

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Cape Field at Fort Glenn, Umnak Island

and/or common Umnak Airport

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street & number ----- not for publication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	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

street & number 4111 Aviation Ave., P.O. Box 196900

city, town Anchorage ----- vicinity of state Alaska

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities

street & number 4111 Aviation Ave.

city, town Anchorage ----- state Alaska

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title ----- 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
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Umnak is one of the Fox Islands in the Aleutians, 100 miles west of former Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base on Unalaska Island and 800 air miles west of Anchorage. Fort Glenn, a World War II military post on Umnak, contained two major airfields, Cape Field, and its satellite, Berry Field.¹ The fort was located at Otter Point on the eastern end of the island. The first runway, 5,000 by 100 feet, was constructed at Cape Field between January and April 1942. Amid snowstorms and howling winds, army engineers surfaced the field with pierced steel-plank matting -- 80,000 pieces, each weighing 65 pounds.

Later, three, more-permanent runways were constructed of locally obtained volcanic cinders at, and the original airstrip became a taxiway, its matting being covered with cinders. As finally constructed the three runways measured: A--8,500 by 350 feet, B--5,000 by 150 feet, and C--7,500 by 300 feet. At Berry Field, two cinder runways eventually measured: A--8,500 by 200 feet, and C--7,500 by 300 feet. Both airfields are operable today, but there are no facilities and no personnel are stationed there.

Otter Point has no natural harbor, but the Army constructed three barge docks where supplies were discharged. Little is left of these timber docks and their remains are unusable. Two major roads were constructed on Umnak: a ten-mile route from Cape Field to Berry Field, and an eleven-mile road from Berry Field northwest to Cape Tanak where radar was installed. These roads continue to scar the tundra.

By the end of 1942, Fort Glenn had a strength of 10,579 personnel. Housing consisted of quonset huts (metal) and Pacific huts (plywood) dispersed over a large area and, usually, partly sunk into the tundra. Support facilities included a twenty-quonset hospital, five cold storage warehouses, 102 other warehouses of various sizes and

1. A second satellite field, having an emergency airstrip for light planes, was constructed southeast of Fort Glenn, south of Mount Tulik.

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/	
1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian	
1800-1899	commerce	exploration/settlement	philosophy	theater	
X 1900-	communications	industry	politics/government	transportation	
		invention		other (specify)	

Specific dates 1942-1945 **Builder/Architect** U.S. Army

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Fort Glenn, a secret airfield constructed under harsh conditions and time pressures on Umnak Island, had a runway and P-40 fighter aircraft in operation when Japanese carrier planes bombed and strafed Dutch Harbor naval installations on adjacent Unalaska Island on June 3 and 4, 1942. On June 3, Fort Glenn's fighters surprised the Japanese and destroyed two enemy observation planes and crippled two more. On June 4, they succeeded in knocking down five Japanese aircraft with a loss of two of their own. Fort Glenn, the army's most westerly field in the Aleutians in the summer of 1942, carried out a stream of missions against the Japanese forces who had occupied Kiska Island on June 7. These air raids, carried out in terrible weather conditions, continued until a new airfield was constructed on Adak farther out in the Aleutians. From July to October 1942, Brigadier General William O. Butler, commanding the Eleventh Air Force, maintained his advanced command post at Fort Glenn directing air operations against the Japanese.

Background

The U.S. Army had the mission of defending the naval installations at Dutch Harbor on Unalaska Island in the Aleutians. The adjacent Fort Mears provided ground defenses with its coastal and anti-aircraft guns and infantry outposts. Rugged Unalaska, however, had no level land on which to build a combat airfield. Even before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, the need for an airfield somewhere near Dutch Harbor became urgent in the minds of army commanders. In September 1941, the Alaska Defense Command's Engineer, the dynamic Colonel Benjamin B. Talley, rented a fishing boat at Dutch Harbor and traveled the eighty miles to the west to Umnak Island and reported it was satisfactory for an airfield.

