# WORLD WAR II IN THE PACIFIC
# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK THEME STUDY

## INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

The "World War II in the Pacific National Historic Landmark Theme Study" has been prepared for the Congress and the Secretary of the Interior's Advisory Board in partial fulfillment of the requirements of P.L. 95-348, August 18, 1978. The purpose of the theme study is to evaluate all resources that relate to the theme of World War II in the Pacific and to recommend certain of these resources for designation as National Historic Landmarks. The events of the war are from 39 to 43 years away, but World War II is truly of national significance; indeed, it is one of the momentous events in human history. This is recognized by Congress's authorizing the study and by the several wartime sites, listed below, that are already national historic landmarks or listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The "World War II in the Pacific Theme Study" considered resources relating to the following general subthemes:

A. Japanese Expansion in the Pacific

B. The United States Home Front

C. Alaska and the Aleutians

D. The United States' Central Pacific Drive

The theme study considered the millions of people, civilian and military, both Japanese and Allied, who took part in the fateful years between 1941 and 1945. Emphasis was placed on the events and their consequences, rather than on individuals. Certain leaders, whose actions were crucial to the success or failture of endeavors, are recognized. Individuals recognized as heroes are generally not highlighted; in combat, the conduct of all members of the unit is vital to the outcome; also, many a true hero did not receive recognition for his deeds. Efforts were made to avoid wartime jingoism, rather to view events as objectively as possible. The geographical areas surveyed for this study are United States territory and Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, which continue to be administered by the United States.

## THE PACIFIC WAR IN OUTLINE

European powers and their colonies had been at war more than two years when Japan carried out a devastating surprise attack on Hawaii's Pearl Harbor naval base and army and navy airfields on December 7, 1941. For the next several months, Japan continued strongly on the offensive in China, Thailand, Malaya, Guam, Philippine Islands, Wake, Gilbert Islands, Burma, British Borneo, Bismark Archipelago, Netherlands East Indies, New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Singapore. At the same time, the

United States developed supply lines in the eastern Pacific and rushed land, sea, and air reinforcements to Australia and the South Pacific. In April 1942, Gen. Douglas MacArthur became Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Area, with headquarters in Australia; and Adm. Chester W. Nimitz became Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Area, with headquarters in Hawaii. Also in April, Lt. Col. James H. Doolittle led the first air attack of the war on Tokyo, Japan, an important incident for American morale. The naval battle of Coral Sea took place in May 1942, a tactical victory for Japan but a strategic victory for the Allies--Australia's security was now assured. The battle also marked the end of the Allies' defensive posture.

1942-1943

On June 4, 1942, the Battle of Midway proved to be the turning point in the Pacific War. Aircraft from three American carriers destroyed four crack Japanese carriers, decisively defeating the enemy. At the same time, Japanese carrier planes carried out a two-day attack on Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians. A Japanese task force occupied Kiska and Attu in the western Aleutians three days later, the only North American territory to be occupied by Japan.

The Allied offensive in the Southwest Pacific got underway in August 1942 when U.S. Marines landed in the Solomons, beginning the bitter battle for Guadalcanal. On New Guinea, the Allies engaged in hard fighting against strong Japanese forces, only slowly gaining an upper hand and defeating the Japanese in the Papua Campagin in December 1942 and January 1943. Also in January 1943, an international conference of the United States and Great Britain at Casablanca reached agreement to advance toward the Philippines through the Central and Southwest Pacific.

In the North Pacific, U.S. Army troops made an amphibious landing on Attu in May 1943, recapturing the island after hard fighting. Two months later, the Japanese secretly withdrew from Kiska in a brilliant maneuver and the Aleutians returned to American control. During the summer of 1943, Allied advances in New Guinea continued and U.S. forces captured New Georgia and other islands in the Solomons. In the Central Pacific, Admiral Nimitz gathered his forces and planned the invasions of the Gilbert and Marshall islands.

Autumn 1943 brought significant gains for Allied forces: November 1, U.S. Marines invaded Bougainville in the Northern Solomons; November 20, U.S. forces landed on Makin and Tarawa atolls in the Gilberts; and, December 26, U.S. Marines landed on Cape Gloucester, Bismark Archipelago. At an international conference at Cairo in December 1943, British and United States delgates reached agreement on Pacific objectives for 1944: Seizure of the Marshall Islands and New Britain in January, Hollandia in New Guinea in June, and the Mariana Islands and the liberation of Guam in October 1944.

## 1944

The year began with continuing land fighting in the Solomons and New Guinea. The Central Pacific drive began at the end of January when U.S. Marine and Army troops stormed ashore on Roi-Namur and Kwajalein islands in Kwajalein Atoll and on Majuro Atoll, all in the Marshall Islands, successfully completing the entire operation in five days. Two weeks later, U.S. forces captured Enewetak Atoll, also in the Marshalls, while carrier planes from an American task force reduced the fabled Japanese "Gibraltar" of Truk Atoll in the Central Caroline Islands. While Army Air Force and naval carrier planes continued their neutralization attacks on other Japanese islands in the Marshalls and Carolines, the Central Pacific amphibious forces prepared to assault Japan's inner defense line, the Mariana Islands. In the Southwest Pacific, General MacArthur's forces subdued western New Britain and occupied the Admiralty Islands north of New Guinea. In April, the landings at Hollandia began.

On June 15, U.S. Marines, followed by army troops, invaded Saipan in the Marianas. A few days later, carrier aircraft from U.S. Task Force 58 engaged Japanese carrier planes in the Battle of the Philippine Sea. Two Japanese carriers and more than 400 of their planes were destroyed as were Japanese hopes to reinforce the Marianas. Saipan gained, U.S. Marines landed at Guam and, a few days later, on Tinian. While fighting continued in the Marianas, President Franklin D. Roosevelt arrived in Hawaii and met with MacArthur and Nimitz to discuss future moves in the Pacific war. Following the meetings, the ailing President sailed to the Aleutians to greet the lonely soldiers of the "Forgotten War." U.S. Army and Marine Corps troops completed the liberation of Guam in early August. American Seabees and Army Engineers constructed immense B-29 bomber fields on Guam, Tinian, and Saipan for the long-range bombing of the Japanese homeland.

American forces invaded Japan's Palau Islands, the Gateway to the Philippines, in mid-September, with army troops assaulting Angaur while Marines land on Peleliu, beginning one of the most fiercely fought battles in the Central Pacific. An army force also occupied Ulithi Atoll, which was converted into a critical staging area for future Pacific battles. Although Peleliu was not secured until November 1944, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff decided to proceed with the invasion of the central Philippines, advancing the target date two months. On October 20, 1944, the U.S. Sixth Army invaded Leyte, the first step in liberating the Phillipines. At Saipan, 111 B-29 bombers lifted off on November 24 to attack Tokyo, the first of many such raids on Japan's Home Islands.

## 1945

Fighting wound down on Leyte as the new year began and, on January 9, American troops landed on Luzon. The U.S. fast carrier Task Force 58 carried out air attacks on Formosa, Okinawa, and Hong Kong. U.S. Marines began the bitter battle for Iwo Jima, north of the Marianas, on February 21, raising the American flag on Mount Suribachi two days later. While fighting continued to rage on Iwo Jima, U.S. Army troops completed the liberation of Manila and cleared Corregidor of the enemy.

Easter Sunday, April 1, 1945, witnessed the U.S. Tenth Army (Marines and soldiers) landing on the beaches of Okinawa. Thus began the last battle of the Pacific War. While the battle raged on Okinawa, Japanese forces continued to hold out in the Philippine Islands, particularly in Luzon and in the south. The two great captains of the Pacific War, MacArthur and Nimitz, became, respectively, commander in chief of all U.S. Army forces in the Pacific and commander of all U.S. Navy forces in the Pacific on April 3.

General MacArthur established his headquarters in Manila, while Admiral Nimitz continued to command from Guam. In the Battle of the East China Sea on April 7, Task Force 58's planes sank the great Japanese battleship, Yamato. Japanese suicide planes sank or damaged large numbers of American ships off Okinawa through April and May. Finally, on June 22, the U.S. Tenth Army completed the capture of Okinawa. Casualties on both sides were extremely heavy.

While armadas of B-29 bombers continued to raid Japanese cities, the United States exploded the world's first nuclear device in New Mexico on July 16, 1945. Ten days later, the Potsdam ultimatum called for Japan's unconditional surrender or face utter destruction. B-29 bomber Enola Gay dropped a nuclear weapon on Hiroshima on August 6. The Soviet Union declared war on Japan on August 8. The next day, B-29 Bock's Car hit Nagasaki with the only other nuclear weapon in the United States arsenal. Japan accepted the Allied surrender terms on August 14. The Pacific War officially ended on September 2, 1945, when Japanese officials signed the instrument of surrender aboard USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Japanese Expansion in the Pacific

Hickam Field, Hawaii
Wake Island
Attu Island
Kiska Island

These sites are recommended for designation as National Historic Landmarks because they represent Japan's amazingly swift military expansion the length and breadth of the Pacific Ocean in late 1941 and early 1942. Hickam Field was Hawaii's largest and most important army airfield and, on December 7, 1941, the only field in Hawaii large enough on which to land B-17 bombers. Japanese carrier planes succeeded in destroying American planes on the ground at Hickam and at other fields, thus gaining air superiority to proceed with the attack on American warships in Pearl Harbor.

Wake Island became a symbol of hope for Americans in the dark days following Pearl Harbor when its small defense force beat back Japan's first attempt to capture the island, the only incident in the Pacific War where coastal defenses thwarted a landing force. When Japan captured the island in a second attempt, "Remember Wake" became a rallying cry for Americans determined to reverse the course of events in the Pacific.

Attu and Kiska islands at the western end of the Aleutians were the only North American territory that Japan seized in World War II. Their capture was Japan's only morsel of success to come out of the simultaneous Battle of Midway where heavy Japanese losses proved to be the turning point in the Pacific War. The successful recapture of Attu by American forces, fighting in the area of the world's worse weather, forced the Japanese to withdraw secretly from Kiska in a brilliant maneuver. American airfields developed on Attu allowed for the bombing of the Kurile Islands in northern Japan at a time when Japan was otherwise beyond the range of Allied planes.

B. The United States Home Front

San Francisco Port of Embarkation, California
Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base Landing Beaches, California
Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Washington
Japanese-American Internment Camp, Manzanar, California

These sites are recommended for designation as National Historic Landmarks because they represent various aspects of the nation's efforts to deal with the war both at home and in support of the fighting forces in the Pacific.

San Francisco Port of Embarkation was the principal port on the West Coast for delivering the personnel, materiel, weapons, and ammunition to the fighting fronts in the North, Central, South, and Southwest Pacific. It overcame great adversities in vast distances and rapidly changing strategic situations to achieve its mission which was vital to Allied success.

The Landing Beaches at Camp Pendleton are prime representatives of the many sites in the United States and overseas at which the U.S. Marine Corps developed and perfected the doctrine and training techniques of amphibious warfare, the warfare that succeeded time after time, island after island, and landing after landing in the Pacific.

Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, during World War II, had drydocks large enough to accommodate the largest battleships and aircraft carriers. The battleships damaged in the Pearl Harbor attack were repaired here. During the war it repaired and returned to duty 31 battleships, 18 carriers, and dozens of smaller warships. Its accomplishments contributed to the successes of American task forces.

The Japanese-American Internment Camp at Manzanar was the first of ten such camps to be established in the United States in World War II. From a background of racial prejudice, mistrust, and fear, American citizens were uprooted from their homes, denied their constitutional rights, and herded into primitive camps in isolated areas for most of the duration of the war. Manzanar is representative of the ten camps.

C. Alaska and the Aleutians

Sitka Naval Base and Coastal Defenses
Kodiak Naval Base and Coastal Defenses
Dutch Harbor Naval Base and Coastal Defenses
Ladd Field

These sites are recommended for designation as National Historic Landmarks because they represent the build-up of Alaska's defenses from almost nothing in 1938 to a position of increasing strength by the time of the Japanese attack on Dutch Harbor and occupation of the western Aleutians in 1942.

Sitka's role in Alaska's defenses was important in the first months of the war. The naval air station was the only defensive base in all of Southeast Alaska in the months following Pearl Harbor. Its patrol planes ranged the coastal fiords and the Gulf of Alaska during the uncertain months following Pearl Harbor.

Kodiak, defended by coastal artillery, grew into a strong advanced naval base in time for the Japanese attack on the Aleutians. When the attack came, Kodiak became the advanced command post for the army, army air force, and navy in Alaska. After these command posts moved forward in 1943, Kodiak continued to make air, ship, and submarine patrols in the North Pacific.

Dutch Harbor, defended by Fort Mears, was the navy's farthest west base in Alaska when war came. Bombed for two successive days in 1942 when the Japanese invasion of the western Aleutians occurred, Dutch Harbor remained an important base throughout the war. Besides patrolling the North Pacific and Bering Sea, it served as a control point for Soviet ships carrying lend-lease supplies from North America to Siberia.

Ladd Field began as an Army Air Corps cold-weather experimental station. During the war, it became the critical transfer site for American lend-lease planes from American crews to Soviet flyers. By 1945, nearly 8,000 military aircraft were transferred to the Soviet Union at Ladd Field for duty on the Russian front.

D. The United States Central Pacific Drive

Kwajalein Island
Roi-Namur Islands
Truk Atoll
Saipan Island
Tinian Island
Peleliu Island
B-29 Enola Gay
B-29 Bock's Car

These sites and objects are recommended for designation as National Historic Landmarks because they represent the most important incidents in

the American drive across the Central Pacific, 1944-1945, which contributed to the unconditional surrender of Japan.

Kwajalein Island was the scene of the United States' most devastating land, sea, and air bombardment in the Central Pacific. U.S. Army amphibious troops captured Kwajalein and nearby islands after four days of bitter fighting in February 1944, its being the first Japanese territory captured by the U.S. Army in combat.

Roi-Namur Islands were captured by a U.S. Marine Corps amphibious force in the startling short time of less than two days. This was the Marines' first conquest of Japanese territory. The swift capture of Kwajalein Atoll allowed American forces to speed up the schedule for future advances in the Central Pacific.

Truk Atoll was long considered the Japanese Gibraltar of the Pacific. In a two-day raid by carrier aircraft of the U.S. Navy, Truk's usefulness as a base for the Japanese navy was forever destroyed. The simultaneous American invasion of Enewetak Atoll in the Marshalls was assured of success.

Saipan marked the United States' breaking the inner line of Japanese defenses in the Pacific. After its conquest, Saipan became a base for B-29 bombers for the long-range bombing of the Japanese homeland.

Tinian, the second of the Northern Marianas islands to fall to U.S. forces, was the scene of the U.S. Marine Corps' perfect amphibious landing in the Pacific. American Seabees quickly constructed the world's largest wartime airfield on Tinian for the bombing of Japan. From here, two nuclear weapons were flown to Japan to destroy Hiroshima and Nagasaki, events that contributed to Japan's surrender and the end of the worldwide war.

Peleliu Island was the scene of the most protracted battle of the Central Pacific. Here, Japanese forces skillfully arranged their defenses in depth, in contrast to earlier battles, and inflicted heavy casualties on the American invaders. In the end, the Americans won, bringing to a close the Central Pacific drive that Admiral Nimitz's forces had begun a year earlier.

B-29 Enola Gay carried out the grave mission of dropping the world's first nuclear weapon on Hiroshima, Japan, in August 1945, an event that led to the conclusion of World War II and forever changed the course of world events.

B-29 Bock's Car dropped the United States' second, and last, nuclear weapon on Nagasaki, Japan, bringing home to the Japanese government the futility of continuing the war. Japan surrendered five days later. The world, at last, was at peace.

## PREVIOUSLY DESIGNATED SITES

### A. National Historic Landmarks

Alaska -- Skagway Historic District and White Pass, June 13, 1962. Skagway was the ocean terminus of the White Pass and Yukon Route and Canol pipeline, both of which contributed mightly to the construction of the Alaska Highway and a system of airfields across northwestern Canada to Alaska for the movement of aircraft and supplies for Alaska's and the Soviet Union's defenses.

California--Mare Island Naval Shipyard, May 15, 1975. The first permanent U.S. naval installation on the Pacific Coast, Mare Island repaired warships of the Pacific Fleet throughout the war.

Hawaii--U.S. Naval Base, Pearl Harbor, January 29, 1964. On December 7, 1941, a surprise Japanese attack destroyed American air strength in Hawaii and sank or damaged the principal ships of the U.S. Fleet in the Pacific, beginning the Pacific war. (Battleship USS Arizona at Pearl Harbor has since become a national memorial in the national park system.)

New Mexico--Trinity Site, December 21, 1965. Here, the world's first nuclear device was exploded in July 1945.

Texas--USS "Texas", December 8, 1976. Battleship Texas served in two campaigns in the Pacific War, Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

### B. National Register of Historic Places

Alaska: Fort Abercrombie State Historic Site, October 27, 1970.
P-38G Ligthning Fighter Aircraft, Attu, June 26, 1979.
D-24D Liberator Bomber Aircraft, Atka, July 26, 1979.

California: Fort Mason, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, April 25, 1972.
Manzanar War Relocation Center, July 30, 1976.

Guam: Agat Invasion Beach, March 4, 1975.
Hill 40, March 4, 1975.
Orote Field, June 18, 1975.
Asan Ridge Battle Area, July 18, 1975.
Asan Memorial Beach Park, August 7, 1975.
Matgue River Valley Battle Area, April 3, 1975.
Piti Coastal Defense Guns, December 22, 1976.
Dungcas Beach Defense Guns, December 22, 1976.
Matagua Hill Command Post, June 10, 1975.
Asan Invasion Beach, February 14, 1979.
Mount Tenjo Fortifications, March 13, 1979.
Japanese Light Tank, Model 95, December 19, 1979.
Yokoi's Cave, January 16, 1980.

Hawaii: Palm Circle Historic District, Fort Shafter, determined eligible, 1981.

Kwajalein Atoll: Kwajalein Island Battlefield, determined eligible, August 1980.
Roi-Namur Battlefield, determined eligible, August 1980.

Majuro Atoll: Marshall Islands War Memorial Park, September 30, 1976.

Ponape: Japanese Artillery Road and Pohndolap Area, September 30, 1976.

Saipan: Banzai Cliff, August 27, 1976.
Suicide Cliff, September 30, 1976.
Isley Field, determined eligible, July 1980.

Tinian: North Field Historic District, determined eligible, August 23, 1982.

Truk Atoll: Japanese Army Headquarters, Dublon, September 30, 1976.
Tonotan Guns and Caves, Moen, September 30, 1976.
Truk Lagoon Underwater Fleet, September 30, 1976.

OTHER SITES STUDIED

Wheeler Field, Oahu, Hawaii. Principal Army Air Force fighter base in Hawaii. Heavily attacked by Japanese aircraft on December 7, 1941. Many aircraft destroyed on the ground and personnel casualties contributed to Japanese air supremacy for the attack on the fleet in Pearl Harbor.

Kaneohe Naval Air Station, Oahu, Hawaii. Base for naval patrol planes, nearly all of which were destroyed, along with hangars, by Japanese planes on December 7, 1941, giving Japanese aircraft a free hand for their attack on the fleet in Pearl Harbor.

Midway Island. Failed objective of the Japanese fleet in 1942 when the U.S. Navy decisively defeated the Japanese at the Battle of Midway, the turning point of the Pacific war. Midway was heavily bombed and strafed during the battle.

Japanese Balloon-Bomb Site, Bly, Oregon. The site of the only North American casualties resulting from Japan's 1944-1945 balloon-bomb operation against the continent. Of the nearly 10,000 balloons launched, only this one caused casualties, killing a woman and five children. The site is called the Mitchell Recreation Area.

Whittier Cutoff, The Alaska Railroad. Constructed and operated by the U.S. Army to provide an alternative shorter railroad route from tidewater to the interior military posts than that of the port of Seward.

Atka. The most westerly of the Aleutian Islands from which the Army and the Navy removed the Aleut inhabitants and placed them in a foreign environment in Southeast Alaska for the duration of the war.

Marks Field, Nome. Refueling and repair field for Soviet ferry pilots flying nearly 8,000 lend-lease planes from Ladd Field near Fairbanks to Siberia. Also used for the transport of diplomats and missions between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Palm Circle, Fort Shafter, Hawaii. Headquarters (Pineapple Pentagon) and residence of the Commanding General, U.S. Army Forces in the Central Pacific Area. Lt. Gen. Robert C. Richardson, Jr., occupied the position from 1942 to 1945. Fort Shafter is believed to be the site of an army review for President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1944.

CINCPAC Headquarters, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Headquarters for Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, Pacific, from 1942 to 1944 when he moved to Guam.

Enewetak Atoll, Marshall Islands. Captured by U.S. forces in February 1944, Enewetak became an important airfield for the neutralization bombing of Japanese installations on Wake, Ponape, and Truk.

Airfield 2, Ponape, Caroline Islands. Admiral Nimitz's Central Pacific forces bypassed Ponape, but American air power continued to keep the island neutralized for the remainder of the war. Considerable evidence of this bombing is found at Japanese Airfield 2.

Airfield, Yap, Caroline Islands. Like Ponape, Yap was a bypassed island. Considerable evidence of the Japanese airfield remains: revetments, bomb craters, antiaircraft guns, and five wrecked Zero fighter planes.

Ulithi Atoll Lagoon. Captured without opposition by U.S. Army forces, Ulithi became an important fleet anchorage for the U.S. Navy, particularly for the invasion of Okinawa in 1945.

French Frigate Shoals, Hawaii. Refueling site for two Japanese aircraft that made a nuisance raid on Oahu in 1942; later, a modest American defense base.

Ewa Marine Corps Air Station, Oahu. Attacked by Japanese planes on December 7, 1941, little remains of the station from that date. It is now part of a larger naval air station.

Opana Radar Site, Oahu. Location of a mobile radar where two American soldiers picked up the incoming Japanese planes on December 7, 1941. Although the soldiers reported their observations, no action was taken at military headquarters.

Johnston Island. Shelled several times by Japanese ships and submarines in December 1941, tiny Johnston Island was later greatly enlarged by dredging and became a ferrying and refueling stop for aircraft flying to the South and Southwest Pacific.

Fort Stevens, Oregon. A Japanese submarine shelled the fort at the mouth of the Columbia River in June 1942. All shells missed their mark.

Japanese-American Internment Camps: Tule Lake, California; Minidoka, Idaho; Heart Mountain, Wyoming; Topaz, Utah; Grenada, Colorado; Poston and Rivers, Arizona; and Rohwer and Jerome, Arkansas. While site integrity varies from camp to camp, little evidence of the wartime internments remains.

Fort Glenn, Umnak, Alaska. Its airfield was built in secrecy before the 1942 Japanese attack on nearby Dutch Harbor. Umnak's fighters engaged some of the Japanese planes, shooting down three or four of them with a loss of two of their own.

Amchitka, Alaska. This airfield, close to Japanese-held Kiska, became operational in February 1943. From then until the Japanese withdrew in July, Amchitka's planes bombed the enemy-held Aleutians.

Shemya, Alaska. Occupied by United States forces shortly after they recaptured Attu, Shemya became an air base, sharing with Attu air raids on Japan's Kurile Islands. Although a 10,000-foot runway for B-29 bombers was constructed on Shemya, it was abandoned for the superior flying conditions found in the Marianas when they were captured in 1944.

Harbor Defenses, Seward, Alaska. By the time the U.S. Army completed construction of coastal batteries and harbor defenses at Alaska's principal port and railroad terminus, the danger of Japanese attack had greatly eased.

Majuro Atoll, Marshall Islands. Although Majuro was the first Japanese territory to be captured in World War II, the fact that the Japanese had abandoned it a year earlier diminished the significance of the event.

Rota, Mariana Islands. Rota was a bypassed island in the Central Pacific Campaign. Some evidence of the Japanese period remains: sugar mill ruins, a coastal gun, and a hospital cave.

Angaur, Palau. Near Peleliu, Angaur was invaded by U.S. Army troops at the same time. Following the relatively easy capture of this island, the army force moved to Peleliu to complete the capture of that bloody island.

Northwest Field, Guam. One of two B-29 bomber fields constructed on Guam for the long-range bombing of the Japanese homeland. The field became operational in early 1945.

NPS Form 10-900
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National Park Service

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# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Hickam Field

and or common Hickam Air Force Base

## 2. Location

street & number ___ not for publication

city, town X vicinity of Honolulu

state Hawaii code 15 county Honolulu code 003

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| X district | X public | X occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | ___ unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| ___ site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | X yes: restricted | ___ government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | ___ yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ no | X military | ___ other: |

## 4. Owner of Property

name U.S. Department of the Air Force

street & number

city, town Washington ___ vicinity of state D.C.

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. U.S. Department of the Air Force

street & number

city, town Washington state D.C.

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| X excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | X original site |
| ___ good | ___ ruins | X altered | ___ moved date _____ |
| ___ fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Army Air Corps established Hickam Field southeast of Pearl Harbor Naval Base on Oahu, Hawaii, in 1935. The principal army field in Hawaii, Hickam was the only one large enough to handle the B-17 bomber. Three runways formed a triangle. Today, these runways are either taxiways or aircraft parking areas, other runways in other locations now serving the base. On the northwest side of the former northeast-southwest runway are the principal features and structures that were attacked by Japanese aircraft on December 7, 1941. Adjacent to the runway and parallel to it is the flight line, on which aircraft were parked at the time of the attack.

Northwest of the flight line, from southwest to northeast are the following structures: hangar 35, a huge, double hangar having twin, rounded roofs; a row of steel-frame hangars arranged in pairs--hangars 15 and 17, 11 and 13, 7 and 9, and 3 and 5; northeast of hangar 5 is the air operations building; and beyond it is one more pair of hangars, 2 and 4. All the hangars, including those damaged in the Japanese attack, are essentially as originally constructed. Some of them retain evidence of the attack such as bullet-splatters in concrete columns and, in one instance, a bullet hole clear through a steel column. The hangars, like other early structures at Hickam, have elements of the art-deco style of architecture, particularly on their corners.

Northwest of hangars 7 and 3 is the huge, reinforced-concrete, three-story former airmen's barracks, now the headquarters of the Pacific Air Force as well as a personnel center. In 1941 the barracks was home for 3,000 enlisted men and was called Hale Makai. Japanese planes bombed and strafed the building, setting it on fire. The bomb and fire damage has long since been repaired, but a large number of spatter holes remain on the exterior walls where bullets hit the concrete. Certain modifications have been made to the structure's external appearance. The most notable of these is a broad, two-story corridor joining two wings at the northeast end of the building, which creates an imposing, but compatible, entrance to the Pacific Air Force offices.

In the square on which the air operations building is located, northeast of hangars 3 and 5, the Air Force displays a small collection of aircraft. These planes do not particularly relate to World War II and are not included in the recommendation.

The recommended historic district includes the flight line, hangars, air operations building, and the former barracks. The district and structures bordering on it, together with the tropical landscaping, make Hickam an area of distinct visual charm. Here, one captures the feeling of the pre-World War II military environment in Hawaii, as well as coming into contact with the physical damage of the surprise attack.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** December 7, 1941 **Builder Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The bombing and strafing of Hickam Field was an important objective of the Japanese task force that attacked Oahu on December 7, 1941. The success of the Japanese attack on the American fleet in Pearl Harbor was dependent on the destruction of American air power for two reasons: that American aircraft not interfere with the attack itself, and that they not interfere with the successful withdrawal of the task force once its mission was completed. On both accounts, the Japanese carrier planes achieved overwhelming success. Hickam, along with other military fields on Oahu, was rendered helpless when sixty percent of Japan's striking force was concentrated against aircraft and airfields. Although Japan experienced immediate victory, the surprise attack united the American people in a fierce desire to reverse their losses. The planes were replaced, the structures were rebuilt, the dead were revered, and the nation began the long struggle to restore its position in the Pacific.

Hickam Field

Hickam Field, adjacent to Pearl Harbor Naval Base, was established in 1935 as Hawaii's principal army airfield and bomber base. It was named in honor of Lt. Col. Horace Meek Hickam, a pioneer aviator who had been killed in an aircraft accident the year before at Fort Crockett, Texas. In 1941, Hickam was the only airfield in Hawaii having runways long enough to handle the B-17 Flying Fortress bombers, which were arriving in Hawaii in increasing numbers. At that time, the airfield was the headquarters of the Hawaiian Air Force, while operational units assigned to it included the Eighteenth Bombardment Wing and the Hawaiian Air Depot. Hickam was a handsome post architecturally, an outstanding feature being the masonry-clad, octagonal water tower that stood 171 feet tall. This landmark was considered to be one of the most beautiful man-made structures on Oahu. Almost as imposing was the recently completed barracks building adjacent to the aircraft hangars. The construction quartermaster had wanted to build several smaller barracks dispersed over a wide area, but the Army Air Corps had insisted on one structure large enough to house 3,000 enlisted men. Construction costs for the sprawling building amounted to $6 million.

On Sunday, December 7, 1941, fifty-one planes were on the ground at Hickam, most of them bombers. A flight of twelve B-17s were expected to arrive from the mainland that morning.[1]

The Attack

Also on the morning of December 7, 275 miles north of Oahu, Japanese pilots aboard six aircraft carriers received final instructions for that day's mission. The air attack on Oahu was to be executed by two waves of aircraft each composed of three groups. The first wave's primary target was the battleships and carriers (the carriers were absent) in Pearl Harbor, but the airfields were to be hit first to prevent a counterattack against the Japanese bombers and torpedo planes. If the Japanese met with no opposition in the air, they were to destroy grounded planes. The second wave's mission was similar, except that the attack on the airfields was to prevent a counterattack against the task force itself.

The first wave of 183 planes (43 fighters, 49 high-level bombers, 51 dive-bombers, and 40 torpedo planes) struck Oahu at 7:55 a.m. At Hickam Field, Japanese Zero fighters and Val dive-bombers strafed and bombed the flight line and hangars, concentrating on the B-17 bombers. In the midst of the attack, the twelve bombers from the mainland arrived, unarmed, unsuspecting, and low on fuel. The Japanese attacked them in the air but most of them succeeded in landing at Hickam where they were attacked on the ground.[2] Later that morning, after the Japanese left Oahu, four of Hickam's bombers succeeded in getting into the air to search, in vain, for the enemy task force. The second wave of 167 planes struck Oahu at 8:40 a.m. Dive-bombers, high-altitude bombers, and fighters hit Hickam Field in two groups. By 9:45 a.m. the Japanese attack was over.

---

1. The other principal airfields on Oahu in 1941 were:
   Wheeler, an army fighter plane base, adjacent to Schofield Barracks
   Ewa, a Marine Corps field, west of Pearl Harbor
   Ford Island, carrier aircraft field, in Pearl Harbor
   Kaneohe, naval base for Catalina patrol planes, on windward Oahu
By late 1941, the army was enlarging Bellows Field, near Kaneohe, for B-17s which were beginning to cause congestion at Hickam.

2. One B-17 crash-landed at Bellows Field, bringing that area to the attention of the Japanese. Another made a forced landing on a golf course.

Hickam took stock of its wounds. About half of its planes had been destroyed or severely damaged. Three hangars, 9, 13, and 15, had been directly hit, hangar 13 being reduced to a twisted ruin. Hangars 7 and 11 had been damaged when a bomb exploded between them. The Hawaiian Air Depot was largely destroyed. Several base facilities, including the fire station, chapel, and guardhouse, had been damaged. The big barracks had been repeatedly strafed and bombed and a portion of the structure was on fire. Many enlisted men had been at breakfast when the attack began. A bomb hit the mess hall in the center of the building, where 35 men were killed. Fifteen cooks who had taken shelter in a cold storage were all killed from concussion. All told, Hickam's casualties amounted to 121 men killed, 274 wounded, and 37 missing.[3]

While the Japanese had succeeded in their objectives, they had ignored the vital repair facilities and the gasoline storage tanks at Hickam, Pearl Harbor, and elsewhere on Oahu. Hickam Field quickly emerged from the attack stronger than before, playing an important role in World War II and in Pacific wars since. Today, it is the headquarters of the Pacific Air Force.

---

3. Total army casualties on Oahu amounted to 218 killed and 364 wounded or missing. Naval casualties were much heavier, 2,008 killed and 710 wounded. The army had 77 planes destroyed and 128 damaged; and the navy and Marine Corps lost 87 aircraft and had 31 damaged.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 89.3 acres

Quadrangle name Puuloa

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 03 | 608050 | 236053 0 |
| B | 03 | 608350 | 236022 0 |
| C | 03 | 607500 | 235936 0 |
| D | 03 | 607180 | 235936 0 |
| E | | | |
| F | | | |
| G | | | |
| H | | | |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

*See continuation sheet.*

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| state | code | county | code |

# 11. Form Prepared By

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| name/title | Erwin N. Thompson, Historian | | |
| organization | National Park Service, Denver Service Center | date | August 9, 1984 |
| street & number | 755 Parfet Street | telephone | (303) 234-4509 |
| city or town | Denver | state | Colorado 80225 |

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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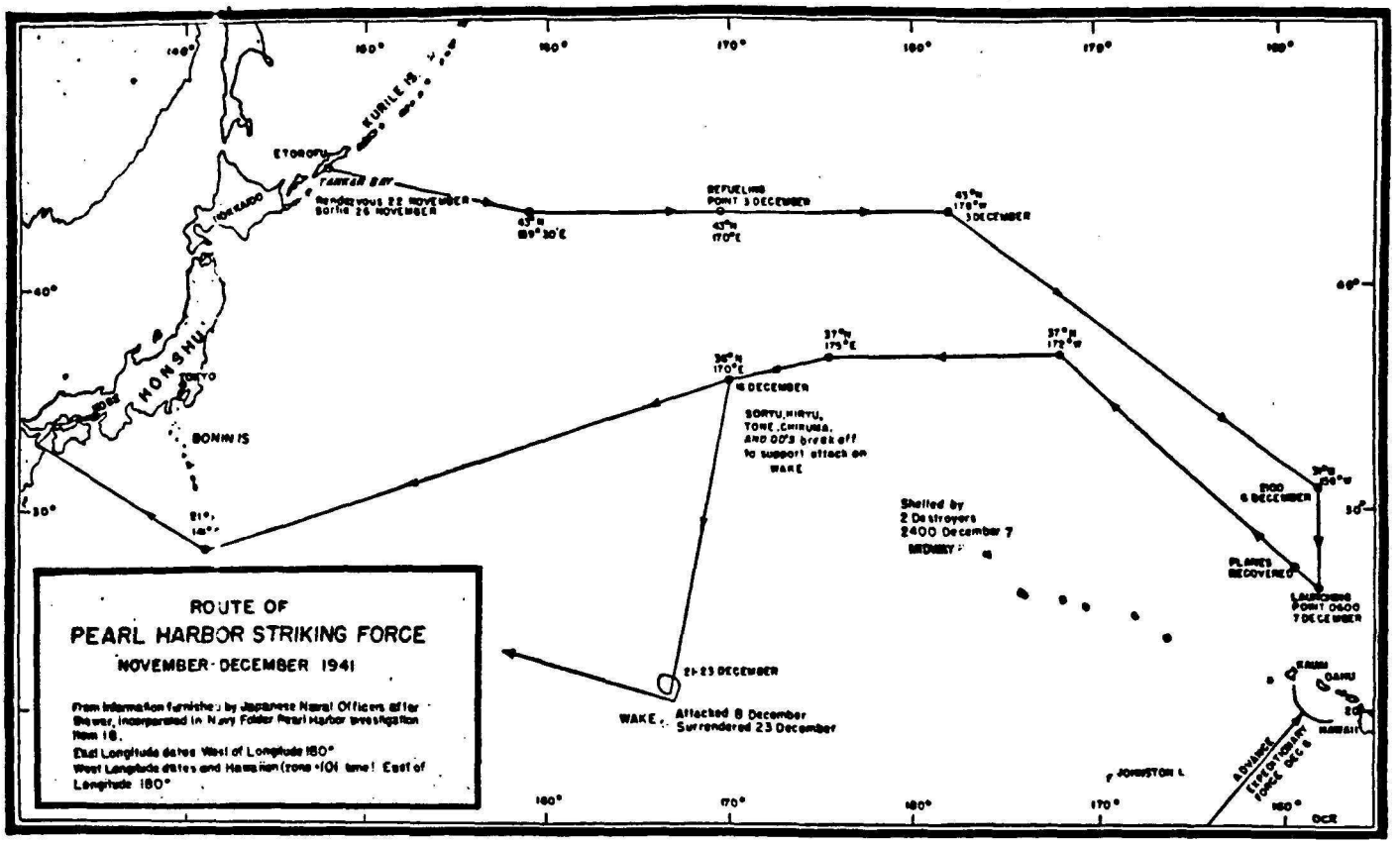
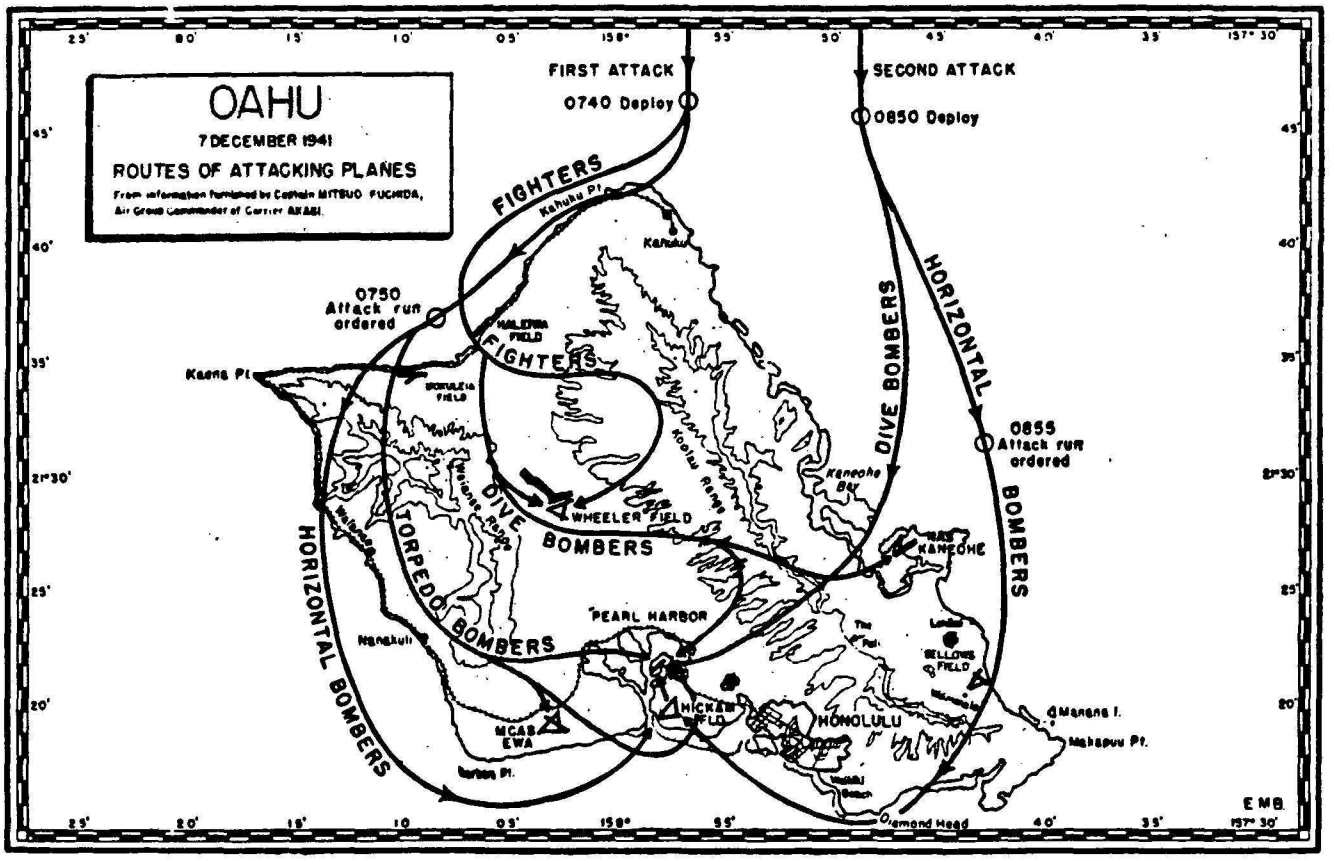
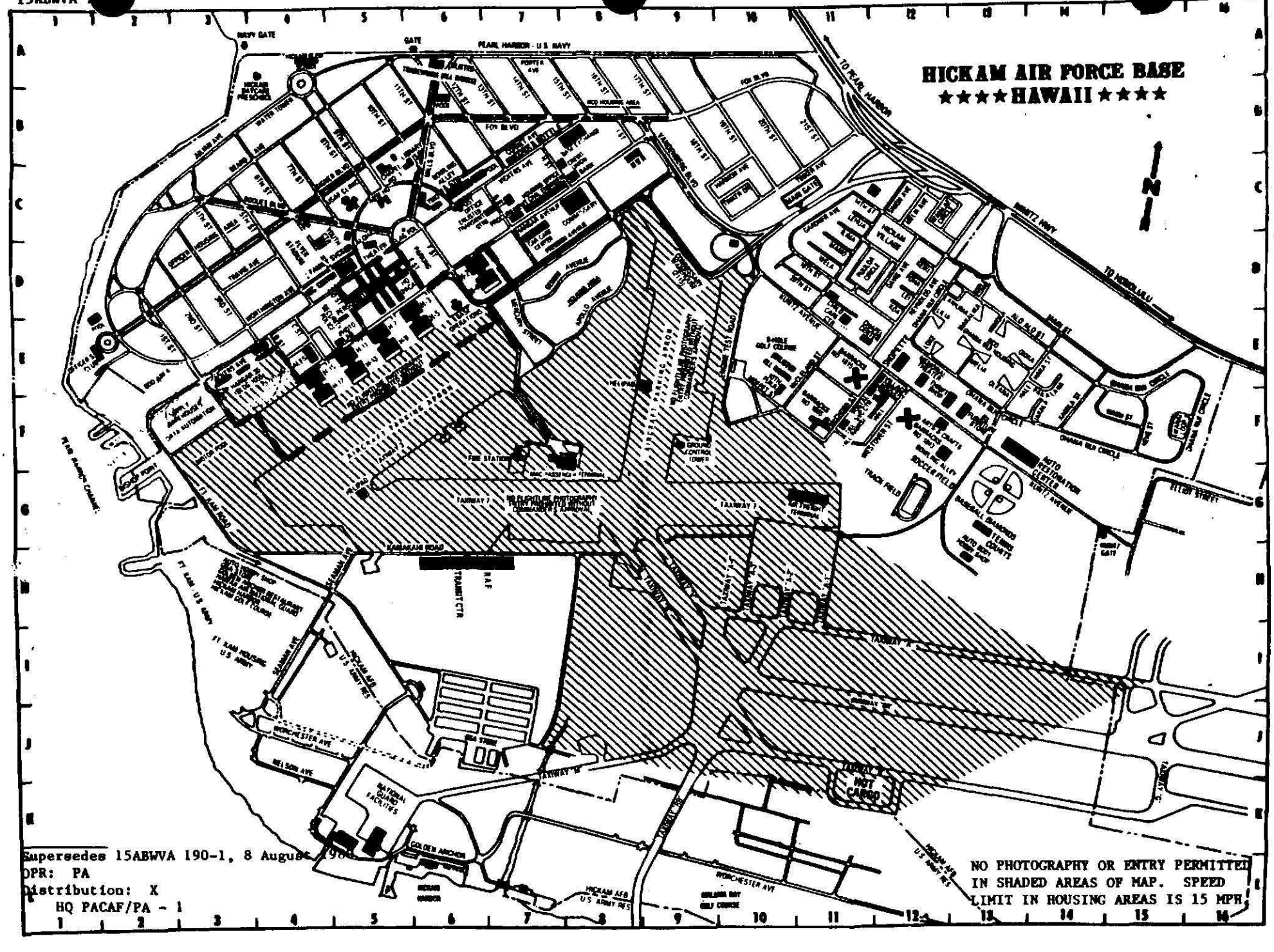
BOUNDARY

Beginning at a point at the southwest corner of the intersection of Vickers Avenue and E Street, then in a straight line southeasterly along the west curb of E Street to its intersection with Hangar Avenue, then in a straight line northeasterly along the south curb of Hangar Avenue for 1,000 feet to its intersection with an unnamed street coming from the southeast, then in a straight line in a southeasterly direction along the west curb of this unnamed street to its intersection with Freedom Avenue, then in a straight line southwest along the north curb of Freedom Avenue to its intersection with F Street, then southeasterly in a straight line along the west curb of F Street to the point where the flight line's and the former runway's boundaries meet, then in a straight line southwest along this boundary for a distance of 3,200 feet, then in a straight line northwest 900 feet to the west side of the west doors of hangar 35, then in a straight line southwest along the southeast end of hangar 35 to 1st Street, then in a straight line along the east curb of 1st Street for a distance of 600 feet, then in a straight line northeast along the northwest end of hangar 35 to B Street, then in a

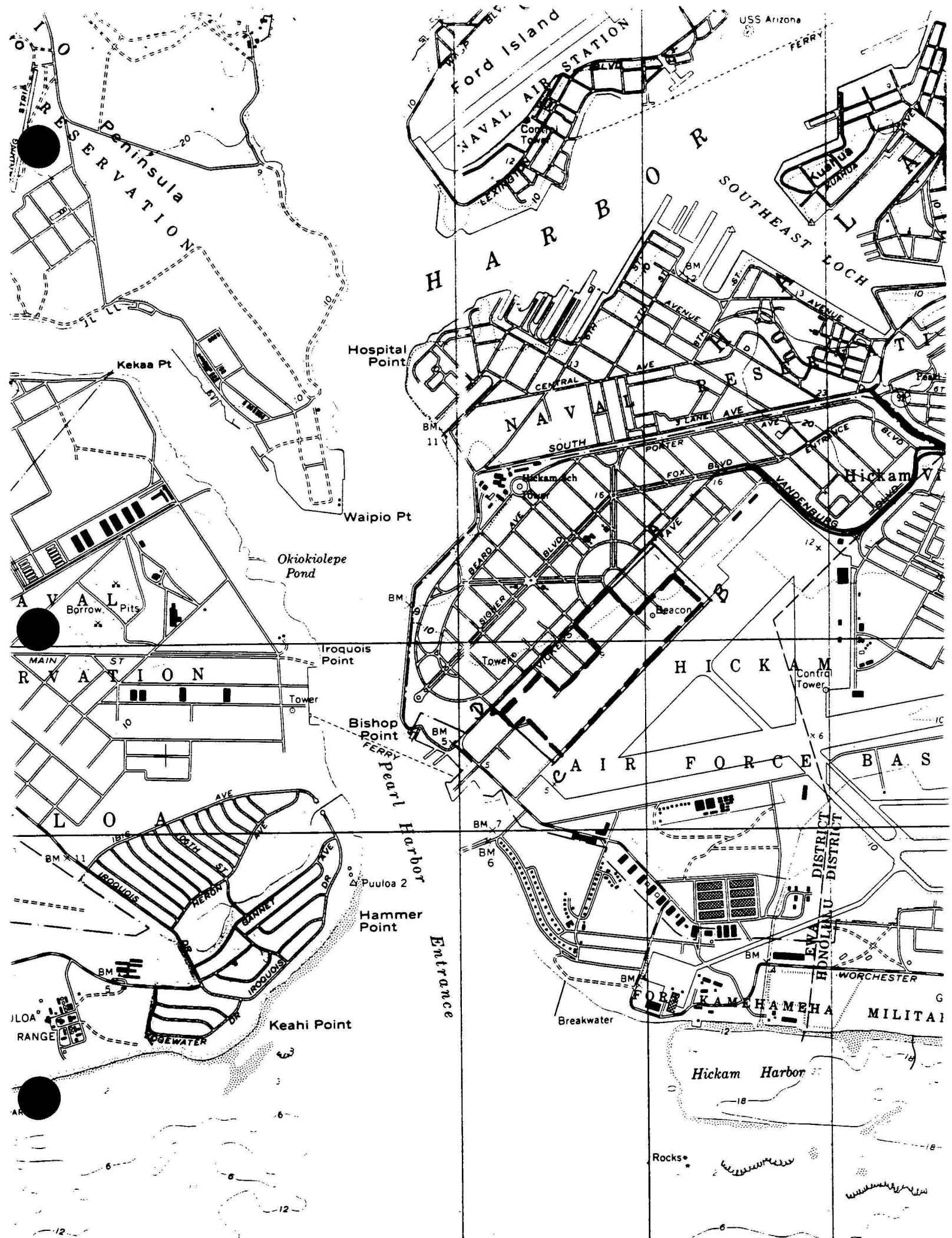
straight line southeast along the west curb of B Street to its intersection with Hangar Avenue, then in a straight line northeast along the south curb of Hangar Avenue to its intersection with D Street, then in a straight line northwest along the east curb of D Street to its intersection with Vickers Avenue, then in a straight line northeast along the south curb of Vickers Avenue to the point of beginning.


ROUTE OF
PEARL HARBOR STRIKING FORCE
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1941
From information furnished by Japanese Naval Officers after the war, incorporated in Navy Folder Pearl Harbor Investigation Item 16.
East Longitude dates West of Longitude 180°
West Longitude dates and Hawaiian (zone +10) time! East of Longitude 180°
KURILE IS
ETOROFU
TAKAN BAY
HONSHU
TOKYO
BONIN IS
Rendezvous 22 NOVEMBER
Sortie 26 NOVEMBER
REFUELING POINT 3 DECEMBER
3 DECEMBER
16 DECEMBER
SORYU, HIRYU, TONE, CHIKUMA, AND DD'S break off to support attack on WAKE
Shelled by 2 Destroyers 2400 December 7
MIDWAY
6 DECEMBER
PLANES RECOVERED
LAUNCHING POINT 0600 7 DECEMBER
21-23 DECEMBER
WAKE
Attacked 8 December
Surrendered 23 December
KAUAI
OAHU
HAWAII
JOHNSTON I.
ADVANCE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE DEC 6


OAHU
7 DECEMBER 1941
ROUTES OF ATTACKING PLANES
From information furnished by Captain MITSUO FUCHIDA, Air Group Commander of Carrier AKAGI.
FIRST ATTACK
0740 Deploy
SECOND ATTACK
0850 Deploy
FIGHTERS
Kahuku Pt.
Kahuku
0750
Attack run ordered
HALEIWA FIELD
FIGHTERS
Kaena Pt.
WAIALUA FIELD
DIVE BOMBERS
HORIZONTAL
0855
Attack run ordered
Kaneohe Bay
Koolau Range
WHEELER FIELD
DIVE BOMBERS
MARINE CORPS AIR STA KANEOHE
BOMBERS
TORPEDO BOMBERS
PEARL HARBOR
HORIZONTAL BOMBERS
Nanakuli
Lualualei
MCAS EWA
Barbers Pt.
HICKAM FLD
HONOLULU
Waikiki Beach
Diamond Head
BELLOWS FIELD
Mokapu Pt.
Mokuleia
Mokuleia Range
EMB

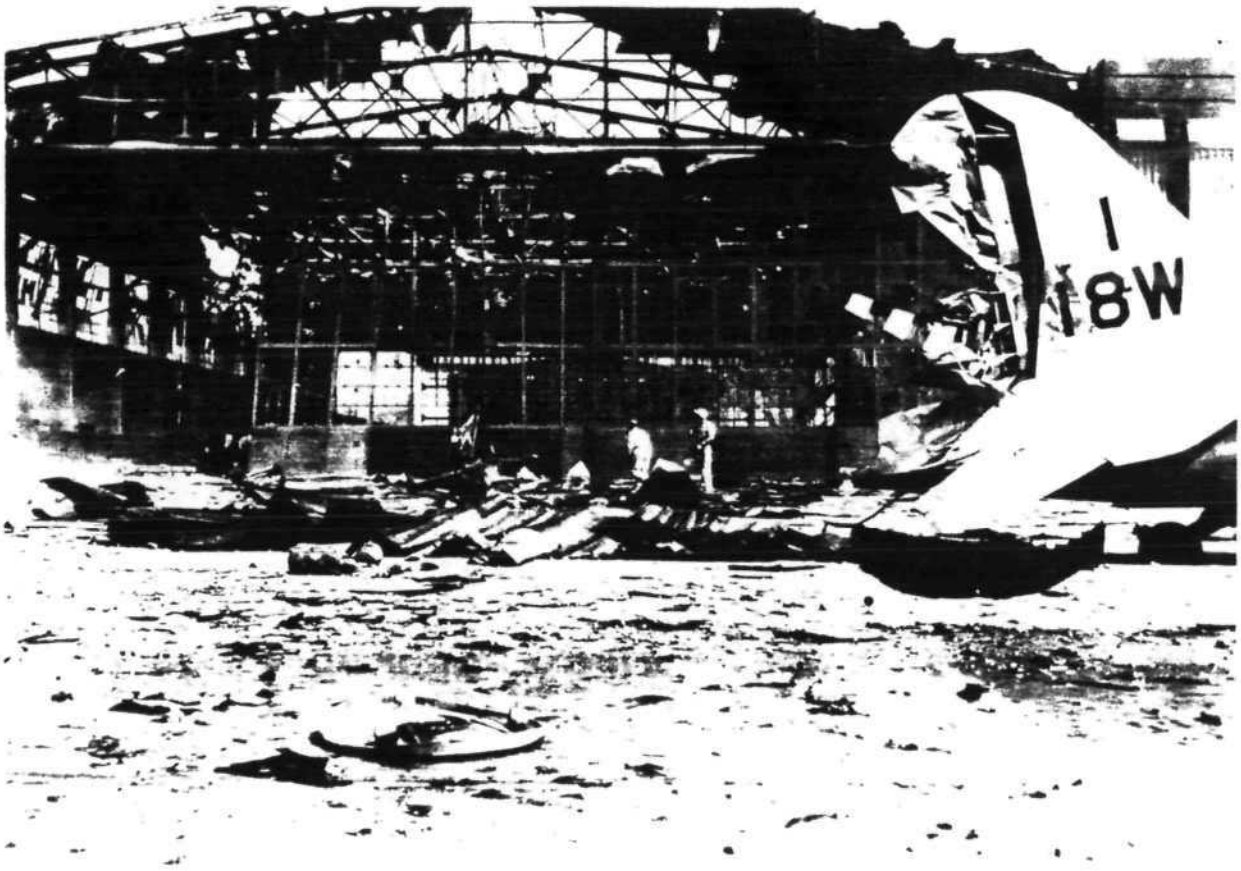



Supersedes 15ABWVA 190-1, 8 August 1960
OPR: PA
Distribution: X
HQ PACAF/PA - 1


Ford Island
NAVAL AIR STATION
Control Tower
USS Arizona
FERRY
Peninsula
RESERVATION
HARBOR
SOUTHEAST LOCH
Hospital Point
Kekaa Pt
Waipio Pt
Okiokiolepe Pond
Borrow Pits
Iroquois Point
Tower
Bishop Point
FERRY
Pearl Harbor Entrance
Puuloa 2
Hammer Point
Keahi Point
Breakwater
Hickam Harbor
Rocks
Beacon
Control Tower
HICKAM
AIR FORCE BAS
FORT KAMEHAMEHA
MILITAI
EWA DISTRICT
HONOLULU DISTRICT
WORCHESTER
CENTRAL AVE
SOUTH
PORTER
FOX BLVD
VANDENBURG
BEARD AVE
SIGNER
IROQUOIS
HERON
BARNEY
DR
RANGE

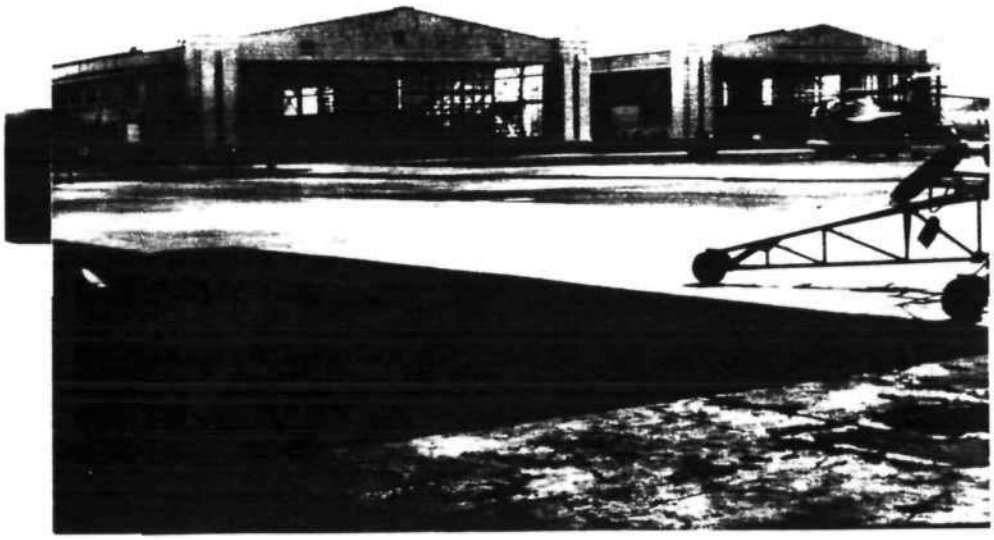
1. Hickam Field and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, ca. 1941. Ford Island is on extreme left. Hickam's row of double hangars and runways are right center.

Courtesy, National Archives




2. Hangar No. 11, Hickam Field, December 7, 1941.

Courtesy, Defense Audiovisual Agency



3. Hickam Field's hangars today.

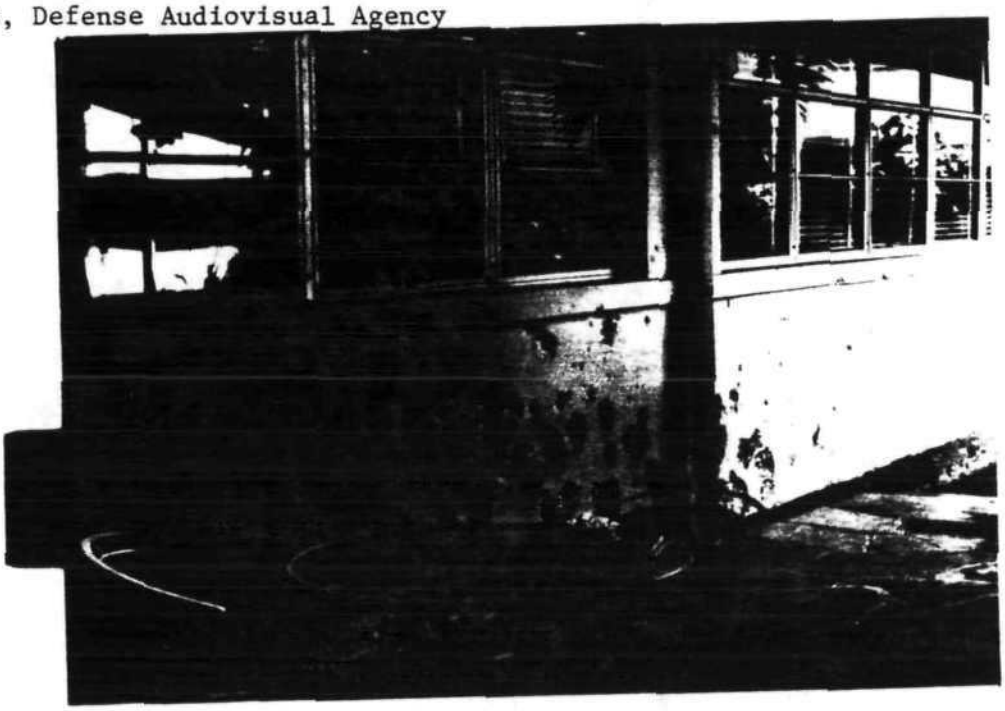
Photo by E.N. Thompson October 1983

4. Enlisted men's barracks, Hickam Field, December 7, 1941.

Courtesy, Defense Audiovisual Agency

5. Casualties at the enlisted men's barracks, Hickam Field, December 7, 1941.

Courtesy, Defense Audiovisual Agency



6. Bullet holes still pockmark the barracks' walls. The structure now is an administrative building.

Photo by E.N. Thompson

October 1983

7. In 1941, this handsome structure was the headquarters for Hickam Field.

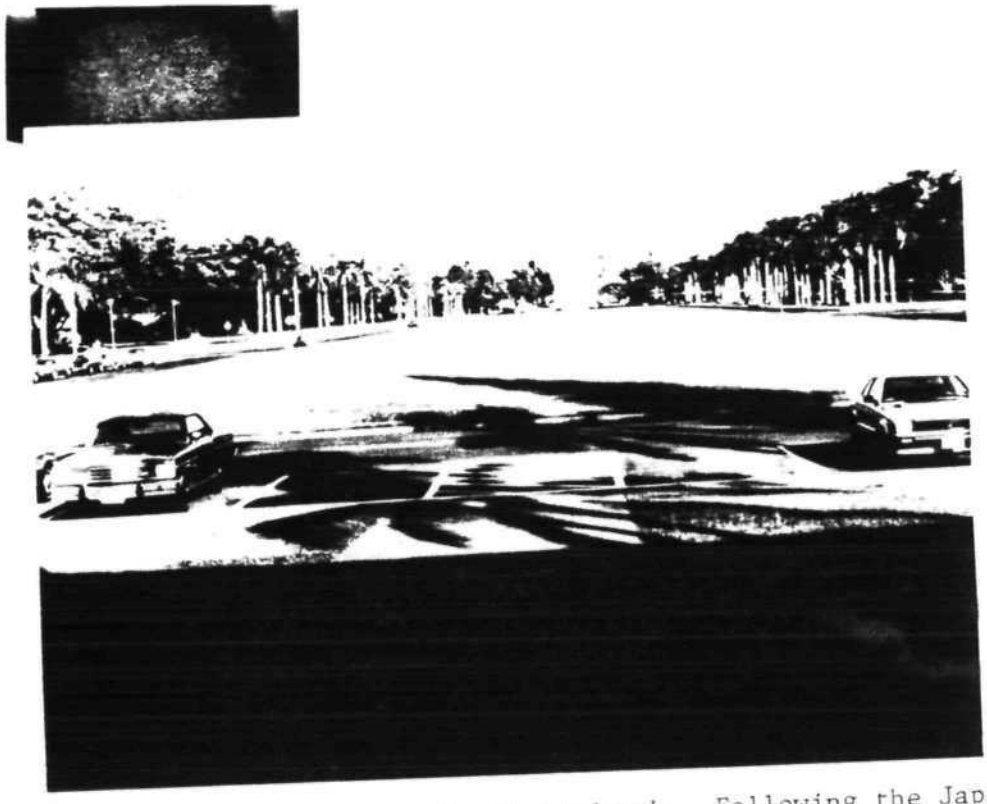
October 1983

Photo by E.N. Thompson

8. The 1941 air operations building at Hickam Field.

October 1983

Photo by E.N. Thompson



9. Hickam Field's water tower, a local landmark. Following the Japanese attack, the tower was covered with camoflage paint.

October 1983

Photo by E.N. Thompson

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

# NHL — WWII, PACIFIC

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Wake Island

and or common

## 2. Location

street & number ___ not for publication

city, town ___ vicinity of

state Pacific Ocean code — county code —

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ district | X public | ___ occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | ___ unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| X site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | X yes: restricted | ___ government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | ___ yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ *no* | X *military* | ___ *other:* |

## 4. Owner of Property

name United States Air Force

street & number

city, town Hickam Air Force Base X vicinity of Honolulu state Hawaii 96853

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. 15th Air Base Wing

street & number Pacific Air Force

city, town Hickam Air Force Base state Hawaii 96853

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

*depository for survey records*

city, town state

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| ___ excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | _X_ original site |
| ___ good | _X_ ruins | _X_ altered | ___ moved date _____ |
| _X_ fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Wake Island is a coral atoll comprised of three islands closely surrounded by a reef.[1] The islands form a V; Wake, the largest island, forms the apex of the V, while Peale and Wilkes islands are the tips. The sides of the V are about five miles in length; the circumference is twelve miles; and total land area amounts to 2,600 acres. The islands are relatively flat, the highest elevation above sea level is 21 feet. Coconut palms are not native to Wake; the land, where it has not been cleared, is covered with thick, scrubby vegetation. No sources of fresh water exist except rainwater. Wake is subject to fierce typhoons, and permanent structures are designed to withstand such storms. Good roads connect the three islands, a causeway, built by Seabees in 1946, leading from Wake to Wilkes (in 1941, naval boats ferried between the two), and a steel and plank bridge joining Wake and Peale. Paralleling this bridge are the ruins of a Japanese-built causeway.

Wake Island

Wake Island proper is the center of operations today. Detachment 4, Fifteenth Air Base Wing operates the airfield and its commanding officer is the island commander. A contractor employs about 400 civilians, mostly Filipinos, to provide support activities. The 10,000-foot runway lies east and west along the southern flank of the island, on the same alignment as the shorter 1941 runway. Administrative offices are in a large, modern terminal building. Service and maintenance shops extend north from the east end of the runway. Beyond these is a huge water catchment that collects rainwater. Paralleling the eastern shore is a large housing complex, now mostly abandoned. Another housing area, for civilians and visitors and complete with mess and recreation facilities, is at the northwest end of Wake, on the site of the pre-war contractor's camp, Camp Two. Petroleum storage facilities stand at the southwest end of the island, where an entrance channel and small boat harbor have been dredged between it and Wilkes. The entrance channel originally led into the lagoon but is now closed off by the causeway joining Wake and Wilkes.

Post-war developments, such as the runway and housing developments, have eliminated evidence of the Japanese occupation, 1941-1945, from parts of the island. Yet, much remains: the admiralty command post near the bridge to Peale, more than twenty concrete pillboxes on the ocean beaches, four semicircular bombproof blockhouses, an unusual rock-walled aircraft revetment, an antiaircraft gun battery (no weapons), ammunition magazines, several bombproof storage buildings, and the ruins of the Japanese power plant. Along the beach on either side of the east end of the runway are large complexes of collapsed wood and earth bunkers. In this rubble are an 8-inch gun emplacement and parts of a coastal searchlight.

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1. Although an atoll, Wake is officially called an island, in the singular form. The origins of this usage seem to be the pre-war U.S. Navy's desire to distinguish Wake from other atolls, most of which were Japanese territory.

Less remains from the 1941 American build-up. The most impressive features are three large reinforced-concrete, igloo-type magazines which played important roles during the fighting. A 3-inch, U.S. antiaircraft gun, M3, 1941, is mounted as a memorial in the civilian residential area. This weapon is believed to be a veteran of the battle for Wake. Post-war memorials include a monument dedicated to U.S. Marines, a monument for the Japanese garrison which was erected by Japan Air Lines, and a chapel. All three are across the road from the air terminal-Air Force headquarters building.

Wilkes Island

Wilkes is unoccupied today. Petroleum storage tanks stand near its east end and a navigation beacon stands in the center of a large cleared area at its west end. An incomplete entrance channel, which was being dredged at the time of the Japanese attack, almost bisects the island. This channel was being constructed for a proposed submarine base. West of the channel, a maze of Japanese rock-walled trenches and rifle-pits ("spider holes") remains near a lone American antiaircraft gun emplacement. A similar complex is found east of the channel. One or two anti-tank ditches protect the shores. The most poignant reminder of the war is a large coral boulder lying on the lagoon beach. Carved on this Prisoner of War Rock is "PW,5-10-43." The unknown carver had to have been one of 98 American civilians on Wake whom the Japanese killed later in 1943.

Peale Island

Peale Island is also unoccupied except for two or three people living near the bridge. Elsewhere on the island are two or three beach houses, an airmen's open-sided beach club, an open-sided theater, and other modest recreational facilities. Toward the west end is an abandoned U.S. Coast Guard loran station. The west end itself has been set aside as a bird sanctuary and is off-limits. (At sunset, the air is black with birds coming back to land.)

Peale is covered with the wreckage of war. Ruins of the Pan American hotel, outbuildings, and clipper pier; the Navy's seaplane ramp and concrete aircraft parking area; and the concrete floors and lower walls of several naval air station structures survive.[2] Japanese ruins on Peale are extensive. At least

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2. There is some confusion in official records whether the Navy or Pan American constructed the seaplane ramp. The writer believes the Navy did the work as part of its naval air station and that Pan American used the facility when it resumed operations in the Pacific after the war.

six large anti-tank ditches are extant. Many infantry rifle-pits remain along the seaward shore. A few underground structures exist in the interior of the island, as do earthen revetments that once contained buildings.[3] One existing frame building, sunk into the earth, is possibly Japanese. If so, it is a rare survivor inasmuch as few frame buildings of Japanese construction remain in the Central Pacific. The portion of the ocean shore in front of the naval air station ruins on Peale is protected by a concrete seawall. Whether it was constructed by Americans or Japanese cannot be determined. In the middle of the wall a pillbox has been incorporated that is definitely of Japanese design. On the northwest coast of the island stands a huge 8-inch Japanese gun of British manufacture. While the gun tube is sound, the steel shielding around the weapon has greatly rusted away, a testimony to the excessive humidity of tropical islands. Nearby, a large earth-covered, concrete ammunition magazine may be entered. Other earthen mounds in this vicinity may contain structures but any entrances have been buried. Not far from the gun, toward the west, is a semicircular concrete blockhouse. Inscribed on its roof, while the concrete was still wet, is "10-4-42," probably the work of another doomed American civilian.

Regrettably, no physical evidence remains of three 5-inch naval gun batteries that were on Wake in 1941, one on each island. With these guns, U.S. Marines drove off the enemy's first invasion force.

Post-war construction has been largely restricted to Wake Island proper. The U.S. Navy occupied the island from 1945 to 1947, using it as a refueling stop for trans-Pacific naval and army transport flights and a weather station. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) oversaw commercial and military Pacific flights from 1947 to 1972. During this period many of the modern structures now found on the island were built. With the introduction of long-range jet aircraft, Wake was no longer required as a refueling stop and the FAA relinquished its facilities to the U.S. Air Force in 1972.

Areas Recommended for Nomination

The areas recommended for nomination as a National Historic Landmark are:

Peale Island. All of Peale Island so as to include all Japanese structures, earthworks, weapons, and fortifications; the ruins of the Pan American Airways

---

3. It is likely that additional underground structures exist that are not now discernible on the surface. The Japanese enlisted garrison of nearly 4,000 was housed on Peale.

establishment; and the ruins of the U.S. Naval Air Station. Features on Peale not included are the abandoned U.S. Coast Guard Station, present-day recreation facilities, and employee residences.

Wilkes Island. All of Wilkes Island so as to include all Japanese structures, earthworks, and fortifications; the U.S. antiaircraft gun emplacement; and the Prisoner of War Rock. Features on Wilkes not included are the navigation beacon and petroleum storage tanks.

Wake Island. All areas that have Japanese structures and fortifications, including command posts, blockhouses, pillboxes, power plant, storehouses, magazines, aircraft revetments, gun emplacements, rifle-pits, and earthworks; the two memorials to the U.S. Marines and Japanese forces; and the American ammunition magazines. Features on Wake Island not included are all post-war construction, such as the runway, taxiways, aircraft and other maintenance areas and buildings, air terminal-headquarters, water catchments, residential areas, and petroleum storage areas.

Also recommended for nomination are the bridge and causeway between Wake and Peale islands, the entrance channel between Wake and Wilkes islands, and the unfinished channel on Wilkes. Not included are the small boat harbor and the causeway between Wake and Wilkes.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ● prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ● 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1941-1945 **Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The success of the U.S. Marines in driving off the first Japanese invasion attempt at Wake, just three days after the Japanese destroyed most of the battleships of the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, was of the utmost importance to the morale of the American people.[1] The apocryphal message from the Marine commander, "Send us more Japs," became the rallying cry of the nation at a time of dark despair. When Wake fell to the Japanese just before Christmas Eve, 1941, national sentiment to get on with the war rose to a new pitch. "Remember Wake" became almost as popular a patriotic slogan as "Remember Pearl Harbor." Also significant is the fact that the Marines' success against the first Japanese attack was the only time in the Pacific War that coastal guns drove off an amphibious landing.

The capture of Wake was important to Japan for this removed a threat to its line of defense from Tokyo to the Marshall Islands and it was a step closer to a future target, Midway.

Fortifying Wake

Named for a British sea captain, William Wake, who passed by in 1796, Wake Island remained unclaimed for another century. The isolated, waterless atoll drew little interest in itself. Distances alone helped to explain its neglect: 2,300 miles from Honolulu, 1,985 miles from Tokyo, and 1,510 miles from Guam. Commo. Charles Wilkes, U.S. Navy, visited Wake in 1840 on his famous voyage of exploration, but the United States took little other interest in the speck of land until it went to war with Spain in 1898. With the acquisition of Hawaii, Guam, and the Philippines, the United States saw the importance Wake could have in trans-Pacific communications.

On July 4, 1898, U.S. Army Transport Thomas dropped anchor off the island. Maj. Gen. Wesley Merritt went ashore, claimed the island for the United States, and raised the Stars and Stripes.[2]

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1. The Japanese attacked Wake on December 10, Hawaiian time, or December 11, Wake time. Also, Wake is 2½ hours behind Hawaii.

2. In 1922, Edwin H. Bryan, Honolulu, discovered a section of a flagstaff on Wilkes Island that had "USAT THOMAS" burned on it. In 1899, the Navy landed on Wake and again took formal possession. Edwin H. Bryan, Jr., American Polynesia and the Hawaiian Chain (Honolulu, 1942), p. 211; Capt. E.A. Junghans, USN, "Wake, 1568-1946," U.S. Marine Corps Records, World War II, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD, hereinafter cited as WNRC.

In 1923, a joint scientific expedition sponsored by Yale University and Bishop Museum, Honolulu, explored and charted Wake, naming the three islands for Captain Wake, Commodore Wilkes, and Titian Peale, who was Wilkes' naturalist. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an Executive Order in 1934 giving the Navy Department jurisdiction over the island.

Pan American Airways applied in 1935 for permission to establish a seaplane base at Wake for its "Clipper" flying boats, the pioneer trans-Pacific air route: San Francisco, Hawaii, Midway, Wake, Guam, Manila, and later, Hong Kong. Permission granted, a supply ship reached Wake in May 1935. Peale Island was selected as the base site; a one-story hotel was constructed (the flight across the Pacific then took six days), hydroponic vegetable gardens were established, and the essential rainwater catchments were built. The first Clipper swooped into the lagoon within two months, beginning once-a-week trans-Pacific service.

Not until 1938 did the Navy take a hard look at Wake, when a board of officers recommended its development as an outlying base. Congress appropriated the funds, and the contractor, Morrison-Knudsen Company of Boise, Idaho, arrived on the island in January 1941.[3] By December, the contractor had a force of 1,146 civilians on the island and the work of building a naval air station was 65 percent completed. The necessary equipment and materials were on hand to complete construction by the summer of 1942.

The 1st Defense Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps, under Maj. James P.S. Devereaux, began arriving on Wake in August 1941 and established a tent camp at the southwest end of Wake Island (Camp One). By October, 15 officers and 373 Marines were on the island. Their days were filled with work: constructing their own quarters, emplacing coastal and antiaircraft guns, refueling by hand B-17 bombers en route to the Philippines, and acting as stevedores when supply ships arrived. Their strength was augmented on December 4 with the arrival of Maj. Paul A. Putnam's Marine Fighter Squadron 211 with twelve F4F3 Grumman Wildcats flying in from carrier USS Enterprise. Major Devereaux was superseded as island commander on November 28 with the arrival of Comdr. Winfield Scott Cunningham, U.S. Navy, who established his headquarters at Camp Two. Comdr. Campbell Keene, U.S. Navy, commanded the naval air station itself. By December 7, 1941, Wake's population amounted to over 1,700 men:

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3. Morrison-Knudsen was a part of a larger conglomeration, Contractors Pacific Naval Air Bases, which undertook construction at several Pacific islands and in Alaska at this time.

| | |
|---|---|
| Navy | 72 |
| Army Signal detachment | 6 |
| 1st Marine Defense Battalion | 379 |
| Marine Fighter Squadron 211 | 59 |
| Pan American (mostly from Guam) | 70 |
| Contractors, Pacific Naval Air Bases | 1,146 |

The island's principal defenses consisted of three batteries of 5-inch guns removed from old battleships. These two-gun batteries were set up at Peacock Point on the south tip of Wake, Kuku Point at the west end of Wilkes, and Toki Point at the west end of Peale. Each island had a battery of four 3-inch antiaircraft guns, but there were not sufficient crews to man all these weapons. Twenty-four .50 caliber machine guns supplemented the antiaircraft defense, and a number of .30 caliber machine guns covered the beaches. No radar had been installed. The men on Wake were aware of the tense situation in the Pacific as 1941 drew to a close. At one point, diplomatic protocol caused Major Devereaux to entertain the Japanese diplomat, Saburo Kurusu, en route to Washington for his infamous negotiations with the United States government. The first Japanese bomb fell on Pearl Harbor at 7:55 a.m., December 7. Word of the attack reached Wake within an hour and a half. Immediately, battle stations were manned. Four Wildcats were already on patrol. The China Clipper had just left for Guam, but returned to Wake to volunteer a search patrol. While the Clipper was still on the water, at 11:58 a.m. (2:28 p.m. Hawaiian time), eighteen Japanese bombers flew low and fast over Wake bombing and strafing the airfield. In a few seconds, 23 officers and men of the fighter squadron were dead, and another 11 wounded. Seven of the eight planes on the ground were destroyed, and the eighth was damaged. The Japanese made a second run over Peale Island hitting the naval air station and Pan American installations, killing ten civilians. As quickly as they had arrived, the enemy planes disappeared, returning to Roi airfield at Kwajalein Atoll, 720 miles away.

On each of the next two days, 27 bombers returned to the attack. The new naval-civilian hospital at Camp Two was destroyed and 21 men killed. Two of the 5-inch guns were damaged. A large store of dynamite at the new channel on Wilkes was detonated. The attacks were not one-sided though; Marine pilots shot down three of the bombers. New hospitals were established in two of the four igloo magazines on the east side of Wake.

Just after midnight on the morning of December 11 (December 10 in Hawaii), island defenders sighted flashing lights off-shore, indicating that a Japanese task force had arrived. At daybreak, the warships closed Peacock Point and, apparently believing that Wake had been seriously weakened by bombing, turned to the northwest, parallel to the south shore, firing and closing as they proceeded. The Marines held their fire until the vessels were within ranges of from 4,500 to 6,000 yards. Within minutes, a Japanese destroyer was sunk and two cruisers, two destroyers, and a transport were damaged. The Japanese force withdrew from the action with all possible speed.

The four surviving Wildcats took to the air armed with two 100-pound bombs and .50 caliber machine guns each. Expending their ammunition with speed, they returned to the field for more (two planes each managed to make four sorties before distances became too great). Capt. Henry T. Elrod, USMC, who already had two bombers to his credit, by some lucky chance got one of his small bombs below the decks of a destroyer. A fire started and within thirty miles of Wake, the destroyer blew up and sank.[4]

Considerably wiser and poorer, the Japanese returned to their naval base at Kwajalein. The Marines and civilians who had volunteered to help were jubilant. The only serious damage that occurred was to Elrod's plane that had been hit by Japanese fire and crashed on landing. Wake's air power was down to three planes and one of them needed its engine replaced. The two operable planes soon had to take off again when 18 Japanese planes bombed Peacock Point at 9:45 a.m. This raid was as fruitless as the task force's, and the Marines claimed three down and a "probable." That evening, Commander Cunningham ordered a common grave prepared for Wake's dead, military and civilian. On this same day, Guam fell to the Japanese.

During the next eleven days, the Japanese bombed Wake eight times. Devereaux's earth and log command post was blown up and he set up a new headquarters in one of the igloo magazines where Wake's sole remaining radio reported the island's fate to the outside world. Enemy planes systematically demolished everything above ground and the survivors quickly learned to live underground. On December 20, a navy patrol bomber arrived from Pearl Harbor bearing mail and news. For a brief time, rumors spread that a task force from Pearl was coming for the relief of Wake.[5]

On December 21 and 22, Japanese carrier planes from Soryu and Hiryu roared over the island.[6] Wake's defenders realized this signaled the approach of

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4. At the time, Marines thought the ship was a cruiser.

5. It was more than a rumor. A task force centered around carrier USS Saratoga departed Pearl Harbor December 15. When the Japanese landed on Wake in their second assault, the task force was 425 miles from the island. Even before news of Wake's surrender was received, Pearl Harbor recalled the ships. Samuel Eliot Morison, The Rising Sun in the Pacific, 1931-April 1942 (Boston, 1948, reprint 1982), pp. 235-252.

6. Both carriers had participated in the attack on Pearl Harbor.

another Japanese invasion force. In the second carrier strike, Wake's two surviving aircraft took to the air. One pilot was wounded but managed to bring his damaged plane down, but it would never fly again. The other Marine pilot did not return. Major Putnam gathered the remnants of his air force and reported to Major Devereaux for duty as ground troops. As darkness fell on Wake, the defenders observed flashes of light at sea.

After the repulse at Wake, Rear Admiral Sadamichi Kajioka had reorganized his task force at Kwajalein Atoll. For a week the enlarged force trained in landing exercises. It sortied on December 20 and proceeded to Wake. The two carriers were already in the area. A support group of six cruisers took station east of Wake in the event American forces advanced from Pearl Harbor. The enemy plan, which was realized, was to have landing craft place troops at Peacock Point on Wake Island and on the south shore of Wilkes with the mission of silencing the 5-inch gun batteries. Meanwhile, two destroyer transports would head straight for the reef on the south side of Wake at 12 knots and deliberately beach themselves to ensure that the troops reached the shore.

At 2:45 a.m., December 23, the two transports rammed the reef and began disgorging from 500 to 800 Special Naval Landing Force troops. Facing them were 85 Marines, including a handful of Marine airmen under Captain Elrod. The Marines had emplaced a 3-inch gun near the runway and opened fire on the transports, setting them on fire. Machine guns along the beach added their support, and the 5-inch guns on Peale Island fired across the lagoon at the vessels. Elrod's men were forced back to the gun position where they held out for six hours while surrounded by some 200 enemy. In the end, Elrod was shot and killed. A navy captain wrote of the gallant Marine, "No one present contributed more to the defense of the island than he; probably no one contributed as much."[7] At 5:30 a.m., Commander Cunningham radioed his famed report to Pearl Harbor, "Enemy has landed. Issue in doubt."

The Japanese advanced across the runway, slowed temporarily by machine gun fire but fanning out to the west and east. Small pockets of Marines in their rear continued to resist. About 6:00 a.m., a group of 40 Marines established a last-ditch line across the island in the vicinity of Devereaux's command post.

Meanwhile on Wilkes Island, Marine artillerymen took on the 100-man Japanese force landing there. Although the enemy quickly overran the 3-inch antiaircraft battery, the Marines prevented the Japanese from expanding their beachhead. At dawn, counterattacking from east and west, the Marines overran

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7. Junghams, "Wake," p. 12.

the Japanese position, practically annihilating the enemy. Unfortunately, Capt. W. McC. Platt was unable to contact Devereaux by radio to inform him of the Wilkes success. Back on Wake, Devereaux could see Japanese flags flying on Wilkes and assumed that the island had been lost. Platt gathered his men and two prisoners and started for Wake.

In his command post, Devereaux had lost contact not only with Wilkes Island but with his Marines at Peacock Point (which apparently had been overrun) and Camp One. He was able to reach Cunningham at Camp Two and called him to discuss the situation. Cunningham informed him that he had learned there would be no relief from Pearl Harbor.[8] At 9:00 a.m., Cunningham decided to surrender and so informed the Marines. Devereaux, armed with a white flag, advanced south along the road until he met a Japanese officer. For the next six hours, escorted by a Japanese guard, he trudged over Wake ordering his disbelieving men to surrender. When he reached Wilkes Island, he learned of the Marines' successful defense.

American casualties from December 8 to 23 were estimated at 109 killed: 49 Marines (including 33 from Squadron 211), 37 contractor civilians, 13 naval personnel, and 10 Pan American employees. The Japanese took about 1,600 prisoners, of whom 450 were military personnel. Japanese losses for the period were estimated at 700 killed on land, at sea, and in the air.

Wake Under the Rising Sun

Americans on Wake spent a rainy Christmas Day, 1941, camped in the open air. That evening they moved into the battered barracks at Camp Two. The Japanese immediately put able-bodied prisoners to work constructing fortifications and improving the airfield, using American heavy equipment and materials. Military and the important civilian prisoners were evacuated to China on January 12, 1942. A small group of wounded personnel was shipped separately to Japan. On September 30, 1942, all remaining prisoners except 98 civilians, were transported to prison camps in China. The 98 men retained on Wake were heavy equipment operators whose skills the Japanese required in building the advanced base. No word was heard of these men until after the war, when it was learned that in October 1943, following an American carrier

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8. It is apparent that little rapport existed between the two officers. After the war, both wrote books defending their individual views concerning events on Wake. Cunningham was bitter when he learned that Devereaux and the Marines were regarded as heroes, while he, the island commander, was virtually ignored.

strike, the Japanese commander, Rear Adm. Shigumatsu Sakaibara, ordered them shot. The killing took place on the north shore of Wake Island, possibly on or near the site of a grove of ironwood trees today.[9]

Japan's defenses on Wake were substantial. Approximately 65 pieces of artillery ranging from captured American 3-inch antiaircraft guns to 8-inch coastal guns, were revetted with coral. Twenty-four light tanks were brought to the island. Aircraft strength peaked at 55 bombers and fighters in April 1943. The combined army and navy garrison on Wake reached a total of more than 4,400, the last significant reinforcement arriving in January 1944 just prior to the American invasion of the Marshalls.

During 1942, the United States paid relatively little attention to the Japanese build-up on Wake. In February 1943, Vice Adm. William F. Halsey, Jr., led an aerial and naval bombardment on Japanese positions. Army bombers, staging through Midway, raided the island in June.[10] As 1943 progressed and the United States prepared for its drive through the Central Pacific, the number and intensity of attacks increased. In October, a six-carrier task force carried out a two-day operation against Wake with both carrier and land planes participating. This attack succeeded in eliminating Japanese air strength on the island and destroyed ninety percent of the buildings. The capture of Kwajalein and Enewetok atolls in the Marshalls in February 1944 gave the Americans additional bases for launching land planes against the island. By early 1944, an air and naval blockade of Wake was complete. The last Japanese supply ship reached the island in December 1943. Only an occasional submarine arrived at Wake during the rest of the war. Food supplies became desparately short. It was estimated that 1,500 men died as a result of malnutrition by August 1945. In addition, the United States allowed a Japanese hospital ship to remove nearly 1,000 malnutrition cases in July 1945.

Admiral Sakaibara surrendered Wake on September 4, 1945, only 1,240 men remaining in his command. The American decision to bypass the island and to neutralize it had proven wise. Wake Island prepared to resume its role in trans-Pacific transportation and communications.

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9. Admiral Sakaibara was executed on Guam in June 1947.

10. Army bombers had attempted earlier that month to bomb Wake, but were unable to find it. Maj. Gen. Clarence L. Tinker, commanding general, Seventh Air Force, and his plane disappeared in the Pacific on this flight.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2,600 acres

Quadrangle name None

Quadrangle scale None

UTM References Not available

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | | | | B | | | |
| C | | | | D | | | |
| E | | | | F | | | |
| G | | | | H | | | |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

See continuation sheet.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| | code | county | code |

## 11. Form Prepared By

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| name/title | Erwin N. Thompson, Historian | | |
| organization | Denver Service Center, National Park Service | date | May 13, 1984 |
| street & number | 755 Parfet Street | telephone | (303) 234-4509 |
| city or town | Denver | state | Colorado 80225 |

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89–665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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_____; Ludwig, Verle E.; and Shaw, Henry I. Pearl Harbor to Guadacanal. History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II, vol. 1. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1958.

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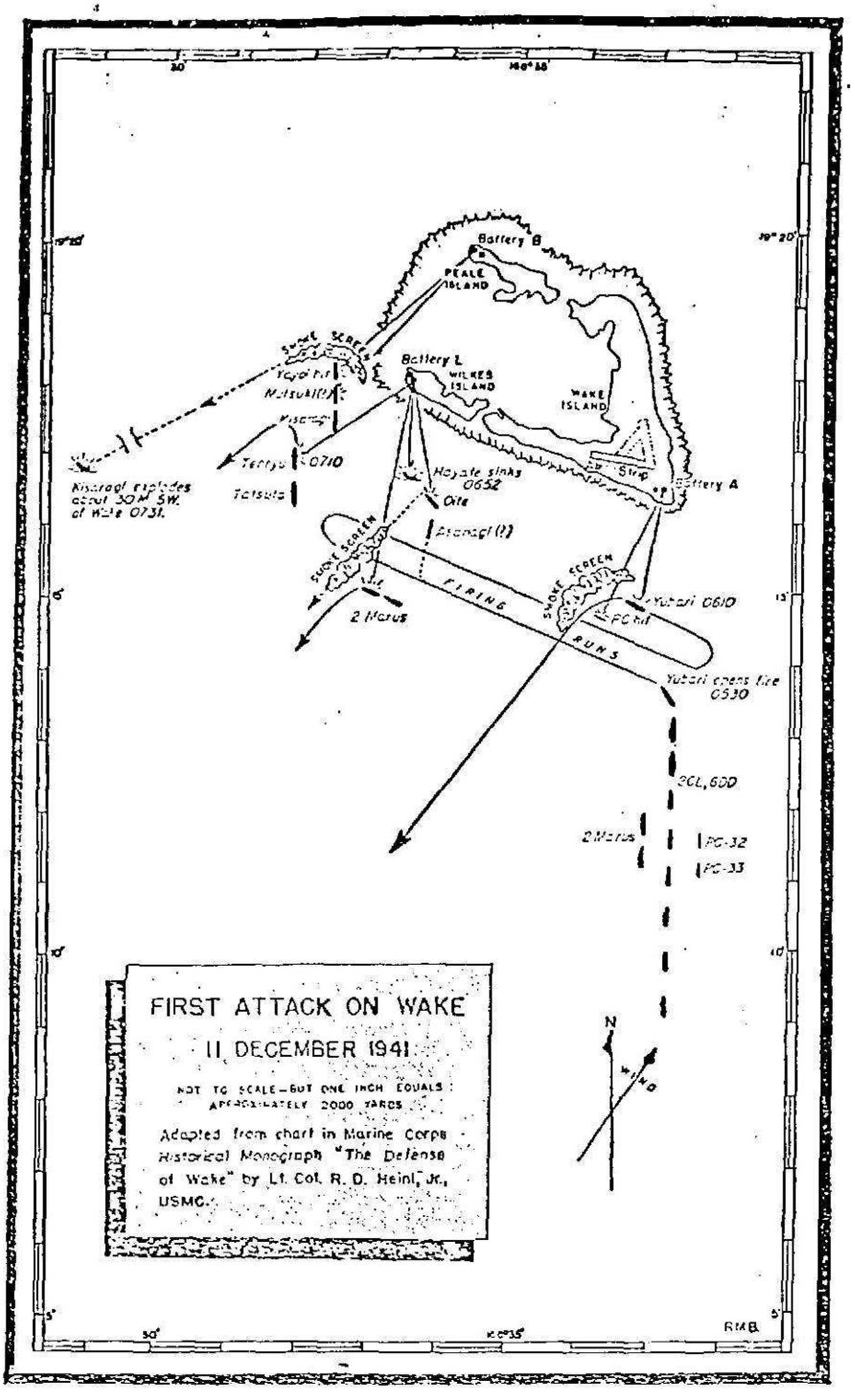
U.S. Marine Corps. Capt. Winfield S. Cunningham to Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps, October 8, 1948; Col. James P.S. Devereaux, "Wake Island Report, Marine Detachment, First Defense Battalion," ca. March 1946; Commander, Marshalls-Gilberts Area to C-in-C, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas (Pearl), September 13, 1945; Capt. E.A. Junghans, USN, "Wake, 1568-1946;" Lt. John Hamas to Lt. Col. James P.S. Devereaux, "Report on What Happened and What Each Officer Did On Wake Island," October 12, 1945, all in U.S. Marine Corps World War II Records, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD.

U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey (Pacific). Interrogations of Japanese Officials, vol. 72.2. Naval Analysis Division, [1946].

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The boundary is the outer edge of the reef that surrounds Wake Island so as to include the reef, the three islands, and the lagoon. This boundary encompasses all American and Japanese structures, earthworks, fortifications, and weapons that are found over all of the three islands from the period 1941 to 1945. It includes the reef where Japanese forces landed. It also includes the land areas on Wilkes and Wake where fighting occurred and the land area on Peale where Japanese enlisted men were garrisoned.

All post-war developments, while within this boundary, do not contribute to the significance of Wake's World War II history and are exempted.

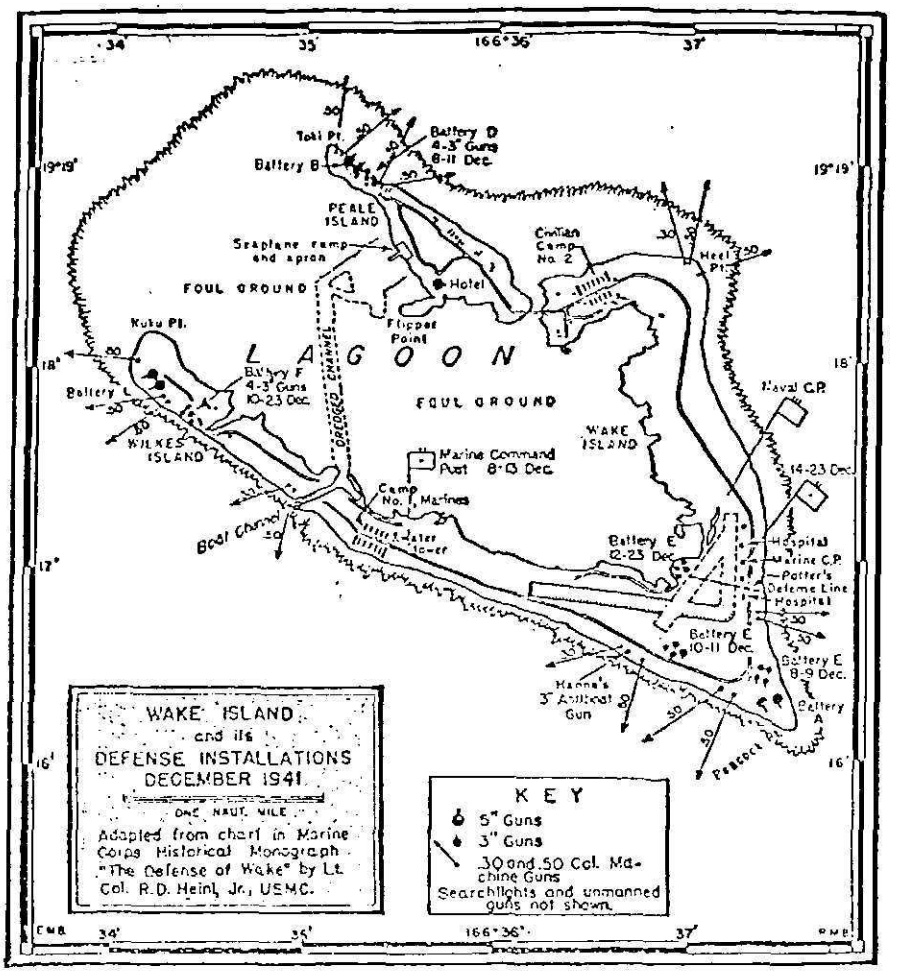


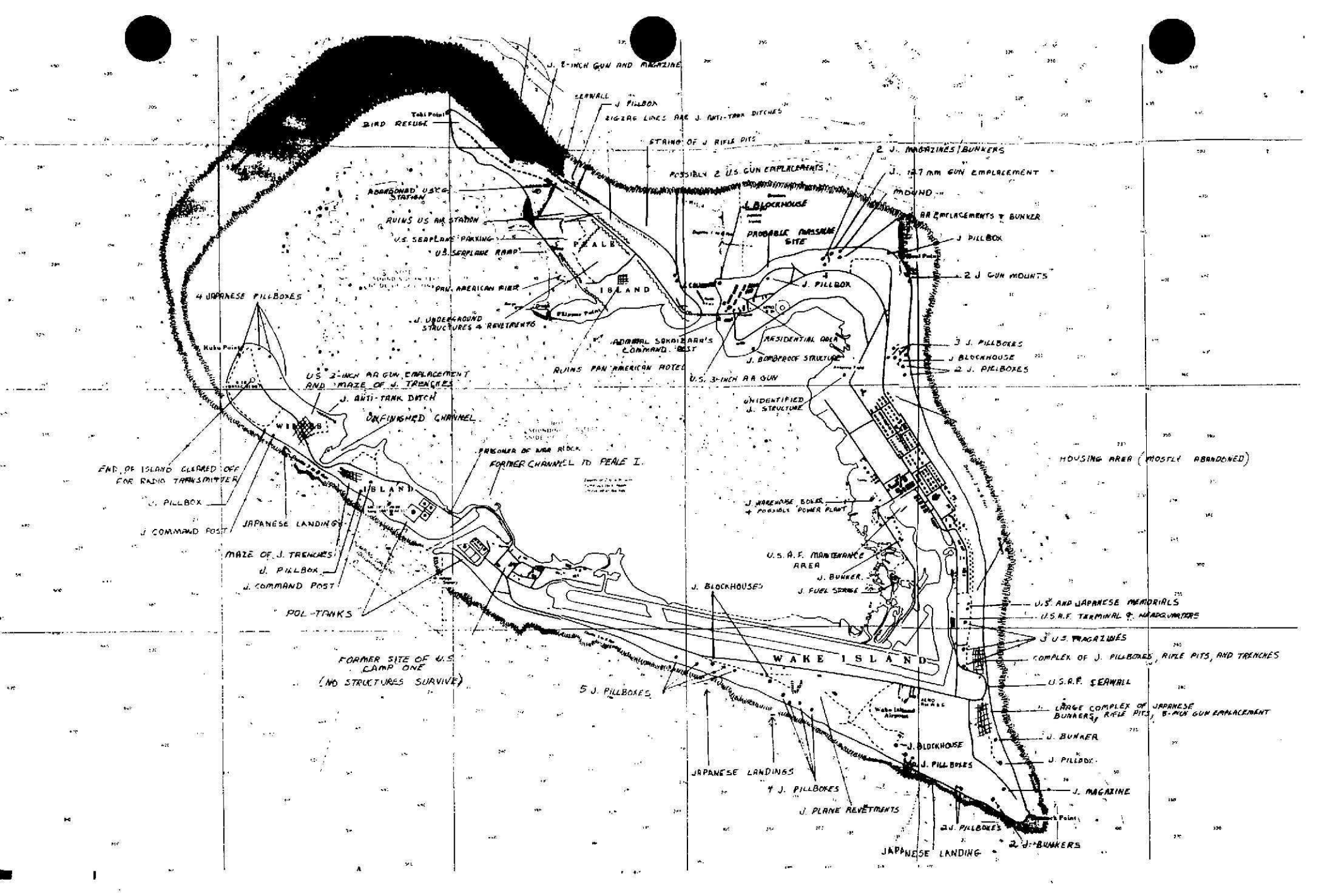

FIRST ATTACK ON WAKE

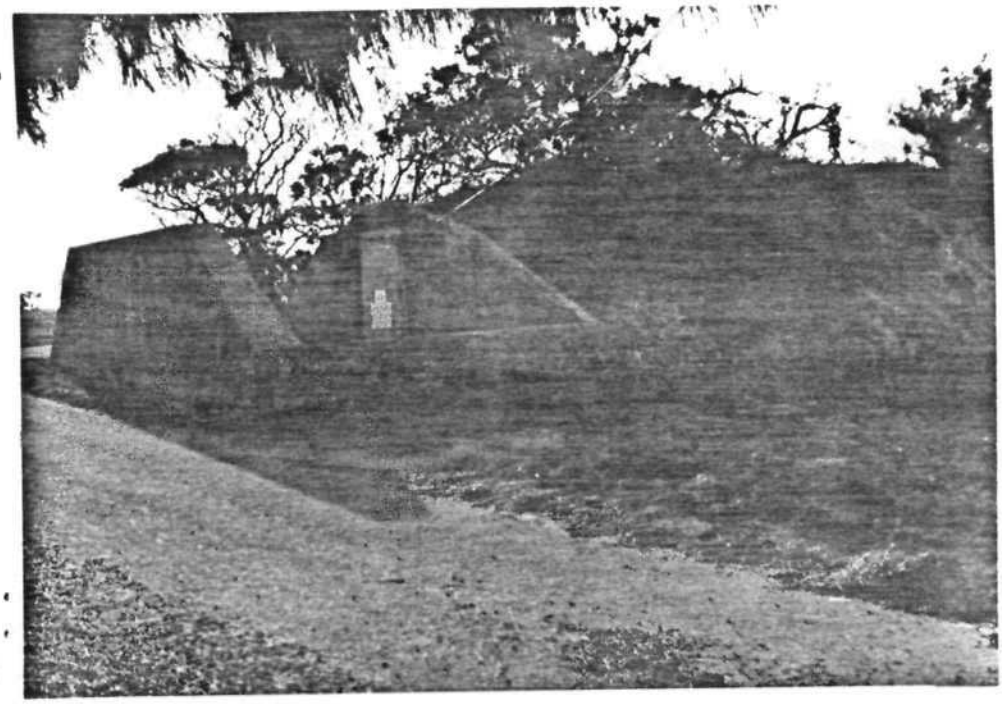
11 DECEMBER 1941

NOT TO SCALE—BUT ONE INCH EQUALS APPROXIMATELY 2000 YARDS

Adapted from chart in Marine Corps Historical Monograph "The Defense of Wake" by Lt. Col. R. D. Heinl, Jr., USMC.

