J

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

Anchorage

city, town

For NPS use only

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

Alaska

state

<u> 1. Nam</u>	ie						
historic	Japanese Occupation Site, Kiska Island						
and or common	Kiska Island, Aleutian Islands						
2. Loca	ation						
street & number				not for publication			
city, town		vicinity of					
state Alaska	code	02 county		code			
3. Clas	sification						
Category district building(s) structure _X_ site object	Ownership _X public private both Public Acquisition in process being considered	Status occupiedX unoccupied work in progress AccessibleX yes: restricted yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainmentX government industrial military	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation X_ other: refuge			
4. Own	er of Proper	ty					
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. Loca	ition of Lega	l Description	on				
courthouse, regis	stry of deeds, etc. U.S.	Fish and Wildlife Servi	ce				
street & number	1011 E. Tudor Road	1					
city, town	Anchorage		state	Alaska			
6. Repi	esentation i	n Existing	Surveys				
title Alaska He	ritage Resources Survey	has this pro	perty been determined el	igible? yes X n			
			federal X stat				

# 7. Description Condition — excellent — deteriorated — X unaltered — X original site

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

\_\_\_\_ altered

X ruins

\_\_\_ unexposed

\_\_\_ good \_X\_ fair

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.

\_\_\_ moved

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 navy, and civilians) and more permanent facilities. 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 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, 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.

### 8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899X 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agriculture architecture art commerce communications	_ community planning conservation economics education	landscape architecture law literature X military music philosophy politics government	e religion science sculpture social humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
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 Significant too was the could have been deployed elsewhere in the Pacific. successful Japanese withdrawal of the entire force in 1943 without a single loss of life, despite constant surveillance of American air and sea forces. 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.

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

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See separate sheet.

10. Geo	graphical	Data			
Acreage of nomina Quadrangle name UT M References	Kicks	900 acres	-	Quadrang	le scale 1:250,000
A 6 0 5 4 3 Zone Easting		3 5 10 0	B 6 0 Zone	5 4 9 0 0 0 0 Easting	5 7 5 4 4 0 0 Northing
		1  3 <sub>1</sub> 0 <sub>1</sub> 0  5  1 <sub>1</sub> 0 <sub>1</sub> 0	D <mark>6 0</mark> F <b>6 0</b> ] Н	[5 3 <sub>1</sub> 3 0 <sub>1</sub> 0 <sub>1</sub> 0  [5 3 <sub>1</sub> 7 8 <sub>1</sub> 0 <sub>1</sub> 0	[5,7 5,1 1,0,0] [5,7 7,0 4,0,0]
	y description and ju	stification			
See separate s	heet.				
List all states a	nd counties for pro	perties overla	oping state or c	ounty boundaries	
state		code	county		code
state		code	county		code
11. For	m Prepare	d By			
name title	Erwin N. Thompso	on, Historian			
organization Denver Service Center, NPS		date March 15, 1984			
street & number	755 Parfet Street		t	elephone 303-23	34-4509
city or town	Lakewood		s	tate Colora	ido
12. Stat	te Historio	<b>Prese</b>	rvation	Officer C	ertification
The evaluated sign	nificance of this prope	rty within the sta	ate is:		
	national	state	local		
665), I hereby nom according to the c	inate this property for riteria and procedures	inclusion in the set forth by the	<b>National Register</b>	and certify that it h	et of 1966 (Public Law 89– as been evaluated
State historic Pres	servation Officer signa	iture			
itle				date	
For NPS use o	nly dfy that this property is	s included in the	National Register		
	Making at Double			date	
Reeper of the I	National Register				
Attest:	Protion			date	
Chief of Regist	ration				

NPS Form 10-900-a

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

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

7. Description

Page

2

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

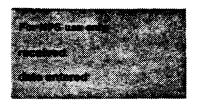
Today, Kiska is unoccupied. The entire island is a part of the Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, which is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.