Back in Washington, the U.S. Navy opposed an airfield on Umnak, arguing that it could provide its own air surveillance with seaplanes. It pointed out that Umnak had

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 7550 acres

Quadrangle name Unalaska

Quadrangle scale 1: 250,000

UTM References

A	013	3111	2100	519	20	01010
	Zone	Easting		Northing		

B	013	3111	2100	519	118	61010
	Zone	Easting		Northing		

C	013	307	0100	519	115	61010
	Zone	Easting		Northing		

D	013	301	16100	519	113	41010
	Zone	Easting		Northing		

E	013	303	21010	519	210	01010
	Zone	Easting		Northing		

F						
	Zone	Easting		Northing		

G						
	Zone	Easting		Northing		

H						
	Zone	Easting		Northing		

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 Western Regional Office, NPS

date June 4, 1986

street & number 450 Golden Gate Ave

telephone (415) 556-4165

city or town San Francisco

state CA 94102

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

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

materials, two laundries, a dry-cleaning plant, Link trainer building, ten shop buildings, powerhouse, and a vault for post finance. For defense against an enemy landing, the Army installed three concrete emplacements for 6-inch naval guns at Otter Point. These weapons were manned in August 1942. It is probable, too, that a battery of 155 mm guns was emplaced on Panama (concrete) mounts.

The U.S. Navy established a small air facility at Fort Glenn in the fall of 1942 (its Catalina flying boats had already been using the army facilities and runways for several months). Both army engineers and naval construction battalions erected the housing, storage facilities, and a Kodiak-type hangar.

A 1977 survey of Fort Glenn by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers found, among other things:

- 1,210 quonset or Pacific huts, standing or collapsed
- 628 buildings, wood, frame, under 10,000 square feet each
- 9 buildings, wood, frame, over 10,000 square feet each
- 153 revetments [there are 63 aircraft revetments]
- 4,800 petroleum barrels
- 58 steel magazines
- 2 metal sheds
- 1 hangar, Kodiak-type greatly deteriorated
- 2 docks, wood, pile
- 1 bunker, concrete
- 9 gun emplacements

The survey noted that one structure contained two 1943 paintings depicting homesick soldiers by Private Carl Ennes. It recommended that they be removed from Umnak and placed in a museum. A regional legend maintains that Major General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr.'s, residence stands at Fort Glenn. General Buckner, who commanded the Alaska Defense Command, did not live on Umnak. It is possible the quarters were occupied by Brigadier General William D. Butler, commanding the Eleventh Air Force, who established his advanced command post at Fort Glenn from July to October, 1942.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 3

Today, the State of Alaska owns both airfields and about 7,500 acres, or 88%, of the land occupied by Fort Glenn. Cape Field is now called Umnak Airport and Berry Field is known as North Shore Field. Adjacent land is owned by two native corporations, the St. Paul Island Tanadgusix Corporation and the Saint George Island Tanag Corporation, both in the Pribilof Islands. In recent years, 240,000 acres in eastern Umnak has a grazing lease for raising livestock (sheep).

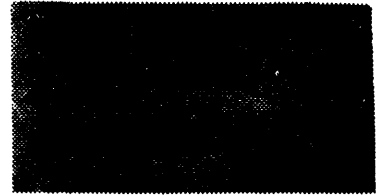
Nearly all the structures at former Fort Glenn have either collapsed or have greatly deteriorated. Few possess historical significance and none is deemed worthy of reconstruction.

The following sites and structures from the World War II period at Fort Glenn are judged to be historically significant in commemorating Umnak's role in the North Pacific campaign:

Cape Field (Umnak Airport) including the first runway (later, a taxiway), Runways A, B, and C, the other taxiways, and the aircraft revetments.
The concrete bunker identified by the Corps of Engineers
All coast artillery gun emplacements.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

no harbor and supplying a major airfield there would be an undue strain. The army responded by sending Talley to Washington to argue its case. In the end, the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved the airfield.

Before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Alaska's newspapers freely reported on military developments in the territory. Determined to retain secrecy at Umnak, the army allowed the public to believe that Blair Packing Company was erecting a fish cannery there. The initial contingents of troops occupied Umnak on February 2, 1942, and began the arduous task of establishing a base in the Aleutian winter. The post was named in honor of Major General Edwin P. Glenn who, as a young officer, had led several exploration expeditions in Alaska in 1898 and 1899.