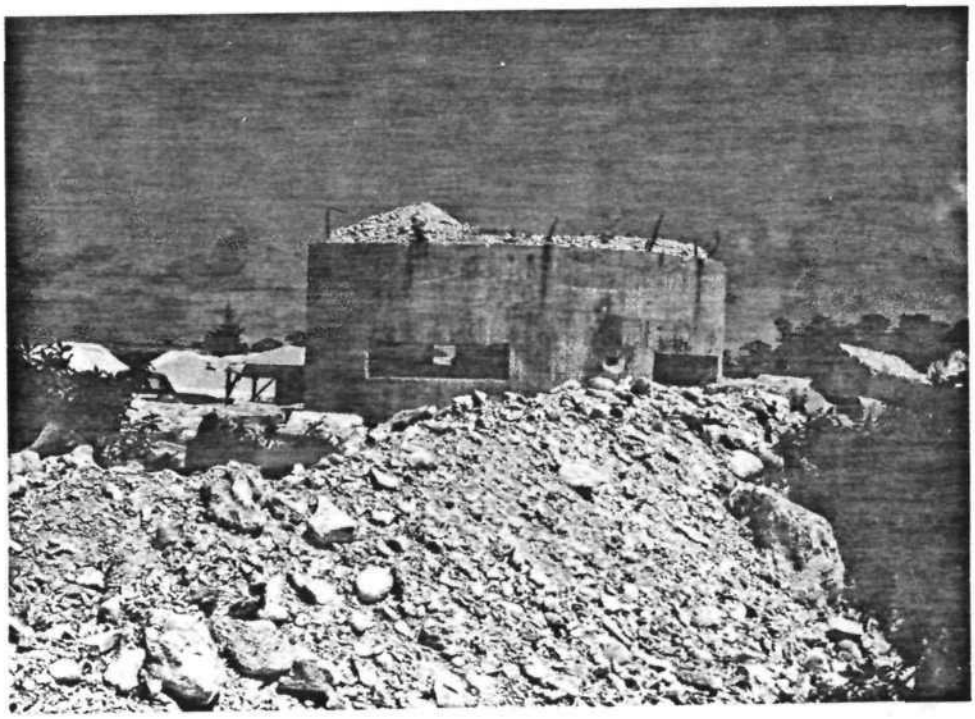

WAKE ISLAND
and its
DEFENSE INSTALLATIONS
DECEMBER 1941
ONE NAUT. MILE
Adapted from chart in Marine Corps Historical Monograph "The Defense of Wake" by Lt. Col. R.D. Heinl, Jr., USMC.
KEY
5" Guns
3" Guns
.30 and .50 Cal. Machine Guns
Searchlights and unmanned guns not shown.
LAGOON
FOUL GROUND
PEALE ISLAND
WILKES ISLAND
WAKE ISLAND
Battery B
Battery D 4-3" Guns 8-11 Dec.
Seaplane ramp and apron
Hotel
Flipper Point
Civilian Camp No. 2
Heel Pt.
Kuku Pt.
Battery L
Battery F 4-3" Guns 10-23 Dec.
Marine Command Post 8-10 Dec.
Camp No. 1 Marines
Boat Channel
Naval C.P.
14-23 Dec.
Hospital
Marine C.P.
Potter's Defense Line Hospital
Battery E 12-23 Dec.
Battery E 10-11 Dec.
Battery E 8-9 Dec.
Battery A
Hanna's 3" Antiaircraft Gun
Peacock
34'
35'
166°36'
37'
19°19'
18'
17'
16'


J. 8-INCH GUN AND MAGAZINE
SEAWALL
J PILLBOX
ZIGZAG LINES ARE J. ANTI-TANK DITCHES
Toki Point
BIRD REFUGE
STRING OF J RIFLE PITS
2 J. MAGAZINES/BUNKERS
POSSIBLY 2 U.S. GUN EMPLACEMENTS
J. 127 MM GUN EMPLACEMENT
MOUND
ABANDONED U.S.C.G. STATION
J. BLOCKHOUSE
AA EMPLACEMENTS & BUNKER
RUINS US AIR STATION
PROBABLE MASSACRE SITE
U.S. SEAPLANE PARKING
U.S. SEAPLANE RAMP
PEALE
J PILLBOX
2 J GUN MOUNTS
PAN AMERICAN PIER
ISLAND
J. PILLBOX
4 JAPANESE PILLBOXES
J. UNDERGROUND STRUCTURES & REVETMENTS
ADMIRAL SAKAIBARA'S COMMAND POST
RESIDENTIAL AREA
3 J. PILLBOXES
J BLOCKHOUSE
2 J. PILLBOXES
J. BOMBPROOF STRUCTURE
Kuku Point
RUINS PAN AMERICAN HOTEL
U.S. 3-INCH AA GUN
US 2-INCH AA GUN EMPLACEMENT AND MAZE OF J. TRENCHES
J. ANTI-TANK DITCH
UNIDENTIFIED J. STRUCTURE
UNFINISHED CHANNEL
WILKES
PRISONER OF WAR BLOCK
FORMER CHANNEL TO PEALE I.
HOUSING AREA (MOSTLY ABANDONED)
END OF ISLAND CLEARED OFF FOR RADIO TRANSMITTER
ISLAND
J. PILLBOX
J WAREHOUSE BOILER & POSSIBLE POWER PLANT
J COMMAND POST
JAPANESE LANDINGS
MAZE OF J. TRENCHES
J. PILLBOX
J. COMMAND POST
U.S.A.F. MAINTENANCE AREA
J. BUNKER
J. FUEL STORAGE
J. BLOCKHOUSES
POL-TANKS
U.S. AND JAPANESE MEMORIALS
U.S.A.F. TERMINAL & HEADQUARTERS
3 U.S. MAGAZINES
COMPLEX OF J. PILLBOXES, RIFLE PITS, AND TRENCHES
FORMER SITE OF U.S. CAMP ONE (NO STRUCTURES SURVIVE)
WAKE ISLAND
U.S.A.F. SEAWALL
5 J. PILLBOXES
LARGE COMPLEX OF JAPANESE BUNKERS, RIFLE PITS, 8-MCH GUN EMPLACEMENT
Wake Island Airport
J. BUNKER
J. BLOCKHOUSE
J. PILLBOXES
J. PILLBOX
JAPANESE LANDINGS
4 J. PILLBOXES
J. MAGAZINE
J. PLANE REVETMENTS
2 J. PILLBOXES
Peale Point
JAPANESE LANDING
2 J. BUNKERS

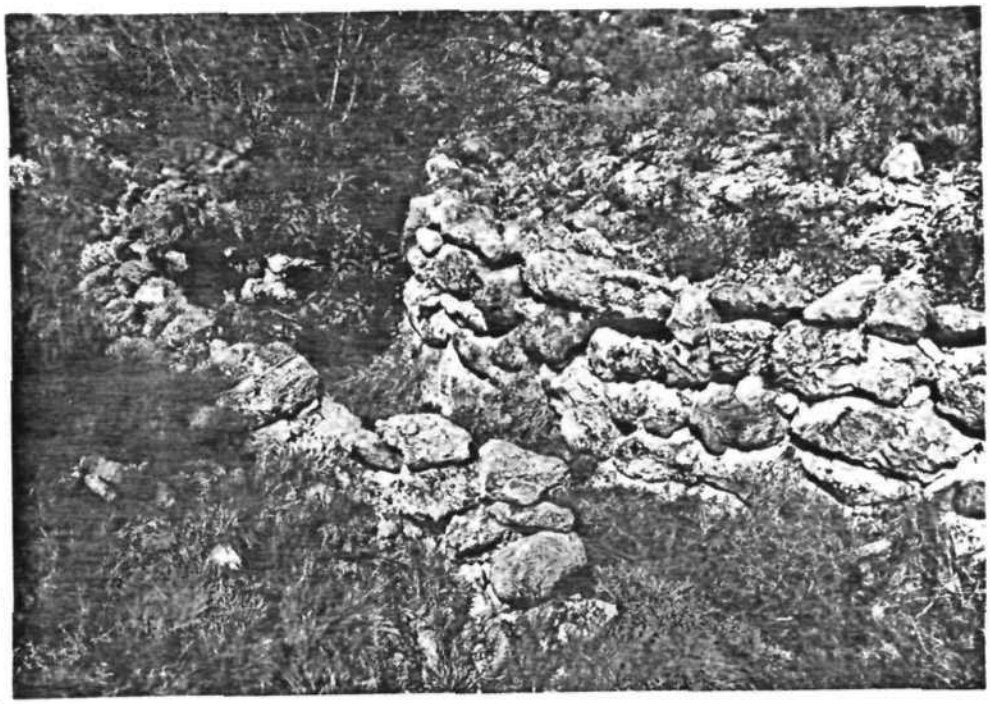


2. Entrance to an American igloo-type magazine. In December 1941, two of these magazines served as hospitals, one was the Marines' command post, and only the fourth continued to store aerial bombs. Only three remain.

Photo by E.N. Thompson October 1983

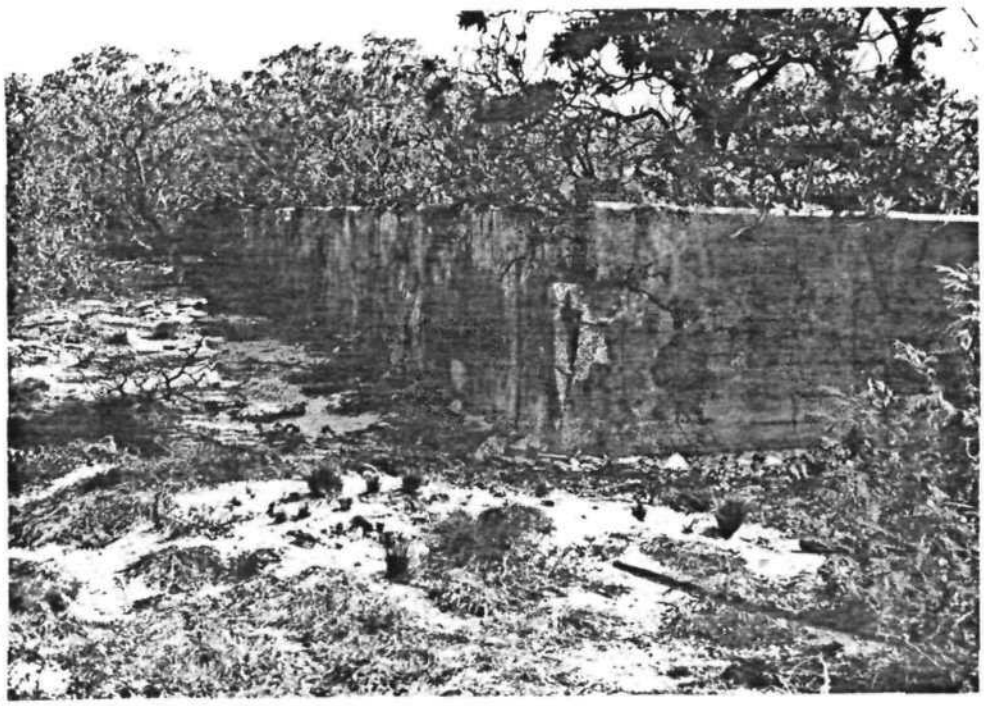


5. One of five Japanese semicircular blockhouses, each with three embrasures, on Wake. They are modified versions of the circular, four-embrasure blockhouses found on Roi and Saipan Islands.



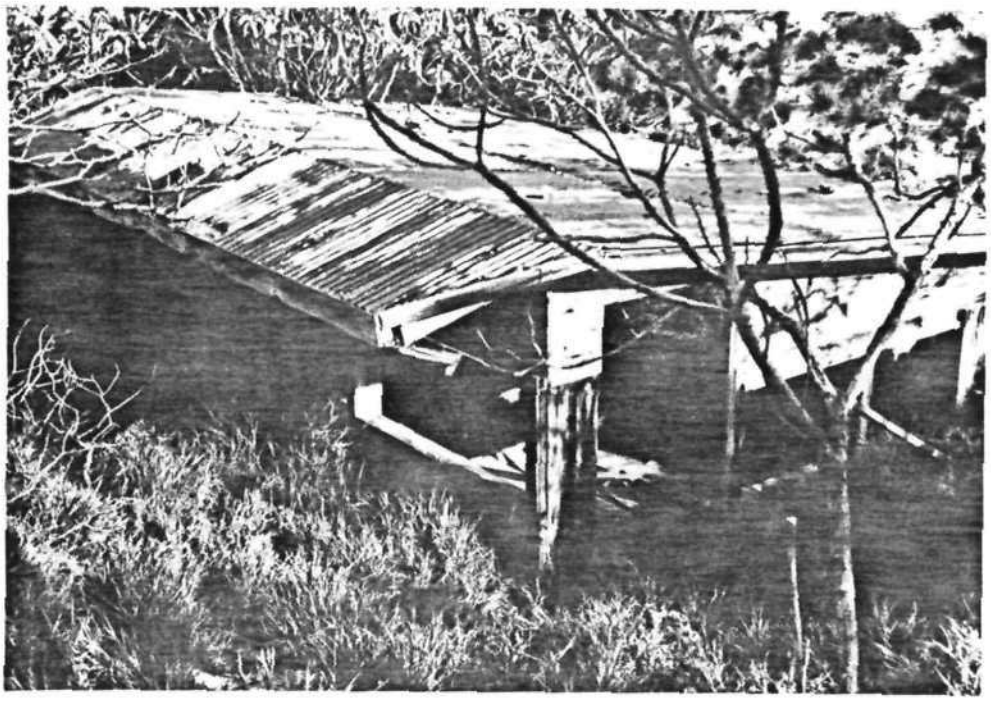
7. Rock-walled Japanese trench on Wilkes. A number of these trenches have survived as well as rifle pits and earthen personnel shelters.

Photo by E.N. Thompson October 1983



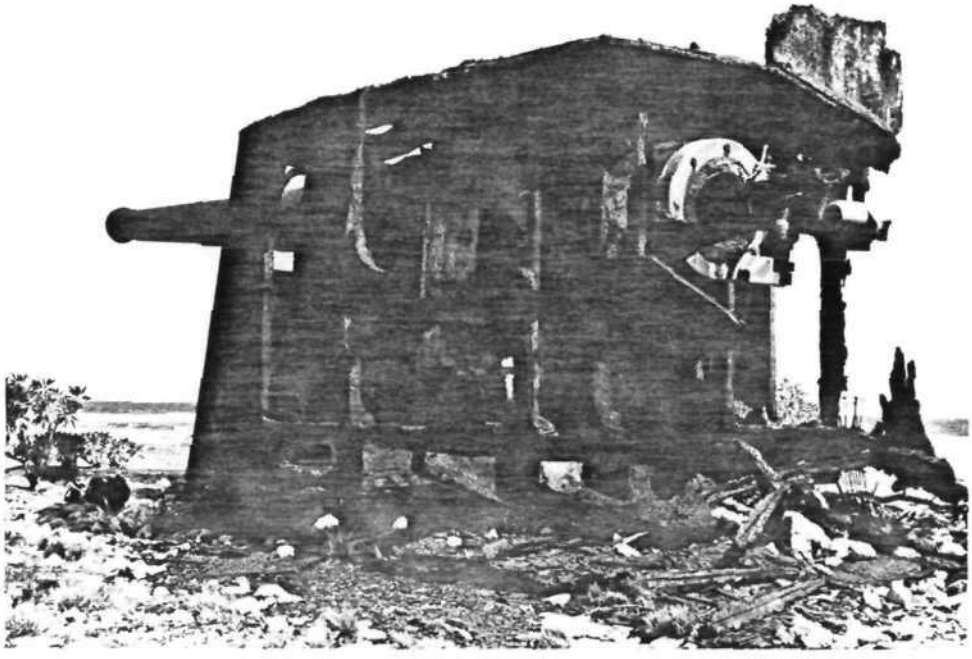
9. Peale Island. Concrete ruins of a large building at the American naval air station which was still under construction when Japan attacked.

Photo by E.N. Thompson October 1983



11. Frame structure inside an earthen revetment on Peale. If Japanese, it is a rare survivor of this type of construction.

Photo by E.N. Thompson October 1983



12. *Japanese 8-inch coastal gun on Peale overlooking the* Pacific Ocean. Japan purchased this type of weapon from Great Britain.

Photo by E.N. Thompson October 1983

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

NHL — WWII, PACIFIC

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

**United States Department of the Interior**
**National Park Service**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Attu Battlefield and U.S. Army and Navy Airfields on Attu

and or common

## 2. Location

street & number Attu Island in the Aleutian Islands ___ not for publication

city, town ___ vicinity of

state Alaska code 02 county code 010

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ district | X public | X occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | ___ unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| X site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | X yes: restricted | X government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | ___ yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ no | X military | X other: Refuge |

## 4. Owner of Property

name U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Dept. of the Interior

street & number 1011 E. Tudor Road

city, town Anchorage ___ vicinity of state Alaska

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

street & number 1011 E. Tudor Road

city, town Anchorage state Alaska

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Attu, Study of Alternatives has this property been determined eligible? X yes ___ no

date 1968 X federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records National Park Service

city, town Washington state D.C.

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| ___ excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | _X_ original site |
| ___ good | _X_ ruins | _X_ altered | ___ moved date _____ |
| ___ fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Attu Island is the site of the only World War II battle on the North American Continent. Today, evidence of the desperate battle is profuse on its eastern end: thousands of shell and bomb craters in the tundra; Japanese trenches, foxholes, and gun emplacements; American ammunition magazines and dumps; and spent cartridges, shrapnel, and shells are to be found at the scenes of heavy fighting. The steel-matted runways at Alexai Field and the asphalt runways at the U.S. naval air station exist, the latter being still operable. Portions of deteriorating piers still stand at Massacre Bay. The post-battle roads may yet be traced, although only five miles are still maintained. A number of steel, igloo-type magazines for bomb storage remain at the naval station. A coastal radar station, disguised to look like a water tower remains at Murder Point. The only occupants today are 24 U.S. Coast Guard men who operate a long-range navigation station. A small U.S. Air Force seismic transmitter is unmanned.

Attu is at the western end of the Aleutian Chain, 1,500 air-miles (2,000 miles via the chain) southwest of Anchorage, 500 miles east of the USSR mainland, and 750 miles east of the Kurile Islands. Located between the cold Bering Sea and the warm Japanese Current of the North Pacific, Attu's volcanic mountains and tundra valleys are subjected to year-round vicious storms (williwaws) and dense fogs that make it one of the most forbidding regions in the world. The island has no trees and the lower levels are covered with spongy tundra and a variety of plants.

The principal water features of eastern Attu are Holtz Bay, Chichagof Harbor, and Massacre Bay. The Aleut village of Attu stood at the head of Chichagof Harbor. It was destroyed during the battle and no trace remains. Archeological sites of earlier Aleut settlements are also found there. The Japanese forces landed at Holtz Bay in June 1942, constructed defense positions there, and established headquarters eventually at Attu village. In May 1943, U.S. forces landed on the north and south coasts: at Red Beach and Austin Cove on the north, and Massacre Bay on the south, bitter fighting occurring until the two forces joined in Jarmin Pass. The Americans next captured the rugged high country known as Fishhook Ridge, then began a drive through Clevesy Pass towad Chichagof Harbor. The battle ended when the Japanese made a last fanatical charge against the pass which ended in their annihilation. Most sites contain evidence of the battle.

American army engineers and naval seabees quickly constructed airfields, roads, and quonset camps over the eastern end of the island, of which vivid evidence remains today on the slow-to-heal tundra. Besides the runways and ammunition magazines, a remarkable feature that still exists is a 3,133-foot-long, bombproof storage tunnel cut through a ridge near Clevesy Pass. Also noteworthy is a dilapidated post-battle military chapel, standing alone on the Hogback above Massacre Bay. In front are a few pine trees, planted by U.S. troops, that still survive the williwaws. Also near Clevesy Pass, on Engineer Hill, the last goal of the Japanese, are trenches, foxholes, tent pegs, barbed wire, coal piles, and other relics of the war. In recent

times, two memorials have been erected on Engineer Hill in honor of the Japanese commander, Colonel Yasuyo Yamasaki. At the Coast Guard station on Massacre Bay is a memorial dedicated to the American naval, air, and ground forces that recaptured Attu.

Many American combat aircraft were lost during the Aleutian Campaign, both to enemy action and to fierce weather conditions. Today, in Temnac Valley west of Massacre Bay, is the wreckage of a P-38 twin-engine fighter plane (Lightning). It has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Because of its isolated location, the terrible weather, and a lack of transportation, few visitors come to Attu's battlefield today. The entire island is a part of the Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, which is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The U.S. Coast Guard station is operated under permit from the Interior Department.

The significant historic features pertaining to the battle for Attu and for the post-battle bombing of Japan's Kurile Islands are:

All the battle sites which indeed cover eastern Attu.

The American invasion beaches at Austin Cove and Red Beach in the north and Massacre Bay in the south.

The countless bomb and shell craters found over all the battlefield on eastern Attu.

Japanese trenches, foxholes, and fortifications, known and unknown, in eastern Attu.

Aleut village site at Chichagof Harbor, which became the Japanese headquarters.

Japanese landing site at West Holtz Bay and defenses there, and the Japanese airfield site at East Holtz Bay.

American ammunition magazines and dump at the head of West Massacre Valley.

Post-battle coastal radar station, disguised to look like a water tower, at Murder Point.

American Army airfield at Alexai Point with steel-matted runways.

The Navy's asphalted runways at its air station (also used by the Army) and steel, igloo-type ammunition magazines northwest of the airfield.

Post-battle American army chapel on the Hogback, including the pine trees planted by soldiers.

Memorials to Col. Yasuyo Yamasaki and the evidence of military occupation on Engineer Hill.

Wreckage of a P-38 twin-engine fighter (Lightning) plane in Temnac Valley.

Excluded from the nomination are all post-1945 structures, developments, and trash pits in the Massacre Bay area, including the U.S. Coast Guard Loran Station, pier ruins, and an abandoned concrete building at Casco Cove.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ theater |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ invention | | ___ other (specify) |

**Specific dates** 1942-1945 **Builder Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**


Summary

The Japanese occupation of Attu and the American recapture of the island are significant in the history of World War II in several ways. The Japanese occupation, coordinated with the June 1942 attack on Midway, marked the peak of Japan's military expansion in the Pacific. The occupation of this remote part of the North American Continent created great alarm among Americans, however briefly, that it was the beginning of an invasion of the United States through Alaska. The invasion also posed a serious threat to United States-Siberian communications (lend-lease to Russia). Significant, too, was the fact that tens of thousands of American military had now to be diverted to the Alaskan Theater who could have been deployed elsewhere in the Pacific. The capture of Attu and neighboring Kiska was important to Japan in that it was the only positive result to come out of the defeat of the Imperial Fleet at the Battle of Midway. Further, the occupation brought about the end of centuries-old history of Aleuts on Attu when the inhabitants were taken to Japan as prisoners.

The recapture of Attu by Americans in 1943 was significant because of its importance to the morale of the American people, who had little to cheer about at that time. The battle was significant in that it illustrated the worthiness of the American soldier against his enemy and it illustrated the loyalty of the Japanese soldier to his cause, when only 29 out of 2,500 survived the battle.[1] Mistakes made and lessons learned in amphibious landings, tactics, and logistical planning made significant contributions to future U.S. Pacific operations. Post-battle bombing raids on Japanese territory from Attu tied up significant numbers of Japanese defense forces and demonstrated that the Home Islands were not safe from air attack and, perhaps, invasion from the north. A military historian has written, "In terms of numbers engaged, Attu ranks as one of the most costly assaults in the Pacific. In terms of Japanese destroyed, the cost of taking Attu was second only to Iwo Jima: for every hundred of the enemy on the island, about seventy-one Americans were killed or wounded.[2]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1. Japanese strength figures in Japanese and American accounts vary from 2,380 to 2,630.

2. Stetson Conn, Rose C. Engelman, and Byron Fairchild, Guarding the United States and Its Outposts. The Western Hemisphere: United States Army In World War II (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964), p. 295.

Japanese Occupation

In May 1942, Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo ordered an attack on the Midway Islands, with the dual mission to occupy those islands and to destroy the remnants of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, and an attack on the Aleutian Islands for the purposes of diverting American naval forces from Midway, protecting the Imperial Navy from an attack from the north, and obstructing communication links between the United States and Russia. Having broken Japanese codes, the United States was alert to the forthcoming attacks and proceeded with defense preparations. At that time, its most westerly bases in the Aleutians were the Dutch Harbor Naval Station and the Army's Fort Mears at Unalaska Island and a still-secret army airfield on neighboring Umnak Island. The Navy had a ten-man weather station on Kiska Island but had not succeeded in establishing a similar detachment on Attu due to foul weather. Kiska had no native population, but Attu village boasted a strength of 45 Aleuts, a Caucasian school teacher, and her husband who radioed weather reports to Dutch Harbor.

Japan's plans for the Aleutians called for a carrier air attack on Dutch Harbor and Fort Mears, a hit-and-run assault on Adak Island, farther out on the chain (which it erroneously believed to be fortified), and, by means of a separate naval task force, the occupation of Kiska and Attu at the end of the Aleutians. The air attacks on Unalaska occurred June 3 and 4, 1942, coinciding with the Battle of Midway. When the magnitude of the Japanese naval defeat became clear, the raid on Adak was cancelled; but the invasions of Kiska and Attu proceeded as scheduled, both being occupied on June 7. On Attu, the Aleuts and their teacher were taken prisoner and eventually removed to Japan, while the teacher's husband lost his life in unclear circumstances.

While Japanese naval troops secured Kiska, the Japanese Army landed on Attu. The 1,140-man force consisted of infantry, engineers, and a service unit, under the command of Major Matsutoshi Hosumi. At first the Japanese planned to hold the islands only until the onslaught of winter, but soon decided to remain in the Aleutians so as to deny the islands to the enemy's use. In mid-August, the commander concluded that the Americans were preparing to invade Kiska and decided to move the Attu garrison to that island.

Attu remained unoccupied until the end of October, when fresh troops, including the 303d Independent Infantry Battalion, came from Japan. In April 1943, Colonel Yasuyo Yamasaki arrived by submarine and took command of Attu's growing defenses and partially completed airfield. Despite some increase in American air attacks from newly constructed foward bases (Adak, September 1942; Amchitka, February 1943) and stepped-up American naval activity, Japan succeeded in reinforcing its Aleutian outposts with troops, armament, and supplies until March 1943.

Battle of Komandorski Islands

Determined to interdict Japanese convoys en route to the Aleutians, an American naval task force arrived off the Soviet Union's Komandorski Islands west of

Attu. Led by heavy cruiser Salt Lake City, the ships' radar picked up a column of eight Japanese warships and two transports carrying supplies for the Aleutians on March 26. Both sides opened fire simultaneously and there ensued "an old-fashioned long-range ship-to-ship duel that lasted almost four hours."[3] Both sides scored hits, but the battle ended inconclusively as both forces withdrew. But the Americans could savor one fact: the Japanese transports hurried home and Japan made no further attempt to reinforce or resupply the Aleutians with surface vessels. From then until the American invasion in May, only submarines succeeded in delivering a trickle of matériel to Attu and Kiska.

Recapture

By early 1943, American planning for the recapture of Kiska had begun in earnest. The Army's Seventh Infantry Division was chosen as the landing force and trained in amphibious warfare under U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Gen. H.M. Smith.[4] In March, however, sufficient shipping not being available to assault the more heavily defended Kiska, planners decided to undertake a smaller operation against Attu.

The assault date was set for May 7, 1943, under the command of Rear Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, North Pacific Force, with Rear Admiral Francis W. Rockwell in charge of the amphibious phase, and Maj. Gen. Albert E. Brown, Seventh Division, taking over when the troops were established on shore. Battleships Pennsylvania, Idaho, and Nevada provided fire support.

Bad weather postponed the landings until May 11 when both the Northern and Southern Landing Forces headed for shore. At Austin Cove on Attu's north shore, a Provisional Battalion landed and began a torturous ascent to the passes west of Holtz Bay (a five-day ordeal that caused frostbite). At Red Beach, on the northwest shoulder of Holtz Bay, a battalion of the 17th Infantry Regiment (soon joined by a battalion of the 32d Infantry Regiment) and a party of Alaskan Scouts landed unopposed and drove south toward the Japanese positions at the head of Holtz Bay.

Fog delayed the Southern Force's (two battalions of the 17th Infantry Regiment) landing at Massacre Bay until late afternoon. They too were unopposed, the Japanese having placed their defenses on the ridges surrounding upper Massacre Valley, positions that were hidden by the fog. By evening, however,

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3. Paul S. Dull, A Battle History of the Imperial Japanese Navy (1941-1945) (Annapolis, 1978), p. 261.

4. General Smith witnessed the Seventh's amphibious assault on Attu and wrote, "I have always considered the landing . . . in the dense fog of Attu . . . an amphibious landing without parallel in our military history." Holland M. Smith and Percy Finch, Coral and Brass (Washington, 1979), p. 103.

both the Northern and Southern forces had come under Japanese fire. By May 13, it was apparent that the Southern Force's advance was stalemated by fierce Japanese resistance; the Northern Force, too, was making slow progress against a stubborn foe. The remainder of the 32d Infantry landed that day at Massacre Bay. Later, Alaska's defense force, the 4th Infantry Regiment, also joined the fight. Admiral Kinkaid, convinced that General Brown was bogged down, relieved him and appointed Army Maj. Gen. Eugene M. Landrum to take command on Attu.

The Japanese prevented the Northern and Southern forces from joining, in Jarmin Pass, for a full week, when the Japanese began withdrawing slowly toward Chichagof Harbor and its surrounding ridges. Two more weeks of bitter fighting occurred before the Seventh Division and its reinforcements succeeded in driving the enemy from the snow-covered cliffs of Fishhook Ridge and Clevesy Pass, which opened the way to Chichagof.

On the night of May 29, the 1,000 surviving able-bodied Japanese made a screaming banzai attack out of Chichagof Harbor, up Siddens Valley, and American positions in Clevesy Pass and against Engineer Hill, killing and being killed. Engineer troops, bivouacked on the latter, succeeded in organizing a thin defensive line and, despite the confusion, succeeded in breaking the attack. The next morning, May 30, Japan announced the loss of Attu. For many days thereafter, however, American forces continued mopping-up operations.

Casualties were heavy on both sides. Out of their force of about 2,500, only 29 Japanese were still alive. Of the United States strength of 15,000, 550 were dead and 1,500 wounded. Another 1,200 Americans were casualties to Attu's climate. Inadequate footgear, especially, caused frozen feet and trenchfoot.

Almost immediately, army engineers and naval seabees began constructing airfields on Attu. Rejecting the Japanese runway at East Holtz Bay as unsatisfactory, army engineers completed a fighter field at West Holtz (Addison Valley) and another fighter field on Alexai Point. The latter was soon extended to serve bombers as well. On July 10, 1943, the Eleventh Air Force made its first attack on Japan's Home Islands when eight B-25 bombers flew from Attu to strike Paramushiro in the Kuriles--this being the first air attack on Japan since the famous Doolittle raid of April 18, 1942.

Other attacks followed, usually with some success until September 11, 1943, when a force of 12 B-25 medium bombers and 8 B-24 heavy bombers left Attu for Paramushiro. On this occasion, Japanese fire destroyed three bombers, and another seven were heavily damaged and forced to land in Siberia where the crews were interned. Further raids were postponed for several months but, by the spring of 1944, Attu's bombers were again over the Kuriles.

The Navy constructed both land runways and a seaplane base for patrol bombers and flying boats west of Massacre Bay and at adjacent Casco Cove. For the duration of the war, naval aircraft made their lonely patrols over the North Pacific. As at Alexai Field, the Navy's two land runways were first covered with steel (Marston) mats. By 1944, however, asphalt had been laid and the Navy made the runways available to army planes as well as its own, and the Eleventh Air Force established maintenance facilities there.

As for the Aleuts, about half of them died while in Japan, mostly from tuberculosis. After Japan's surrender, the survivors, along with the teacher, Mrs. Charles Foster Jones, returned to the United States. Too few in number to begin anew on their island, the Attuans resettled on Atka Island in the Aleutians, together with the inhabitants of that place. The Aleuts have not yet forgotten their homeland. Nor have the veterans of "the Forgotten War," Japanese or American, let Attu slip from their memories.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property ~~7,000 acres~~

Quadrangle name Attu

Quadrangle scale 1:250,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 10 | 650100 | 5874200 | B | 10 | 664600 | 5858100 |
| C | 10 | 664600 | 5855600 | D | 10 | 639100 | 5848600 |
| E | 10 | 632000 | 5873500 | F | | | |
| G | | | | H | | | |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

See separate page

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| state | code | county | code |

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erwin N. Thompson, Historian

organization Denver Service Center, National Park Service date March 9, 1984

street & number 755 Parfet St. telephone (303) 234-4509

city or town Lakewood state Colorado

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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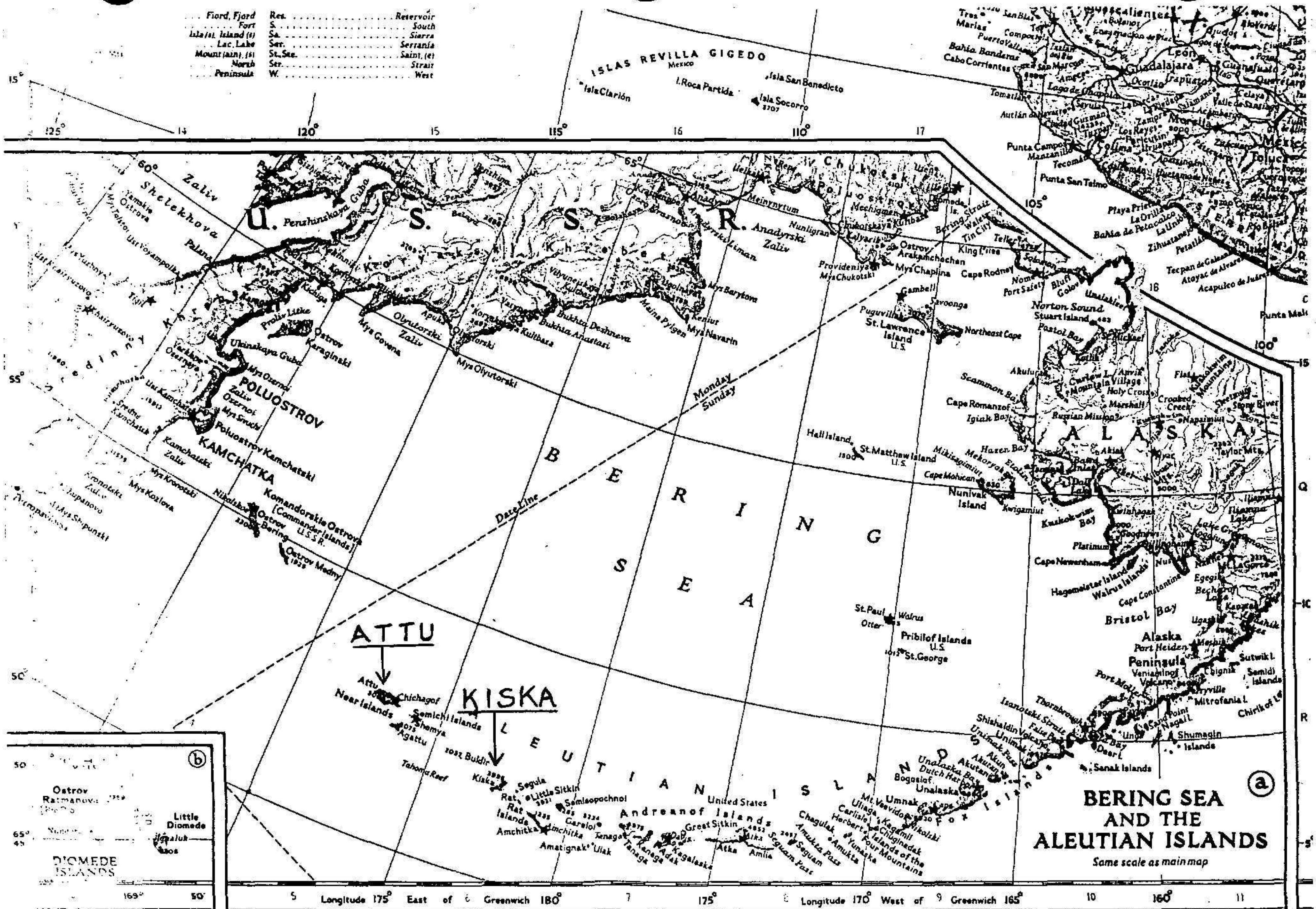
Beginning at a point of land to the east of the mouth of Blonde Cove along a straight line southeast to the mouth of Lefler Creek; then southeast to the southern extremity of Krasnai Point; then east-northeast to McCloud Head; then north to the eastern extreme of Hoppe Island; then along a straight line northwest for 13.5 miles; then due west to a point of intersection with the line from the beginning point to Krasni Point extended northwest.

The boundary on the west lies just beyond the limits of the battlefield and includes the site of the wrecked P-38. The remaining boundary is drawn to closely encompass the battlefield including the water areas in which the amphibious operations took place.

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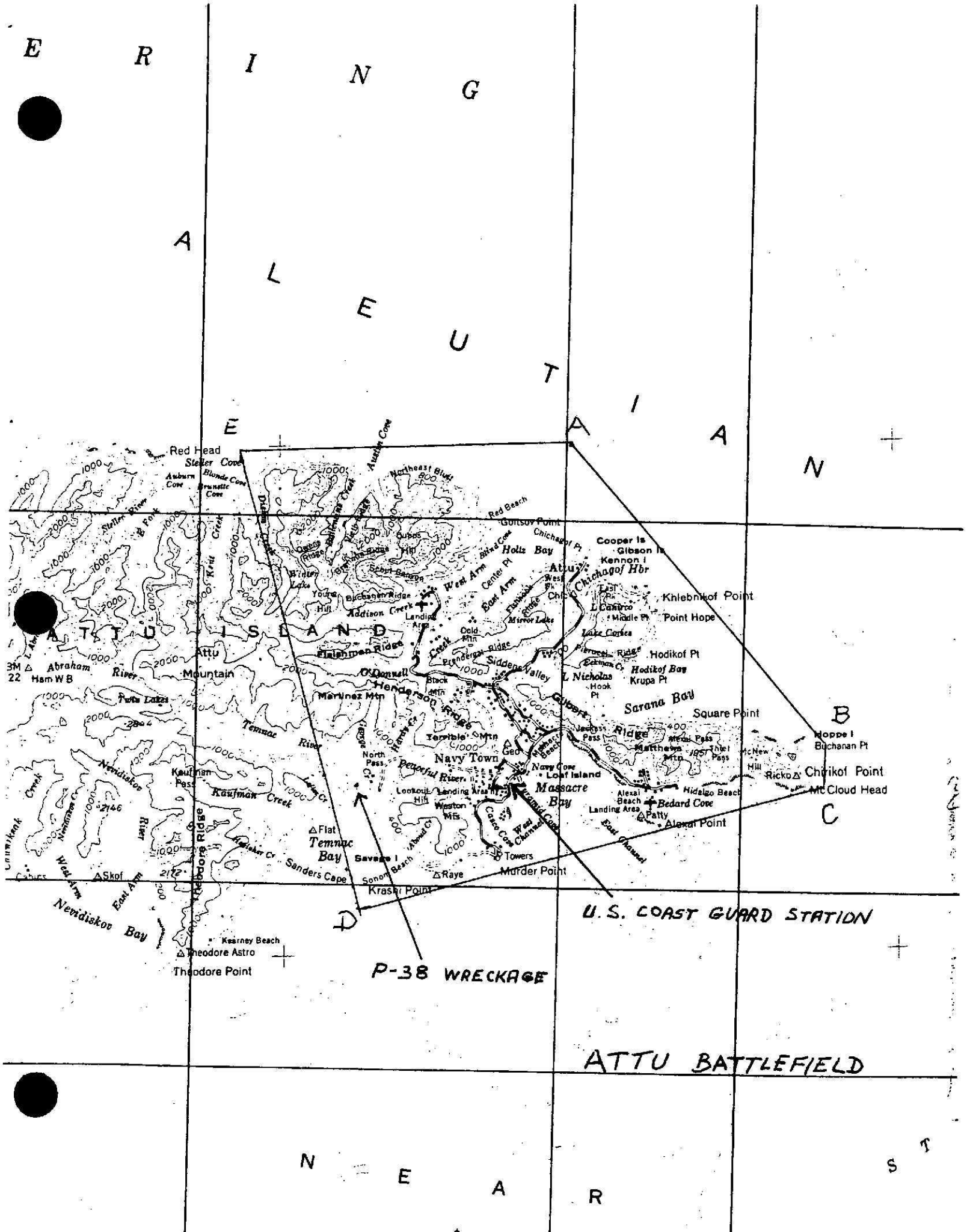
E R I N G
A L E U T I A N
E A N
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Red Head
Steller Cove
Auburn Cove
Brunette Cove
Austin Cove
Northeast Bluff
Red Beach
Gulisov Point
Chichagof Pt
Cooper Is
Gibson Is
Kennon I
Holtz Bay
Attu
Chichagof Hbr
Khlebnikof Point
Point Hope
Lake Cortes
Hodikof Pt
Hodikof Bay
Krupa Pt
Sarana Bay
Square Point
Hoppe I
Buchanan Pt
Chirikof Point
Mt Cloud Head
Ricko
Hidalgo Beach
Bedard Cove
Alexai Point
Massacre Bay
Loaf Island
Navy Town
Navy Cove
Murder Point
Towers
Raye
Sanders Cape
Krasni Point
Sonora Beach
Savage I
Temnac Bay
Flat
Skof
Nevidiskov Bay
Kearney Beach
Theodore Astro
Theodore Point
Theodore Ridge
Kaufman Pass
Kaufman Creek
Temnac River
Abraham River
Attu Mountain
Fishermen Ridge
O'Donnell
Henderson Ridge
Martinez Mtn
Terrible Mtn
Peaceful River
Lookout Hill
Weston Mtn
Gilbert Ridge
Jacobs Pass
Matthews Mtn
Thiel Pass
Alexai Pass
Alexai Beach
Landing Area
Patty
Casco Cove
West Channel
East Channel
Siddons Valley
L Nicholas
Hook Pt
Prendergast Ridge
Black Mtn
Cold Mtn
Mirror Lake
Addison Creek
Landing Area
Young Hill
Buchanan Ridge
Binter Lake
Scott Gulch
Cubes Hill
Blind Cove
Center Pt
West Arm
East Arm
Flat Ridge
Flat Creek
Stellar River
Kris Creek
Nevidiskov River
Nevidiskov Creek
Lake Cr
Hamlet Cr
Abeel Cr
Harry Cr
Bayne Cr
North Pass
Jacobs Pass
Matthews Mtn
Thiel Pass
McNew Hill
Hill
Cabins
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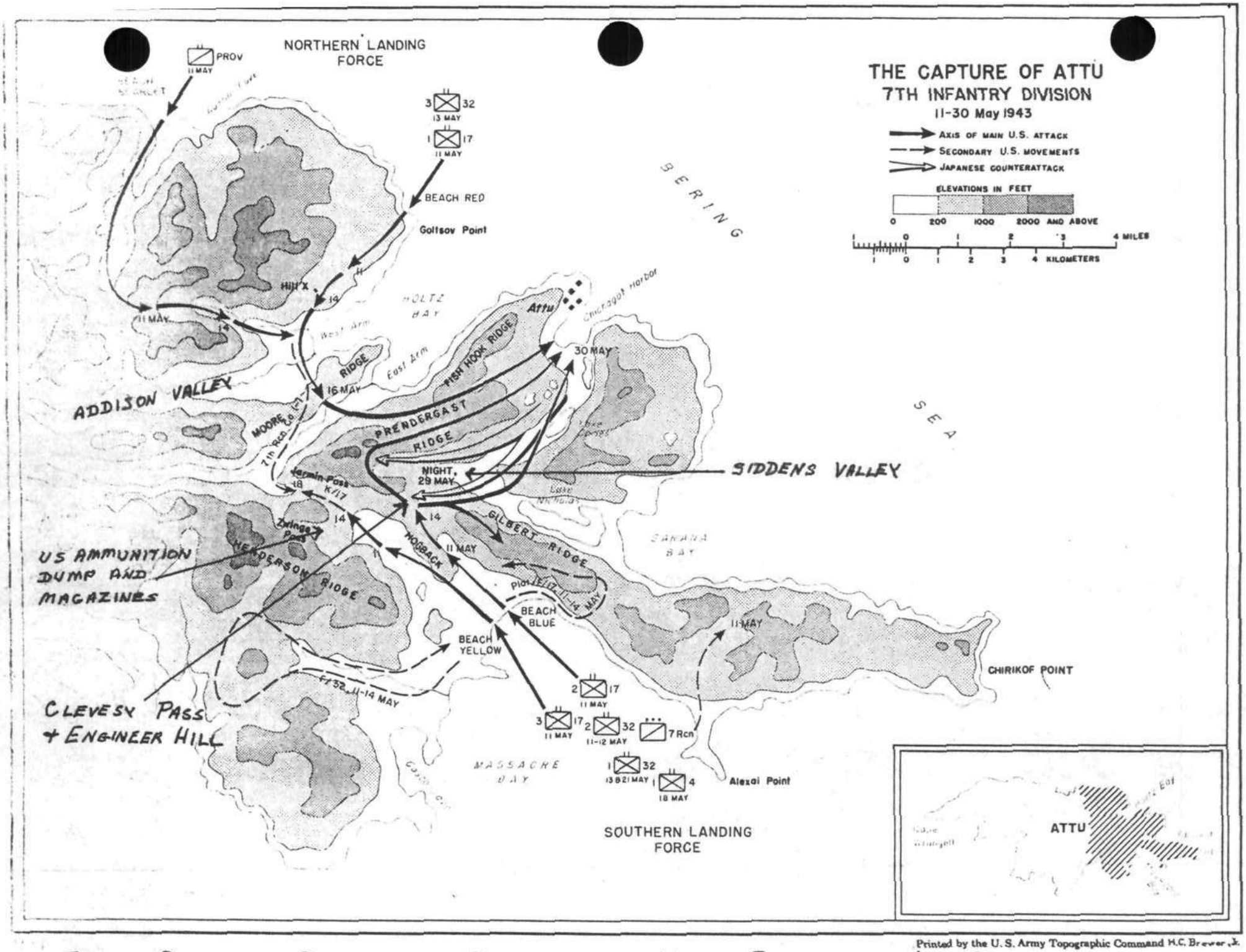
P-38 WRECKAGE
ATTU BATTLEFIELD
N E A R S T




Printed by the U. S. Army Topographic Command H.C. Brewer, Jr.

FROM STETSON CONN, ET AL, GUARDING THE UNITED STATES AND ITS OUTPOSTS.

1. Seventh Infantry Division troops landing at Massacre Bay, Attu, May, 1943. Japanese defenses were hidden above the fog line.

Courtesy, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska

8. Collapsed Japanese gun emplacement in Jarmin Pass, Attu, which looks directly over Massacre Valley and the American landing beach. A small heating stove and Japanese ammunition cases are still to be found here.

Photo by E.N. Thompson. October 1982

9. Hundreds of shellholes and bomb craters may yet be seen in the tundra on Attu. This scene is the approach to Jarmin Pass.

Photo by E.N. Thompson. October 1982

12. One of several Japanese foxholes on the north slope of Gilbert Ridge. Japanese soldiers had excellent visibility over eastern Attu from these positions.

Photo by E.N. Thompson. October 1982

15. A post-battle army chapel on the Hogback, overlooking Massacre Bay, Attu. Soldiers planted the trees--the only ones on Attu.

Photo by E.N. Thompson. October 1942

13. Japanese trenches and foxholes in tundra, near Clevesy Pass, Attu.

Photo by E.M. Thompson. October 1982

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

NHL — WWII, PACIFIC

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Japanese Occupation Site, Kiska Island

and or common Kiska Island, Aleutian Islands

## 2. Location

street & number ___ not for publication

city, town ___ vicinity of

state Alaska code 02 county code ___

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ district | X public | ___ occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | X unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| X site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | X yes: restricted | X government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | ___ yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ no | ___ military | X other: refuge |

## 4. Owner of Property

name U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior

street & number 1011 E. Tudor Road

city, town Anchorage ___ vicinity of state Alaska

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

street & number 1011 E. Tudor Road

city, town Anchorage state Alaska

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alaska Heritage Resources Survey has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date November 24, 1972 ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Alaska Division of Parks, 619 Warehouse Dr., Suite 210

city, town Anchorage state Alaska

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| ___ excellent | ___ deteriorated | _X_ unaltered | _X_ original site |
| ● good | _X_ ruins | ___ altered | ___ moved date _____ |
| fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Kiska is one of the Rat Islands group and is near the western end of the Aleutian Chain, 165 miles southeast of Attu at the end of the chain. Situated between the cold Bering Sea and the warm Japanese Current of the North Pacific, Kiska's volcanic mountains and tundra-covered valleys are subject to year-round violent storms (williwaws) and dense fogs. The treeless island possesses one of the few good anchorages in the Aleutians, Kiska Harbor.

On June 7, 1942, a Japanese task force invaded Kiska, along with Attu, and in the months that followed undertook construction of coastal and antiaircraft defenses, camps, roads, an airfield, submarine base, seaplane base, and other installations. Of the two islands, Kiska was the more important to the Japanese; consequently, it had the larger garrison (between 5,400 and 6,800 army, navy, and civilians) and more permanent facilities. The main installations were the naval facilities on the northwest shore of Kiska Harbor and the army headquarters at the northeast corner of Gertrude Cove, to the southwest. While real and dummy defensive positions were scattered over the island, heavy weapons were concentrated in those two areas and on North Head on the east side of Kiska Harbor. After the fall of Attu, the Japanese on Kiska changed their defense posture by erecting fortifications immediately upon the shorelines for the purpose of annihilation of the enemy upon the beach, rather than defending high ground inland as they had done at Massacre Bay, Attu. An example of this was their construction of a company-sized defense network at the southwest end of Kiska, an area hitherto neglected.

Japanese forces departed Kiska July 28, 1943, and Allied forces (United States and Canada) invaded the deserted island on August 15. An inventory was prepared of the Japanese facilities. They included: frame, A-type housing; three power plants; three radio stations; a naval radar installation; concrete pillboxes; underground hospitals; three light tanks; assorted vehicles; searchlights; four midget (Sydney-type) submarines and their concrete pen; landing barges; wreckage of about 40 float planes and three hangars; 16 coastal defense guns; 69 antiaircraft weapons; 20 pieces of field artillery; numerous machine guns; six Shinto shrines; and countless trenches and foxholes.

Three Japanese ships were found disabled on the beaches of Kiska Harbor: Nozima Maru, 7,190 tons, Kano Maru, 8,572 tons, and Urajio Maru, ca. 4,000 tons. A fourth vessel, Borneo Maru, 5,864 tons, was beached at Gertrude Cove. At the bottom of Kiska Harbor, not far from the submarine base, lay a 300-foot, I-class Japanese submarine.

The Allies established their own camps on the island, consisting of quonset and Pacific huts, tents, and frame structures. Navy seabees constructed a naval auxiliary air facility consisting of a nose hangar and a steel-matted seaplane ramp. Army engineers completed the Japanese runway and named it Salmon Lagoon field. Allied defenses consisted of two 155mm, one 90mm, and one 37mm gun batteries at North Head, and one 155mm battery at Gertrude Cove. Then, in 1946, Kiska was abandoned.

Thirty years later, in 1976, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers inventoried Kiska to determine what remained from World War II. A summary of these findings follows:

Probably Japanese

250-plus revetments
submarine pen, concrete, 30 by 200 feet
5 machine gun emplacements
6 machine guns with mounts
15 antiaircraft emplacements with guns
9 emplacements having 6-inch coastal guns*
freighter Nozima Maru, and a bow of a second vessel
1 midget submarine and parts of 2 others
ruins of a shrine
1 officers' quarters, with wall inscriptions
2 coastal gun emplacements on Little Kiska Island

Probably American

95 quonset or Pacific huts, standing or collapsed, in 3 areas
21 wood frame buildings
3 bridges, wood, 40 feet long
1 metal building, 25 by 27 feet
2 docks, wood, pile, 33 by 115 feet and 33 by 1,069 feet
1 wharf, wood, pile, 33 by 675 feet
½ acre of steel matting on runway
200 petroleum barrels
1 A-20 aircraft, wrecked, east end of runway
1 PBY flying boat, wrecked, northeast side of Kiska Volcano

Today, Kiska is unoccupied. The entire island is a part of the Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, which is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.

The significant historical features on Kiska are Kiska Harbor, Japanese naval installations at Kiska Harbor, Gertrude Cove, Japanese army installations at Gertrude Cove. They also include all major Japanese coastal and antiaircraft

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*Some of these guns are of British manufacture which has led many writers, concerning Kiska and other Pacific islands, to conclude that they are guns the Japanese captured at Singapore or Hong Kong. More likely, they are guns that the Japanese are known to have purchased from Great Britain early in the twentieth century.

installations, particularly on North Head, around Kiska Harbor, around Gertrude Cove, and on Little Kiska Island. Also included is the Salmon Lagoon airfield, begun by Japanese and completed by Allied forces, and now abandoned. The Allied invasion beaches on the northwest shore are significant, although the Japanese had already evacuated the island.

Excluded are Kiska Volcano and the southwest end of Kiska. The latter had some hasty fortifications that the Japanese erected after the Americans captured nearby Attu Island. Also excluded are all Allied structures of the post-Japanese occupation of Kiska, 1943-1946.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1942-1943 **Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Summary

The Japanese occupation of Kiska in June 1942 marked the peak of Japan's military expansion in the Pacific; it created great alarm in North America that a Japanese invasion would be mounted through Alaska; it posed a serious threat to United States-Siberian communications (lend-lease to Russia); and it caused the Allies to divert tens of thousands of military to the Alaskan Theater who could have been deployed elsewhere in the Pacific. Significant too was the successful Japanese withdrawal of the entire force in 1943 without a single loss of life, despite constant surveillance of American air and sea forces. This withdrawal caused the utmost embarrassment to the United States when, eighteen days later, a huge Allied assault force of 34,000 men invaded the deserted island. The event was best summed up by the army's commanding general in Alaska, Simon B. Buckner, who said, "To attract maximum attention, it's hard to find anything more effective than a great big, juicy, expensive mistake."*

Japanese Occupation

In May 1942, Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo ordered an attack on the Midway Islands, with the dual mission to occupy those islands and to destroy the remnants of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, and an attack on the Aleutian islands for the purposes of diverting American naval forces from Midway, protecting the Imperial Navy from an attack from the north, and obstructing communication links between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Japan's plans for the Aleutians called for a carrier air attack on Dutch Harbor Naval Station and adjacent Fort Mears, at Unalaska Island; a hit-and-run assault on Adak Island farther out on the chain, which it erroneously believed to be fortified; and, by means of a separate task force, the occupation of Kiska and Attu at the end of the Aleutians, also thought to be defended by American Marines.

The United States, in fact, had no military installations on Attu, and only a ten-man naval detachment operated a radio station at Kiska Harbor for sending weather reports to Dutch Harbor. Petty Officer William C. House commanded the detachment.

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*Brian Garfield, The Thousand-Mile War: World War II In Alaska and the Aleutians (New York: Doubleday, 1969), p. 289.

The initial Japanese landing took place on June 7, 1942, at Reynard Cove, north of Kiska Harbor, when the Third Special Landing Force (550 Japanese naval men) stormed ashore, followed by supporting personnel. When the Japanese opened fire on the weather station, the American sailors took cover in a ravine, then worked their way up the hills above the cloud level. Soon, however, all were captured--all except Petty Officer House. He succeeded in hiding out for nineteen days, surviving on grass and worms, before surrendering. These Americans were sent to Japan as prisoners of war. The Japanese, meanwhile, established their headquarters in the weather station buildings.

In succeeding months, additional naval units, including the Special Submarine Base Force (six midget submarines) and the Fifth Air Group (seaplane fighters), arrived on Kiska. Army units, too, arrived to establish coastal and antiaircraft defenses; these included units from Japan as well as the initial Attu garrison which came in August 1942. The occupation force eventually grew to about 5,640 military, almost evenly divided between the army and the navy, and 1,170 civilians. Despite this sizeable force, the commanders soon discovered that it was insufficient to construct an airfield, roads, living quarters, and defenses, all at the same time. This situation, combined with a scarcity of equipment and materials, severely taxed the garrison. A naval officer later said that air raid shelters were merely shelters against fog and rain, "but the men were satisfied."* The vital airfield was still incomplete when the Japanese withdrew from Kiska.

During the occupation, the senior army officer, Maj. Gen. [?] Mineki, and the naval commander, Rear Adm. S. Akiyama, considered other islands in the western Aleutians as possible sites for airfields and bases. Air and sea reconnaissances were made at Shemya, Semichi, and Agattu islands, all near Attu; and Buldir and Amchitka islands on either side of Kiska. In the end, however, none was occupied except Buldir where a ten-man detachment was stationed.

During the fourteen-month occupation, the Japanese came under increasingly severe American air and naval attacks. Only one day after the landing, June 8, 1942, an American patrol plane discovered the enemy's ships in Kiska Harbor. Three days later, ten bombers flew from Umnak airfield, then the farthest west air base in the Aleutians, to attack Kiska for the first time. Japanese antiaircraft fire downed one of the bombers, a B-24 Liberator. From then on, Eleventh Air Force planes bombed Kiska regularly despite cloud cover

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*Japanese Monograph No. 89. Northern Area Naval Operations, February 1943-August 1945, p. 73.

and fog. With the completion of an advance airfield on Adak Island in September 1942, American P-38 fighters (Lightnings) were able to accompany the bombers to provide protection from a decreasing number of Japanese seaplane fighters. On one September raid, Royal Canadian Air Force Kittyhawks, assigned to Alaska, accompanied the American planes for the first time.

Because the continuous bad weather in the Aleutians interferred greatly with air operations, the Americans began construction of an airbase on Amchitka Island, only sixty miles from Kiska, in January 1943. During the construction, Japanese seaplanes from Kiska made eleven nuisance raids on the field, causing but little damage. These raids promptly ceased when American fighters landed at the new base in February. From then on, the Eleventh Air Force greatly increased its bombing of Kiska. In one attack, three days before the secret Japanese withdrawal, U.S. planes dropped 104 tons of bombs on the island. (Ironically, the heaviest American attack, 153 tons of bombs, on August 4, fell on an empty island.)

American submarines and surface vessels added their share of punishment to Japanese attempts to reinforce and protect Kiska and Attu. As early as July 5, 1942, American submarines torpedoed three Japanese destroyers at the entrance to Kiska Harbor, sinking one and severely damaging the others. That same month two Japanese submarine-chasers were also sunk and a transport was damaged just outside the harbor. By February 1943, the American navy had sunk nine Japanese transports, three destroyers, and three submarines in western Aleutian waters. The last Japanese surface vessel to reach Kiska, Awata Maru, arrived February 22, 1943. From then on, the garrison depended on submarines to bring in limited amounts of emergency supplies.

With the fall of Attu on May 30, 1943, and the virtual cutoff from the Home Islands, the Kiska garrison feverishly strengthened the defenses, concentrating now on potential landing beaches. At the same time, plans were made to withdraw gradually from the island, employing thirteen of Japan's large I-class submarines. The first boat, I-7, loaded with wounded personnel and civilians, reached Japan on May 27. By mid-June, 820 men had been transferred to the Northern Kuriles. Then, in rapid succession, the Americany navy destroyed three of the submarines, I-7, I-9, and I-24. Orders arrived from Japan to suspend the operation.

Aware that a large American force was assembling in the Aleutians, undoubtedly for an assault on Kiska, the Japanese now planned "Operation KE" for evacuating the island. The Japanese Fifth Fleet, under Vice Adm. Shiro Kawase, assembled a force of two cruisers and ten destroyers at Paramushiro in the Kuriles. The plan called for these ships to make a dash toward Kiska under the cover of fog, board the troops, and return swiftly to Japan. Orders to prepare for an evacuation arrived at Kiska via submarine.

On July 7, the ships set sail in a thick fog but quickly ran into trouble when two vessels collided and a third rammed still two more. Several times during the next three weeks, the force approached Kiska, only to withdraw when the fog thinned or when American ships and planes were reported in the area. Finally, on July 28, conditions were ripe, and the ships deployed just fifty miles south of Kiska (two cruisers and six destroyers). Cautiously approaching the island through the fog, they dropped anchor in Kiska Harbor in early afternoon. The garrison was ready, having destroyed or booby-trapped weapons, equipment, and supplies. As if on cue, the fog lifted within the harbor and in only fifty minutes, 5,183 men boarded the ships and the dash home began:

> At 0600 on the 31st the mist had completely cleared [again] and at 1530 we entered PARAMUSHIRO Harbor. It seemed that heaven were celebrating our success. . . . The enemy had not discovered the evacuation of our troops at all. Thereafter, for day after day, they bombed and bombarded KISKA, and on August 15, the landing of American and Canadian troops on the island was announced. Truly the height of the ridiculous.*

Allied Invasion

On August 15 and 16, 1943, a combined American-Canadian force of 34,000 men, under the command of Maj. Gen. Charles H. Corlett, Seventh Infantry Division, invaded Kiska. The troops poured ashore at two landing sites, both on Kiska's northwest coast. Not until August 18 did Corlett conclude that the island contained no enemy. Meanwhile, his men had killed 24 of themselves and wounded 50 more in the confusion of their advances. Making the best of the embarrassing situation, the commanders announced that the Japanese withdrawal had saved lives, the invasion had provided valuable experience in amphibious warfare, and the Aleutians were again secure.

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*"Translation of Japanese Ensign's Notebook Recovered Tarawa 26 Nov 1943," Alaska Department, U.S. Army, Record Group 338, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See separate sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 48,900 acres

Quadrangle name Kiska

Quadrangle scale 1:250,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 60 | 543600 | 5768500 | B | 60 | 549000 | 5754400 |
| C | 60 | 537900 | 5751300 | D | 60 | 533000 | 5751100 |
| E | 60 | 520200 | 5755100 | F | 60 | 537800 | 5770400 |
| G | | | | H | | | |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

See separate sheet.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erwin N. Thompson, Historian

organization Denver Service Center, NPS date March 15, 1984

street & number 755 Parfet Street telephone 303-234-4509

city or town Lakewood state Colorado

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

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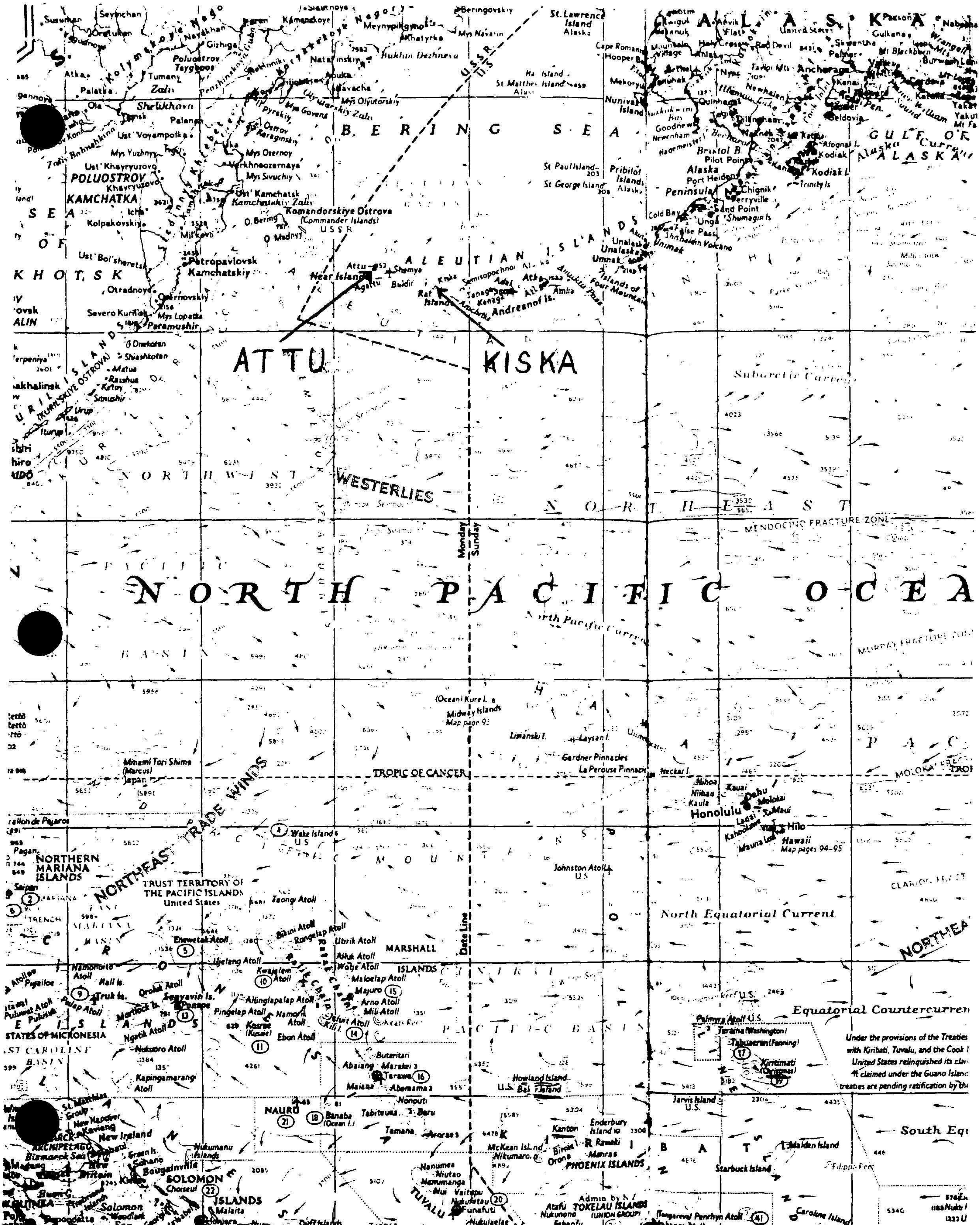
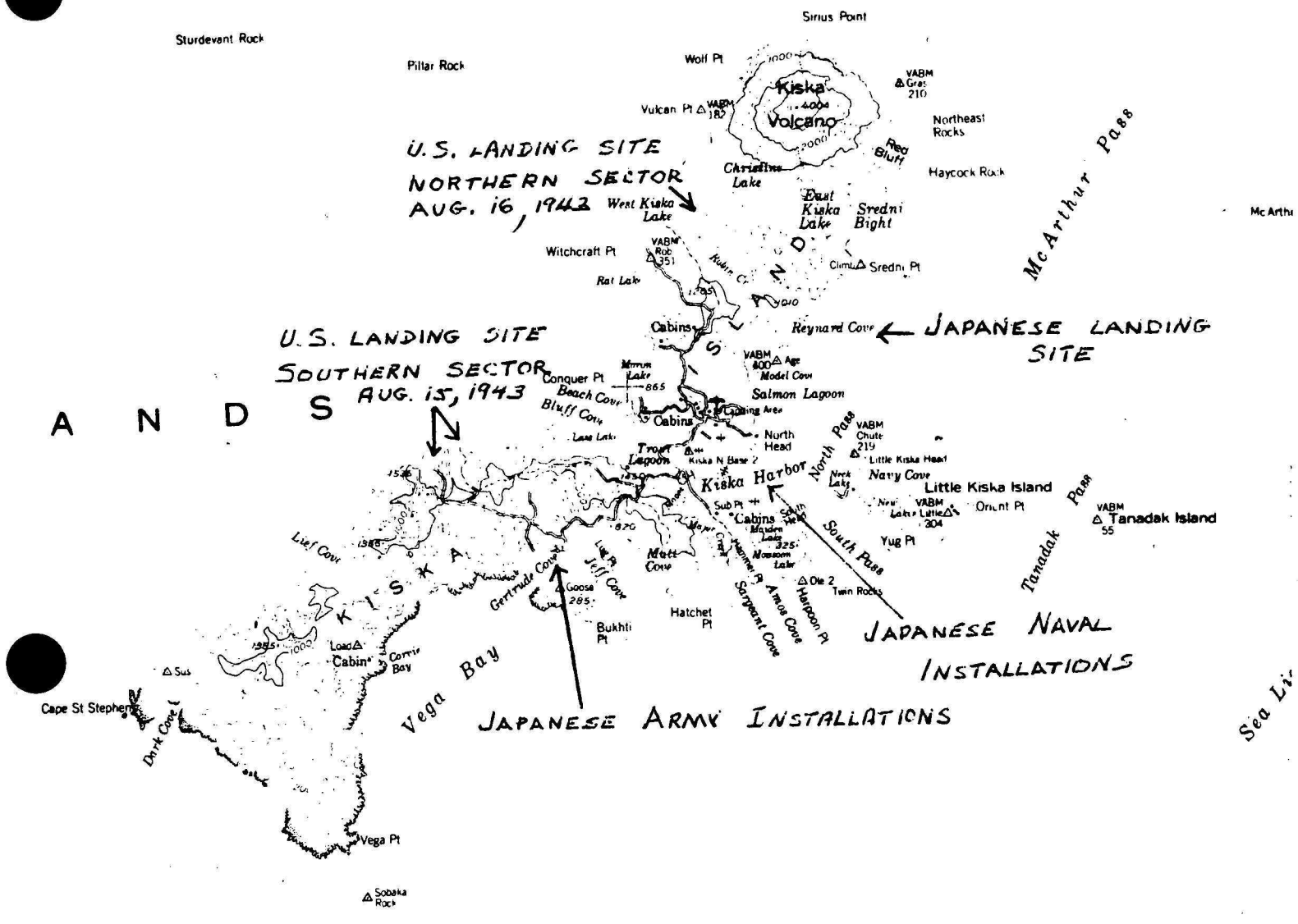


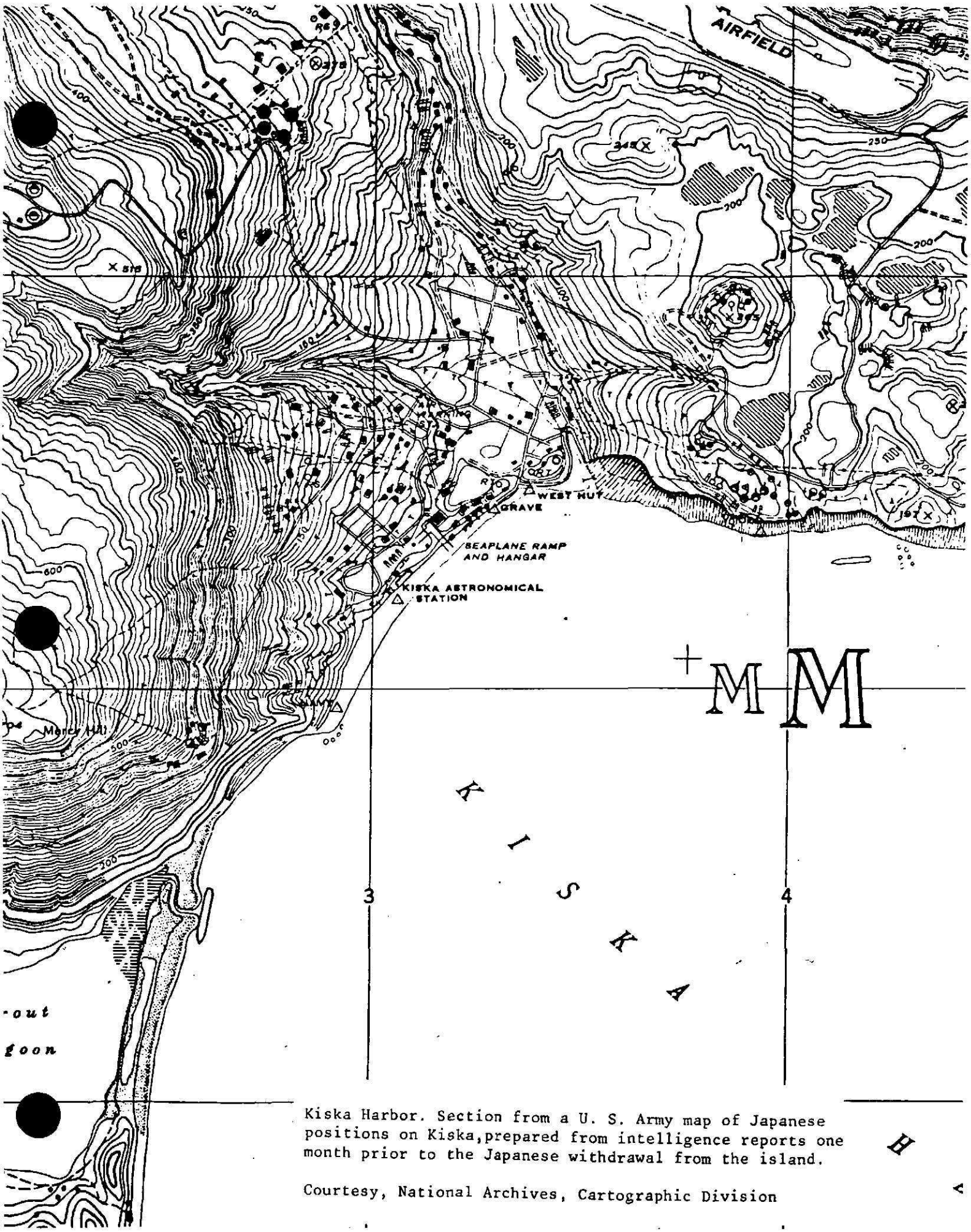
ATTU
KISKA
BERING SEA
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
ALASKA
GULF OF ALASKA
Near Islands
Rat Islands
Andreanof Is.
Islands of Four Mountains
Komandorskiye Ostrova (Commander Islands) USSR
POLUOSTROV KAMCHATKA
Petropavlovsk Kamchatskiy
SEA OF OKHOTSK
USSR
US
Pribilof Islands Alaska
Bristol B.
Alaska Peninsula
Kodiak I.
Anchorage
Subarctic Current
WESTERLIES
NORTHWEST
NORTHEAST
MENDOCINO FRACTURE ZONE
Monday
Sunday
NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN
North Pacific Current
(Ocean) Kure I.
Midway Islands
Map page 93
Laysan I.
Gardner Pinnacles
La Perouse Pinnacle
Necker I.
TROPIC OF CANCER
Minami Tori Shima (Marcus) Japan
NORTHEAST TRADE WINDS
Wake Island US
Honolulu
Hawaii
Map pages 94-95
Hilo
Johnston Atoll U.S.
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS United States
North Equatorial Current
MARSHALL ISLANDS
Date Line
Equatorial Countercurrent
Kwajalein Atoll
Majuro
Palmyra Atoll U.S.
Kiritimati (Christmas)
Tarawa
Howland Island
Baker Island
Jarvis Island U.S.
NAURU
Banaba (Ocean I.)
PHOENIX ISLANDS
TOKELAU ISLANDS
TUVALU
Funafuti
SOLOMON ISLANDS
Malden Island
Starbuck Island
South Equatorial
Under the provisions of the Treaties with Kiribati, Tuvalu, and the Cook Islands, the United States relinquished its claims claimed under the Guano Islands Act; treaties are pending ratification by the

S E A



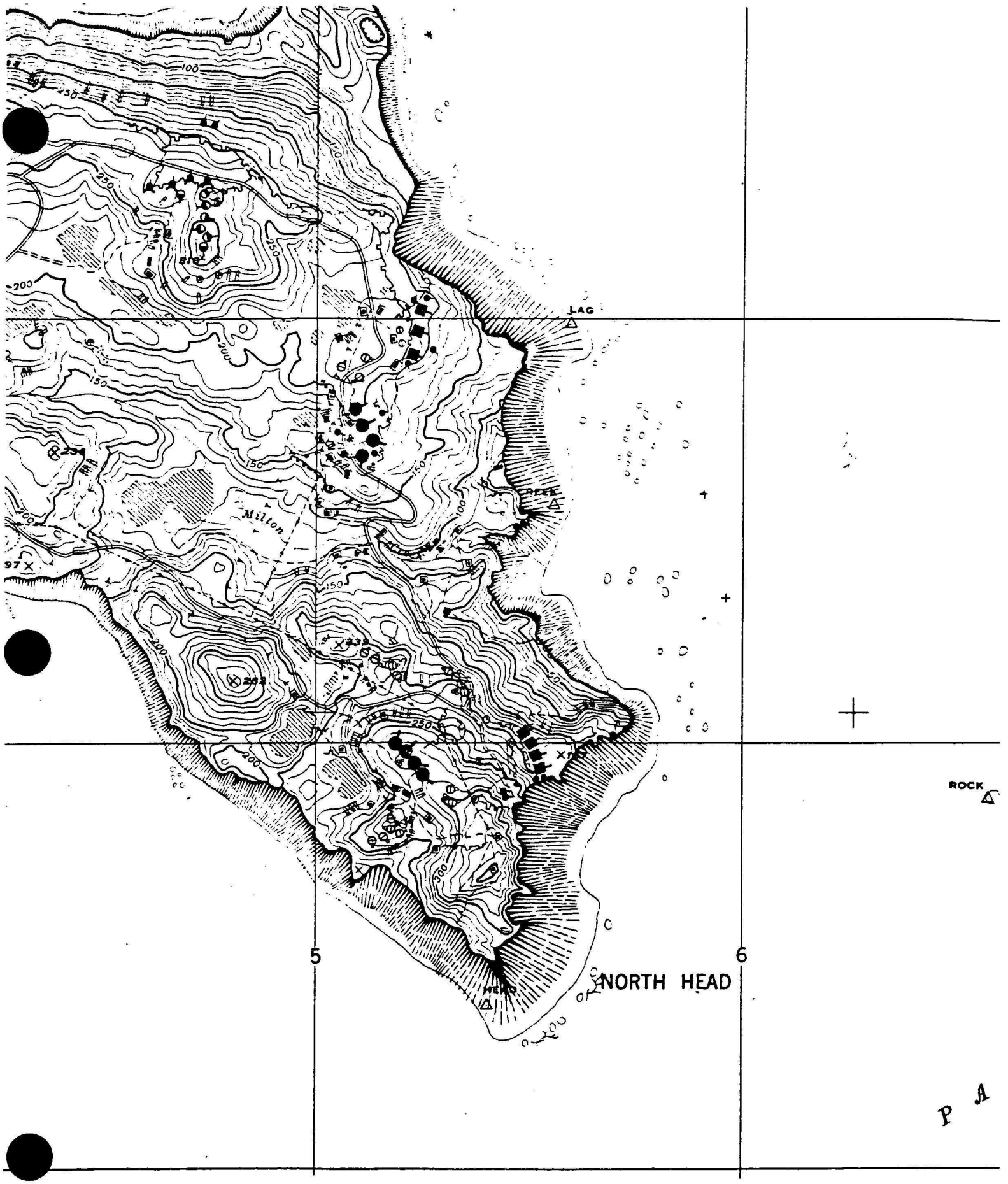

A N D S

I S L A N D S




Kiska Harbor. Section from a U. S. Army map of Japanese positions on Kiska, prepared from intelligence reports one month prior to the Japanese withdrawal from the island.

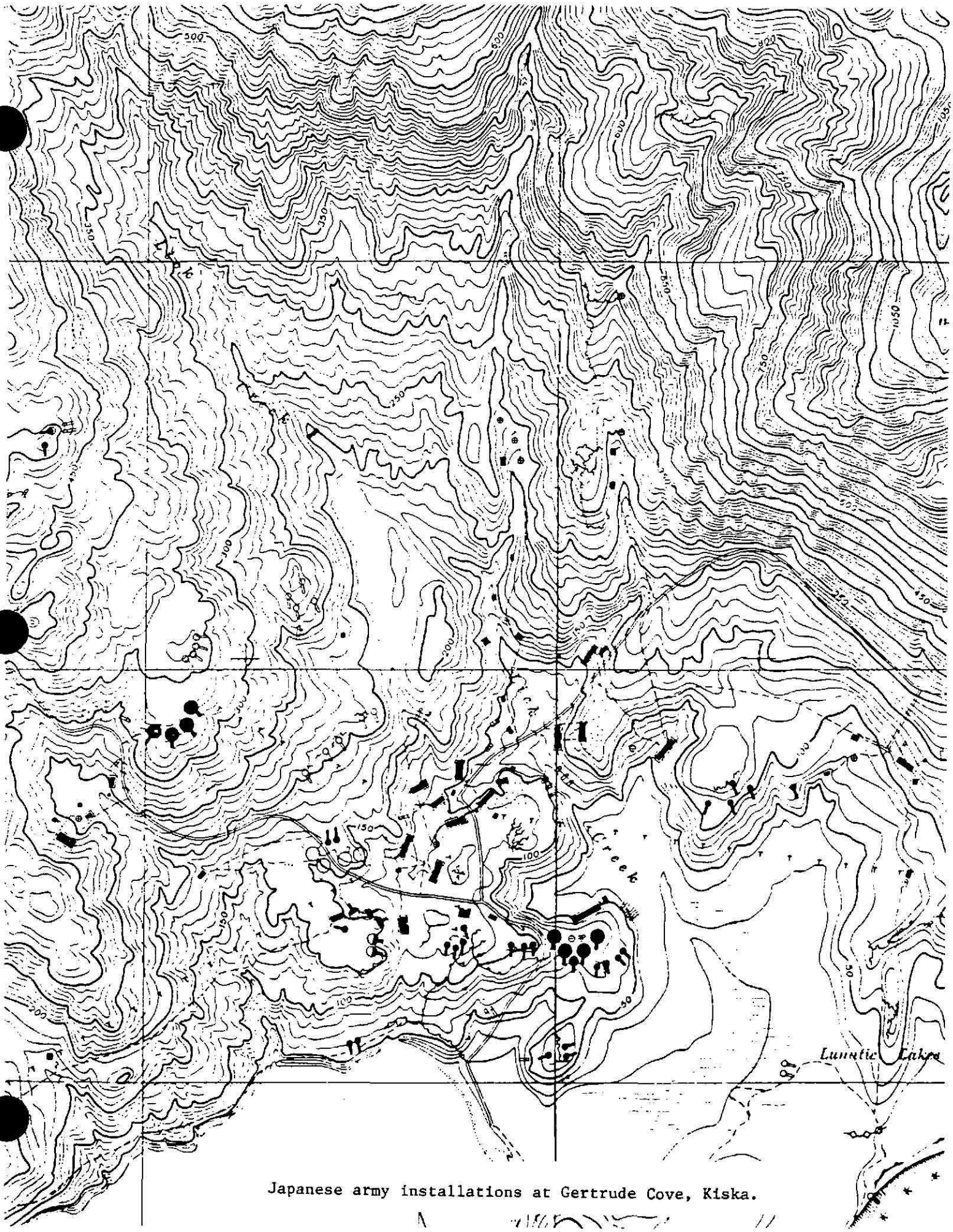
Courtesy, National Archives, Cartographic Division



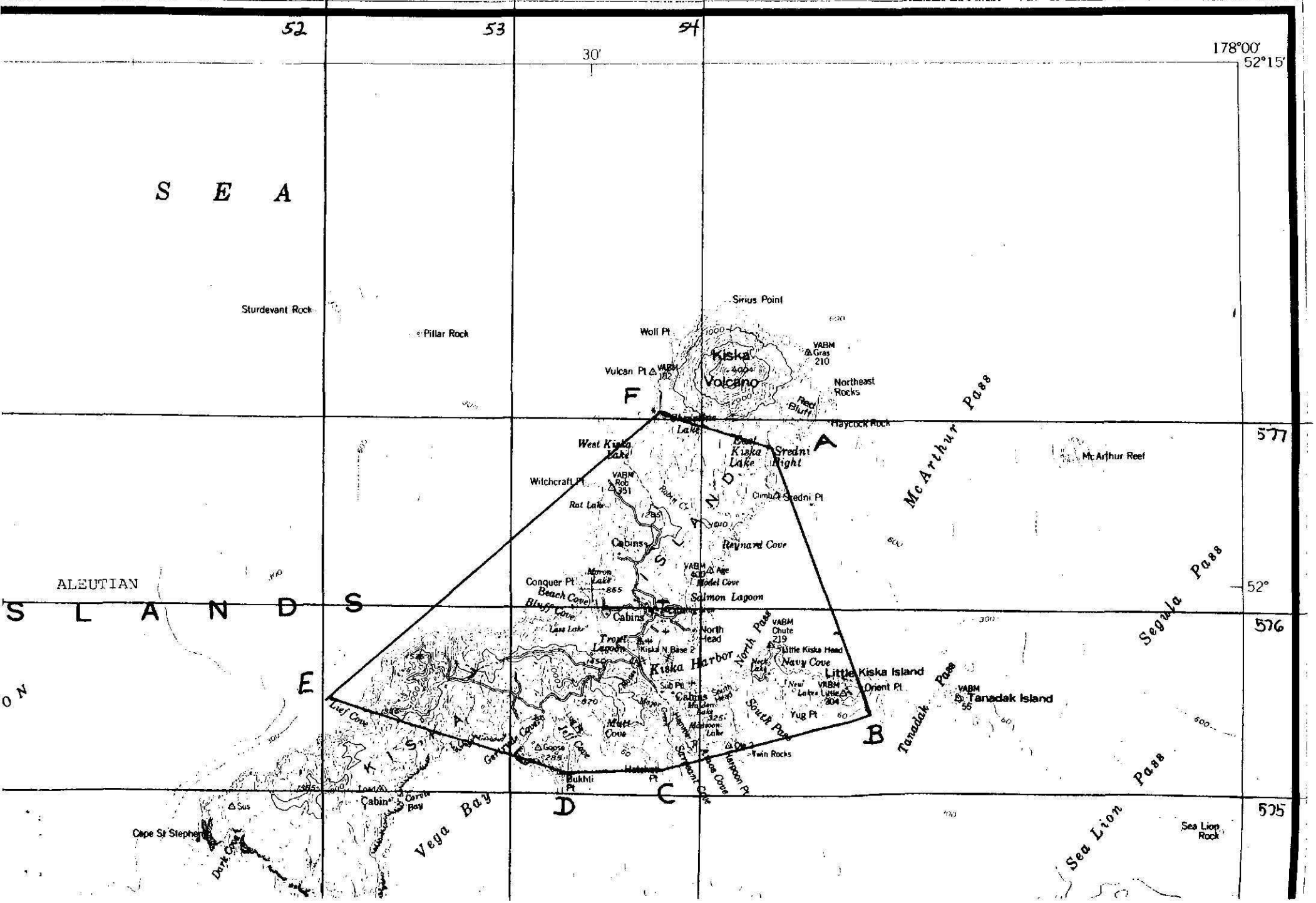

Japanese gun emplacements on North Head, northeast of Kiska Harbor.

BOUNDARY

Starting at a point where an unnamed stream drains from the north into Sredni Bight, then in a straight line south southeast east to Orient Point at the east end of Little Kiska Island, then extending that line .75 mile beyond so as to include all of Little Kiska Island, then a straight line west southwest to the tip of Hatchet Point, then in a straight line west to the tip of Bukhti Point, then in a straight line west northwest to a point of land on the northeast corner of Lief Cove, then extending that line 1.25 miles to a point in the ocean, then a straight line northeast to the ocean shore at the north end of Christine Lake, then in a straight line east southeast to the point of beginning. These boundaries include all the principal places of Japanese occupation on Kiska, as well as the Allies' 1943 invasion beaches.




Japanese army installations at Gertrude Cove, Kiska.


52
53
54
30'
178°00'
52°15'
577
576
575
52°
S E A
ALEUTIAN
S L A N D S
Sturdevant Rock
Pillar Rock
Sirius Point
Wolf Pt
Kiska Volcano
Vulcan Pt
Northeast Rocks
Red Bluff
Haycock Rock
West Kiska Lake
East Kiska Lake
Sredni Eight
Mc Arthur Reef
Mc Arthur Pass
Witchcraft Pt
Rat Lake
Cabins
Reynard Cove
Conquer Pt
Beach Cove
Salmon Lagoon
Kiska Harbor
North Head
North Pass
Little Kiska Head
Navy Cove
Little Kiska Island
Orient Pt
Tanadak Island
Tanadak Pass
Segula Pass
Yug Pt
South Pass
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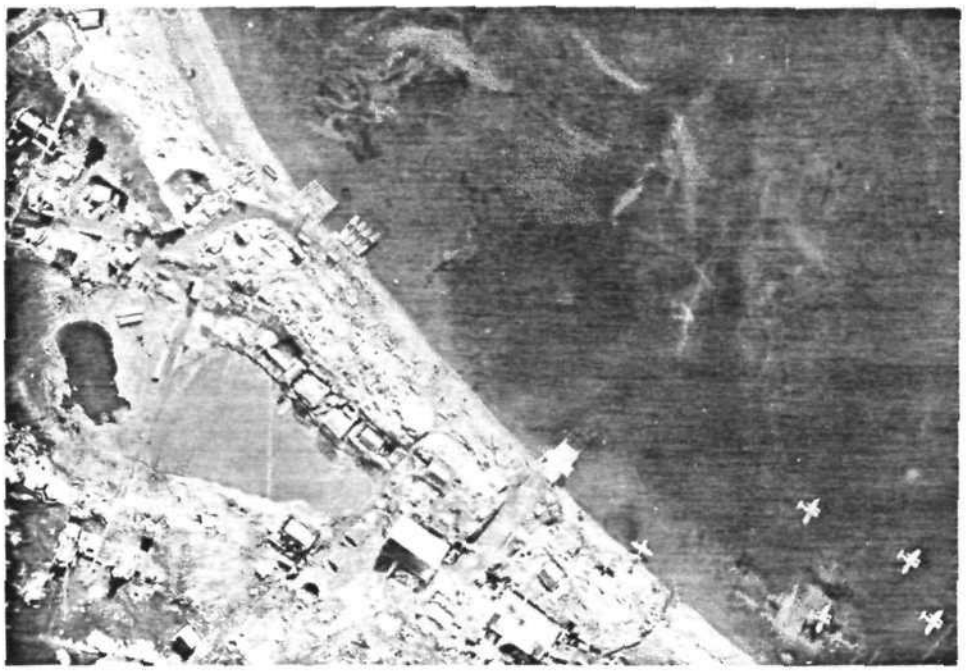

3. Japanese activities at Kiska Harbor, 1942 or 1943. The two buildings parallel to each other and facing the ponds, in the lower left corner of the photo, are believed to be those erected by the U.S. Navy for use as a weather station prior to Japanese invasion.

Courtesy, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska

4. Captured Japanese antiaircraft gun, Type 96, 25 mm, that guarded Kiska. September 11, 1943.

Photo by U.S. Army Signal Corps. Courtesy, Defense Audiovisual Agency.

9. An American Camp on Kiska. Note the new dock constructed by U.S. Army Engineers. December 9, 1943.

Photo by U.S. Army Signal Corps. Courtesy, Defense Audiovisual Agency

8. Japanese airfield on Kiska after being repaired and completed by American troops. Ca. 1943.

Courtesy, National Archives

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

NHL — WWII, PACIFIC

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic San Francisco Port of Embarkation, U.S. Army

and or common

## 2. Location

street & number Fort Mason, Golden Gate National Recreation Area ___ not for publication

city, town San Francisco ___ vicinity of

state California code 06 county San Francisco code 075

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| X district | X public | X occupied | ___ agriculture | X museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | ___ unoccupied | ___ commercial | X park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | X educational | ___ private residence |
| ___ site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | X entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | ___ yes: restricted | X government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | X yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ no | ___ military | ___ other: |

## 4. Owner of Property

name Regional Director, Western Region, National Park Service

street & number 450 Golden Gate Avenue

city, town San Francisco ___ vicinity of state California

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. San Francisco City Hall

street & number Polk and McAllister Streets

city, town San Francisco state California

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Fort Mason, Golden Gate NRA has this property been determined eligible? X yes ___ no

date April 25, 1972 X federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records National Register of Historic Places

city, town Washington state D.C.

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| ___ excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | X original site |
| X good | ___ ruins | X altered | ___ moved date _____ |
| ___ fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Headquarters Building, FM-201

In 1901, Fort Mason was a coast artillery post guarding San Francisco Bay. That year, the army's surgeon general approved construction of a new post hospital. He provided a set of standard plans for a twelve-bed, brick-walled building and estimated the cost at $20,000. A local contractor, James Campbell, completed the attractive building in 1902. The main section measured 42 feet by 44 feet and stood three stories tall. A 1½-story wing on the east was 27 feet by 57 feet. Modest changes to the exterior of the building have been made over the years; for example, the original slate roof has given way to composition shingles and a veranda around the brick wing has been removed. The interior floor plan is little changed from 1902.

The hospital survived the 1906 earthquake with only minor damage. By then, however, the facility was no longer needed at Fort Mason, a new army general hospital having been built at the nearby Presidio of San Francisco. At the same time, the army had a great need for storage space in San Francisco for supplies destined to new overseas possessions, as well as military posts on the West Coast. Before long, the hospital building housed offices and supplies of the army's technical services.

Its coastal defense role behind it by 1912, Fort Mason became an army general depot that year. World War I brought a great increase in depot activity at Fort Mason, now called the San Francisco General Intermediate Depot. To house the depot's administrative offices, the army constructed an annex on the west side of the hospital in 1917-1918. The frame addition measured 60 feet by 100 feet and had 2½ stories. It was joined to the brick structure by a narrow, one-story corridor. For the time being, the army regarded the structure as being two separate buildings. Both were occupied throughout by depot offices by 1923.

The approach of America's entry into World War II brought increased activity at the depot as haste was made to strengthen military installations. Additional bodies required more space. In 1939 the first of several additions was made to the headquarters, now called the San Francisco Port of Embarkation and General Depot. This was a two-story, frame wing on the west, measuring 24 feet by 35 feet. A second identical wing was constructed paralleling the first in 1941. This addition contained the office of the commanding general.

A further increase in staff resulted in the space between the two new wings being filled with a three-story addition having a flat roof with a parapet around it. A single-story addition was made to the north side of the former hospital's brick wing, and another single-story frame addition was constructed at the east end of this wing. The one-story corridor connecting the two main units grew to a four-story observation tower and elevator shaft.

The structure's military architecture reflects army construction from the beginning of the century to World War II. Total interior space amounts to

40,000 square feet. Little embellishment is evident on the exterior. One noticeable feature is the main entrance, in the brick portion. This was reconstructed in the 1930s. Here, at the bottom of a short flight of brick steps are two ornamental gate post lights, each having one large globe.

Port Area, Lower Fort Mason

At first, the U.S. Army Transport Service leased wharfage at San Francisco for its transport ships supplying installations in the Pacific. In 1903, the army considered establishing its own facilities for the transports as well as a general depot for military supplies. Fort Mason was selected as the site for these operations. Although the post was federal property, the submerged lands bordering the bay side of the fort were privately owned. Condemnation proceedings were initiated and in 1909 the 12.5 acres comprising those lands were added to the military reservation. Meanwhile, Congress authorized the construction of four permanent storehouses and three piers on the submerged land.

The army employed the architectural firm of Rankin, Kellogg, and Crane of Philadelphia to design the buildings. Breaking from traditional military architecture, the architects proposed that Fort Mason adopt Spanish Mission Revival architecture. The army readily agreed. The San Francisco Bridge Company won the construction contract for a seawall along the north side of the submerged land, a crib wall on the west, three wharves, one permanent wharf shed, and railroad tracks within the reservation at a price of $1,182,200. Two of four permanent storehouses were also funded. Construction got underway in 1909; dredged sand from the bay built the area behind the seawall into firm land; and reinforced-concrete piers took shape to support the wharves and storehouses. The wharves were completed in 1912, and the first army transport, Sherman, docked at Fort Mason on January 6.

In 1913, Congress funded construction of the two additional storehouses. Like the earlier buildings, each had three stories. The walls were cement-gun finished and colored a light buff. Red clay tiles covered the roofs. The following year, a railroad tunnel was constructed under Fort Mason and tracks were laid into the port area, single tracks to the three wharves and double tracks to the warehouses. At that time only the roads in the port area were asphalted; in the 1930s the entire area was asphalted.

The army acquired new transport ships in the 1920s that were 75 feet longer than the older vessels, requiring extension of the piers at Fort Mason. Improvements and additions did not get underway until the 1930s, when Public Works Administration funds became available. Pier 2 and its permanent-type shed were both extended in length, bringing its dimensions to 118 feet by 654 feet. A permanent shed was built on Pier 3 which was enlarged to 155 feet by

650 feet. A permanent shed was erected on Pier 1 which retained its dimensions of 60 feet by 425 feet. In 1934, a contract was let for a permanent marine repair shops (carpenter, machine, blacksmith, sheet metal, and tinning) building on the west side of the port area. Another contract was let for a battery charging station on the east.

The railroad tracks were relayed and repaired, steel ties replacing the wooden ones and new tracks laid to the enlarged Pier 3. Other improvements included a heating system for the port area, remodeling the electrical system, dredging, replacement of fender piles, and a new fire station.

The new buildings were all steel-frame with concrete walls and floors. To complement the older buildings, the shops and battery charging structures had buff-colored stucco on the exterior walls and clay tile roofs.

The port area today retains its historical integrity to a great extent. As part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, its buildings house a wide variety of community activities: theaters, shops, crafts, studios, and more.

The historically significant features of the former San Francisco Port of Embarkation at Fort Mason are:

The port headquarters building, FM-201
The lower port area
Railroad tracks
Four storehouses, FM-310, 312, 314, and 315
Three piers, FM-316, 318, and 320
Three pier sheds, FM-317, 319, and 321
Marine repair shops, FM-308
Fire station, FM-309
Battery charging station, FM-322
Provost Marshal office, FM-302
Entrance gate to port area and guard post, FM-301 and 303

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1912-1945 **Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

During the early months after the United States entered World War II, the U.S. Army's San Francisco Port of Embarkation (SFPE) shipped more military supplies than all other military ports in the United States combined. The statistical returns for the entire war showed that San Francisco was second only to New York in the numbers and amounts of personnel and supplies shipped to the war zones. Between December 1941 and August 1945, 1,745,000 personnel embarked at San Francisco. In addition, more than half a million veterans of the war debarked at San Francisco during the same period. An equal number came home through the Golden Gate after the conclusion of hostilities. All American dead being returned to the United States from the Pacific were brought through the port. Japanese and German prisoners of war were processed through its facilities. More than 25 million measurement tons of cargo were shipped through San Francisco. For various periods of time between 1941 and 1944 the ports of Los Angeles, California; Portland, Oregon; and Seattle, Washington, were administered by San Francisco. In the Bay Area, Fort Mason oversaw port operations at no fewer than thirteen other installations. San Francisco was the primary port for the Central, South, and Southwest Pacific Areas. Moreover, the task force that drove the Japanese from Alaska's Aleutian Islands was mounted from San Francisco.

History

The U.S. Army's first troop movement in modern times through San Francisco Harbor was brought about by the Spanish-American War. In May 1898, chartered vessels carried the first of more than 5,000 troops and their supplies to the Hawaiian Islands (before that republic was annexed) and to the Philippines. By 1905, the Quartermaster Corps' Army Transport Service had established a regular monthly service from San Francisco to Hawaii, Guam, and Manila. At San Francisco, the army leased the Folsom Street wharf, from where it operated four transport vessels: Logan, Sheridan, Sherman, and Thomas. In 1903, the army decided to construct its own supply depot and port facilities at Fort Mason within the city. The first of these permanent facilities were completed in 1912 and, on January 6, Sherman docked at Fort Mason, having arrived from Manila via Nagasaki, Japan (a coaling station), and Honolulu. World War I resulted in an increase of activity at Fort Mason. A spate of "temporary" buildings sprang up in both the upper and lower levels of the post and still other storehouses were built at the Presidio of San Francisco. In 1918, the expeditionary forces to Siberia were supplied and mounted at Fort Mason, as well as in the Philippines. In 1923, a second transport service was established between San Francisco and New York via the Panama Canal. By that year, the administrative offices of the depot occupied all of the headquarters building, FM-201, on upper Fort Mason.

In 1925 the depot was reorganized as the San Francisco General Depot. It was responsible for supplying the Ninth Corps Area (West Coast), Alaska, the Philippines, Hawaii, Panama Canal, and United States forces in China. Another reorganization in 1932 resulted in renaming the installation the San Francisco Port of Embarkation and General Depot. Brig. Gen. Charles S. Lincoln commanded the operation. He established two positions under him, a supply officer to handle depot operatons and a superintendent for the transportation service, both of whom had offices in the headquarters building. During the 1930s, the mission of supplying Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps on the West Coast was added to Fort Mason's duties (459 camps, 94,715 men). As late as 1939, when war broke out in Europe, Fort Mason's small acreage could still comfortably house the port administrative headquarters and store the required levels of supply for the Quartermaster, Medical, Signal, and Engineer departments; the CCC camps; and a salvage operation. Ordnance, Chemical Warfare, and Air Corps materials passed through Fort Mason but were not stored there. They were unloaded directly from freight cars to ships. SFPE's personnel strength in the fall of 1939 amounted to 130 military personnel and 501 civilians.

World War II

By the end of 1940, the army realized that Fort Mason's port was too small to handle the increasing demands made upon it as tensions rose in the Pacific. The first step taken to remedy the situation was the acquisition of port facilities in Seattle in January 1941 to serve as a terminal for transports supplying Alaska. Seattle remained a sub-post of SFPE until January 1942, when it acquired an independent status.[1] Also in early 1941, 624.5 acres of land were acquired at Oakland, California, for the construction of the Oakland Army Base, that city being the terminus of transcontinental railroads. Unlike Seattle, this new base remained under the direct control of the SFPE at Fort Mason. The Overseas Supply Division moved from Fort Mason to Oakland in June 1942. Los Angeles, California, and Portland, Oregon, soon became sub-posts of San Francisco. Los Angeles remained a sub-post until September 1943, when it achieved an independent status with responsibilties for the China-Burma-India Theater. Administration of Portland's port activities were transferred from SFPE to Seattle in November 1944, when military operations in Alaska were ebbing. These transfers did not lessen San Francisco's responsibilities in supporting the Allies in the Central and Southwest Pacific. One of the more important changes concerning Fort Mason was the transfer of

1. The task force organized for driving Japanese forces from the Aleutian Islands was, nevertheless, mounted from San Francisco in 1943.

ports of embarkation from the Quartermaster Department to the newly constituted Transportation Corps in 1942. This meant removal of general depot responsibilities and a resulting improvement in the integration of army transportation operations.

Fort Mason supervised transportation activities at other installations in the Bay Area. Oakland Army Base oversaw the shipment of all types of supplies and equipment to forward areas. Fort McDowell on Angel Island grew into a large personnel center processing returning veterans and prisoners of war. More than 6,000 Japanese prisoners passed through the camp. An unusual group of prisoners of war at Angel Island was a number of high-ranking German generals whom the British had captured in the Tunisian campaign. These officers were sent on to a camp in New Mexico, but not until they were interrogated at a secret center near San Francisco.

Between 1941 and 1944, SFPE leased eight piers at the San Francisco Embarcadero. Seven of these were used for shipping cargo, the eighth, for personnel. When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Benicia Arsenal, near the head of San Pablo Bay, did not possess deep-water berthing. Ammunition was moved to Fort Mason by barge or rail. This situation ended in July 1942 with the completion of dredging at Benicia that allowed the berthing of larger ships.

Camp Stoneman, near Martinez, became the port's largest (2,565 acres) processing center for troops moving overseas. Other facilities under the port headquarters at Fort Mason included the Alameda Piers, an Air Force depot; Emeryville Ordnance Shops; Richmond Parr Terminals; Hamilton Field, for air shipments; and the Presidio of San Francisco, which was stripped of its infantry garrison to provide room for such activities as an animal depot. Farther away were the Stockton Piers and the Humboldt Bay Piers. The headquarters building at Fort Mason was the center of planning, supervision, and direction for all these.

Immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor, before the outposts were developed, the San Francisco Port of Embarkation became clogged with the scramble to reinforce Hawaii against invasion. Nor did the situation improve swiftly. The Transportation Corps listed a number of persistent problems: the great distances involved, limited shipping, the large number of Pacific bases, a rapidly developing strategic situation, and the low level of stocks in depots. Wartime investigations disclosed, too, that the port's early commanding general failed to give his oversea supply division the authority and support it needed. Changes in command brought improvements.

Despite the varied problems, the San Francisco Port of Embarkation made a substantial and critical contribution to the successful conclusion of World War II in the Pacific. One of its enthusiastic supporters has written, "The part played by the San Francisco Port of Embarkation in winning that half of the

global war which stretched from California to Australia, India, the Aleutians, and Japan and took in every Pacific atoll along the way is a tribute to the war of transportation which swept from the Golden Gate of San Francisco to the very gates of Tokyo."[2]

2. James W. Hamilton and William J. Bolce, Jr., Gateway to Victory, The Wartime Story of the San Francisco Army Port of Embarkation (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1946), vii.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

## 10. Geographical Data

Headquarters Building FM-201

Acreage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name San Francisco North

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 10 | 550440 | 4184210 | B | | | |
| C | | | | D | | | |
| E | | | | F | | | |
| G | | | | H | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| state | code | county | code |

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title

organization date

street & number telephone

city or town state

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Port area, Lower Fort Mason

Acreage of nominated property 21 acres

Quadrangle name San Francisco North

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 10 | 550320 | 4184650 | B | 10 | 550370 | 4184440 |
| C | 10 | 550100 | 4184170 | D | 10 | 550030 | 4184590 |
| E | | | | F | | | |
| G | | | | H | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erwin N. Thompson, Historian

organization National Park Service, Denver Service Center date July 8, 1984

street & number 755 Parfet Street telephone (303) 234-4509

city or town Denver state Colorado 80225

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

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title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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_____. San Francisco Port of Embarkation Transportation Corps, Fort Mason, Camp Stoneman, Oakland Army Base. n.p., n.d.

Wardlow, Chester. The Transportation Corps: Movements, Training, and Supply. The Technical Services. United States Army in World War II. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956.

## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

### Headquarters Building, FM-201

Beginning at the northwest corner of the intersection of MacArthur Avenue and Franklin Street, then westerly in a straight line along the north curb of MacArthur for 470 feet, then in a northerly direction in a straight line that parallels the west wall of the headquarters building for 120 feet, then in a straight line in an easterly direction paralleling the north side of the headquarters building and ten feet from it to the southwest corner of the intersection of Shafter Place and Pope Road, then in a straight line southeast along the southwest curb of Pope Road to the point of beginning. These boundaries enclose the headquarters building and its grounds, including a flagstaff to the east of the building that identifies it as a headquarters.

### Port Area, Lower Fort Mason

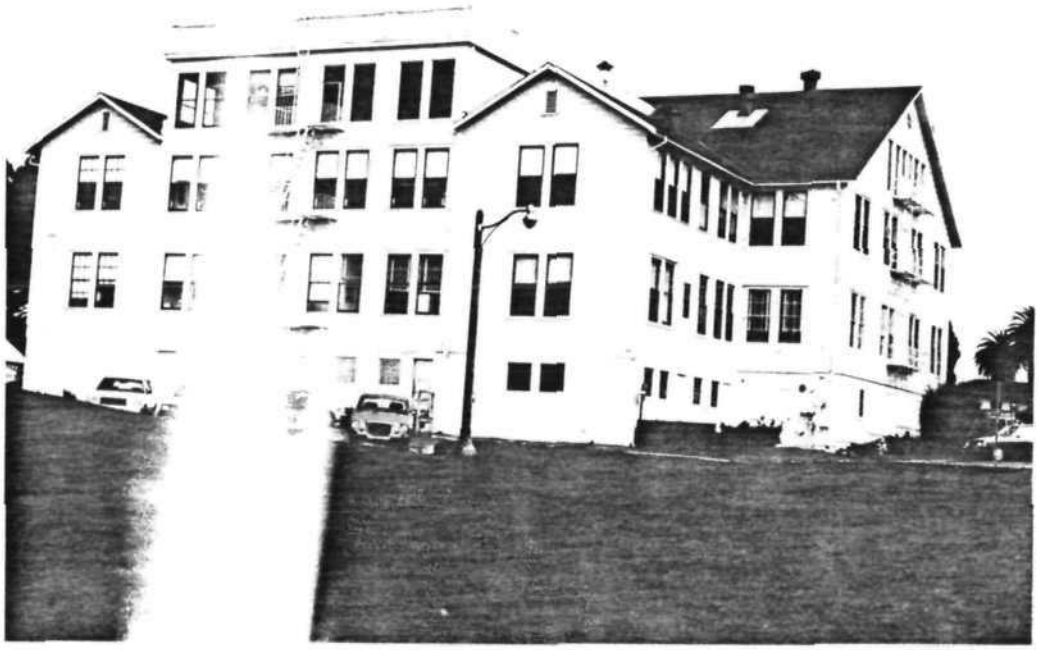
Beginning at a point on the western boundary of the Fort Mason military reservation where the southwest corner of the port area adjoins the intersection of Laguna Street and Marina Boulevard, then in a straight line in a northerly direction along the western boundary of Fort Mason and the west side of Pier 1, FM-316, then projecting that line in the same direction to a point in the bay opposite the northern end of Pier 2, FM-318, then in a straight line east northeast past the northern ends of Pier 2, FM-318, and Pier 3, FM-320, to a point in the bay 200 feet beyond the northeast corner of Pier 3, then in a straight line in a southerly direction to meet a north-south boundary of the reservation, then continuing in the same direction along this boundary line to its end, then continuing in the same direction 90 feet to the foot of a bluff, then in an irregular line, generally southwest, along the foot of the bluff and its several retaining walls to the point of beginning. These boundaries enclose all the port area, lower Fort Mason, including historically significant buildings, railroad tracks, the three piers, and the berthing areas along the piers (the west side of Pier 1 was not used for berthing transports, its being outside the reservation).