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

<sup>\*</sup>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.

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

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

7. Description

Page

3

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.

NPS Form 10-900-a , (3-82)

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

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

For NPS use only received date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8. Significance

Page

2

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

<sup>\*</sup>Japanese Monograph No. 89. Northern Area Naval Operations, February 1943-August 1945, p. 73.

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

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

8. Significance

Page

3

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.

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

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8. Significance

Page

4

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.

<sup>\*&</sup>quot;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.

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

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9. Bibliography

Page

2

#### Bibliography

- Antonson, Joan. Alaska Division of Parks. "Kiska Japanese Occupation Site," National Register Nomination. September 15, 1977. (Apparently, not processed.)
- Burhans, Robert D. <u>The First Special Service Force, A War History of the North Americans</u>, 1942-1944. Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1947.
- Carter, Kit C. and Mueller, Robert. <u>Combat Chronology</u>, <u>1941-1945</u>. The Army Air Forces in World War II. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973.
- Conn, Stetson; Engleman, Rose C.; and Fairchild, Byron. <u>Guarding the United States and Its Outposts</u>. The Western Hemisphere. United States Army in World War II. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964.
- Dziuban, Stanley W. <u>Military Relations Between the United States and Canada, 1939-1945</u>. Special Studies. United States Army In World War II. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959.
- Garfield, Brian. The Thousand-Mile War: World War II In Alaska and the Aleutians. New York: Doubleday, 1969.
- Japanese Monographs: No. 46, Aleutians Operations Records, June 1942-July 1943; No. 47, Northern Area Monthly Combat Reports, January-July 1943; No. 88, Aleutian Naval Operations, 1942-1943; and No. 89, Northern Area Naval Operations, February 1943-August 1945. All are in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
- Love, Edmund G. The Hourglass. A History of the 7th Infantry Division in World War II. Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1950.
- Morison, Samuel Eliot. <u>Aleutians</u>, <u>Gilberts and Marshalls</u>, <u>June 1942-April 1944</u>. History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, vol. 7. Boston: Little, Brown, reprint 1975.
- U.S. Army, Alaska Engineer District. Corps of Engineers. Aleutian Islands and Lower Alaska Peninsula, Debris Removal and Cleanup. [Anchorage] 1977.
- U.S. Navy Department, Bureau of Yards and Docks. <u>Building the Navy's Bases in World War II.</u> 2 vols. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947.

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

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9. Bibliography

Page

3

- U.S. Navy History Center, Washington Navy Yard, D.C. G-2, Alaska Defense Command. "The Enemy on Kiska." n.d.
- U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence, U.S. Navy. The Aleutians Campaign, June 1942-August 1943. Combat Narratives. Washington: Navy History Center, 1945.
- U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey (Pacific). <u>Interrogations of Japanese Officials</u>. vol. 7.2. Naval Analysis Division [1946].
- Washington National Records Center. Alaska Department. U.S. Army: "Draft of Official History;" "Translation of Japanese Ensign's Notebook Discovered Tarawa 26 Nov 43;" "History of Kiska, 1943." Record Group 338.