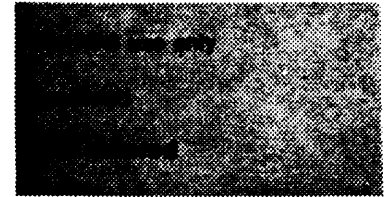
Colonel Talley pushed the construction of a runway. The army engineers struggled against the Aleutian weather which brought a steady mixture of snowstorms and screaming winds called williwaws. After removing the topsoil, engineers compacted the volcanic cinders that underlay eastern Umnak. In March, they covered the runway with pierced steel-plank matting, the first to arrive in Alaska. The runway was usable on March 31, when a C-53 aircraft landed on it that day. Military planes began arriving May 20. Colonel Talley called the accomplishment a near-miracle.

In May, the command was alerted to the coming Japanese attack. Reinforcements arrived and defense preparations were pushed vigorously. On June 3, Fort Glenn had 12 P-40 fighters, 6 B-26 bombers, 2 B-18 bombers (obsolete), one B-17 bomber, and 6 navy PBV Catalina patrol bombers (amphibians). Two waves of Japanese carrier planes attacked Dutch Harbor and Fort Mears on Unalaska June 3. Despite all the preparations, Fort Glenn did not learn of the attack until after the last enemy plane had departed for its carrier. Radio communications had broken down.

When communications were restored, Fort Glenn's P-40s took to the air. Later that day four Japanese reconnaissance seaplanes from cruisers appeared in the area. A dogfight

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

ensued. The enemy planes were no match for the fighters; two were shot down and the other two broke up when they hit the water near their ships (the latter crews were rescued). The Japanese now knew there was an airfield somewhere near Dutch Harbor, but fog kept its location a secret.

The Japanese renewed the attack on Dutch Harbor late in the afternoon of June 4. This time, American communications were working well. Following their attack, the Japanese coincidentally chose the air over the eastern end of Umnak as their rally point. The P-40s were waiting. In the ensuing dogfight, a Japanese fighter and two bombers were shot down; another two bombers, badly damaged, failed to return to the carriers. A Japanese plane, spotting the airfield in an opening in the fog, broke away from the fight and strafed the runway, effecting neither damage nor casualties. Several enemy planes attacked the seaplane tender, U.S.S. Williamson, in Umnak Pass causing twelve casualties. Two P-40s were shot down. The pilot of one crashed on Umnak and was able to walk into Fort Glenn on his own. The other, Lieutenant John J. Cape, was killed, the first member of the Eleventh Air Force to die in aerial combat. The airfield at Fort Glenn was named in his honor.

Meanwhile, the army bombers and Catalinas based at Fort Glenn sought out the Japanese task force. One B-26 returning to the field, after making no contact with the enemy vessels, crashed on landing and sent a torpedo tumbling end over end down the runway. In the evening of June 4, five B-26 bombers, responding to a sighting of the enemy by a PBY, took off from Umnak and three of them succeeded in locating Japanese ships. They launched torpedoes and believed they had scored at least one hit on a cruiser. The Japanese task force, however, departed unscathed.

One week later, a Navy PBY on patrol discovered the Japanese occupying Attu and Kiska in the western Aleutians. Immediately, B-24 bombers staged through Cape Field to bomb the enemy on Kiska. One bomber was knocked down by enemy anti-aircraft fire. The same day, a flight of B-17s made a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 4

high-altitude attack. From then on, daily missions were attempted against Kiska. The weather, however, was a greater enemy than the Japanese. Between June 11 and 30, only six successful missions were run. In July only eight missions out of fifteen dispatched completed the 1,200-mile round trip successfully.