SAN FRANCISCO NORTH, CALIFORNIA
SCALE 1:24000

HEADQUARTERS AREA BLDG FM-201

1. Brick portion of the headquarters building, San Francisco Port of Embarkation, Fort Mason. The U.S. Army constructed this unit as a posh hospital in 1902.

Photo by E.N. Thompson February 1984



2. West end of the Port of Embarkation headquarters, Fort Mason. The structure today is the headquarters for Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Photo by E.N. Thompson February 1984

3. The four permanent army storehouses at the San Francisco Port of Embarkation in lower Fort Mason.

Photo by E.N. Thompson February 1984

4. Piers 1, on left, and 2, San Francisco Ports of Embarkation. The shed on Pier 2 is the original, permanent shed. Pier 1's shed was reconstructed in the 1930s.

Photo by E.N. Thompson February 1984

6. A wide variety of public activities are carried on in the former port's storehouses.

Photo by E.N. Thompson February 1984

5. Pier 3 shed. Although the San Francisco Port of Embarkation came under the Transportation Corps early in World War II, the insignia of the Quartermaster Corps was retained. Note the railroad tracks leading to the pier.

Photo by E.N. Thompson February 1945

**United States Department of the Interior**
**National Park Service**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base Landing Beaches

and or common Beaches Red and White

## 2. Location

street & number ___ not for publication

city, town X vicinity of Oceanside

state California code 06 county San Diego code 073

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ district | X public | X occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | ___ unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| X site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | X yes: restricted | ___ government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | ___ yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ no | X military | ___ other: |

## 4. Owner of Property

name *United States Government, Department of the Navy*

street & number

city, town Washington ___ vicinity of state D.C. 20362

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. United States Government, Department of the Navy

street & number

city, town Washington state D.C. 20362

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ___ no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| X excellent | ___ deteriorated | X unaltered | X original site |
| ___ good | ___ ruins | ___ altered | ___ moved date ___ |
| ___ fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base borders on the Pacific Ocean and is forty-five miles north of San Diego, California. When the base was commissioned in 1942, it possessed seventeen miles of ocean frontage suited for training. This frontage has been reduced at its northern end by the establishment of a state park and the construction of a nuclear power plant. The remaining beach area is separated from the main naval reservation by Interstate Highway 5 (San Diego Freeway) and a railroad. Access to the beaches is gained through underpasses.

In 1942 three beach areas were established for amphibious training and were code-named Beaches Red, White, and Blue. Beach Blue, at the southern end of the reservation, contains a boat basin for landing craft and other vessels.[1] Beaches Red and White have been the sites of amphibious landing exercises since 1942.

Beach Red, at the mouth of Las Flores Creek, has an ocean frontage of approximately one mile. Most of this area is a gently-sloping, white-sand beach at the water's edge. Inland, a small slough is formed by the intermittent run-off of the creek. Grasses, shrubs, and bushes cover the dunes and level land still farther inland. Two unimproved roads line either side of the creek. Vehicle trails in the area are restricted to defined areas. Portable latrines (heads) are strategically located in the landing area (an unknown element in World War II). At the north and south ends of the landing beach, steep bluffs close to the water's edge rise to elevations up to 60 feet.

Beach White, 1.7 miles to the southeast, is similar in its general appearance. It is centered on the drainage from Aliso and French canyons and has an ocean frontage of one mile. One large and two small sloughs are centered in Beach White. Again, steep bluffs are found north and south of the principal landing area. The cliff on the south has been named Shingle Bluff. The high ground at the south end of Beach White has been cleared to create a small, dirt landing strip for light planes. Two unimproved dirt roads enter the area. The more northerly of these roads terminates on the beach at the foot of a steep bluff. On the top of the bluff are three small, portable grandstands employed in troop training. Amphibious exercises are carried out at Beaches Red and White today, Camp Pendleton continuing to be the largest U.S. Marine Corps establishment on the Pacific coast. The Corps plans to continue this historic use at the beaches for the foreseeable future. This training will see continuing refinement of and advances in vehicles, weapons, and tactics, some of which may affect the character of the beaches. Nevertheless, no other use could be as appropriate, considering the landing beaches' historical significance.

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1. Beach Blue, with its primary use as a boat basin, is not included in this nomination.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1942-1945 **Builder Architect**

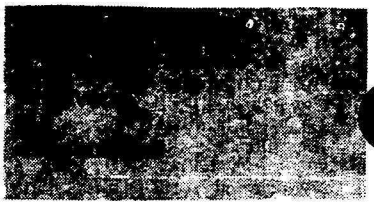
**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Landing Beaches Red and White at Camp Pendleton represent the apex of the development of amphibious training facilities during World War II by the United States Marine Corps in the United States. From the time of the commissioning of Camp Pendleton on September 25, 1942, to the end of World War II, thousands of Marines learned the techniques of assaulting an enemy beach at this California site. Camp Pendleton was the only Marine Corps establishment on the West Coast that was sufficiently large to house an entire Marine division and provide sufficient space for the division to carry out combat maneuvers. The Fourth Marine Division, which was activated at Camp Pendleton in 1943, was the only Marine division in World War II to be mounted in the United States and moved directly into combat, when it successfully invaded Japan's Roi and Namur islands in the Marshalls in January 1944. Camp Pendleton's landing beaches, along with those of other Marine and Army training areas in the United States, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and on foreign islands in the Caribbean and the Pacific contributed significantly to the successful advance of United States forces across the Central Pacific and beyond: Tarawa, Kwajalein, Enewetak, Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Palau, Iwo Jima, and, finally, Okinawa. In 1942, Maj. Gen. Holland M. Smith, the father of amphibious warfare as fought in World War II, arrived in San Diego and organized the Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet (later the Fifth Amphibious Corps) and helped plan every assault in the Central Pacific and commanded the landing forces in the invasions of the Gilberts, Marshalls, and Marianas. In 1946, General Smith concluded his forty-one years of duty in the U.S. Marine Corps as commander of the training base at Camp Pendleton, which command he had assumed in July 1945. Since then, the landing beaches at Pendleton have witnessed the training of several generations of young Marines and members of the other Armed Forces.

U.S. Marine Corps: Amphibious Warfare

Prior to the Spanish-American War, the U.S. Navy employed Marines from individual ships to carry out whatever landings that had to be made on foreign shores. During that war, a significant development occurred when a battalion of Marines was specially organized to secure Guantanamo Bay in Cuba as an advanced naval base. Following the war, the Marine Corps concentrated its training in the defense of advanced bases, most exercises taking place at Culebra Island off Puerto Rico, the principal amphibious training area until the eve of World War II.

Shortly after World War I, a brilliant Marine officer, Maj. Earl H. Ellis, prepared a plan concerning the role of U.S. Marines in a hypothetical Pacific war. Breaking with tradition, Major Ellis conceived the idea of Marines not





only defending advanced bases but their assaulting and seizing enemy bases. Specifically, he prepared a plan for the seizure of the Marshall Islands, a Japanese mandate at the time. Historians have concluded that Ellis's concepts contained the seeds that flowered into the amphibious art of World War II.[1]

The 1920s witnessed a revival of amphibious studies within the Corps. Expeditionary Forces were organized at Quantico, Virginia, and San Diego, California, for service with the U.S. Fleet in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Quantico was also the site of the first school established for studying amphibious operations. Also in the 1920s, Marines participated in a large-scale landing exercise for the first time. The results were not good; but important lessons were learned, particularly the need for improved landing craft. In 1933, the Fleet Marine Force was established and Marines prepared a manual for landing operations which was eventually adopted by both the Army and the Navy. A series of annual training exercises was held at Culebra Island and at San Clemente Island, off San Diego, usually resulting in lessons learned rather than in successful landings.

The problem of satisfactory landing craft was considerably reduced in 1939 when Andrew J. Higgins designed a boat that proved more satisfactory than earlier types, a ramp in the bow being lowered for unloading. This craft was the prototype for the Landing Craft, Vehicle and Personnel (LCVP). Another craft designed by Higgins became the prototype of the standard medium landing craft, Landing Craft, Mechanized (LCM). In 1940, Donald Roebling demonstrated an amphibian tractor, the Alligator, that he had developed for travel in Florida's Everglades. Quickly adopted by the Marines and the Navy, this Landing Vehicle, Tracked (LVT) became the standard craft in the Pacific. It has been called "the greatest tactical surprise of the war."[2]

These technical developments and the refinements in amphibious warfare doctrine and training were conducted under the direction of Brig. Gen. Holland M. Smith, USMC, charged by the commandant of the Corps with developing new

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1. Jeter A. Isely and Philip A. Crowl, The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War, Its Theory, and Its Practice in the Pacific (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), p. 25. Ellis died mysteriously in Japan's Palau Islands in 1923. In 1944, the Fourth Marine Division from Camp Pendleton was the first Marine unit to capture Japanese territory when it invaded the Marshall islands, Roi and Namur.

2. Frank O. Hough, The Island War, The United States Marine Corps in the Pacific (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1947), p. 8. Wartime models of the LVT are on display at Camp Pendleton among a large number of post-World War II experimental landing craft.

amphibious techniques. In 1941, General Smith took command of the Amphibious Force, Atlantic Fleet, overseeing the training of the First Marine Division and the First and Ninth Infantry Divisions, U.S. Army. In September 1942, Smith, now a major general, transferred to San Diego to organize the Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet (later the Fifth Amphibious Force). Dubbed the father of amphibious warfare, General Smith "played the leading part in forging a fighting amphibious team that made possible the eventual successful landings in both the Atlantic and the Pacific."[3]

Camp Pendleton

General Smith's arrival in San Diego coincided with the commissioning of Camp Pendleton, which took place on September 25, 1942, with President Franklin D. Roosevelt participating in the affair. In addition to its San Diego base, the U.S. Marine Corps had already developed other facilities in Southern California.

These included Camp Holcomb, renamed Camp Elliott, north of San Diego and where the Second Marine Division was assembled even though the reservation was too small for combat maneuvers; a rifle range at La Jolla eventually named Camp Mathews; and Camp Dunlap in Imperial Valley which was an artillery training area. What was needed on the West Coast was a reservation large enough to contain a reinforced division with ample room for combat maneuvers, artillery ranges, an airfield, and landing beaches. Construction for an area like that on the East Coast, Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, had begun in 1941. The solution was found in the Santa Margarita Ranch. In March 1942, this 197-square-mile ranch, having 17 miles of coastline, and lying 45 miles north of San Diego, was acquired. Construction began that April and the reservation was named Camp Pendleton in honor of Maj. Gen. Joseph H. Pendleton, a distinguished Marine Corps officer who had commanded the San Diego Marine Base at the time of his retirement in 1924 and who had died in Coronado, California, in February 1942.

In California, Gen. H.M. Smith oversaw training of units of the Second Marine Division and the Army's Seventh Infantry Division, the latter having been selected to drive Japanese forces from the Aleutian Islands. In September 1943, the general moved to Hawaii to take command of the newly formed Fifth Amphibious Corps, to be composed initially of the Second and Fourth Marine Divisions and the Seventh Infantry Division. Meanwhile, Camp Pendleton witnessed the activation of the Fourth Marine Division on August 14, 1943. The new division consisted of elements previously formed at the camp along with others that had trained at Camp Lejeune because of the overcrowded conditions on the West Coast.

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3. Isley and Crowl, The U.S. Marines, p. 62.

Exercises in landing, pillbox reduction, night attacks, demolition, flame throwers, and assault teams were drilled into the Marines. Although landing exercises were carried out on Beaches Red and White from craft loaded in the boat basin at Beach Blue, the Fourth Division received only limited experience in ship-to-shore training. For three days at the first of January 1944, such movements were carried out at Camp Pendleton and San Clemente Island. Observers recorded that this rehearsal was not successful. In less than a month, the Fourth Division assaulted Roi-Namur islands in Kwajalein Atoll. There was no question about the division's fighting qualities once ashore, but the landings themselves were delayed and confused. The lack of ship-to-shore training and an absence of coordination between Marine amphibious tractor drivers and the tank landing ships' crews were most noticeable. One could be sure that future amphibious training would be intensified.[4]

Beaches Red and White at Camp Pendleton are historically significant for their contributions to the successful Central Pacific drive and beyond by U.S. Forces in 1944 and 1945, significant for themselves and as representatives for Marine training facilities in the United States and overseas.

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4. The Fourth Marine Division's landing on Tinian later in 1944 was acclaimed for its perfection. Lt. Gen. H.M. Smith called it "the perfect amphibious operation of World War II." See Henry I. Shaw, Bernard C. Nalty, and Edwin T. Turnbladh, Central Pacific Drive, History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II, vol. 3 (Washington, 1966), p. 355.

BOUNDARIES

Beach Red. Beginning at a point on the southwest side of Interstate Highway 5 and 700 feet southeast of the intersection of Interstate 5 and Las Flores Creek, then in a straight line southwest 233 degrees to the ocean's edge, then in a northwesterly direction following the ocean's edge for one mile, then in a straight line northeast 53 degrees to the boundary between Beach Red and Interstate 5, then in a southeasterly direction following this boundary to the point of beginning.

White Beach. Beginning at a point on the southwest side of Interstate Highway 5 and 2,450 feet southwest of the intersection of Interstate 5 and the unnamed creek that drains French Canyon, then in a straight line southwest 236 degrees to the ocean's edge, then in a northwesterly direction following the ocean's edge for one mile, then in a straight line northeast 56 degrees to the boundary between Beach White and Interstate 5, then in a southeasterly direction following this boundary to the point of beginning.

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_____; Ludwig, Verle E.; and Shaw, Henry I. Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal. History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II, vol. 1. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1958.

Isely, Jeter A., and Crowl, Philip A. The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War, Its Theory, and Its Practice in the Pacific. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951.

Shaw, Henry I.; Nalty, Bernard C.; and Turnbladh, Edwin T. Central Pacific Drive. History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II, vol. 3. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966.

U.S. Navy, Bureau of Yards and Docks. Building the Navy's Bases in World War II, 2 vols. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947.

Webster's American Military Biographies. Springfield, Mass.: G.& C. Merriam Company, 1978.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Red Beach

Acreage of nominated property 230 acres

Quadrangle name Las Pulgas Canyon

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 11 | 457600 | 3683380 |
| B | 11 | 457090 | 3683000 |
| C | 11 | 456120 | 3684280 |
| D | 11 | 456500 | 3684600 |
| E | | | |
| F | | | |
| G | | | |
| H | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| state | code | county | code |

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erwin N. Thompson, Historian

organization National Park Service, Denver Service Center date July 17, 1984

street & number 755 Parfet Street telephone (303) 234-4509

city or town Denver state Colorado 80225

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

# 10. Geographical Data

White Beach

Acreage of nominated property 315 acres

Quadrangle name Las Pulgas Canyon

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 11 | 459110 | 3680120 |
| B | 11 | 459370 | 3679640 |
| C | 11 | 458560 | 3680900 |
| D | 11 | 459040 | 3681240 |
| E | | | |
| F | | | |
| G | | | |
| H | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title

organization date

street & number telephone

city or town state

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

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State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

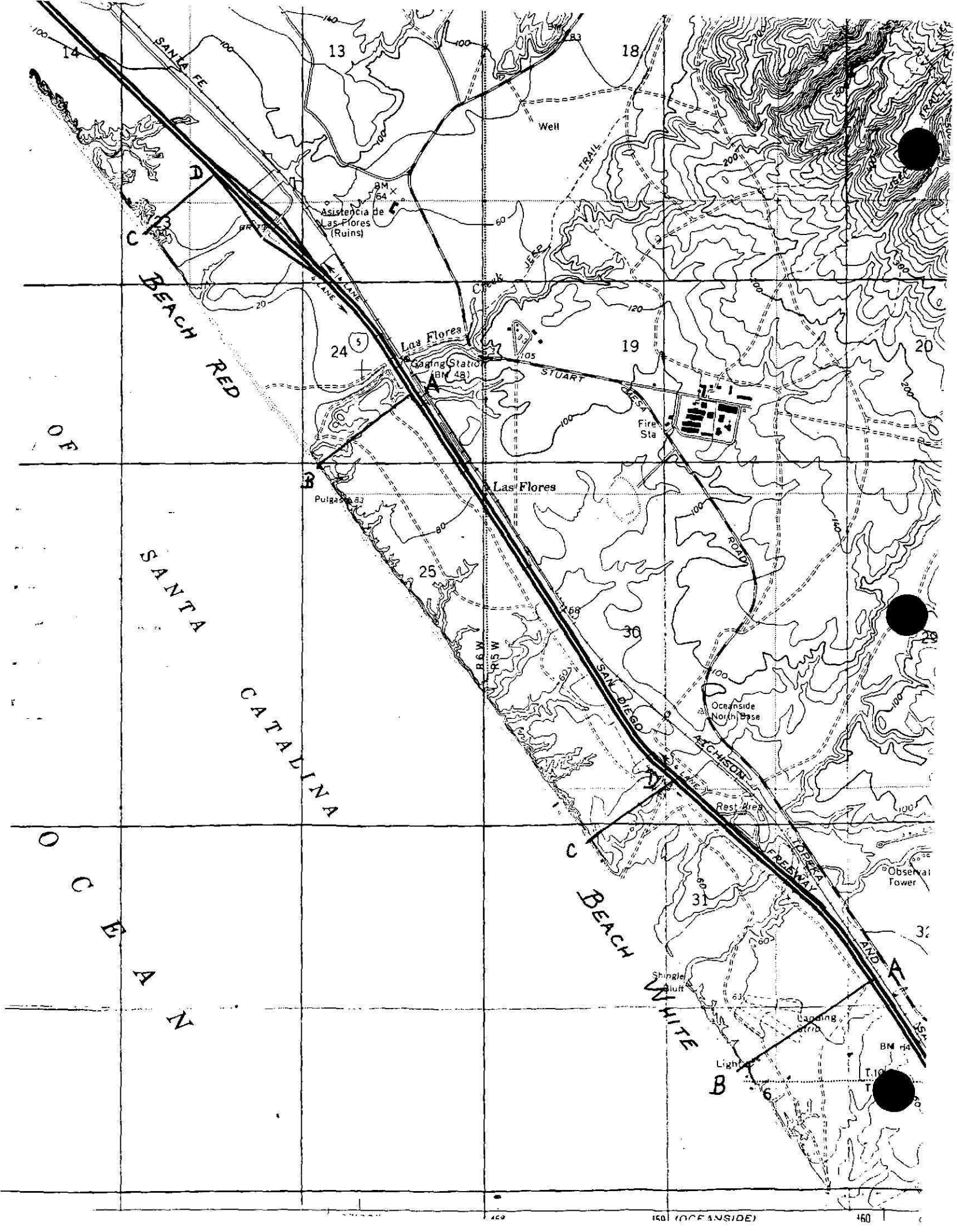
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

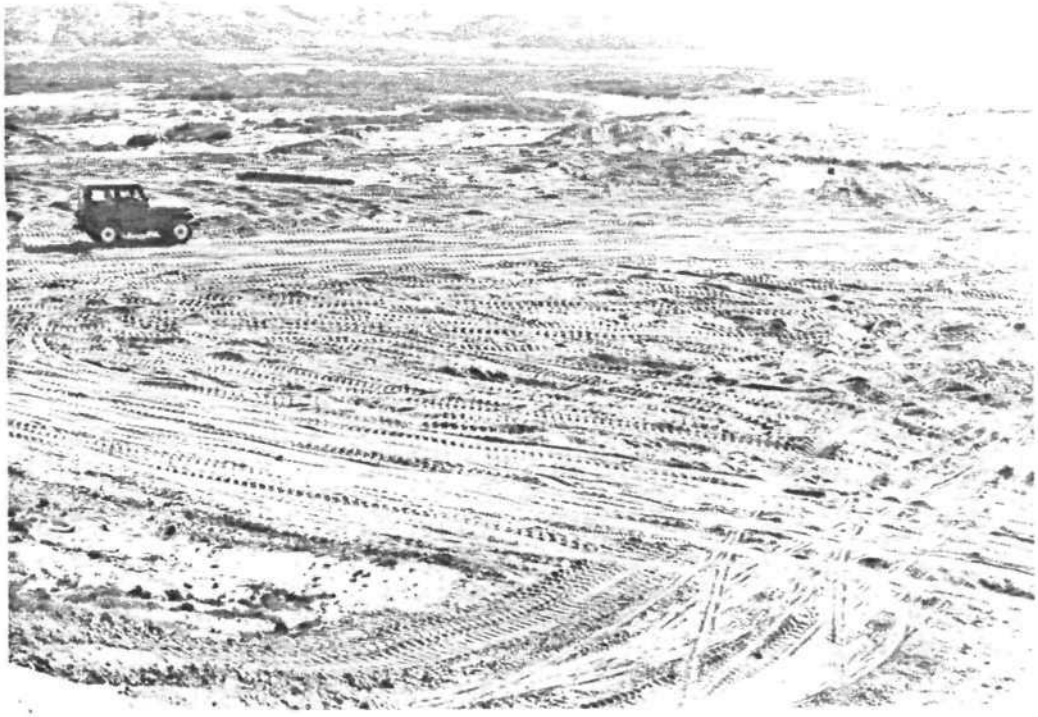
Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311


SANTA FE
Well
TRAIL
Asistencia de Las Flores (Ruins)
JEEP
Creek
Las Flores
Gaging Station (BM 48)
STUART
MESA
Fire Sta
Las Flores
Pulgas
ROAD
R 6 W
R 5 W
SAN DIEGO
ATCHISON
Oceanside North Base
Rest Area
TOPEKA
FREEWAY
AND
Observat Tower
Shingle Bluff
Landing Strip
Light
BM 64
BM 48
RED BEACH
OF
SANTA CATALINA
OCEAN
WHITE BEACH
A
B
C
D
13
14
18
19
20
24
25
30
31
6
(OCEANSIDE)

2. Another view of Red Beach. Bluff to the left is near the southern boundary of the landing area.

Photo by E.N. Thompson February 1984



4. General view of White Beach.

Photo by E.N. Thompson February 1984

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

NHL — WWII PACIFIC

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Navy Yard Puget Sound

and or common Bremerton Navy Yard; Puget Sound Naval Shipyard

## 2. Location

street & number ___ not for publication

city, town Bremerton ___ vicinity of

state Wasington code 53 county Kitsap code 035

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| X district | X public | X occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | ___ unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| ___ site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | ___ yes: restricted | ___ government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | ___ yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | X no | X military | ___ other: |

## 4. Owner of Property

name U.S. Department of the Navy

street & number

city, town Washington ___ vicinity of state D.C.

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. U.S. Department of the Navy

street & number

city, town Washington state D.C.

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| X excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | X original site |
| ___ good | ___ ruins | X altered | ___ moved date _____ |
| ___ fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The industrial area at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard lies along the waterfront, partly on new land, of Sinclair Inlet, Bremerton, Washington. There are six drydocks, of which five played roles in World War II. From east to west, they are: Drydock 3, the first drydock in the U.S. Navy designed for ship building, completed in 1919 and enlarged in 1930 to 867 feet in length; Drydock 1, 650 feet long, 39 feet in depth, and completed in 1896; Drydock 2, 827 feet long, 38 feet in depth, and completed in 1913; Drydocks 4 and 5, each 1,000 feet long and constructed at the beginning of World War II, they were large enough to accommodate the largest battleships and carriers of World War II. Drydock 6 postdates World War II.

In the vicinity of the five drydocks are six piers. From west to east, they are: Pier 3, a fitting-out pier constructed in 1940; Pier 4, a fitting-out pier constructed in 1941; Pier 5, built in World War I; Pier 6, built in World War I, is the largest, measuring 1,200 feet by 100 feet, and having a 250-ton hammerhead crane capable of lifting battleship guns and gun turrets and erected in 1933; and Piers 7 and 8. The drydocks and piers resulted in the navy yard being considered the West Coast battleship repair center during World War II.

A large number of shop buildings, storehouses, and other structures are in the industrial area. At the east end of the yard is the large shipfitters assembly shop, No. 460. The T-shaped, steel-frame, metal-clad building was constructed in 1942 and measures 540 feet by 300 feet and 80 feet in height. Its interior is mainly one cavernous space. Construction costs amounted to $1 million. Between Drydocks 2 and 4 is the huge machine shop, No. 431, that was completed in 1935. A brick facing covers the heavy concrete and steel construction. Floor space amounts to five acres. In 1942, a six-story extension, 280 feet by 170 feet, was added to the machine shop, resulting in total dimensions of 1,080 feet by 310 feet.

One of the more imposing structures in the shipyard is the main building of the Naval Supply Center. This seven-story general storehouse, No. 467, measuring 450 feet by 150 feet, was constructed in 1941 at a cost of $2.3 million. The oldest building in the industrial area is the yard's first general office building, No. 50, erected in 1893 but moved from its original site in 1910. It is a 2½-story frame structure, painted white. Four Ionic columns support a pediment over the main entrance, but the building today possesses fewer exterior architectural refinements than when first constructed.

Other shops in the shipyard include boat and joiner, central tool, forge, foundry, galvanizing, paint, pattern, pipe and copper, print, riggers and laborers, sail loft, shipwright, wood caulker, and welding. These buildings are constructed of a variety of materials--brick, frame, metal, and concrete--and in a variety of sizes and shapes. Railroad tracks enter the reservation from the west with spurs running through the industrial area for a total length of 35 miles.

Parts of the naval reservation are excluded from this nomination. These include the residential and administrative area, mostly on a bluff west and north of Farragut Avenue, i.e., the northwestern portion of the reservation; the Naval Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility and the vessels moored there in the southwest portion of the reservation; the piers and Drydock 6 south of the Naval Supply Center; and that portion of the reservation west of the seven-story Naval Supply Center, No. 467.

The historic district recommended includes the eastern and southern portion of the naval reservation so as to include the five drydocks, piers 3 through 8, and the shops and other buildings associated with the shipyard. Only the exteriors of all structures and the general setting within the recommended historic district are considered to contribute to the historical significance of the area. Building interiors and functions are not considered to add to that significance.

A nuclear-powered submarine repair facility today, the shipyard is highly restricted to visitation. All photographs in this nomination were taken by an official naval photographer and cleared for use herein by the shipyard.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1941-1945 **Builder Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Navy Yard Puget Sound was the principal repair establishment for battle-damaged battleships and aircraft carriers as well as smaller warships of the Pacific Fleet during World War II. Five of the eight battleships bombed at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, were repaired at the shipyard and returned to sea. During the war, the navy yard repaired 31 battleships (some more than once), 18 aircraft carriers, 13 cruisers, and 68 destroyers. In addition, 50 ships were built or fitted out at the yard. The more than 30,000 workers built, fitted out, repaired, or overhauled 394 fighting ships between 1941 and 1945. The navy yard's contribution to the success of the Pacific Fleet from the first to the last day of the war was inestimable.

Origins

As early as 1867, a board of army engineers, examining the West Coast for future defenses, recommended the establishment of a naval station and drydock in Puget Sound. In 1889, Capt. Alfred Thayer Mahan, USN, led a naval commission to examine the Pacific Northwest and Alaska for a navy yard site. The commissioners recommended Point Turner in Puget Sound where the shipyard and Bremerton now stand.[1] Because of political opposition from California and Oregon, Congress did not approve the site until 1896. Later that year the Navy purchased 190 acres at a cost or $9,513, mostly from a Seattle land speculator, William Bremerton. Immediately, the Puget Sound Naval Station was commissioned. Construction of Drydock 1 began in 1892 and the completion date was April 1896. The drydock, mostly of wooden construction at first but now concrete, measured 650 feet in length, 39 feet deep, with a width of 130 feet at the top and 67 feet at the bottom. Cost of the project came to $750,000. On April 11, 1897, the first battleship, USS Oregon, docked at the station. Three years later, in 1902, the station was raised in rank and renamed Navy Yard Puget Sound. The Great White Fleet, returning home from its world cruise in 1908, arrived at the yard to refuel at the coaling station.

Drydock 2 was completed in 1913. Constructed with granite and concrete, the completed drydock was the largest in the U.S. Navy at that time, being 827 feet long and 145 feet wide at the top. In 1917, before the United States entered World War I, the Navy Department decided to build ships at the yard. Drydock 3 was constructed for this purpose, although it was not completed until 1919. By the end of the war, the 6,500 workers at Bremerton had undertaken the construction of 42 vessels, including subchasers, submarines,

1. The navy yard preceded adjoining Bremerton in time.

mine sweepers, ocean tugs, and ammunition ships, in addition to 1,700 small boats. In 1918, the yard workers welcomed the visit of King George V of Great Britain and his son, the Prince of Wales. Between the two great wars, ship building continued at a reduced rate. Light cruiser USS Louisville was launched in 1930 and cruiser USS Astoria, in 1933. In the 1930s, Drydock 3 was enlarged to accommodate two new, then-colossal carriers, Lexington and Saratoga, both commissioned in 1927.[2]

World War II

Beginning in 1938 and extending into the early 1940s, Navy Yard Puget Sound underwent major improvements, including the construction of 1,000-foot-long Drydocks 4 and 5, which were sufficiently large for the new fast battleships then under construction. New quays and piers as well as shop buildings sprouted. Two double shipbuilding ways were constructed for building escort vessels.[3] When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, battleship USS Colorado was at Bremerton undergoing modernization, thus escaping the enemy's bombs.

Five of the wounded veterans of Pearl Harbor arrived at Bremerton for repairs: battleships Tennessee, Maryland, Nevada, California, and West Virginia. Tennessee received new 14-inch rifles for her main battery; old antiaircraft guns were taken out and new 20 and 40mm batteries installed; and the ship was completely overhauled and modernized. Nevada was extensively rebuilt and sailed from Puget Sound in time for the Aleutian campaign in 1943. California had been sunk at Pearl Harbor. She was raised, her hull made watertight, and she arrived in Bremerton for repairs. California rejoined the battleline in January 1944. West Virginia, hit by six or seven torpedoes, took the longest to repair and did not rejoin the fleet until July 1944, practically a new ship. In January 1944, Maryland and Colorado returned to Puget Sound for rebuilding. Both battleships were ready to take part on the assault on the Marianas later that year. Other well-known battleships that arrived at the yard during the war included Pennsylvania, Washington, New Jersey, and South Dakota.

In January 1942, a Japanese submarine hit carrier Saratoga with a torpedo near Oahu, Hawaii. She arrived at Bremerton for both repairs and modernization, including watertight integrity and additional antiaircraft armament. Workers swarmed over the ship in a valiant effort to get her ready for the Battle of

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2. When a drought caused a shortage of hydro-electricity in Tacoma in 1929, Lexington arrived at Puget Sound Navy Yard to generate electricity for the city.

3. These ways are no longer extant.

Midway in June. They could not complete the work in time, and Saratoga missed the fight. Another reminder of the importance of the yard's mission came in a letter from Adm. Chester W. Nimitz in November 1942. He told all navy yards that the campaign in the Solomons hung in the balance and the issue could be determined by the speed with which damaged ships were returned to the fleet. He urged the yards to even greater efforts and more hours of work. Besides Saratoga, other carriers came to Puget Sound for repairs, including USS Enterprise, Bunker Hill, Franklin, Ticonderoga, Wasp, and Lexington.

One of the more spectacular repair undertakings at Puget Sound involved cruiser Pittsburg. During a typhoon in the East China Sea, the cruiser lost the entire forward section ahead of No. 1 gun turret. At Puget Sound an entire new bow was built and attached to the cruiser. By the end of the war, Navy Yard Puget Sound had repaired, overhauled, and modernized 344 fighting ships of all types. On August 12, 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt arrived at the yard on board cruiser Indianapolis. The cruiser was floated into Drydock 2 where the President spoke to the workers, thanking them for their contribution to the war effort.

On December 1, 1945, the navy yard's name was changed to Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. After the war, the Naval Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility became a tenant at the shipyard. Until recently, USS Missouri was moored here, open to visitors. Inactive ships today include aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers, and submarines. Puget Sound Naval Shipyard has remained active since World War II. During the Korean War, it was engaged in a ship activation program. In 1957, construction of guided missile ships began. Since 1961, Puget Sound has been engaged in the repair of nuclear-powered submarines.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name Bremerton West and Bremerton East

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 10 | 528140 | 5267810 | B | 10 | 528180 | 5267200 |
| C | 10 | 527720 | 5266820 | D | 10 | 526550 | 5266820 |
| E | 10 | 526550 | 5267030 | F | 10 | 527500 | 5267800 |
| G | | | | H | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| state | code | county | code |

# 11. Form Prepared By

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| name/title | Erwin N.Thompson, Historian | | |
| organization | National Park Service, Denver Service Center | date | August 9, 1984 |
| street & number | 755 Parfet Street | telephone | (303) 234-4509 |
| city or town | Denver | state | Colorado 80225 |

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

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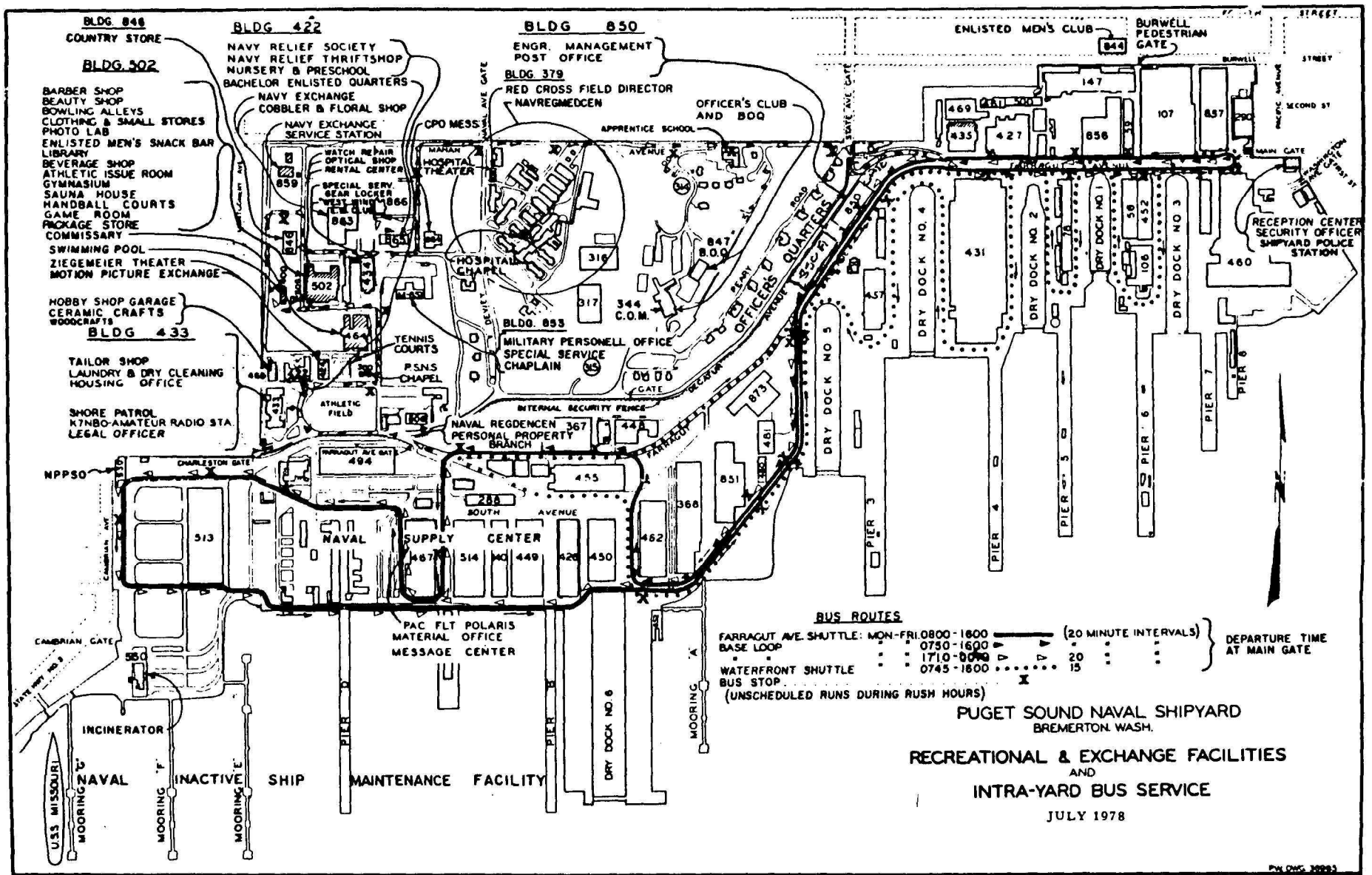
_____. 13th Naval District. "General Correspondence of 13th Naval District and Components," and Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, "Correspondence Files, 1941-1946," both in Federal Archives and Records Center, Seattle, WA.

BOUNDARY

Beginning at the southwest corner of the intersection of Burwell Street and a north-south street one block west of and parallel to Pacific Avenue, then due south in a straight line along the west curb of that street to the south corner of the shipyard's main gate on Front Street, then in a straight line due east along the south curb of Front Street 200 feet, then in a straight line south southeast, 152 degrees, for a distance of 1,400 feet to a point in the waters of Sinclair Inlet, then in a straight line south southwest, 240 degrees, for a distance of 2,300 feet to a point in the waters of Sinclair Inlet, then in a straight line due west through the inlet and along the south edge of a quay for a distance of 3,900 feet, then in a straight line due north along the east curb of a north-south street adjacent to Naval Supply Building 467 for one block to an intersection with an east-west street, then due east along the south curb of that east-west street one block to its intersection with a north-south street, then due north along the east curb of that north-south street to its intersection with Farragut Avenue, then east and northeast along the south curb of Farragut Avenue 3,600 feet to its intersection with a north-south street, then north along the east curb of that street to its intersection with Burwell Street, then in a straight line due east along the south curb of Burwell Street to the point of beginning.

This boundary encloses the historic district of Puget Sound Naval Shipyard to include its drydocks, piers, and shop buildings of the World War II period.




NAVSHIPYDBREM P5720(3)

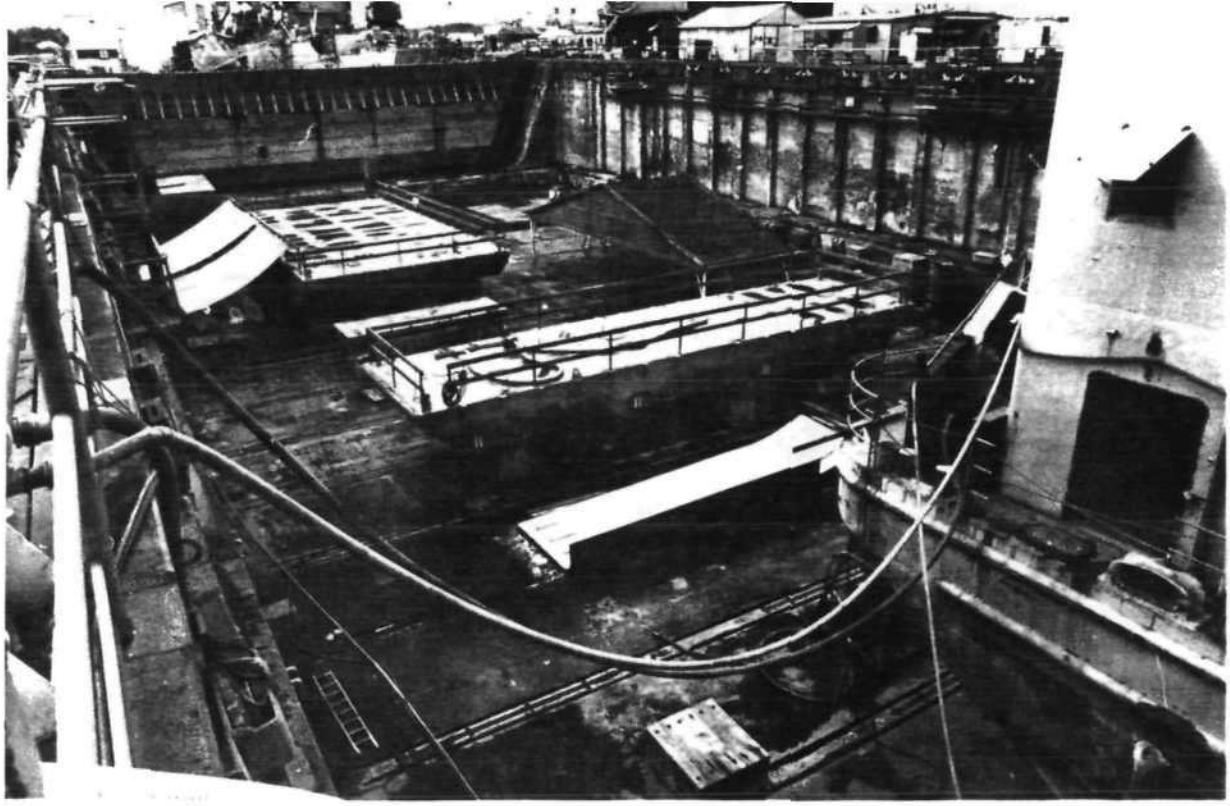
BREMERTON
Olympic College
High Sch
Smith Sch
Harrison Memorial Hosp
Coontz Jr High Sch
BURWELL ST
Tower
PUGET SOUND NAVAL SHIPYARD
CALLOW
Port Washington
MANETTE BRIDGE
Narrows
Point Herron
Point Turner
Radio Tower KBRO
Light
Cable Area
Sinclair Inlet
FERRY
Annapolis
Veterans Home (Retsil PO)
Veterans Home Cemy
Sand
BM 13
City Hall
Piles
County Adm Bldg
Sunset Lane Cem
PORT ORCHARD
Water Tank
Radio Tower
Givens Sch
Parkwood
Golf Cours
Orchard Heights
BM 215

1. Pier 6 on left. The huge, revolving hammerhead crane to the right can lift the guns and gun turrets of battleships.

Courtesy, U.S. Navy February 1984

2. Machine shop building. The six-story extension on the right was added during World War II.

Courtesy, U.S. Navy February 1984



3. Inside Drydock 3, Puget Sound Naval shipyard.

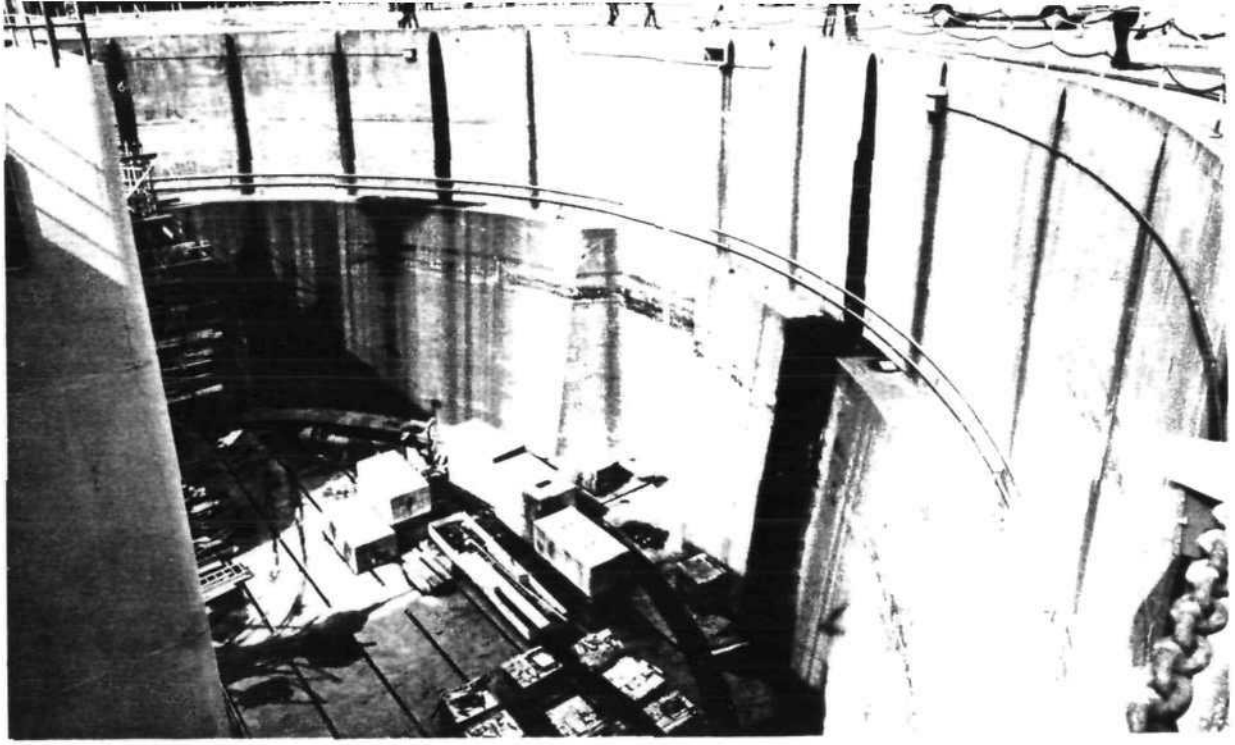
Courtesy, U.S. Navy

February 1984

4. Huge supply building constructed at the shipyard during World War II.

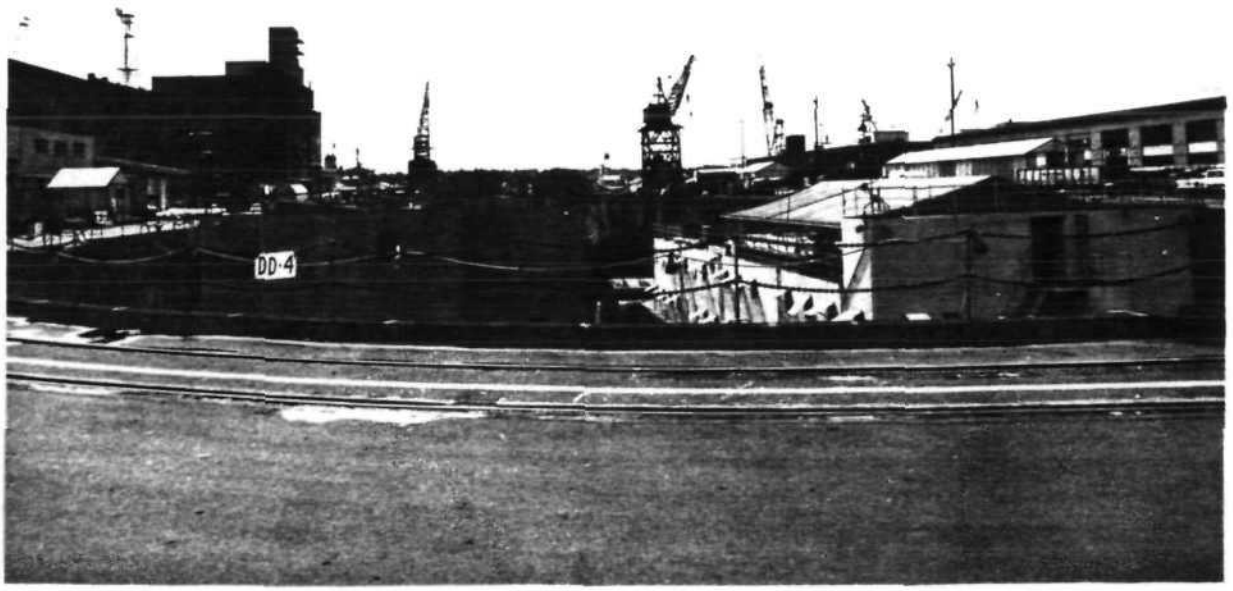
Courtesy, U.S. Navy

February 1984



5. Drydock 4, one of two large drydocks constructed on the eve of World War II. It was capable of taking the largest battleships and carriers of that period.

Courtesy, U.S. Navy February 1984




6. Another view of Drydock 4. Tight security prohibited closer views.

Courtesy, U.S. Navy February 1984

7. Shopfitters building, one of many shops at the shipyard.

Courtesy, U.S. Navy February 1984

8. Another view of the large, L-shaped shopfitters building.

Courtesy, U.S. Navy February 1984

9. Drydock 2 filled with water. In 1944, a cruiser bearing President Franklin D. Roosevelt entered this drydock. The President addressed the shipyard workers.

Courtesy, U.S Navy

February 1984

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

NHL - WWII PACIFIC

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

**United States Department of the Interior**
**National Park Service**

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Manzanar War Relocation Camp

and or common Manzanar Internment or Concentration Camp

## 2. Location

street & number ____ not for publication

city, town X vicinity of Lone Pine

state California code 06 county Inyo code 027

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ____ district | X public | ____ occupied | ____ agriculture | ____ museum |
| ____ building(s) | ____ private | X unoccupied | ____ commercial | ____ park |
| ____ structure | ____ both | ____ work in progress | ____ educational | ____ private residence |
| X site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ____ entertainment | ____ religious |
| ____ object | ____ in process | ____ yes: restricted | X government | ____ scientific |
| | ____ being considered | X yes: unrestricted | ____ industrial | ____ transportation |
| | | ____ no | ____ military | ____ other: |

## 4. Owner of Property

name City of Los Angeles

street & number 200 N. Spring Street

city, town Los Angeles ____ vicinity of state California

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Inyo County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Lone Pine state California

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Manzanar War Relocation Center has this property been determined eligible? X yes ____ no

date July 30, 1976 X federal ____ state ____ county ____ local

depository for survey records National Register of Historic Places

city, town Washington state DC

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| ___ excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | X original site |
| ___ good | X ruins | X altered | ___ moved date _____ |
| X fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Manzanar War Relocation Center, an internment camp, is in Owens Valley, California, at the eastern base of the dramatic Sierra Valley and near Mount Whitney. The rugged mountain peaks form an impressive background for the dry desert of the campsite. To the east, the Inyo Mountains form the skyline. Formerly agricultural land, Owens Valley changed to its desert-like quality when the City of Los Angeles arranged to use the valley's water resources early in this century. In 1942, the U.S. Government set aside 6,000 acres in the valley for the establishment of a camp for the internment of persons of Japanese descent. Of this area, 640 acres were for the camp proper.

The 640-acre rectangle that comprised the 10,000-person capacity camp was originally surrounded by a barbed-wire fence with a watch tower at each corner and midway along each of the four sides. The fence and the towers are gone, but along the western side of the former camp the trace of the fence is visible by means of a row of posts, and the concrete foundation posts of the northwest tower remain.

At the main entrance of the camp, 1st Street, the inhabitants built two stone structures, each having a hint of Oriental architecture in its outline. The structure nearer the highway was a sentry post manned by Army personnel. The other was a police post manned by internees. On the walls of both, returning veterans of the camp have inscribed their names, often listing their room, building, and block numbers. The State of California has placed a landmark plaque on the sentry post.

In the beginning, the hastily built, one-story barracks were divided into rooms, each 20 feet by 24 feet and each housing a family. These barracks were arranged into 36 blocks of 16 barracks each. The dusty streets that separated the blocks can be traced in part. Common bathrooms, showers, laundries, and mess halls were located within the blocks. Here and there, concrete slabs with their drain holes and concrete posts that supported structures are found. Within several of the blocks, traces of former rock gardens survive. North of Block 23, near the orphanage site, are traces of the largest Japanese-style garden, Merritt Park, in the camp.

The southeast corner of the camp was the Federal administrative area with offices and staff housing. Ruins here are more extensive than elsewhere in the camp. Several rock walls and concrete slabs stand. Also, rock-lined flower circles and rock-lined paths are more prevalent than in the camp generally. One rock-walled circle marks the site of the camp flagstaff.

Northwest of the main entrance, and now having its own entrance from the highway, is the only substantial building remaining. This large metal building served as the school auditorium and is an Inyo County maintenance shop and garage.

West of the camp and adjacent to it is a cemetery site. The inscription on a monument translates to English as the "Tower of Memory." Several burials are said to remain. At the northwest corner of the camp, the concrete footings of the hospital complex are found. Trees scattered along intermittent Bairs Creek in the southwest area offer some shade. Camp residents once had a picnic area here.

In 1945, the campsite was cleared of nearly all structures and returned to the administration of the City of Los Angeles in much the same condition as it had been before. The historically significant area is the 640 acres that comprised the camp at Manzanar and which was surrounded by a barbed-wire fence. It includes the cemetery site that lay outside the fence.

Outside the boundary of the camp, northwest of the northwest corner and near Shepherd Creek, is a 600,000-gallon water reservoir constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It is excluded from the recommended boundaries.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | ___ military | ___ social/humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | X other (specify) Wartime Internment Camp |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1942-45 **Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which authorized the Secretary of War to exclude citizens and aliens from certain designated areas as a security measure against sabotage and espionage. As a result, 110,000 persons of Japanese descent, most of them American citizens, were forcibly removed from their homes in California, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska, and removed to permanent camps far from the Pacific Coast. Manzanar was the first of these camps. Here, in a scrubby desert, 10,000 of these people were herded into barracks without being accused of any crime or given any hearing or a trial. Thus, a long history of anti-Japanese agitation and legislation on the West Coast reached a climax. Eventually, most Americans came to the conclusion that a grave injustice had been caused these people and their constitutional rights had been violated. Meanwhile, the vast majority of Japanese-Americans remained loyal to the country despite this great adversity. Manzanar is symbolic of this drastic event in American history, an event that is a reminder that a nation of laws needs constantly to honor the concept of freedom and the rights of its citizens.

Japanese-Americans

The arrival of the first Japanese immigrants in the United States in the 1880s was welcomed by West Coast promoters who were looking for cheap labor to replace Chinese after the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. At first, Japanese were slow to enter the United States, although a number emigrated to the Kingdom of Hawaii to work on the sugar plantations. When Hawaii became a United States Territory in 1898, many of these Japanese were free to move to the mainland, eventually causing Californians of an anti-Asian persuasion to view the newcomers as part of an Oriental threat to the social well-being of the country. At the same time, Japan was developing into an industrial nation at an astounding rate, which also alarmed some Americans of a "Yellow Peril."

The migration continued. In 1890 there were 3,000 Japanese in the United States. In 1900, 12,600 arrived, mostly from Hawaii. Between 1900 and 1908, 135,000 Japanese entered the country, many settling in California. Political and labor leaders, joined by newspaper publishers, began active campaigns against further immigration. Reacting to California's concerns, the Federal Government restricted Japanese immigration in 1908 ("The Gentleman's Agreement"), then prohibited it entirely in 1924. Also, Japanese who had entered the country were barred from citizenship. Meanwhile, California passed the Alien Land Law in 1913, which had the effect of preventing Japanese immigrants from owning land. Many Issei (first-generation immigrants), however, simply transferred their titles to their American-born children (Nisei).

Even before Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor sentiment against Japanese in America had reached a high pitch. December 7, 1941, lit the flame. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, returning from a hasty inspection of Hawaii, informed the nation that the attack had succeeded because of the effective fifth-column work in the Islands. In fact, there was no fifth column in Hawaii. Lt. Gen. John L. DeWitt, commanding general of the Western Defense Command, wrote in February 1942:

> The Japanese race is an enemy race and while many second and third generation Japanese born on United States soil, possessed of United States citizenship, have become "Americanized," the racial strains are undiluted. ... It, therefore, follows that along the Pacific Coast over 112,000 potential enemies, of Japanese extraction, are at large today. There are indications that these were organized and ready for concerted action at a favorable opportunity. The very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken.[1]

General DeWitt carried out Presidential Executive Order 9066, first attempting to have Japanese-Americans move from military zones voluntarily. State governments in the interior of the country generally refused to receive these people. Meanwhile, the Justice Department rounded up aliens who were considered potentially dangerous to the war effort. These included both German and Japanese individuals who were turned over to the Department's own internment centers.[2]

On March 18, 1942, the War Relocation Authority (WRA), first headed by Milton S. Eisenhower and then by Dillon S. Myer, was created to head the mass resettlement. The U.S. Army selected the first two camp sites, Manzanar in California's Owens Valley and Poston on the Colorado River in Arizona. The Army Corps of Engineers began construction at these two sites and eight other that were chosen by the WRA:

| Camp | Capacity |
|---|---|
| Manzanar, California | 10,000 |
| Tule Lake, California | 16,000 |
| Poston, Arizona (3 units) | 20,000 |
| Rivers, Arizona (2 units) | 15,000 |
| Minidoka, Idaho | 10,000 |
| Topaz, Utah | 10,000 |
| Granada, Colorado | 8,000 |
| Heart Mountain, Wyoming | 12,000 |
| Jerome, Arkansas | 10,000 |
| Rohwer, Arkansas | 10,000 |

The Army oversaw the evacuation, which began in March and was completed by August 1942, and controlled most of the evacuees themselves until November when the War Relocation Authority took over camp administration. Manzanar, however, differed. It was filled to overflowing early in the process, its evacuees being moved there directly from their homes rather than being first sent to assembly centers, and the camp was turned over to the WRA on June 1, 1942.

The Japanese-Americans arriving at Manzanar found themselves in miserable circumstances. Rows of 20 by 100-foot, tarpaper-covered barracks were their living quarters. All other facilities were communal. One woman later recalled,

> They used cheap pine wood /for walls/. The knots would fall off so we could see into a neighbor's room, and we could hear the shocking sound of voices, complaining, arguing bitterly. We weren't used to this. Our family was a gentle family. I was deeply upset because our daughter was listening, and I couldn't shut it out.[3]

By their own efforts, however, the internees gradually improved their living conditions as far as circumstances allowed. Doctors and medical supplies slowly improved in quality and quantity. After severe shortages, school supplies became more plentiful. The internees established a chicken ranch, a hog farm, and a pickle factory. For a time, the camp manufactured camouflage materials for the military.

A picture has sometimes been drawn of Japanese-Americans living passively in these camps throoughout the long months of internment, accepting their fate calmly. In fact, episodes of turmoil and violence occurred in nearly all the camps. Manzanar was no exception. In December 1942, six masked men attacked a suspected informer for the camp administration. The latter identified one of the attackers who was jailed. A mass meeting was held to protest the arrest. Negotiations breaking down, an angry crowd regathered and vowed to "get" other suspected informers. The camp director ("project director") then called in military police. The crowd refused to disperse; the military police threw tear gas, then opened fire. Two men were killed and nine wounded. The suspected leaders of the riot were removed from Manzanar and eventually were resettled at Tule Lake, California, after that camp became a center for dissenters from all the others.

As 1942 ended, the War Department decided to establish a Nisei combat team for service in Europe. Volunteers had to pass a loyalty review by answering a questionnaire. This poorly written document resulted in deep divisions within the camps. Some people refused to answer questions concerning loyalty on the basis their legal rights were being denied. Deep and troubling rifts among the

internees developed. In the end, men from Manzanar volunteered for the Army, and the all-Nisei 442nd Regimental Combat Team went on to glory in Italy and France. Another 3,700 Nisei served in combat areas in the Pacific War, mainly in intelligence functions, where they won the admiration of Army and Marine officers in the Central Pacific and elsewhere.

As the war progressed, more and more American leaders questioned the justification for continuing the relocation camps. As the months passed, more and more internees received permission to leave the camps, for military service, college, farm work, and the like. Manzanar's population declined to 5,000 in 1944; the camp was closed in 1945. Forty years later, Japanese-Americans continue to make annual pilgrimages to this scene of their incarceration.

Footnotes

1. Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, Personal Justice Denied, Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment Of Civilians (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982), p. 6.

2. Department of Justice internment centers are not to be confused with the ten relocation or internment camps to which the general West Coast Japanese population was moved. Since 1942, there has been much debate over the names of the latter camps. Although some Japanese-Americans prefer the term "concentration camps," the application of this term to the horrors in Europe make it unacceptable to other Americans. The U.S. Supreme Court refused to use the term in 1944. The term "internment camp" allows for confusion between the ten camps and the Justice Department's detention centers. "Relocation camp" is innocuous.

3. Fred Barbash, "In Desert Camp, Life Behind Barbed Wire," The Washington Post, December 6, 1982.

Bibliography

Barbash, Fred. "Internment, The "Enemy" 40 Years Ago," The Washington Post, December 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, 1982.

Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. Personal Justice Denied, Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982.

Conn, Stetson; Engelman, Rose C.; and Fairchild, Byron. Guarding the United States and Its Outposts. The Western Hemisphere. United States Army In World II. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964.

Department of Parks and Recreation, State of California. "Manzanar Feasibility Study." Sacramento, 1974.

Hosokawa, Bill. Nisei, The Quiet Americans. New York: William Morrow and Co., 1969.

The Mazanar Committee. Extracts from "A Brief History of Manzanar," and "Self-Guided Tours of Manzanar," 1981.

Nomura, Shi. "Manzanar Pilgrim's Travel Fact Sheet," and "Camp Manzanar Points of Interest, Supplement Part II," 1980.

Boundary Description

Starting at a point where Highway 395 meets a dirt road entering the highway from the west 2,950 feet southeast of the intersection of Highway 395 and Shepherd Creek, then in a straight line along the west side of Highway 395 southeast for a distance of 6,250 feet to where Highway 395 meets a dirt road entering the highway from the west, then in a straight line in an southwesterly direction along the north side of that dirt road and projecting the line beyond the turning of that road for a total distance from Highway 395 of 4,250 feet, then in a straight line in a northwesterly direction until it reaches the east side of a northwest-southeast dirt road, then continuing in a straight line along the east side of that road to its end, then in a straight line along the south side of a dirt road in a northeasterly direction to the point of beginning.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 640 acres

Quadrangle name Lone Pine

Quadrangle scale 1:62,500

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 04 | 397060 | 4066021 |
| B | 04 | 398040 | 4064080 |
| C | 04 | 397000 | 4063070 |
| D | 04 | 396001 | 4065070 |
| E | | | |
| F | | | |
| G | | | |
| H | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| state | code | county | code |

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erwin N. Thompson, Historian

organization Denver Service Center date August 12, 1984

street & number 755 Parfet Street telephone (303) 234-7509

city or town Lakewood state Colorado

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

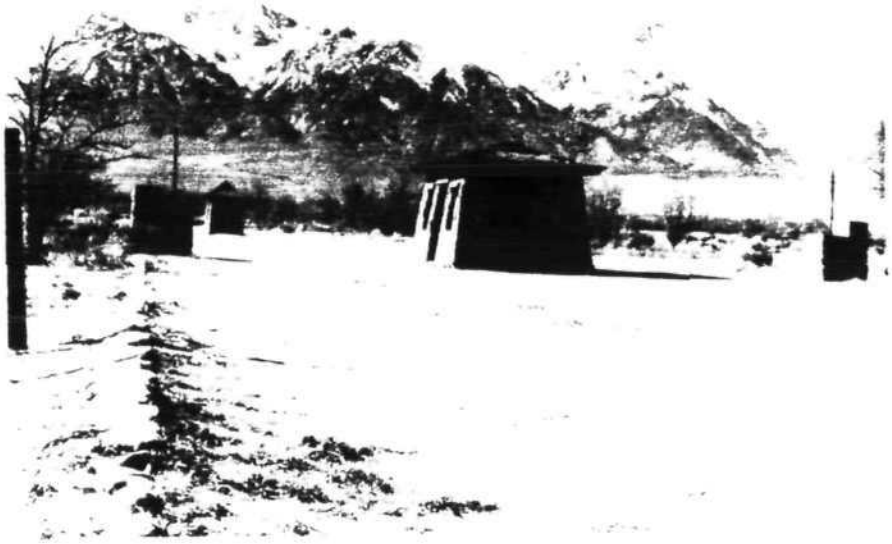
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

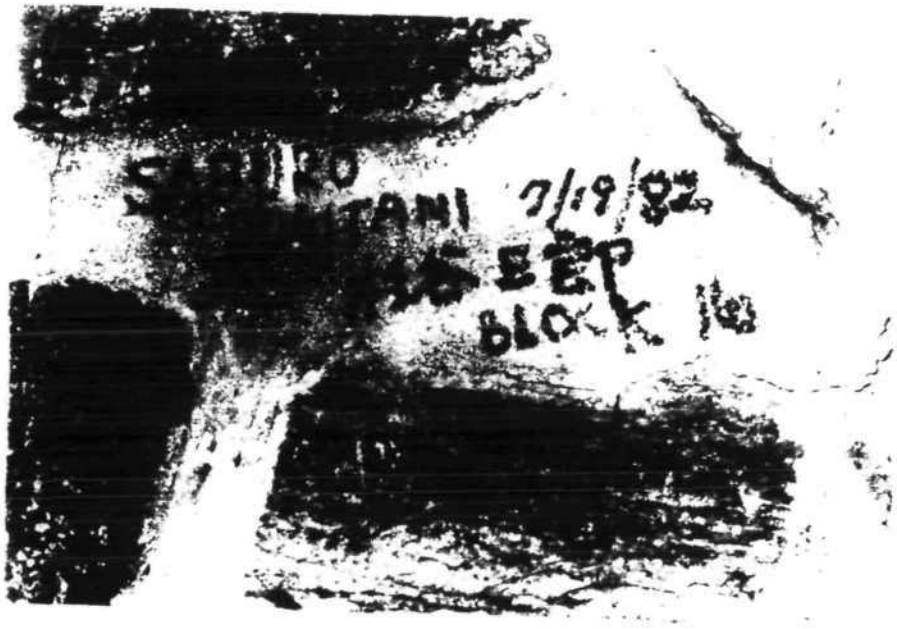
Attest: date

Chief of Registration



1. Guard posts at entrance to the Manzanar Camp. The nearer building was manned by the military; residents controlled the other one.

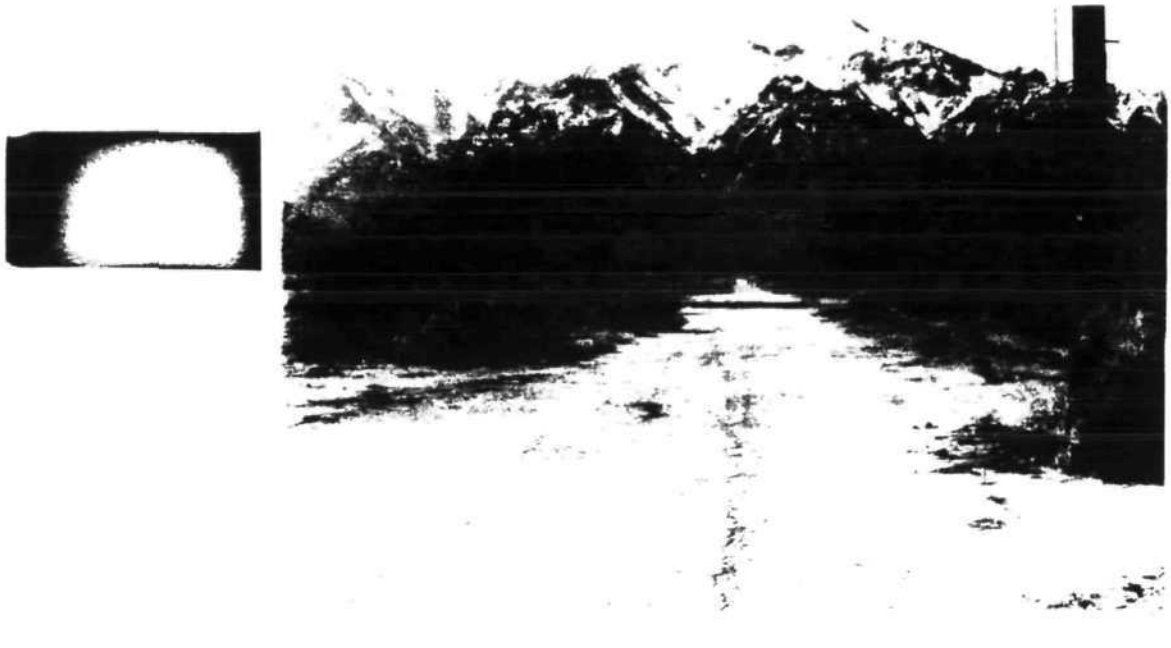
Photo by E.N. Thompson February 1984




2. A former occupant of the Manzanar Camp returns.

Photo by E.N. Thompson

February 1984



3. Manzanar street separating blocks of barracks. Sierra Nevada in the background.

Photo by E.N. Thompson

Febraury 1984

4. Stone ruins in the administrative area, Manzanar.

Photo by E.N. Thompson

February 1984

5. Steps leading nowhere, Manzanar.

Photo by E.N. Thompson February 1984

6. Rock-lined walk, Manzanar.

Photo by E.N. Thompson February 1984

7. Abandoned flower plots, Manzanar.

Photo by E.N. Thompson

February 1984

8. Concrete pad for a bathhouse, Manzanar.

Photo by E.N. Thompson

February 1984

9. Concrete foundation posts slowly weather away in the desert at Manzanar.

Photo by E.N. Thompson

February 1984

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

NHL — WWII, PACIFIC

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Sitka Naval Operating Base & U.S. Army Coastal Defenses, Sitka

and or common Sitka; the Causeway; Mt. Edgecumbe School

## 2. Location

street & number ___ not for publication

city, town _X_ vicinity of Sitka

state Alaska code 02 county Sitka District code 220

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| _X_ district | _X_ public | _X_ occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | ___ unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| ___ site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | _X_ yes: restricted | _X_ government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | ___ yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ no | ___ military | ___ other: |

## 4. Owner of Property

name Bureau of Indian Affairs, USDI, Juneau Area Office, PO Box 3-8000, Juneau, AK 99802 and Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Juneau, AK 99811

street & number

city, town ___ vicinity of state

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Alaska State Office, Bureau of Land Management, USDI

street & number 555 Cordova Street, Anchorage, AK 99501; and State Magistrate Alaska, Sitka, AK 99835

city, town state

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes _X_ no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| ___ excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | X original site |
| X good | X ruins | X altered | ___ moved date _____ |
| ___ fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Naval Operating Base. Located on Japonski Island, 220 acres, immediately in front of the City of Sitka, the Sitka Naval Operating Base began as a naval air station in 1939, although some seaplane facilities had been developed two years earlier. In 1946, the Navy transferred the property to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, USDI, which opened Mt. Edgecumbe School for Native Alaskan children in 1947. This school closed in 1983. The majority of the permanent naval structures, located on the northeast side of the island, have been retained. The school used many in their original functions, e.g., a gymnasium; while others were put to adaptive uses, e.g., a hangar became vocational shops. Through the years, the structures were "brought up to code" many times. But the exteriors of these permanent buildings and the general setting are remarkably true to their World War II appearance. Future use for this area has not been decided.

Elsewhere on Japonski Island several changes have occurred since the war. Nearly all of the navy's wartime temporary structures have disappeared. The U.S. Coast Guard has erected a modern station at the northwest end of the island. On high ground southwest of the naval hangars, U.S. Public Health Service operates a large, concrete, five-story hospital, constructed in 1950. (A small ell to the rear was originally a naval medical facility.) On the west side of Japonski, a runway has been carved out of rock and muskeg to serve Sitka's community airport. During the war, transportation between the naval base and Sitka was by ferry. In 1972, a steel bridge joined the two.

Japonski Island was set aside as a naval reservation in the 19th century. In 1902, the navy established a coaling station on it, of which one large coal storage building still stands, having been modified on both its interior and exterior. Construction of the naval air station proper began in 1939, first by a contractor, but completed by Seabees.

Designed primarily for seaplanes, air facilities consist of a large, concrete aircraft parking area-runway next to the water's edge and facing on Sitka Harbor. Two concrete ramps (50 by 270 feet and 50 by 310 feet) lead into the water. The parking area still has numerous steel rings for tying down aircraft. Inland are two large metal hangars side by side, each measuring 254 by 186 feet. The northern hangar has a control tower extending above the roof line. Two walls of the operations room within this tower have large murals of Southern and Southeast Alaska; but it is not known if they date from the war or were added later when the Federal Aviation Authority operated there. The school used the northern hangar as vocational training workshops, while a fieldhouse-gymnasium was housed in the southern one.

There having been no level area on Japonski suited for a land runway, a system of arresting gear and catapults was placed on the parking area in front of the hangars which allowed carrier-type aircraft to land on a 1,555- by 98-foot strip--similar to an aircraft carrier's. No trace of this equipment remains. According to Seabee records, a third hangar was constructed during the war, possibly in a large open area south of the existing ones. Set into a

retaining wall to the rear of the hangars is a series of small, stoutly constructed nitches that served as ready magazines. The seaplane runways were in Sitka Harbor (Channel) and in nearby Jamestown Bay.

Southeast of the air station, the navy constructed two piers, of which the main, T-shaped one is in an advanced state of deterioration today. Inland from these piers, stretching along the south end of the island, is the base's industrial area. Among the more prominent structures in this area are the former coaling building (above), shop buildings, and bombproof power plant.[1]

On higher ground behind the hangars stands the administrative area: at the south end is a two-story, concrete administration building. Near its center, a third story juts up which was a communications center. On its top is a observation deck (crow's nest). The school, too, used this structure as an administrative center, with offices and classrooms. In front of the building is a grassy area containing a flagstaff and a Russian-manufactured field piece, the history of which is unknown. (Sitka was Alaska's capital until 1900.) Also facing the cannon, at right-angles to the administration building, is the concrete naval recreation center that contained a gymnasium-800-seat theater, soda fountain, and bowling alleys. The school used the structure for much the same functions, including girls' gymnasium and school library. In a row and adjacent to this building are three other permanent structures--two large, two- and three-story barracks and a concrete mess hall. All four buildings are joined by closed-in corridors. In school days the barracks, divided into rooms, served as students' sleeping quarters. The mess hall and kitchen (galley) continued to function as such. A large, comfortable lounge served through both eras. But the naval brig, which is within the complex, was converted to a laundrette for students.

Between the hangar area and the northwest end of the island was officers' country. Here stands a large, three-story, bachelor officers' quarters, since converted to apartments; six duplexes for junior married officers (families were removed soon after Pearl Harbor); four larger sets of quarters for senior officers; and an officers' club (now named the Totem Club). These several structures were occupied by staff personnel during the school period.

Beginning as a neat-and-tidy naval air station and growing into a naval operating base (air station, radio station, naval sector base, Marine barracks, and subordinate naval shore activities), the installation readily adapted to a post-war role as a boarding school. Back in 1943, a newly-arrived Seabee wrote:

---

1. The power plant is similar to ones at Kodiak and Dutch Harbor. This is not surprising as the same contractor constructed all three at the same time.

It was a feeling of disbelief when we walked into a three story, steam heated barracks complete with tile heads and showers, lounge, double decked steel bunks, eight inch thick mattresses, steel lockers, and a magnificient view from every window. . . . We were amazed when we walked into the mess hall. The interior was white, stainless steel steam tables and coffee urns, tile deck, clean linoleum topped tables, and a radio-victrola combination. The library possessed practically everything one would want to read . . . . The recreation building housed the theater, canteen, basketball court, bowling alleys, billiard tables, exercise rooms, heads and showers.[2]

Coastal Defenses

The specific historical resource is Fort Rousseau on Makhnati Island and its Causeway islands. But to provide a historical setting, the army's coastal defense role is described in general. Once the naval air station was under construction, planning began for the installation of harbor defenses to protect the base. The navy's contractor began work on army housing in January 1941. The initial garrison arrived from Chilkoot Barracks in May. Little room being left on Japonski Island, the army selected two small islands to the south, Charcoal and Alice. Named Fort Ray in September 1941, the two islands are not considered to be historically significant but are mentioned here because the name Fort Ray is generally applied to all army installations at Sitka.[3] From 1941 to 1943, Fort Ray was recognized as the army's headquarters at Sitka. In 1943, a reorganization resulted in Fort Ray being attached to the Harbor Defenses, which now had their headquarters on Makhnati Island.

Sitka's harbor defenses were meager throughout 1941. Not until five days after Pearl Harbor did the army announce that Sitka would acquire three 6-inch gun batteries. Meanwhile, authority was given to construct a causeway from Japonski to connect a string of islands out into Sitka Sound and terminating at Makhnati Island where fortifications would be placed.

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2. From an extract of CBMU 512 - Alaska and the Phlippines, June 1943 -August 1945, pp. 31-32, History Files, Sitka National Historical Park.

3. Fort Ray was named in honor of Brig. Gen. Patrick H. Ray who was stationed at Sitka as a lieutenant in 1897 registering food supplies of would-be gold seekers.

Construction of the 8,100-foot, rock-fill causeway proved most difficult. The water varied in depth from 12 to 60 feet. Strong currents, angry waves, and fierce storms required the causeway to be armored with rocks weighting up to 40 tons. The causeway was continually breached, resulting in seemingly endless repairs. The islands themselves were rocky knobs that had to be levelled. Costing over $2 million, the causeway was completed, apparently, in the summer of 1942.[4] Non-fortification facilities included:

Japonski to Nevski. No structures on Nevski
Nevski to Reshimosti Island. Ration storehouse on Reshimosti
Reshimosti to Virublennoi Island. Ration storehouse on Virublennoi
Virublennoi to Gold Island. Fuse house on Gold
Gold to Sasedni Island. Three motor sheds, two officers' quarters, two storehouses, eight barracks, two dayrooms, and two mess halls on Sasedni
Sasedni to Kirushkin Island. Eight barracks, two mess halls, two day rooms, three storehouses, and a dispensary on Kirushkin
Kirushkin to Mogilnoi Island. No structures on Mogilnoi
Mogilnoi to Makhnati Island. No known non-fortification structures of Makhnati

None of these structures remain standing, but concrete slabs and other remnants testify to their former presence.

In July 1943, Makhnati (including the causeway) was declared to be the headquarters post of the Harbor Defenses of Sitka and was named Fort Rousseau, in honor of Maj. Gen. Lowell H. Rousseau. Defense structures were erected on four islands, with the principal works being on Makhnati. Still standing on Virublennoi are three reinforced-concrete, igloo-type ammunition magazines and an earth-covered, concrete "bunker" of unknown function.[5] Moving out to the next island, Sasedni, one finds four reinforced-concrete emplacements. These were for four of fourteen 20mm antiaircraft weapons that the navy gave the army in July 1942. Near each emplacement is a reinforced-concrete structure that appears to be a personnel shelter.

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4. Records state that the causeway reached Mogilnoi Island in March 1942, with 800 feet to go, but they fail to mention a completion date. Col. John Copeland, Fort Ray, to Gen. S.B. Buckner, Mar. 19, 1942, in Correspondence of Maj. Gen. S.B. Buckner, Record Group 338, Alaska Defense Command, Washington National Records Center, MD.

5. Detailed plans of Alaska's World War II fortifications are said to be filed at the Corps of Engineers Alaska District. But efforts to examine these drawings ended in failure.

On the next island, Kirushkin, an elaborate reinforced-concrete and mortared-stone complex of rooms is concealed in a narrow cleft. Stamped into the concrete over a doorway is "1942." This is a "temporary" Harbor Defense Command Post (HDCP) that the army constructed early in 1942 to coordinate the harbor defenses for Sitka. The complex is anything but "temporary"; it will last for centuries. What the army seems to have had in mind was that the permanent location of a HDCP would be elsewhere when the defenses were complete. That was the case; the HDCP for Sitka was eventually established on Makhnati Island.

Makhnati Island was not only the headquarters for Sitka's Harbor Defenses, it had a fixed battery of two 6-inch guns, flanked on either side by a 155mm gun emplacement (Panama mounts).[6] These defense works are impressive. To the rear of a rocky hill are two large splinterproof, reinforced-concrete magazines. Camouflage in the form of chicken wire and strips of burlap still festoon their fronts. Forward of the hill is the 6-inch battery. The weapons were mounted in barbette emplacements. Behind them is a complex, casemated structure that housed ammunition magazines and administrative areas that housed the Harbor Defense Command Post, Harbor Entrance Control Post, and headquarters for Harbor Defenses. Deep underground are three rooms whose function is unknown (local tradition holds they served as a hospital or dispensary). Even the Coast Artillery was impressed; the commanding officer wrote the Alaskan Department, "You should see it, a typical Coast Artillery Fortress."[7]

Makhnati and its Causeway, portions of which have been damaged by storms, are now cut off from Japonski Island by a modern jet runway. The airport management, however, makes arrangements for visitors to cross the runway at scheduled times. The Causeway and its islands are owned by the State of Alaska.

Other coastal defenses at Sitka included an unfinished, fixed 6-inch gun battery at Shoals Point, Kruzof Island, eleven miles west of Sitka, and called Fort Babcock. Shoals Point also had a temporary battery of two 6-inch naval guns. A similar, incomplete battery was constructed on Biorka Island twenty miles south of Sitka (Fort Pierce). Three 75mm guns at Olga Point covered the

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6. The 155mm battery was completed by March 1942. It guarded the harbor while the permanent, 6-inch battery was being constructed.

7. Col. J.E. Copeland, Fort Ray, to Maj. Gen. S.B. Buckner, March 19, 1942, in Correspondence of Maj. Gen. S.B. Buckner, Alaska Department, Record Group 338, Washington National Records Center, Suitland MD.

northern inside passage to Sitka. And two, two-gun 90mm batteries were placed on Watson Point outside the town and on nearby Whale Island. Scattered on several islands near Sitka were reinforced-concrete fire control stations, radars, and coastal searchlight shelters. Many of these structures still exist.

Sitka Naval Operating Base: The historically significant features within the proposed boundaries are: two aircraft hangars, metal clad, 186 feet by 254 feet each, and a control tower mounted on the north hangar; the concrete parking area-runway in front of the hangars; two concrete seaplane ramps; ready ammunition magazines behind the hangars; coal storage building; bombproof power plant; shops buildings; administration building; flagstaff; recreation center; two adjoining barracks, one three-story and one two-story; concrete-walled mess hall; bachelor officers' quarters, three-stories; six duplex officers' quarters; four officers' quarters for senior officers; and the officers' club (Totem Club).

Excluded from the potential national historical landmark on Japonski Island and outside the proposed boundaries are: a residential complex; the U.S. Coast Guard Station; Sitka airport; and the bridge from Japonski Island to the City of Sitka.

Fort Rousseau and Causeway: The historically significant features within the proposed boundaries are:

Causeway, 8,100 feet in length, rock-fill
Nevski Island
Reshimosti Island
Virublennoi Island: three reinforced-concrete, igloo-type ammunition magazines; and an earth-covered concrete bunker
Gold Island
Sasedni Island: four reinforced-concrete antiaircraft gun emplacements, and four reinforced-concrete personnel shelters
Kirushkin Island: reinforced-concrete harbor defense command post (temporary)
Mogilnoi Island
Makhnati Island (Fort Rousseau): two 6-inch coastal gun emplacements; two 155mm gun emplacements; two reinforced-concrete ammunition magazines; reinforced-concrete complex containing magazines, harbor defense headquarters, harbor defense command post, and harbor entrance control post.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1939-1943 **Builder Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Sitka Naval Operating Base had the Navy's first air station in Alaska for the defense of that strategically located land as the world plunged into war in 1939. Its patrol planes covered the entire Southeast Alaska and far out into the Gulf of Alaska. Soon joined by naval air stations farther west, at Kodiak and Dutch Harbor, it became an intermediate point between them and Puget Sound. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, when it was not known where the enemy might strike next, Sitka's preparedness was crucial. Again, when the Imperial Fleet sailed east in June 1942, Sitka was alert for a potential assault on the Alaskan mainland. The Army's coastal defenses at Sitka, with their headquarters and key installations on Makhnati, stood ready through those tense months to defend the naval base against attack.

## The Build-up

In the 1930s, the War Department, considering the possibility of war in the Pacific, developed Plan Orange that recognized the strategic triangle of Alaska, Hawaii, and Panama as America's main line of defense. Ironically, at that time Alaska had no land, sea, or air defenses, only a small peacetime garrison at Chilkoot Barracks near Haines. Then, in 1937, the Navy secured a small appropriation to establish some facilities at Sitka for servicing its PBY Catalinas. One year later, a naval board urged the construction of naval air stations at Sitka, Kodiak, and Dutch Harbor, all in Alaska. Congress appropriated funds in 1939 and the Navy employed a civilian contractor, Siems Drake Puget Sound, to begin construction.

The Navy had long had an interest in Sitka where it had acquired a reservation on Japonski Island when the United States purchased Alaska. From 1879 to 1884, the U.S. Navy had the responsibility for maintaining law and order in the Territory, where lawlessness ruled. In 1902, it established a coaling station on Japonski and, later, a wireless station. When the contractor arrived in the fall of 1939, he found that the island had two coaling sheds, already converted to other uses, a handfull of small buildings, and a great deal of muskeg and forest. Even as the attractive, permanent buildings began to take shape, the Navy formally commissioned the Sitka Naval Air Station on October 1, 1939, the first such installation in Alaska to become operational. Operations on Japonski soon expanded to include a radio station, naval section base, Marine barracks, and subordinate naval shore activities. Although the scope of its operations did not grow as large as those at Kodiak and Dutch Harbor, Sitka was redesignated as a naval operating base on July 20, 1942.

When Japan attacked Oahu and destroyed its naval and army air forces as well as the battleships, Sitka, like other places on the Pacific Coast, became the front line for a time. The threat of invasion remained quite real until the defeat of the Japanese fleet at the Battle of Midway in June 1942. The simultaneous landing of Japanese forces in the western Aleutians increased the state of alertness of Sitka. Its flying boats patrolled the Gulf of Alaska, tracked down reported submarine activity, and scoured the harbors and fiords of Southeast Alaska for enemy activity.

As preparations grew for an American counterattack in the Aleutians, military activity moved westward in Alaska and on the Chain. Gradually, Sitka's role lessened, but the naval base continued to serve as the intermediate base between the United States and Kodiak. The western Aleutians were recaptured in the summer of 1943 and the Pacific War moved farther away. Finally, on August 15, 1944, Sitka Naval Operating Base was decommissioned and placed on a housekeeping basis. It experienced neither a brief, bloody battle, such as Midway, nor served as a base for actively assaulting the enemy, such as Adak. But in the first months of World War II it was one of the few installations prepared to protect the North Pacific.

The U.S. Army had long had the mission to defend American's harbors and naval bases against an enemy invasion. Sitka was no exception. Coast Artillery troops arrived in March 1941 to man coastal guns, antiaircraft guns, searchlights, and radar. Siems Drake Puget Sound and, later, Seabees rushed to complete temporary and permanent batteries. By Pearl Harbor, 155mm and 3-inch guns, and 37mm and .50 caliber antiaircraft weapons were in position; the causeway to Makhnati Island was under construction, and planning was underway for construction of three permanent 6-inch gun batteries.

Seabees were still at work on these three batteries when the Japanese were driven from the western Aleutians in 1943. With this change in the tactical situation in the Alaskan Theater, the Alaskan Department concluded to suspend construction of the fixed batteries on Kruzof and Biorka islands and to rush completion of the battery at Harbor Defense headquarters on Makhnati.[1] The last known report on this battery, dated sometime in 1944, stated that the work was practically completed. By spring 1944, the Army had decided to close its Sitka establishments and in August a company of Coast Artillery troops arrived to assume caretaker duties. The war was now far away, but Makhnati had already proven its worth as the most important element in Sitka's defenses through its weapons, radar, Harbor Defense Command Post, Harbor Entrance Control Post, and Harbor Defense headquarters.

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1. At that time, the 6-inch battery on Biorka (Fort Pierce) was 98 percent completed; the battery on Kruzof (Fort Babcock), 88 percent; and the battery on Makhnati (Fort Rousseau), 98 percent. When work was stopped on Kruzof, construction material was stored inside the completed magazines where some of it remains to this day, in excellent condition. The Biorka site was not visited.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 510 acres

Quadrangle name Sitka

Quadrangle scale 1:250,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 01 | 478400 | 6324100 |
| B | 01 | 479800 | 6322100 |
| C | 01 | 476000 | 6321000 |
| D | 01 | 475800 | 6322400 |
| E | | | |
| F | | | |
| G | | | |
| H | | | |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

See continuation sheet.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| state | code | county | code |

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erwin N. Thompson, Historian

organization Denver Service Center, National Park Service date April 13, 1984

street & number 755 Parfet Street telephone (303) 234-4509

city or town Denver state Colorado 80225

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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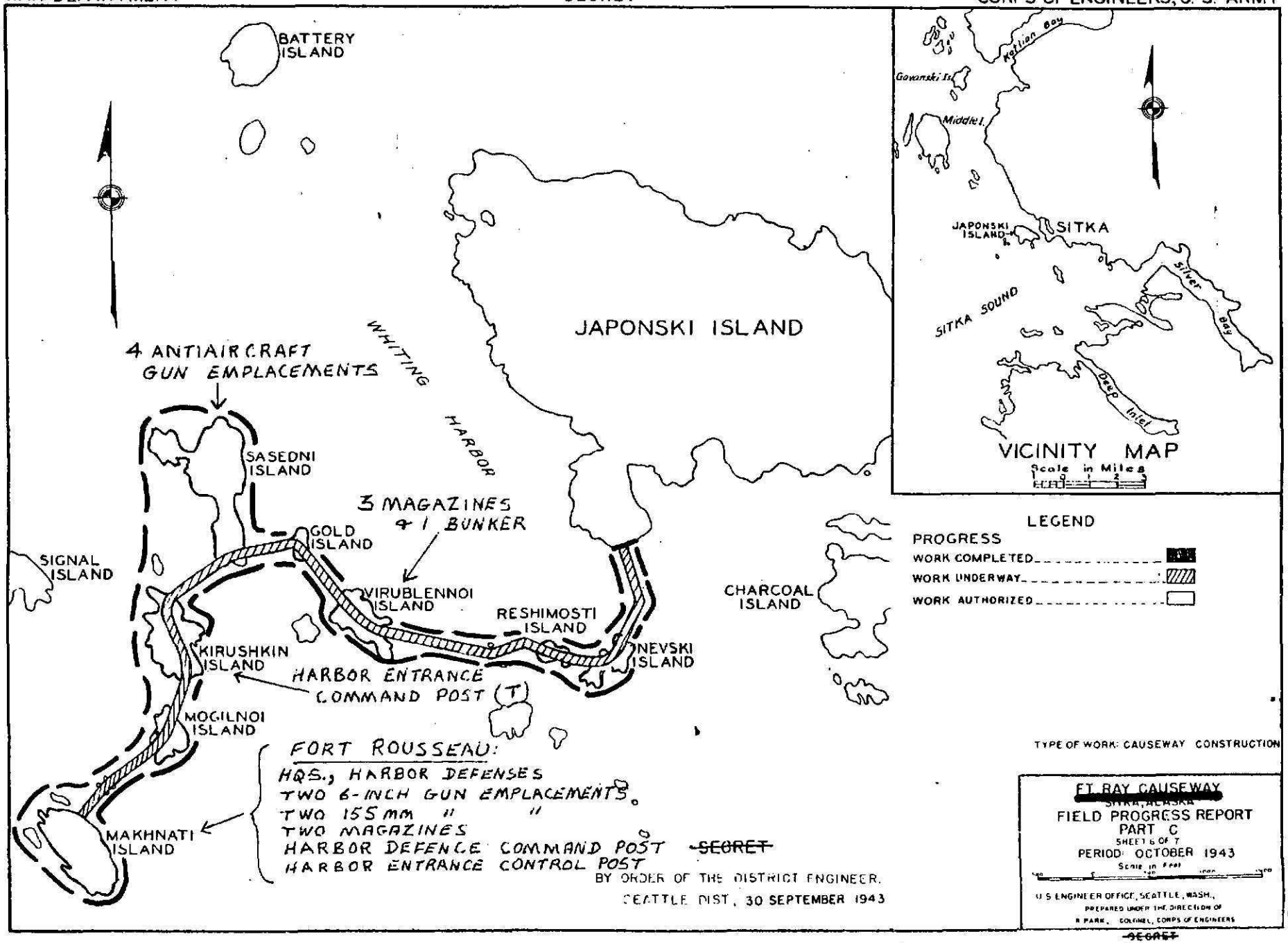
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

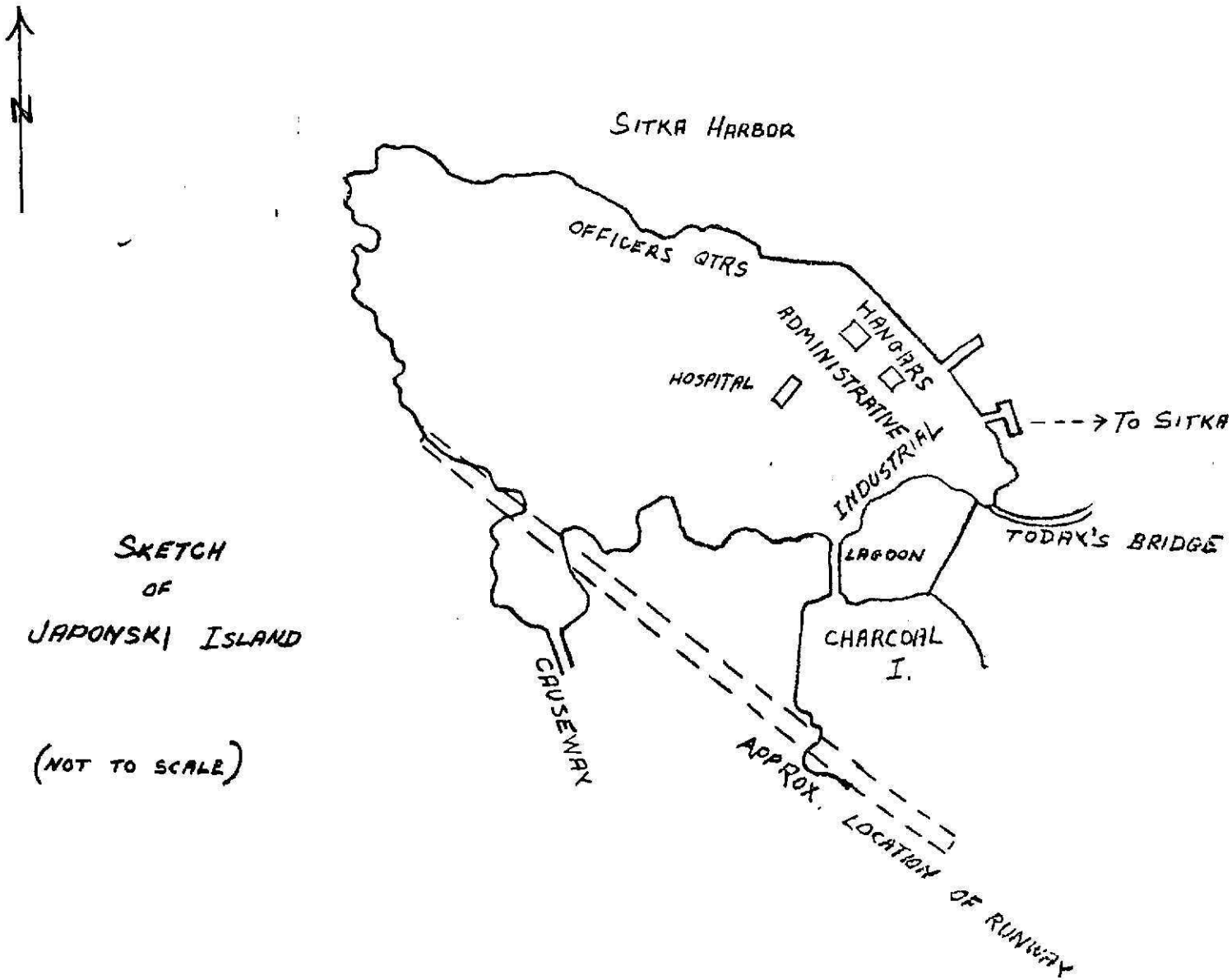
Verbal boundary description: Naval Air Station: Starting at a point at the water's edge 2,000 feet east southeast of the northwest end of Japonski, then following the shoreline along Sitka Harbor but to include the seaplane ramps and piers, to the southeast end of Japonski, then southwest 700 feet to enclose the southeast end of the island, then west northwest 1,500 feet along the shore of a lagoon that separates Japonski from Charcoal Island, then north northwest 2,000 feet on a line that separates the air station from a housing complex and the Public Health hospital to the road that runs along the northeast side of Japonski, then west northwest 2,000 feet on a line 100 feet southwest of the road and generally paralleling it so as to include a row of officers' quarters, then north northeast 700 feet to the point of origin. These boundaries include the seaplane facilities, industrial area, administrative area, and officers' country of the Sitka Naval Air Station.

Makhnati and Causeway: Starting at a point at the east junction of the Causeway and Japonski Island, then following an irregular line along the southern shores of the Causeway and the seven islands to the southwest end of Makhnati Island, then following an irregular line along the northern shores of the Causeway and the islands to the west junction of the Causeway and Japonski, then across the Causeway to the point of origin. These boundaries include the entire Causeway and the coastal defense works on the several islands.

DECLASSIFIED BY AUTHORITY OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, NNDG 745846,
M. C. Lewis (Dwelling), NARS, August 23, 1982

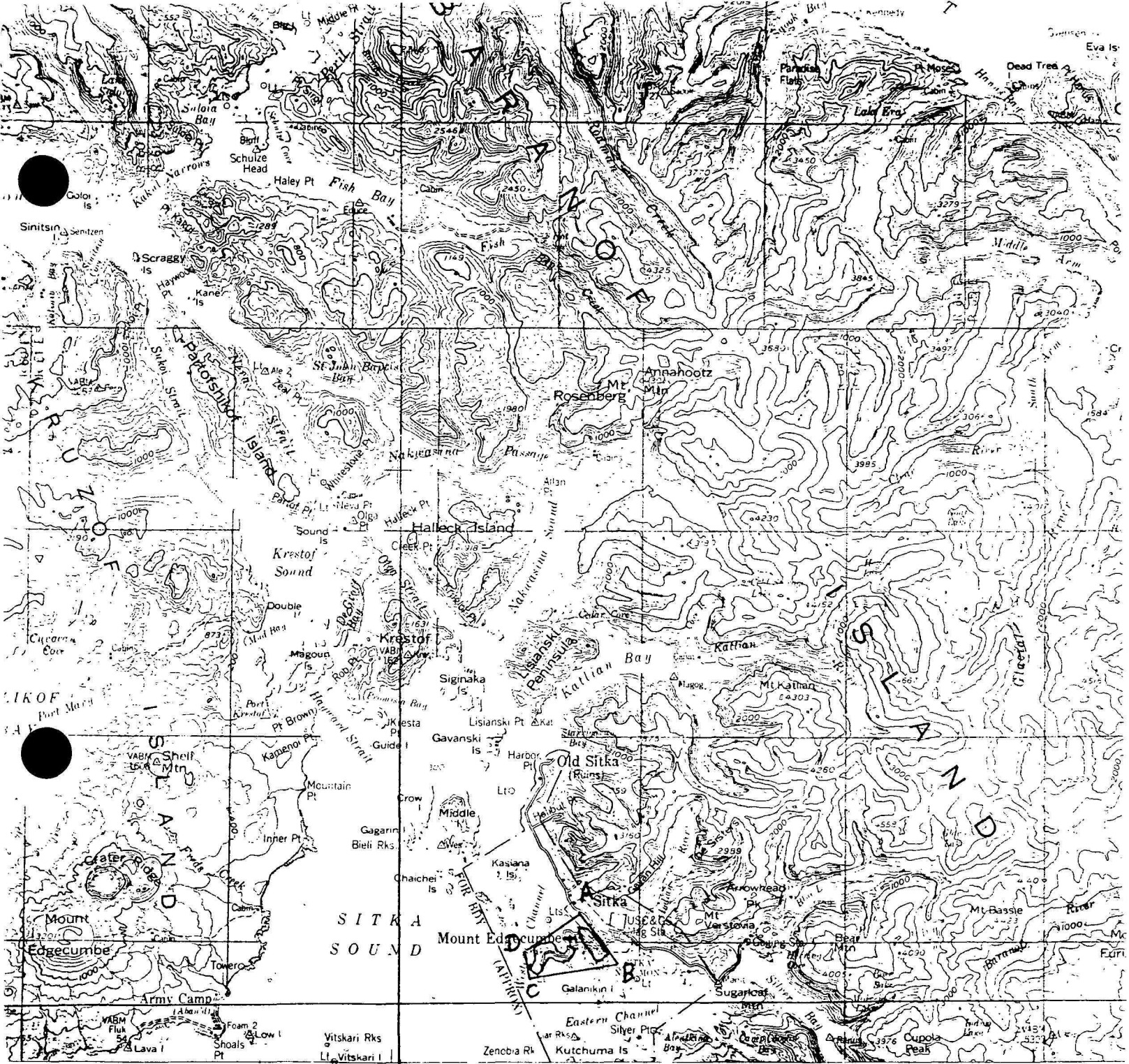
WAR DEPARTMENT SECRET CORPS OF ENGINEERS, U. S. ARMY






SKETCH OF JAPONSKI ISLAND

(NOT TO SCALE)




SCALE 1:250 000

5 0 5 10 15 20 25

5 0 5 10 15 20 25 KILOMETERS

CONTOUR INTERVAL 200 FEET

DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

DEPTH CURVES IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOWER LOW WATER

SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER

1958 MAGNETIC DECLINATION AT SOUTH EDGE OF SHEET VARIES FROM 29° TO 29°30' EAST

THIS MAP IS AVAILABLE IN BOTH SHADED RELIEF AND CONTOUR EDITIONS

FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99701, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242

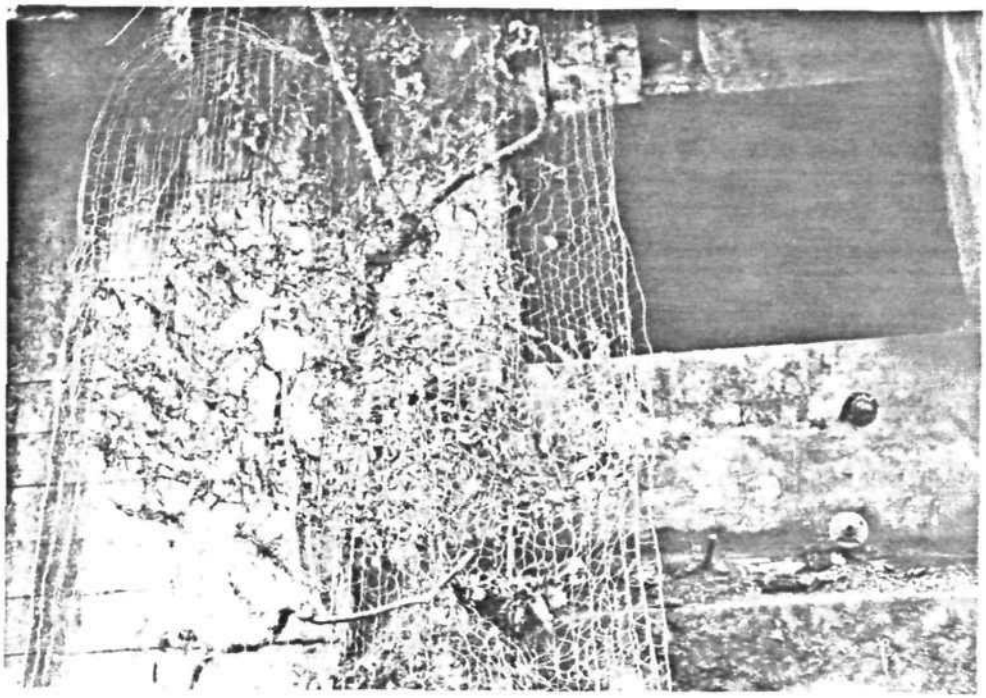
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

1. Sitka Naval Air Station. One of two hangars and control tower. The paved area in front was both aircraft parking and a short runway fitted out like an aircraft carrier's flight deck.

Photo by E.N. Thompson July 1983

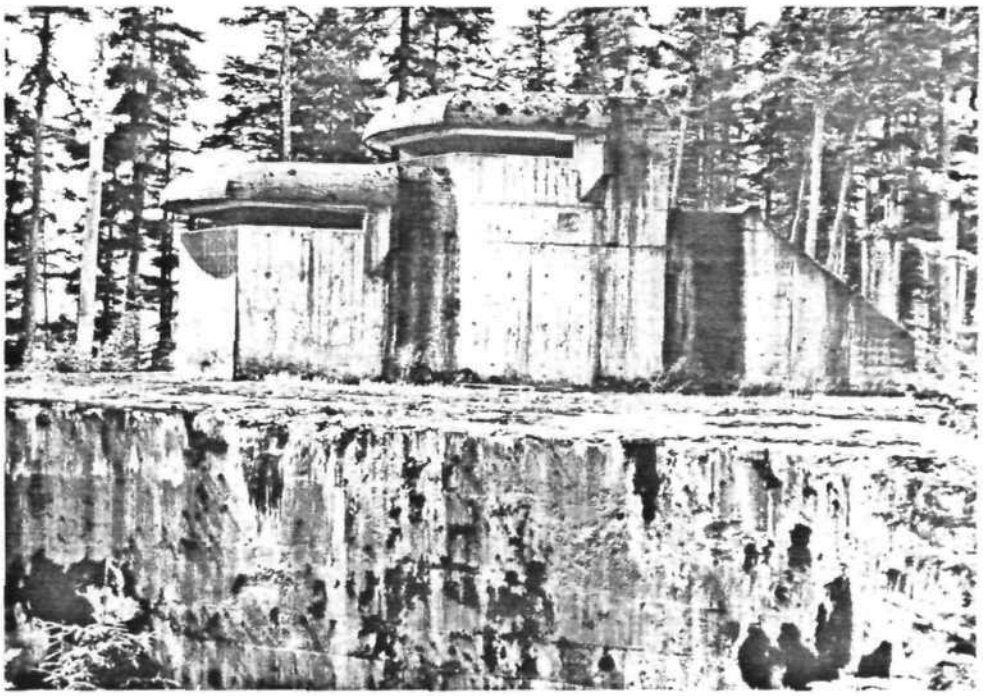
2. Sitka Naval Air Station. On left is the administration building. The building with the dormer windows and the structure behind it served as comfortable barracks. On the right a portion of the mess hall may be seen.

