting that while they have been forgotten, Midway has not.

Webber, Bert. Aleutian Headache: Deadly World War II Battles on American Soil. Medford, OR: Webb Research Group, 1993.

This book is an interesting collection of photographs, facts, and stories of the Aleutian Campaign. It is important for background material and statistics.