During this period, a naval patrol squadron continued to use Cape Field for tactical operations. Army engineers strove to improve facilities of both Cape and Berry fields. At Cape they constructed three volcanic-cinder runways and converted the first runway, the one that had served so well when the Japanese attacked, into a taxiway. At Berry, two runways were constructed, both capable of handling fighters and bombers. As these facilities were completed the number of aircraft at Fort Glenn gradually increased. In the summer of 1942, the first Royal Canadian Air Force fighter squadron arrived.¹ By September the number of bombers on Umnak had grown to cause the formation of the 21st Bomber Group. Brigadier General William A. Butler, commanding the Eleventh Air Force, moved his advanced command post from Kodiak to Fort Glenn in July 1942.

Fort Glenn's role as an advanced base ended in September 1942, when an airfield was completed on Adak Island farther to the west. General Butler moved his advanced command post to the new field in October. Umnak's fighter squadrons continued to patrol the skies over Dutch Harbor. Otherwise, the island's exciting days lay behind it. It was now primarily a staging field for operations farther west.

1. The first Canadians to arrive were the 111th Fighter Squadron. Their arrival was marred by a great tragedy. The weather, as usual, was bad. Five of the planes crashed in the fog "in one awful moment when, one by one, they crashed into a mountainside near Dutch Harbor." John Haile Cole, Top Cover for America, The Air Force in Alaska, 1920-1983 (Missoula: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 1984), p. 86.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 5

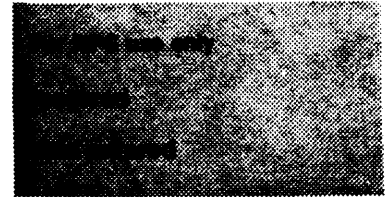
In 1943 this new role resulted in a spark of construction. America's first production B-29 Superfortress came off the line in mid-1943. Planners considered deploying these very-long-range bombers in various Pacific areas: Hawaii, China-Burma-India (CBI) theater, South Pacific, and Alaska. Only the CBI and Alaska could provide bases close enough to Japan to allow the big bombers to reach its industrial plants.

In December 1943, Alaska received authorization to reconstruct and pave runways according to B-29 specifications on Shemya, Adak, and Amchitka. A loaded B-29 required a runway of at least 8,500 feet in length. Although Umnak was too far east to be considered as a forward base for B-29s, its cinder runways at both fields were extended and widened to serve as staging fields for the Superfortresses: Cape -- Runway A, 8,500 by 350 feet; Runway C, 7,500 by 300 feet; and Berry -- Runway A, 8,500 by 200 feet; and Runway C, 7,500 by 300 feet. Then, in March 1944, the Alaska Department learned that all early B-29s would go elsewhere. In the end, none was stationed in Alaska.

In 1944, the Allied armies and navies smashed their way across the Central and Southwest Pacific, leaving Alaska more and more removed from military activities. On February 1, 1945, all of Fort Glenn, except Cape Field, was placed in a caretaking status. In January 1950, Cape Air Force Base was inactivated.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

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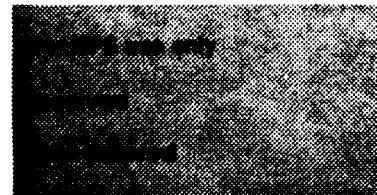
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

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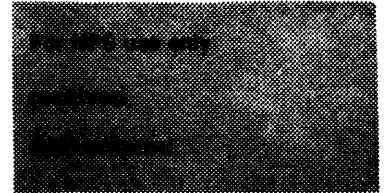
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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