Photo by E.N. Thompson July 1983



7. Second-floor *opening of a large, igloo-type magazine* on Makhnati Island. Note the chicken wire and fragments of burlap that camouflaged the face of the magazine.

Photo by E.N. Thompson July 1983



8. Unfinished 6-inch battery at Shoals Point, Kruzof Island, west of Sitka. In foreground is the heavy roof of the magazines. On top are the battery commander's post and a fire control station. Had the battery been completed, a massive covering of earth would have buried the structure almost up to the observation slits.

Photo by E.N. Thompson July 1983

**United States Department of the Interior**
**National Park Service**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic: Kodiak Naval Operating Base and Forts Greely and Abercrombie

and or common: US Coast Guard Support Center and Fort Abercrombie State Historic Park

## 2. Location

street & number: ___ not for publication

city, town: X vicinity of Kodiak

state: Alaska code: 02 county: Kodiak District code: 150

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ district | X public | ___ occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | ___ unoccupied | ___ commercial | X park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| X site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | X yes: restricted | X government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | ___ yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ no | X military | ___ other: |

## 4. Owner of Property

name: U.S. Coast Guard, 17th USCG District, Pouch 3-5000, Juneau, AK 99801 and Alaska Division of Parks, Dept. of Natural Resources,

street & number: 619 Warehouse Ave., Anchorage, AK 99501

city, town: ___ vicinity of state:

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.: 17th U.S. Coast Guard District, U.S. Dept. of Transportation,

street & number: Pouch 3-5000, Juneau, AK 99801 and Division of Land and Water Management, Dept. of Natural Resources, Alaska

city, town: 3601 C Street, Anchorage state: Alaska

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title: National Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? X yes ___ no

date: October 27, 1970 X federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records: National Register of Historic Places

city, town: Washington state: D.C.

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| ___ excellent | X deteriorated | ___ unaltered | X original site |
| X good | ___ ruins | X altered | ___ moved date _____ |
| ___ fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Kodiak Naval Operating Base and Fort Greely were the principal advance bases in Alaska on the outbreak of World War II. They are five miles southwest of the city of Kodiak, the oldest permanent Russian settlement in Alaska. Construction began in 1939 and both were formally established in 1941. These installations, adjacent to each other, are now one reservation administered by the U.S. Coast Guard. The naval facilities were located between the head of Womens Bay and Buskin River and on Nyman Peninsula. Fort Greely's main developments were north of Buskin River, from Buskin Lake in the west to St. Paul Harbor in the east. Construction was first carried out by a civilian contractor; at the beginning of 1943, Naval Construction Battalions (Seabees) gradually took over all construction for both services. Today, most of the World War II naval structures remain standing and are used by the U.S. Coast Guard Support Center. Few army structures remain in the Fort Greely area.

Naval Operating Base

There are two areas possessing historical significance at the former naval base: 1. the seaplane station and submarine base at Womens Bay, and 2. the land-plane airfield south of Buskin River. The contractor's administrative area and the extensive naval housing do not contribute significantly to the operational history of the base.

Land-plane Airfield

At the north end of the naval reservation and south of Buskin River, the airfield was used by both the army and navy. There are three runways, roughly in a figure 4 configuration. The two shorter runways (Nos. 1 and 2), 5,400 by 150 feet and 5,000 by 150 feet, were constructed by the navy. Later, to station bombers at the field, the army funded construction of the third (No. 3), 6,000 by 150 feet. All three were paved. Along the north side of the field several plane revetments cut into the side of a low hill remain from World War II. Nothing remains of some 25 wartime hangars that stood around the runways. Today, light planes park in the revetments. Commercial and private air operations and facilities are leased or permitted at the field today. The field belongs to the U.S. Coast Guard and is used by it in carrying out ocean air patrols in the Alaska region. A mile-long taxiway joins the airfield to the seaplane facilities to the south.

Naval Air Station (Seaplanes)

The seaplane (primarily PBY, or Catalina, flying boats) facilities were at the head of Womens Bay. There are two large, permanent seaplane hangars, 320 by 250 feet each, and a large, paved parking area around and between them. The hangars now serve Coast Guard patrol (land) planes and helicopters and have been extensively modernized, some $10 million having been spent on them.

The western hangar has a control tower that served the seaplanes in World War II. At the head of Womens Bay are three concrete seaplane ramps. During the 1964 earthquake this area sank several feet, rupturing the ramps where they entered the water. A large dike now separates them from the aircraft parking area. Inland from the hangars is the large engine-overhaul and aircraft maintenance building (essentially, a third hangar), still used as such. East of this building are six smaller structures in the industrial area: cold storage and commissary, two general aircraft storage buildings, two workshops, and a storehouse.

Beyond but close to the southeast corner of the aircraft parking area, near the shore of Womens Bay, the navy's Alaska Sector Command, or administration, building stood until 1983. Nothing remains of the two-story structure torn down that year.

Six hundred feet farther out on Nyman Peninsula, on Womens Bay shore road, stands the bombproof naval air station power plant. This sturdy, reinforced-concrete building is similar in construction to existing naval bombproof plants at Dutch Harbor and Sitka.

Submarine Base Area

Most of Nyman Peninsula was occupied by a submarine base that consisted of frame barracks, mess halls, small shops, and fuel storage tanks, these last still remaining. Two historic structures in this area are the tender and tanker pier, 450 by 50 feet, which is used for importing petroleum products and is in excellent condition, and the marginal pier, 1,400 by 30 feet, which is intact but not maintained. A 30-ton, stiff-leg derrick once on this pier is no more.

Fort Greely

Between 1940 and 1944, the U.S. Army maintained a garrison and coastal defense works at Fort Greely, carved out of that portion of the naval reservation north of Buskin River. More than 11,000 officers and men were housed in a limited area that resulted in a cramped and crowded physical layout. Virtually nothing remains today of Garrisons 1 and 2 and other post facilities. Today, modern Coast Guard family housing occupies part of Fort Greely; commercial fishermen lease other areas to store crab pots and other fishing equipment. On the east shore of the army base, historically important coastal defense installations are found on Artillery Hill and Buskin Hill. Both areas belong to the U.S. Coast Guard, but Buskin Hill is leased by the Alaska Division of Parks which has established there the Buskin State Recreation Park.

Of prime importance on Artillery Hill is the underground Harbor Defense Command Post (HDCP), the control center for all coastal defenses at Kodiak. This reinforced-concrete structure is in a cut-and-fill position near the top of Artillery Hill. Access is difficult, the one entrance having been filled with earth to prevent vandals from entering. Although the interior has not been examined, it is known to contain six concrete-walled rooms that were offices and the necessary utilities. The structure measures 84 by 40 feet. Along the military road leading up the hill to the HDCP are several personnel airraid shelters, each constructed with corrugated metal (similar to quonset huts) and covered with rock and earth. Also found on the hill are several collapsed quonset huts, quite beyond salvage.

Buskin Hill has at least two (of four) 155mm gun emplacements, Panama mounts.[1] This battery was one of three at Kodiak that provided the primary coastal defense for the naval base for the first two years of the war, until the permanent coastal gun batteries were completed.

Fort Abercrombie

At Miller Point, four miles northeast of the city of Kodiak, the army erected a permanent 8-inch gun battery (Battery No. 403) and established it as a sub-post of Fort Greely, naming it Fort Abercrombie in April 1943.[2] Today, the two concrete-and-steel, barbette gun emplacements are on the cliff's edge overlooking the Pacific Ocean. To the rear is a casemated ammunition magazine. Two rear entrances join in the interior to create a U-shaped corridor, off which are the ammunition rooms. On top of the magazine is the reinforced-concrete battery commander's station, missing its (wooden?) roof. In front of the magazine is a reinforced-concrete, partly-damaged, canopy of, possibly, a fire control station. Farther to the rear, along the approach road to the battery, are a large, reinforced-concrete, war reserve, ammunition magazine, and a smaller reinforced-concrete structure that possibly was a communications-switchboard facility.

---

1. The search for all four emplacements was thwarted by a combination of heavy vegetation, foul weather, and illegal squatters.

2. Two other sub-posts, Forts Tidball (6-inch gun battery on Long Island in front of Kodiak) and J.H. Smith (8-inch gun battery at Cape Chiniak south of Kodiak) were established at the same time. The practice of designating batteries as forts may be unique to Alaska.

When the army abandoned Fort Abercrombie, it did not remove the two 8-inch guns, but destroyed them in place with explosives. As a result, the gun pits today contain twisted steel from the gun carriages. The gun tubes, partially destroyed at their breech ends, are also present and have been placed on concrete pedestals for display.

Fort Abercrombie is a state historical park and is on the eve of interpretive development. A museum concerning World War II coastal defense is planned for the casemated magazine.

Summary

The following structures and areas are considered significant to Kodiak's World War II history:

Kodiak Naval Operating Base--Two seaplane hangars; aircraft parking area; three seaplane ramps; engine overhaul and aircraft maintenance building; the industrial area; power plant; and the tender and tanker pier and the marginal pier at the submarine base.

Land airfield, Naval Air Station--Three runways and aircraft revetments on north side of field. Modern air terminal facilities at west end of the area are excluded.

Fort Greely--Harbor defense installations on Artillery Hill and Buskin Hill.

Fort Abercrombie--An 8-inch coastal gun battery and supporting facilities.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1941-1944 **Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Naval Operating Base: The naval operating base, with its air station, submarine base, headquarters for Rear Adm. Robert A. Theobald (later, Rear Adm. Thomas C. Kinkaid), North Pacific Force, and joint operations center for the Navy, Army (Maj. Gen. Simon B. Buckner), and Army Air Force (Brig. Gen. William O. Butler), was operational at the time of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. It was then the principal advance naval base in Alaska and the North Pacific. Coordinating with the naval establishments at Sitka to the east and Dutch Harbor to the west, its flying boats made their vital patrols of the Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, and North Pacific Ocean. The ships and submarines of North Pacific force played critical roles in the Aleutian Campaign. Establishment of the joint operations center allowed for coordinated planning to drive the Japanese from the North Pacific.

Fort Greely: In the uncertainties following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Alaskan outpost of Fort Greely, with its coast artillery, and infantry troops, stood ready to repel an invader. For over a year, the Japanese threat remained real but, in the end, the enemy did not come. Army bombers stood ready in Kodiak's hostile weather until, in June 1942, the opportunity came to meet the enemy force attacking Unalaska in the Aleutians. The coastal defenses remain as evidence of the time when World War II came to Alaska.

A History

During the 1930s, the War Department considered the possibility of a war in the Pacific and prepared War Plan Orange to meet that eventuality. The plan concluded that the "strategic triangle" of Alaska, Hawaii, and Panama should form the main line of defense. Despite this concept, Alaska possessed no defenses. Even as Europe prepared for war, the only army installation in Alaska was a tiny garrison at Chilkoot Barracks near Haines. The navy was no better prepared. Not until 1937 did it succeed in obtaining a few thousand dollars to begin a seaplane base at Sitka. Late in 1938, a naval board urged the strengthening of Sitka and the establishment of seaplane and submarine bases at Kodiak and Dutch Harbor. Congress approved and a civilian contractor, Siems Drake Puget Sound, began construction at Kodiak in September 1939. Congress also appropriated funds to strengthen the army in Alaska, including defenses for the Kodiak naval installation. Because the navy's contractor was already at work at Kodiak, the army employed him to construct its facilities, which were eventually named Fort Greely, in honor of the Arctic explorer, Maj. Gen. Adolphus W. Greely.

The Kodiak Naval Operating Base eventually included a naval air station, with facilities for both land- and seaplanes, submarine base, net depot, ammunition

and fuel storage, docks and piers, and provisioning facilities. When Admiral Chester Nimitz, Commander in Chief, Pacific, at Pearl Harbor, learned of the coming Japanese attack on the Aleutians, he allotted Task Force 8 (later redesignated as North Pacific Force), under Rear Adm. Robert A. Theobald, to Alaska. Theobald, "one of the best brains and worst dispositions in the Navy," and distrustful of army brass, established his flag aboard cruiser Nashville and took personal command of his main body of five cruisers and four destroyers.[1] The admiral concluded that the Japanese would not invade the western Aleutians but would attack farther east. He therefore deployed his main body 400 miles due south of Kodiak to defend the eastern Aleutians and Alaska. Because of this decision, Theobald's force was out of any possible action when the attacks came. Further, the imperative need for radio silence resulted in his inability to issue orders to his air and other surface groups. Afterwards, realizing he could not control events from a ship, Theobald established his headquarters at Kodiak.

During the Japanese landings in June 1942, Maj. Gen. Simon B. Buckner, commanding the army's Alaskan Department, operated from his joint operations center at Fort Richardson outside Anchorage. Far removed from the field and out of touch with the navy, Buckner discovered that his center was wholly inadequate to the task. Despite Theobald's condescending airs, Buckner and his chief of air, Brig. Gen. William O. Butler, moved their advance command post to Kodiak, occupying the navy's Alaska Sector building, alongside the admiral. (While this move improved operational control in the Aleutian Campaign, discord between the admiral and the generals continued to fester. Finally, Theobald was reassigned and replaced by the South Pacific warrior, Rear Adm. Thomas C. Kinkaid, who succeeded admirably in working with the army.)

The Kodiak joint command post continued to direct Alaskan operations until March 1943, when Buckner and Kinkaid moved to Adak Island to be closer to the forthcoming invasions of Attu and Kiska. The post commander at Fort Greely was Brig. Gen. Charles H. Corlett, who later distinguished himself by leading the ground forces that landed at Kiska, by commanding the Seventh Infantry Division in capturing Kwajalein Island in the Marshalls, and, still later, by commanding an army corps in Europe.

The first army troops arrived at Kodiak in April 1941 and the post of Fort Greely was formally established that September. Construction of both permanent and temporary coastal gun batteries and antiaircraft positions was

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1. Samuel Eliot Morison, Coral Sea, Midway and Submarine Actions, May 1942-August 1942. History of United States Naval Operations in World War II (Boston 1975), p. 171.

undertaken by the civilian contractor, but completed by Seabees, all under the watchful eye of Col. B.B. Talley, Corps of Engineers. The permanent works consisted of three batteries, each with two guns in barbette emplacements and a casemated magazine to the rear:

Fort Abercrombie at Miller Point, two 8-inch guns
Fort J.H. Smith at Cape Chiniak, identical to Abercrombie
Fort Tidball on Long Island, two 6-inch guns, steel turrets

Other coastal defenses consisted of three 155mm batteries on Panama mounts (four guns each) and two 90mm batteries (two fixed guns each). A total of 52 .30 caliber machine guns were emplaced at strategic points. Also, an undetermined number of field artillery pieces was brought to Kodiak. At Fort Greely, the all-important harbor defense command post was constructed on Buskin Hill, overlooking the naval base.

The 155mm batteries played an important role in the early months of the war because their emplacements could be constructed quickly. Construction of the heavier batteries, with their reinforced-concrete, casemated magazines, took longer. These three batteries were completed in 1943, about the time the Aleutians were freed from Japanese forces. As the war moved farther from Alaska, the coast artillery companies began leaving Kodiak until, in December 1944, Fort Greely was placed in a caretaker status.

In addition to defense installations, the army added to Kodiak's offensive capabilities through the Eleventh Air Force's medium and heavy bombers. The navy's two land runways being too short for these planes, the army funded construction of a third runway, 6,000 feet in length. In addition to American aircraft, the Royal Canadian Air Force stationed its Bolingbroke bombers at Kodiak from time to time in order to patrol the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea. In the fall of 1942, Canada also stationed a fighter squadron there, making Kodiak its rear base in Alaska.

The navy continued its operations at Kodiak, not decommissioning its submarine base until May 1945. The naval air station remained active throughout the war and on into years of peace. Back in 1941, when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, and again in 1942, when the Japanese invaded the Aleutians, Kodiak was a strong link in America's thin chain of defense in the northwest corner of North America. It fulfilled its mission well.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Naval Base and Fort Greely

Acreage of nominated property 3,000 acres

Quadrangle name Kodiak

Quadrangle scale 1:250,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 05 | 531200 | 6402800 | B | 05 | 531200 | 6401000 |
| C | 05 | 529400 | 6397100 | D | 05 | 527800 | 6397100 |
| E | 05 | 529300 | 6401800 | F | 05 | 530400 | 6402800 |
| G | | | | H | | | |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

See continuation sheet.

***List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries***

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| state | code | county | code |

## 11. Form Prepared By

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| name/title | Erwin N. Thompson, Historian | | |
| organization | Denver Service Center, National Park Service | date | April 9, 1984 |
| street & number | 755 Parfet Street | telephone | (303) 234-4509 |
| city or town | Lakewood | state | CO 80225 |

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

*State Historic Preservation Officer signature*

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

# 10. Geographical Data

Fort Abercrombie

Acreage of nominated property 350 acres

Quadrangle name Kodiak

Quadrangle scale 1:250,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 05 | 539000 | 6410000 |
| B | 05 | 538900 | 6409600 |
| C | 05 | 537900 | 6410200 |
| D | 05 | 538400 | 6410000 |
| E | | | |
| F | | | |
| G | | | |
| H | | | |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

See continuation sheet.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title

organization date

street & number telephone

city or town state

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

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date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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_____. Correspondence of Maj. Gen. Simon B. Buckner, 1941-1944. Record Group 338, WNRC.

_____. Map. "Permanent Defense Plan," Alaska, no date. Record Group 338, WNRC.

_____. Supplement to Harbor Defense Projects, 1944. Harbor Defenses of Kodiak. Record Group 338, WNRC.

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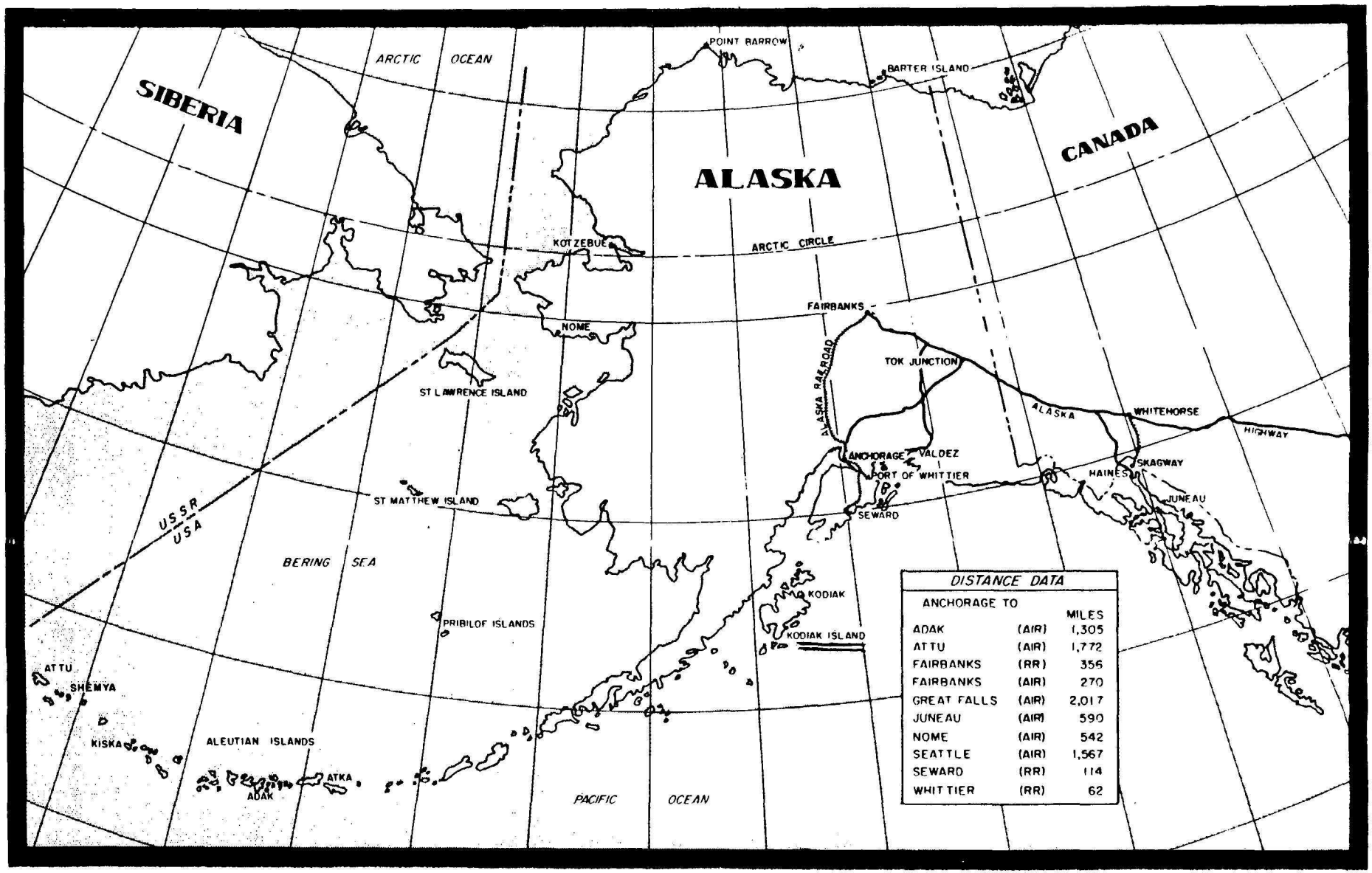
Beginning at a point where the northeast corner of Artillery Hill meets the sea at St. Paul Harbor, then following the coast of Kodiak in a southerly and southwesterly direction past Artillery Hill, Buskin Hill, the mouth of Buskin River, Finny Beach, and along the east side of Nyman Peninsula to its southeast corner at Nyman Spit; then in a northwest direction along the tip of Nyman Peninsula to its southwest corner; then in a northeast direction along the northwest coast of Nyman Peninsula so as to include a marginal pier and a petroleum pier to the southeast corner of a paved aircraft parking area; then in a straight line in a northwest direction along the southwest side of the parking area so as to include three concrete ramps to the western corner of the parking area; then in a straight line in a northeasterly direction along the northwest boundary of the parking area to the southwest side of a paved road; then in a straight line in a southeasterly direction along the southwest side of this road to its junction with a paved road coming from the northeast; then in a straight line in a northeast direction along the southeast side of this road to its junction with a paved road running northwest-southeast; then in a straight line in a southeast. direction along the southwest side of this road to its end; then projecting that line to where it meets the edge of a taxiway; then in a generally northeasterly direction along the northwest side of the taxiway and an adjoining runway to the intersection of that runway and a northwest-southeast runway; then in a northwesterly direction along the edge of this runway to its intersection with an east-west runway; then westerly along the southern edge of this runway to its western end; then around this runway's western end to an unimproved road on its northern side; then following the south edge of this road easterly to its junction with a dirt road coming from the northeast; then in a northeasterly direction along the eastern side of this road to a bridge that crosses Buskin River; then in a line in a northeastern direction that parallels the coast along St. Paul Harbor and which is about 1,200 feet distant from the coast to an east-west dirt road along the north side of Artillery Hill; then along the southern side of that road in an easterly direction to the point of beginning.

These boundaries enclose the following historically significant features: the naval seaplane base, bombproof power plant, submarine base piers, aircraft hangars and maintenance buildings, army-navy airfield, 155mm gun battery on Buskin Hill, and the harbor defense command post on Artillery Hill.

Fort Abercrombie: The boundary is the water boundary on three sides of Miller Point. The fourth side is a straight line cutting across Miller Point from Monashka Bay to Mill Bay, 2,500 feet inland from Miller Point. The boundary encloses the 8-inch gun battery and its supporting fortification structures.


SIBERIA
ARCTIC OCEAN
POINT BARROW
BARTER ISLAND
CANADA
ALASKA
KOTZEBUE
ARCTIC CIRCLE
FAIRBANKS
NOME
TOK JUNCTION
ALASKA RAILROAD
ST LAWRENCE ISLAND
ALASKA
WHITEHORSE
HIGHWAY
ANCHORAGE
VALDEZ
PORT OF WHITTIER
SKAGWAY
HAINES
JUNEAU
SEWARD
ST MATTHEW ISLAND
USSR
USA
BERING SEA
KODIAK
KODIAK ISLAND
PRIBILOF ISLANDS
ATTU
SHEMYA
KISKA
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
ATKA
ADAK
PACIFIC OCEAN
DISTANCE DATA
ANCHORAGE TO
MILES
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ATTU (AIR) 1,772
FAIRBANKS (RR) 356
FAIRBANKS (AIR) 270
GREAT FALLS (AIR) 2,017
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NOME (AIR) 542
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SEWARD (RR) 114
WHITTIER (RR) 62
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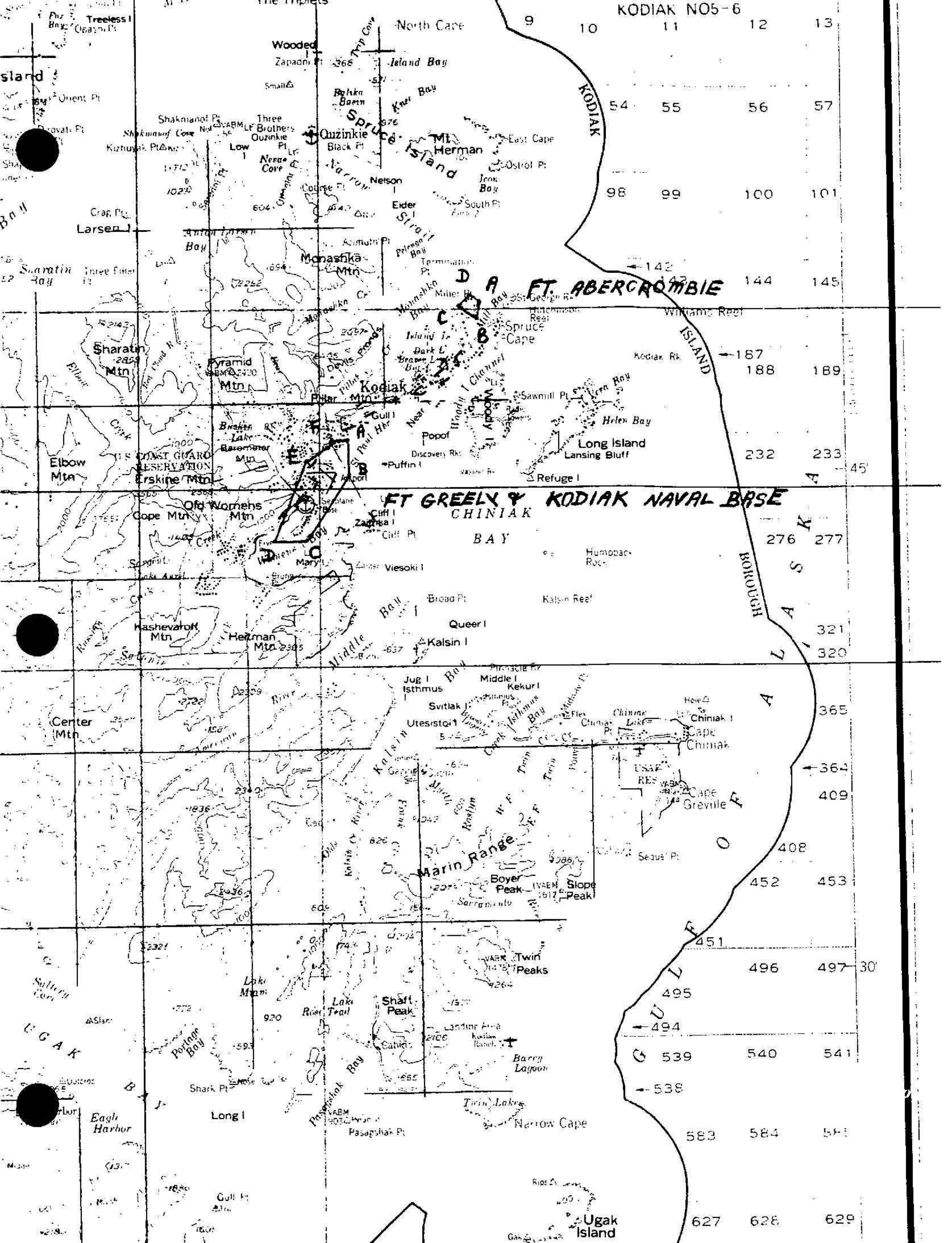
# ALASKA



KODIAK N05-6
FT. ABERCROMBIE
FT GREELY & KODIAK NAVAL BASE
North Cape
Island Bay
Wooded I
Zapadni Pt
Ouzinkie
Spruce Island
Mt Herman
East Cape
Ostrof Pt
Narrow Strait
Nelson I
Eider I
South Pt
Shakmanof Pt
Three Brothers
Low I
Larsen I
Anton Larsen Bay
Monashka Mtn
Monashka Bay
Miller Pt
Spruce Cape
Williams Reef
Kodiak
Pillar Mtn
Woody I
Sawmill Pt
Helen Bay
Long Island
Lansing Bluff
Refuge I
Popof
Discovery Rks
Puffin I
Gull I
Sharatin Mtn
Pyramid Mtn
Elbow Mtn
Barometer Mtn
U.S. COAST GUARD RESERVATION
Erskine Mtn
Old Womens Mtn
Cope Mtn
CHINIAK BAY
Cliff I
Zaimka I
Cliff Pt
Viesoki I
Broad Pt
Kalsin Reef
Queer I
Kalsin I
Kashevarof Mtn
Herman Mtn
Middle Bay
Jug I
Isthmus
Middle I
Kekur I
Svitlak I
Utesistoi I
Chiniak I
Cape Chiniak
Cape Greville
Center Mtn
Marin Range
Boyer Peak
Slope Peak
Twin Peaks
Shaft Peak
Lake Rose Teal
Barry Lagoon
Twin Lakes
Narrow Cape
Pasagshak Bay
Pasagshak Pt
Portage Bay
UGAK BAY
Long I
Eagle Harbor
Ugak Island
KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH
GULF OF ALASKA
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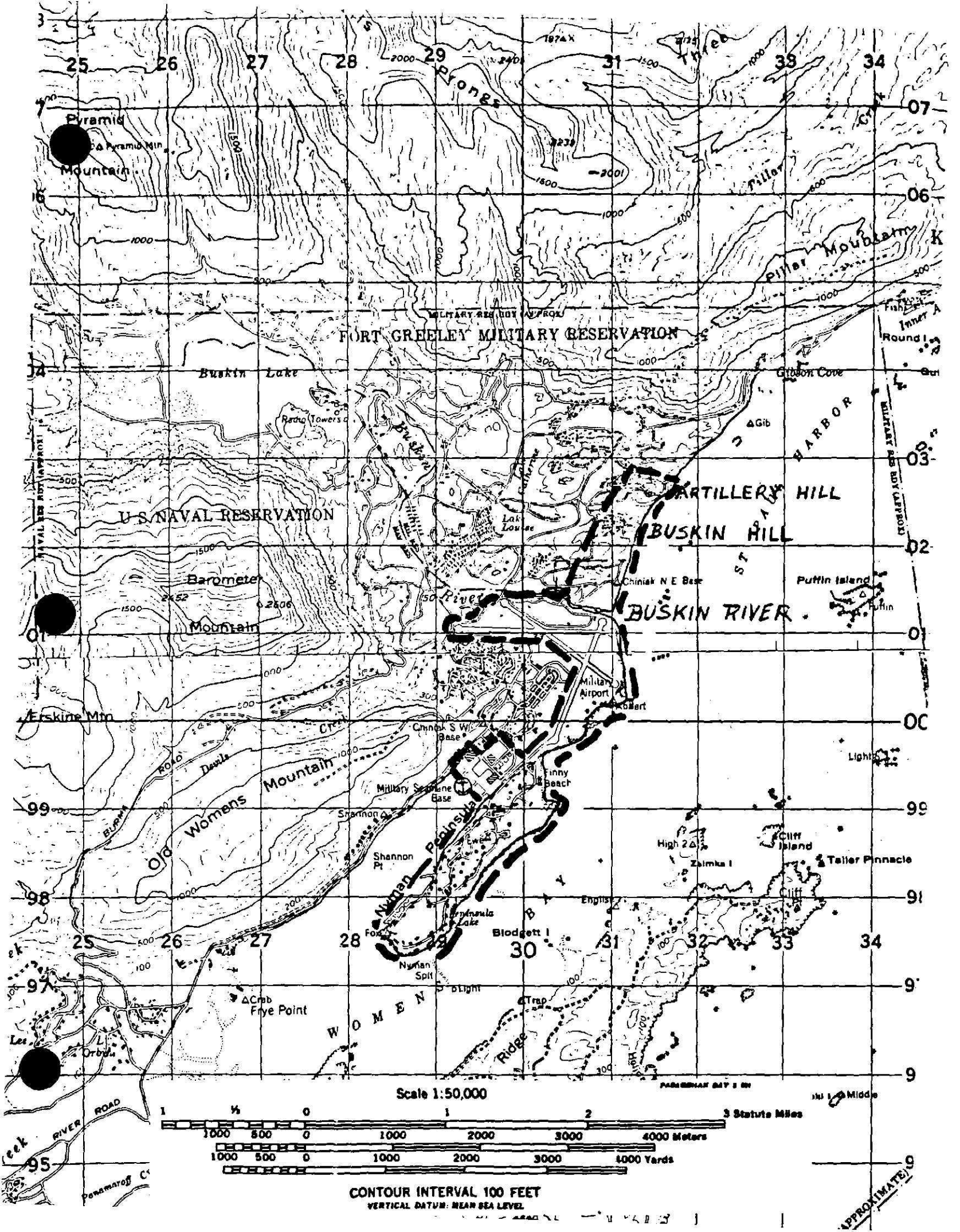
Pyramid Mountain
Pyramid Mtn
Pillar Mountain
FORT GREELEY MILITARY RESERVATION
Buskin Lake
Gibson Cove
Round I
Inner A
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HARBOR
ARTILLERY HILL
BUSKIN HILL
U.S. NAVAL RESERVATION
Lake Louise
Chinlak N E Base
Puffin Island
Puffin
BUSKIN RIVER
Barometer Mountain
Military Airport
Erskine Mtn
Chinlak S W Base
Finny Beach
Old Womens Mountain
Military Seaplane Base
Shannon Pt
Nyman Peninsula
Cliff Island
High 2
Zaimka I
Taller Pinnacle
Cliff
English
Blodgett I
Nyman Spit
Light
Crab
Frye Point
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CONTOUR INTERVAL 100 FEET
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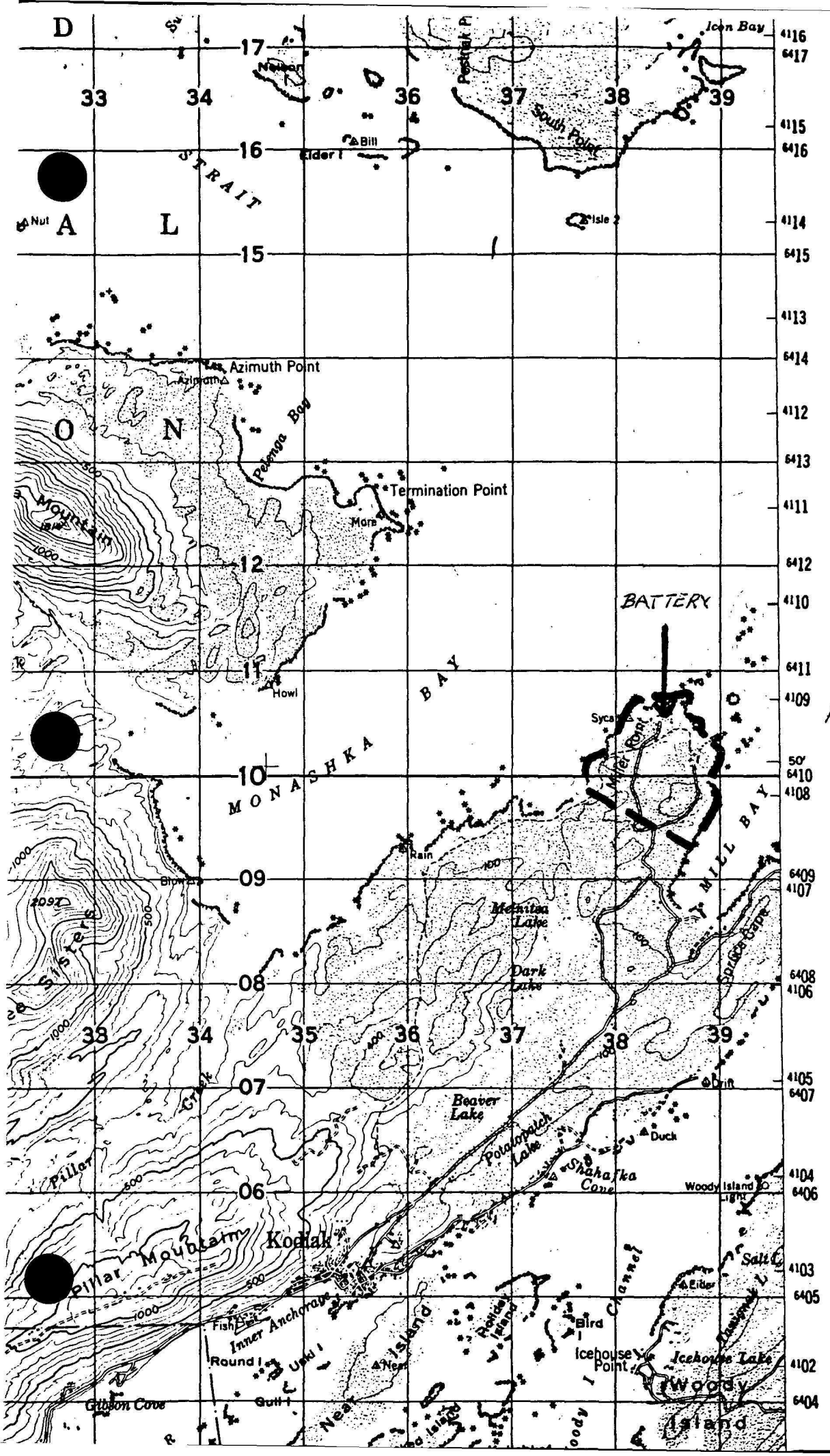
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Bill
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STRAIT
South Point
Isle 2
Nut
Azimuth Point
Pelmoga Bay
Termination Point
Mare
Mountain
Howl
BATTERY
FORT ABERCROMBIE
MONASHKA BAY
Rain
Blow
Mehnitna Lake
Dark Lake
MILL BAY
Spruce Cape
Beaver Lake
Potatopatch Lake
Duck
Shahafka Cove
Woody Island Light
Kodiak
Pillar Mountain
Pillar Creek
Inner Anchorage
Fish
Round I
Gull I
Gibson Cove
Neal Island
Raitch Island
Bird I
Icehouse Point
Icehouse Lake
Woody Island
Woody I Channel
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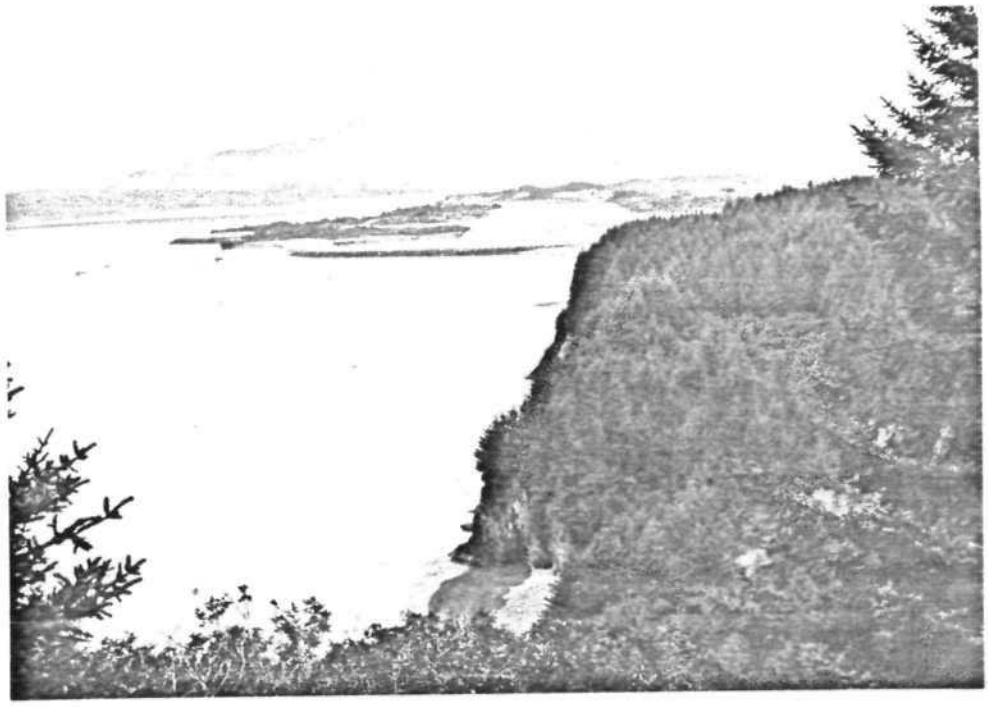
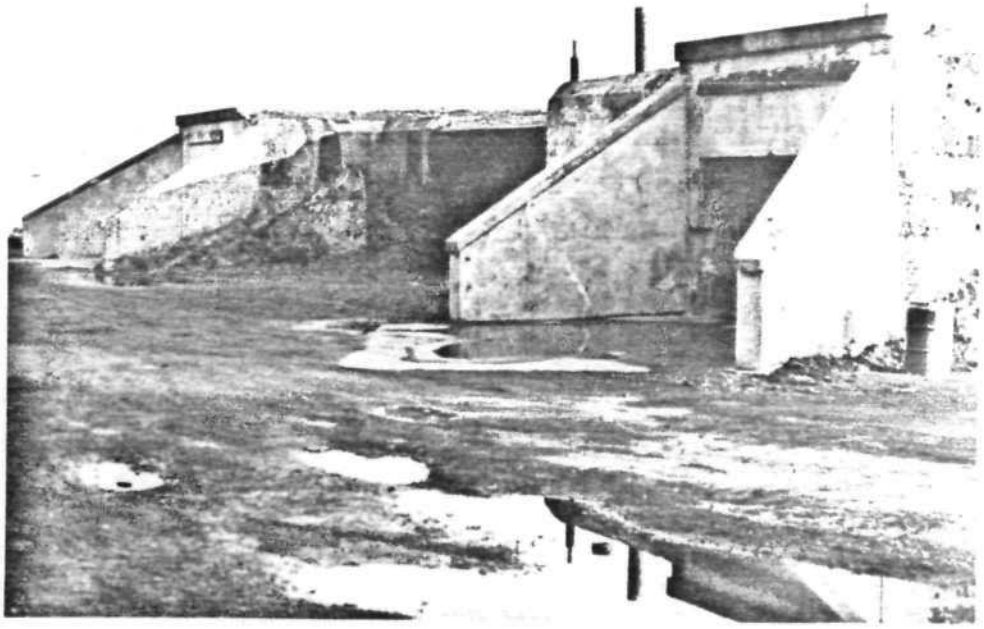


1. Airfield at Kodiak, used by both naval and army planes. Looking from Buskin Hill toward the naval operating base.

Photo by E.N. Thompson August 1983

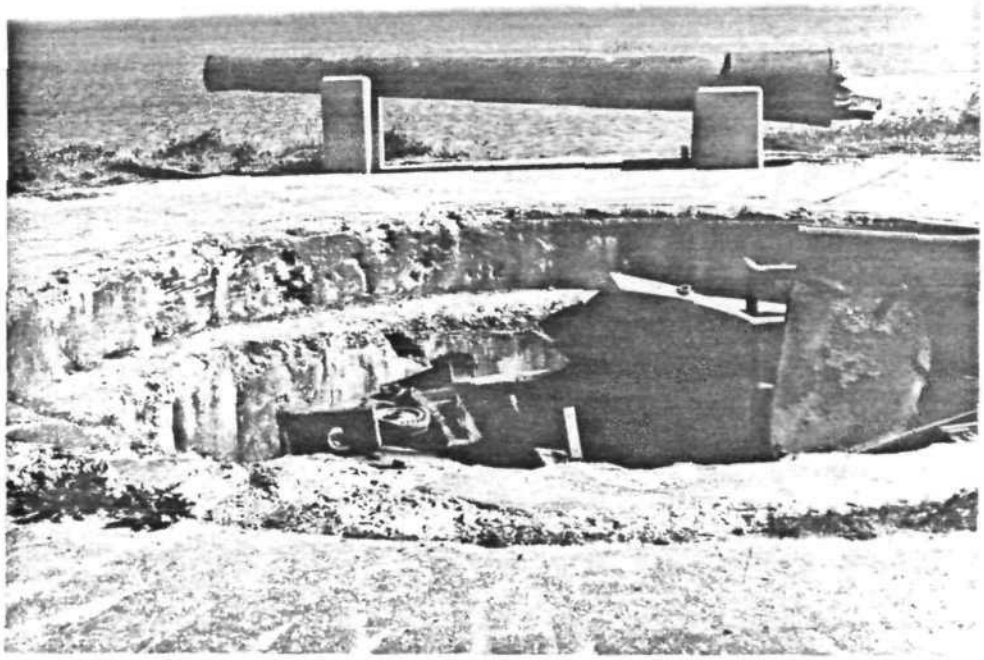


8. Casemated magazine at 8-inch gun battery at Fort Abercrombie, a sub-post of Fort Greely. This rear view shows the two entrances to a U-shaped passage.

Photo by E.N. Thompson August 1983

6. Panama mount for a 155mm gun, one of four at a battery on Buskin Hill, Fort Greely, Kodiak. These guns protected the naval base.

Photo by E.N. Thompson August 1983



9. An 8-inch gun tube at Fort Abercrombie. The gun emplacement is in the foreground. When the Army left Kodiak, it simply blew up its coast artillery positions, rather than removing the guns and carriages.

Photo by E.N. Thompson August 1983

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

NHL — WWII, PACIFIC

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base and Fort Mears, U.S. Army

and or common Amaknak Island

## 2. Location

street & number ___ not for publication

city, town Unalaska ___ vicinity of

state Alaska code 02 county Aleutian Islands code 010

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ district | ___ public | X occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | ___ unoccupied | X commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | X both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| X site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | ___ yes: restricted | X government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | X yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | X transportation |
| | | ___ no | ___ military | X other: unused |

## 4. Owner of Property

name Ounalashka Corporation, P.O. Box 149, Unalaska, AK; City of Unalaska, Unalaska, AK; and

street & number Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Juneau, AK

city, town ___ vicinity of state

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Alaska State Office, Bureau of Land Management, USDI, Anchorage, AK,

street & number and State Magistrate Alaska, Unalaska, AK

city, town state

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| ___ excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | X original site |
| ___ good | X ruins | X altered | ___ moved date _____ |
| X fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base and Fort Mears are on Amaknak Island in Unalaska Bay, which is on the north side of Unalaska Island, one of the Fox Islands in the Aleutians. Unalaska is approximately 1,000 air-miles southwest of Anchorage. Amaknak Island lies within the city limits of Unalaska. It is about 5½ miles long and varies in width from a few hundred yards to about one mile. It may be divided into four areas: In the north Mount Ballyhoo and Ulakta Head rise dramatically from the sea. Ulakta Head still contains World War II coastal defenses and some coast artillery quarters: a reinforced-concrete, casemated 8-inch gun battery; two 155mm gun emplacements (Panama mounts); a dug-in, concrete battery command post; two fire control stations; a joint army and navy combination harbor entrance control post and harbor defense command post; eight igloo- and elephant-type magazines; several frame barracks and storehouses; and numerous quonset huts mostly in ruins. The army named Ulakta Head "Fort Schwatka" and it is known locally today as "Eagle's Nest."

To the south of Mount Ballyhoo lies the site of former Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base on relatively low but rolling terrain. This area was intensely built up during World War II and most structures remain, although many are fast deteriorating and some are already ruins. Principal features include: the short (4,385-foot) navy runway which serves the commercial airport today, plane revetments along the north side of the runway, magazines, aerology-operations building (now an airline terminal), double hangar, bombproof power plant, two wharves, brick apartment house, a large number of occupied cottages (former naval quarters), torpedo storehouse and two hillside tunnels for torpedo explosives, and a large number of deteriorated naval structures, including storehouses, shops, barracks, and hospital. A new air terminal is under construction.

South of the naval base is the original site of Fort Mears which was taken over by the Navy in 1944. This was primarily the army's housing area and it contained many frame, two-story, mobilization-type barracks, storerooms, mess halls, theater, and a hospital. Several of the barracks remain standing but all of them are in poor condition. In the Fort Mears area are several concrete pillboxes and, on the hillsides, personnel trenches. South of and close to Fort Mears is what might be called "downtown" Amaknak. Located here are a motel, shopping center, modern housing, and, at the former submarine base dock, a large container shipping facility. Also in this area, at the narrowest part of the island, stands a wartime marine railway.

The south end of Amaknak is called Little South America because its outline resembles that continent in shape. Like the north end of the island, it is dominated by a hill. The army named it Hill 400, while it is now known locally as Bunker Hill--from its coastal defense structures. Along its west and south base are fifteen reinforced concrete or steel ammunition magazines and a warhead tunnel. A winding road leads to the top of the hill and several more igloo- or elephant-type magazines are scattered along it. On the very top is a dug-in, two-level, reinforced-concrete battery commander station. Nearby is a frame fire control station which, considering it is wood, is in remarkably good

condition. Also on top are four 155mm gun emplacements (Panama mounts). Wooden ready magazines at these emplacements are also in good condition. Elsewhere on the hill are ruins of a few quonset huts and frame buildings.

The historic areas and features being considered are the army coastal defense systems at Ulakta Head and Hill 400 and the following naval structures at Dutch Harbor, all on Amaknak Island:

Brick apartment house at the naval radio station. Pre-war construction. Navy no. 618. Said to be the only brick building in the Aleutians. During World War II, it was the Marine command post. Its interior has been wrecked by vandals.

Bombproof power plant. Navy no. 409. Reinforced concrete. Designed to withstand a direct hit by a 500-pound bomb. Said to be the strongest structure in the Aleutians. Presently being renovated as a power plant.

Aerology-operations building. Navy no. 417. Also used by the Naval Air Transport Service, whose insignia is inlaid in today's waiting room floor. The building presently serves as a terminal for a commercial airline.

Air administration building. Navy no. 416. Today it serves as an air terminal for a commercial airline. There is also a restaurant in the building.

Torpedo assembly complex. Navy nos. 443, 444, 445, and 447. Torpedo assembly building (443). Lower half of walls is reinforced concrete; upper portion is wooden. Later used as aviation supplies storehouse. Torpedo shop annex (447), reinforced concrete. Two tunnels cut into hillside (444 and 445) for storage of explosives and torpedoes.

The above areas and features are owned as follows:

Brick apartment house, no. 618, and the torpedo complex, nos. 443, 444, 445, and 447, are owned by the Ounalashka Corporation.

Bombproof power plant, no. 409, is owned by the City of Unalaska.

Aerology-operations building, no. 417, and air administration building, no. 416, are owned by the State of Alaska.

Former military installations on Unaaska Island proper are not included in this nomination inasmuch as the significant events occurred on Amaknak Island.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1940-1945 **Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, the naval air station at Dutch harbor and the adjacent army post, Fort Mears, both on Amaknak Island, Unalaska, were the only defenses the United States possessed in the entire Aleutian Chain. On June 3 and 4, 1942, Japanese carrier aircraft made a two-day attack on Amaknak Island, the most serious air attack on North American territory during the war. These strikes were coordinated with the enemy's attack on Midway and his occupation of the western Aleutians. Dutch Harbor continued to have important missions throughout the war. The naval air station expanded into a naval operating base, Unalaska Bay being one of the best anchorages in the Aleutians. Among its many tasks was that of controlling the steady stream of Soviet shipping that passed through Dutch Harbor and adjacent Akutan Pass en route to and from Siberia and the United States.

History

In 1912, the U.S. Navy installed a radio station at Dutch Harbor. In the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922, the United States agreed not to fortify the Aleutians. Even when Japan withdrew from this treaty in 1934, the United States took no steps to fortify either the Aleutians or the Alaska mainland. Not until 1938 did a navy board urge the construction of naval air and submarine bases at Dutch Harbor and Kodiak and an air base at Sitka. At Dutch Harbor construction began in July 1940 on both army and naval installations, the army mission being defense of the naval air station. Dutch Harbor has an excellent anchorage, but there is little level land on Amaknak; the naval air station, therefore, was designed for seaplanes and Catalina flying boats (PBYs). A seaplane ramp yet remains at Dutch Harbor. As for land planes, the navy first contrived a small landing strip equipped with catapult and arresting gear, similar to an aircraft carrier's. Eventually, a regular, if short, runway was carved out of rock at the foot of Mount Ballyhoo for fighter aircraft. It continues to serve Unalaska's commercial flights.

When the first army troops arrived at Dutch Harbor in May 1941, they found a new Marine Barracks and Dutch Harbor's "landmark," a large brick residence at the naval radio station. Over in the town of Unalaska (population 300, mostly Aleuts), they noted a U.S. Coast Guard station with its 60-man bunkhouse.

Construction proceeded on both bases and soon the tiny island was crowded with new buildings. The naval air station was commissioned on September 1, 1941. The army base was formally named Fort Mears on September 10, in honor of Col. Frederick Mears, a member of the original Alaskan Engineering Commission, which built the Alaska Railroad, and chief engineer of the Panama

Railroad. When war came, the civilian contractor gave way to navy seabees who continued construction for both the army and navy. Naval facilities expanded, new missions were added, and the Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base was commissioned January 1, 1943, to include the air station, submarine base, ship repair facility, and facilities for provisioning the fleet. Strength figures eventually reached 5,680 naval and 10,000 army personnel.

As the number of men increased, the army began moving its facilities to Unalaska, principally to Unalaska and Pyramid valleys. As the army moved out, the navy moved in until, in 1944, the navy took over all of Amaknak, except the harbor defenses. At Ulakta Head, the army installed a battery of two 8-inch guns and a battery of two 90mm guns, naming the complex Fort Schwatka. On Hill 400, the principal defense was a battery of four 155mm guns. On the east side of Unalaska Bay, near Summer Bay, stood Fort Brumback with four 155mm guns. And at Fort Learnard, on the west side of the bay, the army installed two 6-inch guns and a two-gun 90mm battery.

After the June 1942 Japanese air raids, the military anticipated an enemy landing before winter. Defenses were increased. The army installed a series of strong points on the ridges around Unalaska Valley, dubbing it the Iron Ring. Concrete pillboxes appeared at every road intersection. Additional 3-inch antiaircraft batteries were installed around Unalaska Bay. And the unfortunate native Aleuts were forced to leave their homes and move to a strange and hostile environment in Southeast Alaska. By fall 1942, however, invasion scares diminished and, as new bases were established farther west, Unalaska's strength began to decline.

Japan Attacks

Unalaska's first alert came even before the United States entered World War II. On July 4, 1941, a radio message arrived warning that a possible collapse of the Russian front might open the way for enemy operations against Alaska. Within a few weeks, however, activity returned to normal. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor resulted, of course, in stepping up work to obtain a state of readiness.

In May 1942, Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo ordered an attack on the Midway Islands, with the dual mission to occupy those islands and to destroy the remnants of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, and an attack on the Aleutians for the purposes of diverting American attention from Midway, protecting the Imperial Navy from an attack from the north, and obstructing communications between the United States and Russia--a communications line of which Dutch Harbor was a key link. Having broken Japanese codes, the United States was alert to the forthcoming attacks. On May 17, Fort Mears was notified that Japan was preparing to attack sometime between June 1 and 10. Later, word came that the enemy would probably hit the Aleutians on June 1.

Steaming toward Unalaska at that time was Rear Adm. Kakuji Kakuta's Second Carrier Striking Force, consisting of aricraft carriers Ryujo and Junyo (40 fighters and 42 bombers), heavy cruisers Takao and Maya, and three destroyers. The task force reached its launching position early on June 3 and, despite fog, launched its planes. Junyo's planes were forced to return because of the fog and an encounter with an American flying boat. The eleven bombers and six fighters from Ryujo arrived over Amaknak in clear skies. Having been alerted by a patrol plane, the few American ships in the harbor had already put to sea. At 5:45 a.m., the first flight of Japanese fighters roared over the island, followed five minutes later by bombers. Fourteen bombs fell on Fort Mears, destroying five buildings, killing 25 soldiers, and wounding 25 more. A second strike caused no damage; but a third damaged the radio station and killed one sailor and one soldier. All planes returned to Ryujo safely except one Zero fighter which made a forced landing on Akutan (thus providing the Americans their first example of this excellent plane).

Just west of Unalaska, on Umnak Island, the United States had recently completed an airfield (Fort Glenn) and its aircraft were also anticipating the Japanese attack. On June 3, however, communications difficulties between the two islands resulted in Umnak being unaware of the attack until after the enemy planes had returned to the carrier. Later in the day, Umnak's P-40 fighters intercepted two Japanese reconnaissance planes, to the latter's great surprise, and shot one of them down into Umnak Pass. The enemy now knew that the Americans had an air base on or near Unalaska, but fog protected its location.

That night the Japanese force sailed toward Adak to carry out a pre-invasion bombardment in the mistaken belief that Adak was garrisoned. The weather became so foul that Admiral Kakuta decided to turn back and deliver a second strike on Unalaska. In late afternoon, June 4, a force of nine fighters, eleven dive bombers, and six level bombers struck, this time concentrating on Dutch Harbor. They hit the 3,000-ton S.S. Northwestern, a beached vessel near Dutch Harbor dock that served as housing for civilian workers.* The vessel caught fire and was destroyed, as was an adjacent warehouse. A bomb hit a naval gun emplacement, killing four men; and another destroyed an army gun, leaving two dead and two wounded. Bombs destroyed four new steel fuel tanks and 22,000 barrels of oil--a month's supply for Dutch Harbor. A naval hangar, still under construction, had a big hole punched through its roof and a Catalina flying boat inside was damaged. The total death list for the two-day attack mounted to 43: 8 navy, 1 marine, 1 contract employee, and 33 army. Another 50 were wounded.

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*Many Unalaskans, today, believe that a sunken hull at the head of Captains Bay is the Northwestern. Seabee records, however, state that they raised the Northwestern, repaired it, and had it towed to Seattle where she yielded 2,700 tons of scrap steel. U.S. Navy, Bureau of Yards and Docks, Building the Navy's Bases in World War II (Washington, 1947) 2:177.

While this second raid was in progress, navy PBYs and army bombers located the carrier force and attacked; no hits were scored, however. For the next two days bombers continued to make search and attack sorties, to no avail. (A bomber did attack the Pribilof Islands through error, while P-38 fighters attacked a Soviet freighter.)

Also on the raid of the 4th, Junyo's planes selected as their rallying point the west end of Unalaska. Eight P-40s from Umnak met them, shooting down four with a loss of two of their own. During this action, Japanese pilots, at last, spotted the airfield below them. American air losses during the two-day battle amounted to five army aircraft and six naval Catalinas. The Japanese reported a loss of eleven planes also. The enemy carriers now withdrew to the west, to a point off Kiska to screen their forces who were landing there.

The Soviets

When American lend-lease to the Soviet Union got in full swing, Russian ship traffic increased greatly between the Siberian ports of Provideniya and Petropavlovsk and the West Coast. One of the better passages through the Aleutians from Bering Sea to the Pacific is Akutan Pass just east of Dutch Harbor. Thus, the responsibility of controlling this shipping fell to the navy at Dutch Harbor. Westbound vessels were not boarded, but many entered Unalaska Bay for refueling or repairs. Eastbound Russian ships were required to stop at Dutch Harbor to pick up recognition signals. American naval personnel boarded each vessel and interviewed the ships' officers. A small flurry of excitement occurred at the base on January 3, 1943, when the first Russian submarine entered the port.

By mid-October 1942, Russian ships entering Dutch Harbor had increased to the point where the navy decided to establish a separate refueling, repair, and provisioning station on Akutan Island, 35 miles to the east, to divert them from Unalaska's busy waters. The new station opened in November 1942, with the completion of six 5,600-barrel oil tanks, a coal yard, a 250-foot dock, and mooring buoys. With the war drawing to a close, the navy decommissioned the fueling station on April 30, 1945. From then on, Russian ships again put into Dutch Harbor. No fewer than seventeen Soviet vessels were in port at Dutch Harbor on V-J Day 1945.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

*Acreage of nominated property* 1,000 acres

Quadrangle name Unalaska

Quadrangle scale 1:250,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 03 | 402600 | 5976400 |
| B | 03 | 398600 | 5970000 |
| C | 03 | 396500 | 5970000 |
| D | 03 | 399100 | 5976400 |
| E | | | |
| F | | | |
| G | | | |
| H | | | |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

See continuation sheet.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| state | code | county | code |

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erwin N. Thompson, Historian

organization National Park Service, Denver Service Center date March 23, 1984

street & number 755 Parfet Street telephone (303) 234-5206

city or town Denver state Colorado 80225

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Ulakta Head-Mount Ballyhoo: Beginning at a point where the northwest corner of the aircraft runway meets the waters of Unalaska Bay, then following the coastline of Amaknak Island generally northeasterly, around the northern end of the island, then southwesterly so as to exclude a spit of land, to the northeast corner of the runway, then in a straight line northwesterly along the northern boundary of the runway to the point of beginning. This boundary encloses the complex of fortifications and structures that belonged to Fort Schwatka.

Hill 400: Beginning at a point where the head of a narrow inlet meets the east end of the isthmus that joins Hill 400 (Little South America) to the rest of Amaknak Island, then following the coastline of Hill 400, east, south, west, north, and northeast, to where Hill 400 meets the west end of the isthmus, then in a straight line along the southern edge of the isthmus in an easterly direction to the point of beginning. This boundary encloses the coastal fortifications, antiaircraft gun emplacements, magazines, and tunnels constructed on and around Hill 400.

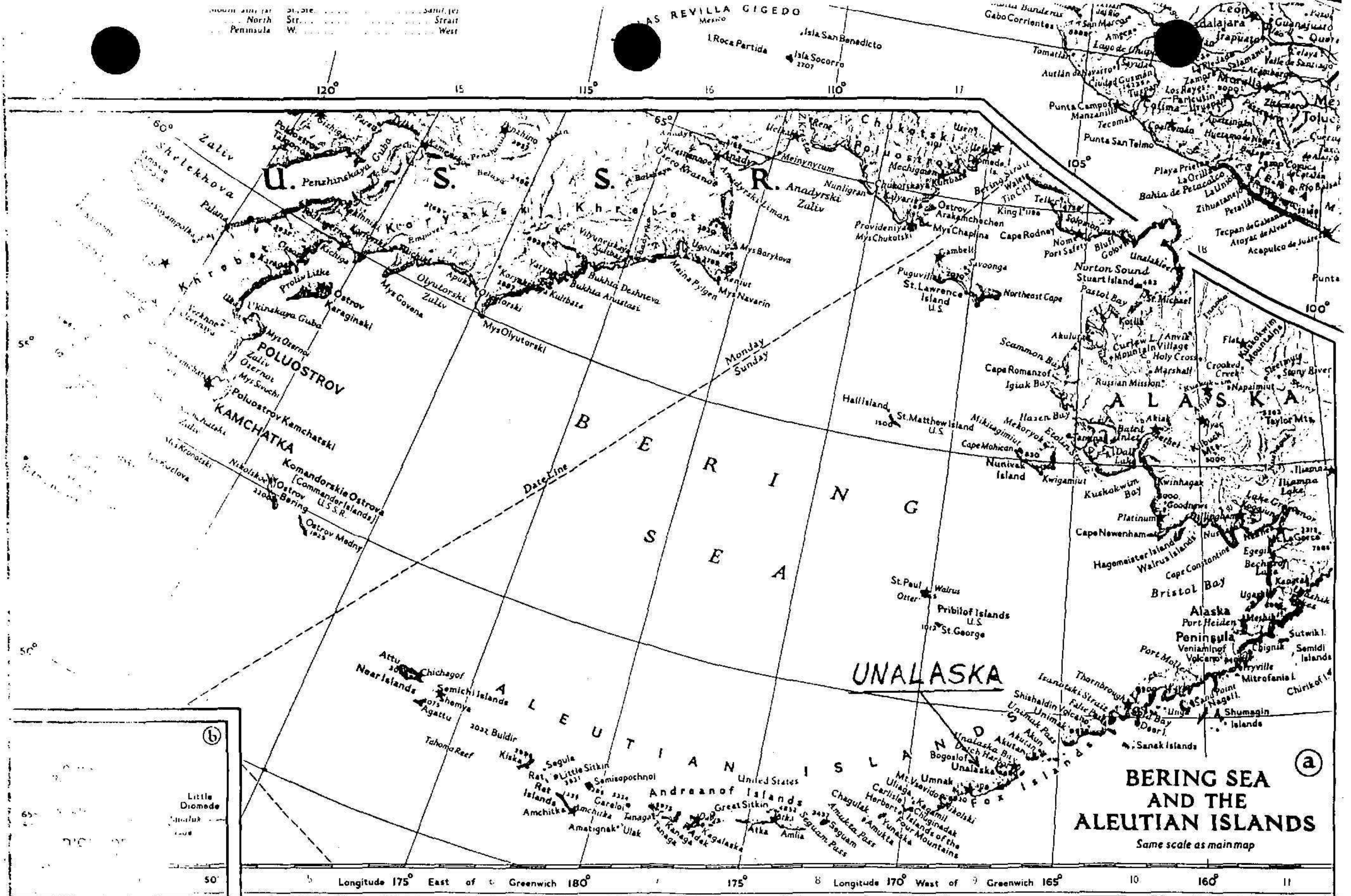
Air Operations, No. 417, and Air Administration, No. 415, Buildings: Beginning at a point at the east corner of a gate that opens onto the runway west of the operations building, then in a straight line in an easterly direction 200 feet along a fence that separates these two buildings from the runway, then 90 degrees in a straight line in a southerly direction paralleling the east side of the administration building to the north edge of an ill-defined dirt road, then 90 degrees westerly following the northern edge of that road 200 feet to its junction with a north-south dirt road, then 90 degrees north in a straight line along the east boundary of this north-south road to the point of beginning. This boundary encloses the two structures which stand on unsurveyed land.

Torpedo Assembly Complex: Beginning at a road junction 50 feet northwest of the northwest corner of the torpedo assembly shop, then in a straight line in an east northeasterly direction along the southern edge of an unimproved dirt road 200 feet, then 75 degrees in a straight line in a southerly direction 525 feet, then 90 degrees in a straight line in a west northwest direction 250 feet to the edge of an unimproved north-south road, then along the eastern edge of this road in a straight line in a northerly direction 500 feet to the point of beginning. This boundary encloses the torpedo assembly shop, the annex, and the two torpedo tunnels.

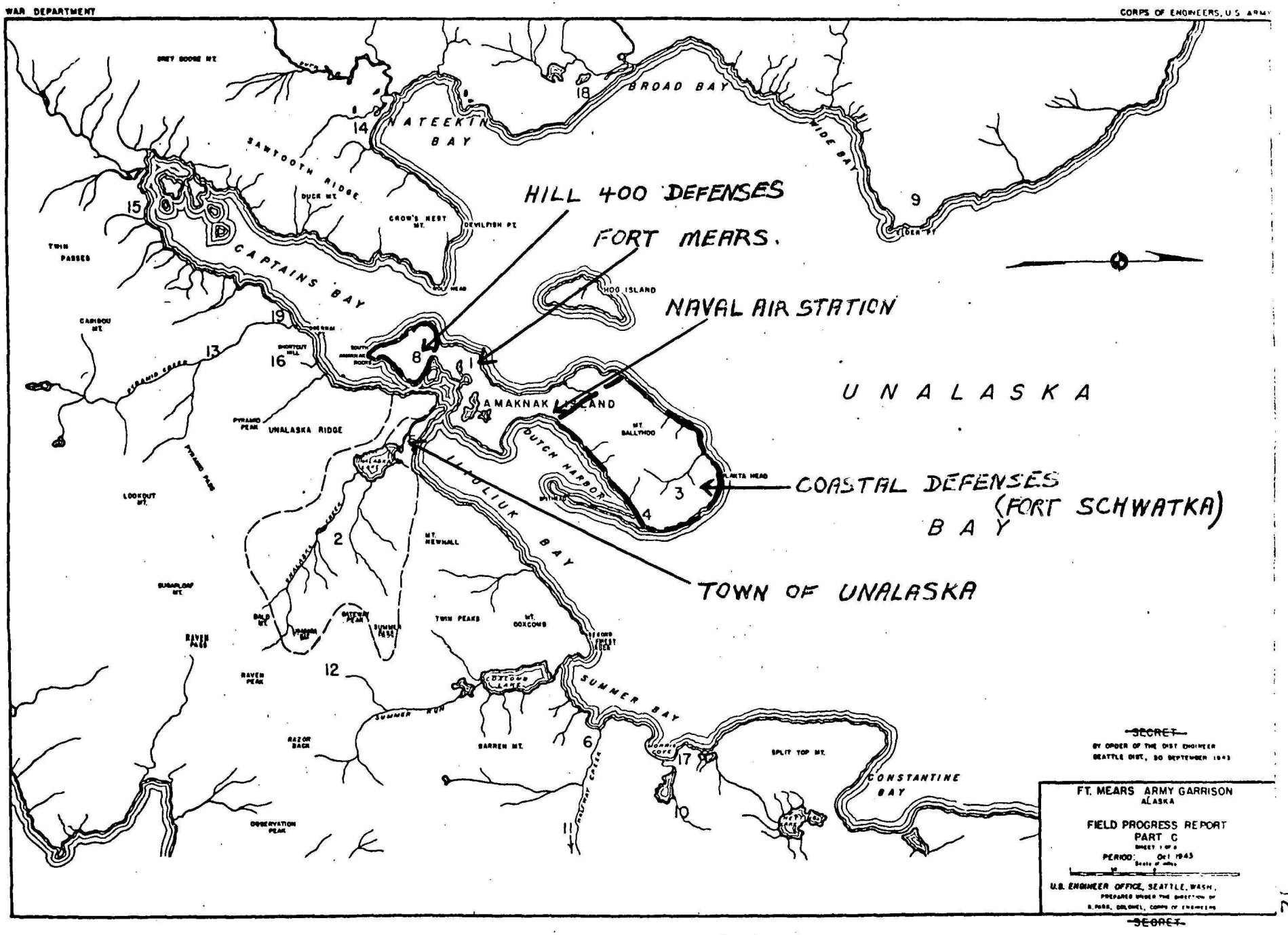
Power Plant, No. 609: Beginning at a point on the west side of the shore road along Dutch Harbor and 25 feet northeast of the northeast corner of the power plant, then in a generally southern direction along the landward side of this road 250 feet, then in a straight line in a westerly direction paralleling the southern side of the power plant and 20 feet from it for a distance of 200 feet to the east side of a dirt road, then in a straight line paralleling the west side

of the power plant and 30 feet from it in a northerly direction for 250 feet, then in a straight line paralleling the north end of the power plant in an easterly direction 125 feet to the point of beginning. This boundary encloses the large, irregularly shaped power plant structure.

Brick Apartment Building, No. 618: Beginning at a point on the west side of a dirt road on the east side of Amaknak Island that formerly ran from the naval base to the ferry dock to Unalaska and 100 feet east of the northeast corner of the apartment building, then along the inland edge of this road in a south southeasterly direction 200 feet, then 90 degrees in a straight line in a west southwesterly direction 200 feet, then 90 degrees in a straight line in a north northwesterly direction 225 feet to the point of beginning. This boundary encloses the brick apartment building and the (natural) grassy area that surrounds it.




ATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY, WASHINGTON, D.C. — A NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAP

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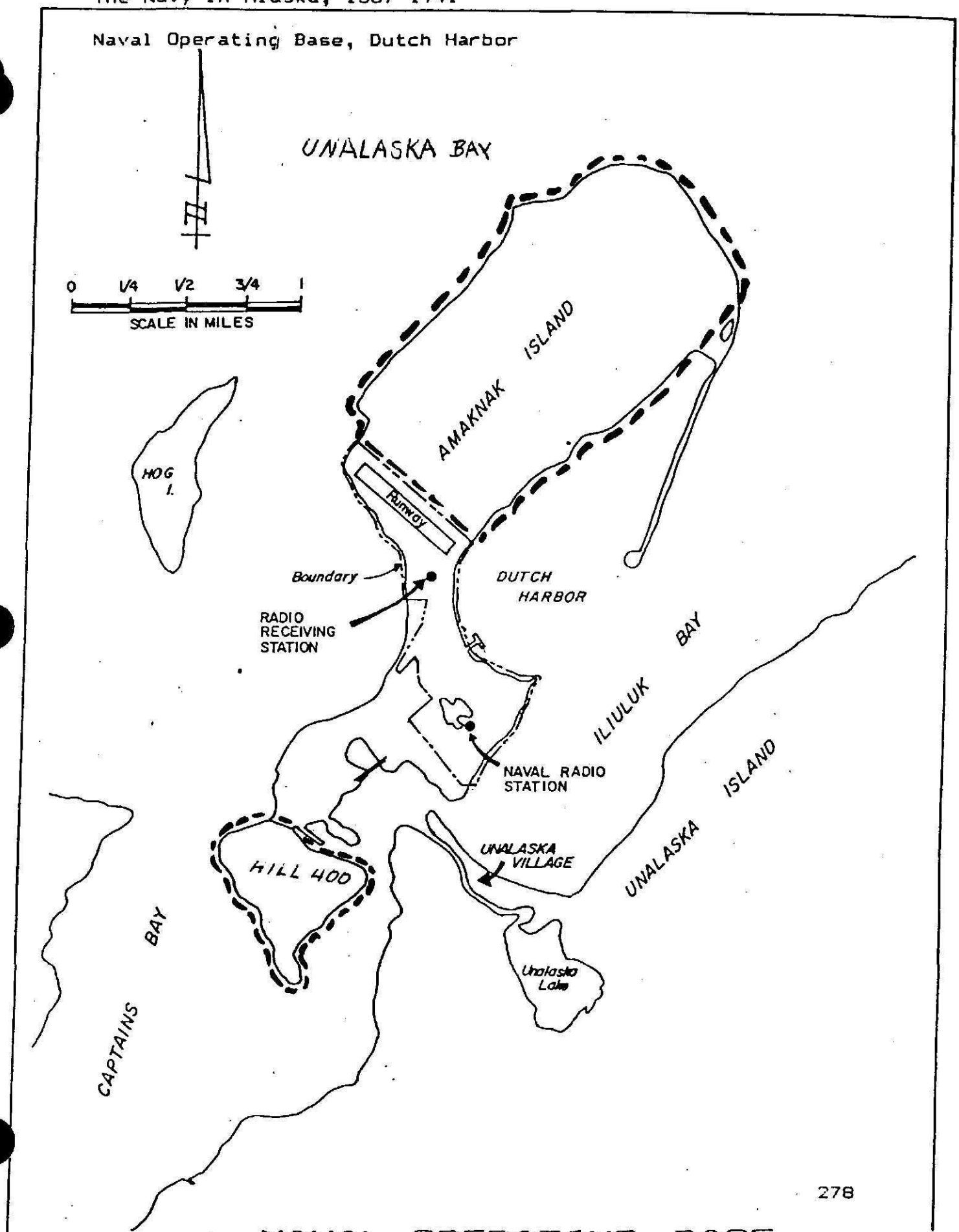
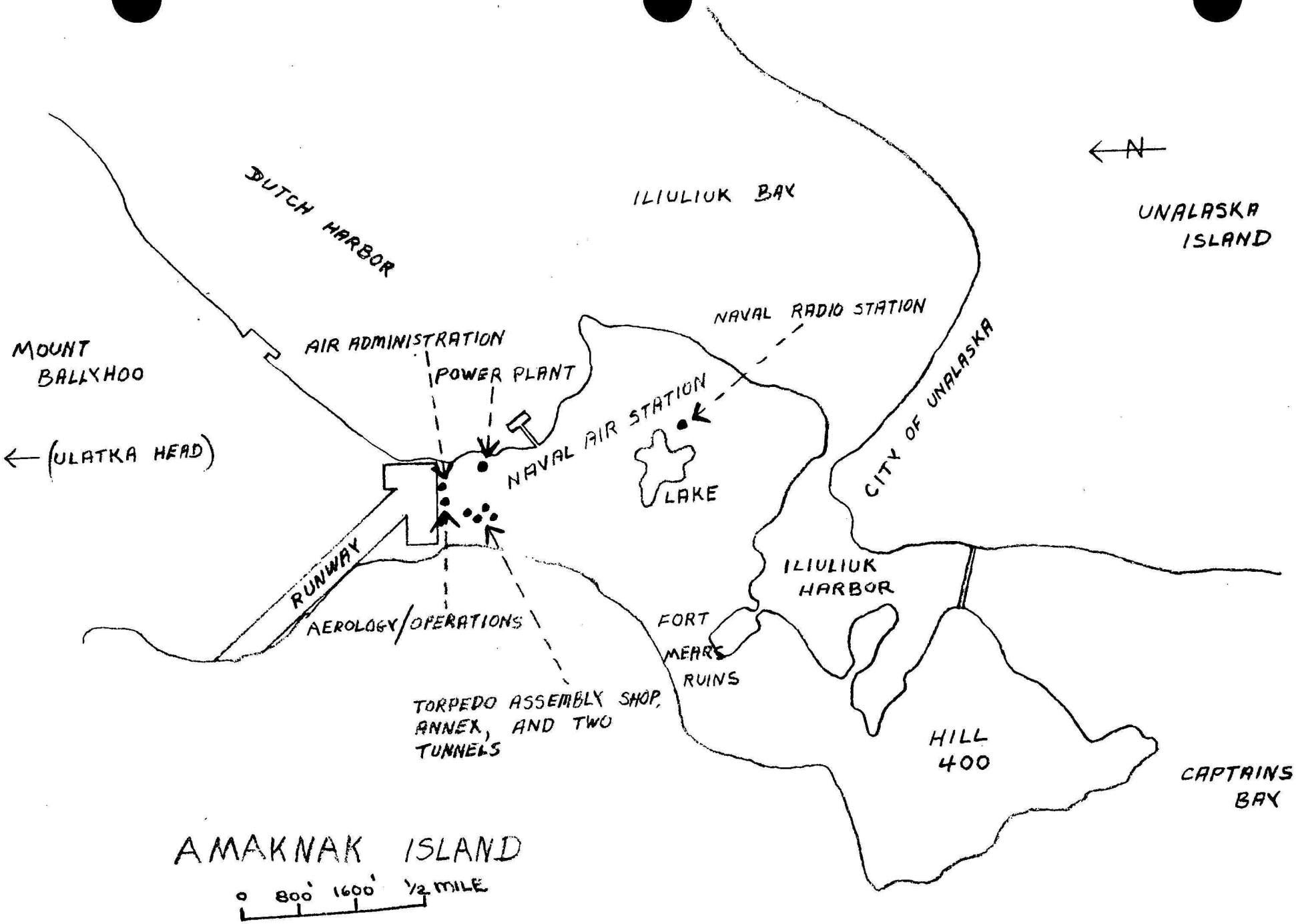
[illegible] C. Parr's (Durkin), NARS, August 23, 1982






NAVAL OPERATING BASE, DUTCH HARBOR


DUTCH HARBOR
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N
MOUNT BALLYHOO
(ULATKA HEAD)
AIR ADMINISTRATION
POWER PLANT
NAVAL RADIO STATION
NAVAL AIR STATION
LAKE
CITY OF UNALASKA
RUNWAY
AEROLOGY/OPERATIONS
ILIULIUK HARBOR
FORT MEARS RUINS
TORPEDO ASSEMBLY SHOP, ANNEX, AND TWO TUNNELS
HILL 400
CAPTAINS BAY
AMAKNAK ISLAND
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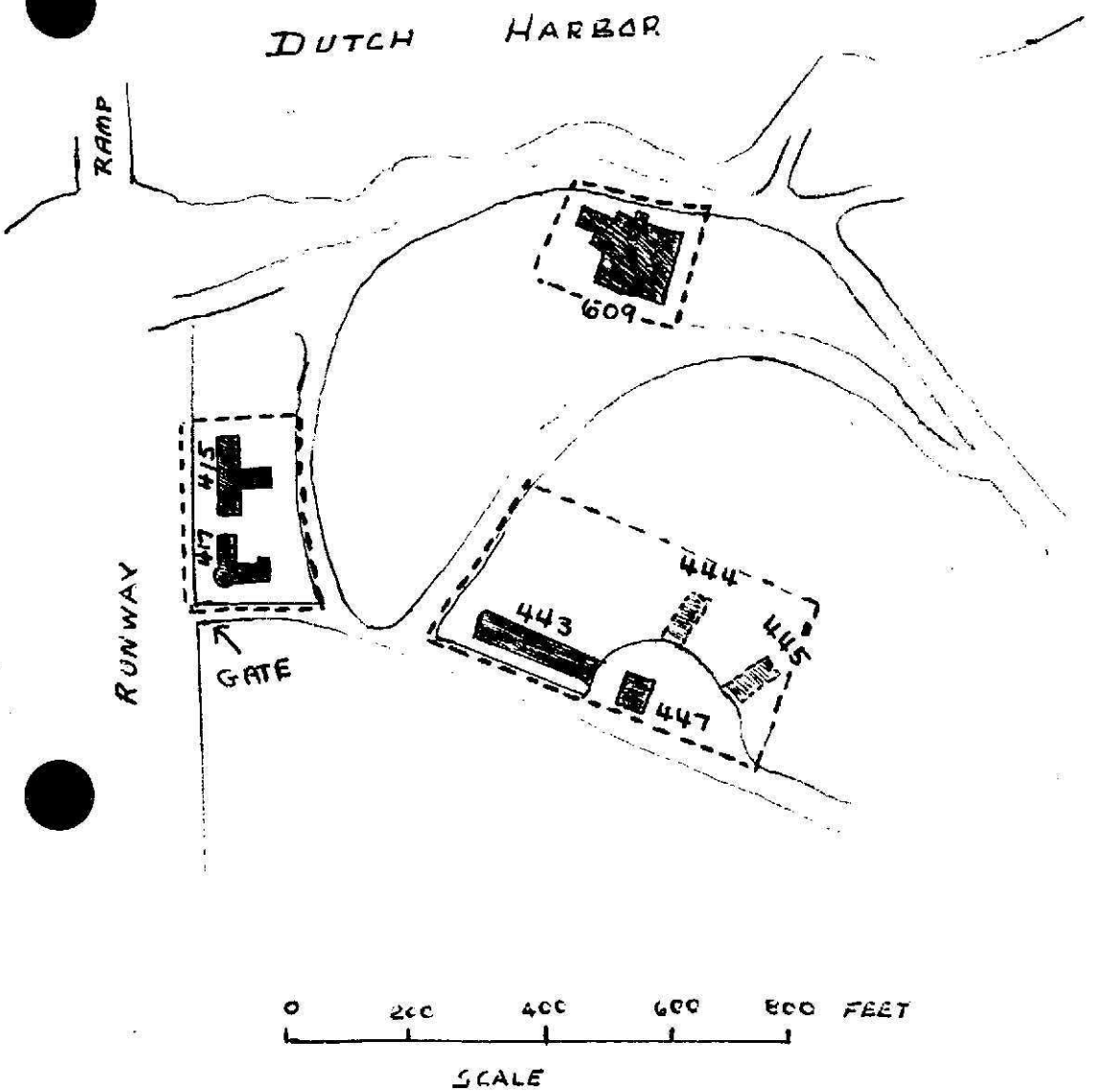
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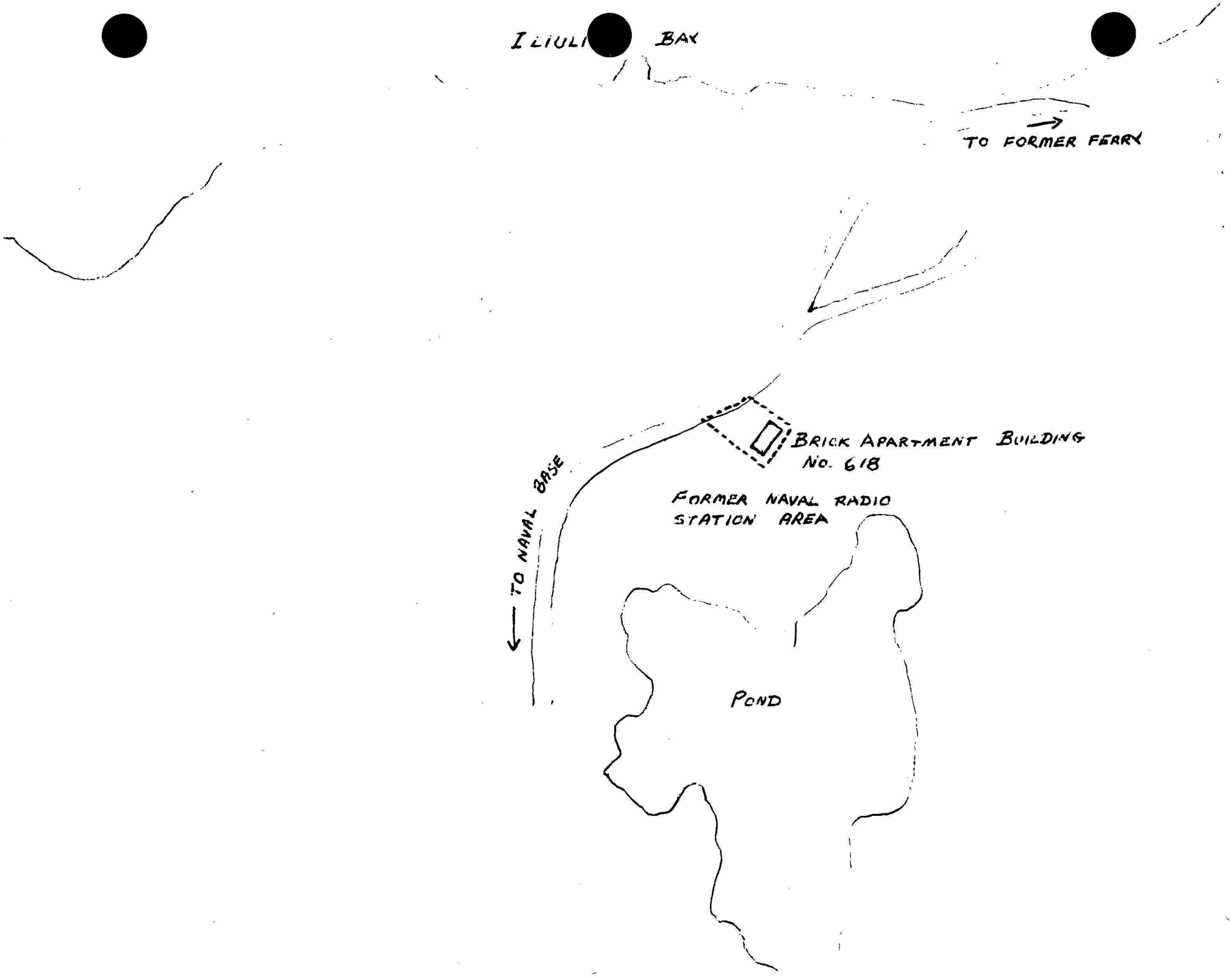
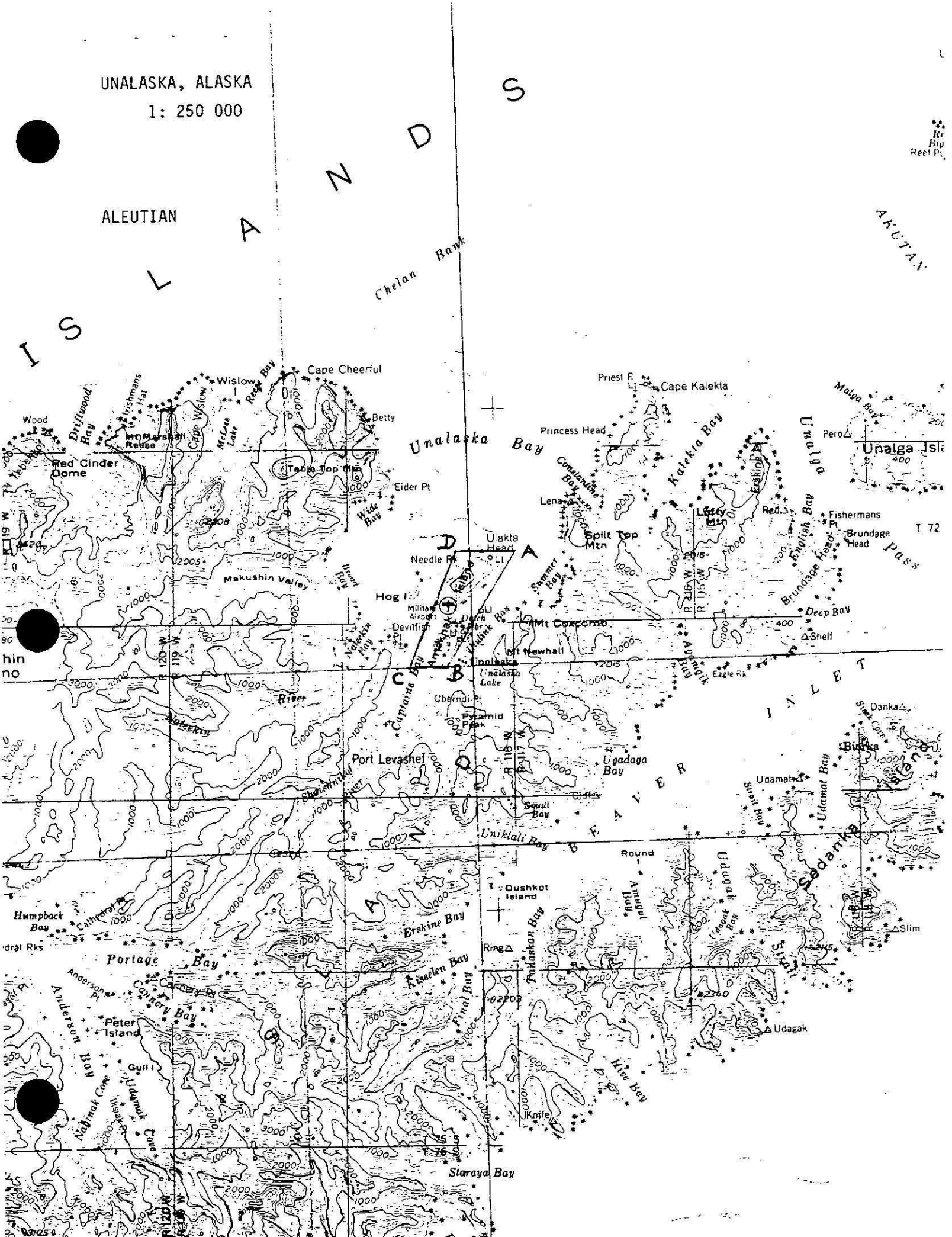
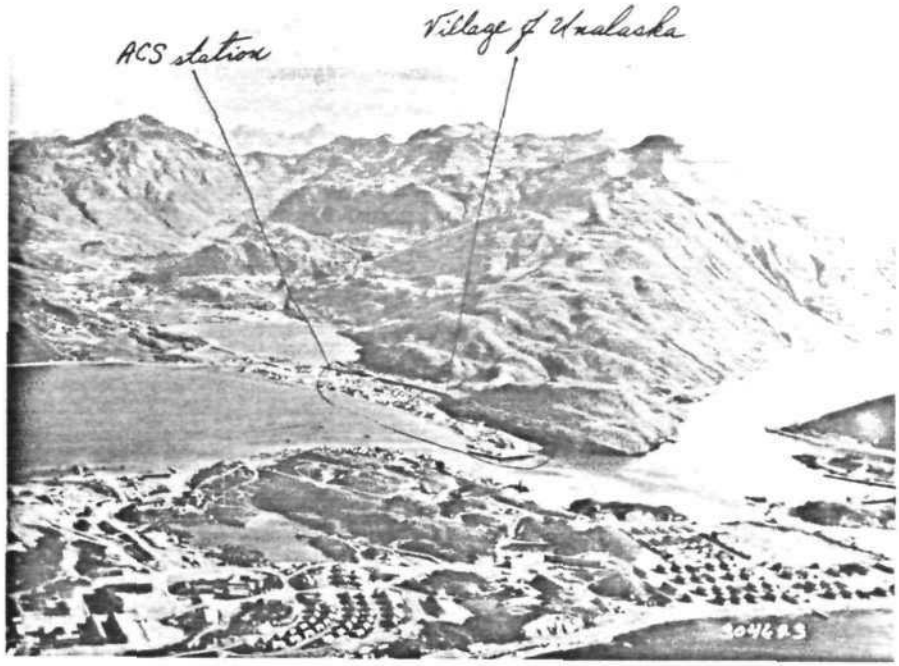

ILIULI BAY
TO FORMER FERRY
BRICK APARTMENT BUILDING
NO. 618
FORMER NAVAL RADIO
STATION AREA
TO NAVAL BASE
POND

UNALASKA, ALASKA

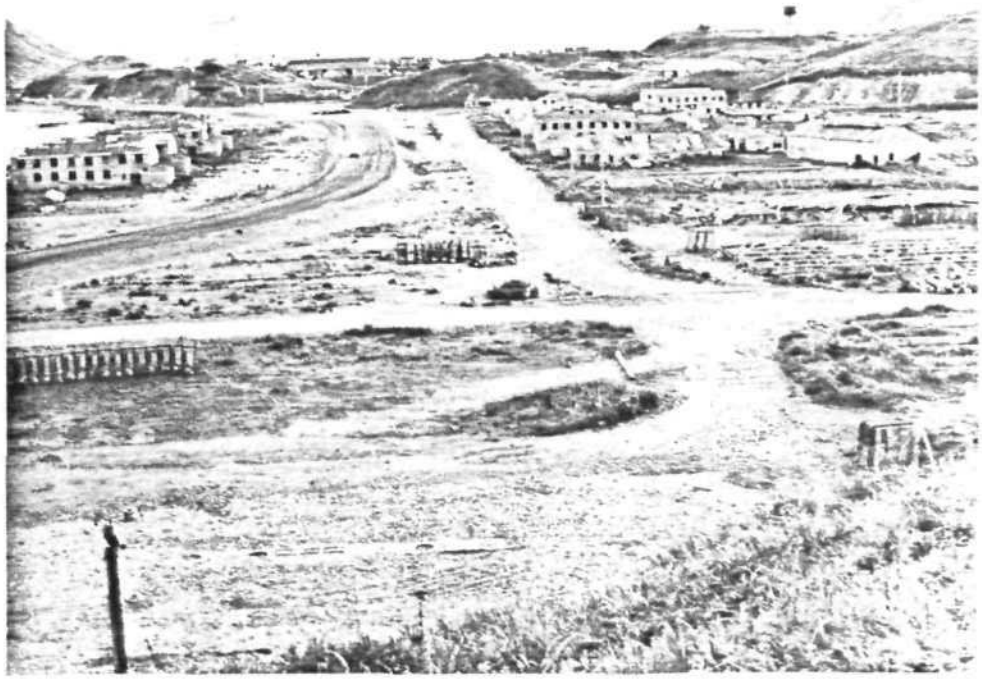
1: 250 000





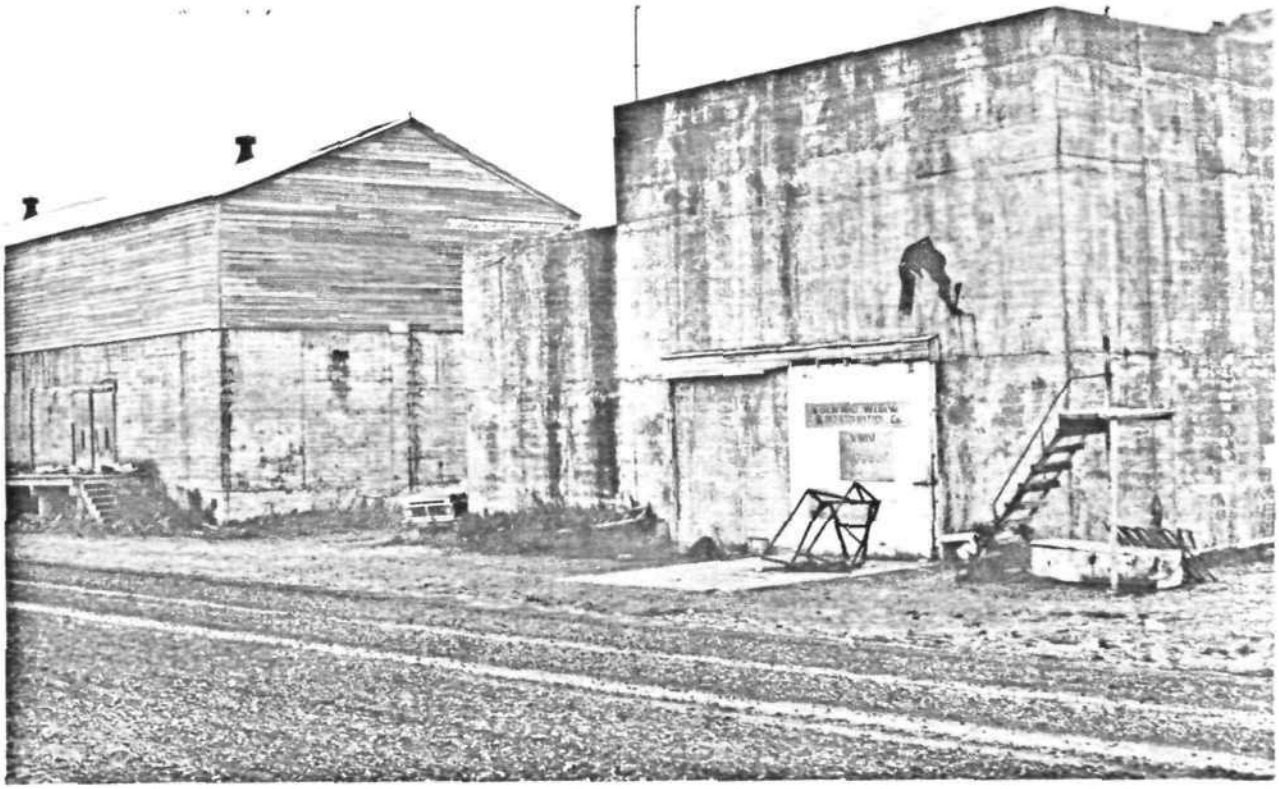

1. A 1945 view of Unalaska. Lower left is a portion of Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base. Lower right is original Fort Mears. Across the strait is the City of Unalaska. Upper left is Unalaska Valley into which the Army moved.

Photo by U.S. Army Signal Corps. Courtesy, Defense Audio-visual Agency.



4. Site of Fort Mears today. The few structures remaining are fast deteriorating.

Photo by E.N. Thompson. August 1983



10. Torpedo assembly building on left; annex shop on right. Nearby are two torpedo explosives tunnels cut into hillside, Dutch Harbor.

Photo by E.N. Thompson. August 1983

6. Casemated, reinforced-concrete magazines for 8-inch coastal gun battery high on Ulakta Head.

Photo by E.N. Thompson. August 1983

**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Ladd Field

and or common Fort Wainwright

## 2. Location

street & number ___ not for publication

city, town X vicinity of Fairbanks

state Alaska code 02 county Fairbanks North Star code 090

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| X district | X public | X occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | ___ unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| ___ site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | X yes: restricted | ___ government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | ___ yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ no | X military | ___ other: |

## 4. Owner of Property

name United States Army

street & number

city, town Fort Wainwright ___ vicinity of state Alaska 99707

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Director of Facilities, HQ 172d Infantry Brigade (AK),

street & number Engineering (AFZT-FE-PS)

city, town Fort Richardson state Alaska 99505

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| X excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | X original site |
| ___ good | ___ ruins | X altered | ___ moved date _____ |
| ___ fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Construction at Ladd Field, the first U.S. Army airfield in Alaska, began in the fall of 1938. Named in honor of Maj. Arthur K. Ladd, killed in an aircraft accident in South Carolina in 1935, it was built just east of Fairbanks, Alaska. The first Army Air Corps troops arrived at the field in April 1940. Its World War II facilities were designed to fulfill three missions: cold weather experimental station, air depot for repair and testing of aircraft, and the principal base in Alaska for the Air Transport Command.

Today, it is an army installation, Fort Wainwright, and facilities have greatly expanded with the erection of modern barracks, family housing, medical center, administrative centers, and other structures. The core of the original field, including the permanent garrison, hangars, and runways, remains relatively intact and is maintained in good condition. Both the U.S. Army and the Bureau of Land Management make use of these structures, but a few buildings are presently unoccupied. Several features of wartime activities that were located around the periphery of the field are no longer extant: a temporary 500-man transient camp for Russian and American aircrews; Coast Artillery (antiaircraft) garrison area; air depot and troop housing area; and Quartermaster Corps housing. A satellite runway, 26 miles to the southeast (and called "Mile 26 Field") is now fully developed Eielson Air Force Base.

Permanent Garrison. The first thing to be built at the new site was a three-mile spur of The Alaska Railroad from Fairbanks to deliver construction material. This spur exists and is maintained in good condition. Because of the extremely cold winters in Interior Alaska, all structures for the original garrison were permanent in nature. Officers' quarters are arranged in a horseshoe, centered on an open lawn. Three of these (1047, 1049, and 1051) are frame, two-story, apartment-type quarters and date from 1941. A similar-type structure (1045) was the early administrative center and is now a guest house. Next to it, but dating from 1945, is an attractive-appearing automobile garage. In the center of the horseshoe is Quarters No. 1, the commanding officer's house. This handsome, two-story, frame structure, surrounded by a white picket fence and a ring of trees, was the envy of all army officers in Alaska, both higher and lower rank than the occupant.

The horseshoe is today surrounded by many more sets of quarters of later construction, but among them are three from the early 1940s: nurses' quarters (1021), east of the guest house, a one-story, frame building constructed before 1943 (but carried in the records today as dating from 1946) and presently vacant; radio station (1024), one-story, frame, cottage-type building pre-dating 1943, although current records date it from 1945 (local tradition holds this building to have been the residence of the head of the Russian mission at Ladd, but no supporting evidence has yet been found); and a standard-plan military chapel, constructed in 1944.

The legs of the horseshoe and the open space between them extend southward, across a street into the industrial area. This open space no longer has a flag staff but a monument to Lt. Gen. Jonathan M. Wainwright has been emplaced

there. East of this former parade ground is a large, U-shaped, two-story post hospital (1555), constructed during a major expansion in 1943. In later years, this structure served as post headquarters; today, it houses the Bureau of Land Management's Alaska Fire Service. East of the hospital is a former aircraft maintenance shop (1541), now an addition to a large Bureau of Land Management administration/visitor center building. While present-day building records state the shop was built in 1942, a 1943 army map does not show it.

West of the parade are three wartime structures: A two-story building with a one-story wing at each end (a long ell at the rear no longer exists); the wartime function of this building (1562) was possibly administrative while today it is called Kluge Hall and contains administrative offices and a thrift shop. South of it stands the all-important wartime power and heating plant (1561), not presently in operation. Next to the plant is a wartime community center (1560), constructed in 1941 and enlarged in 1943.[1]

Many of the first buildings at Ladd retain their original, and distinctive, copper roofs. Another unusal feature was a network of underground utilities corridors. Those corridors in the vicinity of the officers' quarters, parade ground, and Hangar No. 1 are of sufficient size (7 by 9 feet) to allow persons to walk underground during cold winter weather.

Airfield

South of the industrial area, the airfield proper begins. Adjacent to the parade is the huge, metal-clad Hangar No. 1, the first to be completed at Ladd, in 1941. On its north and south sides are two-story "lean-tos" containing offices and shops. This imposing hangar is now vacant. East, west, and south of the hangar are extensive concrete or earthen aircraft parking areas where, later, planes destined for the Soviet Union received final preparation. Beyond them is the first of two parallel runways at Ladd Field. In 1941, this reinforced-concrete runway was 5,000 feet in length. By 1943, gravel extensions had been laid at each end, giving a total length of over 9,000 feet. These extensions were later paved. Also in 1943, the second, paved runway, 9,000 by 150 feet, as well as additional parking areas, taxiways, and hardstands were under construction. Two Kodiak, T-type hangars (1542 and 1543) were erected at the end of the parking area east of Hangar No. 1. Said to have been used only by the cold weather test station, these hangars have

1. Today's army building records state it was originally a community center. The writer feels uneasy about the term which was not in common use at the time and because of the building's location--between the power plant and a hangar.

been permitted to the Bureau of Land Management for fire suppression activities.[2]

In the 1943 expansion program for Ladd, three Birchwood-type hangars were authorized for the south side of the enlarged field. These nearly-identical structures are extant, but their locations are somewhat different than originally planned: Hangar No. 2 (3008), Hangar No. 3 (3005), and Hangar No. 6 (2085). They were completed ca. 1944. All three have been modernized and are in excellent condition. Today, they house army helicopters. Also on the south side of the field are two sets of double hangars, Nos. 4 and 5 (2106) and 7 and 8 (2077) that were erected at the same time. Considering the many changes in missions over the past 45 years, the overall integrity of the original Ladd field structures is remarkable.