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

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

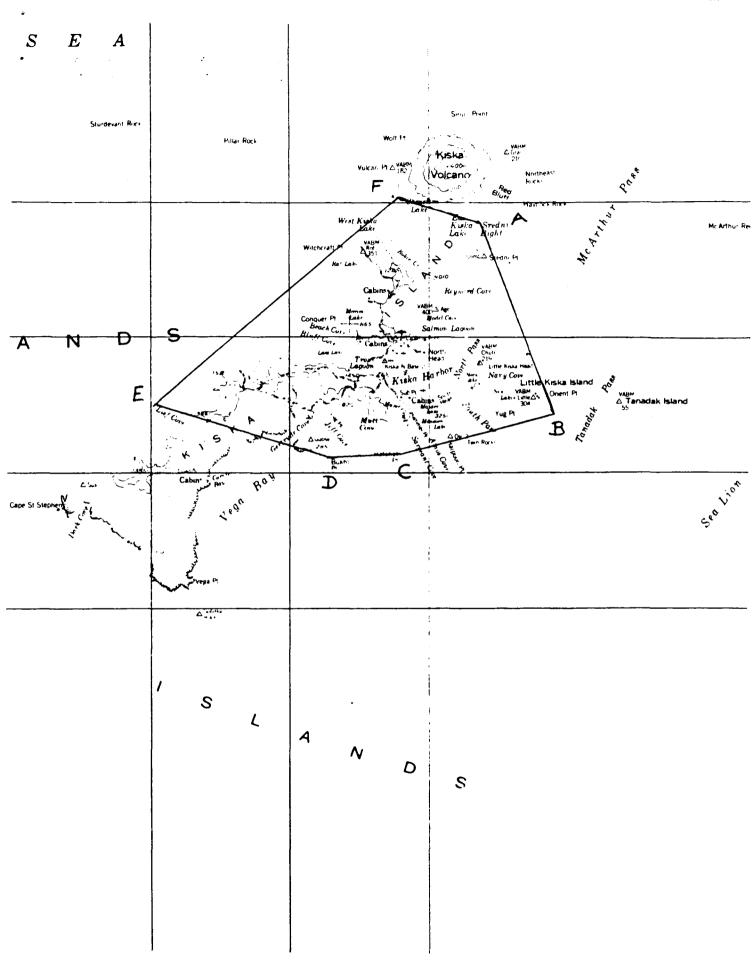
Item number 10. Geographic Data

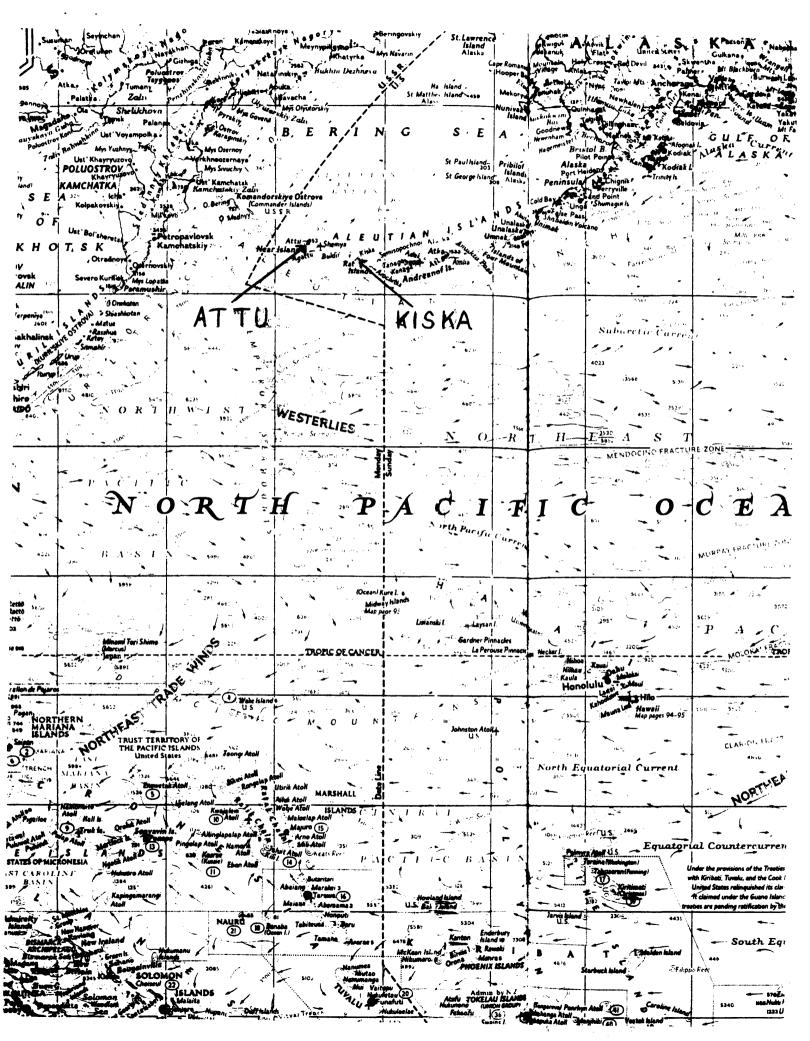
Page