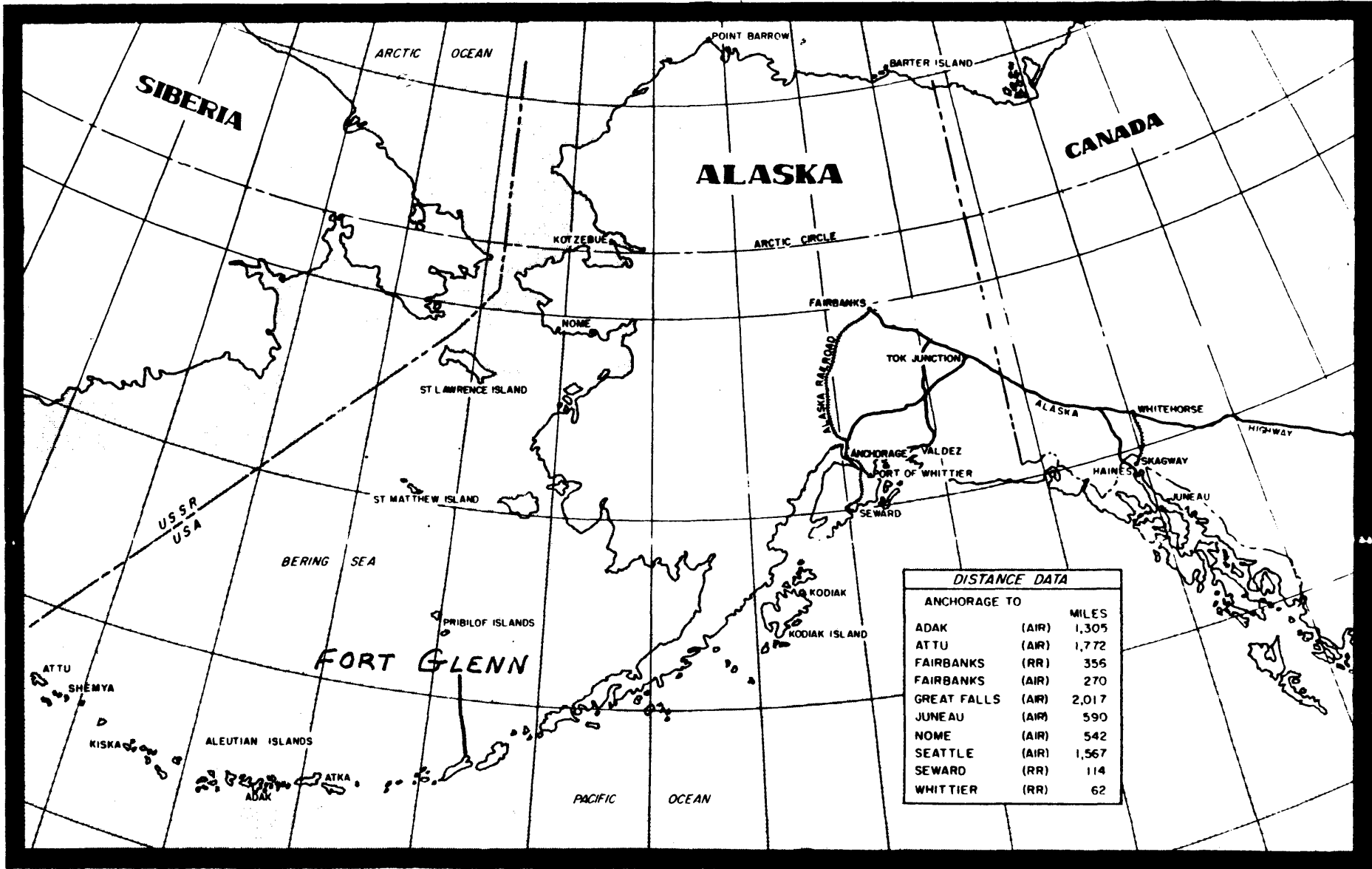
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Page 1