The significant historical features at former Ladd Field are:

Officers' quarters on the horseshoe, nos. 1047, 1049, and 1051; also, the commanding officer's quarters, no. 1.

Early administrative center (present guest house), no. 1045.

Automobile garage, no. 10.

Former nurses' quarters, no. 1021.

Radio station, no. 1024.

Former post hospital, no. 1555.

Former aircraft maintenance shop, no. 1541.

Strcuture no. 1562 (Kluge Hall).

Former power and heating plant, no. 1561.

Former "community center," no. 1560.

Hangar no. 1.

Two parallel runways, including parking areas, taxiways, and hardstands.

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2. Both hangars were surveyed in 1980 for possible demolition.

Two Kodiak hangars, nos. 1542 and 1543.

Three Birchwood hangars, nos. 3008, 3005, and 2085.

Two double hangars, nos. 2106 and 2077.

Chapel, no. 1043.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1938-1945 **Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Ladd Field was established in 1940 originally as a Cold Weather Test Station at the insistance of Maj. Gen. H.H. Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Corps. Here, at Alaska's first army airfield, vital lessons were learned in wing-icing, navigation, aircraft maintenance and operation, instruments and controls, radio communication, cold-weather clothing, armament, and a wide variety of other investigations for operating aircraft in arctic-like conditions. As the Japanese prepared to invade the Aleutians in 1942, the Eleventh Air Force established an Air Depot at Ladd Field for the repair, testing, and supply of aircraft in the Alaska Theater. And, beginning in 1942, Ladd Field became the center of the "Alsib [Alaska/Siberia] Movement," wherein nearly 8,000 military aircraft from the United States were transferred to Russian aircrews for use on the Russian Front. Despite Alaska's cruel winters this air ferry route came to be preferred over the longer Miami-Iraq-Moscow route. Soviet diplomats and missions also traveled through Ladd Field during the war en route to and from the Soviet Union and the United States.

Cold Weather Test Station

Well before he became chief of the Army Air Corps, Maj. Gen. H.H. ("Hap") Arnold recognized the importance of establishing a cold weather test station in Alaska to experiment in adapting planes, personnel, equipment, and base facilities to operate successfully in deep cold temperatures such as are experienced in Interior Alaska. As chief, he persuaded the War Department to complete a site survey in the summer of 1938. A site was chosen 3½ miles east of Fairbanks (postwar growth has brought city development up to the base's boundary) and by autumn the Quartermaster Corps had begun construction with a civilian crew that eventually grew to 1,200 men.

An early experiment concerned how best to construct a 5,000-foot runway that would not heave in freezing and thawing conditions. A promising solution was to remove two feet of topsoil then put in one foot of unwashed gravel. Concrete, reinforced with steel, was poured over this base. (Local citizens persuaded the Army to use thawing techniques rather than attempting to blast the frozen tundra.) This method proved quite successful, although the runways have been upgraded and reconstructed in the subsequent 45 years.

The first Air Corps troops arrived at Ladd Field in September 1940, and soon the first B-17 Flying Fortress arrived for experimental work. The power and heating plant was completed during the winter of 1940-44, bringing heat and cheerful light to the still unfinished barracks and quarters. In January 1941, the Corps of Engineers took over construction and the forceful Col. B.B. Talley, CE, drove the work to completion. At the same time, Coast Artillery antiaircraft units arrived to winter test their weapons. Cold weather testing

continued at Ladd Field until the spring of 1942 when concern over a Japanese invasion caused the Alaska Department to request the testing be halted. The Eleventh Air Force took over the field and established an air depot for aircraft repair, service, and supply for the Alaskan Theater.

Within a few months, however, the commanding general of the Army Air Forces directed the reestablishment of cold weather testing, this time keeping the activity directly under himself. (Even earlier, Ladd Field had been fairly independent of the Alaska Department. One result of this was the envy of other units in Alaska over the high degree of refinement that went into Ladd's facilities. Most other installations were making do with tents and quonset huts.) Testing operations resumed, to be continued until well after the conclusion of World War II. A typical report summarized activity for the winter of 1942-43: "In addition to aircraft accessory equipment, tests and experiments were carried out in connection with clothing, food, motor transportation, medical research, photography and the many and varied factors in connection with Arctic operations."[1]

## Air Depot

The establishment of the Air Depot at Ladd in 1942 resulted in the addition of nearly 1,000 officers and men to the garrison. Depot activities, combined with those of the Air Transport Command, resulted in the extension of the existing runway, construction of a second, and the building of additional hangars and housing. Then, with the freeing of the western Aleutians from the enemy a year later, the size of the Eleventh Air Force decreased considerably, resulting in less work for the depot. At the same time, the Air Transport Command was increasing its work load and, having taken command of Ladd Field, had the Sixth Air Depot Group disbanded and absorbed the personnel into its own activities.

## The Russians Are Coming

The United States and the Soviet Union had discussed the concept of ferrying American-manufactured aircraft to Russia under a lend-lease program even before Pearl Harbor. In August 1941, the two nations reached an agreement in principle on the plan. Two routes were feasible: from Florida to North Africa, to Iraq and Iran, and on to Moscow, for a distance of 13,000 miles; and from Great Falls, Montana, to Fairbanks, to Siberia, and on to Moscow, for a

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1. Alaska Defense Command, History of Ladd Field, 1938-44, "AAF Cold Weather Testing Detachment," p. 54. Record Group 338, Alaska Defense Command, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD.

distance of 7,900 miles. The Russians[2] were not enthusiastic about the Siberian route but, in July 1942, Premier Joseph Stalin accepted this plan.

Canadians were already building airfields in the wilderness between Edmonton, Alberta, and Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. These together with six fields in Central Alaska--Northway, Tanacross, Big Delta, Ladd, Galena, and Nome--became the Northwest Staging Route for the delivery of the aircraft. At first, the United States wanted to turn over the planes to Russian aircrews in Siberia. Stalin, however, wishing to avoid an appearance of collaboration in the Far East, suggested that Soviet flyers accept the planes in Alaska, perhaps at Nome. Agreement was soon reached that Ladd Field would be the delivery point and that the Russians would land at Nome for refueling and repairs before crossing Bering Strait.[3]

The U.S. Army Air Corps Ferrying Command had its origins in delivery of American aircraft to Great Britain. Early in 1942 it expanded operations by flying bombers to the South Pacific. Renamed the Air Transport Command (ATC) in June 1942, it directed its Seventh Ferrying Group to deliver the first planes to Alaska. Five A-20 Havoc attack bombers landed at Ladd Field on September 3, 1942. Next day, officers of the permanent Russian mission flew in from Siberia. On September 11, 22 P-40 fighters arrived from Montana. Finally, a contingent of Russian pilots landed at Ladd on September 24 to begin five days of transitional training before flying the new planes home.

Americans found the Russians difficult students at first. The language barrier was only part of the problem. Some planes were too small for two men and the Americans gave instructions on the ground then watched nervously as the Russians took to the air. Also, the Russians appeared to have orders not to fraternize too much with American officers and not at all with American women (photographs of Russians at American dances suggest that any such orders were later relaxed). For the most part, the Russians were polite, well-behaved, and under strict discipline. In the beginning, they complained some about the quality of American planes, perhaps suspicious of products from a capitalist country. (Some Russians may have had a capitalistic heart; it is reported that few planes reached Siberia without a cargo of silk stockings, cosmetics, fishing tackle, cigarettes, or toys.) With the passage of time,

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2. During World War II, Americans preferred the terms "Russia" and "Russians" over "Soviet Union" and Soviets."

3. Galena Field, between Fairbanks and Nome, was an alternate jumping-off point for Siberia or for emergency landings.

however, differences smoothed out and, by 1944, Russia was favorably impressed with the quality and quantity of American aircraft. Soviet flyers and mechanics had free run of Ladd Field and, after the severely cold winter of 1942-43 that was made worse by inadequate facilities, took over many of the new hangars and shops erected in 1943.

The Alsib route witnessed the comings and goings of more than air crews. As early as September 1941, Corps of Engineers Col. B.B. Talley, flying to Nome on an inspection trip, spotted two large (American-made) Russian seaplanes in a lagoon twenty miles east of Nome. That night he met the Russians--a general and 42 staff members--who were en route to the United States on a military mission.[4] Throughout the war, Ladd Field played host to many dignitaries from both nations, including Ambassador Andrei Gromyko and Foreign Minister V.M. Molotov from the Soviet Union, and Wendell L. Wilkie and Vice President Henry A. Wallace of the United States.

The Air Transport Command took over Ladd Field in October 1943, having already assumed command of Galena, Big Delta, Tanacross, and Northway. In March 1944 alone the amount of air freight handled at Ladd amounted to 586 tons, and 288 planes were delivered to Russia. By September 1945, when the Russian mission left Alaska, 7,930 aircraft had been delivered to the Soviets by way of the Alsib Movement.

On November 1, 1945, the Air Transport Command transfered Ladd Field back to the Eleventh Air force. Fifteen years later, on January 1, 1961, the Department of the Air Force transferred Ladd Air Force Base to the Department of the Army. The Department renamed the now historic field Fort Jonathan M. Wainwright, for the hero of Corregidor.

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4. B.B. Talley, Daily Log, 1941-1943, entry for September 1, 1941.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See separate sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1,010 acres

Quadrangle name Fairbanks (D-2) Quadrangle scale 1:250,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 03 | 472400 | 7191300 | B | 03 | 472400 | 7189500 |
| C | 03 | 469400 | 7189500 | D | 03 | 469400 | 7191300 |
| E | | | | F | | | |
| G | | | | H | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

See separate sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| state | code | county | code |

## 11. Form Prepared By

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| name/title | Erwin N. Thompson, Historian | | |
| organization | Denver Service Center, NPS | date | April 18, 1984 |
| street & number | 755 Parfet Street | telephone | (303) 234-4509 |
| city or town | Lakewood | state | Colorado 80225 |

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

*The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:*

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

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_____. History of Ladd Field, 1938-1944, "AAF Cold Weather Testing Detachment," ca 1944. Record Group 338, Alaska Defense Command, WNRC.

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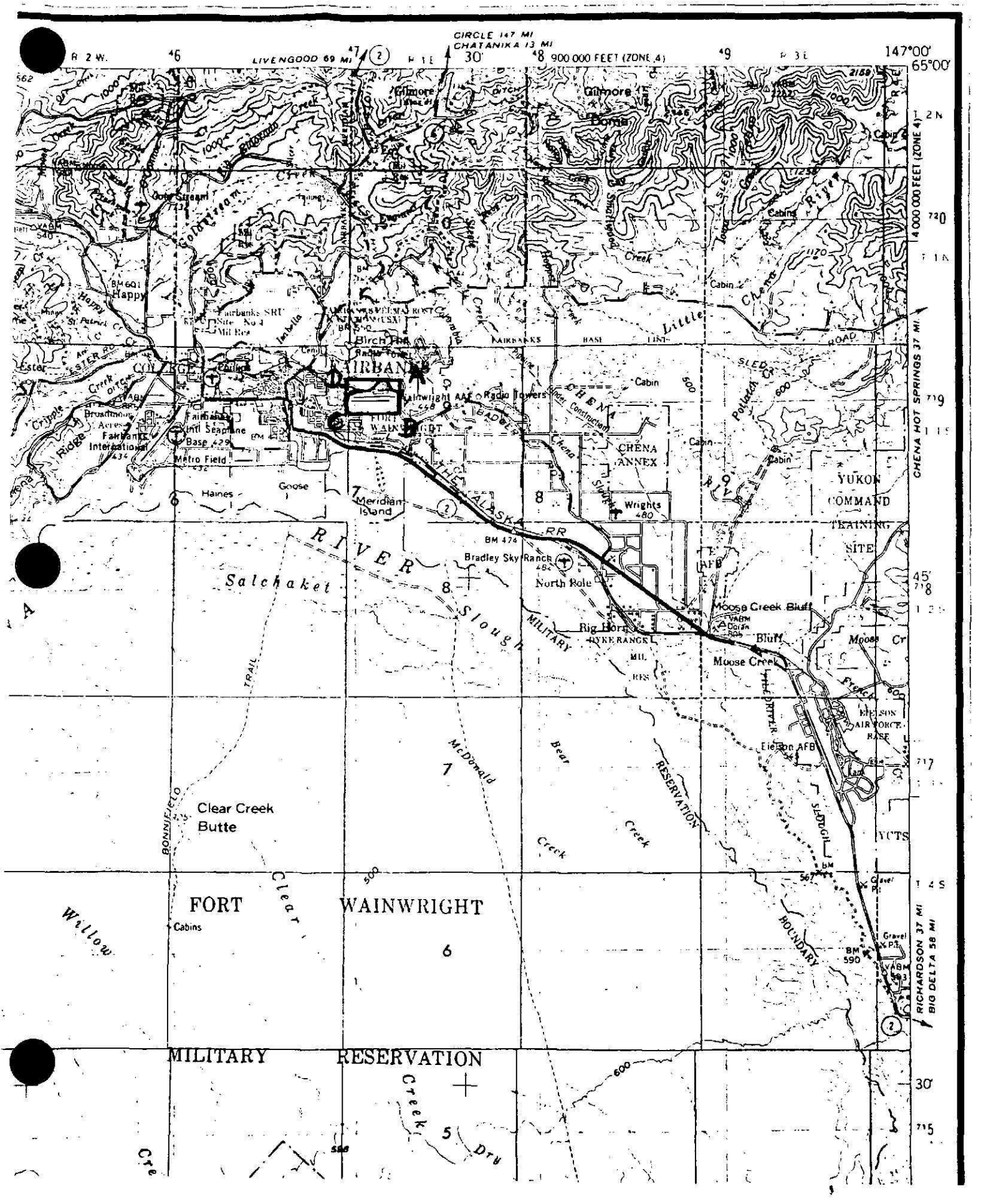
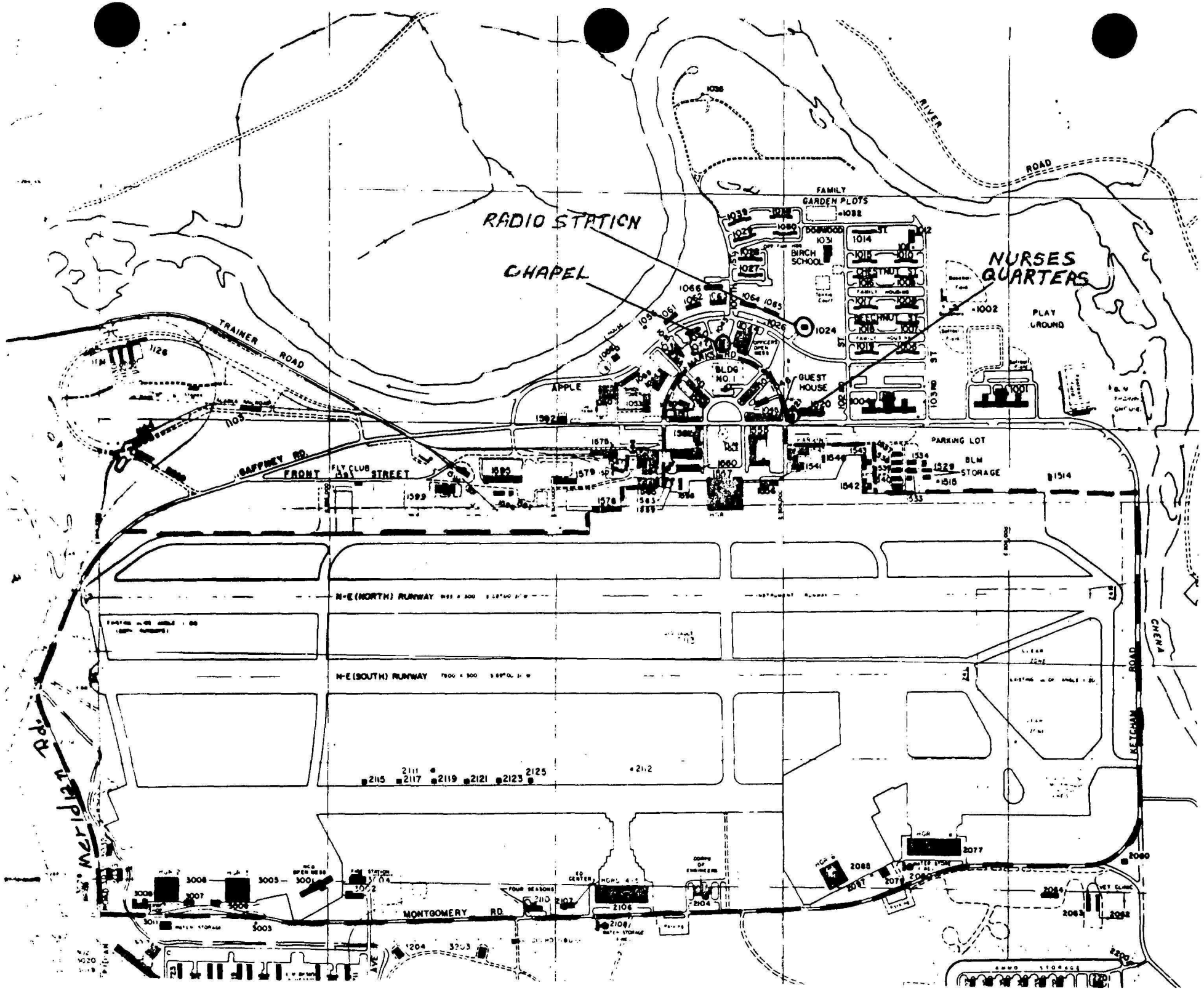
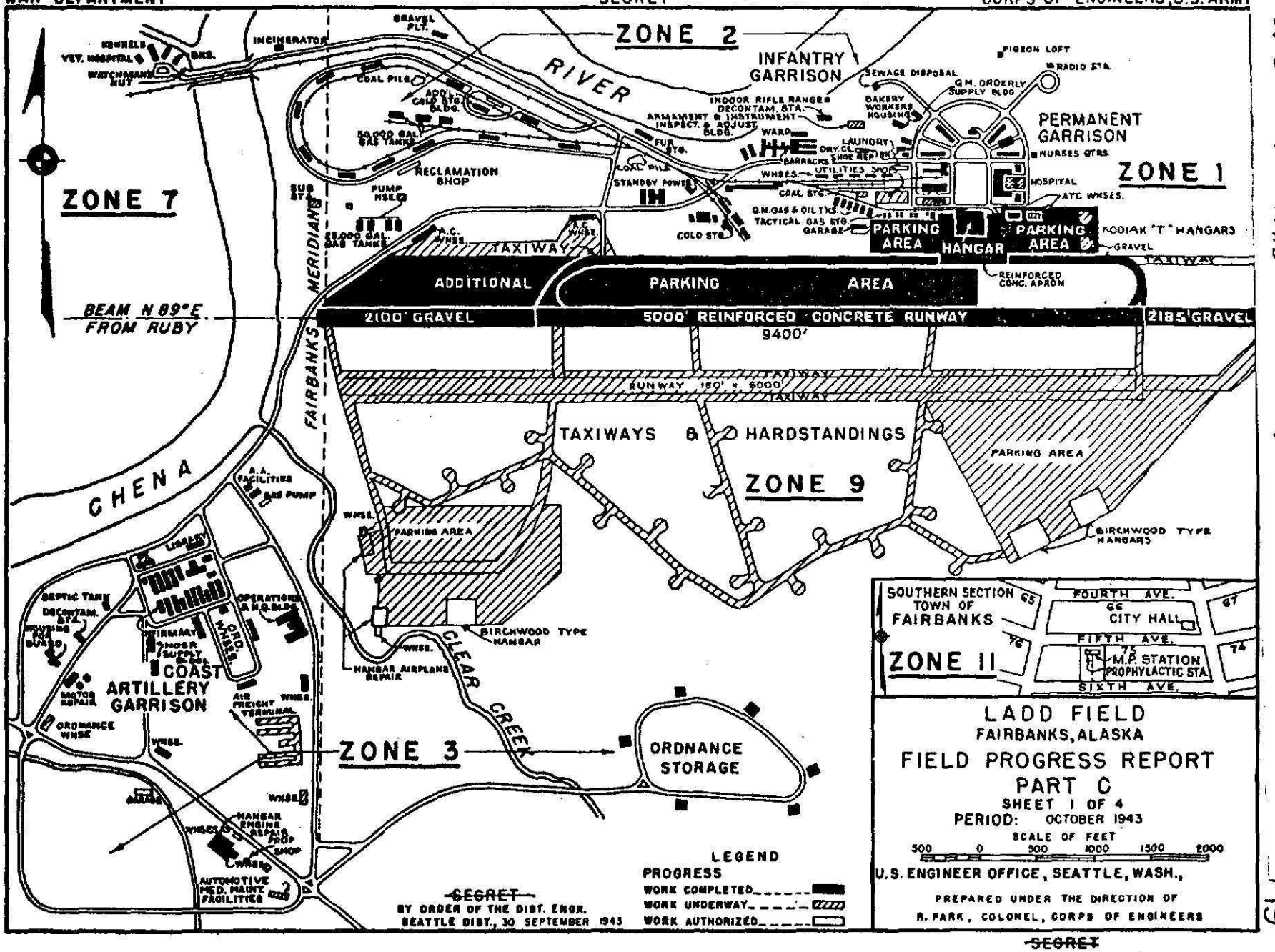
Yukon Sentinel, August 21, 1981. A Fort Wainwright newspaper. Files, Public Affairs Office, Fort Wainwright, Alaska.


CIRCLE 147 MI
CHATANIKA 13 MI
LIVENGOOD 69 MI
900 000 FEET (ZONE 4)
147°00'
65°00'
4 000 000 FEET (ZONE 4)
CHENA HOT SPRINGS 37 MI
RICHARDSON 37 MI
BIG DELTA 58 MI
Gilmore
Dome
Happy
Ester
COLLEGE
FAIRBANKS
Fairbanks SRT Site No 4
Fairbanks Intl Seaplane Base
Fairbanks International
Metro Field
Haines
Goose
Meridian Island
Wainwright AAF Radio Towers
FORT WAINWRIGHT
CHENA ANNEX
Wrights
YUKON COMMAND TRAINING SITE
Bradley Sky Ranch
North Pole
Rig Horn
HYKE RANGE
Moose Creek Bluff
Moose Creek
Eielson AFB
EIELSON AIR FORCE BASE
Salchaket Slough
Clear Creek Butte
FORT WAINWRIGHT
MILITARY RESERVATION
Willow Creek
McDonald Creek
Bear Creek
Little Chena River
Chena River
Cabins


RADIO STATION
CHAPEL
NURSES QUARTERS
FAMILY GARDEN PLOTS
BIRCH SCHOOL
PLAY GROUND
TRAINER ROAD
BLDG NO. 1
GUEST HOUSE
APPLE
PARKING LOT
BLM STORAGE
GAFFNEY RD.
FRONT STREET
FLY CLUB
N-E (NORTH) RUNWAY
N-E (SOUTH) RUNWAY
MONTGOMERY RD.
KETCHAM ROAD
CHENA
RIVER
ROAD
Meridian Rd.

DECLASSIFIED BY AUTHORITY OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, NNDG 745046
N. C. Lewis (Brulin), NARS, August 23, 1982





## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

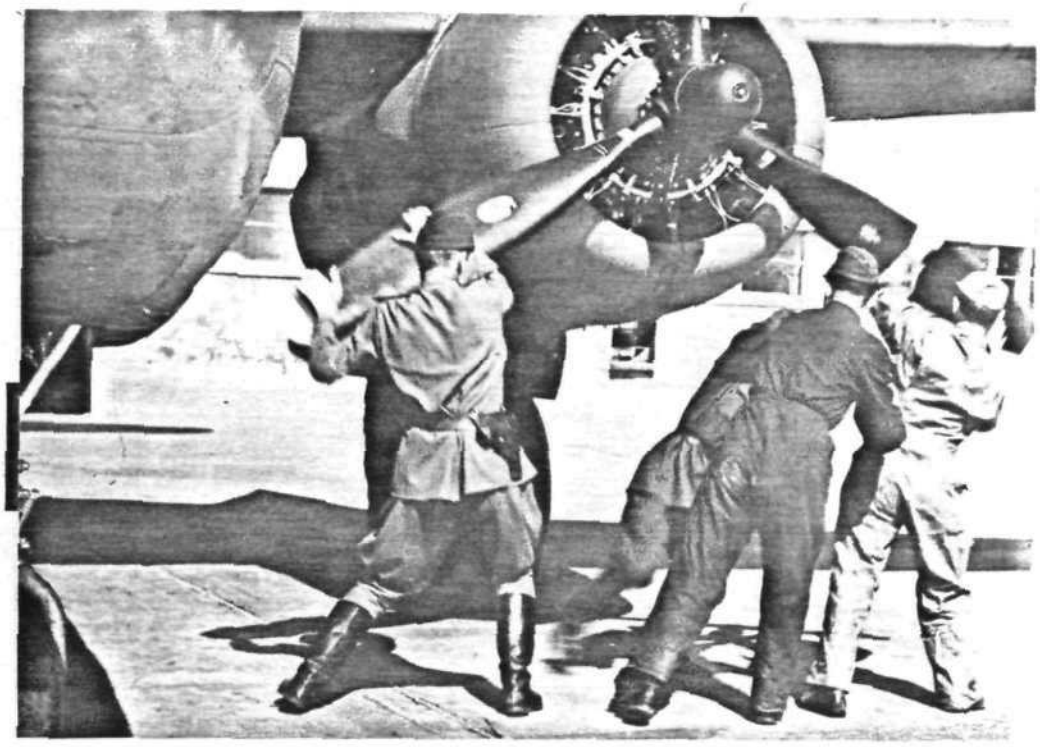
### Verbal boundary description

Starting at the west junction of Gaffney Road and Marks Road, then following the horseshoe curve along the inside curb of Marks Road to its east junction with Gaffney Road, then continuing due south along the inside curb of a road to the northwest corner of Building 1541, then due east 750 feet, then due south along the east ends of Buildings 1543 and 1542 to the north edge of a plane parking area, then due east to Ketchum Road, then south on Ketchum Road along its inside curb to its junction with Montgomery Road, then generally west along Montgomery Road to its junction with Meridian Road, then generally north and north northwest along the inside curb of Meridian Road to its junction with Gaffney Road, then following the northeast and east northeast curve of Gaffney Road 1,500 feet to a point due west of the north side of the north taxiway, then due east along the north side of the north taxiway to its junction with a paved aircraft parking area, then following the boundary of the parking area north, then east, then north, then east to the southeast corner of Building 1565, then due north along the inside curb of a road to Gaffney Road and the point of beginning.

These boundaries contain nearly all the historic area of Ladd Field, 1938-1945, including the permanent garrison, industrial area, hospital, hangars, and runways.

Structures within the boundaries that do not contribute significantly to the historic setting include Buildings 1556, 1558, 1559, 1563, 1546, 2085, 2097, 2079, 2080, 2104, 2107, 2110, 3004, 3002, 3001, 3007, 3009, 3031, 3032, and 3033.

Three structures that contribute to the historic setting are in the permanent garrison area but are outside the above boundaries: Building 1021, Nurses' Quarters; Building 1024, Radio Station; and Building 1043, Chapel. Their boundaries are their outlines.

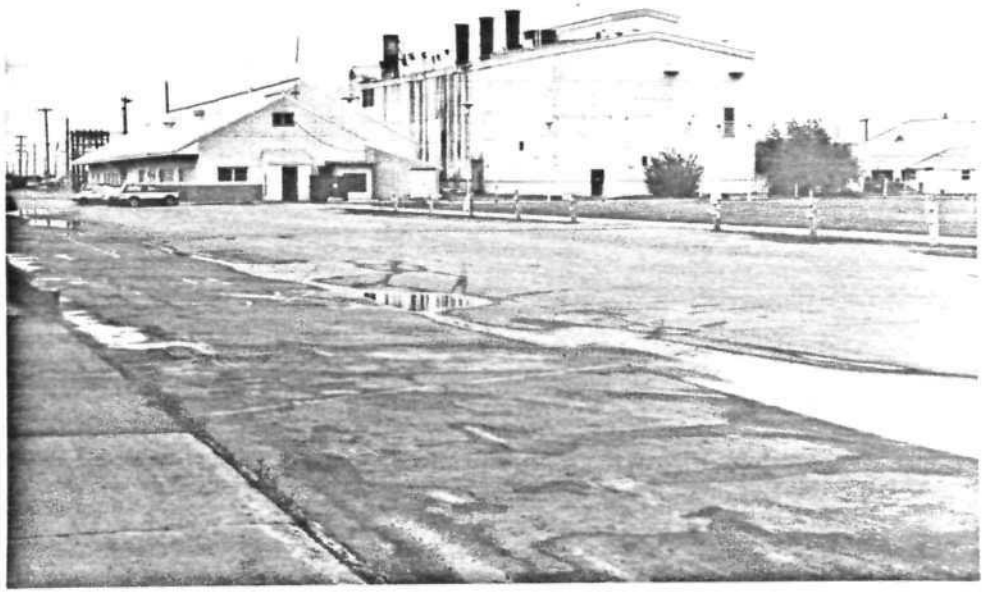


1. Soviet airmen prepare an A-20 attack bomber for flight at Ladd Field, World War II.

Courtesy, Smithsonian Institution and U.S. Air Force

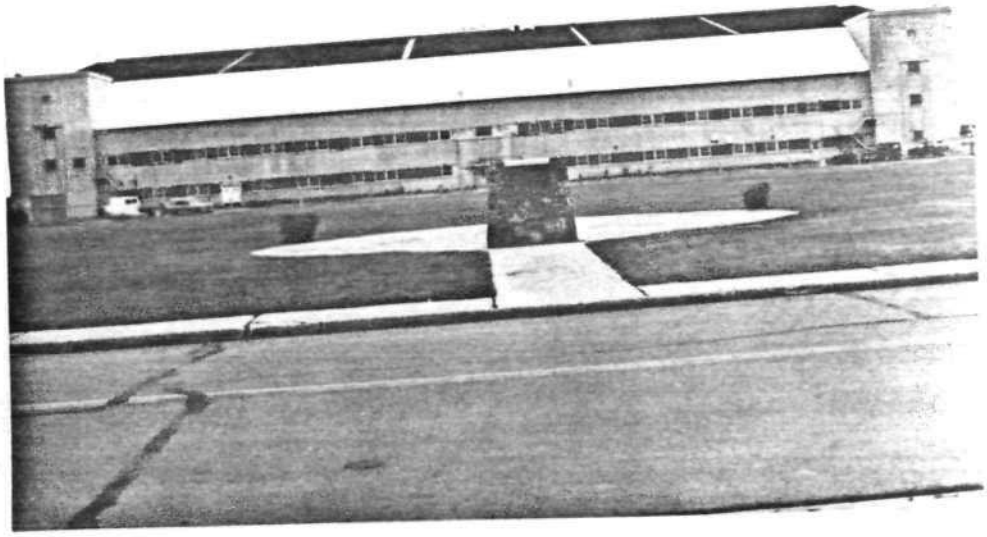
2. P-39 Airacobra fighters in foreground at Ladd Field readying for flight to Siberia, July 9, 1944. This aircraft was a favorite of Russian flyers. The Red Stars were painted on in Montana.

Courtesy, Smithsonian Institution and U.S. Air Force



9. On the left is the 1941-43 "community building". Next to it stands the all-important power and heating plant. A portion of an early administration building appears on the right.

Photo by E.N. Thompson August 1983

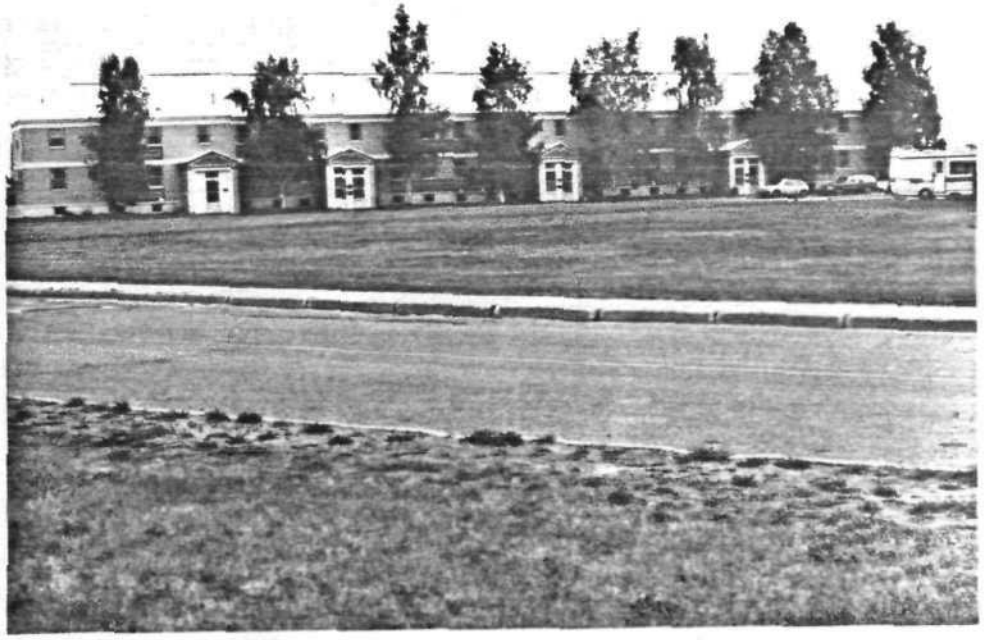


8. Hangar No. 1 at Ladd Field. It was the field's only hangar from 1940 to 1943. In the foreground is a memorial marker to Lt. Gen. Jonathan Wainwright for whom the present-day army post is named.

Photo by E.N. Thompson August 1983

10. One of three Birchwood-type hangars built on the south side of Ladd Field in 1943. The Army uses it today for helicopters.

Photo by E.N. Thompson August 1983



5. *One of three apartment houses at Ladd Field for* officers. Soon after Pearl Harbor, all military families in the Alaskan Theater were evacuated to the United States.

Photo by E.N. Thompson August 1983

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

NHL — WWII, PACIFIC

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Adak Army Base and Adak Naval Operating Base

and or common Adak Naval Station

## 2. Location

street & number ___ not for publication

city, town ___ vicinity of

state Alaska code 02 county Aleutian Islands code 010

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ district | _X_ public | ___ occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | ___ unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| _X_ site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | _X_ yes: restricted | ___ government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | ___ yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ no | _X_ military | ___ other: |

## 4. Owner of Property

name United States Navy

street & number Adak Naval Station, U.S. Department of the Navy

city, town FPO Seattle ___ vicinity of state Washington 98791

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. United States Navy

street & number Adak Naval Station, U.S. Department of the Navy

city, town FPO Seattle state Washington 98791

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes _X_ no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| ___ excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | _X_ original site |
| ___ good | _X_ ruins | _X_ altered | ___ moved date _____ |
| _X_ fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Adak is one of the Andreanof Islands in the Aleutian Chain and is about 1,400 air-miles southwest of Anchorage. While there is considerable archeological evidence of earlier habitation, the island was unoccupied on the outbreak of World War II. Like the rest of the Aleutians, Adak is noted for its storms, fog, tundra, and muskeg, all of which challenged the military when it arrived in 1942.

Today, Adak Naval Station, located on the World War II site, occupies the northern half of the island and borders on Kuluk Bay to the east, one of the few good anchorages in the Aleutians. The southern half is a part of the Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge and is outside the boundaries of the historic area. To the west and north of the main base are Mount Reed, Mount Moffett, and Mount Adagdak. Also north of the main base are Andrew Lake (freshwater) and Clam Lagoon (saltwater). The neck of land that separates the two was the location of the World War II naval air station with two runways for land planes, while seaplanes used the lake and lagoon.

Today, Naval Security Group Activity (NSGA) has classified facilities in this area. Little is left of the air station. The two land runways are barely discernible. A dilapidated wooden hangar still stands (out of eight originally), as do concrete portions of two other structures. A wooden boathouse at Andrew Lake is believed to be from World War II. Barbed wire is found extensively in the general area. Neither the hangar nor boathouse are deemed worthy of preservation.

The main area of today's naval station, called "Downtown," is centered around the two runways (7,880 and 7,600 feet) that were constructed for the Army Air Force in 1942. On the south side of Runway B are four hardstands that probably mark the sites of four Kodiak T-type hangars during the war. Almost all structures in this main area are of recent construction and permanent in nature: extensive family housing, barracks, bachelor officers' quarters, headquarters, hospital, theater, navy exchange, hangars, roads, and all the support facilities that a town of 3,000 people would have. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maintains a headquarters and visitor center for the Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Adak also has a museum in temporary quarters that houses wartime artifacts gathered on the island.

On the north side of Sweeper Cove are structures surviving from the wartime Army Reserve Depot, including three immense warehouses, smaller storage buildings, two wharves (one of which has been modernized), and a stone breakwater.* This depot, with matériel for 50,000 troops, was established in 1943-44 to serve in the event an invasion of Japan from the Aleutians were to

---

*The breakwater has recently been rebuilt. The contractor placed a bronze plaque on it that states the original breakwater was constructed by U.S. Navy Seabees. In fact, the original was also built by a contractor under the direction of U.S. Army Engineers.

materialize. The three large warehouses, each measuring 181 by 800 feet, were painted respectively red, white, and blue in 1976 for the American Revolution Bicentennial.

On the rolling hills west of the main base, the army in World War II constructed a large hospital of quonset huts. Very little remains in this area except scars in the tundra. There is one quonset of unusual appearance--bay windows and ells--still standing. Now abandoned, its original function is unknown. Near the hospital site, to the north, an Advance Command Post was established and, during the Aleutian campaign, army, navy, and army air force commanders established their headquarters here. Little remains at the suspected site of this command post: a roof; a two-story, concrete vault; and wooden (communications?) poles. Because of security reasons, one must have a marine escort to this site. U.S. Marines today maintain an unusual memorial in this general area--two trees.

During the war, both army and navy shipping made use of Sweeper Cove. The navy had two temporary drydocks and three piers there. Two of the army's wharves, at the Reserve Depot, are maintained and used by the navy today, as is the petroleum unloading pier that the army constructed. Other naval facilities were located in Finger Bay, including ship repair drydocks, a motor torpedo boat base, and Rear Adm. T.C. Kinkaid's quarters. Still other naval installations located here or elsewhere on the island included a radio station, marine barracks, and main fleet post office. On the shore of Finger Bay today is an abandoned anti-submarine net. Nearby, are the foundation ruins of a fish cannery that operated until 1979. The wartime wharves at Finger Bay are now greatly deteriorated. Ruins of personnel quarters are found over all the hills, from Finger Bay to Andrew Lake. Some of these are maintained and used by personnel for off-duty retreats.

During the war, the military considered Adak to be an offensive base and not a defensive one. Consequently, few coastal defenses were constructed: 155mm gun batteries at North Spit, Shagak Bay, and at Zeto Point; and two batteries of 90mm guns on the west side of Kuluk Bay near the runways. At different bays and inlets around Adak, infantry outposts with machine gun emplacements were established. Three of these are within the historic area: North Spit, Shagak Bay; Andrew Bay; and Zeto Point. Also at Zeto Point was a joint army and navy harbor entrance control post. A long-range radar aircraft warning station was at Cape Adagdak, near where a U.S. Coast Guard Loran Station is today. Some evidence--concrete, timbers, quonset ruins, etc.--is found at these sites.

In 1976, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted a survey at Adak to determine what remained from the World War II era. Included in the findings were the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| 300 | wood frame buildings |
| 1,291 | quonset or Pacific huts, standing or collapsed |
| 190 | revetments |
| 2,000 | petroleum barrels |
| 6 | reinforced concrete buildings |
| 10 | docks, wood, pile |
| 8,300 | feet barbed wire, with pickets |
| 15 | acres metal runway matting |

Adak continued to serve as an active base throughout the war and beyond. In 1950, the Army Air Force turned the base over to the U.S. Navy, which continues operations there. Today, the navy has an important mission to carry out at Adak and must, necessarily, continue to develop the station in such manner as is necessary to fulfill that mission. Nevertheless, the evidence of Adak's World War II role as advance army airfield, naval air station, expeditionary advance command post, army reserve depot, naval operations base, and task force anchorage is very much present.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1942-1945 **Builder Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The World War II installations on Adak Island are significant in the history of the Aleutian Campaign because they allowed American forces to mount a successful offensive against the Japanese-held islands of Kiska and Attu. As the most westerly American airfield from September 1942 to February 1943, Adak allowed for intensified bombing (with fighter plane protection) of the Japanese garrisons. As the most westerly naval operations base from the fall of 1942 to the end of the campaign, it provided support to the ships and submarines of the North Pacific Force in their fight against the enemy in northern waters. Its excellent harbor provided shelter for the assembly of a large task force for the assault on Kiska. And its rugged tundra-covered terrain and fierce weather provided ideal conditions for training the Allied invasion force in amphibious warfare in the Aleutians. Had a northern invasion of Japan's Home Islands occurred, as was once proposed, Adak's Reserve Depot would have provided the essential matériel for such an undertaking.

## The Build-Up

When the Japanese bombed Unalaska Island and invaded Attu and Kiska islands in June 1942, American defenses in the Aleutians consisted of an army and naval base at Unalaska and an army airfield on nearby Umnak Island, both 700 miles east of Kiska. Although bombers, flying through some of the world's worst weather, could reach Kiska, they could not be escorted by shorter-range fighters. The need for an Aleutian advance base further west became urgent. The army favored Tanaga Island, west of Adak, but the navy argued strongly for the latter, particularly because of its all-weather harbor. Higher authority supported the navy's position, and Col. (later General) B.B. Talley, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, was directed to establish a base on Adak. Talley, then the senior army engineer in Alaska, had demonstrated his abilities in the rapid construction of a dozen or more new bases in Alaska and had already scouted Adak from the air. Now, he prepared to turn the island into Alaska's largest and most expensive wartime base of operations.

On June 28, 1942, advance American reconnaissance parties landed from submarines on Adak. They found no trace of Japanese occupation, although the enemy had planned a hit-and-run raid on the island earlier. Two months later, August 30, U.S. troops waded ashore at Kuluk Bay amidst a terrific storm. The 4th Infantry Regiment pushed through the mud struggling to set up defenses (the Japanese did not discover the landings until October 1, at which time they made two ineffectual air raids on Adak), while the 807th Aviation Engineer Battalion began constructing an airstrip on a flooded tidal basin. By draining and filling in this flat basin, they succeeded in building a

temporary strip in twelve days. On September 14, the first Liberators flew from Adak to bomb Kiska. Maj. John S. Chennault, son of the famous Gen. Claire L. Chennault, led his Flying Tigers of the 11th Fighter Squadron in company with the bombers. This has been described as a historic mission that established the importance of Adak inasmuch as it was the first combined fighter and bomber zero-altitude strike (50 feet above the waves) of World War II.

Construction of a more permanent runway, Runway A, immediately adjacent to and parallel with the temporary strip soon got underway and, later, Runway B was completed. Both were laid with steel matting in the beginning but eventually were paved. Many times repaired and improved, these runways continue to serve patrol planes today.

Navy seabees soon followed army engineers, constructing a naval air station for the Fleet Air Wing Four's two-squadron search and patrol missions. By summer 1943, the navy's facilities on Adak had grown so extensively that a naval operations base was established: naval air station, ship repair facilities, motor torpedo boat division, naval radio station, marine barracks, main fleet post office, and headquarters for both the commander, North Pacific Force, and commander, Alaska Sector (navy). Also under Adak were the naval advance fueling station and net depot at nearby Great Sitkin Island.

The Eleventh Air Force's bombers and fighters on Adak continued their strikes against Kiska and Attu throughout the fall of 1942:

> Because of bad weather, aircraft were forced down all along the Chain. Lucky pilots managed to crash land on narrow beaches of isolated islands. . . . The unlucky ones simply disappeared. Many missions went out only to be forced back to the base. Just as many managed to get over Attu and Kiska but failed to drop their bomb loads because of low fog which obscured the targets.*

Because of these conditions, the decision was made to construct a new airfield on Amchitka Island, only 65 miles from the enemy on Kiska. The landing force assembled on Adak and on January 12, 1943, occupied Amchitka. Adak's planes provided cover until the new airfield was completed. From then on, Adak became a secondary air base, repairing aircraft and forwarding shipments of bombs and air supplies to Amchitka.

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*Alaska Department, "History of Adak," Record Group 338, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD.

Activity intensified on Adak throughout the first half of 1943, as the Allies prepared to invade the Japanese-held Aleutians. Brig. Gen. W.O. Butler, Commander, Eleventh Air Force, had already established his advance command post on Adak, in October 1942. He was joined in March 1943 by Rear Adm. T.C. Kinkaid, Commander, North Pacific Force, and Maj. Gen. Simon B. Buckner, Commanding General, Alaska Defense Command, both of whom moved their command posts from Kodiak for the forthcoming operations. From Adak, they oversaw the successful invasion of Attu in May 1943, and immediately laid plans to capture Kiska.

For the invasion of Attu, the Seventh Infantry Division had received some hurried training in amphibious landing on the sunny beaches of Southern California, a climate and terrain that hardly prepared it for the tundra and mud of the Aleutians. The invasion of Kiska would be different; this landing force of 34,000 men would train on Adak's rugged hills and stormy beaches.

Throughout early summer, troops poured into Adak, a mighty fleet assembled in Kuluk Bay, and the island teemed with activity.* On the eve of the Kiska invasion, August 1943, the population of Adak was estimated at 90,000 men and more than 100 ships were anchored in the harbor.

Once the Aleutians were cleared of the enemy, a debate took place as to the future role of Adak and other Aleutian bases. Field commanders pointed out the strategic importance of the Aleutians and proposed an offensive against Japan through the Kuriles. In October 1943, the Joint Chiefs of Staff settled the issue by deciding to reduce the Aleutian garrisons but to prepare base facilities and airfields for an offensive if further operations in the North Pacific were planned at a later time. Thus, a huge Army Reserve Depot took shape on the north shore of Sweeper Cove. Contractors filled in land, constructed piers and a breakwater, and built row upon row of storehouses and all the necessary facilities for equipping a potential force of 50,000 men. Just before he transferred from Alaska to another theater of war in June 1944, General Buckner visited Adak and reported that the new depot was coming along in fine shape and it was changing the shape of the land.

On August 3, 1944, the cruiser Baltimore slipped into Kuluk Bay. On board was the Commander in Chief, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, paying his last visit to combat troops in the field before his death eight months later. Adak did not serve as a springboard for an invasion of Japan. But it is the only Aleutian military base to remain continuously in active service from World War II to the present.

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*All American and Canadian units trained on Adak except the First Special Service Force (2,500 men) which preferred Amchitka.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 46,700 acres

Quadrangle name Adak

Quadrangle scale 1:250,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 01 | 453220 | 5761200 |
| B | 01 | 453220 | 5741400 |
| C | 01 | 522200 | 5741400 |
| D | 01 | 51590 0 | 5744800 |
| E | 01 | 51590 0 | 5748200 |
| F | 01 | 527100 | 5761200 |
| G | | | |
| H | | | |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

See continuation sheet.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| | code | county | code |

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erwin N. Thompson, Historian

organization Denver Service Center, National Park Service date March 16, 1984

street & number 755 Parfet Street telephone (303) 234-4509

city or town Denver state Colorado 80225

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

*State Historic Preservation Officer signature*

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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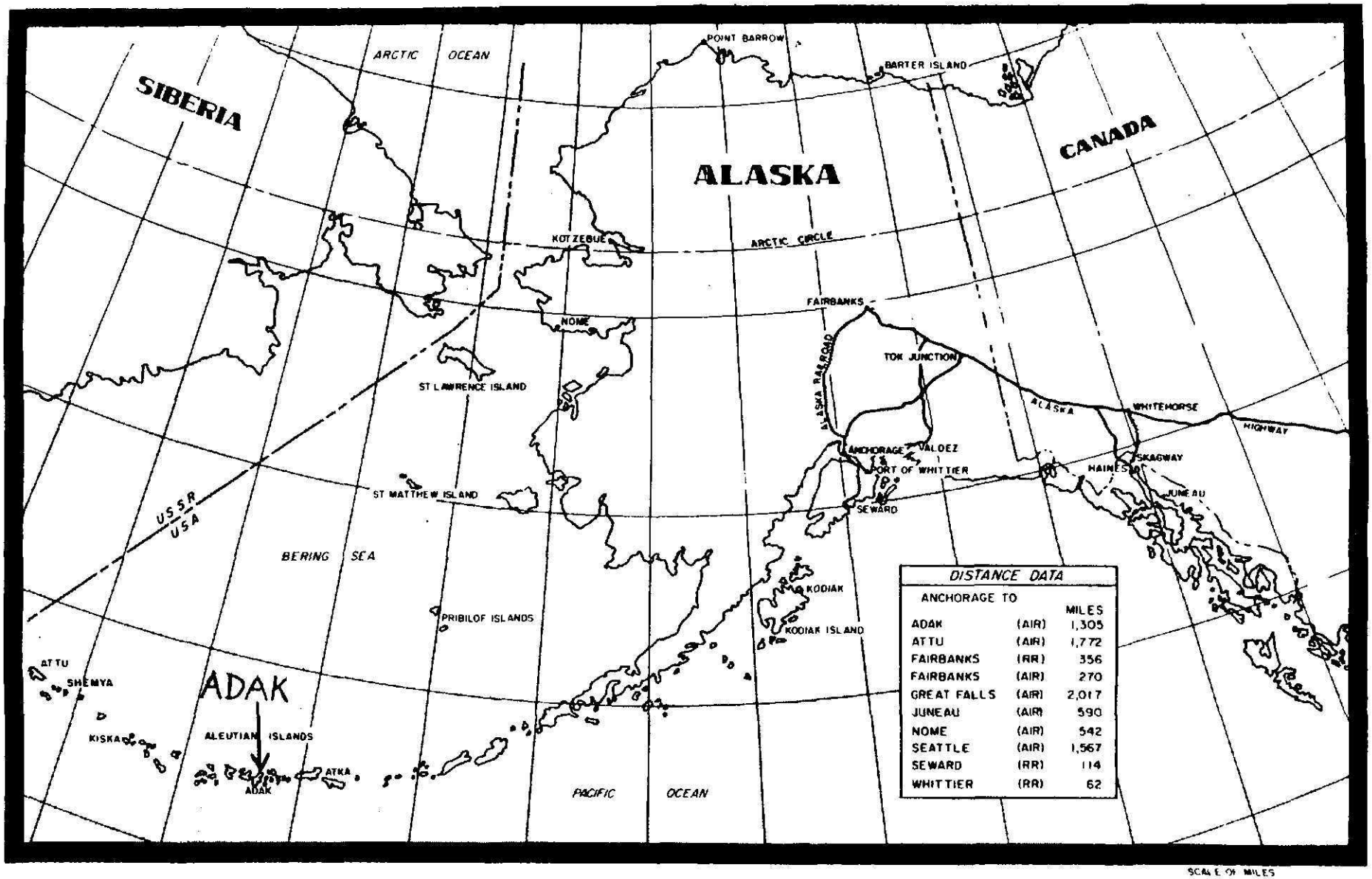
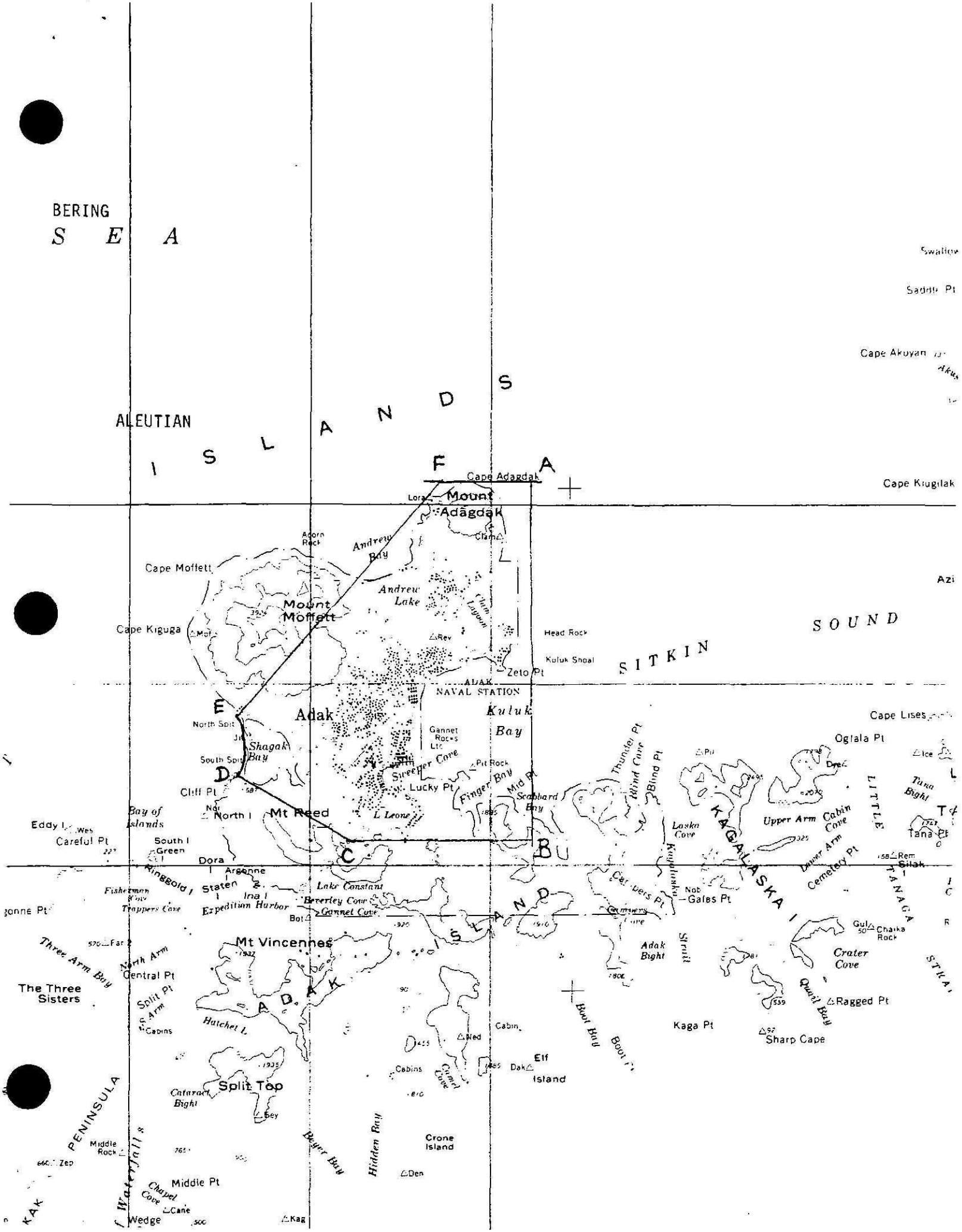
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA, BOUNDARIES

Starting at a point in the ocean two miles due east of Cape Adagdak, then south in a straight line passing through Scabbard Bay and on inland 0.8 mile to a point, then west in a straight line passing just south of Finger Bay 10 miles to an unimproved road, then in a straight line west northwest to the southwest base of South Spit, then northerly along the ocean side of South Spit, across the mouth of Shagak Bay, then northerly along the ocean side of North Spit and beyond .75 mile to the mouth of an unnamed stream northwest of the northwest base of North Spit, then in a straight line northeast to a point of land on the west side of Mount Adagdak marked "Lora[n]", then projecting that line in the same direction to a point in the ocean due west of Cape Adagdak, then due east in a straight line past the tip of Cape Adagdak to the point of beginning.

These boundaries enclose all the principal features of the Naval Air Station; Army Field; Naval Operating Base; the harbors of Sweeper Cove, Finger Bay, and inner Kuluk Bay; Army Reserve Depot; outposts at North Spit and Andrew Bay; coastal defenses; and the areas employed in mounting ground troops for the recapture of Attu and Kiska.


SIBERIA
ARCTIC OCEAN
POINT BARROW
BARTER ISLAND
CANADA
ALASKA
KOTZEBUE
ARCTIC CIRCLE
FAIRBANKS
NOME
TOK JUNCTION
ALASKA RAILROAD
ST LAWRENCE ISLAND
ALASKA
WHITEHORSE
HIGHWAY
ANCHORAGE
VALDEZ
PORT OF WHITTIER
SKAGWAY
HAINES
JUNEAU
SEWARD
ST MATTHEW ISLAND
USSR
USA
BERING SEA
KODIAK
KODIAK ISLAND
PRIBILOF ISLANDS
ATTU
SHEMYA
ADAK
KISKA
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
ATKA
ADAK
PACIFIC OCEAN
DISTANCE DATA
ANCHORAGE TO
MILES
ADAK (AIR) 1,305
ATTU (AIR) 1,772
FAIRBANKS (RR) 356
FAIRBANKS (AIR) 270
GREAT FALLS (AIR) 2,017
JUNEAU (AIR) 590
NOME (AIR) 542
SEATTLE (AIR) 1,567
SEWARD (RR) 114
WHITTIER (RR) 62
SCALE OF MILES
50 0 100 200

# ALASKA


BERING
S E A
ALEUTIAN
I S L A N D S
Cape Adagdak
Mount Adagdak
Andrew Bay
Andrew Lake
Cape Moffett
Mount Moffett
Cape Kiguga
Head Rock
Kuluk Shoal
Zeto Pt
SITKIN
SOUND
ADAK NAVAL STATION
Adak
Kuluk Bay
North Spit
Shagak Bay
South Spit
Gannet Rocks
Sweeper Cove
Lucky Pt
Finger Bay
Mid Pt
Seaplane Bay
Cliff Pt
North I
Mt Reed
L Leone
Bay of Islands
Eddy I
Careful Pt
South I
Green I
Dora
Argonne
Kingbold I
Staten I
Ina I
Expedition Harbor
Lake Constant
Beverley Cove
Gannet Cove
Fisherman Rock
Trappers Cove
Mt Vincennes
Three Arm Bay
North Arm
Central Pt
The Three Sisters
Split Pt
S Arm
Cabins
Hatchet I
Catarract Bight
Split Top
PENINSULA
Middle Rock
Middle Pt
Chapel Cove
Wedge
Bayer Bay
Hidden Bay
Crone Island
Cabin
Elf Island
Boot Bay
Kaga Pt
Sharp Cape
Ragged Pt
Quail Bay
Crater Cove
Adak Bight
Strait
Gales Pt
Cemetery Pt
Lower Arm
Upper Arm
Cabin Cove
Laska Cove
Thunder Pt
Blind Cove
Blind Pt
Oglala Pt
Tana Bight
Tana Pt
Silak
Chaika Rock
KAGALASKA I
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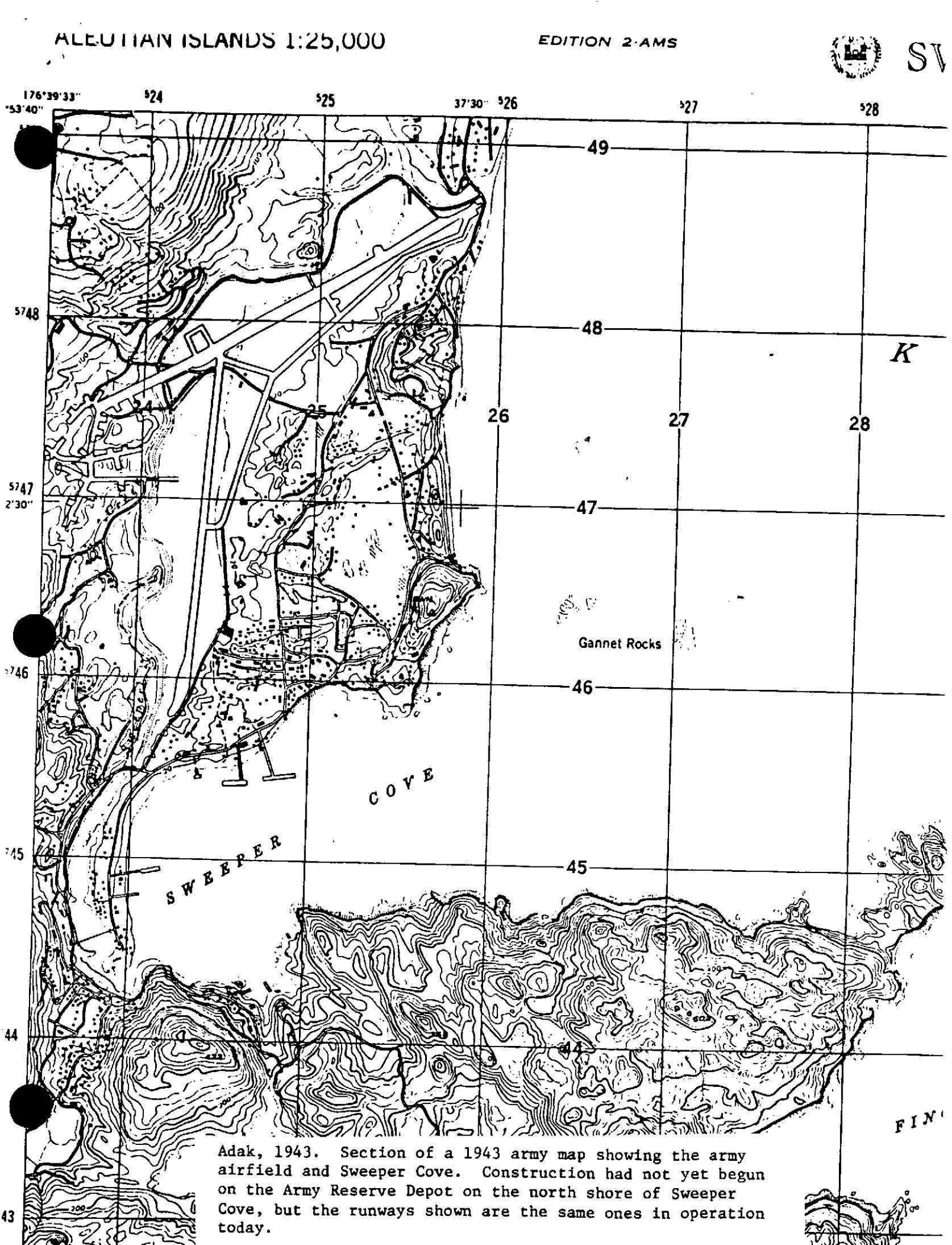


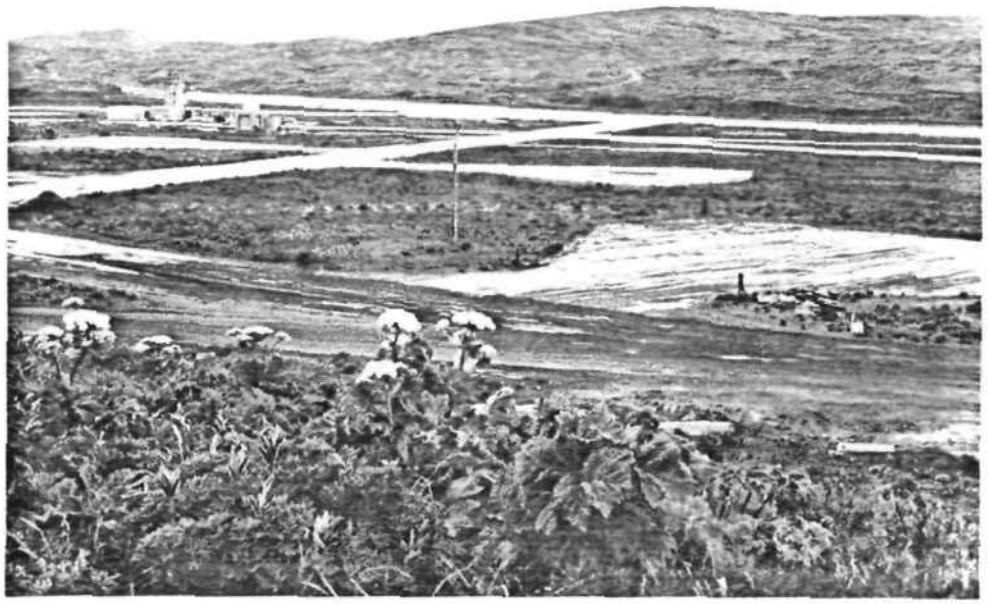

Adak, 1943. Section of a 1943 army map showing the army airfield and Sweeper Cove. Construction had not yet begun on the Army Reserve Depot on the north shore of Sweeper Cove, but the runways shown are the same ones in operation today.

2. A portion of the vast encampment established on Adak for the bombing and invasion of the Japanese-held islands of Kiska and Attu in the Aleutians. The army airfield lies beyond the hangar. 1943.

Courtesy, Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska

1. American convoy at anchor in Kuluk Bay, Adak, assembling for the invasion of Japanese-held Kiska Island. ca. August, 1943.

Courtesy, National Archives

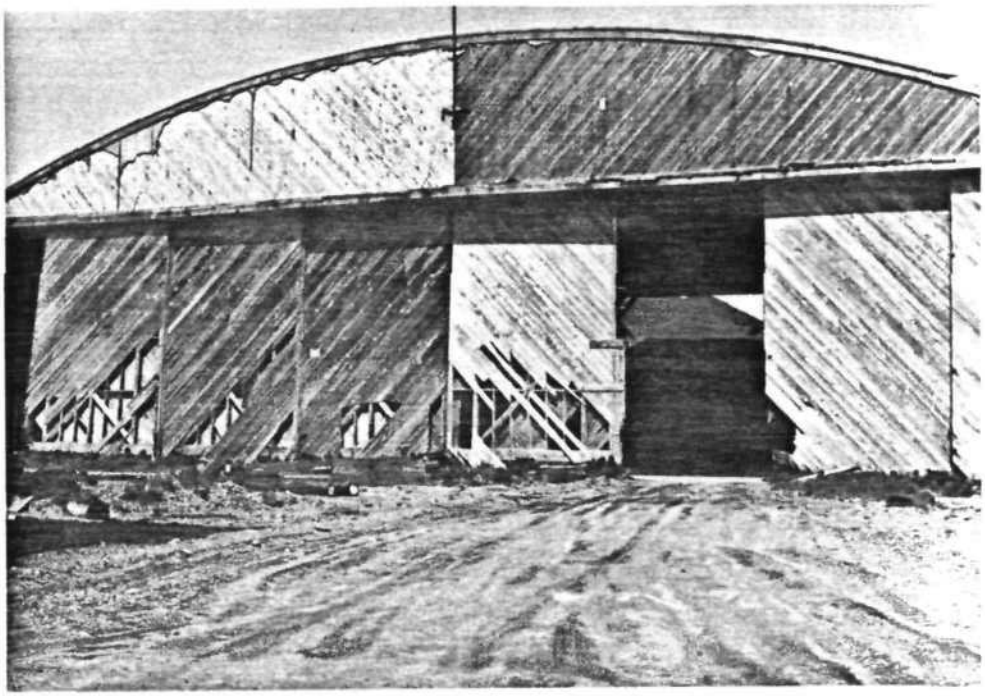


7. *The army* airfield constructed on Adak in September, 1942, for the Aleutian campaign has been much improved and is still used by naval patrol planes at Adak Naval Station. In the foreground are three of four hardstands that probably mark the sites of four Kodiak T-type hangars of World War II.

Photo by E.N. Thompson. August, 1983.

3. Two of three immense army reserve depot warehouses at *Sweeper Cove, Adak, built in 1943-44 for a possible in*-vasion of Japan's Home Islands from the north.

Photo by E.N. Thompson. August, 1983



8. Deteriorated aircraft hangar at the World War II naval air station on Adak--one of only two structures still standing at the former station. This general area today is the site of several classified installations.

Photo by E.N. Thompson. August, 1983

9. Andrew Lake was a part of the World War II naval air station on Adak. It was used by naval flying boats and seaplanes. The boat house dates from the war and is still used by the Navy for recreational boating purposes.

Photo by E.N. Thompson. August, 1983

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

NHL — WWII, PACIFIC

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Kwajalein Island Battlefield

and or common Kwajalein Missile Range, U.S. Army

## 2. Location

street & number ___ not for publication

city, town X vicinity of Kwajalein Atoll

state Republic of the Marshall Islands code 75 county Kwajalein Atoll code 020

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ district | X public | X occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | ___ unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| X site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | X yes: restricted | ___ government | X scientific |
| | ___ being considered | ___ yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ no | X military | ___ other: |

## 4. Owner of Property

name Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands

street & number

city, town Majuro ___ vicinity of state Marshall Islands 96960

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the High Commissioner

street & number Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

city, town Saipan state Mariana Islands 96950

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Kwajalein Historic Site Survey has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date August 1980 X federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Pacific Ocean Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

city, town Honolulu state Hawaii

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| ___ excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | X original site |
| ___ good | X ruins | X altered | ___ moved date _____ |
| X fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Kwajalein Island is at the southern end of Kwajalein Atoll, which is in the Ralik (Sunset) Chain of the Marshall Islands. Kwajalein is the largest coral atoll in the world, its lagoon having an area of 1,100 square miles. Kwajalein Island itself has an area of only 1.2 square miles. Its average elevation above sea level is 5.5 feet and its highest point is a man-made hill, Mount Olympus, that contains missile silos. Since the 1944 battle fought there, the banana-shaped island's size has been considerably enlarged by dredging and filling at its west and north ends and along its lagoon side.

Kwajalein Island is the headquarters of the U.S. Army Kwajalein Missile Range. The appearance of the island has entirely changed since the war. It now houses a scientific-military community of about 3,000. Residences, stores, clubs, and schools crowd the north end of the island. The remaining land is covered with an airfield, missile facilities, and a small golf course. Since the war, much of the island has been landscaped; green lawns, coconut palms, and tropical plants grace the land. Altogether, this far-away island, 2,400 miles from Hawaii, provides a pleasant and attractive environment for its populace.

Only a little evidence remains of the Japanese period, 1914-1944, and of the fierce fighting in 1944. The Seventh Infantry Division, U.S.A., landed at the original west end of the island where a small plaque marks the site. Inland from the plaque is a Japanese reinforced-concrete ammunition magazine, partly underground. A low picket fence surrounds the site.

A short distance to the north, also surrounded by a white picket fence, is a Japanese cemetery and memorial. A wooden torii stands over the entranceway. From time to time, human remains are uncovered on the island and are interred at this site. Japanese citizens erected the memorial, as they have done all over the Pacific.

Today's modern, jet runway lies on the site of the unfinished Japanese runway and the post-battle American bomber field. No trace of either former runway, the hardstands, or taxiways are visible. Today's runway, which was resurfaced in 1975, measures 6,715 by 100 feet. The field has been named Bucholz Army Airfield in honor of Pfc. Fred H. Bucholz, killed in battle on Kwajalein and posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. At the air terminal there is a plaque in memory of Bucholz, which is surmounted by the "Hourglass" insignia of the Seventh Infantry Division.

South of the runway, the Missile Range maintains a small golf course. Near the center of the fairways stands another Japanese reinforced-concrete ammunition magazine that served an antiaircraft gun battery. The interior is marked by an explosion that exposed the steel reinforcing bars. On top of the T-shaped magazine is a circular concrete pad on which an antenna was mounted in recent

times and then removed. The magazine has two rarely-found features: a vaulted ceiling and a casemated window.[1]

North of the air terminal-headquarters building, within the fenced-off fuel farm, stands a large, reinforced-concrete, Japanese air raid shelter. Of different design than most surviving Japanese shelters, this structure has led some students to theorize that it is post-battle American-built. But an Army Air Force photograph of the shelter, taken on June 12, 1944, bears a caption stating it is a Japanese bomb shelter that American troops repaired and used for the same purpose. The shelter stood in the Japanese building complex known as the Admiralty Center, where Rear Adm. Monzo Akiyama had his headquarters on Kwajalein. This location gives new meaning to a comment in the 32d Infantry Regiment's operations reports for February 4, 1944, where the regimental intelligence officer wrote that a prisoner of war said he was assigned to Admiral Akiyama's headquarters and that the admiral had been killed on February 2 in front of an air raid shelter.[2]

On the rubble-protected shoreline in front of the missile range headquarters-air terminal are ruins of reinforced-concrete Japanese structures, either in their original locations or thrown there for erosion control. The most substantial of these is a pillbox, wave-worn but still largely intact. It is said to have been an artillery fire control station, the only one extant on Kwajalein.

Nearby, facing the ocean, are two American 75mm (3-inch) field artillery guns on rubber tires. These M-9 weapons were manufactured at Rock Island Arsenal in 1943, but it is not known if they were on Kwajalein during the battle. Today, they guard the two missile range flagstaffs, one for the Stars and Stripes and one for the Marshallese flag. A third weapon, a small Japanese naval gun, is mounted on a concrete pedestal in front of the island's central police station.

The main Japanese pier, built of reinforced concrete, was shaped much like an ice-hockey stick. Situated on the lagoon side of the island, the pier and its

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1. Duane Denfeld, "An Historic Site Survey of Kwajalein Missile Range, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands," (Guam 1980), p. 24, concludes "these unique construction features suggest that this is of late Japanese construction."

2. Thirty-second Infantry Regiment, Operation Report, 1400 hours, February 4, 1944, in Operations Reports, 1-6 February, 1944, Operations Flintlock, Adjutant General's Office, Operations Reports, 1940-48, 7th Infantry Division, Record Group 407, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD, hereinafter cited as WNRC; G-2 Situation Map, Kwajalein Island, January 31, 1944, Record Group 332, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

lone blockhouse, which had a 13mm dual-purpose gun on its roof, were considerably damaged during the fighting. The blockhouse is entirely removed and the pier has been rebuilt in its original configuration, named Echo Pier, and continues to serve Kwajalein's port. In 1972, Army engineers renovated the pier at a cost of $3.2 million. Since then, portions of the Japanese concrete work were discovered in the course of construction work in the area. Present-day maps show that the pier is not nearly as long as it was in 1944; this is caused by the fact that dredged fill has extended the land out into the lagoon in this vicinity.

At the original north end of Kwajalein the Japanese installed a battery of two twin-barrelled, dual-purpose 127mm (5-inch) guns. Because of the island's low elevation, they built small mounds on which to emplace the weapons.[3] One of these mounds, "Bunker Hill," exists and the concrete base of the gun position is exposed. Metal conduits for electrical cables in the concrete have been filled in. This site is now within the residential area and near the junior-senior high school.

A similar battery stood at the original west end of Kwajalein at what came to be Red Beach One. Here, Kwajalein has been increased in length by the addition of 55 acres of fill for radar installations. Close to its original site but now on the shore of the new land lies a steel and concrete mass that is thought to be the base for one of the 127mm guns. Heavily rusted, this curious object helps to control beach erosion.

These features are all that are visible of the momentous events that occurred on Kwajalein in early 1944. At that time, the island was utterly destroyed by the most intense land, sea, and air bombardment of World War II in the Pacific:

> The results of all this expenditure of explosives were devastating. The damage was so intensive that it is impossible to determine the relative effectiveness of the three types of bombardment--naval, artillery, and air. The area inland of Red Beaches was reduced almost completely to rubble. Concrete emplacements were shattered, coconut trees smashed and flattened, the ground pock-marked with large craters, coral ripped to splinters. As one observer reported, "The entire island looked as if it had been picked up to 20,000 feet and then dropped."[4]

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3. Americans faced this same situation at French Frigate Shoals, Hawaii. Failure to elevate the emplacements resulted in the inability to fire over the waves when the surf was up.

4. Philip A. Crowl and Edmund G. Love, Seizure of the Gilberts and Marshalls. The War in the Pacific. United States Army in World War II (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 232.

The destruction was horrible. Nearly all the Japanese forces had been killed and the smell of death hung over the island like a fog. Almost immediately, however, army engineers began bulldozing the rubble and the near-miracle of an island being reborn began. Kwajalein today bears no resemblance to its appearance in February 1944. One is stunned when an old-timer points out an extra-tall palm tree as the sole survivor from before the battle. Yet, beneath the bustling community, beneath the lawns and asphalt, is the sacred soil of battle where Japanese, Korean, Marshallese, and American men died.

Kwajalein Island is today owned by the government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The U.S. Army Ballistic Missile Defense Command leases Kwajalein and other islands in the atoll for Kwajalein Missile Range operations.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1944 **Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Kwajalein Island, captured by U.S. Army troops, along with Roi-Namur Islands, captured by U.S. Marines, was the first Japanese territory in the Pacific to be taken in battle in World War II. Benefitting from costly lessons learned earlier at Tarawa and Makin atolls in the British Gilbert Islands, the U.S. Navy surface fleet and carrier aircraft, the Army Air Forces' bombers, and Army and Marine field artillery unleashed the most intensive bombardment of World War II in the Pacific against Kwajalein Atoll, stunning the enemy and resulting in relatively few American battle deaths. The amphibious landing on Kwajalein carried out by the Seventh Infantry Division was perfectly executed, reflecting great credit on training and planning, as well as the Division's earlier experiences in the Aleutians. Although the Army took twice as long to capture Kwajalein as the Marines did to take Roi-Namur, the Seventh Division could claim that its line of advance was five times as long as that of its brothers'-in-arms. Once again, the Seventh Infantry Division proved itself an effective offensive force. Once again, the Japanese soldier proved his loyalty by fighting almost to the last man to make his enemy's advance as costly as possible. The Marshallese people who survived the war have forged a new nation, now on the eve of its independence.

Japanese in the Marshalls

The Marshall Islands consist of 32 coral atolls and a number of coral islands in the western North Pacific Ocean, a few degrees above the equator. They are strung on a double chain, the eastern group called Ratak (Sunrise), the westerly, Ralik (Sunset). The Marshalls were discovered by Spanish navigators, explored by English captains Marshall and Gilbert, purchased by Germany from Spain in 1899, and seized by Japan in World War I. In 1920, the League of Nations gave Japan a mandate over the islands with the condition they not be fortified. Japan withdrew from the League in 1935 and closed the islands to foreign visitors. Thus, the Marshalls became the easternmost outpost of the Japanese empire. The administrative headquarters operated out of the one town, Jabor, at Jaluit Atoll. As war neared, Japan began to fortify the Marshalls, placing emphasis on Mille, Maloelap, and Wotje atolls in the Ratak chain, and Jaliut and Kwajalein in the Ralik. Airfields, seaplane bases, fleet anchorages, and submarine bases were developed at different atolls. Each base was protected by land defenses.

When war came, it was from the Marshalls that the Japanese force came to capture Wake in December 1941. Again, in March 1942, two Japanese flying boats staged through the Marshalls to make a nuisance raid on Oahu, Hawaii. In August 1942, U.S. Marines raided Makin Atoll in the Gilberts and unknowingly left nine men behind when they withdrew. The Japanese took the

Marines prisoner and moved them to Kwajalein Island to await transportation to Japan. Six weeks went by but no transportation became available. Vice Adm. Koso Abe, then commanding all Marshall bases, reached the end of his patience and, on October 16, had the nine Marines beheaded.[1]

On February 1, 1942, the United States Navy's aircraft carriers Enterprise and Yorktown attacked Kwajalein. This was the first offensive operation by a United States task force in World War II, an operation that did much for American morale.

Throughout 1942 and much of 1943, however, the Japanese were able to strengthen their Marshall bases with little or no interference from the Americans. But when the United States captured the Gilbert Islands south of the Marshalls in November 1943, Japan realized that the Marshalls would be next. Judging that the Americans would succeed in an attack, Japan ordered its forces to impede the enemy's advance as much as possible by fighting to the death. When the attack on Kwajalein Atoll came, it surprised the Japanese who had thought the enemy would first strike one of the more heavily defended atolls.

Kwajalein Atoll had three principal bases in January 1944: an airfield on Roi Island at the northern apex of the atoll, with air headquarters under Vice Adm. Michiyuki Yamada and support facilities on adjacent Namur; the military headquarters for all the Marshalls under Rear Adm. Monzo Akiyama on Kwajalein Island at the south end of the lagoon; and a seaplane base on Ebeye Island, about two miles northeast of Kwajalein. In addition, several islets in the atoll had detachments for operating communications centers, radars, supply warehouses, and the like. Kwajalein Island was defended by elements of the 6th Base Force (naval troops) and the newly-arrived 1st Amphibious Brigade (army), a battalion of Special Naval Landing Forces, and a Naval Guard Force. The combined strength of these combat troops amounted to about 2,700 men. The island also had about 1,800 labor troops composed mostly of Koreans, but also some Japanese and Okinawans.

At both the north and west ends of the banana-shaped island, were two twin-mount, dual-purpose 127mm (5-inch) guns. Pillboxes, machine guns, 3-inch dual-purpose guns, tank ditches, and fire trenches protected the perimeter of the island, most strong points having been placed on the ocean

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1. Samuel Eliot Morison, Aleutians, Gilberts, and Marshalls, June 1942-April 1944. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1975), pp. 239-40. After the war, Abe was tried for atrocity and was hanged on Guam.

side. (When Americans landed on the lagoon side of the islands in the Gilberts, Japanese quickly augmented lagoon defenses at Kwajalein.) Antiaircraft weapons were scattered over the island. In the western half an airfield was still under construction, but had been advanced sufficiently to enable planes to land. After the battle, American intelligence officers concluded that the island's defenses were surprisingly weak, there being no heavily-constructed blockhouses, a paucity of artillery, and many artillery pieces without cover or concealment. On Kwajalein, however, the Japanese had made more of an attempt to arrange defenses in depth than elsewhere in the atoll.[2]

The American Scheme

Under the direction of Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor, the Fifth Fleet, led by Vice Adm. Raymond A. Spruance, departed Hawaii en route to the Marshall Islands for Operation Flintlock. Rear Adm. Richmond K. Turner commanded the Joint Expeditionary Force, while Maj. Gen. H.M. Smith, USMC, was the commander of the Expeditionary Troops. Admiral Turner also directed the Southern Attack Force (Task Force 52) which assaulted Kwajalein Island. Under him and Smith, Maj. Gen. Charles H. Corlett, USA, led the Seventh Infantry Division, whose three infantry regiments had participated in amphibious landings in the Aleutians in 1943.

The Northern Attack Force (Task Force 53), which invaded Roi-Namur islands, was led by Rear Adm. Richard L. Conolly. Under him, Maj. Gen. Harry Schmidt, USMC, commanded the Fourth Marine Division in its first battle experience, having come from Camp Pendleton, California. A third unit, the Majuro Attack Group, under Rear Adm. Harry W. Hill, sailed separately toward that atoll, where a battalion of the Army's 106th Infantry Regiment landed unopposed.[3]

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2. G-3 Report, Operation Flintlock, Fifth Amphibious Corps, February 18, 1944; and Engineer, V Amphibious Corps, to Commanding General, V Amphibious Corps, February 15, 1944, both in U.S. Marine Corps Records, World War II, WNRC. Army accounts record at least one "tremendous" blockhouse on the lagoon side of Kwajalein. See Philip A. Crowl and Edmund G. Love, Seizure of the Gilberts and Marshalls (Washington 1955), p. 266.

3. The 106th Infantry landed on Majuro on January 30, thus giving it the honor of being the first American unit to seize Japanese territory. Because Majuro was undefended, the significance of this "first" was somewhat diminished. Further, many accounts identified these soldiers as Marines.

Prior to the landings, the Fast Carrier Force, under Rear Adm. Marc A. Mitscher, blasted Japanese airfields throughout the Marshalls. These nine new fast carriers were accompanied by eight fast battleships.[4] In addition, the Northern and Southern Landing Forces were supported by seven battleships and six aircraft carriers.[5] In one day, February 1, the supporting naval vessels fired almost 7,000 14-inch, 8-inch, and 5-inch shells on Kwajalein Island alone. Bombers of the Seventh Air Force, commanded by Maj. Gen. Willis H. Hale, and carrier-based planes unleased their fury against the enemy.

Assault

On January 31, 1944, D-Day, Seventh Division infantry and artillery troops landed against slight opposition on five islets northwest of Kwajalein. This initial operation gave the Americans control of Ninni Pass, the entrance to southern Kwajalein Lagoon, and enabled the artillery to set up 12 batteries of 105mm guns and one battalion of 155mm guns on Enubuj, the islet nearest to Kwajalein. These guns were registered on Kwajalein by nightfall. The following day, in support of the main landings, these weapons expended 29,000 rounds against enemy positions.

Plans for February 1 called for the 184th Regimental Combat Team (RCT) to land on the northern (left) half of the west end of Kwajalein, code-named Red Beach One, and the 32d RCT to assault the southern half, Red Beach Two.[6] At 9:30 a.m., precisely on schedule, the lead elements waded to shore in what has been called by some as the "most nearly perfect of all amphibious operations."[7] Utter destruction met their eyes. They advanced rapidly, the

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4. Carriers: Enterprise, Yorktown, Belleau Wood, Essex, Intrepid, Cabot, Bunker Hill, Monterey, and Cowpens. Battleships: Washington, Massachusetts, Indiana, South Dakota, Alabama, North Carolina, Iowa, and New Jersey.

5. Three of these older battleships had been severely damaged at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941: Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Maryland.

6. The 184th Infantry Regiment was organized in the California National Guard in 1924 and inducted into active federal service in 1941. It was inactivated in 1946. The 32d was a Regular Army regiment, organized at Schofield Barracks in 1916.

7. Edmund G. Love, The Hourglass, A History of the 7th Infantry Division in World War II (Washington, 1950), p. 105.

32d against light opposition, the 184th slowed somewhat by a network of pillboxes. By mid-afternoon, both regiments had reached the western end of the Japanese airfield. As Japanese resistance stiffened, the Seventh Division's advance slowed, then stopped just before sunset. The 32d Regiment had reached a point about half-way along the runway, while troops of the 184th were about 250 yards behind on the lagoon shore. The cleared area of the runway created a wide gap between the two. Machine guns were set up to sweep this open space. With one-quarter of Kwajalein captured, the soldiers established perimeters of defense for the night. Casualties for this day were light, 17 dead and 36 wounded in both regiments. Japanese casualties were estimated at 500 dead (most by the bombardment) and 11 captured.[8]

February 2 brought continuing advances against the enemy, although Marine General H.M. Smith fumed aboard his command ship about the division's lack of dash.[9] This seemed more apparent when the Marines announced their capture of Roi-Namur on this date. General Corlett, too, urged his troops to attack vigorously and finish the job on the morrow. On this second day, capture of the Japanese airfield was completed. By nightfall, the 184th was short of its objective, the cross-island "Nora" road, causing the 32d RCT to withdraw somewhat from its hard-won Japanese strongpoint, code-named "Corn." Americans were unaware that the Japanese commander, Rear Admiral Akiyama, was killed this day at Admiralty Center within his lines. Although Corlett warned his troops to expect a banzai attack at dawn, the night of February 2-3 passed quietly.

The third day of battle brought disappointing results for the Americans. On the left, the 184th RCT ran into stiff resistance from a maze of pillboxes, trenches, and shelters. These, combined with burning buildings, smoke, wreckage, and craters, caused considerable confusion during the fighting. Units got separated, broken up, and even lost. Infantry-tank coordination was ineffective. By nightfall, the regiment was 250 yards short of its objective, the main Japanese pier. This situation called for a change of plans and it was decided that the 184th's final objective would be reduced to taking the pier, and the 32d RCT would pinch out the 184th at that point and be responsible for

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8. The 32d RCT reported that it had captured ten of an estimated 110 Marshallese on the island. At least one of those collected that day was a woman. 32d RCT Unit Journal, Operation Flintlock, February 1-6, 1944, Adjutant General's Office, World War II Operations Reports, 1940-1948, Record Group 407, WNRC.

9. Holland M. Smith and Percy Finch, Coral and Brass (Washington 1948, reprint 1979), p. 146.

taking all the north end of Kwajalein. During the day, the 32d had had easier going than the 184th, but it too had not reached its objective, "Nathan" road. (Division headquarters mistakenly thought that both regiments had reached the day's objectives.) One accomplishment on February 3 was the capture and destruction of Admiralty Center, in which both regiments participated.

As February 4 dawned, the Seventh Division anticipated the end of enemy resistance. Yet to be taken was the northern stretch of Kwajalein, measuring 1,000 yards long and 400 yards wide. On this day, the 184th RCT reached the Japanese pier by 1:00 p.m. and began mopping up its assigned area. The 32d's final assault got off to a confused start, partly caused by Japanese emerging from shelters behind the American lines, firing every which way but west. By noon, the drive north began in earnest and an American platoon reached the north end of Kwajalein at 3:15 p.m. Shortly after four o'clock, General Corlett announced the island secured, "All organized resistance . . . has ceased. The troops have been reorganized for mopping up operations."[10] The division's 17th RCT, meanwhile, completed the capture of the Japanese seaplane base on nearby Ebeye Island. At the end of the day, an American soldier picked up a canteen on the battlefield. Inscribed on it, he read, "Contractors Pacific Naval Bases, Wake [Island], Canteen No. 13269."[11]

The Southern Landing Force's casualties in capturing the southern end of the atoll amounted to 142 killed, 845 wounded, and two missing in action. Estimates of enemy losses amounted to 4,938 dead and 206 prisoners, 79 of whom were Japanese and 127 Korean. In the Southern Sector, 140 Marshallese were collected during the course of the fighting and in the whole atoll 55 Marshallese were killed.[12]

An aspect of the battle for Kwajalein that has been generally overlooked is the employment of Japanese-Americans (Nisei) as interpreters. An American intelligence observer praised the work of these men most highly, stating they stayed on duty twenty-four hours a day dealing with prisoners of war and translating enemy documents. He recommended that in future operations their number be increased and they each have two armed bodyguards because of the danger of being mistakenly shot.[13]

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10. Crowl and Love, Marshalls, p. 289.

11. 32d RCT Unit Journal, February 1-6, 1944, Record Group 407, WNRC.

12. Different sources give different figures in their estimates. The figures given here are the official Army counts.

13. Anonymous, "Intelligence Observer with Task Force," with a letter of transmittal dated February 19, 1944, in U.S. Marine Corps Records, World War II, WNRC.

After the Battle

Even as mopping-up operations were underway, army engineers began the repair and reconstruction of the airfield, constructing a 6,300-foot, coral-surfaced runway and 102 hardstands for heavy bombers. On March 11, 1944, the Seventh Air Force's B-24 bombers took off from Kwajalein on a mission to Japanese-held Wake Island. Later, Kwajalein's planes struck other atolls in the Marshalls, Ponape, Truk Atoll, and, staging through Enewetak, as far away as Guam. On March 25, the Seventh Air Force established its operational headquarters on Kwajalein, under the VII Bomber Command. This headquarters remained operational until June 1944, when it moved to Saipan. Also in 1944, the U.S. Navy established a naval operating base at Kwajalein as well as a headquarters for the military government of the Marshalls. The naval base continued operations until 1959, when the U.S. Army took over the island as a part of the Kwajalein Missile Range.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 768 acres

Quadrangle name none

Quadrangle scale none

UTM References not available

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | | | | B | | | |
| C | | | | D | | | |
| E | | | | F | | | |
| G | | | | H | | | |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

See continuation sheet.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erwin N. Thompson, Historian

organization National Park Service, Denver Service Center date May 2, 1984

street & number 755 Parfet Street telephone (303) 234-4509

city or town Denver state Colorado 80225

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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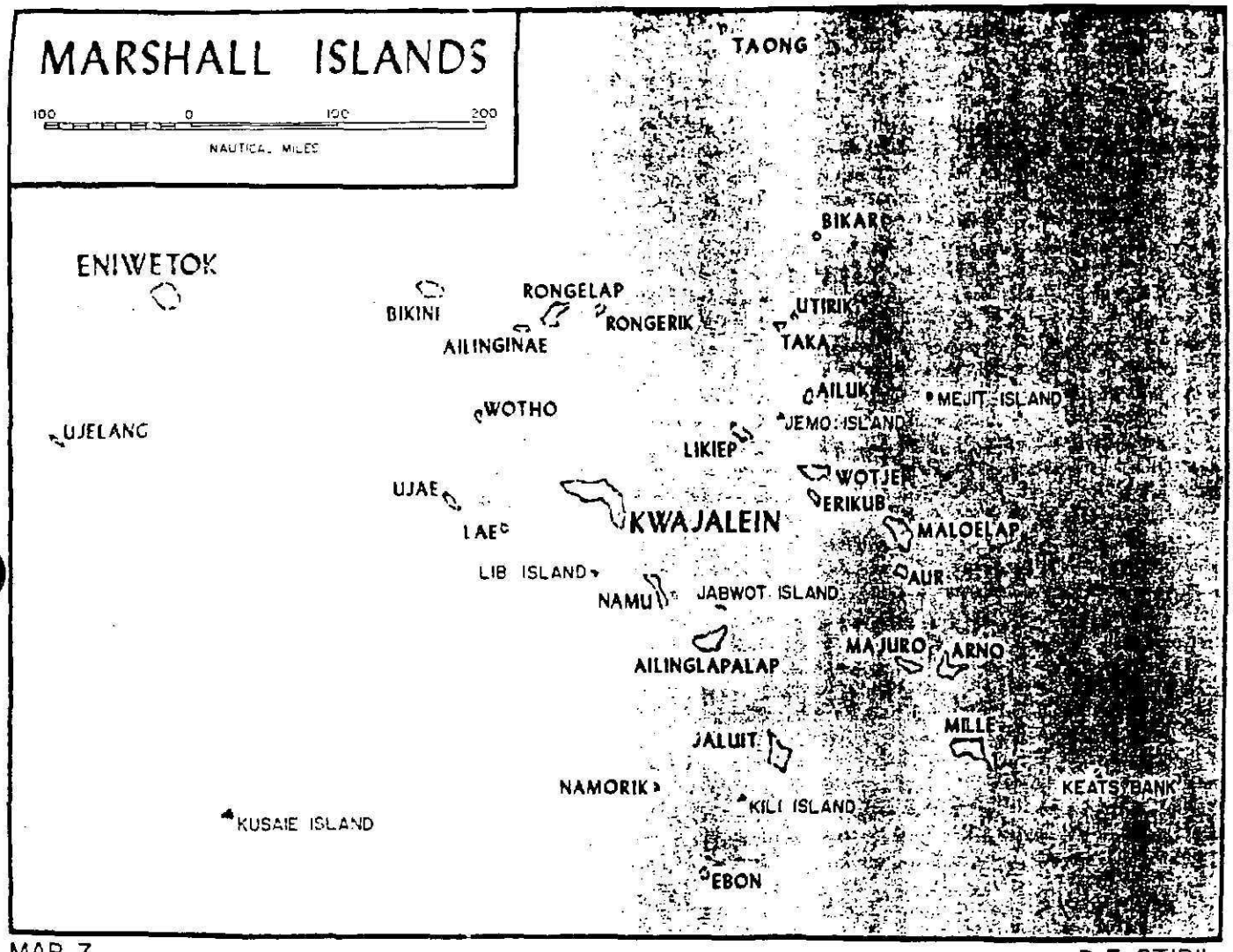
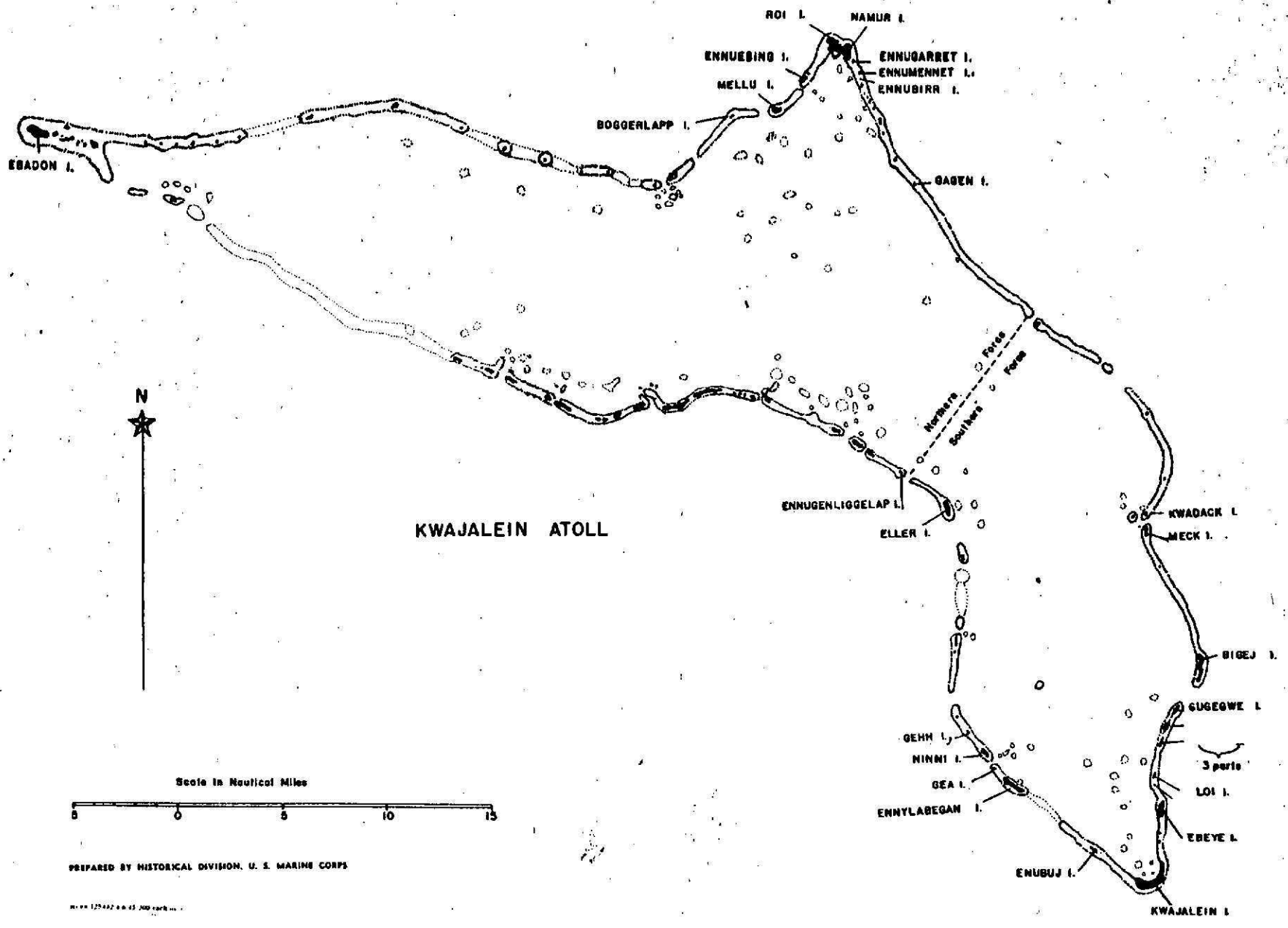
## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The boundary is the original outline of Kwajalein Island as shown on an enclosed map. On its south and east sides it is bounded by the Pacific Ocean. New dredged land borders its west and north ends. On its lagoon side, new dredged land borders the island from its north end, then south and west ending as shown on the map. Although the original island is covered with modern structures and facilities, all of which are excluded from this nomination, the entire land area underneath these features is considered historically significant. Every square inch of the island was fought over in a fierce battle. The above-ground historically significant structures are indicated on the enclosed map.




MAP 7

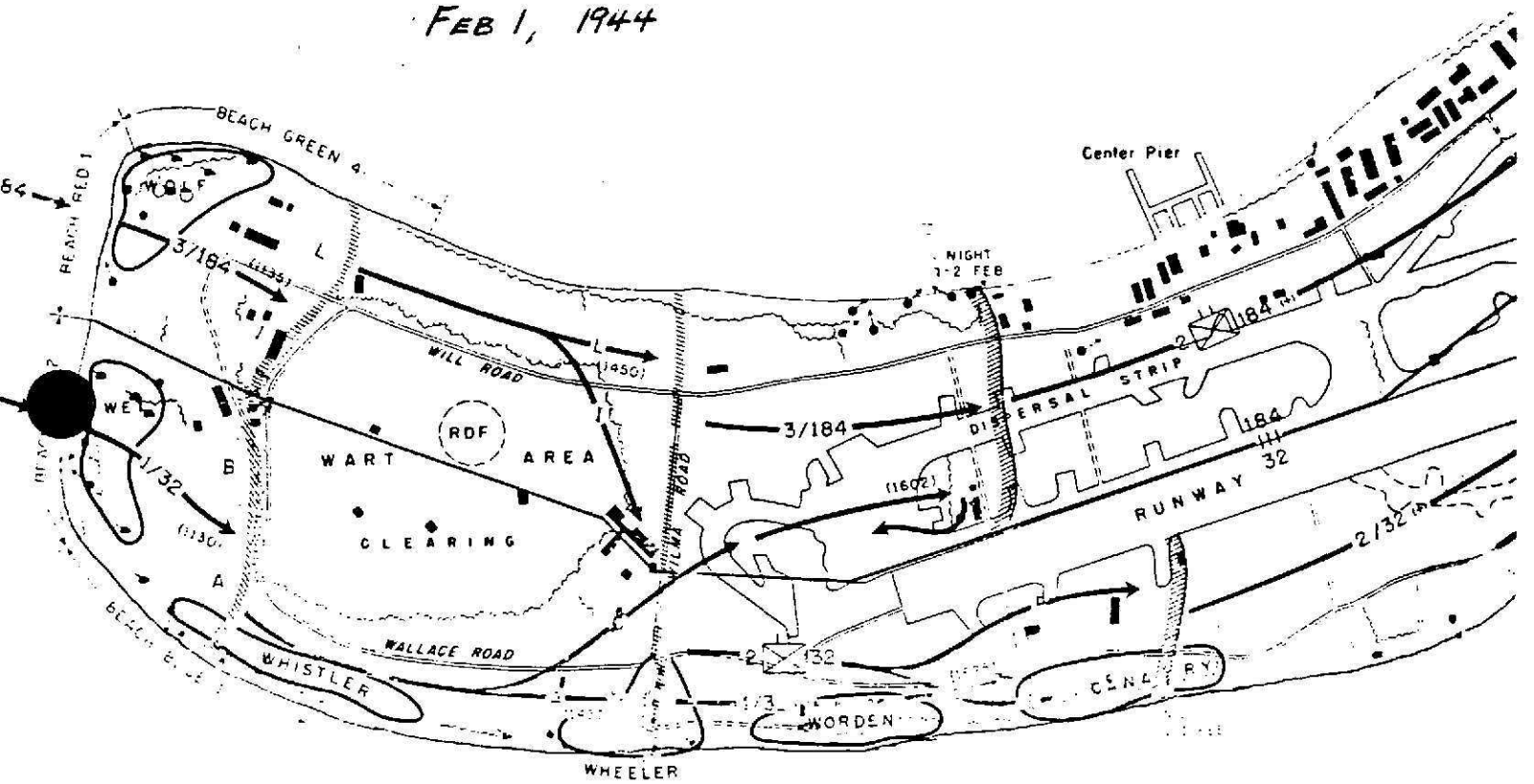
R. F. STIBIL

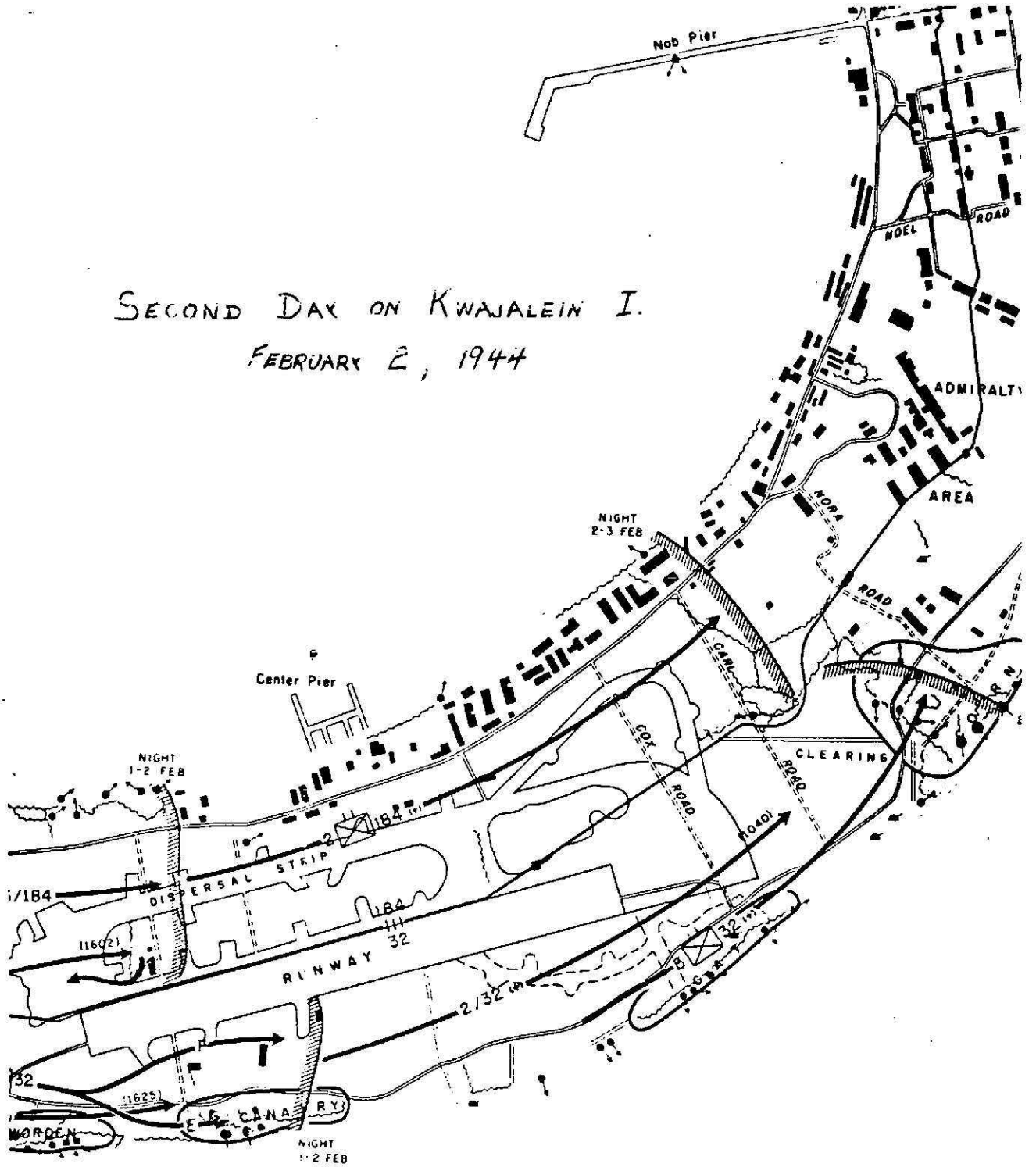


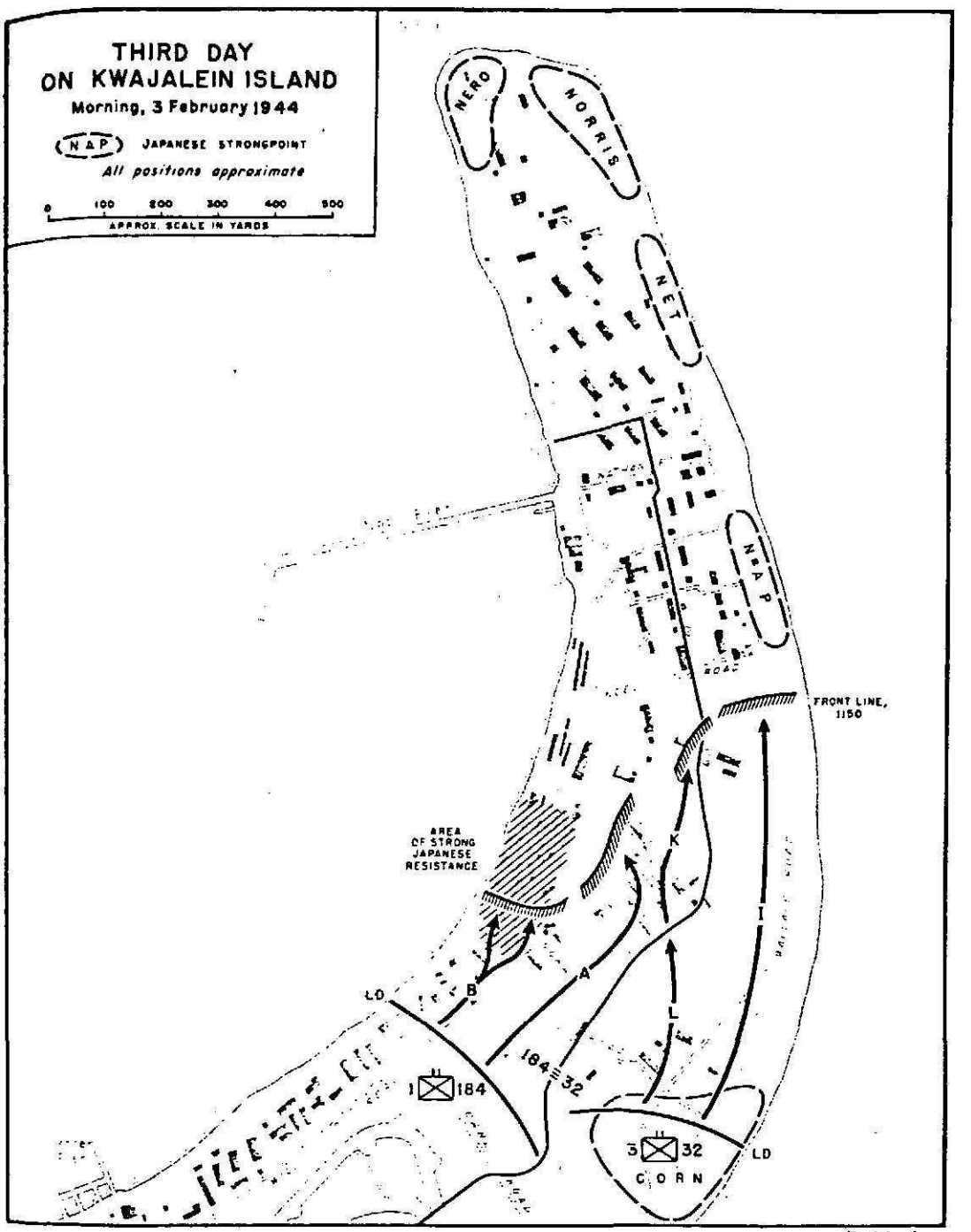

PREPARED BY HISTORICAL DIVISION, U. S. MARINE CORPS

LANDINGS ON KWAJALEIN ISLAND

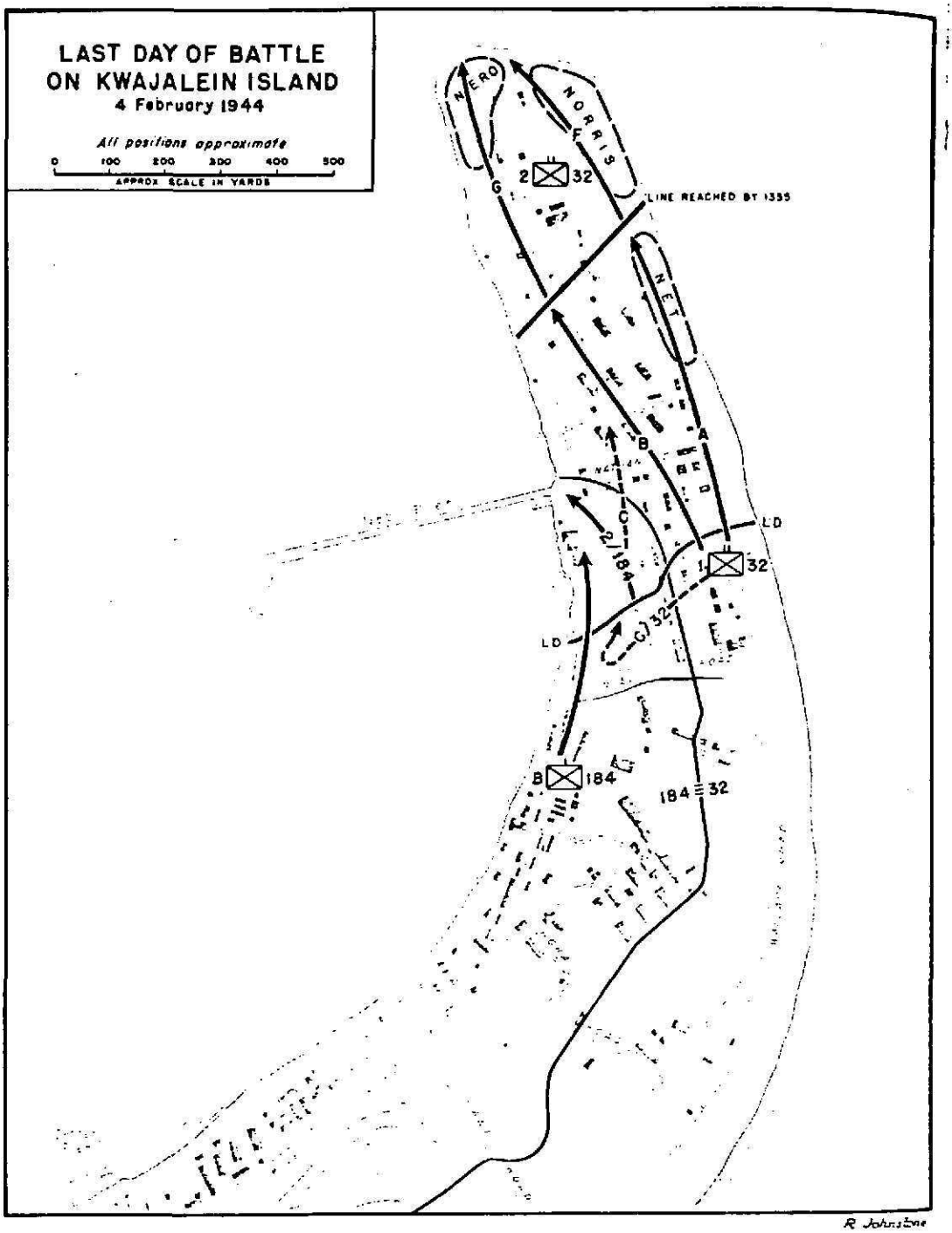
FEB 1, 1944



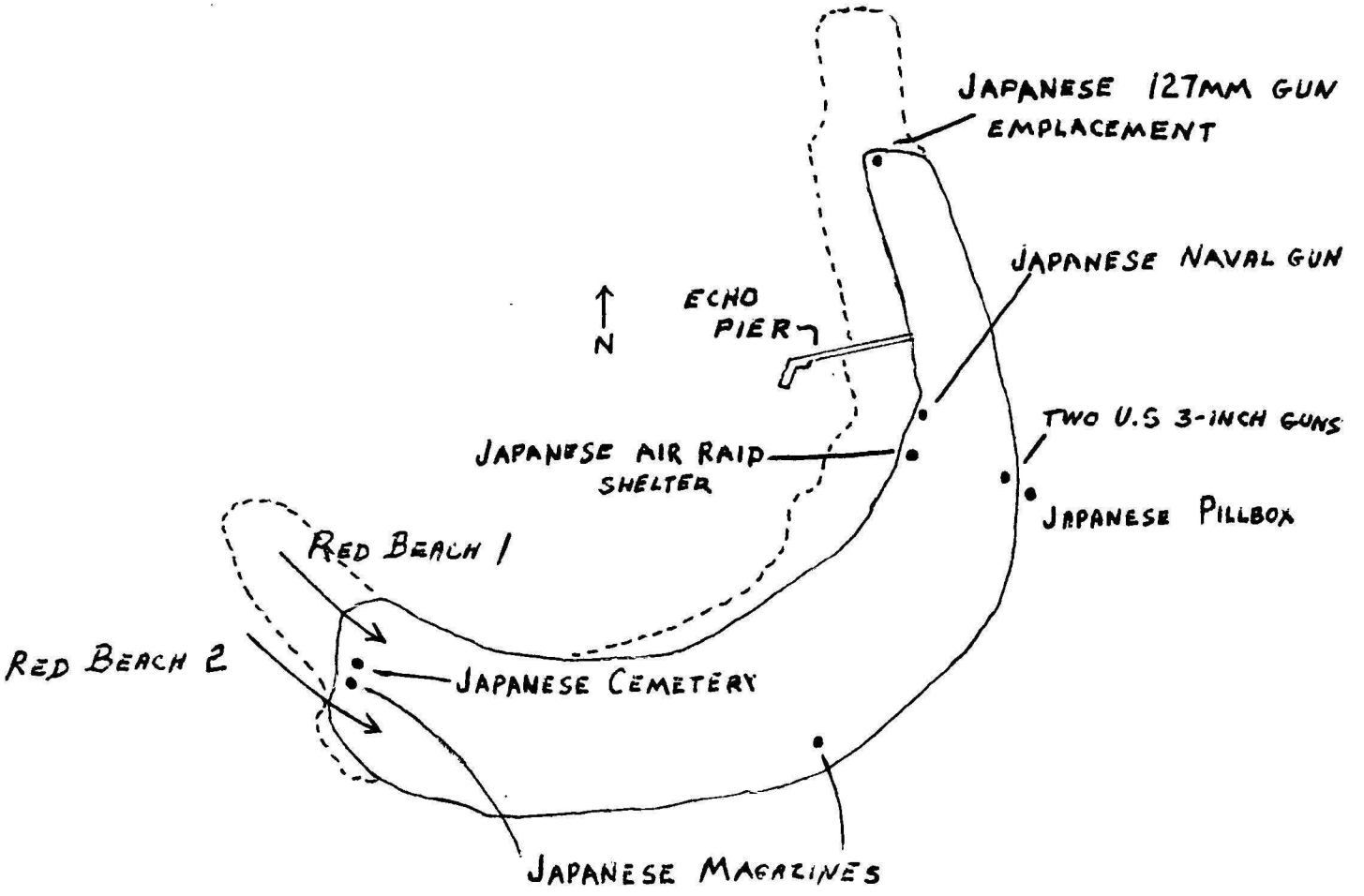

SECOND DAY ON KWAJALEIN I.
FEBRUARY 2, 1944
Nob Pier
NOEL
ROAD
ADMIRALTY
AREA
NORA
ROAD
NIGHT
2-3 FEB
Center Pier
CARL
COX
ROAD
ROAD
CLEARING
NIGHT
1-2 FEB
184
DISPERSAL STRIP
184
32
RUNWAY
2/32
32
(1602)
(1625)
(1401)
NIGHT
1-2 FEB


THIRD DAY
ON KWAJALEIN ISLAND
Morning, 3 February 1944
NAP JAPANESE STRONGPOINT
All positions approximate
0 100 200 300 400 500
APPROX. SCALE IN YARDS
NERO
NORRIS
NET
NAP
FRONT LINE, 1150
AREA OF STRONG JAPANESE RESISTANCE
A
B
K
L
I
LD
184
32
3
184
32
CORN
LD
R Johnstone

MAP 11


LAST DAY OF BATTLE
ON KWAJALEIN ISLAND
4 February 1944
All positions approximate
0 100 200 300 400 500
APPROX SCALE IN YARDS
NERO
NORRIS
NET
LINE REACHED BY 1355
2 32
32
B 184
184 32
LD
LD
R Johnstone

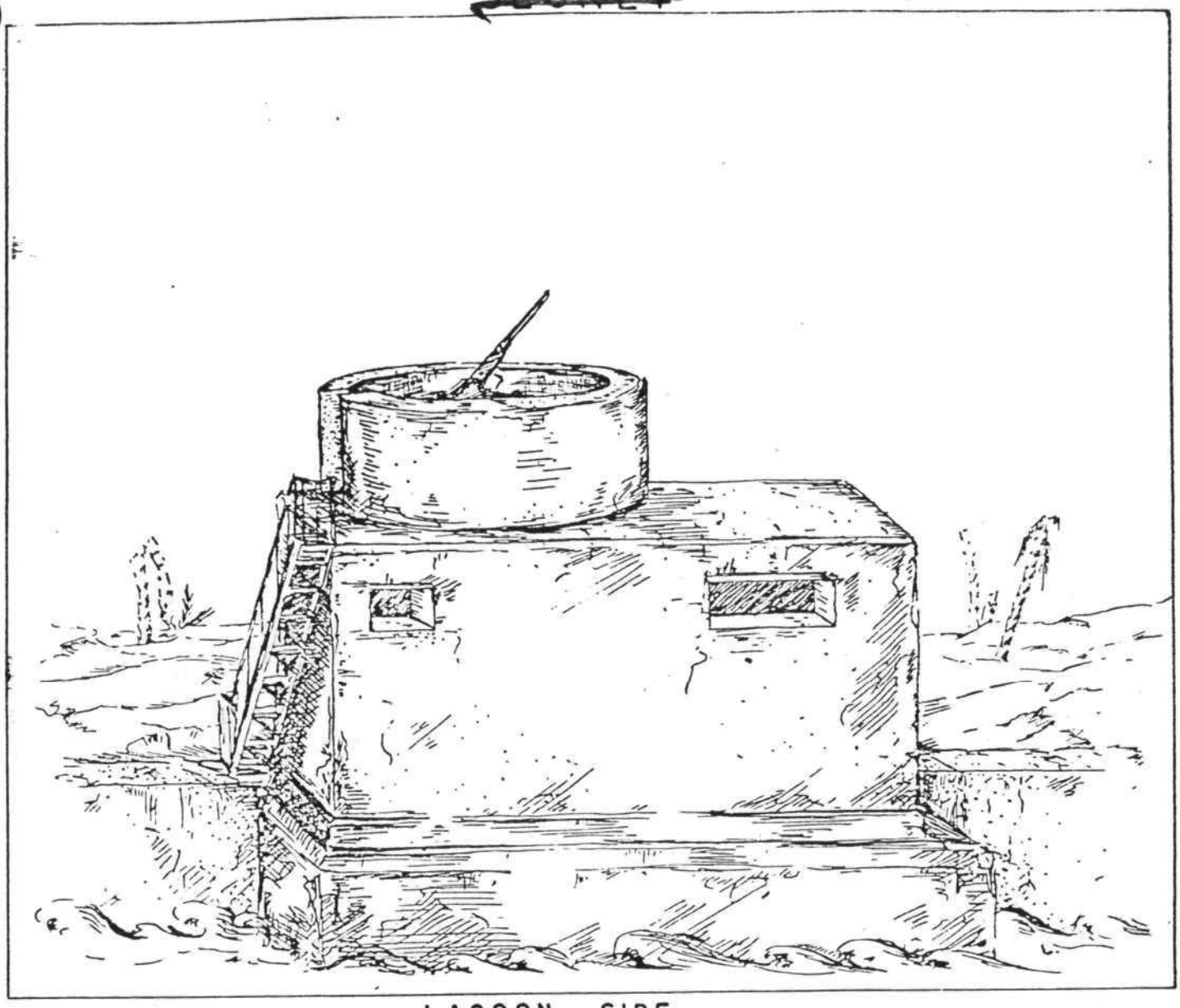
*MAP 13*




Kwajalein Island

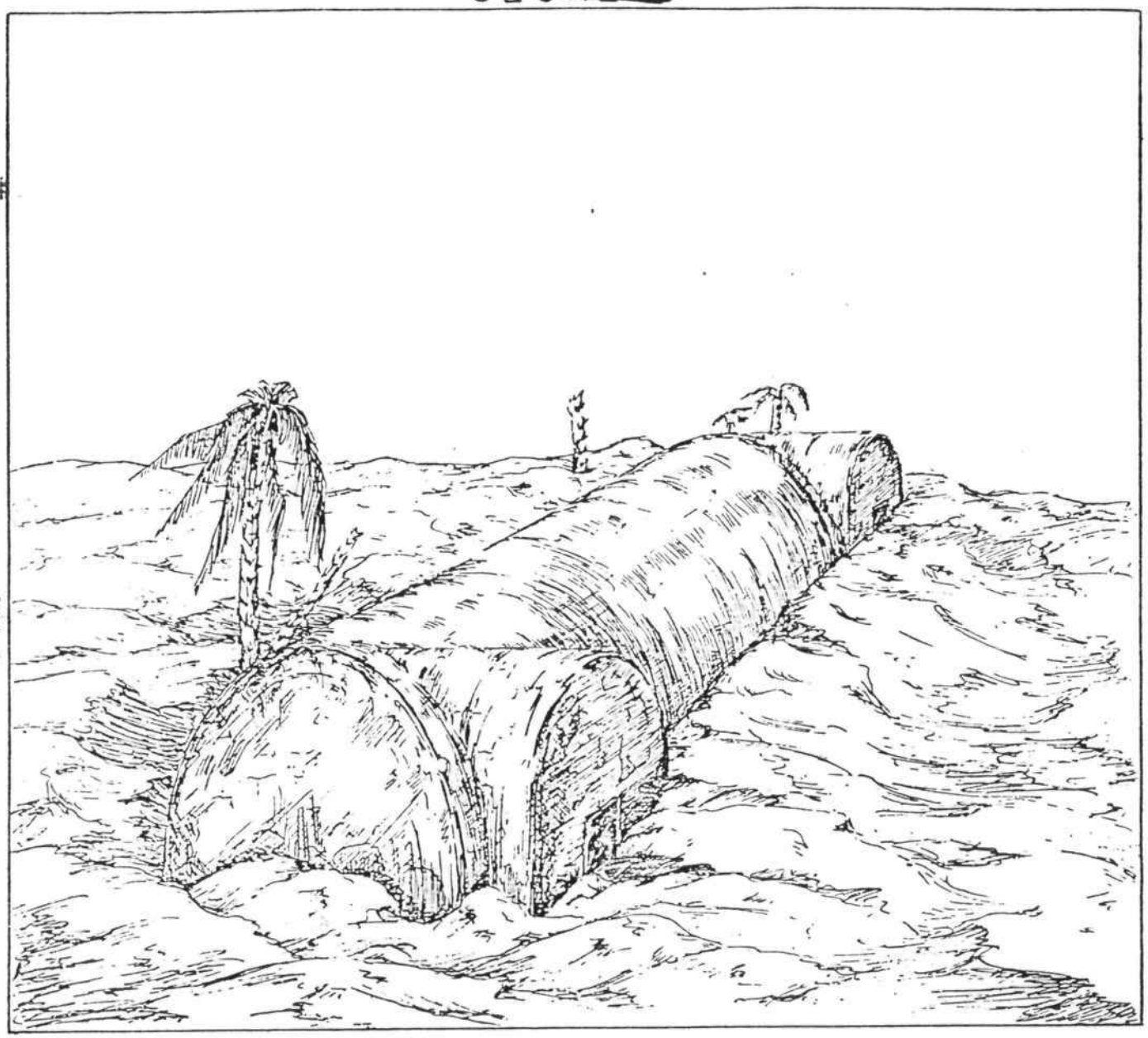
Solid line marks the original outline of the island. Broken lines indicate new land added by dredging and filling.

~~SECRET~~

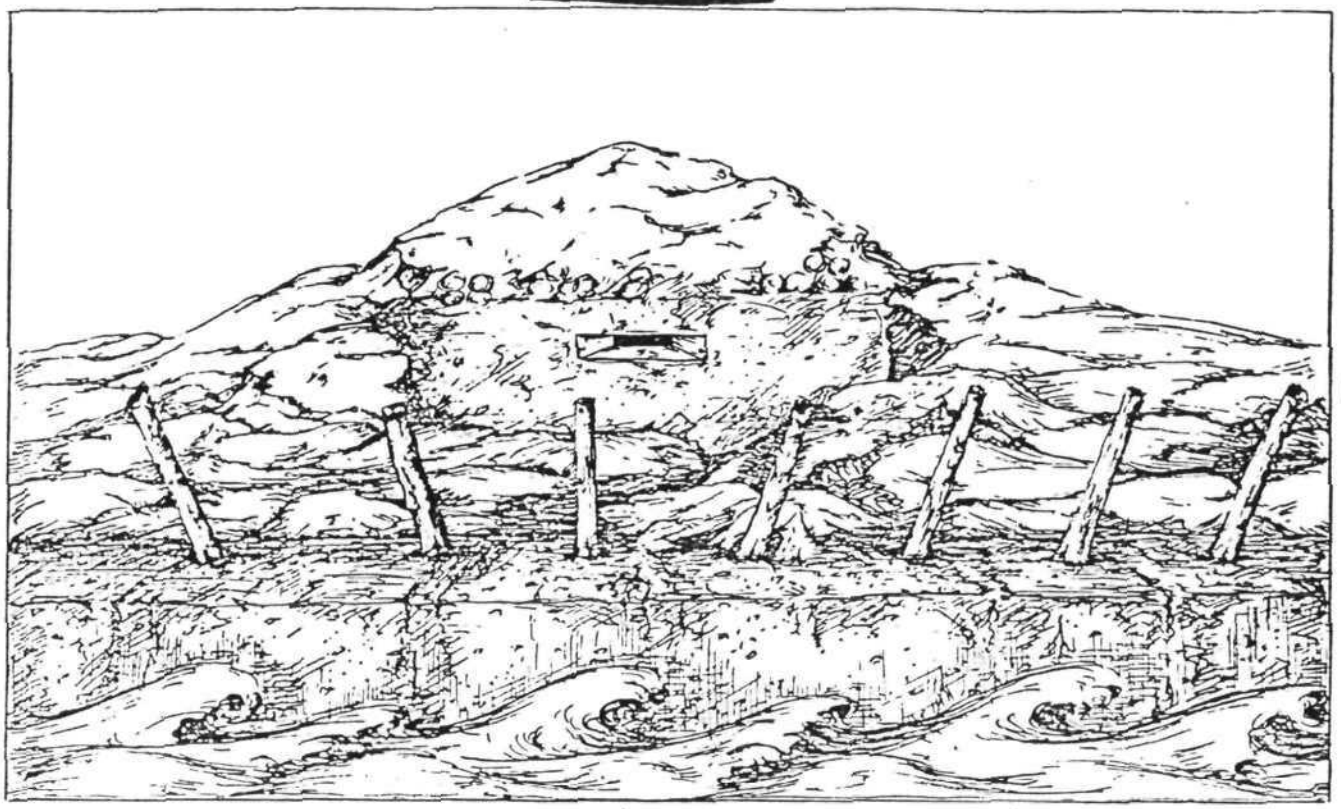


LAGOON SIDE
BLOCK HOUSE
ON NOB PIER

~~SECRET~~

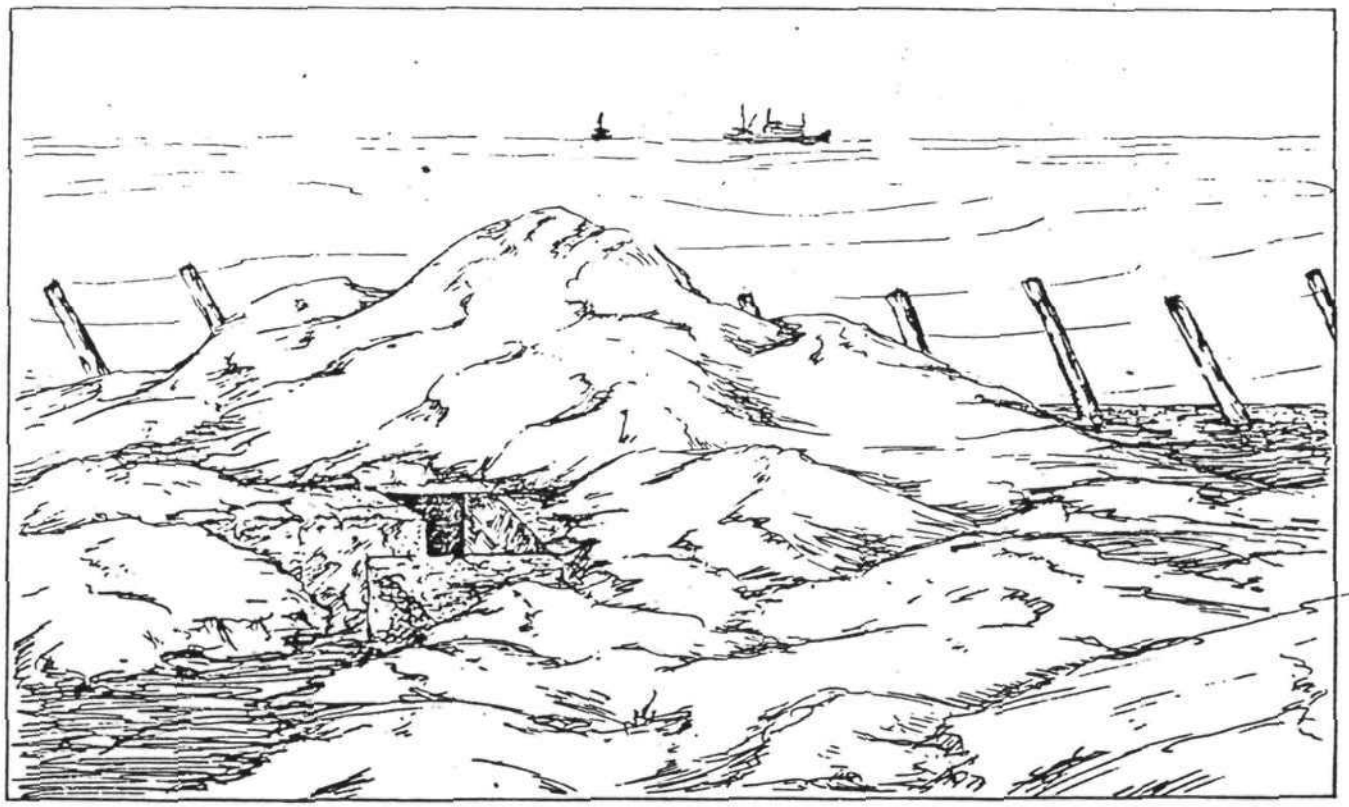


BOMB SHELTER



FRO
VIE

JAP PILL BOX — NOTE SEA WALL & LOGS.



REAR
VIEW

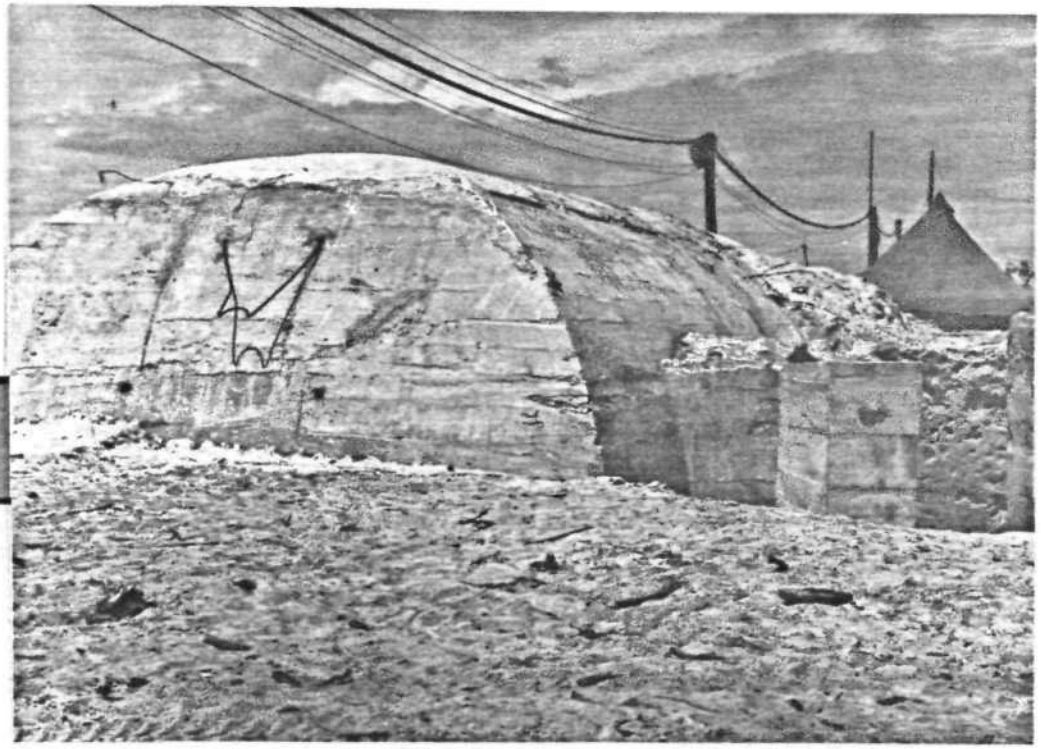
JAP PILL BOX WITH COMPARTMENTS

1. Kwajalein Island. Seventh Infantry Division troops landing on Beaches Red, 1 and 2, February 1, 1944. This west end of Kwajalein was thoroughly destroyed by pre-invasion bombardments.

Photo by U.S. Army Signal Corps
Courtesy, Defense Audiovisual Agency February 1944

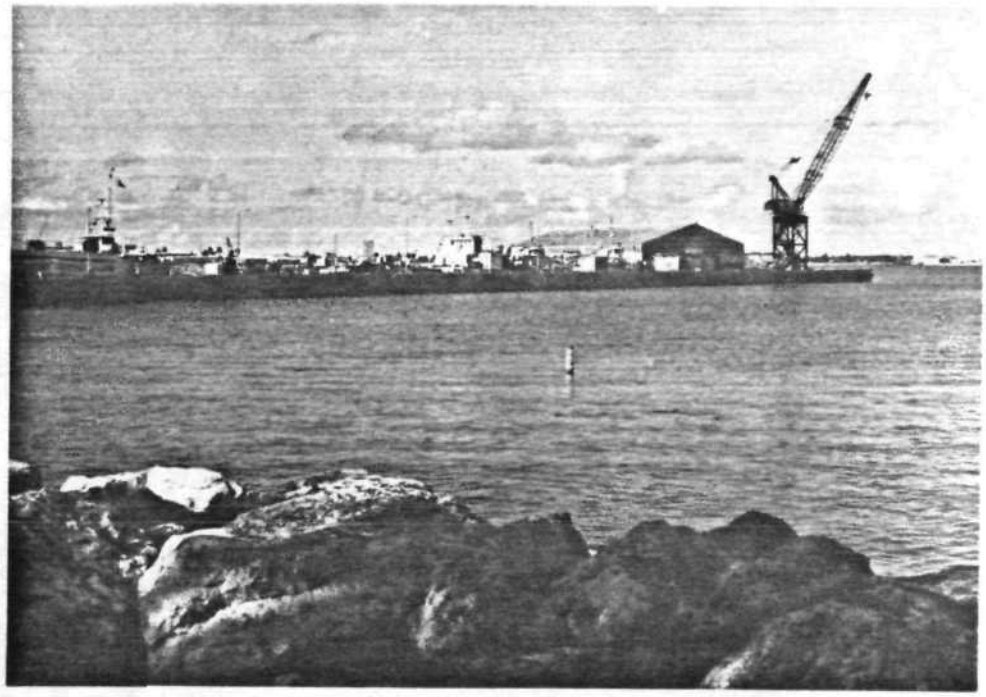
3. Seventh Air Force bomber field constructed on top of Japanese field on Kwajalein Island. Note the absence of vegetation.

Photo by U.S. Army Air Forces
Courtesy, Smithsonian Institution November 19, 1944



2. Japanese air raid shelter captured intact on Kwajalein Island. Seventh Air Force also used it as a shelter. It is in good condition today.

Photo by U.S. Army Air Forces
Courtesy, Smithsonian Institution June 12, 1944



7. Pier on the lagoon shore of Kwajalein Island. Rebuilt after the battle in the same configuration as the Japanese pier, it now serves the Missile Range. The vessel on the left, Tarlang, brings Marshallese workers from Ebeye daily.

Photo by E.N. Thompson October 1983

8. Japanese naval gun in front of the police station, Kwajalein Island. Its wartime history is unknown.

Photo by E.N. Thompson October 1983

10. Japanese twin-mount, dual-purpose 127mm gun emplacement at the north end of Kwajalein Island, one of the last positions to be captured. Because of the island's low elevation, the Japanese constructed mounds for these weapons. This is called "Bunker Hill."

Photo by E.N. Thompson October 1983

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

# NHL — WWII, PACIFIC

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

**United States Department of the Interior**
**National Park Service**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Roi-Namur Battlefield

and or common Kiernan Re-entry Measurements Site, Kwajalein Missile Range

## 2. Location

street & number ___ not for publication

city, town ___ X vicinity of Kwajalein Atoll

state Republic of the Marshall Islands code 75 county Kwajalein Atoll code 020

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ district | X public | X occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | ___ unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| X site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | X yes: restricted | ___ government | X scientific |
| | ___ being considered | ___ yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ no | X military | ___ other: |

## 4. Owner of Property

name Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands

street & number

city, town Majuro ___ vicinity of state Marshall Islands 96960

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the High Commissioner

street & number Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

city, town Saipan state Mariana Islands 96950

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Site Survey of Kwajalein Missile Range has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date August 1980 X federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pacific Ocean Division

city, town Fort Shafter, Honolulu state Hawaii

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| ___ excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | _X_ original site |
| ___ good | _X_ ruins | _X_ altered | ___ moved date _____ |
| ___ fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Roi-Namur Islands are at the northern apex of Kwajalein Atoll, which is in the Ralik (Sunset) chain of the Marshall Islands. Kwajalein is the largest atoll in the world, its lagoon having an area of 1,100 square miles. Roi-Namur has an area of 350 acres. Originally considered two separate islands they were joined by a sand bar on their lagoon sides. From the center of this bar a spit of firm land extended northward dividing the shallow reef water between the two. Americans named this spit Aqua Pura because of a Japanese water distillation plant there. Before World War II, Japanese naval personnel built a 1,200-foot causeway connecting the two islands and the spit. The causeway was well-constructed, being filled with coral, masonry revetted, and paved with asphalt. Repaired after the battle, much of the causeway remains, now serving as a seawall. Contrary to common belief, the Japanese did not construct a road along the sandbar; American Seabees built a road in this area immediately after the 1944 battle. Since the war, most of the area between the road and the causeway has been filled in and landscaped, making the two islands one. Americans also added a small area of new land by filling in the reef at Roi's southeast corner, where they constructed a small pier. Both islands are roughly rectangular in shape and have an elevation of 5.5 feet above sea level.

Roi-Namur is part of the U.S. Army Kwajalein Missile Range and is the home of Kiernan Re-entry Measurements Site. Facilities include the TRADEX and computer buildings, housing and administrative buildings, aircraft runway, docks, a 48-inch telescope, and several highly technical radars, including the huge ALTAIR and a Super RADOT. The residential area is located in the northwest corner of Roi. The one runway extends the length of Roi, from its southwest corner to the northeast point. Most of the technical facilities are on Namur.

Prior to 1944, the Japanese airfield covered most of Roi, which resulted in sparce vegetation on that island. Air headquarters, barracks, and support facilities were concentrated on Namur. The northeast portion of Namur was heavily wooded. After the battle, American naval personnel occupied both islands, employing almost every square foot of land, including the former wooded area. At the same time, work began to restore the tropical vegetation and 3,000 young coconut trees were planted within a year of the battle. Today, Roi-Namur is outstandingly beautiful. Palm, breadfruit, pandanus, and papaya trees cover the land; green grass and morning glory hide the scars of war; and once again northeastern Namur is a lush jungle of growth.

Like Kwajalein Island, Roi-Namur was subjected to the most severe air, land, and sea bombardment of World War II in the Pacific. Despite the terrible destruction, a number of Japanese fortifications and other structures have survived.

Roi

The Japanese airfield on Roi had three short runways in a figure 4 configuration. Only the northeast-southwest runway is extant. Although

improved several times, the strip retains the same dimensions, including a part of a turning circle at each end, as it had before 1944. An army air shuttle service between Roi-Namur and Kwajalein uses the runway on a regular schedule. The field has been named in honor of Lt. Col. J. Aquilla Dyess, USMC, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. In the fight for Namur, Dyess was killed directing his troops in assaulting the last Japanese position.

The Japanese built an ingenious water collection system at the airfield. On either side of the three runways they constructed concrete conduits, two feet square. Every three feet there was a six-inch slot in the concrete cover for the entry of water. Rain from the runways drained into these conduits and flowed to large underground reservoirs for storage. When U.S. Marines stormed ashore on Roi, a large number of Japanese took refuge in these conduits,where most of them lost their lives. Afterward, the ditches were covered over. It is known that at least one, running along the former east-west runway, is extant.

Roi and Namur each had a battery of two twin-mount, dual-purpose 127mm guns on raised mounds, both sited primarily for off-shore fire. Nothing remains of the battery on Namur, but Roi is the possessor of one of these emplacements including the weapon. The circular concrete revetment that surrounds the weapon is partially destroyed. The remaining portions retain their small ready magazines. The two gun barrels point menacingly toward the ocean.[1]

Nearby, a substantial portion of the carriage and the concrete platform of the second gun remains. A bombproof ammunition magazine, measuring 43.5 by 22.5 feet, for each weapon was constructed 450 feet from the guns. One magazine remains, but there is no trace of the narrow-gauge tracks on which ammunition was transported.

On the west side of Roi a small cemetery has been established. From time to time, Japanese remains are accidentally uncovered and interred here. Japanese citizens have erected a memorial at the site. A translation of its legend reads, "Here Lie Members of the Japanese Armed Forces Who Gave Their Lives in Defense of Roi-Namur."[2]

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1. It is said that both barrels were loaded with ammunition for many years after the war. Then, one barrel was purposefully fired. Instead of a round roaring out to sea, the breech blew off and flew several hundred yards to the rear, causing only a little property damage. The other barrel supposedly is still armed.

2. Duane Denfeld, "An Historic Site Survey of Kwajalein Missile Range, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands" (Agana, Guam, 1980), p. 34.

The Japanese constructed circular blockhouses on Roi-Namur and elsewhere in the Pacific.[3] Three of these blockhouses remain on Roi-Namur: on the northwest corner of Roi, near the northeast corner of Roi, and on the east shore (Nadine Point) of Namur. The two latter were hit by shells and are impressive evidence of the power of the American bombardment. The blockhouse at the northwest corner of Roi emerged from the battle relatively unscathed and is a prime exhibit of Japanese fortifications. These structures had a diameter of 40 feet. The seaward wall was four feet thick with four layers of one-inch reinforcing steel running vertically and horizontally. Each blockhouse had four steel-plated, stepped embrasures, each with a 60-degree field of fire and spaced 60 degrees apart around the circumference so as to cover the shore in either direction as well as the ocean. The interior walls were covered with one-inch rock wool insulation backed with hardware cloth. Wood framing suggests that the walls also were panelled with wood, as were the blockhouses on Saipan. Interior concrete walls partially separated the four gun emplacements and a circular concrete magazine, eight feet in diameter, stands in the center. A person standing on top of the magazine could observe through slits in a small steel turret that extended two feet above the roof. This blockhouse has a steel door at its rear (landward) entrance.

The Japanese air operations building, also of reinforced concrete, stands on the east side of Roi. Somewhat battered from the invasion, it no longer has its control tower on the roof. It was built in a standard design and is similar to structures on Saipan and Tinian. Following the battle, the U.S. Navy used the building for its own air operations. Nearby, is a Japanese air raid shelter, also of standard design and similar to two shelters on Namur.[4]

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3. Identical blockhouses are found on Saipan and a modified form exists on Wake. American intelligence personnel described them as German-style blockhouses. Denfeld, who has studied both German and Japanese fortifications, concludes they are inherently Japanese and the only close similarity to German construction is the concept of casemating the weapons. Ibid, p. 33.

4. One of these shelters on Namur is camouflaged by morning glory and most difficult to spot. Mr. Edward S. Burris, who has been exploring Roi-Namur for twenty years, has learned that Namur's other shelter, on the southeast corner of the island, was also a control point for a pair of remote-control torpedo tubes out on the reef. These tubes are not mentioned in Marine Corps records, but an American intelligence map shows narrow-gauge tracks running out to an islet in this area.

At either end of the former east-west runway on Roi, the Japanese constructed protective seawalls. Both well-built, masonry walls continue to protect the island from the relentless surf.

Aqua Pura Spit

Two Japanese structures remain in this area, now a wide stretch of land joining the two islands. One is a non-bombproof concrete building that has been described as a general storage building. An American intelligence map, compiled before the 1944 invasion, shows only two buildings on the spit and identifies them as a water distillation plant. The other structure is a reinforced-concrete pillbox with a circular concrete ring attached. The same map shows two medium antiaircraft guns and a blockhouse in this general area.

Namur

Along the former west side of Namur, from south to north, are five Japanese structures. On the lagoon shore is a typical reinforced-concrete pillbox. A little to the east is a windowless concrete building, which has been repaired and is now attached to a missile range corrugated-metal building. Persons who have examined the interior of this structure have concluded that the Japanese used it as a jail.[5] About halfway up the coast are two features that D. Colt Denfeld has identified as a communications center (a concrete building with three rooms) and a nearby tunnel that possibly housed transformers.[6] Just north of the former causeway road is a two-story, concrete power plant, its adjacent fuel storage building, and the ruins of an oxygen generating plant. On the northwest corner of Namur, only two concrete pillboxes remain at this once heavily defended point. Both are in good condition.

The Japanese dispersed reserve ammunition magazines and bombproof petroleum storage buildings in the wooded area of eastern Namur. This location provided a safety feature in the event of an air raid on the field on Roi. Two bombproof magazines have survived. A combat photographer made one of them famous during the war: On the last day of the battle, February 2, the 24th

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5. Access to the building is restricted.

6. A post-battle intelligence report stated that the communications receiving station was "believed" to have been in the air administration headquarters. The gothic ruins of the communications transmittal center are on Ennubirr Island, southeast of Namur.

Marines approached this structure and forced open its huge steel doors. Inside they found 500 tons of explosives, mostly 500- and 250-pound bombs. It took the Marines three full days to remove the ammunition. Meanwhile, a tragic scene unfolded outside the building. Sixty Japanese had taken refuge in a dugout under the bombproof where they had attempted for two days to blow up the magazine. Failing that, they began killing themselves rather than be taken prisoner. When discovered, only seven remained alive. Six of these were badly wounded and two soon died. (The site where a similar magazine blew up a day earlier on Namur may still be identified. In the excitement of the battle a Marine threw a satchel-charge into the building which was full of aerial torpedoes. The resulting explosion will never be forgotten by the survivors.) Also on eastern Namur are two large but somewhat battered bombproofs for storing aviation gasoline. They are of the same design as gasoline storage bombproofs on Saipan.

On the lagoon side of Namur are three wartime features: the L-shaped Japanese pier; the ruins of a small, post-battle pontoon pier nearby; and, in the water off Namur's south point, a concrete pillbox.[7]

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7. A captured Japanese map of Roi-Namur shows many of the installations described herein, including the causeway, water conduits along the runways, bomb and fuel storage on eastern Namur, hospital complex in southwest Namur, and other features. Also appearing on the map, but not accounted for in other sources, are three structures or sites on the west side of Roi: command building, power plant, and "Waiting Place." Estimate of Japanese Troops and Defensive Organizations, Roi-Namur, no date, U.S. Marine Corps Records, World War II, WNRC.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1944 **Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Roi-Namur Islands, captured by U.S. Marines, along with Kwajalein Island, captured by U.S. Army troops, were the first Japanese territory in the Pacific to be taken in battle in World War II. Benefitting from costly lessons learned earlier at Tarawa and Makin atolls in the British Gilbert Islands, the U.S. Navy surface fleet and carrier aircraft, the Army Air Forces' bombers, and Army and Marine field artillery unleashed the most intensive bombardment of World War II in the Pacific against Kwajalein Atoll, stunning the enemy and resulting in relatively few American battle deaths. The Fourth Marine Division, in its first combat, captured Roi Island in the amazingly short time of six hours and seized Namur Island in twenty-six hours, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy who resisted bravely almost to the last man. The Fourth Marine Division, stationed at Camp Pendleton, California, was the only Marine division in World War II to be mounted and staged into combat directly from the continental United States.

Japanese in the Marshalls

The Marshall Islands consist of 32 coral atolls and a number of coral islands in the western North Pacific Ocean, a few degrees above the equator. Spanish navigators discovered them, English captains Marshall and Gilbert explored them, Germany purchased them from Spain in 1899, and Japan seized them in World War I. In 1920, the League of Nations gave Japan a mandate over the islands with the condition they not be fortified. Japan withdrew from the League in 1935 and closed the Marshalls to foreign visitors. Thus, these islands became the easternmost outpost of the Japanese empire. As war neared, Japan began to fortify five of the atolls: Mille, Maloelap, Wotje, Jaliut, and Kwajalein. Airfields, seaplane bases, fleet anchorages, and submarine bases were developed, all protected by land defenses.

Kwajalein Atoll had three principal bases in January 1944: an airfield on Roi Island at the northern apex of the atoll, with air headquarters for all the Marshalls under Vice Adm. Michiyuki Yamada and support facilities on adjacent Namur; the military headquarters for the Marshalls under Rear Adm. Monzo Akiyama on Kwajalein Island at the south end of the lagoon; and a seaplane base on Ebeye Island, near Kwajalein. Roi-Namur's garrison consisted of approximately 3,500 naval personnel, of whom some 500 were Korean laborers. About half the garrison belonged to the 24th Air Flotilla which had 35 landbased planes on Roi. These aircraft were either destroyed by American strikes or removed by the Japanese even before the invasion. The remainder of the combat troops was a 600-man provisional battalion named the Sonoyama Unit of the 61st Naval Guard Force, stationed primarily on Namur.

Throughout 1942 and much of 1943, the Japanese were able to strengthen their Marshall bases with little or no interference from United States forces. When the Americans captured the Gilbert Islands south of the Marshalls in November 1943, Japan realized that the Marshalls would be next. The Japanese were surprised, however, when the attack came at Kwajalein Atoll, "'There was divided opinion as to whether you would land at Jaluit or Mille'. . . . 'Some thought you would land on Wotje, but there were few who thought you would go right to the heart of the Marshalls and take Kwajalein.'"[1] Roi-Namur's defenses were more formidable than those on Kwajalein Island to the south, even though its combat personnel were fewer in number. Massive, circular blockhouses; pillboxes; four twin-mounted, dual-purpose 127mm guns; numerous 20mm dual-purpose guns; and machine guns protected the shores. Both islands were ringed with trenches, anti-tank ditches, and foxholes. North-central Namur, particularly, had a maze of trenches hidden in heavy undergrowth, as well as a number of strong, concrete storage buildings. When the enemy invaded the Gilbert Islands on their lagoon shores, the Japanese hastily strengthened the lagoon shores of Roi-Namur which had hitherto received the least attention.

## The American Scheme

Under the direction of Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor, the Fifth Fleet, led by Vice Adm. Raymond A. Spruance, departed Hawaii en route to the Marshall Islands for Operation Flintlock. Rear Adm. Richmond K. Turner commanded the Joint Expeditionary Force and Maj. Gen. Holland M. Smith, USMC, was commander of the Expeditionary Troops. Admiral Turner also directed the Southern Attack Force which assaulted Kwajalein Island. The Northern Attack Force (Task Force 53), which invaded Roi-Namur, was led by Rear Adm. Richard L. Conolly. Under him, Maj. Gen. Harry Schmidt, USMC, commanded the Fourth Marine Division's three infantry regiments, the 23d, 24th, and 25th Marines.

Prior to the landings, the Fast Carrier Force, under Rear Adm. Marc A. Mitscher, blasted Japanese airfields throughout the Marshalls. By D-Day, January 31, 1944, not a single Japanese aircraft was able to take to the air. In addition, the landing forces were supported by an additional six aircraft carriers and seven battleships which brought their destructive power to bear on the islands. Besides the carrier-based planes, bombers of the Seventh Air

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1. Henry I. Shaw, Jr., Bernard C. Nalty, and Edwin T. Turnbladh, Central Pacific Drive, History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II, vol. 3, p. 139, p. 139, quoting a Japanese naval officer.

Force, commanded by Maj. Gen. Willis H. Hale, unleashed their fury against the enemy.

Assault

On D-Day, January 31, elements of the 25th Marines captured five islets off Roi-Namur. The first action was the assault on Ennuebing and Mellu islands to the southwest of Roi. Not only did these islands guard the passes into Kwajalein Lagoon, they provided a platform for Marine artillery to fire on Roi-Namur. Although delayed by rough seas and the incomplete training of the amphibious tractor crews, the Marines quickly overcame light resistance and secured both islands by mid-morning, the first capture of Japanese territory by U.S. Marines in the war. Further delays occurred and not until mid-afternoon were the 25th Marines able to land on Ennumennet and Ennubirr islands across the lagoon, southeast of Namur. Again, they faced light opposition and quickly swept the two with few casualties. On Ennubirr they took possession of the ruined Japanese communications transmission station. The 75mm pack howitzers of the 14th Marines arrived on both islands just before dark and registration on Roi-Namur was postponed until next morning. Darkness had set in before the 25th Marines seized the fifth island, Ennugarret, only 400 yards from Namur. During the night, weapons were rushed to this island to provide a base of fire for the main attack.

Analyzing the D-Day operations, Marine historians have concluded, "More reliable radios, closer cooperation between LSTs and LVTs [for the transfer of troops], and a tighter rein by control officers would have resulted in a less hectic operation, but these facts were of no consolation to the Japanese killed on the outlying islands."[2]

At early light on D plus 1, February 1, the big LSTs moved into the lagoon as a land, sea, and air bombardment of Roi-Namur began. Fresh delays, caused by a shortage of LVTs, forced a postponement of the landings from 10 a.m. to a few minutes before noon. Four battalions stormed ashore on Roi-Namur: two battalions of the 23d Marines on lagoon Beaches Red 2 and 3 on Roi, and two battalions of the 24th Marines on lagoon Beaches Green 1 and 2 on Namur.

Capture of Roi

Supported by tanks and the 37mm cannon of armored amphibians, the 23d Marines pushed ahead against a dazed but courageous enemy and within a few

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2. Ibid., p. 152. LST, landing ship, tank; LVT, landing vehicle, tracked.

minutes reached its first objective, the O-1 line, on the airfield. Its commander, Col. Louis R. Jones, radioed General Schmidt, "This is a pip," adding, "Give us the word and we'll take the island."[3] Without waiting for the word, infantry and tanks plunged recklessly ahead. Colonel Jones required an hour to rein in his Marines in order to reorganize a coordinated attack. In mid-afternoon, the 23d renewed its advance, moving up both the east and west coasts of Roi. At 6:03 p.m., Roi Island was declared secured. Mopping-up in the center of the island continued through the evening; many Japanese had hidden in the water-collection conduits along the runways from where they harassed the Marines until captured or killed.[4]

Capture of Namur

As the bombardment of Namur continued, two battalions of the 24th Marines stormed ashore on Beaches Green 1 and 2 about the same time as those who hit Roi. At first, the advance met little opposition, but as the companies approached the O-1 line, progress slowed because of dense underbrush, heaps of rubble, and increasing Japanese fire. The ruins of the Japanese air headquarters were overrun. The Marines did not know it yet, but Admiral Yamada had been killed three days earlier in the bombardment and most of his senior officers had committed suicide. By early afternoon, most of the 24th's companies had come up to the O-1 line, which was the east-west road from the causeway. Toward the eastern part of the island, an assault team from the 2d Battalion began attacking a bombproof structure that appeared to be a gun position. Breaching a wall, Marines threw satchel-charges through the hole. Suddenly, a tremendous explosion shook the island, followed swiftly by two others. A Marine air observer flying over Namur at the time reported his plane

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3. Jones to Schmidt, 1207 hours, D-Day plus 1, Record of Events, 23d Marine Regiment, January 13-February 8, 1944, USMC Records, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD, herinafter cited as WNRC. This must be the shortest Record of Events that included a battle ever written. The entire diary, from the time the 23d left San Diego to their departure from Kwajalein Atoll amounts to four pages!

4. Robert D. Heinl, Jr. and John A. Crown, The Marshalls: Increasing the Tempo (Washington, 1954), pp. 64-67; "Observations and Recommendations, Flintlock Operations," January 19, 1944, USMC Records, WNRC. Most U.S. Marine accounts agree that Roi was declared secure on the evening of February 1. The G-3 at V Amphibious Corps headquarters stated that the island was declared secured at 8 a.m., February 2. G-3, Headquarters, V Amphibious Corps, Report for Operation Flintlock, February 18, 1944, USMC Records, World War II, WNRC.

was lifted 1,000 feet by the blast. It looked to him as if the whole island had blown up. On the ground, the number of casualties increased as chunks of concrete and steel rained down. The bombproof had been a magazine filled with aerial torpedoes. The 2d Battalion, 24th Marines, suffered severe casualties from the explosions with 20 dead and about 100 wounded. Not until late afternoon was its commander, Lt. Col. Francis H. Brink, who was himself wounded, able to reorganize his command and rejoin the attack. Some further advances were made before darkness came; one force of tanks and infantry actually gained the northernmost point of Namur but withdrew to the main line. This first day of fighting on Namur resulted in the Marines occupying about two-thirds of the island.

Small groups of Japanese harrassed the Marine forces during the night with little effect. At dawn, the enemy launched a counterattack which infantry and tanks quickly shattered. At 9 a.m., February 2, the 24th Marines renewed the attack with two battalions, reducing blockhouses and pillboxes one by one. Shortly after noon, the battalions met at the northern point and Namur was declared secured two hours later. The Fourth Marine Division, fresh from the training fields, was now battle-seasoned. It had met the enemy and had captured its objectives, even if beset with problems not of its own making, such as shortages in amphibious landing vehicles and the delays and confusion in delivering men and machines to the beaches.

Although they had lost the islands, the Japanese had the last word at Kwajalein Atoll. On the night of February 11-12, twelve Japanese bombers got through American radar and made a devastating surprise attack on Roi Island. Using both high explosive and phosphorous bombs, they hit the 20th Marines' (Engineers) comand post, a large bomb dump, and the LST unloading point. The explosions, which lasted four hours, and fires destroyed two landing ships and large stocks of food, ammunition, bombs, construction equipment, and clothing. The 20th Marines lost all its regimental records and journals. Casualties were severe with 30 killed and about 400 wounded.

Japanese casualties in the Northern Sector for Operation Flintlock amounted to 3,470 dead, many of whom were killed in the pre-invasion bombardment. Of the 264 men taken prisoner, 99 were Japanese, the remainder, Korean. In contrast, the Fourth Marine Division had 313 killed and 500 wounded.[5] Japanese dead were buried in deep trenches within the triangle formed by Roi's runways. On Namur, three large bomb craters became the Japanese burial ground. The Fourth Marine Division established a temporary cemetery for its dead on Aqua Pura Spit.

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5. Both Japanese and American casualty figures differ considerably in the several official accounts of the action in the Northern Section. The figures given above may or may not be correct.

As Marine engineers and Seabees cleared Roi-Namur of battle rubble, the Fourth carried out its last remaining task, an uneventful sweep of all islands in the Northern Sector. The division departed the atoll on February 8, enroute to Pearl Harbor to prepare for its next mission--Saipan.

Less than a week later the first of the runways on Roi was repaired and made operational. Soon thereafter, the 4th Marine Air Wing arrived on Roi-Namur. From then to the end of World War II, Marine pilots bombed and strafed the bypassed Japanese bases in the Marshall Islands, Ponape, and Wake.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 350 acres

Quadrangle name None

Quadrangle scale

UTM References Not available

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | | | | B | | | |
| C | | | | D | | | |
| E | | | | F | | | |
| G | | | | H | | | |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

See continuation sheet.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| state | code | county | code |

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erwin N. Thompson, Historian

organization National Park Service, Denver Service Center date May 10, 1984

street & number 755 Parfet Street telephone (303) 234-4509

city or town Denver state Colorado 80225

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

s the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-
55), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated
ccording to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

ate Historic Preservation Officer signature

le date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

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U.S. Marine Corps. Comments on Flintlock Operations, Fourth Marine Division, n.d.; Engineer, V Amphibious Corps, to Commanding General, V Amphibious Corps, February 15, 1944; G-3 Report, Operation Flintlock, Headquarters, V Amphibious Corps, February 18, 1944; Intelligence Report on Flintlock Operation, Fourth Marine Division, n.d.; Intelligence Report to Accompany CT 24, Fourth Marine Division, n.d.; Japanese map of

Rio-Namur in Estimate of Japanese Troops and Defensive Organizations; Journal, Fourth Marine Division, January 31 to February 2, 1944; Observations and Recommendations, Flintlock Operations, n.d.; Photographs of Japanese Defenses, Kwajalein Atoll, in Special Staff Officers' Reports, Marshall Islands; Report of Division Surgeon, Flintlock Operation, Fourth Marine Division, n.d.; Report of Operations, 20th Marines (Engineers), Fourth Marine Division, March 16, 1944; and Record of Events, 23d Marine Regiment, January 13-February 8, 1944. U.S. Marine Corps Records, World War II, WNRC.

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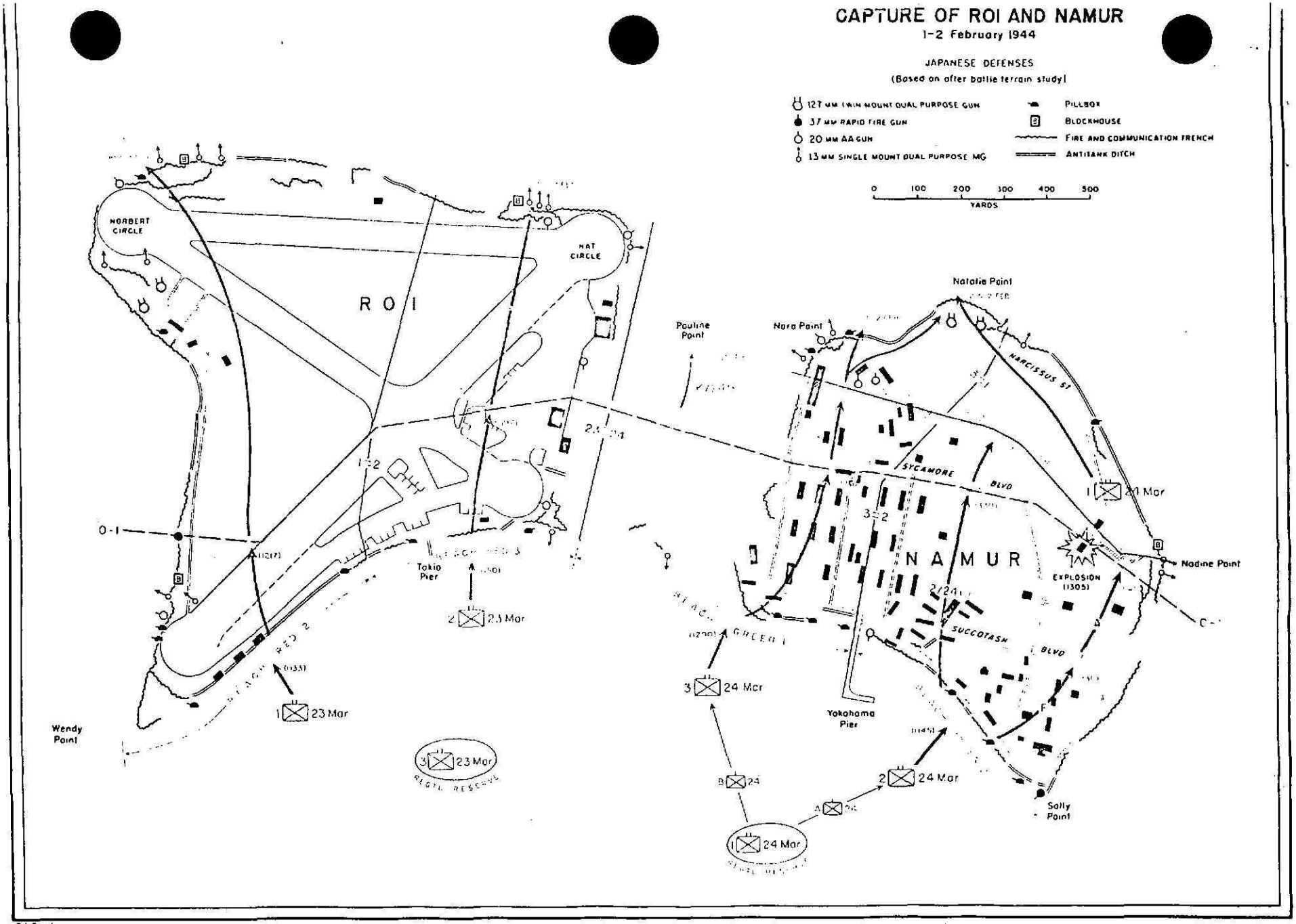
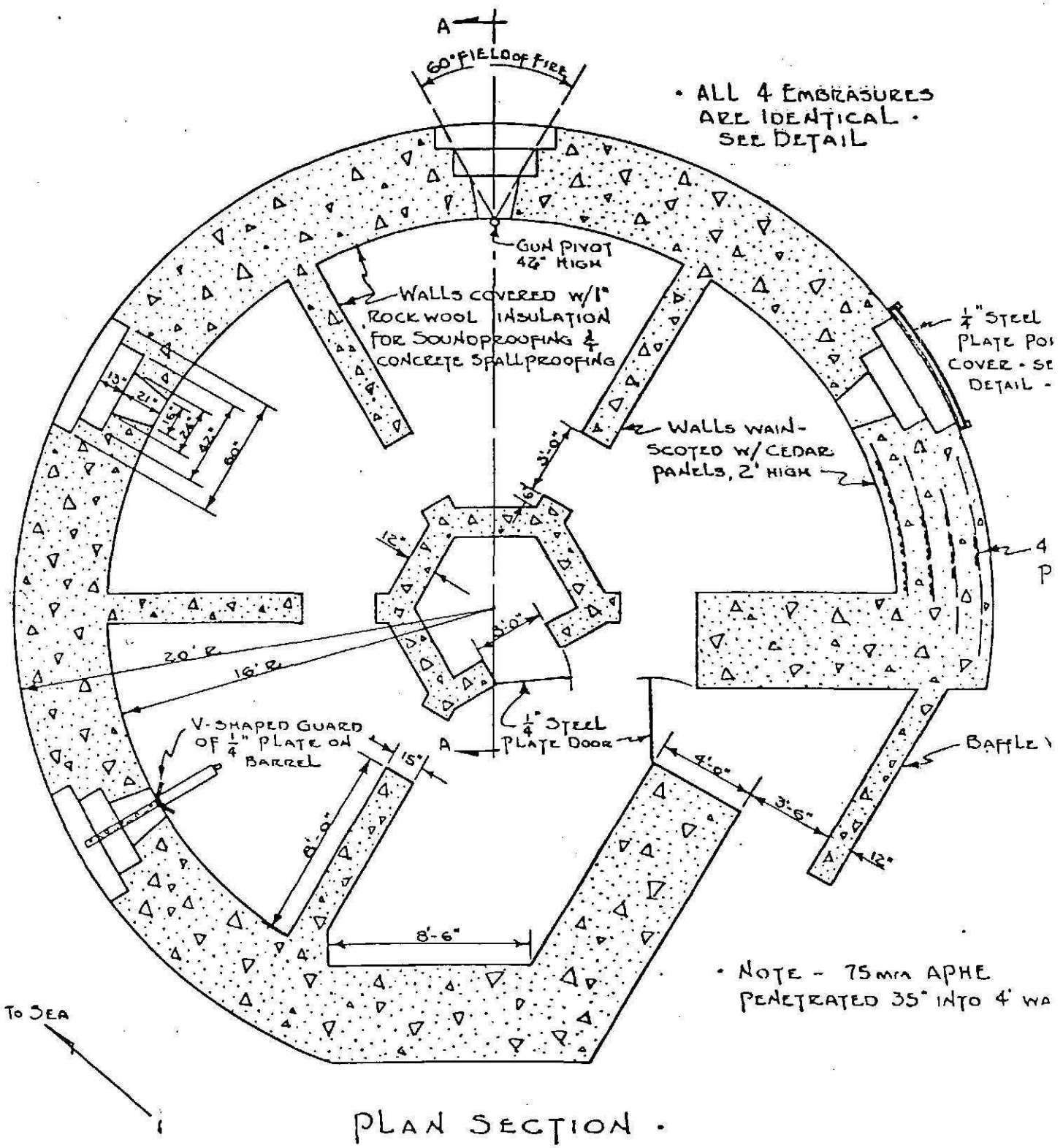
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The boundary is the water's edge around Roi-Namur islands so as to include the landing beaches, and surviving Japanese structures, weapons, and fortifications. All Kwajalein Missile Range developments on Roi-Namur, while within this boundary, do not contribute to the historical significance of the battle and are exempted. Because the bombardments and the fighting involved all the land, all of it is historically significant despite the continuing impact of modern developments.




Printed by the U. S. Army Topographic Command *MAP VIII*

From Philip A. Crowl and Edmund G. Love, Seizure of the Gilberts and Marshalls. The War In the Pacific. United States Army In World War II (Washington 1955).

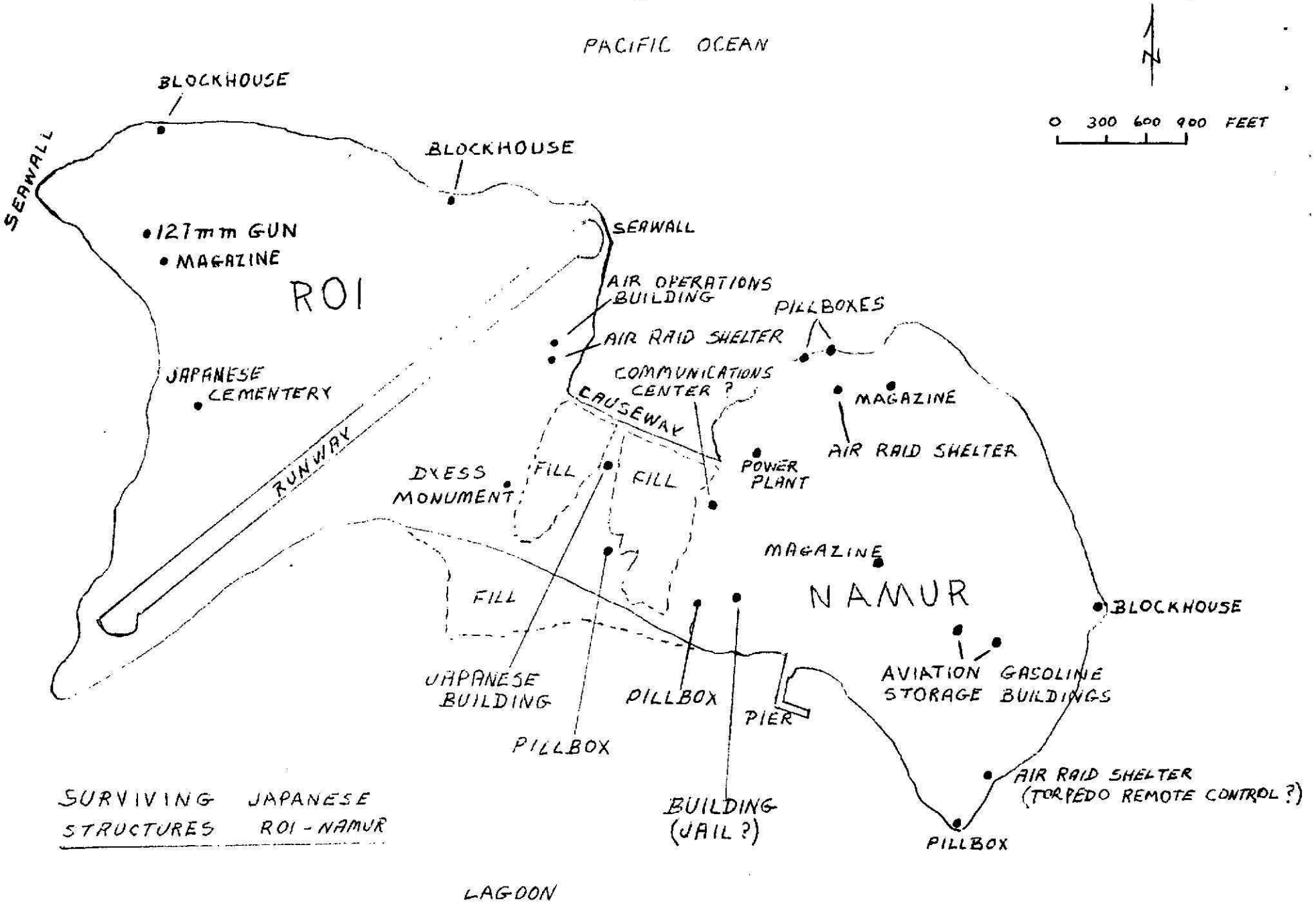



PLAN SECTION •

SCALE $\frac{3}{16}$" = 1'-0"

Plan of Japanese blockhouse. Feature in center was an ammunition magazine.

SEE P



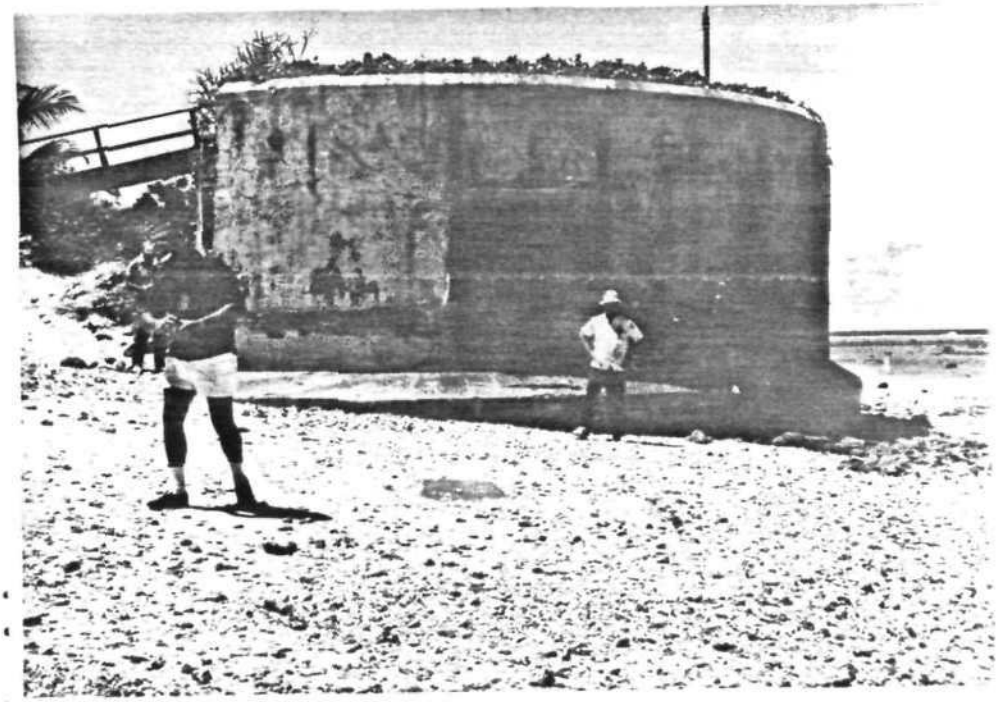

SURVIVING JAPANESE STRUCTURES ROI - NAMUR

1. Aerial of Roi-Namur, January 1944. Roi airfield is at top of photo. The horizontal runway is in use today. Kwajalein Lagoon is in the lower left. The corner of Namur shown, lower right, contained Admiral Yamada's air headquarters for the Marshall Islands. Aqua Pura Spit and the causeway lie between the two islands.

Courtesy, Smithsonian Institution and U.S. Air Force

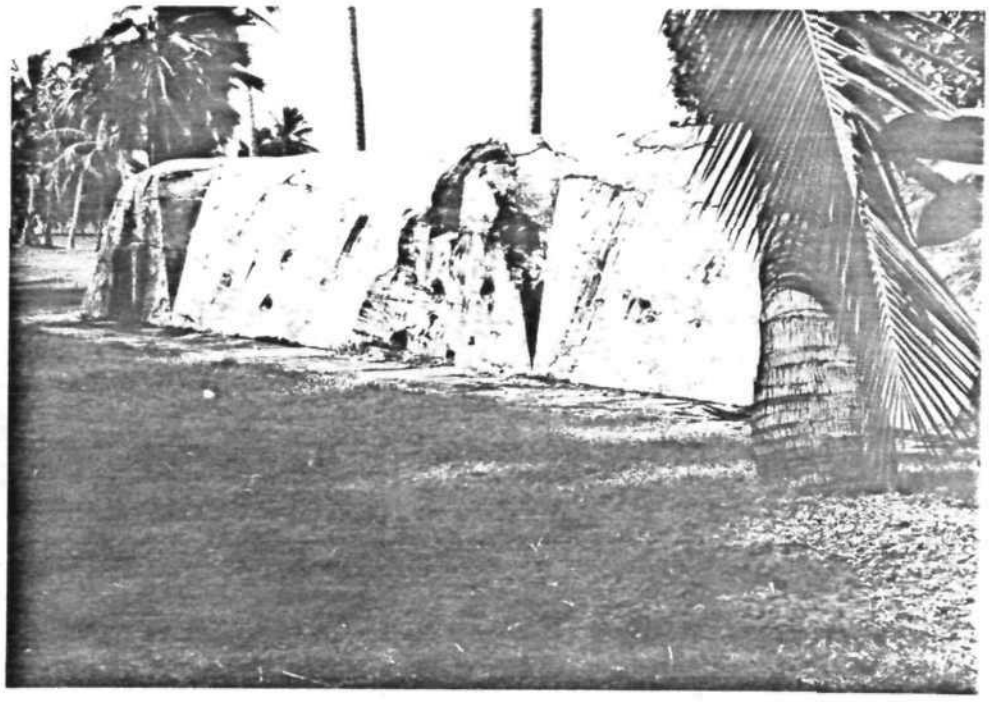
5. Twin-mount dual-purpose (coastal defense and anti-aircraft), 127mm (5-inch) gun. Japan had two such batteries of two emplacements each on Roi-Namur. This sole survivor on Roi may have been the weapon that opened fire on D-Day, January 31, 1944.

Photo by E.N.Thompson October 1983



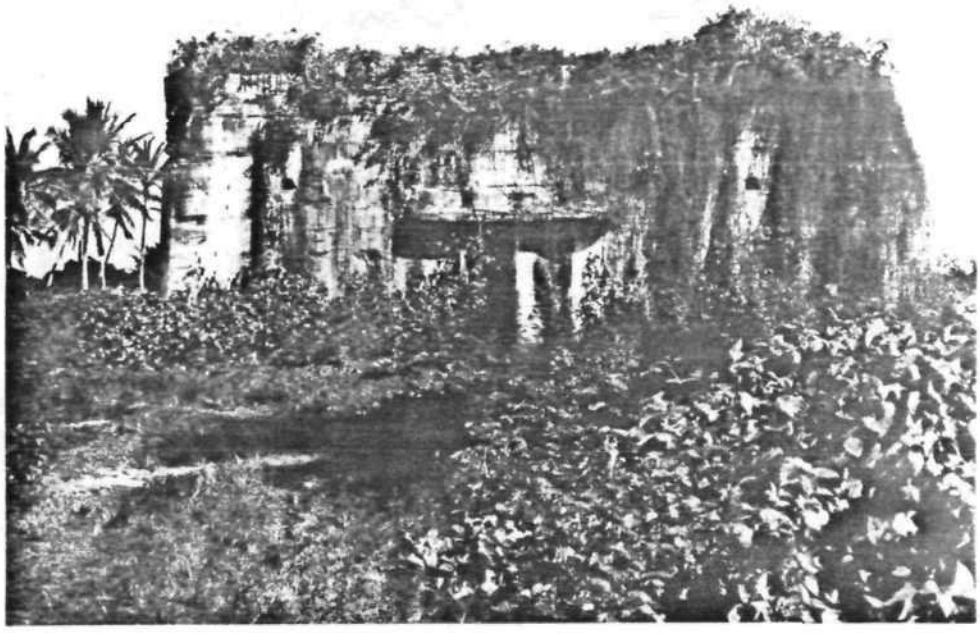
6. Japanese circular blockhouse on Roi. There were four or five (accounts differ) of these strong defensive works on Roi-Namur. American intelligence personnel thought they were of German design. This one, at the northwest corner of Roi, is the best preserved of three survivors. The person with the white shirt is standing in front of one of four gun embrasures.

Photo by E.N. Thompson October 1983



4. Partly-demolished Japanese air raid shelter on Roi. This standard design may yet be found on other Pacific Islands, including two survivors on adjacent Namur.

Photo by E.N. Thompson October 1983



11. One of two existing Japanese bombproof, aviation gasoline storage buildings on eastern Namur. These are similar in design to structures on Saipan.

Photo by E.N. Thompson October, 1983

**United States Department of the Interior**
**National Park Service**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Truk Lagoon Underwater Fleet, Truk Atoll

and or common Truk Lagoon, Truk State, Federated States of Micronesia

## 2. Location

street & number ___ not for publication

city, town ___ vicinity of

state Federated States of Micronesia code 75 county Truk State code 050

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| X district | X public | ___ occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | X unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| ___ site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | ___ yes: restricted | X government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | X yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | X transportation |
| | | ___ no | ___ military | ___ other: |

## 4. Owner of Property

name Government of the Federated States of Micronesia

street & number

city, town Kolonia ___ vicinity of state Ponape, Eastern Caroline Islands

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Government of the Federated States of Micronesia

street & number

city, town Kolonia, Ponape, Federated States of Micronesia state Ponape, Eastern Caroline Islands

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Truk Lagoon Underwater Fleet has this property been determined eligible? X yes ___ no

date September 30, 1976 X federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records National Register of Historic Places

city, town Washington state D.C.

comprise the "underwater fleet," the Mecca of divers worldwide. A summary of the sunken vessels and other wrecks within the lagoon follows:

Combined Fleet Repair Anchorage

This anchorage was between Dublon and Fefan islands:

1. Yamagiri Maru. Six-hold freignter, 3,188 tons, 305 feet long. Its hold no. 5 contains 18.1-inch shells for Japan's two giant battleships, Yamato and Musashi.[3]

2. Tonan Maru 3. Tanker, 19,209 tons, 535 feet long. This large whale factory converted to a tanker was hit by an American submarine in 1943. She was towed to Truk for repairs. Tonan was sunk in shallow water on February 17. After World War II, Japanese authorities received permission to salvage the ship for whaling operations, Japan's merchant marine fleet having been destroyed. Large sections of the vessel that had been blown off by bombs remain at the site.

3. Kiyozumi Maru. Six-hold freighter, 6,983 tons, 450 feet long. This vessel was taken over by the Imperial Navy in 1941 and converted to an auxiliary cruiser. In October 1943, her armament was removed and the ship was reclassified as a transport. She participated in the Midway campaign of 1942 as a troop carrier. In December 1943, an American submarine hit Kiyozumi with a torpedo. A tug towed the vessel into Truk, where repairs were being made. On February 17, she was bombed repeatedly and finally sank. Because oil still leaks from the wreck, she is known locally as "Oilslick Wreck."

4. Hoyo Maru. Large tanker, 8,629 tons, 470 feet long. Built in 1936, Hoyo was taken over by the Japanese Navy in 1940. From 1941 on, she was stationed at Truk. Hit in a bombing attack at sea in 1943, the ship was repaired in Japan. Luck was not with her. Early in February 1944, she departed Truk en route to Singapore and was hit by a submarine torpedo just outside the lagoon. She was towed in and was undergoing repairs at the time of the American attack. The ship broke in two as she capsized. The wreck is close to Fefan's shore and, because of silty water, Hoyo is seldom visited by divers.

5. Kansho Maru. Five-hold freighter, 4,861 tons, 380 feet long. The Japanese Navy employed this ship as a transport of special cargo from

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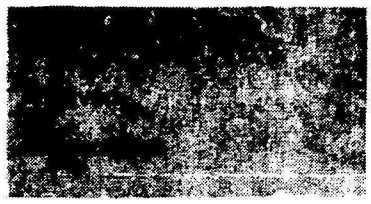
3. All ship descriptions are from Lindermann, Hailstorm Over Truk.





attacked Pearl Harbor. In 1942, she entered Truk for repairs after being torpedoed by an American submarine. A single torpedo sank her on February 17, 1944. The wreck contains many artifacts as well as human bones.[4]

13. Fumitsuki. Destroyer. Launched in 1926, she was undergoing repair at the Repair Anchorage. Fumitsuki was destroyed by a bomb. No trace of the wreckage has yet been found or identified.

In addition to these wrecks, an area between Dublon and Fefan islands was used by the Japanese as a dumping ground. This area is heavily silted and therefore has little coral growth. Divers have found many objects including an automobile, four-bladed ship's propeller, tracked vehicle, aircraft parts, tank trucks, generators, and engines.

Combined Fleet Anchorage

This anchorage was east and south of Dublon, around Eten, and south to Uman. The majority of the wrecks consist of vessels other than warships:

14. Nippo Maru. Freighter, 3,763 tons, 352 feet long. Prior to World War II, Nippo was a banana boat on the Taiwan-Japan run. In 1941, she became a fresh water transport for the Japanese Navy and was a frequent visitor to Truk. Discovered in 1980, the wreck has a wide variety of artifacts on board: coastal defense guns, field artillery, trucks, shells, and a tank.

15. Momokawa Maru. Five-hold feighter, 3,829 tons, 352 feet long. Launched in 1940 as a timber transport, Siberia-Japan, Momokawa was sunk in the February 17-18 attack. The wreck was not discovered until 1982. Many artifacts are on board, including porcelain dishes, chinaware, ship's bell, aircraft components, trucks, and ammunition.

16. Aikoku Maru. Freighter-passenger liner, 10,438 tons, 492 feet long. Aikoku was one of the finest cargo-passenger liners built in Japan just before hostilities. She was taken over by the Navy and converted to an armed merchant raider (auxiliary cruiser). By 1944, the ship was transporting cargo and troops to various islands in the Central Pacific. On February 16, she entered Truk Lagoon having come from Ponape. Lying in great depths from 130 feet to 240 feet, the wreck can be visited by only the most experienced divers. Human bones are found within the holds.

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4. Lindermann, Hailstorm Over Truk, pp. 55-56, does not show the location of this popular wreck.

27. Unkai Maru. Five-hold freighter, 3,188 tons, 305 feet long. An ancient, coal-burning vessel, Unkai was built in England in 1905 and first named Venus. Japan purchased the ship in 1911.

28. Gosei Maru. Coastal freighter, 1,931 tons, 270 feet long. Gosei was sunk on February 18. Its cargo of live torpedoes continued to explode over time until, in 1976, an explosive charge was set off to make the wreck safe for diving. Lying in shallow water, Gosei is a favorite photographic subject.

29. Rio de Janeiro Maru. Passenger liner, 9,627 tons, 450 feet long. Built in the late 1920s, this ship served the Japan-South America-United States West Coast route. The Japanese Navy converted her to a submarine tender and depot ship in 1940. In April 1943 she was reclassified as a transport and based at Truk. Cargo consists of a coastal gun, coal, and saki bottles.

30. Amagisan Maru. Special transport, 7,621 tons, 450 feet long. This large freighter rests on sloping ground. Water depth to the bow is 100 feet, while the stern is under 180 feet of water. Little cargo was on board, but a sedan automobile remains in a hold. The mess contains china and tableware.

31. Sankisan Maru. Freighter, 4,776 tons, 368 feet long. The Japanese Navy acquired this vessel in October 1943. Settled in shallow water (the foremast breaks the water), Sankisan is visited often. An explosion blew the aftership apart, but the remainder of the wreck contains a varied cargo: trucks, small arms ammunition, aircraft parts, and coal. Small reef fish and corals flourish at the site.

32. Hino Maru 2. Freighter, 999 tons, 200 feet long. Called "One-Gun Boat," this small vessel was destroyed by bombs. Its bow gun, only three feet under water, is heavily photographed.

33. Interisland Supply Vessel. It is about 120 feet in length and its gross tonnage is about 800 tons. This small coastal oiler serviced the fleet at Truk. Marine growth on the wreck is outstanding.

34. Subchaser No. 38. About 300 tons. This vessel may have been a small merchant ship that was converted to anti-submarine duty. It sank in shallow water.

35. Taiho Maru. Four-hold freighter, 2,829 tons, 305 feet long. Only the aft section survived an explosion. Two landing craft lie nearby. Cargo consists of steel drums.

Other wreckage that has been found in this anchorage includes:

The area recommended as a National Historic Landmark is all of Truk Lagoon within the coral reef that surrounds it. It does not include the islands within the lagoon, some of which have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places.

by American aircraft in an ambush attack, he was replaced by Adm. Mineichi Koga, whose flagship at Truk was the mighty Musashi.

Although the Imperial Navy established coastal and antiaircraft defenses at Truk, ground defenses were not intensified until the arrival of the first elements of the Army's Fifty-second Division between November 1943 and January 1944.[3]

Ground defenses--air raid shelters, bombproof tunnels, and alternate gun emplacements--were not completed until August 1944, well after the United States had decided to bypass Truk.

American Advances, 1944

In early February 1944, U.S. Marine and Army troops captured Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands, 955 miles east of Truk. The battle for Kwajalein was carried out so swiftly and successfully that Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, Pacific, concluded to speed up the Central Pacific campaign. He directed the immediate invasion of Enewetak Atoll, also in the Marshalls, which had originally been set for May 1. Because Enewetak was only 670 miles from Japan's Gibralter of the Pacific, Truk, Nimitz decided that a strong attack on Truk to neutralize Japanese forces there was a necessary adjunct to the Enewetak assault, now scheduled for February 17, 1944.

American intelligence knew little about Truk except its alleged invulnerability. On February 4, a U.S. Marine Corps Catalina flew over the atoll on a photographic mission. This reconnaissance showed that a Japanese battleship (Musashi), two carriers, ten cruisers, twenty destroyers, twelve submarines, and a large number of transports were in the lagoon. Japanese planes rose to the attack, but the flying boat evaded interception and returned safety to base with the important information. At Truk, the Japanese correctly judged this overflight presaged an enemy attack. Admiral Koga ordered the fleet to weigh anchor. On February 10, led by Musashi, Japanese warships sailed for the Western Pacific, never to return to Truk. The battleship steamed toward Japan. Other warships withdrew to the Palau Islands and to the Philippines. About forty vessels, some undergoing repair, others loading or unloading cargo, remained in the lagoon.

Before dawn on February 17,[4] Vice Adm. Raymond A. Spruance, on board battleship New Jersey, sailed toward Truk. Under him, Rear Adm. Marc A. Mitscher, Yorktown, commanded Task Force 58, consisting of nine carriers, six

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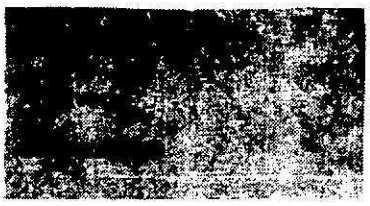
3. The balance of the division did not arrive at Truk until after the February raid.

4. February 16th in Hawaii.





Truk, 1944-1945

While the Japanese Navy never returned to Truk in force, for a time after the February raids the defenses of the atoll continued to be improved. Additional army troops arrived, underground defenses were constructed, mines were laid in the passes to the lagoon, and antisubmarine nets were emplaced. All these endeavors were for naught. On March 12, 1944, the Amercian Joint Chiefs of Staff decided that because of the successful February attack, Truk need not be invaded. They abandoned a plan that called for over five American divisions to be employed against the atoll. On April 30 and May 1, a second American fast carrier task force hit Truk. Of the 103 operational Japanese aircraft at the beginning of the attack, twelve survived. The few ships at anchor were destroyed. Land installations, the major objective of the strike, were battered.

Beginning in March 1944, the Seventh and Thirteenth Army Air Forces' B-24 bombers, based in newly won Kawjalein and Enewetak and in the South Pacific, began a series of raids on Truk, their primary objective being to keep the airfields inoperable, especially during the American campaign in the Marianas in the summer of 1944. When the Marianas were taken, huge airfields were constructed on Saipan, Tinian, and Guam for the B-29 Superfortress bomber. Before these planes were prepared to form the vast armadas for the long-range bombing of Japan, the air crews required further training to refine their techniques. Truk was selected as one of the targets for these training missions. Until the end of World War II, fresh B-29 air crews made routine missions over Truk. There was little of significance to bomb.

The surviving Japanese forces at Truk, starved for food and medical attention, formally surrendered aboard a United States destroyer on September 2, 1945.

Today, the "underwater fleet" at Truk, festooned with an infinite variety of marine life and containing the honored remains of Japanese warriors, is one of the world's underwater wonders.

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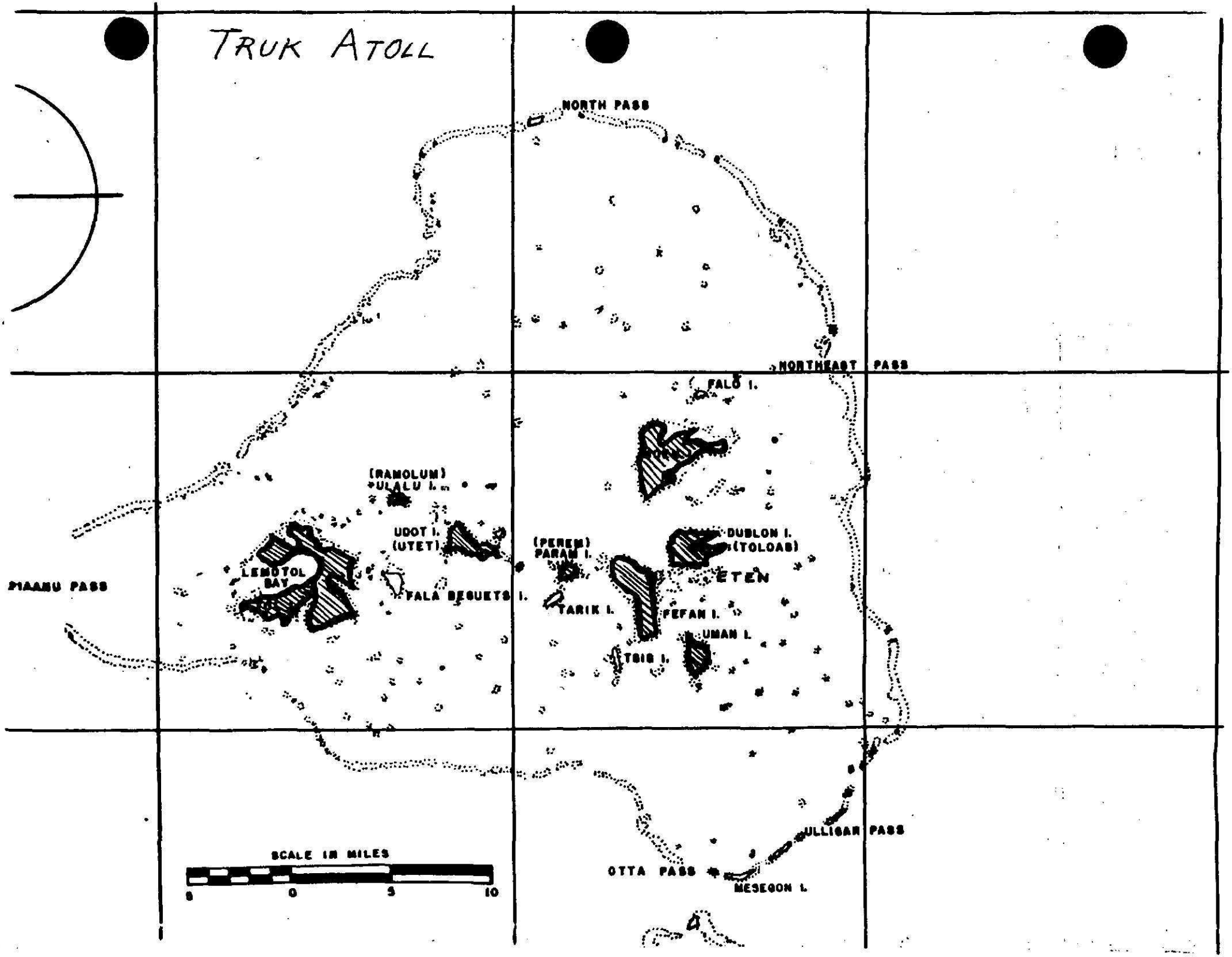
# TRUK ATOLL


NORTH PASS
NORTHEAST PASS
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ULALU I.
UDOT I.
(UTET)
(PEREM)
PARAM I.
DUBLON I.
(TOLOAS)
LEMOTOL BAY
ETEN
PIAAMU PASS
FALA BEGUETS I.
TARIK I.
FEFAN I.
UMAN I.
TSIS I.
ULLIGAN PASS
SCALE IN MILES
OTTA PASS
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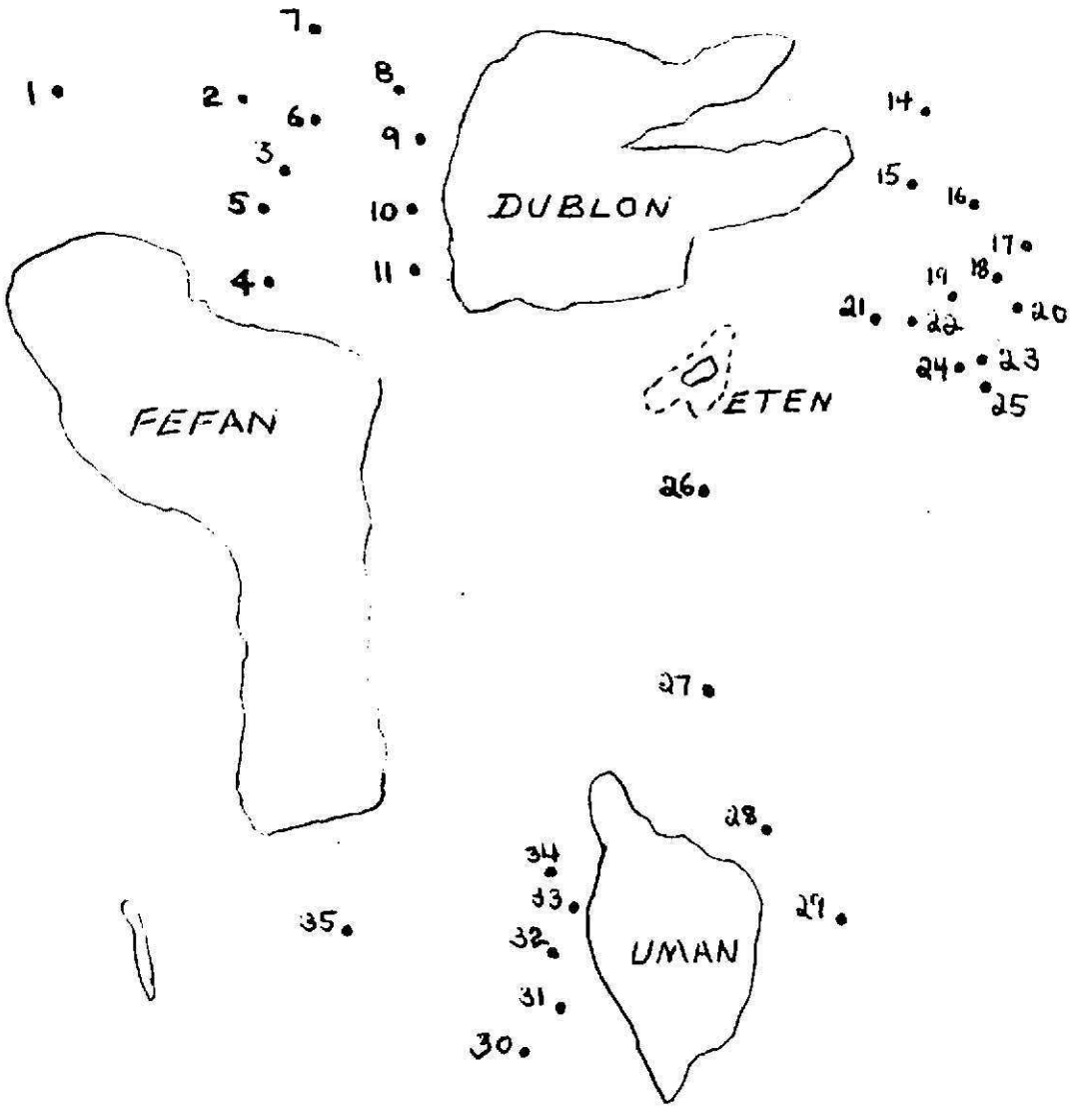


LOCATIONS OF UNDERWATER FLEET

BASED ON KLAUS P. LINDEMANN, HAILSTORM OVER TRUK

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

NHL — WWII, PACIFIC

OMB No. 1024-0018
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**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

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date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Landing Beaches, Aslito/Isley Field, and Marpi Point, Saipan Island

and or common Saipan International Airport and Beaches, Saipan

## 2. Location

street & number ____ not for publication

city, town X vicinity of Chalan Kanoa

state Saipan code 69 county Mariana Islands code 010

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ district | X public | X occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | ___ unoccupied | X commercial | X park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| X site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | ___ yes: restricted | ___ government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | X yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | X transportation |
| | | ___ no | ___ military | ___ other: |

## 4. Owner of Property

name Government of the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands

street & number

city, town Saipan ___ vicinity of state Mariana Islands

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Government of the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands

street & number

city, town Saipan state Mariana Islands

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Isley Field has this property been determined eligible? X yes ___ no

date July 1980 X federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records National Register of Historic Places

city, town Washington state D.C.

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| ● excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | X original site |
| ● good | ___ ruins | X altered | ___ moved date _____ |
| ___ fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The National Historic Landmark recommendation for Saipan Island consists of three separate geographical areas that are closely united in terms of their World War II history: the landing beaches, Isley Field, and Marpi Point.

General

The Marianas are a chain of fifteen volcanic, coral-reefed islands aligned roughly in a north-south axis in the western Pacific Ocean. The United States seized Guam, the largest and most southern of the islands, from Spain in 1898. The remaining islands, occupied in turn by Spain, Germany, and Japan, are known as the Northern Marianas and have recently elected to become a commonwealth with close ties to the United States. Of these, Saipan is the largest and most populous. It lies about 100 miles north of Guam, is 1,260 miles south of Tokyo, 1,500 miles east of Manila, and 3,200 miles west of Pearl Harbor.

Near the center of the island, Saipan's highest elevation, Okso Takpochao (Mount Tápotchau in 1944) rises to 1,548 feet. Stretching north from it is a long, broken ridge ending in a steep cliff, Laderan Banaderu (Suicide Cliff). North of the cliff is a low, level stretch of land named Banaderu (Marpi Point in 1944). The southern end of the island is dominated by a promontory, I Naftan (Mount Nafutan in 1944). The land between Naftan and Takpochao is relatively level and here the Japnaese built an excellent airfield, Aslito. The Americans reconstructed and enlarged this field for B-29 bombers, eventually renaming it Isley Field. Today, the same area is modern Saipan International Airport.

Most of the Chamorro population lives along the west coast of Saipan, the principal communities being Chalan Kanoa, San Antonio, Susupi, San Jose, and Garapan. Garapan, the former Japanese capital, is oriented toward tourism, with most visitors coming from Japan. Puntan Muchot (Mucho Point in 1944) in Garapan has been set aside as American Memorial Park and is administered by the (U.S.) National Park Service. North of Garapan is Tanapag Harbor, the island's principal port, which was rebuilt and expanded by the U.S. Navy in 1944 and 1945. Also near Garapan is the administrative headquarters of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI), administered by the United States under a trust from the United Nations. Saipan is both a municipality in and the capital of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Government offices, the governor's office, the courts, and the legislature are concentrated in Chalan Kanoa and neighboring Susupi.

Invasion Beaches

On June 15, 1944, United States Marines stormed ashore on the relatively level southwestern shores of Saipan along a line about 7,600 yards in length, extending from near Puntan Agingan in the south to above today's San Jose.

These beaches are protected by barrier reefs which create wide lagoons, Lagunan Chalan Kanoa and Lagunan Garapan, between the ocean depths and land. These wide stretches of shallow water made an amphibious landing both difficult and dangerous. While this water area has not been examined for World War II artifacts, one can observe two U.S. medium tanks standing motionless a short distance out. The narrow sandy beach itself is public domain, as is a fair portion of the strip of land of varying width lying between the beaches and the main north-south highway (Beach Road). Toward the north, this strip of land is undeveloped and is landscaped with grass and palm trees as far south as San Jose. At that town, a few structures have appeared on the western side of the highway. Between San Jose and Susupi, Civic Center Park lies between the highway and the beach. The land in front of Susupi and Chalan Kanoa is considerably developed, there being the legislative buildings, two resort hotels, and numerous other structures. One of the hotels is on Puntan Susupi (Afetna Point in 1944). This point marked the boundary between the Second and Fourth Marine Divisions who landed on either side of it. The point itself was heavily defended by the Japanese.

Immediately below Chalan Kanoa is the Admiral H.G. Hopgood Junior High School. South of the school is a U.S. Coast Guard Station, on Puntan Afetna (unnamed in 1944). This point marked the southern end of the beaches on which the Marines landed.[1] Between the station and Puntan Agingan, relatively little development has occurred. Along the beaches, particularly in the stretch north of Puntan Susupi, a few Japanese, reinforced-concrete pillboxes remain. A Japanese light tank has been placed on one of these, thus creating a monument.

South of the landing beaches is a rocky promontory, Puntan Agingan (Agingan Point in 1944), pointing toward Tinian Island three miles away. The Japanese were constructing a reinforced-concrete, 6-inch gun battery here at the time of the American invasion. The two British, Whitworth Armstrong guns, model 1900, had already been mounted, but only one casemate had been completed. Both weapons had been damaged by naval bombardment. The guns are gone, but a steel pedestal remains as does the battered casemate. The general area is unkempt and until recently was a trash dump. Nearby, is a Japanese pillbox built into the edge of the cliff. Also, a small but sturdy concrete platform stands at the tip of the point. Its function has not been determined. No trace remains of Japanese machine guns and anti-boat guns that were positioned on the point. Agingan is public domain land. It is recommended that the following areas be included in a national historic landmark commemorating the American landings on Saipan on June 15, 1944:

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1. It should be noted that today's Puntan Afetna is not the Afetna Point of 1944.