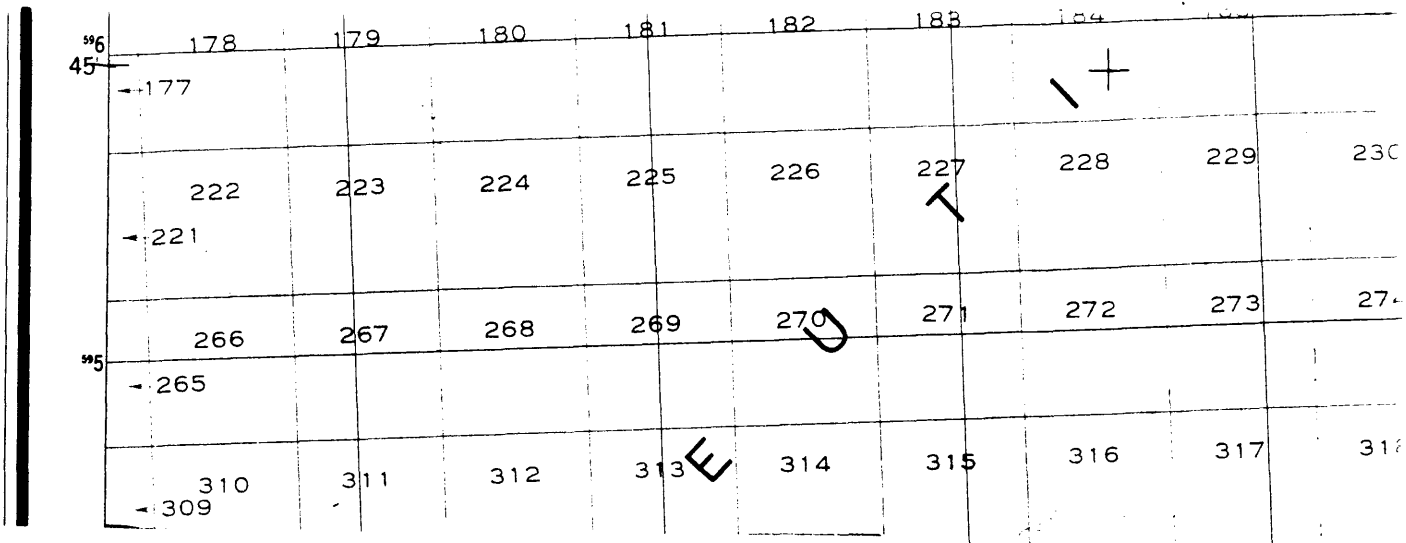
Beginning at an unnamed point on Umnak Island due west of Pusto Island, then due south in a straight line 4,225 feet to the top of Otter Point. Then southwest 123° in a straight line for 3.3 miles to a point of land that marks the southwest side of an unnamed bay. Then southwest 246° in a straight line for 3.5 miles to the mouth of an unnamed creek. Then north-northwest 13° in a straight line for 4.5 miles to where a road ends and a trail to the northwest begins. Then due east for five miles to the point of beginning.

This is the original boundary of Cape Field which lay within Fort Glenn during the war, and it is the boundary of the field that the U.S. Army turned over to the Alaska following World War II.

The location(s) of coastal defense guns at Fort Glenn has not yet been determined; it is believed that guns were emplaced at Otter Point which is within the boundaries.