The waters between the coral reefs and the land, including Lagunan Chalan Kanoa and Lagunan Garapan, from a point 4,000 feet north of the junction of Beach Road and Wallace Highway (where an unnamed road joins Beach Road from the east near Bench Mark 3.8), south to where the reef joins to Puntan Agingan.

The nearby unbroken sandy beach between the above two mentioned places.

The strip of land between Beach Road and the beach from the above mentioned northern point south to the junction of Beach Road and Wallace Highway.

The strip of land west of Beach Road that is designated as Civic Center Park.

And a strip of land west of Beach Road, south of the U.S. Coast Guard Station, continuing south to and including Puntan Agingan.

Aslito/Isley Field

Japan began construction of Aslito Field, its principal air base in the Marianas, in 1934. Captured by U.S. forces early in the battle, a considerable number of concrete structures survived the fighting, although battle damaged. In the general vicinity of today's air terminal are the air operations building, two power plants, four gasoline storage buildings, fourteen standard air raid shelters, an aerial bomb magazine, a partly underground structure for gasoline storage tanks, and various structural ruins. The air operations building, similar to structures on Tinian and Roi islands, has been fully restored and is occupied by a tourist bureau. The other structures are abandoned.

Navy Seabees repaired Aslito Field soon after its capture for use by fighter planes. Then, Army engineers swiftly expanded the field into a large airbase for the mighty B-29 bomber. Eventually, the base was named Isley Field.[2] Of the two 8,500-foot, parallel runways, the southern one has been modernized to carry today's commercial jet planes. The northern runway has been maintained in part for emergency occasions. The nearly seven miles of B-29 taxiways and

2. U.S. Army troops captured the field and the Army officially named it in honor of Col. Gardiner J. Conroy, USA, killed in action in the Gilbert Islands in 1943. Later, the airfield was renamed in honor of Comdr. Robert H. Isely, USN, who had been shot down over Saipan. It was soon discovered that Isely's name had been misspelled, but the official spelling was retained as Isley.

over 100 out of 181 hardstands (parking areas) around the runways may be traced in part, although the area is covered with the ubiquitous tangantangan that was aerial seeded on war-ravaged Saipan. In total, Isley Field had about ten million square feet of pavement.

The large administrative area of the Seventy-third Bombardment Wing, stretching along the south side of the field on the Opyan coast (Obyan in 1944) on southern Saipan, is also densely covered with tangantangan. Recently, local citizens have cleared an interpretive trail through a portion of this area, leading past concrete pads of quonset huts, wartime rock-bordered walks, exotic shrubs and trees brought in by airmen, and other vestiges of 1944-1945. At one point along the cliffs of Opyan is a secluded beach of white sand, Unai Peo or, popularly, Ladder Beach. Here, off-duty airmen relaxed in the Pacific sun, and the beach remains popular with today's citizens. Not far away at another accessible beach, Unai Opyan (code-named Beach White 2 in 1944), is a large, circular, reinforced-concrete Japanese blockhouse (one of three extant on Saipan). Although American intelligence concluded that its design was German-inspired, the fortification is most likely inherently Japanese. It has four embrasures spaced at sixty degrees, each having a sixty-degree angle of fire. Thus, its four cannon could cover the beach in either direction as well as the ocean. A low, now-roofless, steel turret protrudes from its roof for observation purposes. This solid structure is in relatively good condition, although an interior magazine has been removed, or was never built. The blockhouse serves as a dramatic reminder of Japanese defenses.

Southwest of Isley Field, the United States constructed a third, but slightly shorter runway, complete with taxiways and 79 hardstands. Christened Kobler Field, it served primarily army and navy air transports. On occasion, carrier aircraft took refresher training at Kobler and overflow B-29s from Isley parked there. The field has lost the greater part of its integrity, having become the site of a large-scale, low-income housing development. (One row of houses marches straight down the runway, providing the occupants with asphalt lawns.)

Recommended as part of a national historic landmark is the general area formerly known as Aslito Field and Isley Field to include: the site of the two B-29 runways, taxiways, and hardstands; the site of the Seventy-third Bombardment Wing's administrative area; the Japanese blockhouse on the beach at Unai Opyan; and the concrete Japanese structures associated with Aslito Field. Exempted are the modern air terminal, its vehicle parking lot, and its concrete aircraft parking area in front.

Marpi Point

The area that the Americans called Marpi Point at the north end of Saipan has several official names today. The great cliff where unknown thousands of

Japanese civilians and military committed suicide in 1944, popularly known as Suicide Cliff, is officially named Laderan Banaderu. The level land north of it on which the Japanese had begun construction of an air field and where the American Navy constructed Marpi Field for training aircraft carrier groups, is now called Banaderu. Banzai Cliff, where more Japanese ended their lives by leaping into the ocean, still goes by that name.

Little remains of the U.S. Navy airfield, which had two runways, 5,900 feet and 3,500 feet in length. Of nearly three miles of asphalted taxiway, only a few hundred yards are extant. The rest of the area is smothered in tangantangan. Around the base of Suicide Cliff and on the top are several elaborate memorials to the great tragedy that occurred in the last days of the battle. At the base of the cliff, three large, impressive memorials are dedicated respectively to Okinawans, Koreans, and Japanese. A peace memorial stands on top, 770 feet above low ground. Yet another, simpler memorial has been erected at Banzai Cliff. At the northwest base of Suicide Cliff is a Japanese fortification composed partly of a natural cave and partly of poured concrete. Easily accessible, this rather impressive work is heavily visited and is known popularly, but erroneously, as the "Last Command Post." Adjacent to this stronghold, a collection of Japanese artillery, a tank, and other military artifacts have been assembled for public display.

An additional feature at Marpi is an outstanding example of a Japanese coastal pillbox constructed with local coral rock and concrete. It is built into the rugged coral-limestone cliff on the west side of Puntan Laggua. This perfectly camouflaged (by its own nature) pillbox commanded the entire northern coast of Saipan.

Recommend as part of a national historic landmark on Saipan, with emphasis on its tragic history, is the general area of Marpi Point to include Suicide Cliff, Banzai Cliff, the airfield, and the two Japanese fortified works.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | ___ military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| ___ 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** _____ **Builder Architect** _____

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Capture of the Mariana Islands by United States forces was vital to the plan of massive strategic bombing raids on Japan's industries and ports by the new very-long-range B-29 bombers from bases within range of Japan. Saipan, being in the center of the Marianas and regarded as a principal military base, was selected as the first Mariana target. The capture of the island by U.S. Marine and Army divisions meant a breach of Japan's inner defense line, opening the way to the Home Islands. A Japanese naval officer said, "Our war was lost with the loss of Saipan."[1] The large land mass of Saipan, as compared to earlier Central Pacific battles on coral islands, combined with dense vegetation, mountains, and caves, caused the American forces to employ different tactics to advance and take terrain. Japan learned an important lesson from its defeat; its forces would organize in depth in future combat, a reality Americans met with in the battles for Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. The loss of Saipan forced the resignation of Premier Hideki Tojo and the entire Japanese cabinet. Finally, less than five months after its capture, November 24, 1944, 111 B-29s departed Saipan to carry out their first massive raid on Tokyo.

American Preparations

Following the capture of Kwajalein and Enewetak atolls, the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff decided that the next advance of Adm. Chester W. Nimitz's Central Pacific forces would be against the Mariana Islands. Saipan was selected as the first objective and the invasion date was set for June 15, 1944. Under Admiral Nimitz at Pearl Harbor, Adm. Raymond A. Spruance, in command of the Fifth Fleet, led Operation "Forager." Vice Adm. Richmond K. Turner took charge of both the Joint Expeditionary Force (Task Force 51) and, under it, the Northern Attack Force, which was to assault both Saipan and Tinian. Feisty Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith, USMC, "the father of amphibious warfare," was the commanding general of Expeditionary Troops and Northern Troops and Landing Force (NTLF). For the invasion of Saipan, Smith had three infantry divisions: Second Marine Division, Maj. Gen. Thomas E. Watson; Fourth Marine Division, Maj. Gen. Harry Schmidt; and Twenty-seven Infantry Division as a reserve, Maj. Gen. Ralph C. Smith, USA. The Marine divisions were experienced in Pacific warfare, one or the other having fought at Guadalcanal,

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1. Henry I. Shaw, Jr., Bernard C. Nalty, and Edwin T. Turnbladh, Central Pacific Drive, History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II, vol. 3 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 346, quoting Vice Adm. Shigeyoshi Miwa.

Tarawa, and Kwajalein. Only six of the Twenty-seventh's nine infantry battalions had been in combat, four in the Gilbert Islands, two at Enewetak. The three divisions trained in amphibious landings in Hawaii; then, the 71,000-man ground force staged through the Marshalls and advanced toward Saipan.

Japanese Defenses

Between the attack on Pearl Harbor and early 1944, the Japanese considered Saipan to be a rear area and did little to prepare for its defense. When the United States captured Kwajalein and Enewetak atolls in February 1944, Japan rushed to bolster defenses on Saipan. By June, army strength amounted to 25,470; naval forces had increased to 6,160. No unified command existed. The senior naval officer was Vice Adm. Chiuchi Nagumo, commanding the Central Pacific Area Fleet. Admiral Nagumo had led the attack on Pearl Harbor and had been defeated in the Battle of Midway. Lt. Gen. Hideyoshi Obata had his Thirty-first Army headquarters on Saipan. He, however, was trapped on Guam when the invasion came, and Lt. Gen. Yoshitsugu Saito, commanding the Forty-third Division, took tactical control of the island. Other army units included the 47th Independent Mixed Brigade, 3d Independent Mountain Artillery Regiment, 9th Tank Regiment, and 25th Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment. Naval forces were composed principally of the 5th Special Base Force, 55th Naval Guard Force, and 1st Special Naval Landing Force.

Due to the effectiveness of American submarine actions, the Japanese on Saipan suffered from a shortage of armament and fortification construction materials. Nonetheless, they struggled against time to effect defenses, still placing emphasis on defending the beaches even though Saipan's topography was much different than the coral islands of earlier battles. A letter from Saipan in May 1944 stated that the distribution of men and weapons was completed but fortifications could not be strengthened because of the shortages, "The situation is unbearable."[2]

American Offensive

In February 1944, Vice Adm. Marc A. Mitscher had led his Fast Carrier Task Force on a two-day raid on Saipan and the other Marianas. Beginning June 11, Mitscher's Task Force 58 (seven fast carriers, eight light carriers, and seven fast battleships) returned to the Marianas and commenced aerial and surface

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2. Translations of Captured Japanese Documents on Japanese Defense Plan, Saipan. U.S. Marine Corps Records, World War II. Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD, hereinafter cited as WNRC.

bombardments. On June 14, seven old battleships, highly trained in shore bombardment, joined the attack. Naval underwater demolition teams reconnoitered the landing beaches. Landing ships bearing the Second and Fourth Marine Divisions slowly approached Saipan from the east.

Invasion

At 5:30 a.m., June 15, an intense naval bombardment commenced against Saipan's southwestern beaches, while Marines carried out a diversionary demonstration farther north, off Garapan. Carrier planes began a thirty-minute strike at 7:00 a.m. Almost three miles offshore, landing ships started disgorging more than 700 amphibian tractors and tanks. Farther out, other vessels loaded with artillery and tanks stood by. Larger troop transports carrying reserve troops and heavy equipment swung at anchor ten miles to sea, on the horizon. The line of departure, 4,250 yards offshore, was marked by naval craft flying flags that displayed the colors and numbers of the landing beaches. Shortly after 8:00 a.m., gunboats began firing their automatic weapons and rockets. Soon, the first wave of amphibian vehicles crossed the line. When the lead vehicles came within 300 yards of the beaches, naval gunfire ceased, except against Afetna Point (Puntan Susupi) which lay between the divisions' beaches. At that moment, 72 carrier planes made a last-minute strafing run.

North of Afetna Point, the Second Marine Division landed with four battalions abreast: 6th Marines on Beaches Red, and 8th Marines on Beaches Green. South of the point, the Fourth Marine Division's 23d Marines landed on Beaches Blue, and the 25th Marines assaulted Beaches Yellow. When the first waves crossed the reef and started across the lagoons, the Japanese opened up with well-directed machine gun, mortar, and artillery fire. In the Second Division's sector, some battalions got off course in the confusion and landed farther north than planned. All touched land between 8:40 and 8:43 a.m., with only seven vehicles knocked out of action. The Fourth Division's leading elements reached the southern beaches at the same time, with a loss of three tanks and two troop tractors. Critics of the landings have noted two factors that caused the scheme to be judged less than perfect. Because elements of the Second Division had drifted northward, a serious gap developed between the divisions, a situation that continued for three days. Also, the plan for the amphibian tanks to dash immediately inland and to deploy and protect the troops following in their tractors failed. Many of the tanks stopped on the beaches, their drivers refusing orders to move inland. Other tanks, underpowered and lacking sufficient armor and armament, floundered about or bogged down. Intense enemy fire and confusion on the beaches added to the failure to break through to objectives.

The amphibian tanks on the Fourth Division's left flank had more success than most. They moved through the ruins of Chalan Kanoa with surprising ease and half of them reached their objective, Fina Susu (Fina Sisu) Ridge, 2,000 yards inland, by mid-morning. Farther south, almost no progress was made on Beaches Yellow. Fierce fighting occurred in this area and, one hour after landing, Marine infantry on Beach Yellow 1 had been able to push inland only twelve yards. Pillboxes and artillery on Agingan Point delivered heavy fire on the 25th Marines, forcing them to dig in for the night with their right flank exposed.

The Second Division's confused landing created its own problems. On Beach Green 1, two battalions of the 8th Marines tried to land at the same time, creating mix-ups and congestion. The 6th Marines landed 400 yards farther north than their assigned beaches thus creating a serious gap between themselves and the 8th to their right. By noon, the 6th had 35 percent casualties. It succeeded, however, in knocking out a small Japanese counterattack force of three tanks. The right flank of the 8th Marines had the unenviable task of attacking south along the beach toward the antiboat weapons on Afetna Point which guarded the one channel through the reef to Chalan Kanoa. Progress against the numerous pillboxes was slow. By nightfall on D-Day the Second Marine Division had suffered over 1,500 casualties.

On the whole, however, the landing was a success. By nightfall the Marines had established a beachhead 10,000 yards long and, in places, 1,000 yards deep. Artillery and tanks had come ashore and division command posts had been established. The most serious problems for the morrow were Japanese-held Afetna Point between the divisions, Agingan Point on the Fourth Division's right, and Japanese artillery sited on the Second Division's left flank. While the most critical stage of the landing was past, no one was prepared to say the beachhead was secured.

During the night the most serious Japanese counterattack hit the extreme left (north) flank of the 6th Marines when three separate attempts were made by infantry and tanks crashing down the coastal road from Garapan. All were repulsed and about 700 Japanese were killed.

June 16 brought welcomed successes when the 8th Marines took Afetna Point. In the south, the 25th Marines finally captured Agingan Point, along with five machine guns and two mountain guns. By evening, the Fourth Division was established on Fina Susu Ridge. That night, General Saito ordered another counterattack. It too failed and 24 out of 37 Japanese tanks were destroyed. Also on June 16, Admiral Spruance learned that a Japanese task force was steaming from the Philippines to do battle with the Fifth Fleet.

Aslito Field

Among the many changes of plans caused by the Japanese fleet's movement were orders to Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith to land two of his reserve regiments, the 165th and 105th. The 165th came ashore during the night of June 16-17 and, with orders to capture Aslito Field at 7:30 a.m., relieved the 25th Marines in the south. Attacking across cane fields toward a ridge that commanded the western approaches to the airfield, the 165th made good progress until it reached the strongly defended ridge. There, the Japanese forced the regiment's right wing back practically to its starting point. The battalion on the left had better success. In mid-afternoon, patrols reached the west and south sides of the airfield and made contact with the 25th Marines to the north. This same day, the Army's 105th Regiment landed, but without much of its equipment. The transports had been ordered east because of the advance of the Japanese fleet. The 105th's vessel did not return to Saipan until June 25.

The two Marine divisions made satisfactory progress on the 17th, but nightfall found a worrisome 600-yard gap between them, caused primarily by the sniper-infested swamp that surrounded Lake Susupe (Hagoi Susupi). Also on the 17th, Lt. Gen. Holland Smith established his NTLF command post in Chalan Kanoa.

On June 18, the 165th Regiment completed the capture of Aslito Field against almost no opposition, as well as taking yesterday's difficult ridge to the southwest. When Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith arrived at the command post that afternoon, the airfield was officially named Conroy Field in honor of the 165th commander, Col. Gardiner J. Conroy, who had been killed on Makin in November 1943.[3]

In the Fourth Marine Division's area, the 25th Marines cut across Saipan and easily gained the beaches of Magicienne Bay (Bahia Laolao), where it was soon joined by the 24th Marines. The division's 23d Marines, on the left, ran into the heaviest opposition of the day, making slight progress. The Second Division remained almost stationary during June 18, owing to the 23d's difficulties on the right. That night, General Saito ordered his forces to withdraw to a new line of defense extending from Garapan in the northwest and running past the southern slopes of Mount Tapotchau (Okso Takpochao) to Magicienne Bay.

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3. It has not been determined who changed the name to Isley Field nor when the change took place.

Battle of Philippine Sea

When the Americans invaded Saipan on June 15, a large Japanese fleet under Vice Adm. Jisaburo Ozawa moved toward the Philippine Sea west of the Marianas to activate Operation A-Go, a plan to destroy the U.S. Pacific Fleet wherever it appeared with one blow. On June 16, Admiral Spruance decided to postpone the assault on Guam, which had been set for June 18, and to detach part of the fleet supporting the invasion of Saipan to augment Admiral Mitscher's Fast Carrier Task Force (TF-58). By evening on July 18, Ozawa's search planes had located Mitscher's force, but the American admiral was still in the dark with regard to the Japanese. At 5:30 a.m., June 19, an American Hellcat spotted two Japanese planes near the fleet and shot one down. The battle had begun. Between 10:00 a.m. and 2:50 p.m., Admiral Ozawa's carrier planes carried out four massive raids against American ships. Not one succeeded in inflicting serious damage on Mitscher's ships. By dark, 315 Japanese planes had been shot down; the Great Marianas Turkey Shoot had ended.

Meanwhile, American submarines Albacore and Cavalla put torpedoes into Japanese carriers Shokaku and Taiho, the latter being Japan's newest and largest carrier. Both exploded and sank during the afternoon.

Not until the afternoon of June 20 did planes from Task Force 58 finally spot the Japanese ships. Admiral Mitscher decided to attack, knowing that his planes would have to return to the carriers after dark. The attack commenced just before sunset. When darkness fell, Americans claimed one more Japanese carrier, Hiyo, and destroyed two-thirds of Ozawa's remaining aircraft while losing only twenty of their own. The planes returned to their carriers in total darkness. Admiral Mitscher, throwing caution overboard, ordered carrier lights turned on. Many planes crashed on deck or ditched in the ocean, but the recovery rate was remarkable--only 49 men were lost. While most of the Japanese task force escaped, the Philippine Sea was made safe for the conquest of Saipan and Tinian and the liberation of Guam. Japanese land forces on those islands had no hope of being reinforced.

Saipan Captured

Having cut the island in two, American forces now faced the main Japanese defensive line in the north and a small body of the enemy on Nafutan Ridge in the south. Gen. Ralph Smith's army troops began the reduction of the southern Japanese positions. The infantry battalions made only small advances on June 20 and even less on the following day. Marine Gen. Holland Smith decided on June 21 that the Twenty-seventh Division was needed in the north against the principal Japanese defense. He ordered the division to move north, leaving one infantry battalion and a platoon of light tanks to finish off Nafutan Peninsula. During the next several days the battalion struggled forward but

made only small gains. Then, on the night of June 26-27, about 500 Japanese troops slipped through the American lines, using the password, "Shichi Sei Hokoku," or "Seven lives for one's country." Racing north, the Japanese hit the airfield with small arms fire, destroying a fighter plane and damaging two others. They then dashed toward their (former) headquarters on Hill 500. There, they unexpectedly encountered U.S. Marines who wiped out the marauders. Marine Gen. Holland Smith was more than disappointed with the Army's performance.

Meanwhile, the Second and Fourth Marine Divisions began the assault on General Saito's new defense line. On June 23, the Army division was inserted in the center of the corps against the objectives known as Death Valley and Purple Heart Ridge. For two days the Twenty-seventh was frustrated by the rugged terrain and a stubborn enemy. Its failure to advance angered Marine General Smith who relieved Army General Smith on June 24, causing an uproar that reached back to the Pentagon and lived on until after World War II.[4] The dispirted soldiers of the Twenty-seventh carried on. On June 28, the division received a new commander, Maj. Gen. George W. Griner.[5]

By the end of June, the Second Marine Division, after several days of hard combat, had captured the peak of Mount Tapotchau and a particularly stubborn hill, Tipo Pale (Tipo Poli) and stood on the outskirts of Garapan. Since D-Day, the division had suffered 4,488 casualties. The Twenty-seventh Division in the center finally broke through Death Valley and came abreast of two Marine divisions on its flanks. Its casualties since landing amounted to 1,836. On the right, the Fourth Division consolidated its considerable gains, having swept through the plains of Kagman Peninsula.

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4. As a result of this incident, Marine General Smith was promoted to command the new Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. Never again was he in direct command of combat troops. Army General Smith was transferred to the European Theater.

5. The bitterness between the Marines and soldiers may be exemplified by events in Death Valley. The 106th Infantry Regiment's operational reports are filled with messages from the 8th Marines that the Army's supporting artillery fire was falling on the Marines. In contrast, when the Army complained that Marine fire was hitting its men, a Marine colonel is said to have retorted, "goddam you, in order to shoot at you, I'd have to reverse every weapon 180 degrees, and you'd still be out of range." 106th Infantry Regiment, "Operations Reports," June 26 and 27, 1944, Record Group 407, WNRC; Allan R. Millett, Semper Fidelis, The History of the United States Marine Corps (New York: Macmillan Co., 1980), p. 414.

In his cave headquarters in a ravine east of Makunsha (San Roque), General Saito held a conference with Admiral Nagumo and issued orders for a final banzai attack on the enemy for July 7. The tired and wounded general then committed suicide.[6] Before sunrise, July 7, 3,000 Japanese soldiers poured down the Tanapag plain from Makunsha and fell upon the 105th Infantry Regiment. A wild fury of hand-to-hand fighting took place as the Japanese pushed on south to assault artillery positions of the 10th Marines. Expending its strength, the attack exhausted itself. A counterattack soon recovered lost ground. In those few hours, the 105th Regiment, whose earlier performance had irked Gen. Holland Smith, suffered almost 1,000 casualties. No Japanese survived.

The Fourth Marine Division took over the entire front north of Makunsha and advanced toward Marpi Point. After a stiff fight, they captured "Prudential Hill" which overlooked Karaberra Pass. By the afternoon of July 9, the Marines stood on the northern cliffs and Saipan was declared secured.

Suicide Cliff and Banzai Cliff

The Marines' triumph was tempered by a tragedy unfolding on northern Saipan. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of terrified Japanese civilians committed suicide by leaping from Suicide Cliff (Mount Marpi or Laderan Banaderu) and from Banzai Cliff overlooking the rocks and angry surf below. Some families carried their children to their deaths:

> In spite of continuous American efforts to induce both military and civilian survivors to give themselves up, the traditional Japanese code of death before surrender prevailed in most cases. Shortly after the declaration that the island was secured, hundreds of civilians leapt from the cliffs of Marpi Point to the knifelike rocks below. At times the waters below the point were so thick with the floating bodies of men, women, and children that naval small craft were unable to steer a course without running over them.[7]

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6. The location of Admiral Nagumo's last headquarters is unknown. General Saito's cave has been identified. His remains were cremated by his staff. Later, when the ashes were identified, U.S. forces gave the late general a formal military burial.

7. Philip A. Crowl, Campaign in the Marianas, United States Army in World War II (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), pp. 264-265.

The number of these tragic deaths cannot be determined with accuracy. The two sites remain as hallowed ground, marked with imposing memorials dedicated to the dead of Japan, Okinawa, and Korea, and to peace.[8]

Isley Field

On June 22, while fighting raged elsewhere on Saipan, the first P-47 fighters of the Seventh Air Force set down on the former Aslito Field. Two additional squadrons and some P-61 Black Widow night fighters were soon on the island, completing the formation of the 318th Fighter Group. For the first time in the Pacific war, Maj. Gen. Willis Hale's Seventh Air Force had the mission of providing close support to ground troops. A Japanese soldier recorded his anguish on seeing the American planes over Saipan, "The enemy planes are taking off from ASLITO airfield, flying freely in the air; it's maddening to see them flying."[9]

In late July the airfield was sufficiently expanded to allow B-25 medium bombers to begin operations against Tinian and Guam. They were reinforced by the arrival of the B-24 heavy bombers of the 30th Bombardment Group. The 30th Group maintained its headquarters at the field, now renamed Isley, until late November, when it moved next door to Kobler Field to make room for B-29s at Isley.[10] Bombing raids were carried out over Iwo Jima and Chichi Jima north of Saipan and Truk and Yap to the south.

On November 2, the first Japanese air raid on Isley Field occurred when nine aircraft from Iwo Jima caused minor damage. Additional nuisance raids were carried out during the month until, on November 27, fifteen Japanese planes attacked, destroying three B-29s and damaging three others. By the time of

---

8. The pre-invasion civilian population of Saipan was estimated to have been between 24,800 and 30,000. In August 1944, 13,290 had been placed in camps. Almost half of them were children. Civil Affairs Officer to Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, September 22, 1944, U.S. Marine Corps World War II Records, WNRC.

9. Japanese soldier's diary, Report on Japanese Defense Plan, Saipan, Translations of Captured Japanese Documents, U.S. Marine Corps, World War II Records, WNRC.

10. Kobler Field, first known as Isley 2, was named in honor of Lt. Wayne F. Kobler, the Seventh Air Force's first pilot to lose his life in the Marianas when he was shot down over Tinian on June 27, 1944.

the last Japanese raid, in January 1945, eleven B-29 bombers had been destroyed at Isley Field.

One of the principal reasons for capturing the Marianas was to construct airfields for bombing Japan's cities and ports with the new B-29 Superfortress. On Saipan, army engineers rapidly constructed two 8,500-foot, asphalted runways at Isley in addition to the necessary taxiways, hardstands, and support facilities. The first B-29, "Joltin' Josie, The Pacific Pioneer," landed on October 12, 1944. Within a few weeks the entire 73d Bombardment Wing (12,000 personnel, 180 bombers), under the command of Brig. Gen. Emmett "Rosie" O'Donnell, had arrived. On November 24, General O'Donnell led 110 B-29s on their first raid, against a large aircraft manufacturing complex in Tokyo. This daylight, high-altitude, precision attack set the pattern for the next three months. Isley's B-29 raids continued against the Japanese aircraft industry in Tokyo, Nagoya, Yokohama, and Kobe. Early in 1945, additional B-29 fields were completed on Tinian and Guam and the tempo of the attacks increased. The first two-wing attack, from Saipan and Tinian, against Japan occurred on February 4, 1945. By then, the Army Air Force had concluded precision attacks were not succeeding. Despite 22 missions, nearly all from Isley Field, not one Japanese aircraft production complex had been destroyed. Moreover, losses of the big bombers had been high, rising to 5.7 percent of those airborne in January 1945.

The last daylight, high-altitude, precision attack on Japan, 192 planes, took place on March 4. By that time, Isley's Superfortresses had participated in 2,148 sorties and dropped the larger share of 5,398 tons of bombs on Japan.

Beginning in March, the bombers began a series of nighttime, low-altitude, incendiary attacks on Japan's urban areas. Isley's planes participated in the first of these when 15.8 square miles of Tokyo burned in what is regarded as the most devastating air attack of World War II, exceeding even the nuclear attacks in deaths and destruction. By June 1945, Japan's six most important industrial cities lay in ruins. Isley's bombers had participated in seventeen maximum-effort incendiary attacks that dropped 41,592 tons of bombs. Further incendiary raids were carried out over Japan until August when Japan agreed to unconditional surrender. In nine months of operations, the 73d Bombardment Wing flew 9,894 sorties, with a loss of 182 aircraft. The B-29 bombers did not themselves bring an end to the war, but they made a significant contribution toward a state of peace.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Landing Beaches

Acreage of nominated property 1,366 acres land and water

Quadrangle name Saipan

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 55 | 361610 | 167180 | B | 55 | 359530 | 167110 |
| C | 55 | 358310 | 167140 | D | 55 | 358460 | 167130 |
| E | 55 | 359810 | 167180 | F | | | |
| G | | | | H | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| state | code | county | code |

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erwin N. Thompson, Historian

organization Denver Service Center, NPS date July 1, 1984

street & number 755 Parfet Street telephone (303) 234-4509

city or town Lakewood state Colorado

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Aslito/Isley Field

Acreage of nominated property 1,453 acres

Quadrangle name Saipan

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 55 | 364 310 | 1672 900 | B | 55 | 364 770 | 1672 200 |
| C | 55 | 364 920 | 1671 570 | D | 55 | 364 030 | 1669 930 |
| E | 55 | 361 650 | 1670 370 | F | 55 | 361 540 | 1671 020 |
| G | 55 | 362 940 | 1673 190 | H | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title

organization date

street & number telephone

city or town state

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

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State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

## 10. Geographical Data

Marpi Point, Suicide Cliff, and Banzai Cliff

Acreage of nominated property 737 acres

Quadrangle name Saipan

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 55 | 372 860 | 1691 0210 |
| B | 55 | 374 140 | 1618 6110 |
| C | 55 | 370 300 | 1688 9910 |
| D | 55 | 371 918 0 | 1690 6150 |
| E | | | |
| F | | | |
| G | | | |
| H | | | |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

See continuation sheet.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title

organization date

street & number telephone

city or town state

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated *according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.*

*State Historic Preservation Officer signature*

title date

*For NPS use only*

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

### Landing Beaches

Starting at the southwest corner of the junction of Beach Road and an unnamed east-west road at Bench Mark 3.8; then south southwest along the ocean side of Beach Road to its junction with Wallace Highway; then in a straight line due west to the ocean beach; then generally south southwest along the beach on a line that separates the beach from firm land past the village of San Jose to an east-west dirt road that marks the northern boundary of Civic Center Park; then east along the dirt road to its junction with Beach Road at Bench Mark 3.2; then along the ocean side of Beach Road southwest 2,600 feet to its junction with a dirt road marking the southern boundary of Civic Center Park; then along the northeast side of the dirt road northwest to the beach; then generally south southwest on a line that separates the beach from firm land past Susupi, Chalan Kanoa, and San Antonio to Punta Afetna; then south southeast along the line that separates the beach from firm land to a point marking the northeast beginning of Putan Agingan; then projecting this line straight across Puntan Agingan to the ocean at Unai Dikike Agingan; then in a west northwest direction following the coast of Puntan Agingan to its western tip; then generally north northwest along the outer edge of the reefs past Lagunan Chalan Kanoa and Lagunan Garapan to a point on the reef due west of the starting point; then due east in a straight line to the point of beginning.

These boundaries encompass the reef and the lagoons that U.S. landing forces crossed in the invasion of Saipan; the portions of the landing beaches possessing integrity; and the surviving Japanese fortifications on Agingan.

### Aslito/Isley Field

Beginning at a point on the inside edge of a dirt road 2,000 feet due west from Bahai Laolao and 450 feet northeast of the most northeasterly B-29 hardstand at former Isley Field; then following the inside edge of this dirt road generally south southeast for 4,800 feet to its junction with another dirt road; then generally southwest 3,800 feet along the inside edge of a dirt road to its junction with a dirt road 300 feet southwest of the most southerly B-29 hardstand; then generally south along the west side of a dirt road to the water's edge at Unai Opyan so as to include the ruins of a Japanese blockhouse on the beach; then generally west along the shore of Saipan Channel to the western end of Unai Peo (Ladder Beach); then generally north along the east edge of a dirt road 2,000 feet to its junction with an east-west dirt road; then along the inside edge of a dirt road running east-west then generally northeast to its junction with Wallace Highway; then across Wallace Highway and continuing along the inside edge of the same dirt road east southeast then northeast to the point of beginning.

These boundaries encompass the following significant sites and structures at Japanese Aslito Field and American Isley Field: 73d Bombardment Wing administration area on the Opyan coast; Japanese blockhouse at Unai Opyan; B-29 taxiways, hardstands, and the two modified runways at Isley Field; and the Japanese reinforced-concrete structures of Aslito Field.

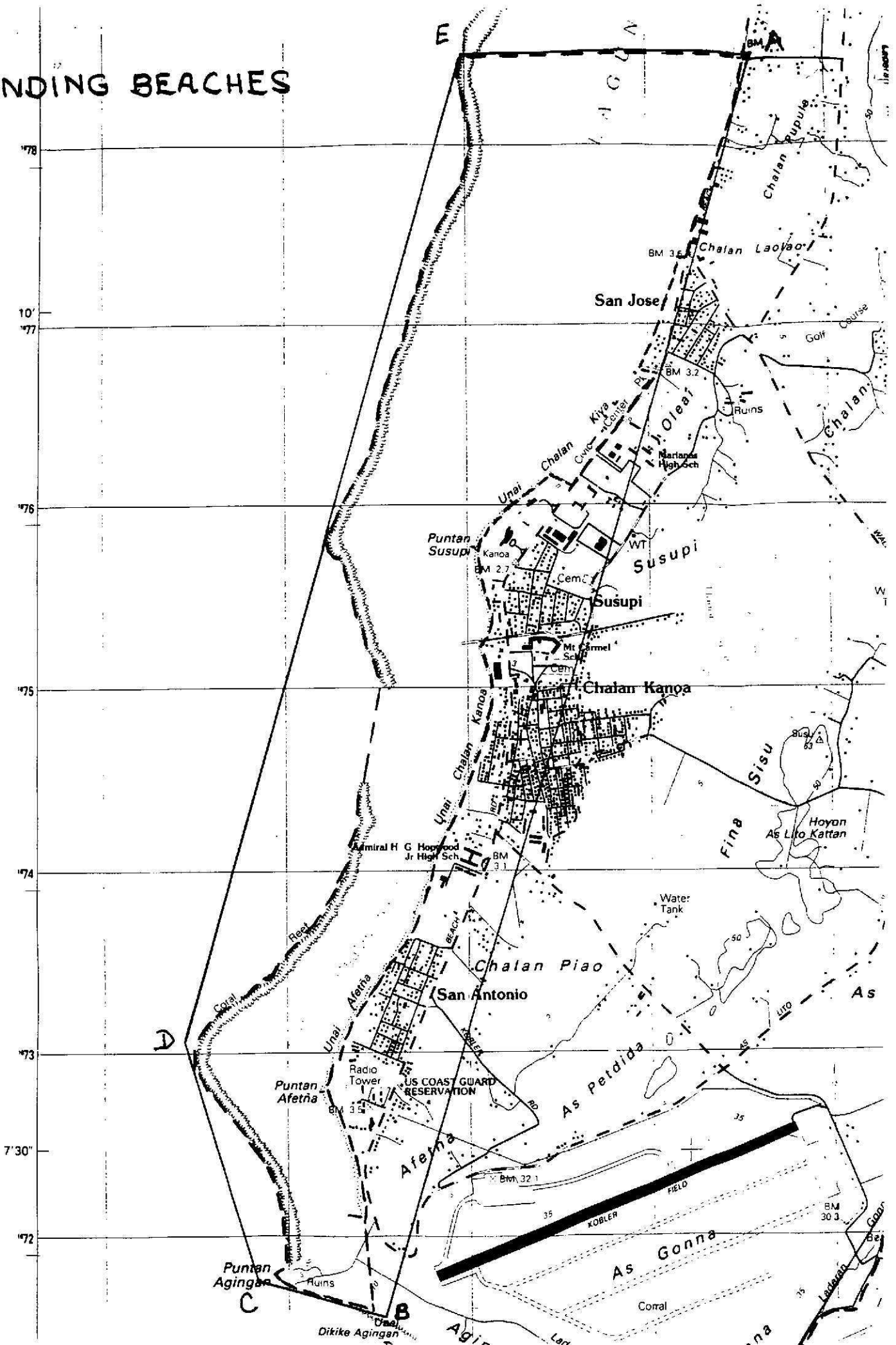
Excluded are the modern air terminal, its parking area, and water reservoirs.

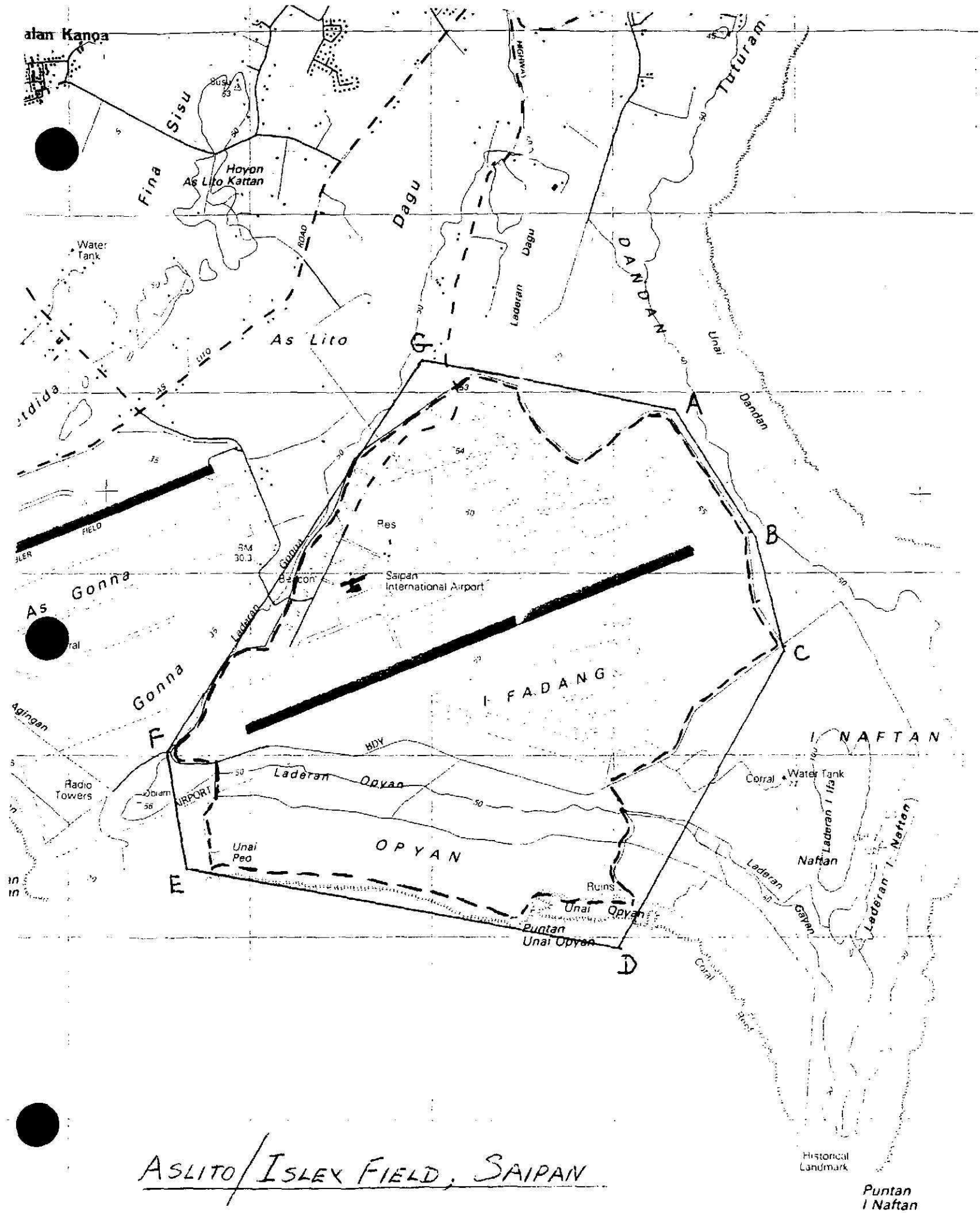
Marpi Point

Beginning at the northern tip of Puntan Laggua Kattan then southeast following the coast to the tip of Puntan Laggua; then west northwest in a straight line to the summit of Suicide Cliff or Laderan Banaderu; then generally west in a straight line to a point on the ocean shore immediately north of Puntan Makpe; then generally northeast along the ocean shore to the tip of Puntan Sabaneta; then along the ocean shore generally southeast past Banzai Cliff to the point of beginning.

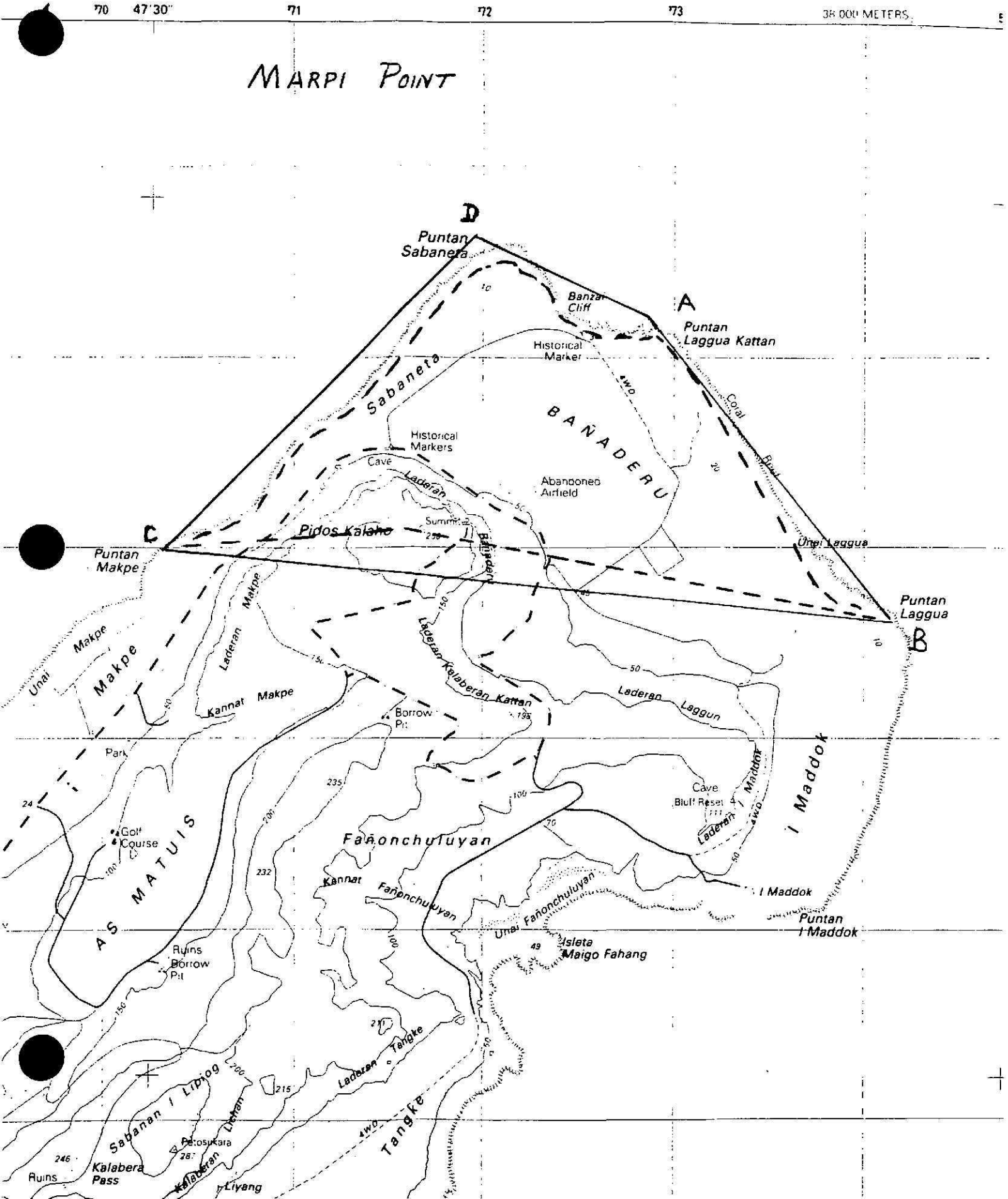
These boundaries include the following historically significant sites and structures: Suicide Cliff and its several memorials on the summit and at its base; Banzai Cliff; former Marpi Field; a Japanese fortification known as "the last command post," and a coastal pillbox on the northwest shoulder of Puntan Laggua.

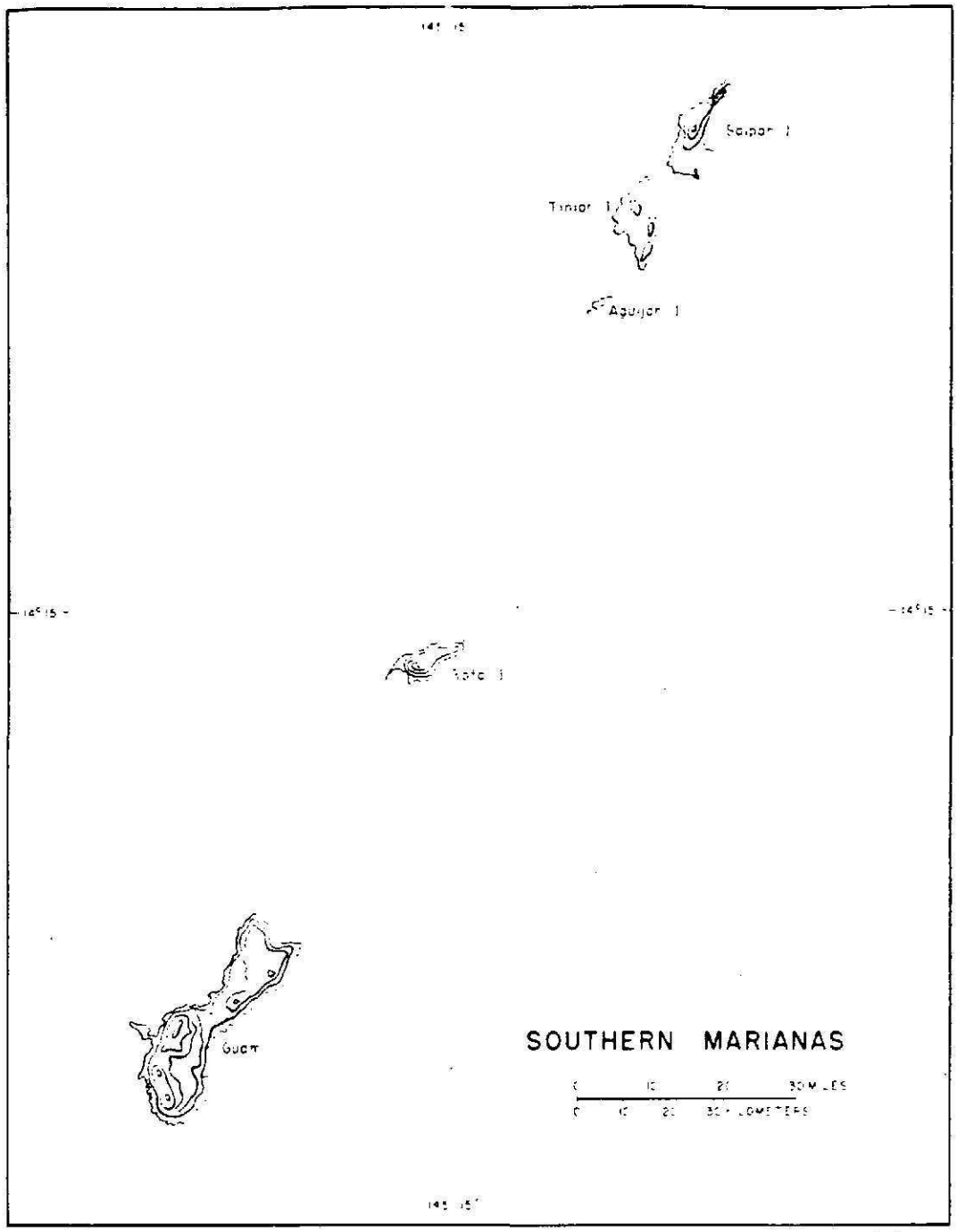
# LANDING BEACHES





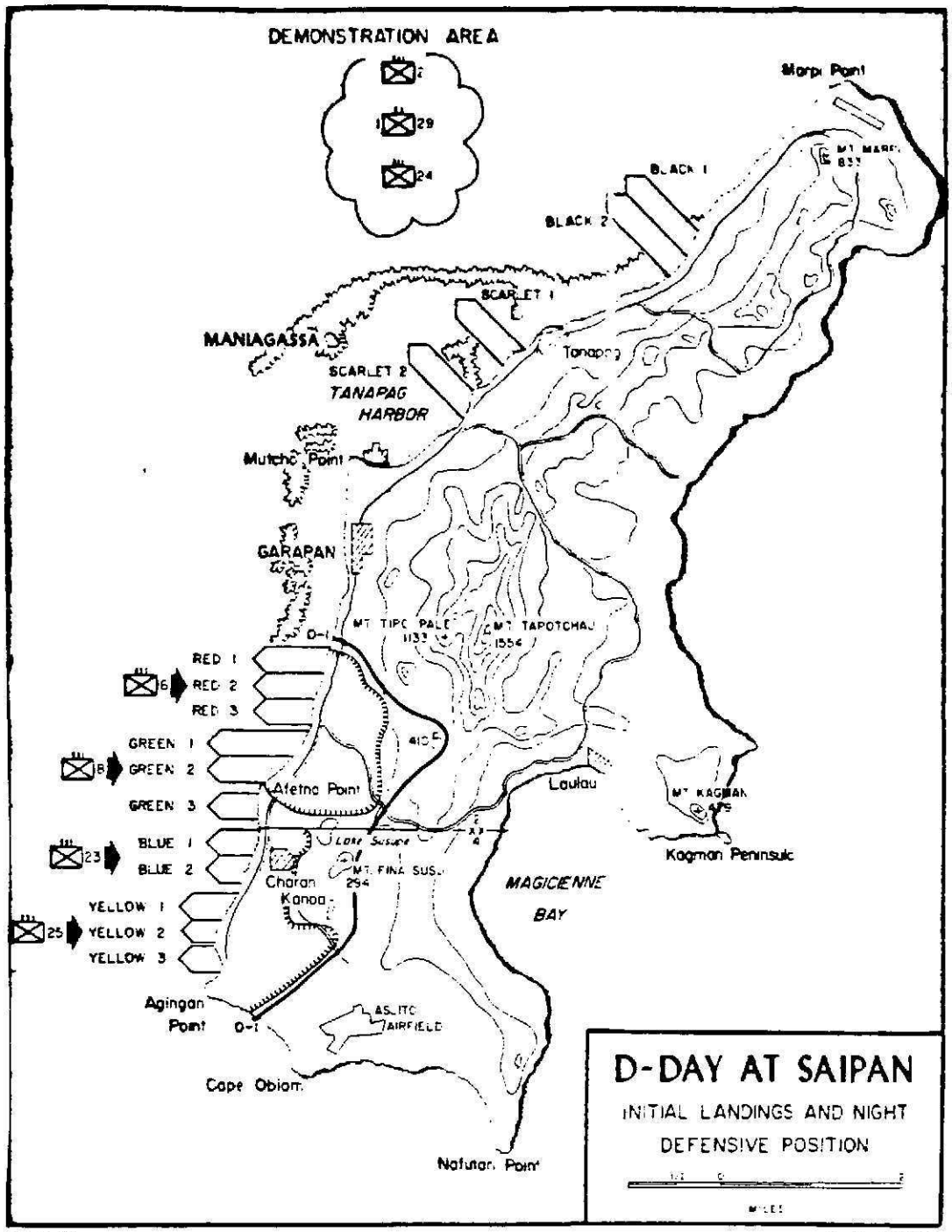

ASLITO/ISLEY FIELD, SAIPAN


70 47'30"
71
72
73
38 000 METERS
MARPI POINT
D
Puntan Sabanera
Banzai Cliff
A
Puntan Laggua Kattan
Historical Marker
Sabaneta
BAÑADERU
Coral Road
Historical Markers
Cave
Laderan
Abandoned Airfield
Pidos Kalaho
C
Puntan Makpe
Unai Laggua
Puntan Laggua
B
Unai Makpe
Makpe
Laderan Makpe
Laderan Kalaberan Kattan
Laderan Laggun
Kannat Makpe
Borrow Pit
Park
Golf Course
AS MATUIS
Cave
Bluff Reset
Laderan Maddok
I Maddok
Fañonchuluyan
Kannat Fañonchuluyan
Unai Fañonchuluyan
I Maddok
Puntan I Maddok
Isleta Maigo Fahang
Ruins Borrow Pit
Laderan Tangke
Sabanan I Liptog
Laderan Liehan
Petosukara
Kalabera Pass
Ruins
Kalaberan Liyang
Tangke



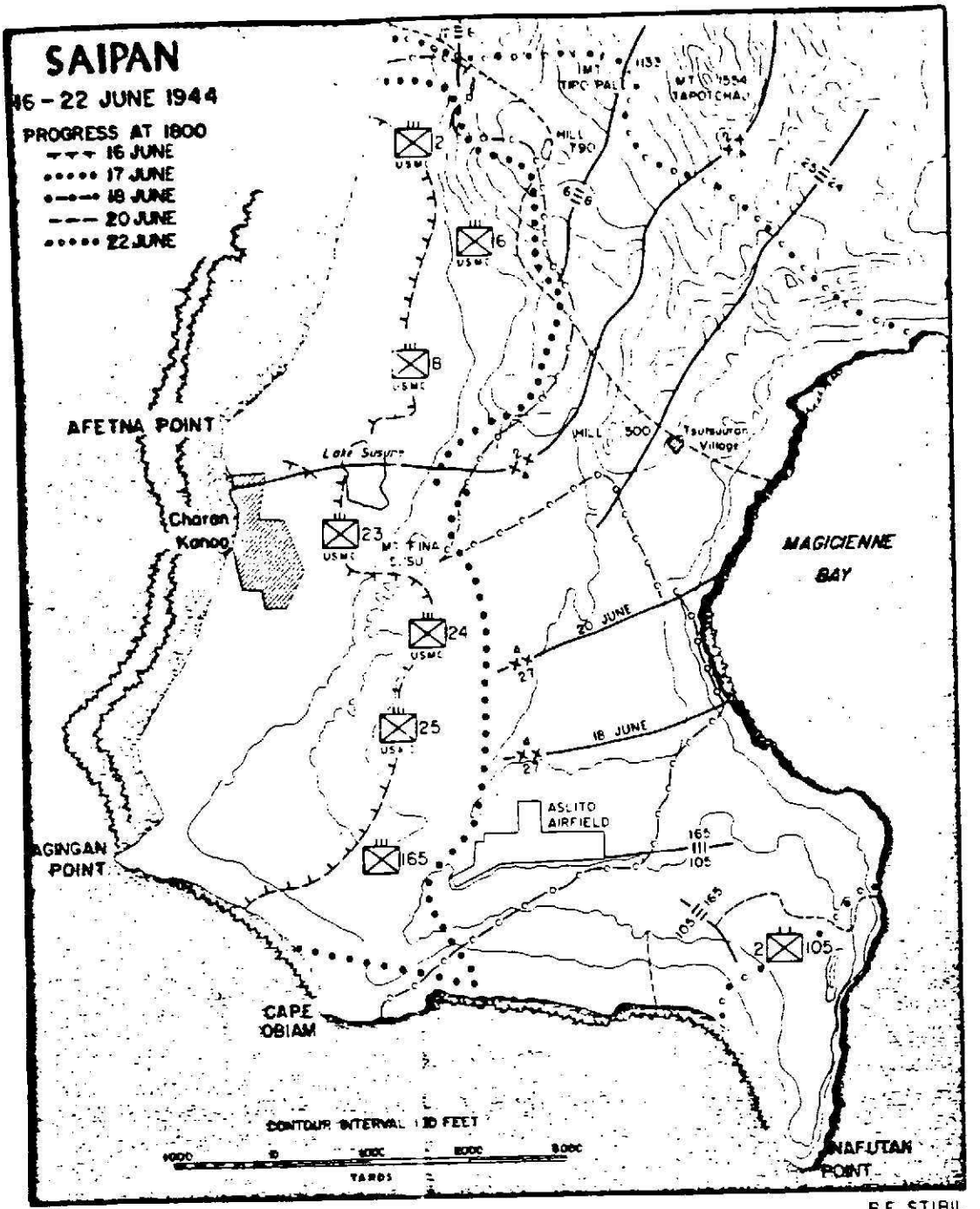

*MAP 2*

FROM CROWL, CAMPAIGN IN THE MARIANAS




MAP 16 R. F. STIBIL

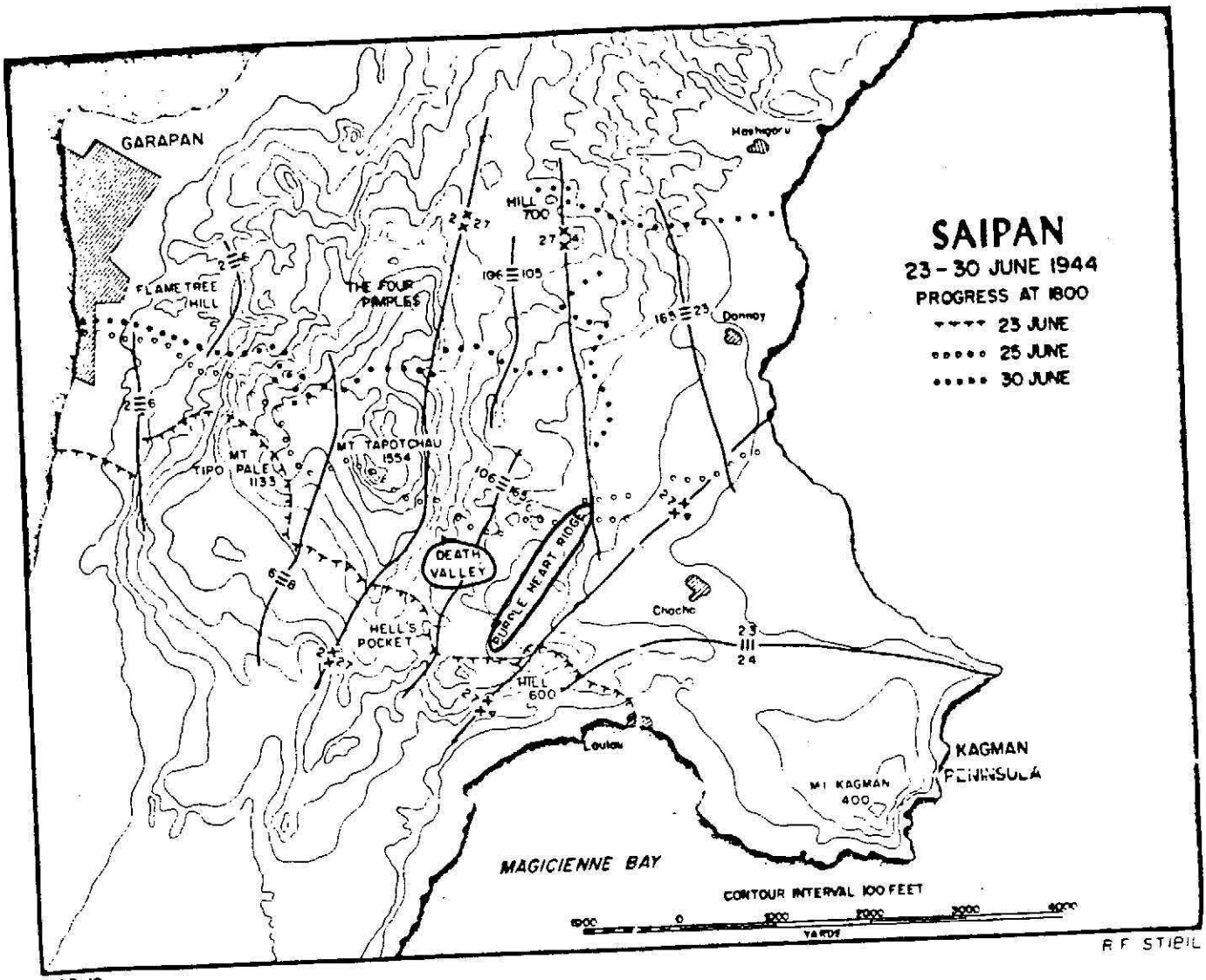
FROM SHAW, ET AL, CENTRAL PACIFIC DRIVE




MAP 17

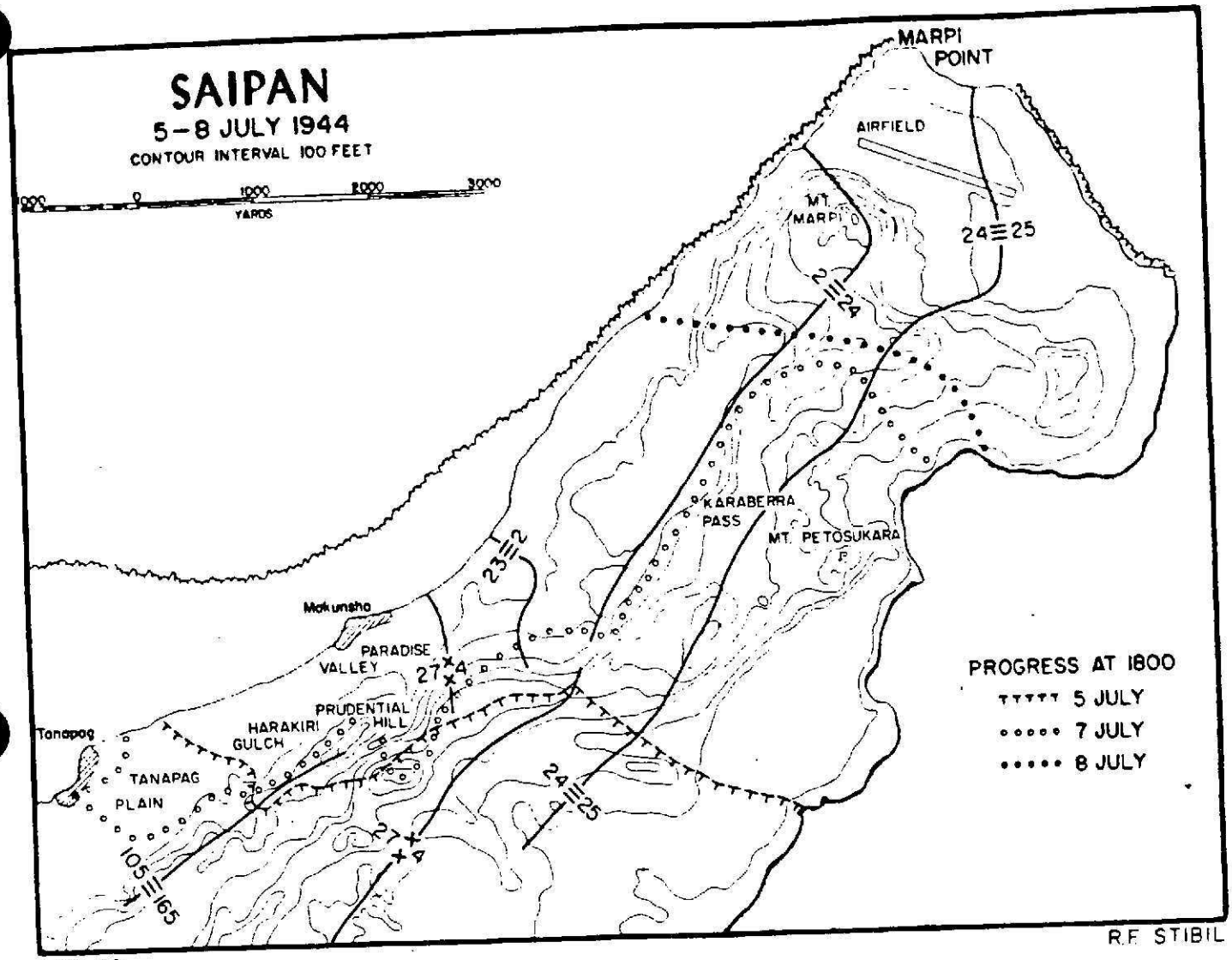
R.F. STIBIL

FROM SHAW, ET AL, CENTRAL PACIFIC DRIVE




MAP 18

FROM SHAW, ET AL, CENTRAL PACIFIC DRIVE

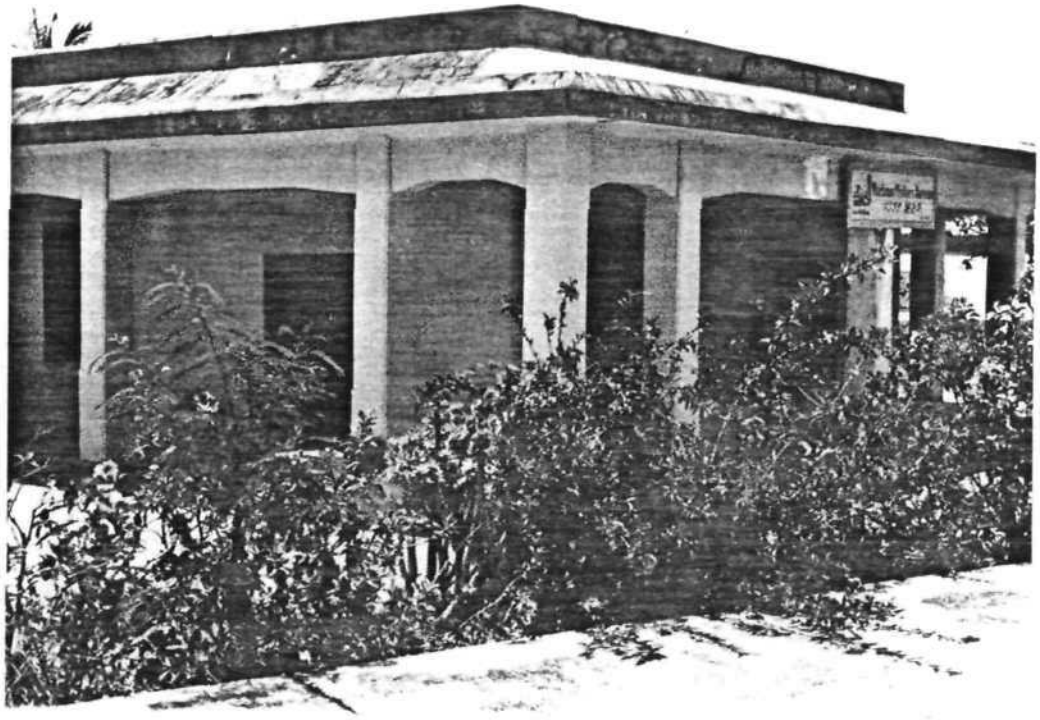



MAP 20

FROM SHAW, ET AL, CENTRAL PACIFIC DRIVE

8. Japanese circular blockhouse at Beach White 2, southern Saipan. Two of its four gun embrasures appear in the photo.

Photo by E.N. Thompson March 1983



5. Japanese air operations building at Aslito Field today. Americans used the structure for the same purpose. The building has been restored and a tourist bureau has its office here.

Photo by E.N. Thompson March 1983

6. Isley Field, ca. 1945. B-29 bombers are lined up on a runway. The other runway remains clear for operations. Beyond the hardstands and taxiways, in the upper left corner, is a small part of the Seventy-third Bombardment Wing's administrative area.

Courtesy, Smithsonian Institution and U.S. Air Force

4. Smashed Japanese aircraft and buildings at Aslito Field, Saipan. None of the hangars remains. 1944.

Courtesy, Defense Audiovisual Agency

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

NHL — WWII, PACIFIC

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

**United States Department of the Interior**
**National Park Service**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Tinian Landing Beaches, Ushi Point Field, and North Field, Tinian Island

and or common North Field Historic District

## 2. Location

street & number ___ not for publication

city, town Tinian Island ___ vicinity of

state Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands code 75 county Mariana Islands code 010

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ district | X public | ___ occupied | ___ agriculture | ___ museum |
| X building(s) | ___ private | X unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| X structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| X site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | ___ yes: restricted | ___ government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | X yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ no | X military | X other: none |

## 4. Owner of Property

name Government of the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands

street & number

city, town Saipan ___ vicinity of Mariana Islands state

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Government of the Northern Mariana Islands

street & number Lands and Survey Division

city, town Saipan state Mariana Islands

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title North Field Historic District has this property been determined eligible? X yes ___ no

date August 23, 1982 X federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records National Register of Historic Places

city, town Washington state D.C.

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| ___ excellent | ___ deteriorated | X unaltered | X original site |
| ___ good | ___ ruins | ___ altered | ___ moved date |
| ___ fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The northern end of Tinian Island is relatively flat land having an elevation of about 75 feet above sea level. Before the 1944 battle this area, other than two airfields, was a checkerboard of sugar cane fields. Nearly all the coastline is sheer coral-limestone cliffs dropping into the ocean. On the northwest coast are three breaks in this cliff where small sandy beaches have formed. The most northerly of these, Unai Lamlam, has no historical significance. During the 1944 invasion of Tinian by U.S. Marines the two southern beaches were code-named Beaches White 1 and 2. They are about 1,000 yards apart. Beach White 1 (Unai Babui) is sixty yards wide. At either end of it are low coral ledges which are exceedingly sharp and uneven. Southwest is Beach White 2 (Unai Chulu) which is 120 yards in width. A small coral reef extends about 100 yards from the shore. At each end of the beach are coral ledges and perpendicular coral cliffs. Inland from Beach White 2 is a Japanese reinforced-concrete pillbox in fair condition. It is one of two that the Marines encountered when landing. Thick vegetation smothers the ground inland.[1]

The Japanese constructed an excellent military airfield toward the northern end of Tinian, Ushi Point (Puntan Tahgong). Nothing remains of the runway or taxiways at Ushi Point Field; but a concrete aircraft service apron and four structures remain from the Japanese period. These features are north of the western end of the northernmost B-29 runway. The concrete apron measures 750 by 300 feet. Weeds grow in cracks, but the apron is relatively intact. North of the apron is the large, two-story, T-shaped air administration building. It suffered some damage during the battle, particularly a large bomb hole in the roof. The building is of standard Japanese design and is similar to structures on Peleliu Island and at Truk Atoll.[2] In addition to administrative offices and a power plant, the building contained the quarters of senior air officers on the second floor. The finely decorated stairway to this floor remains as do bath and toilet facilities. To the rear of the structure are three, large concrete cisterns.

At the southeast corner of the apron, the concrete air operations building, minus its control tower, is in good condition. Even the exterior steel rungs for access to the roof are in place. It is identical to operations buildings on Saipan and Roi islands. The Americans used it as their operations center after

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1. By coincidence, the Japanese people on Tinian also called these popular swimming places the White Beaches before the war. Henry I. Shaw, Jr., Bernard C. Nalty, and Edwin T. Turnbladh, Central Pacific Drive, History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations In World War II, vol. 3 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 358.

2. The writer has not seen the structure at Truk. The information is from D. Colt Denfeld, "Survey of Peleliu," draft, Historic Preservation Office, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Saipan.

the capture of Tinian. Stretching along the west side of the apron are two standard-design air raid shelters, also in good condition. These features of the Japanese field are surrounded by a forest of tangantangan, isolating them from the later American field. (Another Japanese runway a short distance to the south was destroyed during construction of American North Field.)

Once the capture of Tinian was completed, U.S. Navy Seabees began the construction of North Field in this area. When completed, North Field was the largest airfield in the Pacific, perhaps in the world. Designed for a wing of B-29 bombers (Superforts), the four parallel runways stretch east and west for 8,500 feet. Around and between the runways are nearly eleven miles of taxiways. Hardstands were constructed for 265 bombers. Two large asphalt service aprons exist. The asphalt runways are in relatively good condition, the northernmost (Runway 1 or A) apparently being maintained for periodic training exercises that are conducted on northern Tinian by the U.S. Department of Defense. No American quonsets or other buildings remain in the area.

North of the northern runway and the Japanese structures is a special, asphalted service apron. Here, the two B-29 bombers, Enola Gay and Boch's Car, were loaded with the first atomic bombs to be used in warfare. Because the bombs were too large to be placed under the planes for loading, a special pit was built for each weapon. Once the bombs were in the pits, the bombers simply moved over them and the bombs were raised into the bays. Both pits have been filled with earth and landscaped. In front of each is a bronze historical plaque mounted on a concrete pedestal. The setting is simple, but awesome.

After the battle, Seabees developed a large port at Tinian Town (San Jose) in southwest Tinian Island. To speed the delivery of supplies and munitions to the airfields, the Seabees built two north-south highways, Eighth Avenue (2 lanes) and Broadway (4 lanes).[3] At their northern terminuses, both roads ended in traffic circles. Both circles exist and the one at the end of Broadway contains a prewar Japanese memorial.

The historically significant area of northern Tinian contains the following historic features:

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3. Because Tinian is shaped much like Manhattan, the Americans named their roads after New York City's streets: Riverside Drive, 72d Street, Wall Street, etc.

Landing Beaches White 1 and 2
Japanese pillbox at Beach White 2
Japanese service apron, air administartion building, air operations building, and two air raid shelters of former Ushi Point Field
North Field: four B-29 runways, taxiways, two service aprons, and various dirt roads around the airfield
Two traffic circles, one with a Japanese memorial

West of the field is a small lake or pond. While it in itself is not historic, the only major Japanese counterattack of the battle, an attack that cost the Japanese dearly, was mounted in its vicinity. Thus, this general area is also considered significant. Northern Tinian also contains the sites of four former American antiaircraft batteries and four administrative areas for American aircraft service groups on the west, north, and east sides. There are no known above-ground features at these sites. No known non-historic structures are within the recommended boundaries.

Northern Tinian is public domain owned by the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. It is leased to the U.S. Department of Defense and is administered by the U.S. Navy.

Tinian Place Names

| 1944 | Traditional Chamorro Place Names |
|---|---|
| Asiga Bay | Unai Asiga |
| Beach White 1 | Unai Babui |
| Beach White 2 | Unai Chulu |
| Fabius San Hilo Pt. | Puntan Lananibot Sankilo |
| Gurgan Pt. | Puntan Diapblo |
| Lalo Pt. | Puntan Carolinas |
| Marpo Pt. | Puntan Kastiyu |
| Masalog Pt. | Puntan Masalok |
| Mt. Lasso | Lasu |
| Mt. Maga | Maga |
| Southern ridge | Carolinas and Kastiyu |
| Sunharon Harbor | Tinian Harbor |
| Tinian Town | San Jose |
| Ushi Pt. | Puntan Tahgong |

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1944-1945 **Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The capture of Tinian in the summer of 1944 by U.S. Marines was significant for several reasons. By selecting almost impossibly small landing beaches, the Marines confused Japanese commanders and established a beachhead at little cost in lives. Despite the narrow beaches (a total of 180 yards in width), two Marine divisions succeeded brilliantly in a difficult amphibious operation. Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith, USMC, called this "the perfect amphibious operation in the Pacific war."[1] In the first night of the battle, the Japanese employed their usual tactic of attempting to destroy the enemy on the beach. It was a fatal effort for it cost them up to 2,000 lives, including some of their best infantry troops. Future battles would see Japanese defenses arranged in depth, inflicting heavier casualties on the enemy.

Tinian's topography provided the U.S. Army Air Force with a superb platform for constructing two long-range B-29 bomber airfields, including North Field, the largest airfield in the Pacific and perhaps in the world during World War II. From Tinian's six runways, as well as from bases on Saipan and Guam, armadas of B-29s raided and destroyed Japanese cities and towns in the homeland, shipping in Japan's coastal waters, petroleum supplies, and industrial plants. Finally, B-29s Enola Gay and Boch's Car flew from Tinian's North Field to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, thus bringing a conclusion to World War II and changing forever the course of world events.

Japanese Tinian

During the Spanish regime, Tinian Island was virtually depopulated through disease, rebellion, and forced removal of the Chamorros. After Germany purchased most of Micronesia from Spain in 1899, the island continued to be uninhabited. Japan's seizure of Micronesia in World War I brought a great change to Tinian as Japanese citizens arrived to develop a sugar industry. By World War II, Tinian had a civilian population of 15,000 Japanese and Koreans. Fifty-eight percent of the island's thirty-nine square miles was planted with sugar cane. Two sugar cane mills were in operation and an extensive system of narrow-gauge railroad covered the island. Early in 1944, as Allied pressure grew in the Pacific, the Japanese removed from 3,000 to 5,000 civilians to

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1. Holland M. Smith and Percy Finch. Coral and Brass (Washington: Zenger, 1948, reprint 1979), p. 201.

Japan. The rest, however, were caught up in the American invasion in July 1944.[2]

By the summer of 1944, Tinian's naval and army garrisons amounted to 8,350 personnel. The principal defense unit was the 4,000-man 50th Infantry Regiment commanded by Col. Keishi Ogata. Naval air personnel amounted to 2,100. The 56th Naval Guard Force of 1,100 men manned coastal defense and antiaircraft guns. Another 1,000 men composed the 233d Construction Battalion. Captain Goichi Oya commanded the naval forces, even though Vice Adm. Kakuji Kakuda, commander of the First Air Fleet, was the senior naval officer on the island.[3] As in other Pacific areas, there was little cooperation between the army and navy commanders.

Colonel Ogata surmised that the Americans would attempt a landing either at the beaches at Tinian Town on the southwest coast or at Asiga Bay on the island's east coast. He established strong defenses at both. He did not entirely neglect the White Beaches in the northwest. The larger beach was mined and pillboxes could deliver a crossfire on the beach. The smaller White Beach had few defenses. Who would attempt a landing on a 60-yard-wide stretch of sand?

American Plans and People

The U.S. Marines' assault on Tinian was considered to be Phase III of Operation FORAGER which began with the capture of Saipan (Phase I) and the battle for the liberation of Guam (Phase II) which was raging even as the Marines approached Tinian. Under the overall command of Adm. Chester W. Nimitz at Pearl Harbor, Adm. Raymond A. Spruance led the Fifth Fleet toward the Marianas. Vice Adm. Richmond K. Turner, as commander of the Joint Expeditionary Force, was responsible for both the Northern Attack Force (Task Force 52, Saipan and Tinian) and the Southern Attack Force (Task Force 53, Guam). He had relinquished direct control of the Northern Attack Force by the time of the Tinian invasion to Rear Adm. Harry W. Hill. Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith, USMC (still in command of Expeditionary Troops), was off Guam with Admiral Turner. Maj. Gen. Harry Schmidt, USMC, had recently taken over the Fifth Amphibious Corps which consisted of his old command, the battle-hardened

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2. The nearly 1,000 Chamorros on Tinian today moved there from Yap Island after World War II. They had migrated to Yap from Guam in the late 1800s where both Germans and Japanese employed them as copra traders and workers.

3. Admiral Kakuda led the air attack on Dutch Harbor and Fort Mears in the Aleutians in 1942. Apparently, he had a problem with alcohol by 1944. See Frank O. Hough, The Island War, The United States Marine Corps in the Pacific (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1947), pp. 254-255.

Fourth Marine Division, now under Maj. Gen. Clifton B. Gates, and the experienced Second Marine Division, still commanded by Maj. Gen. Thomas E. Watson. Both divisions had fought throughout the Saipan campaign and had continued to mop up that island until their departure for Tinian. The invasion of Tinian, J-Day, was set for July 24, 1944.

Bombardment

The first fast carrier strike on the Marianas occurred on February 23, 1944, when the planes of six carriers under Rear Adm. Marc A. Mitscher bombed Saipan, Tinian, Rota, and Guam. From June 11 to 15, 1944, Mitscher returned to the attack with four fast carrier groups (15 carriers) accompanied by battleships, cruisers, and destroyers. This attack reduced Japanese air strength in the Marianas to near zero. By mid-July no fewer than fifteen battalions of field artillery under Brig. Gen. Arthur M. Harper, USA, on southern Saipan were sending thunder toward northern Tinian. Naval ships began bombarding Tinian as early as June 13. As the invasion date neared the Navy's fire intensified, virtually demolishing Tinian Town. The Army's P-47 fighters and B-24 bombers on Saipan joined the attack even before that island was subdued. These planes were the first in the war to experiment in combat with the new napalm fire bomb, burning out cane fields and underbrush on Tinian. On J-minus-one, July 23, army and carrier planes, field artillery, and naval gunfire blasted Tinian.

Invasion

At daybreak, July 24, elements of the Second Marine Division, supported by aircraft and warships, carried out a deception off Tinian Town. Battleship Colorado supported the ruse with neutralizing fire. Suddenly, a concealed Japanese battery of three 6-inch guns opened fire and scored 22 direct hits on Colorado and destroyer Norman Scott. A total of 53 sailors and Marines were killed and 207 wounded.[4] Meanwhile, the Fourth Marine Division made the real landing at Beaches White.

At 7:47 a.m., July 24, the first Marines of the 24th Regiment touched shore at Beach White 1. The regiment landed in a column of battalions with the 2d Battalion leading. A small force of Japanese opened fire and mortar and artillery fell on the beach area. The Marines pushed ahead and within an hour two battalions were abreast and moving rapidly. The 24th Regiment's right reached its first objective, the edge of the runway south of Ushi Point Field,

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4. Colorado had been in drydock at Puget Sound when the Japanese struck at Pearl Harbor. She survived this attack and was in Tokyo Bay for Japan's surrender. Mothballed in 1947, the ship was scrapped in 1959.

1,400 yards inland, by 4:00 p.m. A stubborn group of Japanese halted the regiment's left flank 400 yards short of its objective.

Beach White 2 was more difficult. Because of mines in the sand, the first units of the 25th Regiment had to jump or climb from the craft to the ragged coral ledges at the ends of the beach. Japanese defenses were more extensive in this area, yet the Marines forged ahead, bypassing two pillboxes that commanded the beach. The 25th Marines halted short of their first objective in late afternoon and dug in for the anticipated Japanese counterattack. Division commander Cates ordered the 23d Marines ashore as a reserve. Also on shore was a battalion of the 8th Marines, Second Division, making a total of 15,600 combat Marines who had landed on two handfulls of sand in less than twelve hours.

Counterattack

The Fourth Marine Division dug in along a 3,000-yard-wide beachhead, 24th Marines on the left (north), 25th Marines in the center, and 23d Marines on the right (south). Beginning at 2:00 a.m., July 25, Colonel Ogata's forces began a counterattack to drive the enemy into the sea. In the north some 600 naval troops from Ushi Point Field engaged in a firefight with the 24th Marines, striking hardest at the extreme left near the coastline. For three hours the Japanese attempted unsuccessfully to break through the invaders' lines. At dawn, the 24th Marines counted 476 enemy dead.

Ogata's crack infantry troops assaulted the center of Marine lines near the boundary of the 24th and 25th regiments. The first attack was thrown back, but the Japanese regrouped and pressed forward again. About 200 of them broke through the lines. Half of them headed toward the Marines' artillery positions near the beach. The artillerymen opened up their machine guns and, aided by a company from the 8th Marines, wiped out the attackers. The other group of Japanese infantrymen got behind the 25th Marines' positions where machine gun and mortar fire quickly eliminated them. This attack on the center cost the Japanese 500 lives.

The 23d Marines on the south faced an attack from a combined infantry-tank force. Five light tanks, nearly half of Ogata's armor strength, rumbled up the coastal road. All five were destroyed by Marine fire but not before three of them broke through the 23d's front. Japanese infantry continued to fight desperately but, by dawn, the attack exhausted itself. Marines counted 267 enemy dead. All told, the Japanese lost 15 percent of their personnel strength and 50 percent of their armor in this costly attempt to defeat the enemy on the

beaches.[5] Although more fighting lay ahead, General Gates concluded that his division had broken the enemy's back on its first night ashore on Tinian.[6]

Tinian Won

The Second Marine Division completed landing on Beaches White 1 and 2 on July 25 and 26, its 8th Marines taking over the extreme left (north) of the front. By the evening of the 25th, the Marines had advanced to Ushi Point Field in the north and had taken Mt. Maga in the south.

The Second Division swept to Tinian's east coast on July 26, then turned south. On the west, the Fourth Division captured Mt. Lasso, Tinian's highest point. Seabees began repairing the airfield for fighters.

Resistance remained light as the Marines advanced southward, indicating that the Japanese were withdrawing. On July 30, the 24th Marines entered the wrecked and deserted Tinian Town. Beyond the town, an oblong-shaped plateau, over 500 feet in elevation, formed the southern and southeastern end of Tinian. In the center a twisting road led to the top of the tree-covered plateau. A vertical cliff dropped into the sea on the eastern side. The slopes were more gentle at the southwest end of the plateau where they formed three distinct terraces. The Japanese prepared to make this high ground their last stand.

In the morning of July 31, an American naval and aerial bombardment blasted the plateau with 684 tons of explosives. A naval gunfire officer wrote, "Observers report that this was probably the most intense and effectively controlled bombardment executed thus far in the Pacific."[7] Following the bombardment, the Second Division moved forward on the left toward the base of the cliff, encountering sniper fire as it advanced. Large numbers of civilians began surrendering, interferring with the Marines' progress. In the afternoon elements of the 8th Marines reached the top of the plateau via the heavily defended road. During the night the Japanese attempted, in vain, to cut the

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5. The official Marine Corps history states that 1,241 Japanese died in the counterattack. General H.M. Smith thought the number was closer to 2,000. Other accounts offer different figures.

6. G-3, Fourth Marine Division, Operations Report, Tinian, U.S. Marine Corps, World War II Records, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD, hereinafter cited as WNRC.

7. Lt. C.S. Corben to Commanding General, Northern Troops and Landing Force, August 12, 1944, U.S. Marine Corps Records, World War II, WNRC.

road; and before dawn, August 1, 750 of them made a banzai attack on the Marines on the plateau. An hour-long firefight resulted in 74 casualties in the 8th Marines and 200 Japanese dead.

During July 31, the Fourth Division also succeeded in placing Marines on the plateau. Meanwhile, a wide gap had developed between the two divisions, a gap the Japanese were not able to exploit. The division expanded its hold on the plateau on the following day and reconnoitered the terraces on the ocean side. Progress was again slowed by crowds of Japanese and Korean civilians emerging from caves to surrender. Some, however, preferred suicide. That evening, General Schmidt announced that Tinian had been secured.

Fighting continued. The Japanese made several more banzai attacks for several days as Marines went about the dangerous task of mopping up Tinian. In a final accounting, the two divisions' casualties amounted to 355 killed, 1,550 wounded, and 27 missing in action. More than 5,500 Japanese troops lost their lives, while 404 were taken prisoner. More than 13,000 civilians, mostly Japanese, were interned on Tinian until the end of the war.

North Field

While fighting on Tinian continued, the Navy's Seabees began the repair and extension of the two Japanese runways in the north. Because of the relative flatness of the terrain, Tinian had already been selected as the site for an advanced air base to serve very-long-range B-29 bombers which required 8,500-foot-long runways. The north end of the island had a capacity for four of these runways as well as an extensive network of taxiways, service aprons, and hardstands (aircraft parking). Eventually, the 6th Naval Construction Brigade was formed on Tinian, and work proceeded at a feverish pace.

The Japanese runway at Ushi Point Field became the basis for runway 1, the most northerly of the four, which was completed and asphalted January 1. 1945.[8] The Japanese runway south of Ushi Field was extended to become runway 3 and was completed two weeks later. Strip 2, between runways 1 and 3, was in operation on February 27; but runway 4 was not completed until May 5, 1945.

While North Field was under construction, the XXI Bomber Command's first B-29 raid on Japan flew from Saipan on October 24, beginning three months of

8. The first B-29 landed on this runway on December 22, 1944.

daylight, high-altitude, precision attacks from the Marianas.[9] At the end of December 1944, the B-29s of the 313th Bombardment Wing (VH) began arriving at North Field (12,000 personnel, 180 aircraft). One month later, 122 of the big bombers had arrived. Meanwhile, the daylight precision raids on Japanese aircraft industries were proving disappointing. Relatively little damage was inflicted on the plants, and losses of the big, expensive planes were greater than expected. Maj. Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, who took command of XXI Bomber Command on January 20, decided to conduct a nighttime incendiary raid to test its effectiveness. On February 25, 231 Superforts lifted off at Saipan, Tinian, and the new North Field on Guam en route to Tokyo. The test proved most effective and almost 30,000 of Tokyo's buildings were destroyed. In March, the XXI Bomber Command began a series of incendiary attacks on a number of Japanese cities. Tinian's B-29s participated in all of them. The most terrible of these was an attack on Tokyo that burned 15.8 square miles of the city, killing almost 84,000 people and injuring 44,000 more in "perhaps the most scathing air attack of the whole war."[10] By mid-June, Japan's six most important industrial cities lay in ruins. In seventeen major incendiary attacks, 6,960 B-29s dropped 41,592 tons of bombs with few losses to themselves.

The 313th Wing at North Field received a special assignment in March 1945--aerial mining of Japanese waters. The bombers made their first attack between March 27 and April 1. Over 100 Superforts laid 1,500 mines in Shimonosaki Strait between Kyushu and Honshu islands. Japanese antiaircraft fire destroyed three of the planes. By the end of April, 18 Japanese ships had been sunk and shipping in general was disrupted. Mines forced the great battleship Yamato, heading a task force during the battle for Okinawa, to put to sea via Bungo Strait, thus leading to her destruction. In May alone, mines sank 85 ships. U.S. submarines, aircraft, and the 313th Wing's mines combined to force Japan to close most of its ports to shipping by the end of July. Japan lost 478,000 tons of shipping in that month. In addition, the 313th Wing dropped millions of leaflets urging the Japanese people to surrender before starving.

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9. The XX Bomber Command had already been established in India and, staging through China, was also bombing Japan. In 1945, both commands were disbanded and the XXI Bomber Command became the Twentieth Air Force, a component of U.S. Strategic Air Forces. Headquarters were on Guam, and five wings carried out raids from Guam, Tinian, and Saipan.

10. Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds., The Pacific: Matterhorn to Nagasaki, June 1944 to August 1945. The Army Air Forces In World War II, vol. 5 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 614-617.

Atomic Bombs

On May 19, 1945, a new, secretive organization began arriving at North Field, the 1,767-man 509th Composite Group headed by Col. Paul W. Tibbets, Jr. Tight security was provided the group which occupied a former Seabee camp--to the discomfort of the navy men. Likewise, the group's stripped-down B-29s were closely guarded. Because the 509th Group did not take part in the raids on Japan, airmen of the 313th Wing ridiculed the newcomers, even to the extent of stoning the encampment. Meanwhile, the 509th pilots practiced special flying techniques (only Tibbets knew why), mostly over Japanese-held Rota Island and Truk Atoll. Beginning July 20, the group began flying over Japan to familiarize itself with targets and tactics. About that time, cruiser Indianapolis arrived at Tinian bearing uranium 235.[11]

At 2:45 a.m., August 6, Enola Gay[12] left runway 1 at North Field on its historic mission. At 8:15 a.m. the plane dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Seconds later, 80,000 people were dead or mortally wounded; 62,000 buildings were destroyed. Enola Gay returned to Tinian at 2:58 p.m. The world would never be the same.

On August 9, Maj. Charles W. Sweeney, in Bock's Car, dropped a second bomb on Nagasaki, nasty weather having prevented his attacking the primary target, Kokura. Low on fuel, Sweeney was forced to land at the new American base on Okinawa. Before he was able to return to North Field, Tinian, President Harry S Truman announced Japan's unconditional surrender.

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11. A Japanese submarine sank Indianapolis a few days later, with a fearsome loss of life.

12. Tibbets flew in the B-29 assigned to Capt. Robert Lewis who was present as copilot. Before takeoff, Tibbets had his mother's name, Enola Gay, painted on the aircraft, much to Lewis' annoyance.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

*Acreage of nominated property* 3,080 acres

Quadrangle name Tinian

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 55 | 354120 | 1669400 | B | 55 | 355470 | 1668180 |
| C | 55 | 355480 | 1665460 | D | 55 | 353480 | 1664460 |
| E | 55 | 350060 | 1665960 | F | | | |
| G | | | | H | | | |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

See continuation sheet.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| state | code | county | code |

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erwin N. Thompson, Historian

organization National Park Service, Denver Service Center date June 12, 1984

*street & number* 755 Parfet Street *telephone* (303) 234-4509

city or town Denver state Colorado 80225

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

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Corben, USNR, Naval Gunfire Officer, to Commanding General Northern Troops and Landing Forces, hereinafter NTLF, Naval Gunfire Report, Tinian, August 12, 1944; NTLF: Annex BAKER to Operations Plan 30-44, Phase III (Tinian), July 13, 1944; Operations Report, Marianas, Phase II (Tinian), with Annexes, August 12, 1944; Daily Dispatch Summaries, July 10-August 10, 1944; Journal, Tinian, July 23-August 8, 1944; and G-3, Periodic Report, July 23-August 10, 1944, all in U.S. Marine Corps World War II Records, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD.

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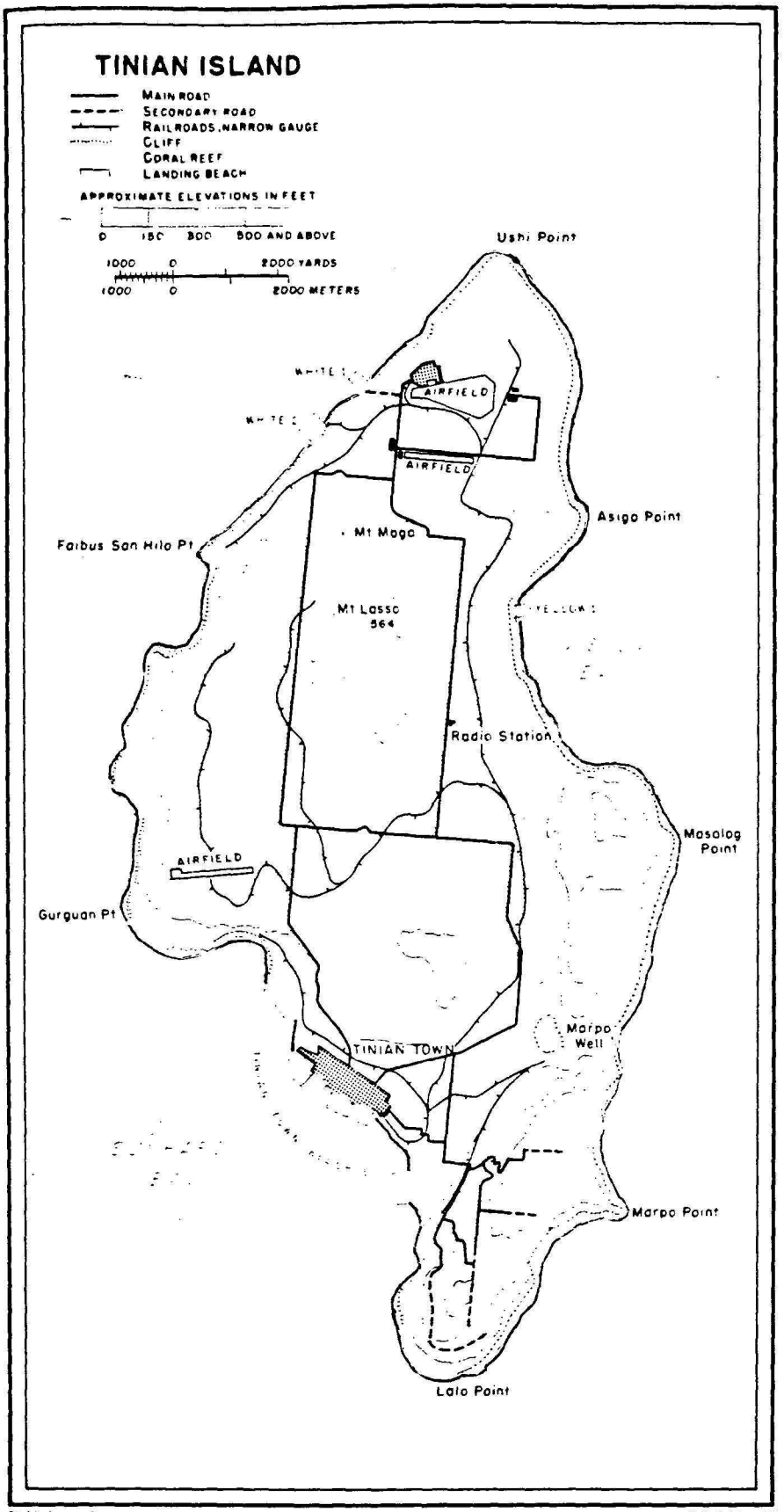
## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Starting at a point at the north end of Broadway and its eastern junction with a traffic circle, continuing around the exterior perimeter of the traffic circle (easterly and northerly) to its junction with a narrow road running north, following along the outer (eastern) boundary of the road as it curves to the east northeast, continuing along the outer (southern) boundary of the road to a point where it curves to the north, leaving the road at that point and continuing in a straight line east northeast to the coast at Unai Chiget.

Then following the coast in northerly and northwestern directions to the tip of Puntan Tahgong. Then following the coast in a southwestern direction to a point 1,600 feet southwest of the south end of the reef at Unai Chulu. Then east southeast in a straight line to the westernmost point of a traffic circle at the head of 8th Avenue. Then following the exterior (southern) perimeter of the traffic circle to its east side where it joins a narrow road. Then east along the southern boundary of the road to a junction marked BM 10.6. Then south and southeasterly along the outer boundary (western and southern) of a narrow road to the traffic circle at the north end of Broadway. Then along the outside (southern) perimeter of the traffic circle to the point of beginning.

These boundaries include all the significant historical features in the nomination: Landing Beaches White 1 and 2; U.S. Marines' beachhead; Japanese counterattacks of July 25, 1944; Japanese structures at Ushi Point Field; North Field; the only traffic circles in Micronesia; and the postwar Japanese shrine within the Broadway traffic circle.



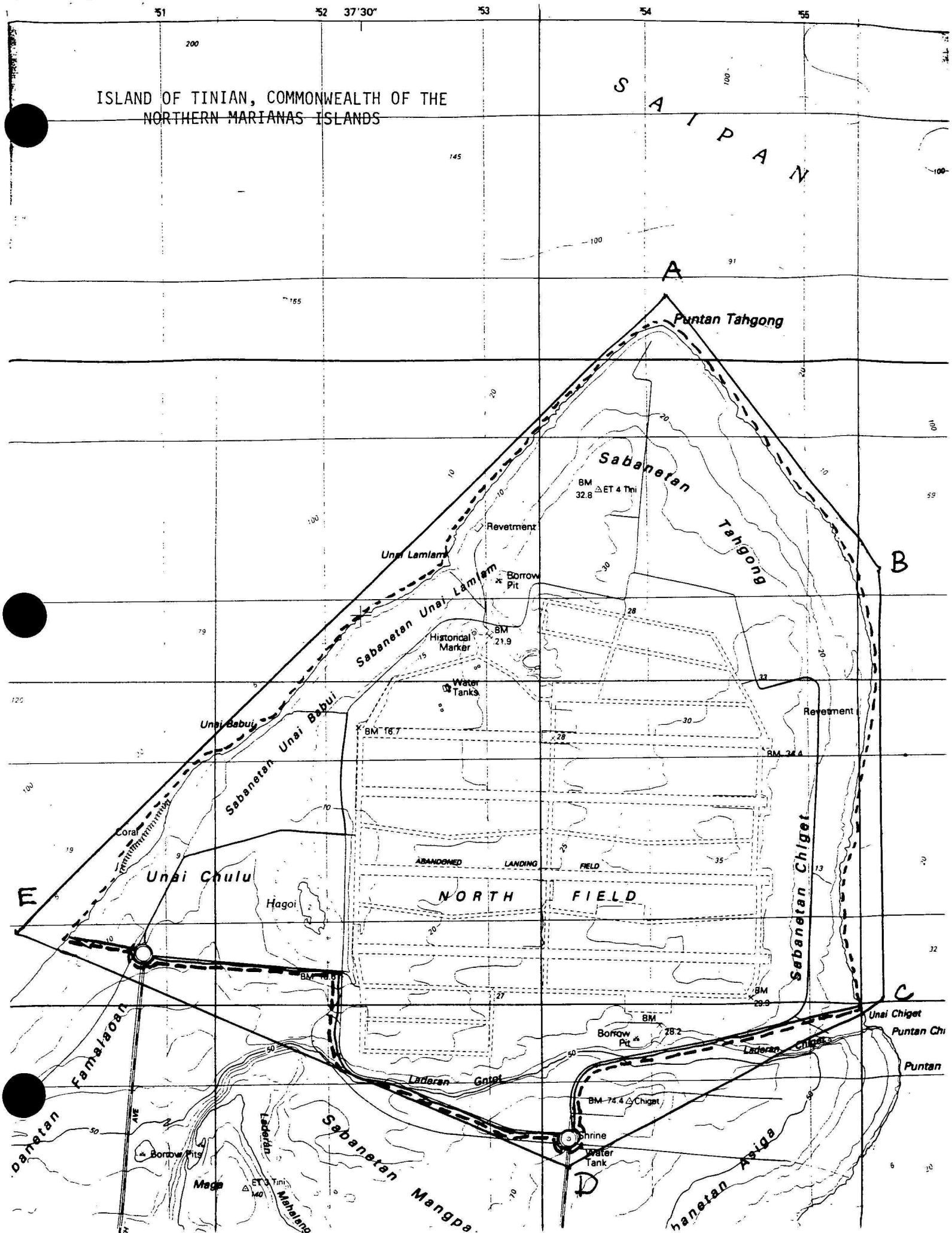

D. Holmes, Jr.

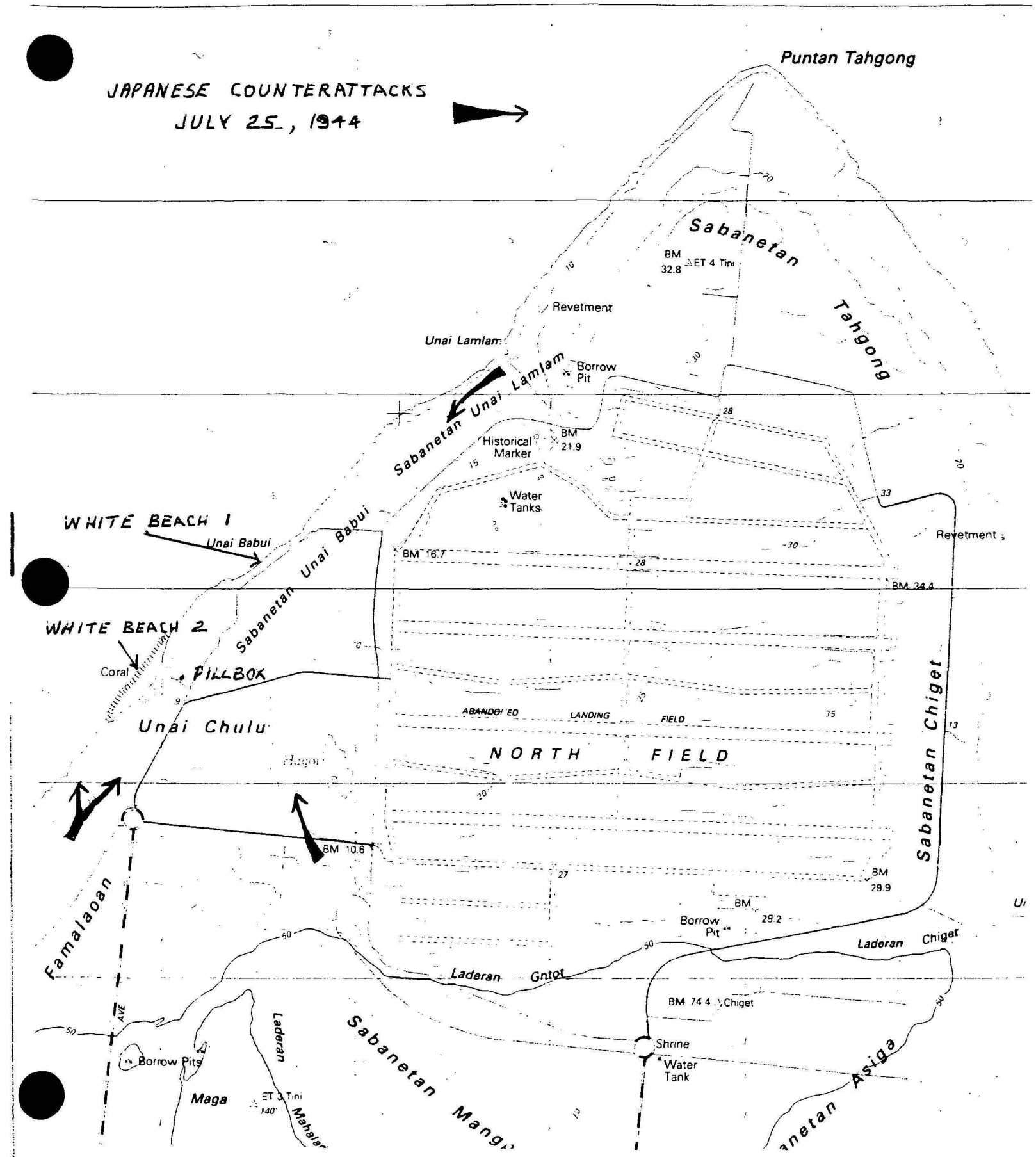
Printed by the U. S. Army Topographic Command

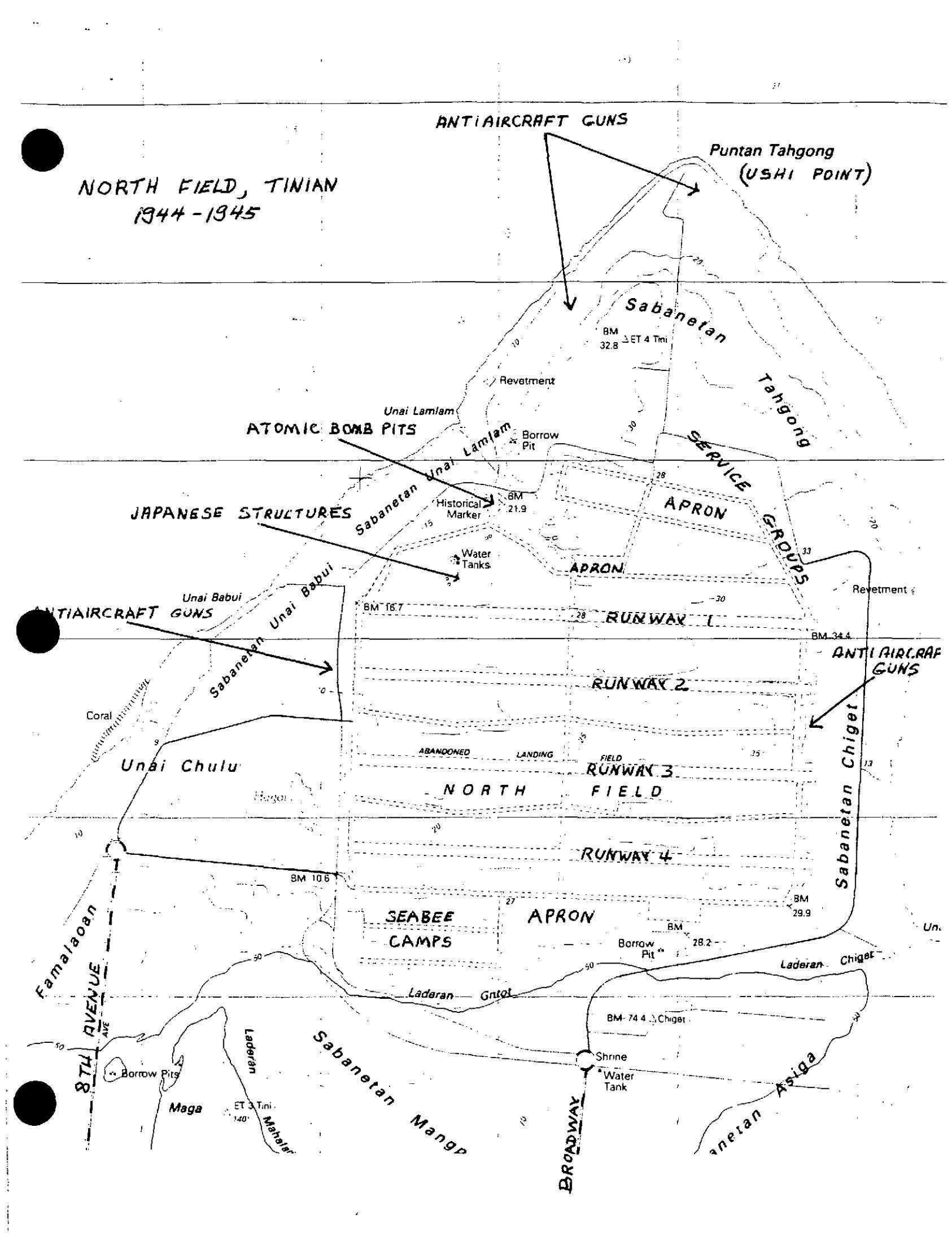
*MAP V*

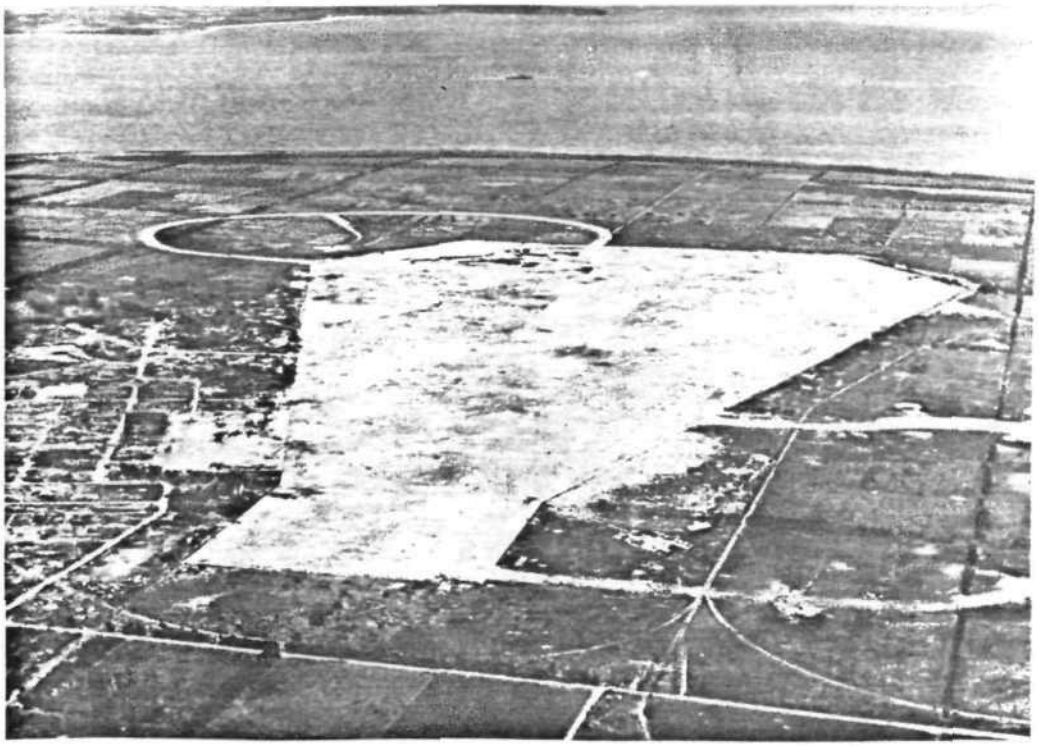
FROM PHILIP A. CROWL, CAMPAIGN IN THE MARIANAS

ISLAND OF TINIAN, COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS ISLANDS




JAPANESE COUNTERATTACKS
JULY 25, 1944
Puntan Tahgong
Sabanetan Tahgong
BM 32.8
ET 4 Tini
Revetment
Unai Lamlam
Borrow Pit
Sabanetan Unai Lamlam
Historical Marker
BM 21.9
Water Tanks
WHITE BEACH 1
Unai Babui
Sabanetan Unai Babui
BM 16.7
Revetment
BM 34.4
WHITE BEACH 2
Coral
PILLBOX
Unai Chulu
ABANDONED LANDING FIELD
NORTH FIELD
Sabanetan Chiget
BM 10.6
BM 29.9
BM 28.2
Borrow Pit
Laderan Chiget
Famalaoan
Laderan Gntot
BM 74.4
Chiget
Shrine
Water Tank
Borrow Pits
Maga
ET 3 Tini
Laderan Mahalai
Sabanetan Mangi
Sabanetan Asiga


NORTH FIELD, TINIAN
1944-1945
ANTIAIRCRAFT GUNS
Puntan Tahgong
(USHI POINT)
Sabanetan
Tahgong
BM 32.8
ET 4 Tini
Revetment
Unai Lamlam
ATOMIC BOMB PITS
Borrow Pit
Sabanetan Unai Lamlam
SERVICE GROUPS
Historical Marker
BM 21.9
APRON
JAPANESE STRUCTURES
Water Tanks
APRON
Unai Babui
Sabanetan Unai Babui
Revetment
ANTIAIRCRAFT GUNS
BM 16.7
RUNWAY 1
BM 34.4
ANTI AIRCRAFT GUNS
RUNWAY 2
Coral
Sabanetan Chiget
ABANDONED LANDING FIELD
Unai Chulu
RUNWAY 3
NORTH FIELD
RUNWAY 4
BM 10.6
BM 29.9
SEABEE CAMPS
APRON
BM 28.2
Borrow Pit
Famalaoan
8TH AVENUE
Laderan Chiget
Laderan Gntot
BM 74.4
Chiget
Shrine
Water Tank
Borrow Pits
Laderan
Sabanetan Mangp
Maga
ET 3 Tini
Mahalef
BROADWAY
Sabanetan Asiga

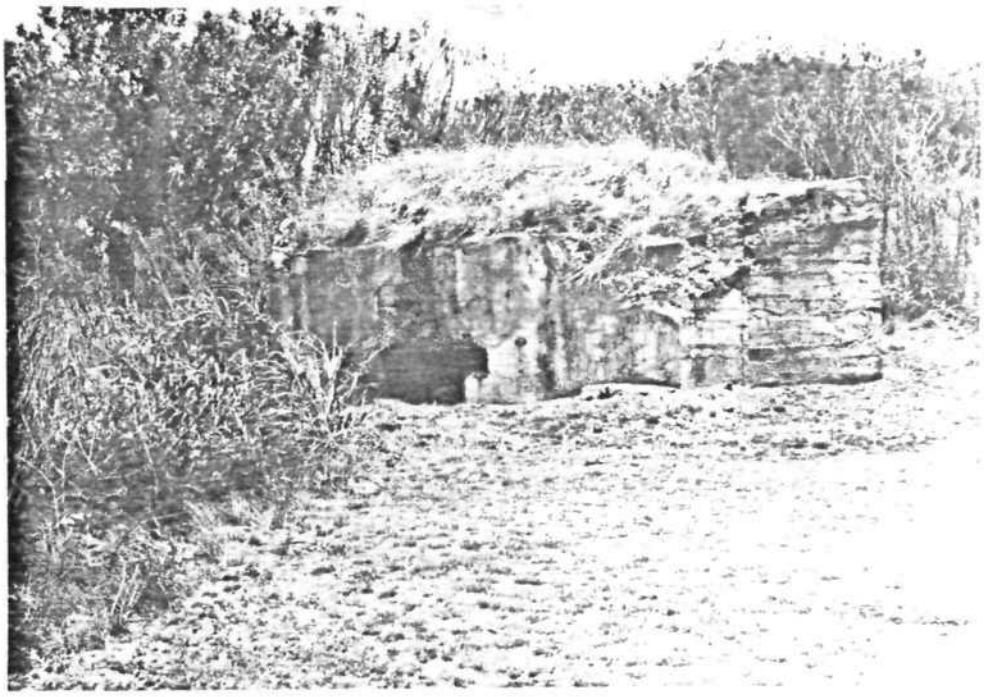


5. Aerial of Japanese Ushi Point Field at the time of the American invasion in July 1944. To the left is the existing Japanese service apron. On its upper right is the air operations building. The air administration building is in the extreme left of the photo.

Courtesy, National Archives

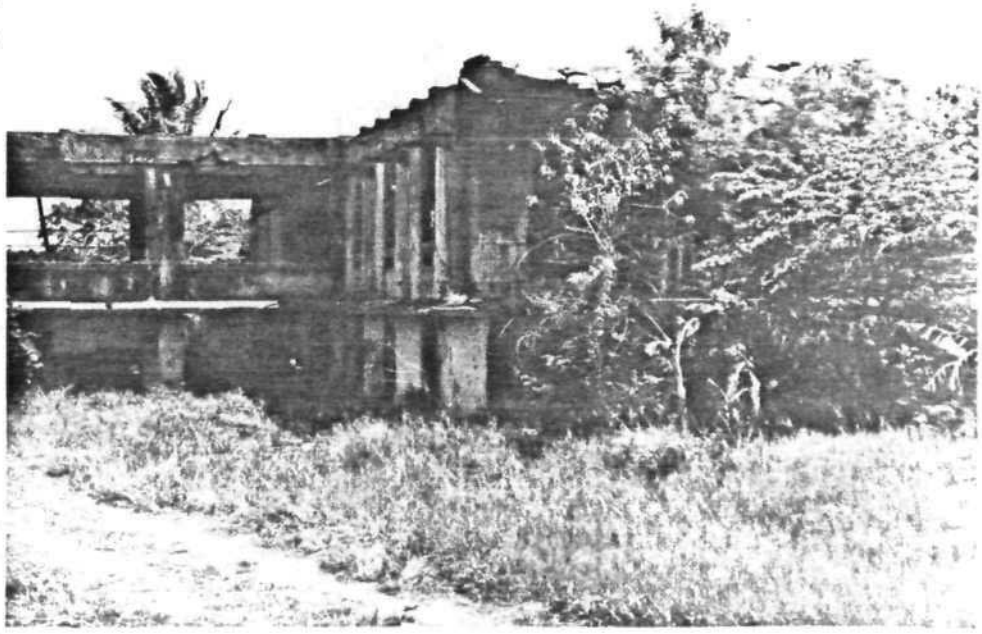
11. B-29 bomber in front of former Japanese air operations building, North Field, Tinian, August 11, 1945.

Courtesy, Smithsonian Institution and U.S. Air Force



4. One of two Japanese pillboxes that covered Beach White 2, Tinian.

Photo by E. Thompson April 1983



6. Ruins of the Japanese air administration headquarters at Ushi Point Field, Tinian.

Photo by E. Thompson April 1983

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

# NHL — WWII, PACIFIC

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Peleliu Battlefield, Palau Islands

and or common State of Peleliu, Republic of Palau (Belau)

## 2. Location

street & number ___ not for publication

city, town ___ vicinity of

state Peleliu code 75 county Palau code 030

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ district | ___ public | X occupied | X agriculture | ___ museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | ___ unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | X both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| X site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| ___ object | ___ in process | ___ yes: restricted | ___ government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | X yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ no | ___ military | X other: jungle |

## 4. Owner of Property

name Government of the State of Peleliu

street & number Republic of Palau

city, town ___ vicinity of state

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. None

street & number

city, town state

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
|---|---|---|---|
| ___ excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | X original site |
| ___ good | X ruins | X altered | ___ moved date ___ |
| ___ fair | ___ unexposed | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Peleliu battlefield includes all of Peleliu Island which is in the southern Palau Islands. Peleliu is 30 miles south of Koror, the capital of the Republic of Palau, and 500 miles east of the Philippine Islands. It is six miles in length and two miles in width. Shaped much like a lobster's claw, the coral-limestone island is relatively flat at its southern end, where a runway from World War II still is in use. North of the former airfield, the terrain changes to a jumble of broken coral ridges generally running north and south and separated by narrow valleys or ravines. The steep cliffs and rugged peaks, with elevations up to 300 feet, contain hundreds of natural caves, which Japanese troops improved for defensive purposes. This area was known militarily as Umurbrogol Mountain or Pocket.

A string of ridges continue along the northern arm of the island terminating in a complex of peaks named Amiangal Mountain. Before the war, Japanese operated a phosphate crushing plant in this area, of which no trace remains. The shorter, eastern arm of Peleliu is low, flat ground containing swamps and dense growths of mangrove in tidal waters. By the end of the 1944 battle most of Peleliu's vegetation had been destroyed. It is said that a person could see from one end of the island to the other. Today, the island is covered with a lush, thick growth of jungle. Here and there small plots of taro and other crops are cultivated. Being only a few degrees above the equator, Peleliu's climate is humid and hot and, for persons not accustomed to it, debilitating.

Today's population of 250 people live primarily at two villages which were reconstructed after the war, Klouklubed (the capital) and Imelchol, both near the north end of the northern arm. On the fringes of Klouklubed are a Japanese reinforced-concrete radio station which bears the scars of war, the ruins of a chapel built by the 321st Infantry Regiment in 1944, and a stone monument believed to have been erected by that unit. Also at the north end of the island is Elochel Dock, built around a Japanese concrete-block pier and used by the interisland ferry and fishing boats. Near the south end of Peleliu, on the west side, is a small-boat basin that was constructed by Seabees soon after the battle. It occupies the area known as Beach Orange 3 during the American invasion.

Much evidence of Japanese defenses and of the battle for Peleliu remains.[1] The World War II invasion beaches, other than Beach Orange 3, are unchanged from their 1944 appearance except that the jungle now crowds down to the edge of the sand and coral outcroppings. Inland, there are remains, such as concrete slabs, from the post-battle American installation that covered the more level terrain. Coral outcroppings at both ends of Beaches White 1 and 2 and a low

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1. Because the writer could spend only two full days on Peleliu, the description that follows owes a considerable debt to a one-month survey carried out by Dr. D. Colt Denfeld for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands.

coral ridge inland that parallels the shore all contain pillboxes and gun casemates. Beach Orange 2 is the site of the former American military cemetery and a present Palauan cemetery. In the American area are two large stone monuments that originally were dedicated to the First Marine Division and the Eighty-first Infantry Division but from which the bronze plaques have been removed.[2] A few wooden posts and small metal crosses, most with rusted American steel helmets placed on top, and a flagstaff are near the monuments. The concrete steps at a former military chapel now lead nowhere. The cemetery is known locally as "U-S-A."[3]

At the site of the airfield, three major Japanese reinforced-concrete structures remain, all bearing the signs of American bombardments. The most impressive of these is the two-story administrative building, which is similar to the Japanese headquarters at Ushi Point Field, Tinian Island. Steel shutters cover some of the windows. Nearby is a large underground air raid or storage shelter. The third structure is a heavily damaged aviation gasoline storage building of the same design as storage buildings on Saipan Island. In addition, several standard concrete air raid shelters remain in the area. Immediately after the capture of the airfield, American Seabees repaired and lengthened the two X-shaped runways. The crushed-coral, northeast-southwest runway, 6,000 feet in length, remains operable for light aircraft; the other runway is not maintained.

Several concrete and coral pillboxes remain at the southern end of Peleliu as does the one circular blockhouse the Japanese had in their defenses. This blockhouse, said to be in good condition, was constructed on the same general plan as blockhouses on Saipan and Roi-Namur.[4] Japanese citizens have erected two memorials or shrines on southern Peleliu. One of these is a handsomely designed shrine sited at the foot of an unnamed ridge in the vicinity of a pre-war village named Omoak. It is enclosed with a low fence and a torii stands at the entrance. The other memorial was placed at the former United States military cemetery.

The Japanese constructed strong defense works on the northwest coast of Peleliu in the vicinity of the former village of Garekoru and named Beach Amber

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2. Bronze plaques have a short life in the Central Pacific. Bronze is simply too precious to be used in such a manner.

3. American dead were eventually reburied in the Philippine Islands.

4. Official Marine histories mention other blockhouses on Peleliu. An exhaustive, post-battle study of the island's terrain and defenses by the Intelligence Section, First Marine Division, shows only this one.

by Marines. American forces did not land at this beach; rather army troops easily overran the area on their drive north on West Road. Today, many rifle pits, gun emplacements, personnel shelters, and ammunition caves remain in the midst of the coral and jungle.

The limestone ridges and ravines in the last center of Japanese resistance, "the Umurbrogol Pocket," undoubtedly contain much evidence of the battle for Peleliu. U.S. Marines counted over 100 caves that were occupied by Japanese troops in this area. The rugged terrain and the thick jungle now covering the area make a thorough investigation difficult. The cave in which the Japanese army commanders committed suicide in a ridge named China Wall has been identified. It is described as being a vertical fault containing three separate caves.[5] One feature in the Pocket that played a critical role during the battle is accessible, Bloody Nose Ridge. The almost-sheer face of this ridge is only a few hundred yards north of the airfield, on the southern edge of the Umurbrogol complex. This particular coral peak and four others nearby were identified as the Five Sisters during the battle. The 1st Marines attacked Bloody Nose soon after landing on Peleliu and suffered devastating casualties in the failed attempt. Despite repeated attacks by Marine and Army units, the Japanese held this position for two months, almost to the end of their organized resistance.

Today, a trail and steps have been cut to the top of Bloody Nose Ridge. On top there is a large stone monument built soon after the fighting. Although there is no identification on it, it is believed to have been built for or by the 323d Infantry Regiment which finally captured the Five Sisters. In 1983, the United States Navy commander on Guam had a flagstaff and a United States flag placed on top of the ridge. From the peak one may view much of the Umurbrogol Pocket, including the other Sisters, Walt Ridge, and Horseshoe Valley. Jungle now completely smothers the harsh landscape of 1944.

Not far from Bloody Nose Ridge, sitting in a natural cave on the slope of yet another mass of coral limestone, is a Japanese 200mm (8-inch), short-barreled naval gun, one of the largest weapons in Peleliu's defenses. It was one of four such weapons that were emplaced in the northern ridges for anti-shipping and coastal defense fire and mounted on spider-like steel frameworks 23 feet in diameter. U.S. Marine intelligence officers concluded that these guns had been hurriedly emplaced for none had been fired before being captured. The weapon appears to be in excellent condition. On level ground at the base of this ridge are remnants of a barbed-wire enclosure which is believed to have been built by United States forces as a holding area for prisoners of war. Across the trail from the enclosure stands a lone U.S. light tank, M-3, mounting a 37mm gun. The white stars painted on the turret and body are clearly visible.

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5. D. Colt Denfeld, "Survey of Peleliu," a draft, 1983.

A Japanese light tank, type 95, missing its turret and 37mm gun, may be found at the northwest end of the abandoned runway, about 1,300 yards southwest of the American tank. Other vehicles remaining on Peleliu include several U.S. landing vehicles, tracked (LVT). One of these is a LVT(A)4 armed with a 75mm howitzer, M-8.[6]

Amiangal Mountain at the north end of Peleliu consists of an L-shaped complex of hills and ridges. Four hills that make up the bottom of the L were collectively named during the fighting Hill Row and, individually, Hills 1, 2, 3, and Radar Hill (after a Japanese installation). The caves in this area are larger and better made than those in the Umurbrogol Pocket. The reason for this is said to be that the Amiangal caves were constructed by Japanese naval troops who had comfort in mind as well as defense and the services of a tunnel construction unit, while army troops constructed those in the Pocket primarily for a prolonged defense. One of the larger caves in the north was a three-chambered hospital with a fourth room hollowed out one story below. Dug into Hill 3, the 140-foot-long cave was fitted out with electric lights and a radio. When U.S. soldiers entered this cave they found fifty dead Japanese, most of whom had bandages over their eyes and had been shot in the head. U.S. Marines dubbed the hospital Mercy Cave.[7] Probably the largest cave on Peleliu is found near the top of the Amiangal L. This "Thousand-Man Cave," consisting of numerous interconnected tunnels, runs entirely through the ridge and has several entrances.[8]

Peleliu Island is today a state in the Republic of Palau. All land on the island is owned by the extended families, the clans, the traditional chiefs, and the paramount chief--all at the same time. The concepts of private ownership, titles, or real estate taxes are foreign to Peleliu. Peleliu has an elected governor who heads the state on political matters.

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6. Denfeld states these are the only LVTs surviving on land battlefields in the Pacific.

7. 321d Infantry Regiment, Unit Report, October 14, 1944, World War II Operations Reports, Record Group 407, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD.

8. Dorothy E. Richard, United States Naval Administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 3 vols. (Washington: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1957), 1:157, states this indeed was the largest cave on Peleliu and when it was captured on September 30, 1944, it contained more than 1,000 men! Denfeld records in his survey that Japanese (re-?)occupied the cave as late as February 1945.

All of Peleliu Island is recommended for nomination as a National Historic Landmark so as to include: the southern end of the island with its two promontories, small-boat harbor, Japanese (and American) airfield and administrative area, landing beaches and adjacent reef on the west coast, and fortifications, weapons, and military vehicles; the complex of coral ridges known as the Umurbrogal Pocket; the west coast with its Japanese fortifications and the West Road; the north arm of Peleliu with its ridges, caves, and East Road; and the east arm of Peleliu with its fortifications. These areas contain the features and objects associated with the Japanese defenses and the battle for Peleliu.

Excluded from the recommendation are the two villages in northern Peleliu, Klouklubed and Imelchol, which were rebuilt after the war. (The manner of land tenure precludes drawing exact boundaries around the villages.) Remnants of post-battle American installations, such as concrete slabs, on Peleliu are not considered to be historically significant.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1944 **Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The battle for Peleliu Island, the Gateway to the Philippines, was the longest and one of the most hard-fought battles in the entire Central Pacific amphibious operations of World War II. In contrast to earlier combats where the Japanese had vainly attempted to annihilate the enemy on the beaches, Peleliu's defenses were organized with the main line of resistance established inland, artillery and mortar fire registered on the beaches, and defenses skillfully arranged in depth in order to sustain resistance to an attack while destroying the enemy. Although the crack Japanese troops lost the battle, their new tactics enabled them to inflict heavy losses on American Marine and Army forces and to hold out for 74 days. While some strategists have argued that the capture of Peleliu was not a necessary preliminary for the coming struggle in the Philippines, brave men bled and died in the Palaus for their beliefs and their loyalties. Peleliu marked the conclusion of the Central Pacific drive toward the Philippines. A new phase of the Pacific War was already underway.[1]

## Background

Japan seized the Palau Islands, along with the rest of Micronesia, from Germany in World War I. Receiving a mandate from the League of Nations after the war, Japan established its administrative headquarters for Micronesia at Koror, the capital of the Republic of Palau today. On Peleliu Island, thirty miles south of Koror, a phosphate crushing plant was established and, by World War II, an excellent airfield had been constructed. When war came, the Palaus served as a staging area and replacement depot for Japan's forces in the Netherlands East Indies and New Guinea.

Even before the U.S. Navy carried out a devastating fast carrier strike on naval installations at Truk Atoll in February 1944, the Japanese had pulled all forward-based elements of the Combined Fleet back to Palau. At this same time, Gen. Douglas MacArthur's Southwest Pacific forces prepared to move into the Hollandia area in New Guinea in their drive toward the Philippines. Concerned that Japanese naval and air power in the Palaus could strike at Hollandia, a large task force of fast carriers under Vice Adm. Marc A. Mitscher raided Palau on March 30 and 31, 1944. Peleliu's fighter planes rose to the

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1. Adm. William F. Halsey, commander of the Western Pacific Task Forces, was the one officer who argued against attacking Palau before the operation took place. He recommended that Leyte in the Philippines be attacked directly because of the weakening Japanese position there. See E.B. Potter, Nimitz (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1976), p. 392.

defense and many were shot down. American planes succeeded in mining the harbor at Koror and destroyed or damaged 36 Japanese ships.

Spurred on by this raid to strengthen Palau's defenses, Japan transferred the veteran Fourteenth Division under Lt. Gen. Sadae Inoue from Manchuria to Palau in April 1944. Inoue established his headquarters at Koror and placed the bulk of his army force on adjacent Babeldaup Island where he planned to fight to the death. He dispatched the reinforced 2d Infantry Regiment under Col. Kunio Nakagawa to Peleliu and one battalion of the 59th Infantry Regiment to Angaur, an island seven miles south of Peleliu. Peleliu's garrison amounted to approximately 10,500 men of whom 6,500 were combat troops and some 4,000 were naval personnel.[2]

Nakagawa carefully planned the island's defenses in depth. Potential landing beaches were mined, offshore obstacles erected, anti-tank ditches skillfully located so as to channel enemy tanks toward anti-tank weapons, barbed wire strung, and artillery and mortars placed so as to shell the beaches with direct and enfilade fire. Extensive cave fortifications honeycombed the limestone ridges in the northern half of the island.

Stalemate II

The American plan for the invasion of Palau, Stalemate II, as it finally evolved, called for Adm. William F. Halsey to command the Western Pacific Task Forces. Halsey's Third Fleet covered the approach of the Joint Expeditionary Force. Maj. Gen. Julian C. Smith, USMC, commanded the Expeditionary Troops, and Maj. Gen. Roy S. Geiger, USMC, was in charge of the III Amphibious Corps. Under Geiger, Maj. Gen. William H. Rupertus, USMC, commanded the First Marine Division which was to seize Peleliu, and Maj. Gen. Paul J. Mueller, USA, commanded the Eighty-first Infantry Division which was to caputre Angaur and Ulithi Atoll. Stalemate II was the largest amphibious force yet seen in the Pacific. Its strength totaled 800 vessels, 1,600 aircraft, and 250,000 men.[3]

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2. Because the senior naval officer on Peleliu, Vice Admiral Itou, was a flag officer and because of the intense rivalry between the Japanese army and naval commands, Inoue sent Maj. Gen. Kenjiro Murai to Peleliu to coordinate with the admiral. Colonel Nakagawa remained in command of Peleliu's defenses.

3. Simultaneous with the invasion of the southern Palaus, General MacArthur's forces seized Morotari Island, 450 miles to the southwest, as a second anchor for the forthcoming Philippines campaign.

The First Marine Division, thoroughly experienced in the Guadalcanal and New Britain campaigns, was composed of the 1st, 5th, and 7th Marine Regiments and the 11th Marine Artillery Regiment. The Eight-first Infantry Division had no previous combat experience but had completed jungle and amphibious training in Hawaii. Its 321st and 322d Infantry Regiments were assigned the capture of Angaur, while its 323d Regiment was to occupy Ulithi Atoll about halfway between Palau and the Mariana Islands. The two divisions were brought together on Guadalcanal for a week of tactical rehearsals before sailing west.

Begining in August 1944, the U.S. Thirteenth Air Force began bombing the Palaus. On September 6, Halsey's fast carrier groups started full-scale attacks on the islands. Six days later, a naval gunfire bombardment of Peleliu and Angaur began. D-Day for landing on Peleliu was set for September 15. Mine-sweepers and underwater demolition teams began sweeping the waters and removing obstacles from Peleliu's southwestern beaches. Early morning, September 15, found the Third Amphibious Corps off Peleliu. The First Marine Division prepared to land.

## The Battle

Peleliu's southwestern beaches had been code-named White 1 and 2 and Orange 1, 2, and 3. The three reinforced regiments (regimental combat teams, RCTs), landing abreast on a 2,200-yard beachhead, touched shore at 8:33 a.m. On the left (north), two battalions of the 1st Marines landed on Beaches White 1 and 2. In the center, two battalions of the 5th Marines hit Beaches Orange 1 and 2. The 7th Marines came ashore in a column of battalions on Beach Orange 3 on the right (south). Immediately, murderous Japanese mortar fire and enfilading cannon fire on both flanks swept the beaches hitting as many as sixty landing vehicles and fifteen tanks. Observing the smoking vehicles, Colonel Nakagawa reported, too optimisticly, to Koror, "Our forces successfully put the enemy to rout."[4]

On the 1st Marines' extreme left flank, Japanese gunners placed enfilading fire from positions in a coral outcropping at the water's edge. Seventy yards inland, an unsuspected coral ridge was alive with Japanese who swept the beach with machine gun and rifle fire. A company of Marines successfully reduced the coral outcropping but with heavy casualties. Moreover, the company became cut off from the adjacent unit and would remain isolated for the next thirty hours. The Marine Corps' official history concludes that had the Japanese mounted a major counterattack at this point, "the Marines might have

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4. Japanese Monograph No. 49, "Central Pacific Operations Record," vol. 2, April-November 1944, p. 85.

been driven into the sea."[5] The 1st Marines' right flank battalion on Beach White 2 had better success. It reached its first objective 350 yards inland by mid-morning, encountering moderate resistance. There it halted because of the stalemate on the left. By 9 a.m., the 5th Marines had reached its objective, an open space on the west side of the airfield. The left battalion halted at that point because of the inability of the 1st Marines to advance. The right battalion had more success. Although the battalion's units became scattered, one company succeeded in driving across the island and reaching the eastern shore.

The 7th Marines on the southern flank experienced much the same withering enfilade fire as did the 1st Marines. From a small islet and a promontory at the south end of Peleliu, the Japanese delivered heavy fire against the 7th's exposed flank. The regiment continued to make progress, however, until it came up against a heavily fortified area containing the Japanese circular blockhouse. There it dug in for the night to await the assistance of tanks. In the day-long drive, the 7th Marines, too, suffered heavy casualties.

In the late afternoon, the Japanese made their first counterattack when from twelve to seventeen light tanks emerged in front of the 5th Marines.[6] Although a few tanks got through to the beachhead all but one were destroyed. Despite the troubles on the flanks, the Marines had succeeded in establishing a beachhead 3,000 yards long, 500 yards average depth, and a maximum depth of 1,500 yards.

On September 16, the 5th Marines completed the capture of the airfield. In the south, the 7th Marines overcame the blockhouse and reached the eastern shore. It gained all of southern Peleliu by nightfall except two promontories at the southern tip. In the north, the 1st Marines began a turning movement northward against the Umurbrogal ridges beyond the airfield. Quickly running into fierce resistance, the Marines made little progress.

The next day, D+2, the 1st Marines gained a few hundred yards in the level area of the west coast, up West Road, but were thwarted gain in the attempt to gain the limestone ridges, especially at Bloody Nose Ridge. The 1st Marines

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5. *George W. Garand and Truman R. Strobridge*, Western Pacific Operations. History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II, vol. 4 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 114.

6. It is probable that the light tank on Peleliu today was one of those in this abortive attack.

counted 1,500 casualties in their ranks by the end of this third day of fighting. Meanwhile, the 7th Marines completed the capture of southern Peleliu, including the promontories; and the 5th Marines began an easy drive up the eastern arm of the island.

American light planes were able to land on the airfield on September 19. That same day, the 1st Marines renewed the attack on the ridges, making small gains, but were again stopped at Bloody Nose Ridge. To the east, a company of the 7th Marines gained the crest of Walt Ridge but, suffering extremely heavy casualties, was forced to withdraw. During the next three days both the 1st and 7th RCTs assaulted the ridges time and again, without success. By September 22, the First Marine Division had suffered nearly 4,000 casualties, the 1st Marine Regiment alone losing 56 percent of its strength. General Rupertus decided to cease frontal attacks on the southern ridges; instead, he planned a drive up the west coast and an attack on the Umurbrogal complex from the north.

Before the invasion, General Rupertus thought he could capture Peleliu in four days. A week had now passed and despite the heavy casualties, Rupertus was unwilling to call for assistance from army troops of the Eighty-first Infantry Division. He remained so stubborn about this, that the corps commander, General Geiger, had to step in and direct the 321st Infantry Regiment to move from Angaur to Peleliu, where it landed September 23. The depleted 1st Marine Regiment was taken off Peleliu on September 30, its casualty figure having reached 1,672.

Another reason Rupertus wished to take northern Peleliu at this time was the 25,000-man Japanese force on Babeldaup that could be expected to reinforce Peleliu. Indeed, on September 23, Japanese barges approached the island from the north. The Americans spotted this reinforcement and sank the barges. Most of the Japanese made it to shore nevertheless. The same scene occurred the following night. It was estimated that from 600 to 700 Japanese reinforcements reached Peleliu.

On September 24, Rupertus sent his unwanted soldiers on a push up the West Road. The 321st RCT reached its objective, discovering along the way a trail running across the ridges toward East Road.[7] A company, directed to explore the trail, moved eastward and succeeded in capturing Hill 100, the northern bastion of the Japanese defenses in the Umurbrogal ridges. The following day,

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7. On this drive up West Road, the army troops gained the enmity of the 7th Marines who were assigned the task of following the 321st to screen the West Road from flanking fire. The soldiers were supposed to have moved along the west ridge and the road; in fact, they stayed only on the road, forcing the 7th Marines to fight the Japanese on the ridge.

the 321st reached East Road thus dividing the Japanese defenses on the island. At the same time, it pushed north along West Road until it reached the village of Garekoru. The 5th Marines took over at this point to begin the process of cleaning up the northern tip of Peleliu and its elaborate caves in the Amiangal ridges. On September 28, the 5th Marines also occupied Naegebus Island and its unfinished runway. Marine Fighter Squadron 114 provided air support on this occasion.

As September drew to a close, Japanese losses were estimated to be over 9,250, while the First Marine Division's casualties had mounted to over 5,000 men.

On September 30, the 7th Marines began an asault on the Umurbrogal ridges in an effort to reduce the pocket, which measured about 1,500 yards north to south and 500 yards in width. Elements of the 5th Marines joined the attack the following day. By October 3, the Marines had captured the crests of two important ridges, Walt and Boyd, on the eastern side of the pocket, thus opening East Road. The 7th Marines, particularly, experienced heavy casualties in this four-day fight. By the evening of October 4, the 7th "was no longer able to function as an effective combat unit on the regimental level."[8] Rupertus ordered the 5th Marines to relieve the 7th.[9]

Between October 6 and 14, the 5th Marines made repeated attacks on the pocket, steadily making small gains, particularly in the north and northwest. It captured such landmarks as Baldy Ridge, Ridge 120, Ridge 3, Hill 140, and knobs of coral not named. Then, on October 14, General Rupertus withdrew all the First Marine Division from the battle lines, replacing it with the 321st RCT and a battalion of the 323d Infantry Regiment freshly arrived from Ulithi Atoll.[10] Rupertus remained in command at Peleliu until October 20 when Maj. Gen. Paul J. Mueller, commanding the 81st Infantry Division, replaced him. During the month the First Marine Division fought on Peleliu it suffered no fewer than 6,265 casualties, of which 1,124 were dead and 117 were missing.

Colonel Nakagawa reported on October 14 that his force had been reduced to 1,150 armed men.[11]

---

8. Garand and Strobridge, Western Pacific Operations, p. 236.

9. The 321st replaced the 5th Marines in northern Peleliu and offshore islets. It was its turn to become angry at the Marines for not having done a better job of cleaning out Japanese-held caves.

10. All of the 323d RCT was on Peleliu by October 24.

11. Japanese Monograph No. 49, p. 143.

The Eighty-first began a methodical tightening of its lines around the pocket on October 21. Not without difficulty it captured the northern hills called the Five Brothers, one by one. In Horseshoe Valley, west of Walt Ridge, it succeeded in cutting the Japanese off from their water supply at Grinlinton Pond. (This accomplishment was offset by heavy rains that replenished the Japanese water supply.) On November 2, the 323d RCT captured the Five Sisters, including Bloody Nose Ridge against which the 1st Marines had hurled itself so long ago. Japanese fighting strength was now reduced to 350 men. Little action occurred on either side between November 4 and 9 as a typhoon swept over Peleliu. On November 13, the assault and occupation of Peleliu was again announced, this time by General Geiger.

That same day, the two infantry regiments began the final drive. On November 24, the Japanese burned the 2d Infantry's regimental flag and all secret documents. In the evening a last radio message was sent to Koror advising that the 56 remaining combatants had organized into seventeen raiding groups and would hide in the jungle and caves to harass the enemy. During the night, General Murai and Colonel Nakagawa committed suicide. It had taken U.S. forces almost 2½ months to complete what began as a four-day operation.

The Eight-first Division did not declare an end to organized resistance until November 27:

> At 1030, 27 November all organized resistance on Peleliu ceased when the Commanders of the battalions of the 323rd Infantry met at the cave which had been the headquarters of Colonel Kunio Nakagawa, Commanding Officer of the 2nd Regiment, 14th Japanese Imperial Division and the last high ranking Japanese Commander on Peleliu.[12]

The division's casualties in the Palaus amounted to 542 killed and 3,275 wounded or injured. For months to come, Japanese continued to be captured or killed on the island. In January 1945, a Japanese raiding party landed on Peleliu. It was swiftly wiped out. Twenty-seven Japanese surrendered in April 1947. As late as 1955 a Korean civilian was seized on Peleliu--two years after the Korean War.

As they had in earlier battles, Japanese-Americans (Nisei) performed important duties on Peleliu as interpreters and translators. The Third Amphibious Corps reported also that it had made extensive use of the famous Navajo Talkers in

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12. 321st Infantry, "Operation Report, Stalemate II, Palau Islands," December 29, 1944, Adjutant General's Office, World War II Operations Reports, 1940-1948, Record Group 407, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, MD.

their radio communications. Not so successful was the use of the Marines' war dogs. While the dogs served well in the beginning on sentry duty and patrols, they became increasingly nervous and tired under the strain of heavy mortar fire. As the battle progressed, many of their handlers were killed or wounded and strangers could not work the dogs. An exceptional dog was Duke, Z876, a German shepherd, who carried twenty pounds of maps and papers 1½ miles across the airfield under heavy enemy mortar fire.

The remaining Japanese in Palau, some 25,000, spent the rest of World War II waiting for the enemy to land so that they could give their lives for their Emperor. The opportunity never came. On Peleliu, U.S. Navy Seabees reconstructed the Japanese airfield and built a naval base. Army engineers hacked a bomber field out of the jungle on nearby Angaur. Ulithi Atoll became an important fleet anchorage, especially for the 1945 invasion of Okinawa.

Bloody Nose Ridge, Five Sisters, Five Brothers, China Wall, Death Valley, Snipers' Mile, Hell's Pocket, Baldy Ridge. . . . The Palau operation turned out to be one of the bloodiest battles of the Pacific War--and one of the most forgotten.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 7,680 acres

Quadrangle name None

Quadrangle scale None

UTM References Not available

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | | | | B | | | |
| C | | | | D | | | |
| E | | | | F | | | |
| G | | | | H | | | |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

See continuation sheet.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| state | code | county | code |

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erwin N. Thompson, Historian

organization National Park Service, Denver Service Center date June 1, 1984

street & number 755 Parfet Street telephone (303) 234-4509

city or town Denver state Colorado 80225

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

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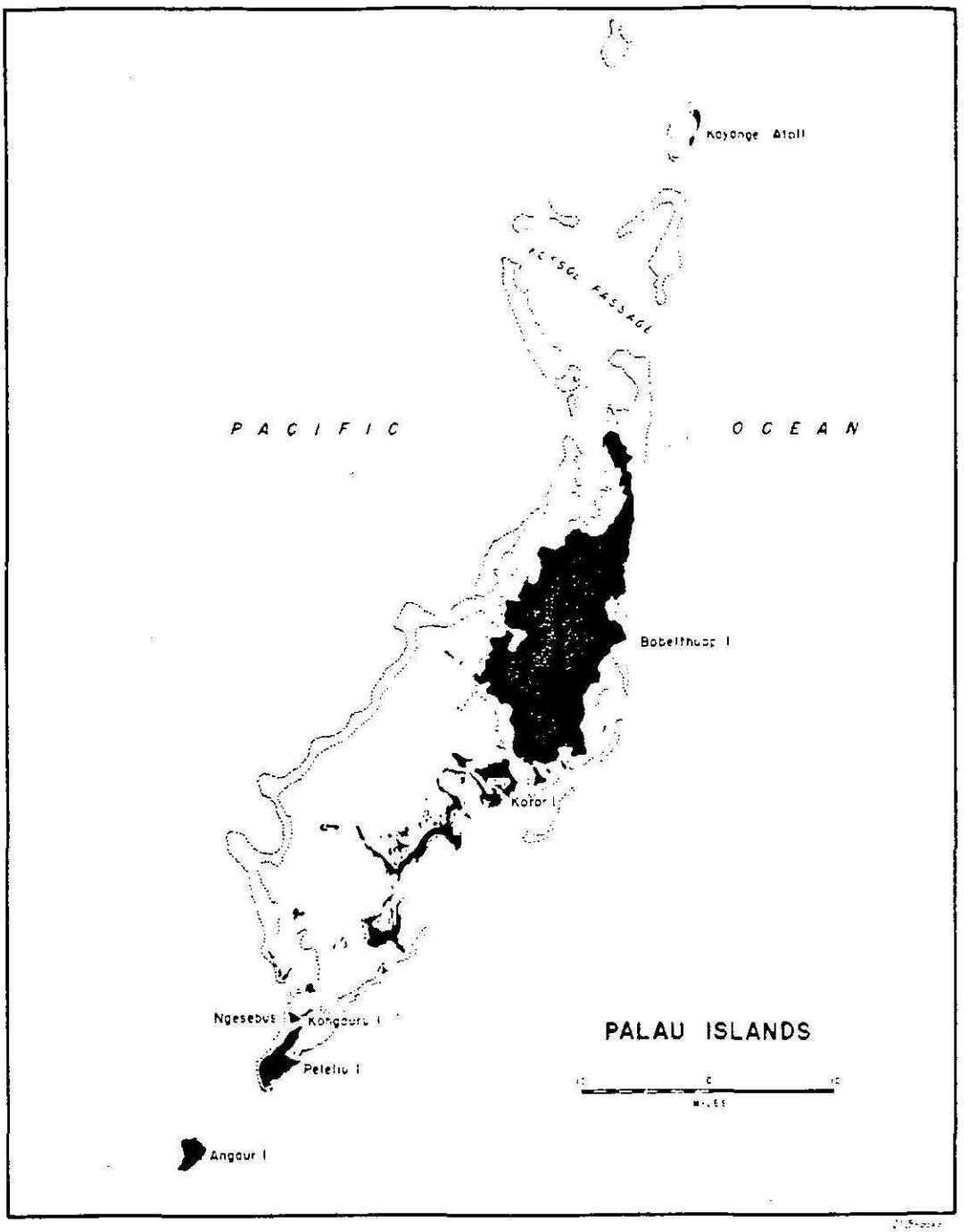
_____. Bureau of Yards and Docks. Building the Navy's Bases in World War II, 2 vols. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947.

U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey. The Seventh and Eleventh Air Forces in the War Against Japan, vol. 70 [Washington ?], 1947.

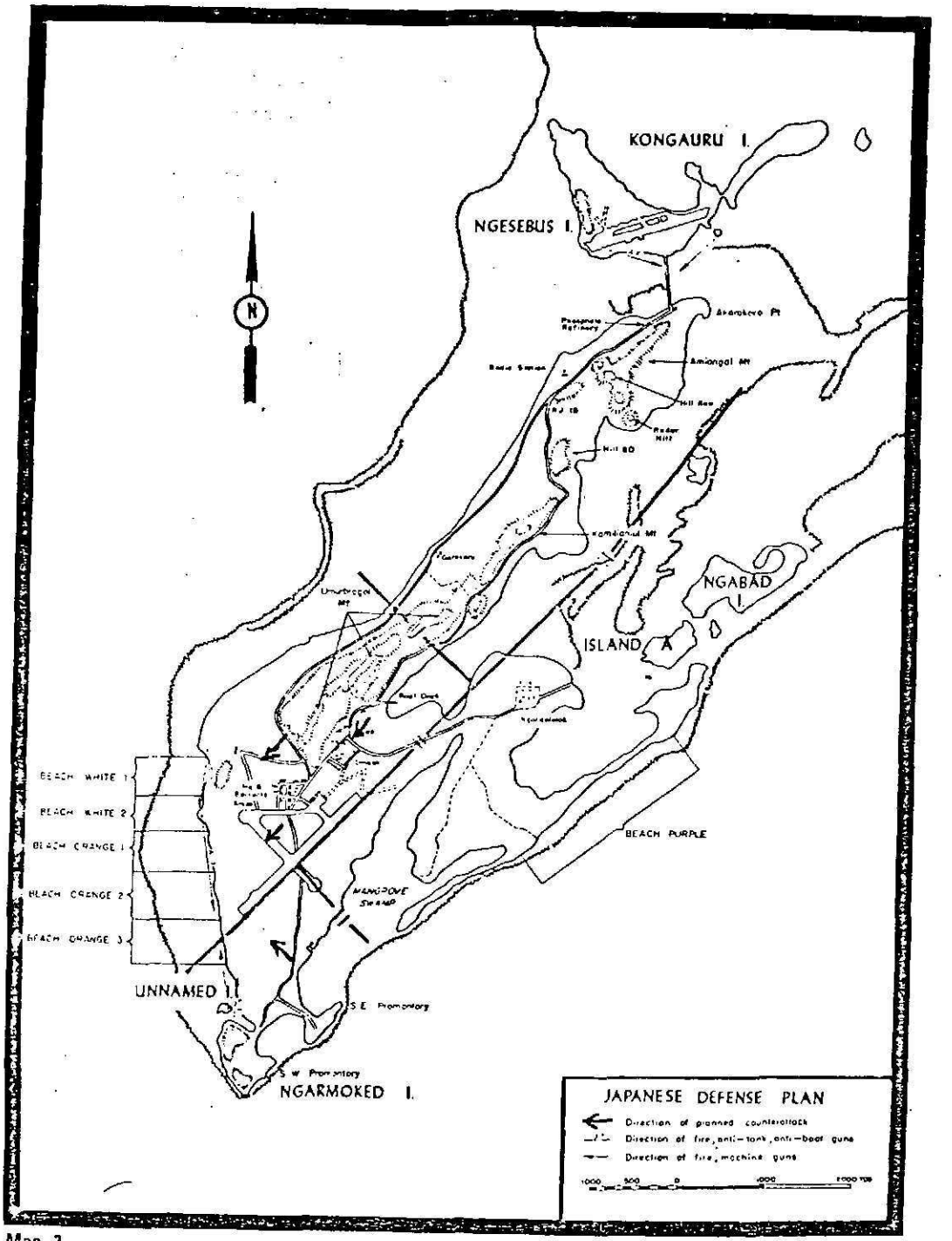
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The boundary of Peleliu Battlefield is the natural boundary of Peleliu Island where it meets the sea. The United States landings on Peleliu and the subsequent fighting involved all of the island with no exception. Structures in the two villages of Klouklubed and Imelchol are within this boundary but are excluded from the historically significant terrain, both being of post-war construction. Land surveys have not been made on Peleliu and, because of local customs concerning land tenure, specific boundaries cannot be drawn around these villages.



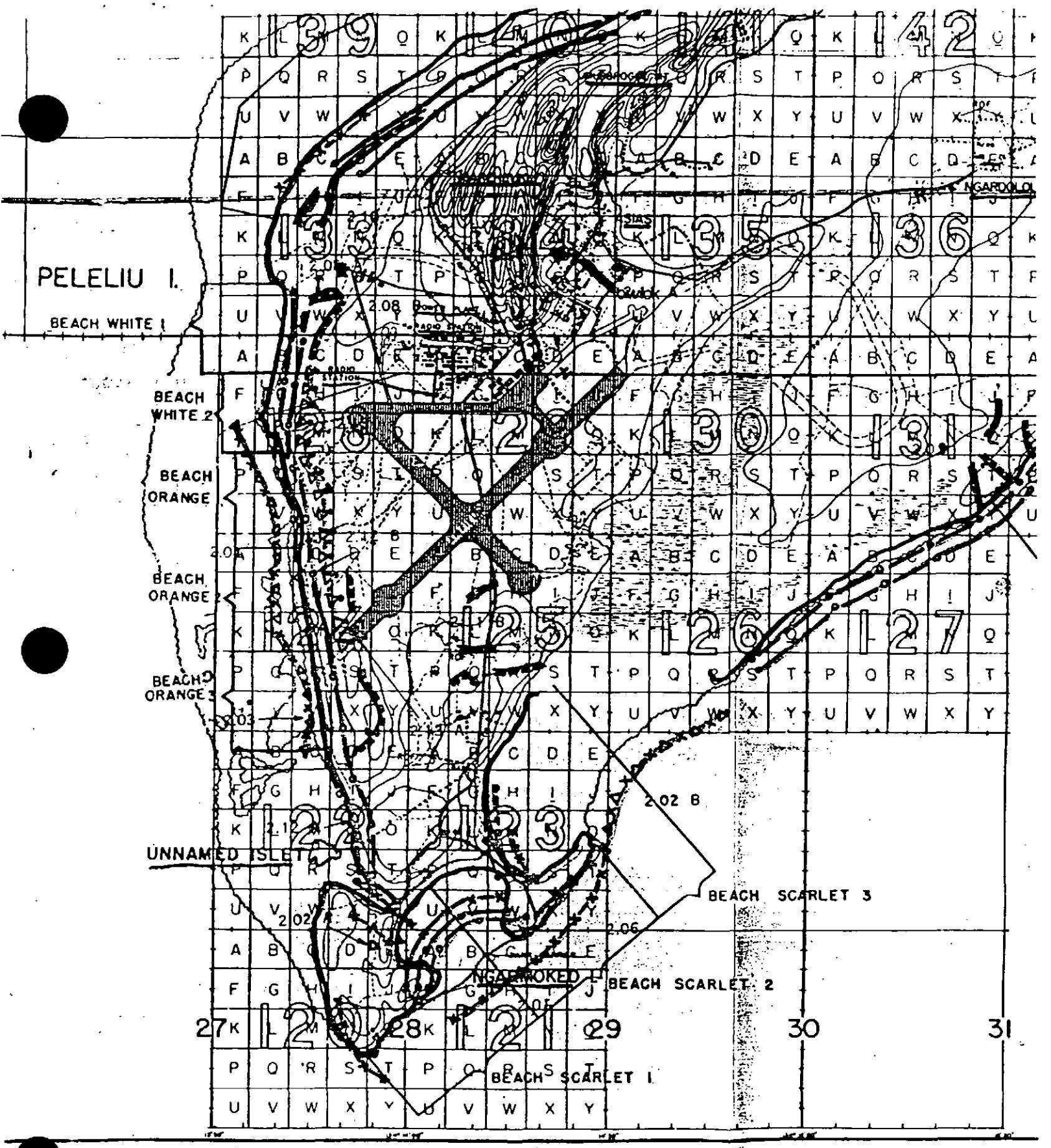

*MAP 19*

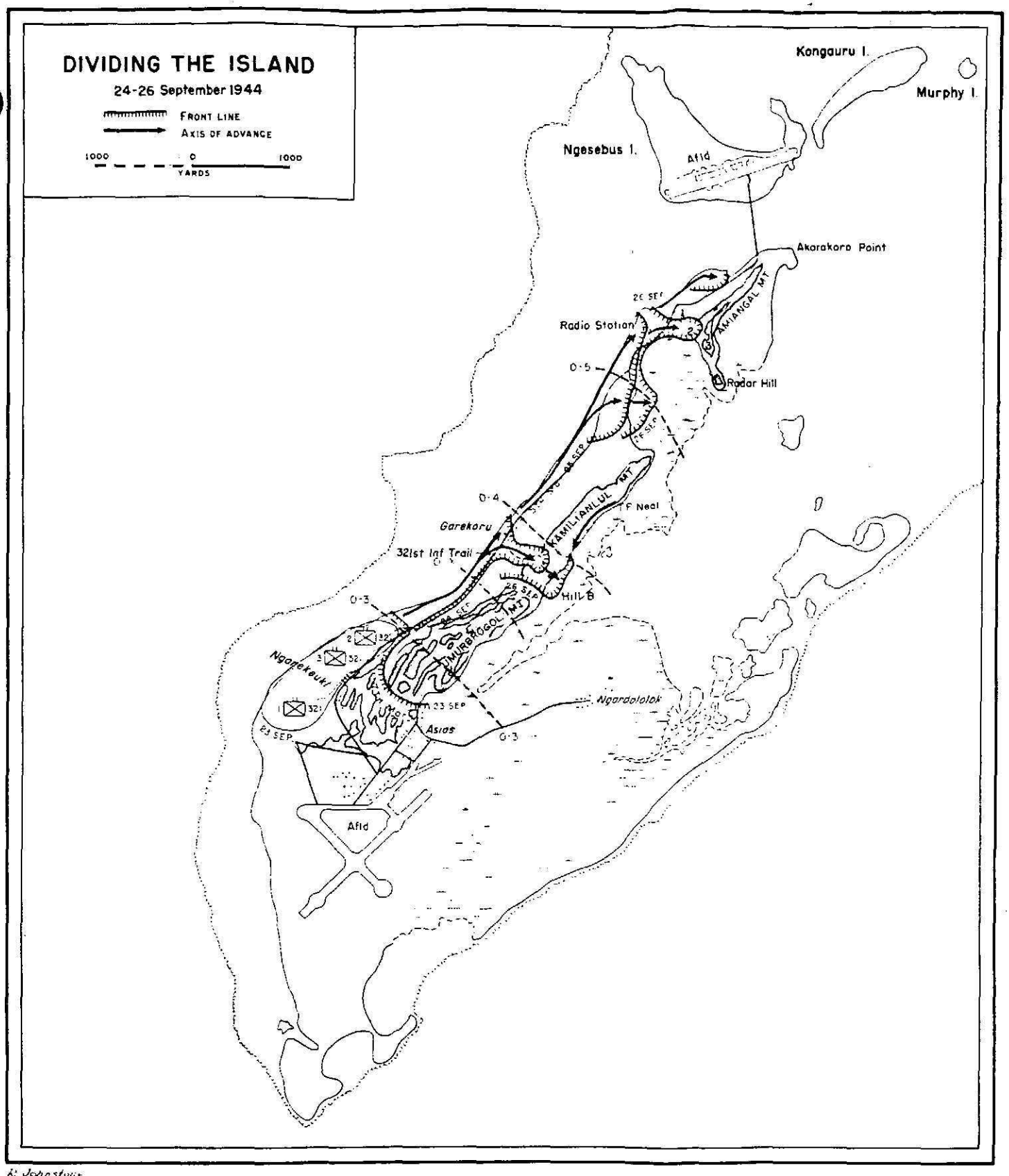
FROM ROBERT ROSS SMITH THE APPROACH TO THE PHILIPPINES




Map 3

E. L. Wilson


PELELIU I.
BEACH WHITE 1
BEACH WHITE 2
BEACH ORANGE
BEACH ORANGE 2
BEACH ORANGE 3
UNNAMED ISLET
NGAROKOED
BEACH SCARLET 1
BEACH SCARLET 2
BEACH SCARLET 3
NGAROLOL
27
28
29
30
31

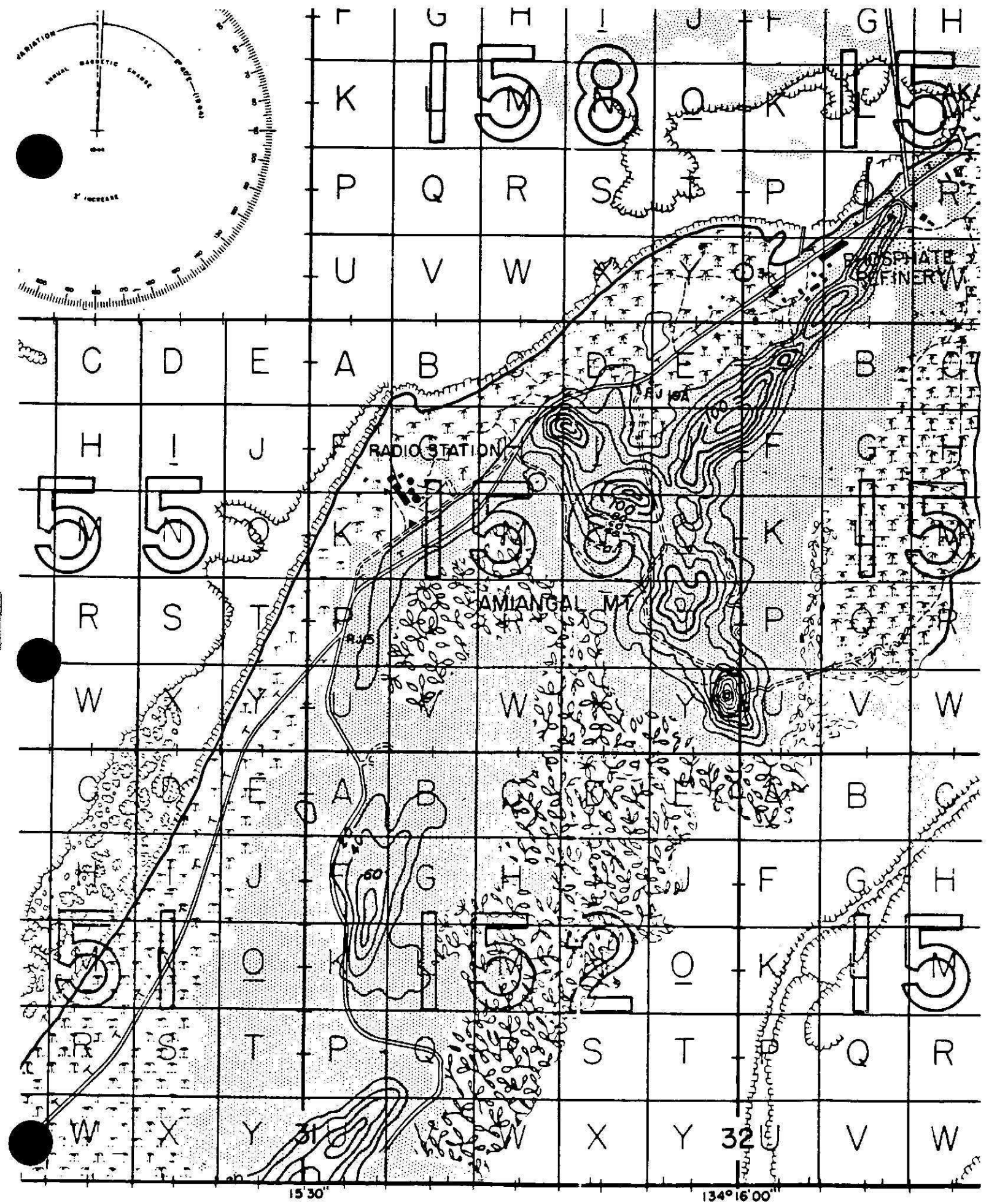


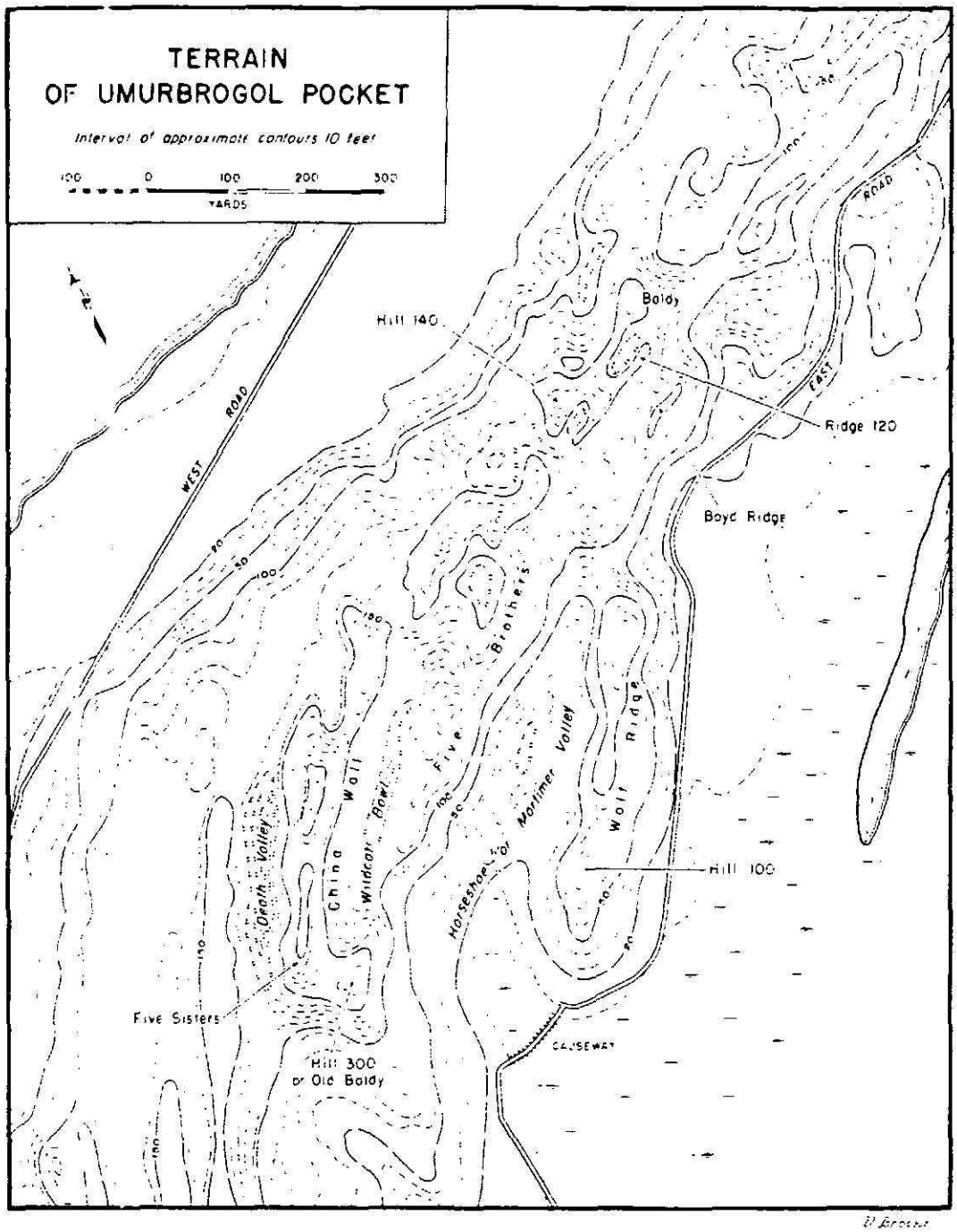

R. Johnston

Printed by the U. S. Army Topographic Command

MAP X

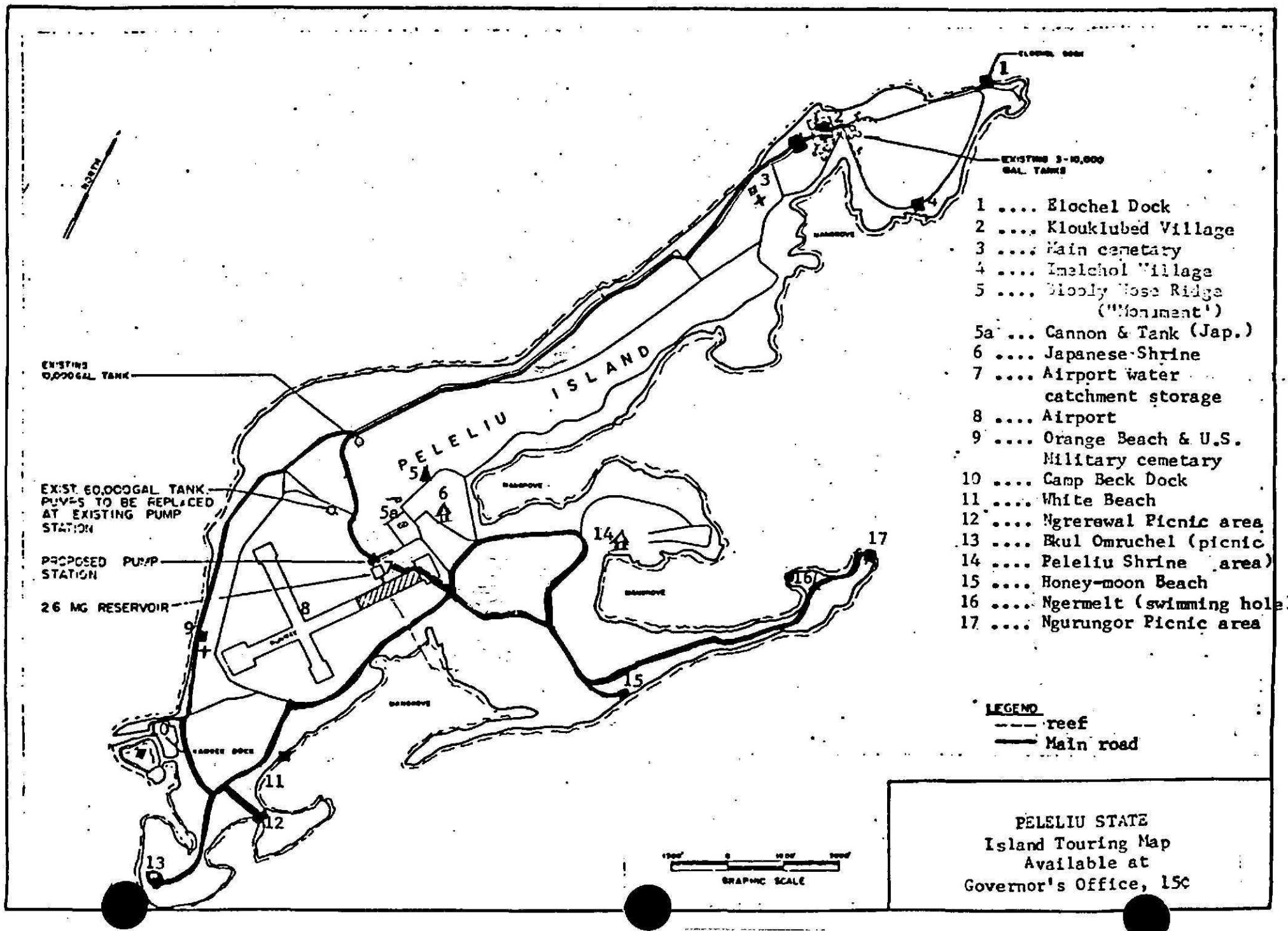
FROM ROBERT ROSS SMITH, THE APPROACH TO THE PHILIPPINES


VARIATION
ANNUAL MAGNETIC CHANGE
PHOSPHATE REFINERY
RADIO STATION
AMIANGAL MT
RJ 10A
RJ 15
60
31
32
15'30"
134°16'00"

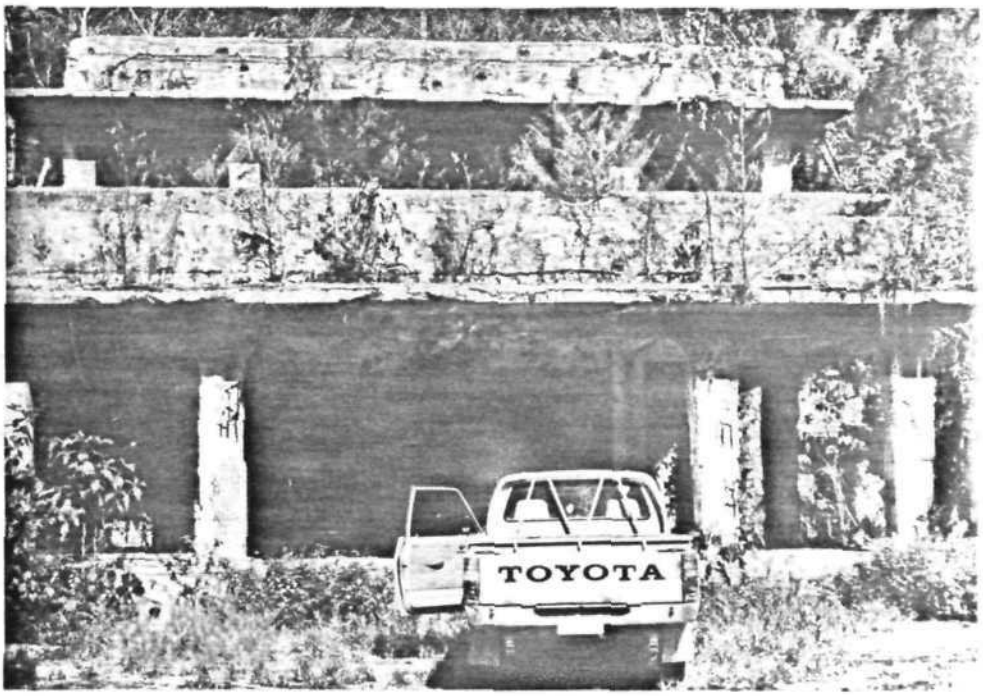



*MAP 21*

FROM ROBERT ROSS SMITH THE APPROACH TO THE PHILIPPINES




PELELIU STATE
Island Touring Map
Available at
Governor's Office, 15¢

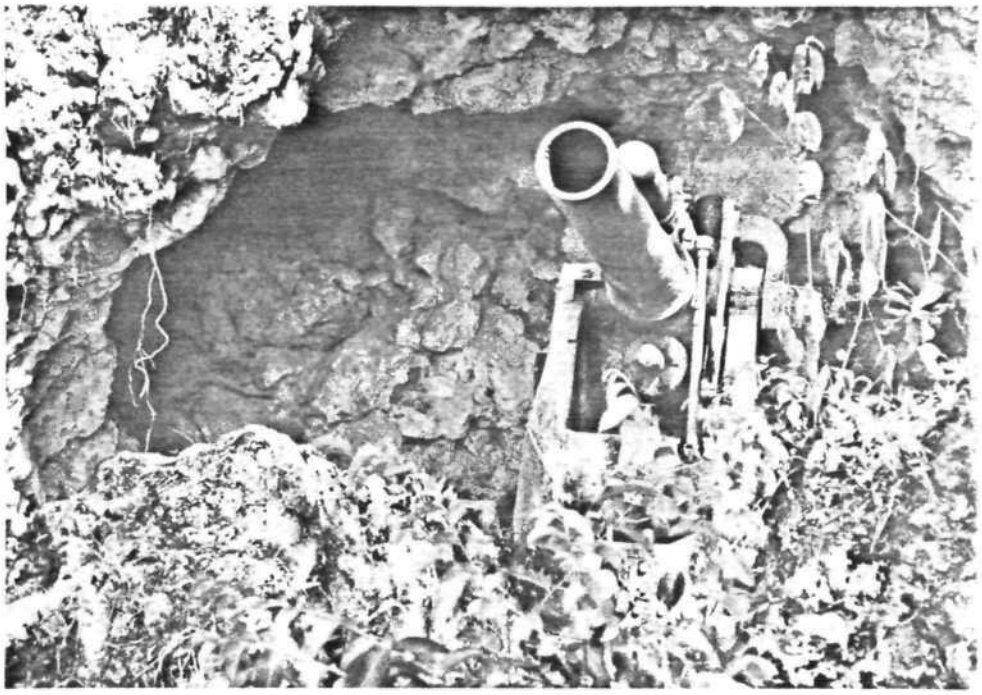



9. Japanese air administration building at the airfield on Peleliu.

Photo by E. Thompson April 1983

5. One of many coral and concrete pillboxes hidden in the jungle along the landing beaches. This one is inland from Beach White 2.

Photo by E. Thompson April 1983



7. Japanese 200mm, short-barreled naval gun overlooking the airfield and the landing beaches. Peleliu.

Photo by E. Thompson April 1983

6. Peleliu. American landing craft, LVT(A)4, with a turret mounting a 75mm howitzer. It stopped near the southern base of the Umurbrogol Mountain complex.

Photo by E. Thompson April 1983

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

NHL — WWII, PACIFIC

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic B-29 Bomber *Enola Gay*

and or common

## 2. Location

street & number Paul Garber Restoration Facility, Smithsonian Institution ___ not for publication

city, town Suitland ___ vicinity of (temporary location)

state Maryland code county Prince Georges code

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ district | X public | ___ occupied | ___ agriculture | X museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | ___ unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | X work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| ___ site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| X object | ___ in process | ___ yes: restricted | ___ government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | ___ yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | X no | ___ military | ___ other: |

## 4. Owner of Property

name Smithsonian Institution

street & number

city, town Washington ___ vicinity of state D.C. 20560

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Smithsonian Institution

street & number

city, town Washington state D.C. 20560

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one | not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ excellent | ___ deteriorated | ___ unaltered | ___ original site | |
| ___ good | ___ ruins | X altered | ___ moved | date _____ |
| ___ fair | ___ unexposed | | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

B-29 bomber Enola Gay is disassembled and is stored in the Smithsonian Institution's Paul Garber Restoration Facility, Suitland, Maryland. Current plans are for the complete restoration of the aircraft and placing it on public display as soon as a suitable facility for that purpose is acquired.

Early in 1940, at the request of the Army Air Corps, the Boeing Aircraft Company, Seattle, Washington, developed specifications for a "Very Long-Range" (VLR) bomber. Even before the prototypes were test flown, the Army Air Corps placed an order for this new aircraft which became known as the B-29 "Superfortress," the world's most superior bomber in World War II. Several advanced features were incorporated in the design of the plane, such as its being the first military craft to be pressurized, and the first heavy bomber to have tricycle landing gear. Another innovation was the development of retractable, remote-controlled gun turrets that allowed a gunner to operate more than one turret at a time. Also, the gunners, except the man in the tail, were physically removed from the noise and vibration created by the 0.5-inch machine guns.

Once the B-29 went into production, certain improvements were made between 1943 and 1945. In general, the aircraft's specifications, including Enola Gay's, were as follows: wing span, 141 feet, 2 inches; length, 99 feet; height of tail fin, 27 feet, 9 inches; loaded weight (with 12,000-pound bomb load), 67.5 tons; power, four 18-cylinder radial engines with superchargers; operation radius, 1,800 miles (3,600 miles round trip); maximum speed, 375 miles per hour at 25,000 feet; and the crew varied from eleven to thirteen men. Enola Gay carried a crew of twelve on its fateful mission.

The original model was armed with ten 0.5-inch machine guns and one 20mm cannon. Armament was considerably reduced on some later models. Enola Gay and the other "atomic B-29s" were stripped of their armament and armor plating, except for the tail turrets, to give them extra height and speed. Bomb-load capacity depended on the altitude and range flown. This varied from 5,000 pounds for a long-range, high-altitude flight to 20,000 pounds for a short distance flight at low altitude. Enola Gay's nuclear bomb, "Little Boy," weighed a little over 9,000 pounds. On that mission, the plane flew over the Pacific at a low altitude until she neared Japan, when she climbed to 31,060 feet.

Other features that marked the atomic B-29s of the 509th Composite Group were the strengthened bomb bays, new bomb suspension systems, white paint on the underside to minimize glare damage, fuel-injection engines, electronically controlled reversible propellers, and the planes' markings which consisted of an arrow pointing forward within a circle.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics/government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1945 **Builder Architect** Glenn L. Martin Co., Omaha, Nebraska

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Enola Gay's dropping of a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, had many significant outcomes affecting mankind. First, was the terrible devastation of the city of Hiroshima. Instantly, 78,000 people were killed; thousands more were wounded, either from the blast and resulting firestorm or from nuclear radiation. Of the city's 90,000 buildings, 62,000 were destroyed within a four-square-mile area. Second, the destruction of Hiroshima, followed by the similar destruction of Nagasaki three days later, caused the Emperor of Japan to instruct his government to surrender unconditionally, thus bringing the world's costliest war to a conclusion. Third, the introduction of nuclear warfare and the threat thereof had a far-reaching effect of awesome proportions on future world politics and international relations. Fourth, this new weapon and subsequent developments, such as the hydrogen bomb, have had a vast impact on battle readiness, tactics, and strategy, almost worldwide. Further, and strangely, out of the terror have come benefits for mankind in the form of nuclear medicine, energy, and peaceful scientific developments.

Atomic Bombs and Bombers

In 1939, Professor Albert Einstein wrote President Franklin D. Roosevelt describing the possibility of constructing a tremendously powerful bomb from uranium. In 1942, President Roosevelt placed the nation's resources behind the costly and time-consuming research and development in this field. Maj. Gen. Leslie R. Groves, Corps of Engineers, took charge of the work, which was code-named the Manhattan Project. Dr. J.R. Oppenheimer established a laboratory at Los Alamos, New Mexico, in the spring of 1943, where much of the important research was conducted. Shortly thereafter, Gen. Henry H. Arnold, commanding the U.S. Army Air Force, was instructed to provide specially modified B-29 bombers for a new weapon. The Glenn L. Martin Company of Omaha, Nebraska, turned out 46 of these "atomic bombers." Meanwhile, development of the new weapon proceeded under great security. Two types of bombs were developed simultaneously. One depended on uranium 235 for its chain reaction; the other made use of plutonium. In the Pacific, United States forces captured the Marianna islands of Saipan and Tinian and liberated Guam in the summer of 1944. Five B-29 airfields were constructed on the three islands for the long-range bombing of Japan.

On September 1, 1944, Lt. Col. Paul W. Tibbets, Jr., learned that he was to command the organization that would drop the new weapon. He took command of the 509th Composite Group and its one squadron, the 393d, at an airfield near Wendover in a remote section of Utah.[1] A self-contained unit, the 509th

1. An air group normally consisted of three squadrons.

Group even had its own military police. When fully formed, its complement was 225 officers and 1,542 enlisted men. At Wendover, Tibbets began a special air crew training program with new techniques in bomb-dropping and long-distance navigation. At one point, he took ten of his planes to Cuba for training in long-distance navigation over water at night.

In February 1945, Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, Pacific, with his headquarters now on Guam, learned that the atomic bomb would be available on August 1, 1945. At the same time, North Field on Tinian was selected as the base for the 509th Group. The first elements of Tibbets' command arrived on Tinian in May and, by July 1945, the 509th was fully settled into its closely guarded area.[2] Also in July, scientists exploded the first atomic device in a test at Alamogordo, New Mexico. Tibbets continued the training of his air crews at Tinian, flying over the Pacific and practicing bomb-dropping with conventional weapons on such Japanese-held islands as nearby Rota. On July 20, ten of the bombers began flying individually over Japan to further their experience and skills. Cruiser USS Indianapolis delivered components of the two bombs to Tinian while the uranium 235 was flown to the island.[3]

On July 24, Gen. Carl A. Spaatz, commanding the new U.S. Strategic Air Forces in the Pacific, received orders directing the 509th Group to deliver its first special weapon on the first good weather after August 3. Four possible targets were assigned: Hiroshima, Kokura, Niigata, or Nagasaki. Lt. Gen. Curtis LeMay arrived from Guam on August 3 bearing the orders for Special Bombing Mission No. 13. The strike was set for August 6, with Hiroshima selected as the primary target. On August 5, none other than Mao Tse-tung in northern China had his headquarters radio a favorable weather forecast to Tinian. That afternoon, a B-29 rolled toward loading pit 1 and the uranium bomb, Little Boy, was winched up into its bomb bay.

Tibbets decided to fly the B-29 commanded by Capt. Robert Lewis who would be along as co-pilot. That evening, Tibbets ordered his mother's name, Enola Gay, painted on the fuselage. Lewis, reportedly, became angry when he first saw the name on his plane, but, apparently, soon acquiesced to the fact. The hand-picked crew for Enola Gay was composed of:

---

2. Disgruntled Seabees of the 13th Naval Construction Battalion were forced to give up their comfortable quarters to the airmen.

3. A week later, a Japanese submarine sank Indianapolis.

Col. Paul W. Tibbets, Jr., pilot and commander
Capt. Robert Lewis, co-pilot
Maj. Thomas Ferebee, bombadier
Capt. Theodore Van Kirk, navigator
Lt. Jacob Beser, electronic surveillance
Lt. Morris R. Jeppson, ordnance officer
Sgt. Joseph Stiborik, radarman
Sgt. George Caron, tail gunner
Sgt. Richard Nelson, radioman
Sgt. Robert Shumard, assistant engineer
Sgt. Wyatt Duzenburg, flight engineer

Capt. William Parsons, U.S. Navy, was also on board. After Enola Gay was in the air, Parsons, assisted by Lieutenant Jeppson, armed Little Boy.

In addition to Colonel Tibbets' plane, six other B-29s were involved in the mission. Capt. Charles McKnight, in Top Secret, was posted at Iwo Jima, where a third bomb-loading pit had been prepared in case an emergency occurred to Enola Gay by the time it rendezvoused over that island. Three weather planes preceded Tibbets to Japan to report on weather conditions at the potential targets. (All three reported favorable conditions.) Two B-29s accompanied Tibbets, one carrying scientific instruments, the other, cameras. Maj. Charles Sweeny flew the scientific plane; three days later he would drop the plutonium bomb on Nagasaki.

The flight to Hiroshima was uneventful. As the plane approached the target, Tibbets informed the crew that they were carrying an atomic bomb. Enola Gay's bomb doors opened and the bomb dropped at 8:17 a.m. One minute later it detonated, 800 feet off from the aiming point. The rest was history. At 2:58 p.m., Enola Gay touched down at North Field, Tinian, a little more than twelve hours since her departure.

Colonel Tibbets retired from the U.S. Air Force about twenty years later with the rank of brigadier general. The Department of Defense donated Enola Gay to the Smithsonian Institution. On reflecting on the changes in public opinion over the years concerning nuclear warfare, Tibbets concluded that he was an expendable victim. To the American public on V-J Day, 1945, he was one of the indispensible heroes of World War II.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property not applicable

Quadrangle name _____ Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | | | | B | | | |
| C | | | | D | | | |
| E | | | | F | | | |
| G | | | | H | | | |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

Not applicable

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| state | code | county | code |

## 11. Form Prepared By

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| name/title | Erwin N. Thompson, Historian | | |
| organization | National Park Service, Denver Service Center | date | June 18, 1984 |
| street & number | 755 Parfet Street | telephone | (303) 234-4509 |
| city or town | Denver | state | Colorado 80225 |

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

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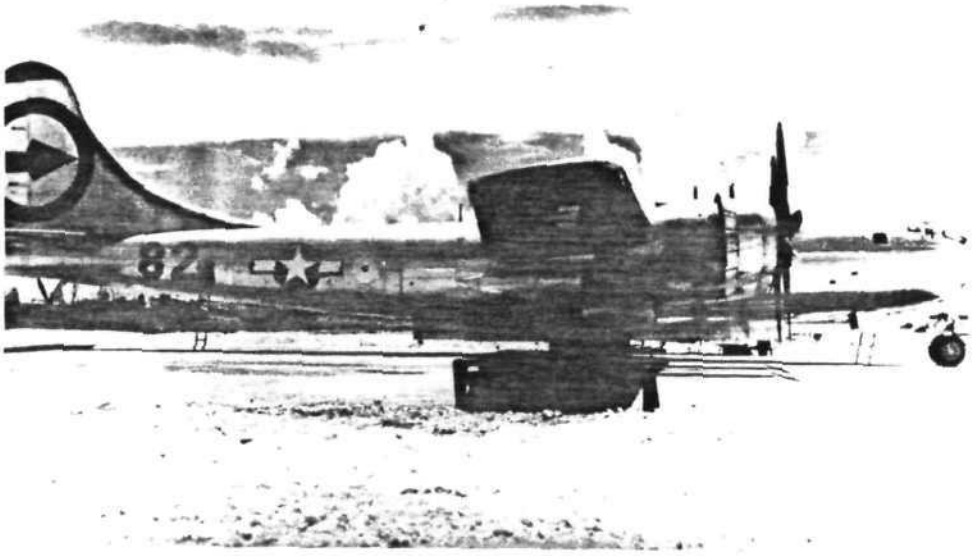
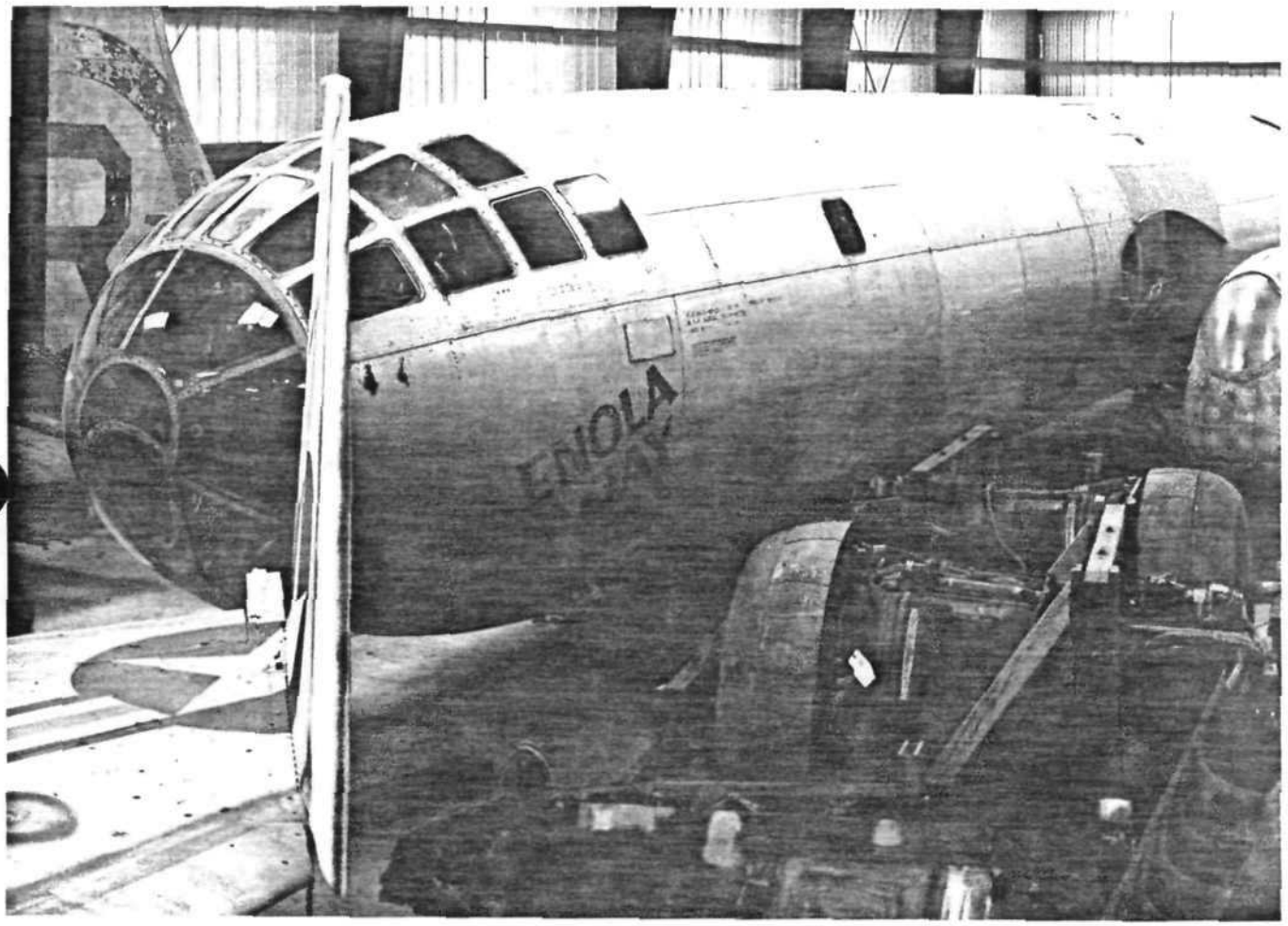



1. Enola Gay at North Field, Tinian.

Courtesy, Smithsonian Institution and U.S. Air Force

3. Hiroshima after the atomic bomb strike. Structure on the right remains unreconstructed as a peace memorial. October 7, 1945.

Courtesy, Smithsonian Institution and U.S. Air Force




5. Enola Gay today. The disassembled aircraft will be restored by the Smithsonian Institution and placed on public display.

Courtesy, Smithsonian Institution

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

# NHL — WWII PACIFIC

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic B-29 Bomber *Bock's Car*

and or common

## 2. Location

street & number U.S. Air Force Museum ___ not for publication

city, town Wright-Patterson Air Force Base ___ vicinity of

state Ohio code 39 county Greene code 057

## 3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ district | X public | ___ occupied | ___ agriculture | X museum |
| ___ building(s) | ___ private | X unoccupied | ___ commercial | ___ park |
| ___ structure | ___ both | ___ work in progress | ___ educational | ___ private residence |
| ___ site | **Public Acquisition** | **Accessible** | ___ entertainment | ___ religious |
| X object | ___ in process | ___ yes: restricted | ___ government | ___ scientific |
| | ___ being considered | X yes: unrestricted | ___ industrial | ___ transportation |
| | | ___ no | ___ military | ___ other: |

## 4. Owner of Property

name U.S. Department of the Air Force

street & number

city, town Washington ___ vicinity of state D.C.

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. U.S. Department of the Air Force

street & number

city, town Washington state D.C.

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

| Condition | | Check one | Check one | not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| X excellent | ___ deteriorated | X unaltered | ___ original site | |
| ___ good | ___ ruins | ___ altered | ___ moved | date _____ |
| ___ fair | ___ unexposed | | | |

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Early in 1940, at the request of the Army Air Corps, the Boeing Aircraft Company, Seattle, Washington, developed specifications for a "Very Long-Range" (VLR) bomber. Even before the prototypes were test flown, the Army Air Corps placed an order for this new aircraft which became known as the B-29 "Superfortress," the world's most superior bomber in World War II. Several advanced features were incorporated in the design of the plane, such as its being the first military craft to be pressurized, and the first heavy bomber to have tricycle landing gear. Another innovation was the development of retractable, remote-controlled gun turrets that allowed a gunner to operate more than one turret at a time. Also, the gunners, except the man in the tail, were physically removed from the noise and vibration created by the 0.5-inch machine guns.

Once the B-29 went into production, certain improvements were made between 1943 and 1945. In general, the aircraft's specifications, including Bock's Car's, were as follows: wing span, 141 feet, 2 inches; length, 99 feet; height of tail fin, 27 feet, 9 inches; loaded weight (with 12,000-pound bomb load), 67.5 tons; power, four 18-cylinder radial engines with superchargers; operation radius, 1,800 miles (3,600 miles round trip); maximum speed, 375 miles per hour at 25,000 feet; and the crew carried from eleven to thirteen men.

The original model was armed with ten 0.5-inch machine guns and one 20mm cannon. Armament was considerably reduced on some later models. Bock's Car and the other "atomic B-29s" were stripped of their armament and armor plating, except for the tail turrets, to give them extra height and speed. Bomb-load capacity depended on the altitude and range flown. This varied from 5,000 pounds for a long-range, high-altitude flight to 20,000 pounds for a short distance flight at low altitude. Bock's Car's nuclear bomb, "Fat Man," weighed 10,000 pounds. On its fateful mission, the plane flew over the Pacific at a low altitude until she neared Japan, when she climbed to over 30,000 feet.

Other features that marked the atomic B-29s of the 509th Composite Group were the strengthened bomb bays, new bomb suspension systems, white paint on the underside to minimize glare damage, fuel-injection engines, electronically controlled reversible propellers, and the planes' markings which consisted of an arrow pointing forward within a circle.

The nuclear weapon that the Bock's Car carried was a plutonium bomb, the same as the weapon that had been tested at Alamogordo, New Mexico, earlier. At the time it was dropped on Japan, it was the only nuclear weapon in the possession of the United States. It was 60 inches in diameter and 128 inches in length. Although it weight only five tons, Fat Man yielded the equivalent force of 20,000 tons of high explosive, which was greater than that of the uranium bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan.

# 8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | ___ landscape architecture | ___ religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | ___ sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | ___ architecture | ___ education | X military | ___ social/ humanitarian |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | ___ theater |
| ___ 1800–1899 | ___ commerce | ___ exploration settlement | ___ philosophy | ___ transportation |
| X 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | ___ politics government | ___ other (specify) |
| | | ___ invention | | |

**Specific dates** 1945 **Builder Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Bock's Car's dropping of a nuclear bomb on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945, along with the similar destruction of Hiroshima three days earlier, had many significant outcomes affecting mankind. First was the terrible devastation of Nagasaki. Instantly, 35,000 people were killed; 5,000 were missing; and 60,000 more were wounded, either from the blast and resulting firestorm or from nuclear radiation. Forty-five percent of Nagasaki was destroyed. Second, the devastation of Nagasaki and Hiroshima led to the Emperor of Japan instructing his government to surrender unconditionally, thus bringing the world's costliest war to a conclusion. Third, the introduction of nuclear warfare and the threat thereof had a far-reaching effect of awesome proportions on future world politics and international relations. Fourth, this new weapon and subsequent developments, such as the hydrogen bomb, have had a vast impact on battle readiness, tactics, and strategy, almost worldwide. Further, and strangely, out of the terror have come benefits for mankind in the form of nuclear medicine, energy, and peaceful scientific developments.

Atomic Bombs and Bombers

In 1939, Professor Albert Einstein wrote President Franklin D. Roosevelt describing the possibility of constructing a tremendously powerful bomb from uranium. In 1942, President Roosevelt placed the nation's resources behind the costly and time-consuming research and development in this field. Maj. Gen. Leslie R. Groves, Corps of Engineers, took charge of the work, which was code-named the Manhattan Project. Dr. J.R. Oppenheimer established a laboratory at Los Alamos, New Mexico, in the spring of 1943, where much of the important research was conducted. Shortly thereafter, Gen. Henry H. Arnold, commanding the U.S. Army Air Force, was instructed to provide specially modified B-29 bombers for a new weapon. The Glenn L. Martin Company of Omaha, Nebraska, turned out 46 of these "atomic bombers." Meanwhile, development of the new weapon proceeded under great security. Two types of bombs were developed simultaneously. One depended on uranium 235 for its chain reaction; the other made use of plutonium. In the Pacific, United States forces captured the Marianna islands of Saipan and Tinian and liberated Guam in the summer of 1944. Five B-29 airfields were constructed on the three islands for the long-range bombing of Japan.

On September 1, 1944, Lt. Col. Paul W. Tibbets, Jr., learned that he was to command the organization that would drop the new weapon. He took command of the 509th Composite Group and its one squadron, the 393d, at an airfield near Wendover in a remote section of Utah. A self-contained unit, the 509th Group even had its own military police. When fully formed, its complement was

225 officers and 1,542 enlisted men. At Wendover, Tibbets began a special air crew training program with new techniques in bomb-dropping and long-distance navigation. At one point, he took ten of his planes to Cuba for training in long-distance navigation over water at night. To command the 393d Heavy Bombardment Squadron, Tibbets selected Maj. Charles Sweeney. Described as a chubby-cheeked, charming Boston Irishman, Sweeney proceeded to drill his own air crew, Crew No. 15, until it was considered the best in the 509th Composite Group.

In February 1945, Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, Pacific, with his headquarters now on Guam, learned that the nuclear weapons would be available on August 1, 1945. At the same time, North Field on Tinian was selected as the base for the 509th Group. The first elements of the command arrived on Tinian in May and, by July 1945, the 509th was fully settled into its closely guarded area.[1] Also in July, scientists exploded the first atomic device in a test at Alamogordo, New Mexico. The air crews of Sweeney's squadron continued their intensive training at Tinian, flying over the Pacific and practicing bomb-dropping with conventional weapons on such Japanese-held islands as nearby Rota. On July 10, ten of the bombers began flying individually over Japan to further their experience and skills. Cruiser Indianapolis delivered components of the two bombs, one uranium and one plutonium, to Tinian in mid-July.[2]

On July 24, Gen. Carl A. Spaatz, commanding the new U.S. Strategic Air Forces in the Pacific, received orders directing the 509th Group to deliver its first special weapon on the first good weather after August 3. Four possible targets were assigned: Hiroshima, Kokura, Niigata, or Nagasaki. Lt. Gen. Curtis LeMay arrived from Guam on August 3 bearing the orders for the mission. The strike was set for August 6, with Hiroshima selected as the primary target.

Colonel Tibbets, piloting B-29 Enola Gay, departed Tinian bearing the uranium bomb. Flying his own bomber, Great Artiste, which was fitted with scientific instruments, Major Sweeney accompanied Tibbets on the fateful mission. At 8:17 a.m., August 6, Enola Gay dropped her terrible weapon. Hiroshima was destroyed. The B-29s returned safely to Tinian.

President Harry S Truman announced the event to the world and called on Japan to surrender to avoid ruin. In Japan, the government kept its people

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1. Disgruntled Seabees of the 13th Naval Construction Battalion were forced to give up their comfortable quarters to the airmen.

2. A week later, a Japanese submarine sank Indianapolis with a heavy loss of life.

ignorant of the immensity of the attack, perhaps not comprehending it itself. The Japanese not having reacted, preparations began on August 8 to drop the second weapon. General LeMay asked Tibbets if he wanted to lead this attack. Tibbets declined, saying he had had enough publicity. Squadron commander Sweeney was then chosen to drop the plutonium bomb on the primary target, Kokura, with Nagasaki designated as an alternative. Because Great Artiste was already fitted with scientific instruments, it would accompany the mission in the same role as it had at Hiroshima. Sweeney then "borrowed" Capt. Frederick C. Bock's B-29, Bock's Car. The big plane rolled over loading pit 2; Fat Man was hoisted aboard; and all was made ready.

Major Sweeney's flight on August 9 was beset with difficulties. Before taking off, the plane's fuel system developed a problem, but the major decided to risk the flight anyway. Weather forecasts had been threatening and, when the bomber reached Kokura, the city was obscured by clouds. Sweeney made three runs over the aiming point, a munitions complex, to no avail. Fuel running low, he decided on the alternate target. The overcast at Nagasaki was also extensive. Then, Bombardier Kermit Beaham spotted a break in the clouds and dropped the bomb. Because of the city's hilly terrain, casualties were fewer at Nagasaki than at Hiroshima, although the plutonium bomb was the more powerful and efficient. But that was a mere statistic; Nagasaki's casualties numbered 100,000.

Because of a rapidly developing fuel crisis, Major Sweeney headed to recently captured Okinawa Island south of Japan. There he guided Bock's Car down in a harrowing landing, refueled, and proceeded homeward to Tinian, where Bock's Car arrived twenty hours after her departure. There were no more nuclear weapons to deliver.

B-29 bombers carried out the last conventional bombing of Japan on August 14. On that day, the Emperor of Japan directed his ministers to accept the Allied terms of surrender. On September 2, 1945, Japan formally surrendered on board USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property not applicable

Quadrangle name ——— Quadrangle scale

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | | | | B | | | |
| C | | | | D | | | |
| E | | | | F | | | |
| G | | | | H | | | |

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

Not applicable

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

| state | code | county | code |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |

## 11. Form Prepared By

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| name/title | Erwin N. Thompson, Historian | | |
| organization | National Park Service, Denver Service Center | date | June 18, 1984 |
| street & number | 755 Parfet Street | telephone | (303) 234-4509 |
| city or town | Denver | state | Colorado 80225 |

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

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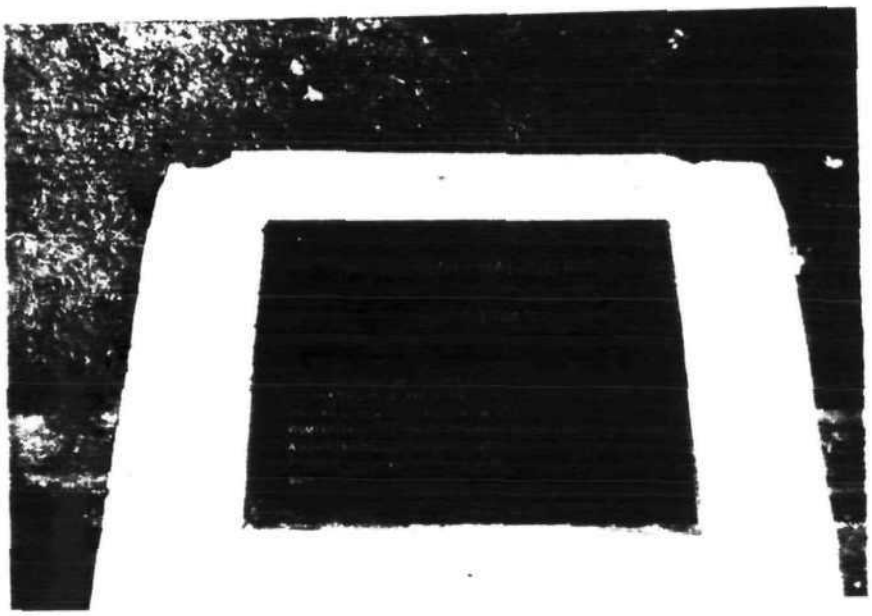
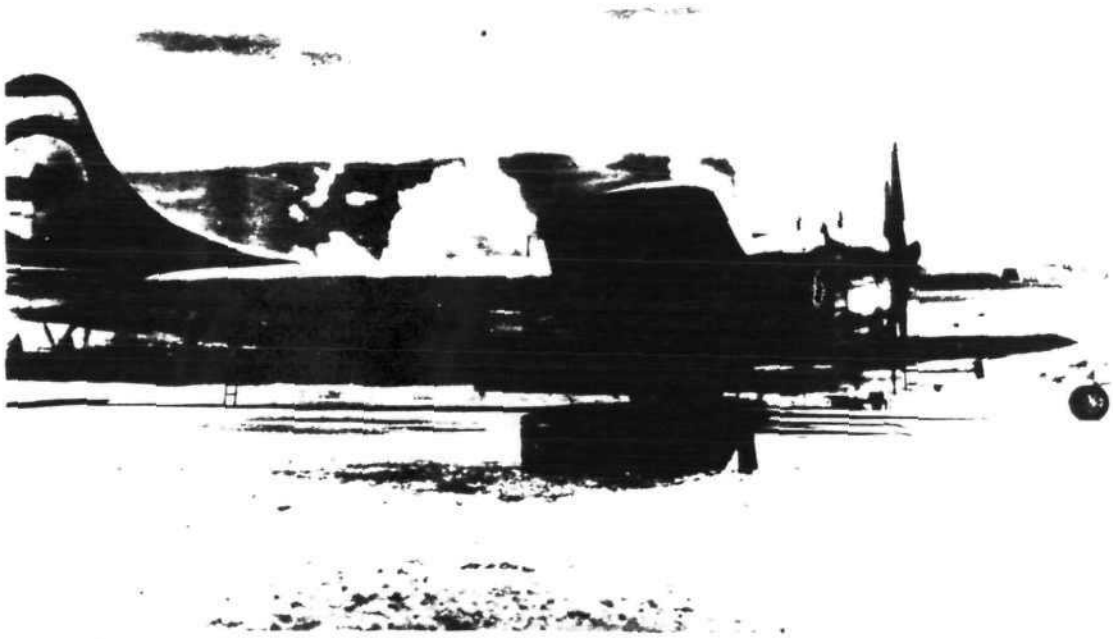


2. Above, loading pit two on Tinian. The pit has been filled in and landscaped. Below is the plaque dedicated to Major Sweeney and Bock's Car.

Photos by E.N. Thompson April 1983

1. The 509th Composite Group's compound on Tinian was tightly guarded. *Other airmen on the island could not figure out what the 509th was up to.*

Courtesy, Smithsonian Institution



3. B-29 Enola Gay which dropped a nuclear weapon on Hiroshima. Bock's Car was identical in appearance.

Courtesy, Smithsonian Institution