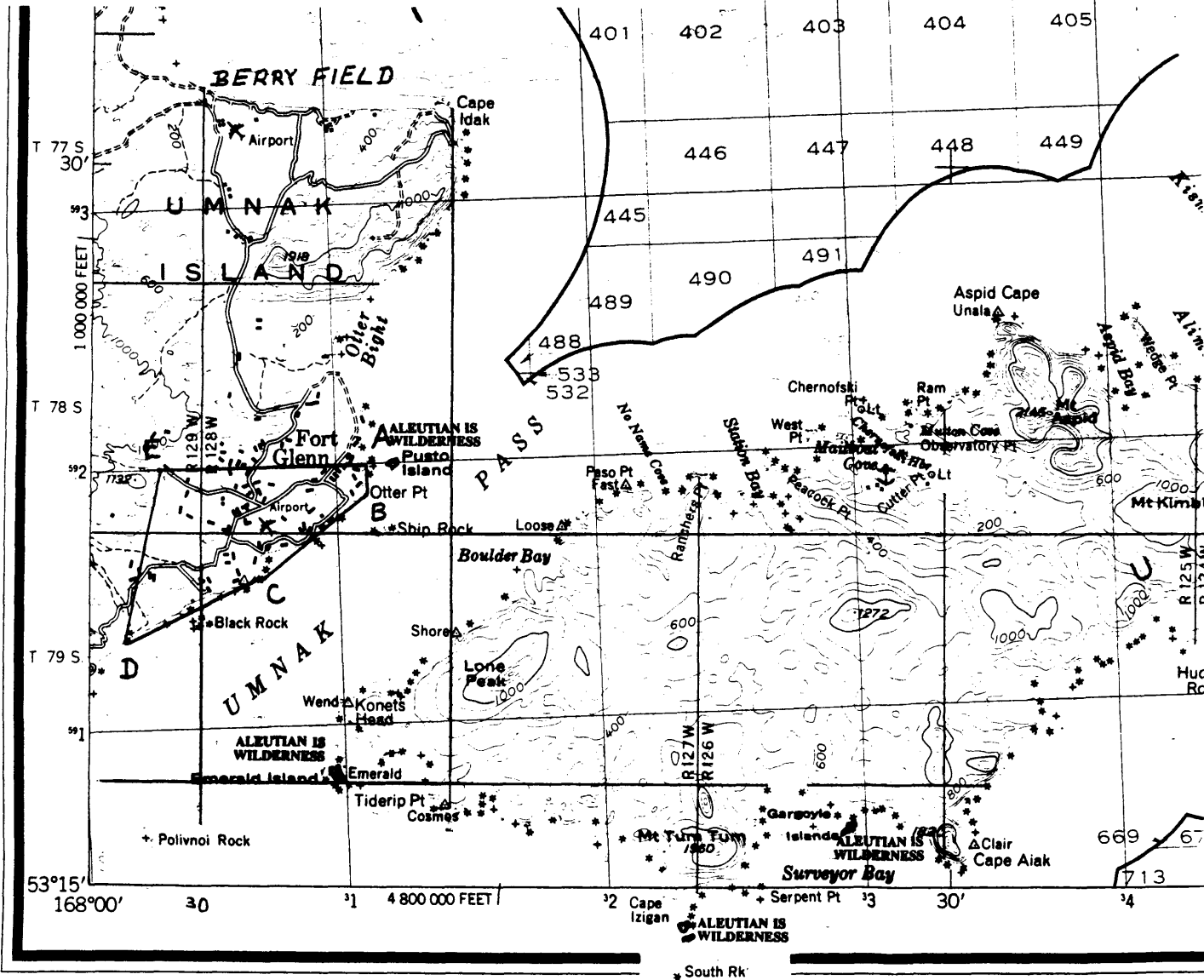


ALASKA



**Cape Field at Fort Glenn, Umnak Island
Unalaska Quadrangle (1:250,000 scale)**

- A. 03/311 200/5920 000
- B. 03/311 200/5918 600
- C. 03/307 000/5915 600
- D. 03/301 600/5913 400
- E. 03/303 200/5920 000



MAPPED BY NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE/NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION, AND U.S. CORPS OF ENGINEERS

FEDERAL RESERVATION BOUNDARIES ESTABLISHED BY THE ALASKA NATIONAL INTEREST LANDS CONSERVATION ACT, PL 96-487, DEC 2, 1980 ARE SHOWN AS COMPILED BY THE ADMINISTERING AGENCIES

CONTROL BY NOS/NOAA

TOPOGRAPHY FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY MULTIPLEX METHODS AND BY PLANE-TABLE SURVEYS, 1940-1944. AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN 1937-1943

THE ALASKA MARITIME NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE CONSISTS OF ALL THE PUBLIC LANDS IN THE COASTAL WATERS AND ADJACENT SEAS OF ALASKA CONSISTING OF ISLANDS, ISLETS, ROCKS, REEFS, CAPES AND SPIRES, AS WELL AS DESIGNATED MAINLAND AREAS

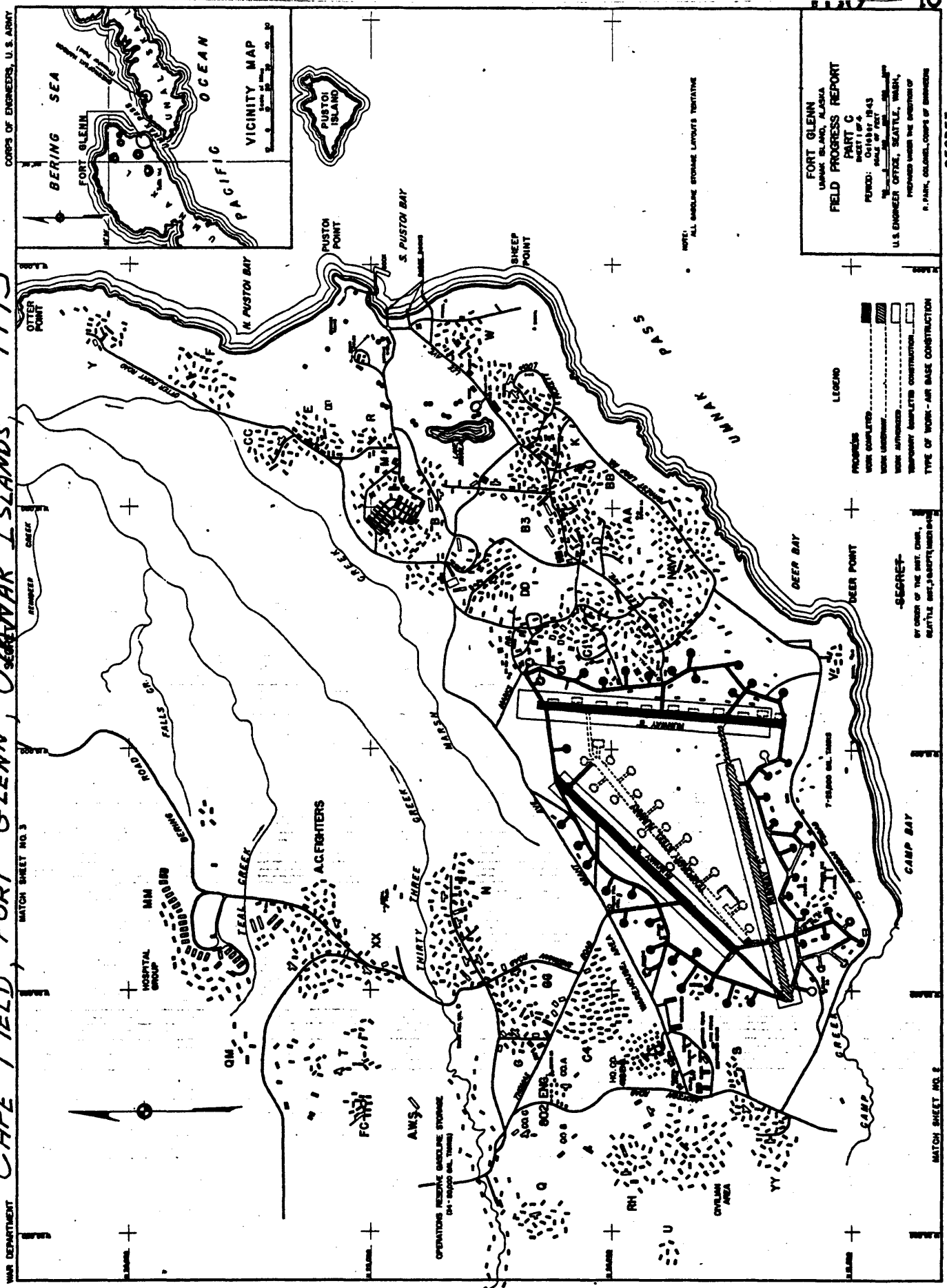
SELECTED HYDROGRAPHIC DATA COMPILED FROM NOS/NOAA CHARTS 16520 AND 16500

FT. GLENN

LI

W. G. Lewis (Dullin), NARS, August 23, 1982

CAPE FIELD, FORT GLENN, 1943, UNAK ISLANDS



FORT GLENN
UNAK ISLAND, ALASKA
FIELD PROGRESS REPORT
PART C
SHEET 1 OF 4
PERIOD: October, 1943
SCALE: 1/8" = 100'
PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
P. PARK, COLONEL, CORPS OF ENGINEERS

LEGEND
WORK COMPLETED
WORK AUTHORIZED
TEMPORARILY AUTHORIZED CONSTRUCTION
TYPE OF WORK - AIR BASE CONSTRUCTION

SECRET
BY ORDER OF THE DIST. DIR.,
SEATTLE DIST. HEADQUARTERS

SECRET

MATCH SHEET NO. 2