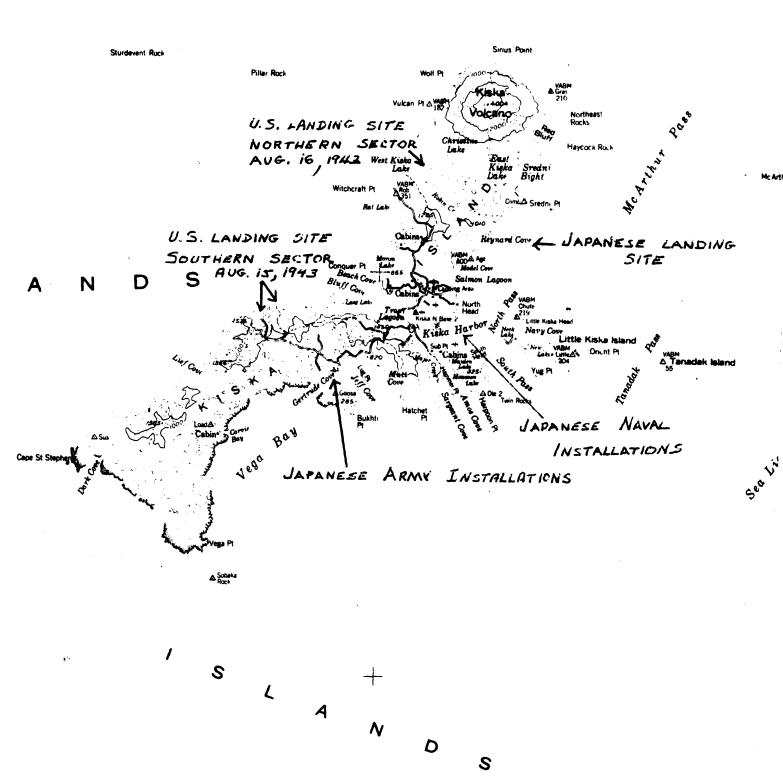
2

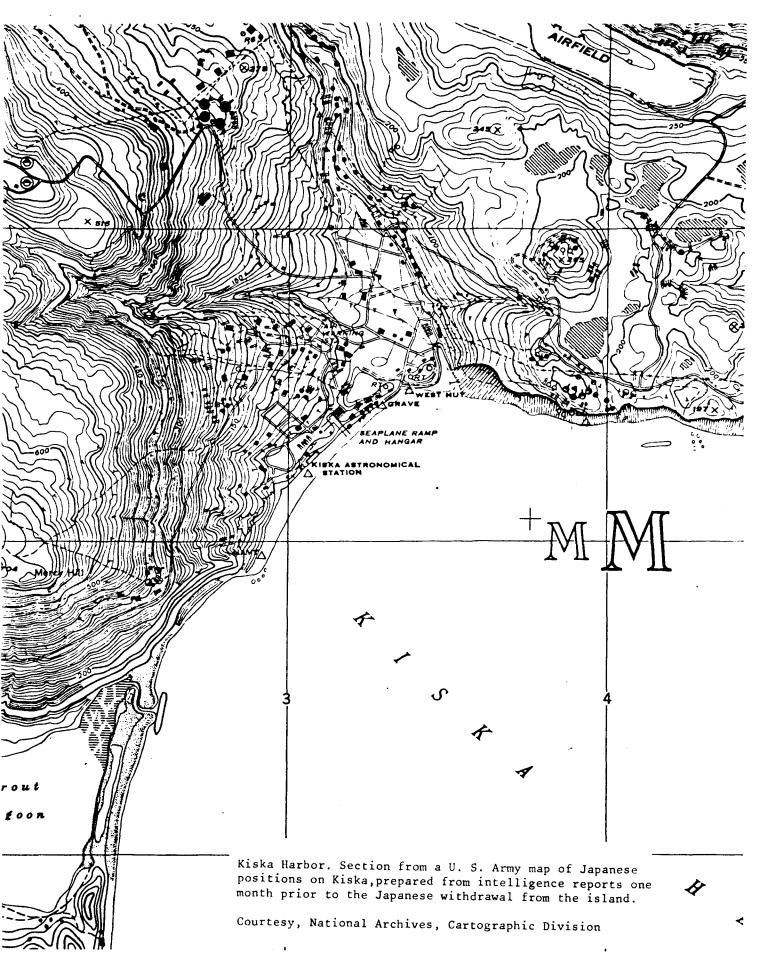
#### BOUNDARY

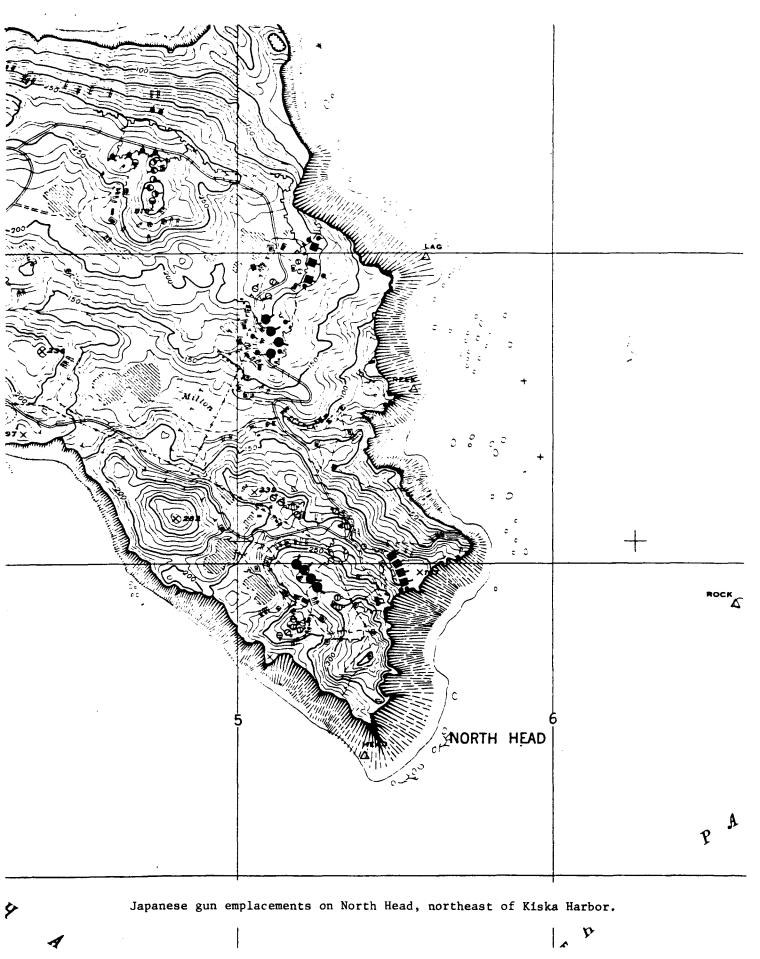
Starting at a point where an unnamed stream drains from the north into Sredni Bight, then in a straight line south southeast east to Orient Point at the east end of Little Kiska Island, then extending that line .75 mile beyond so as to include all of Little Kiska Island, then a straight line west southwest 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.

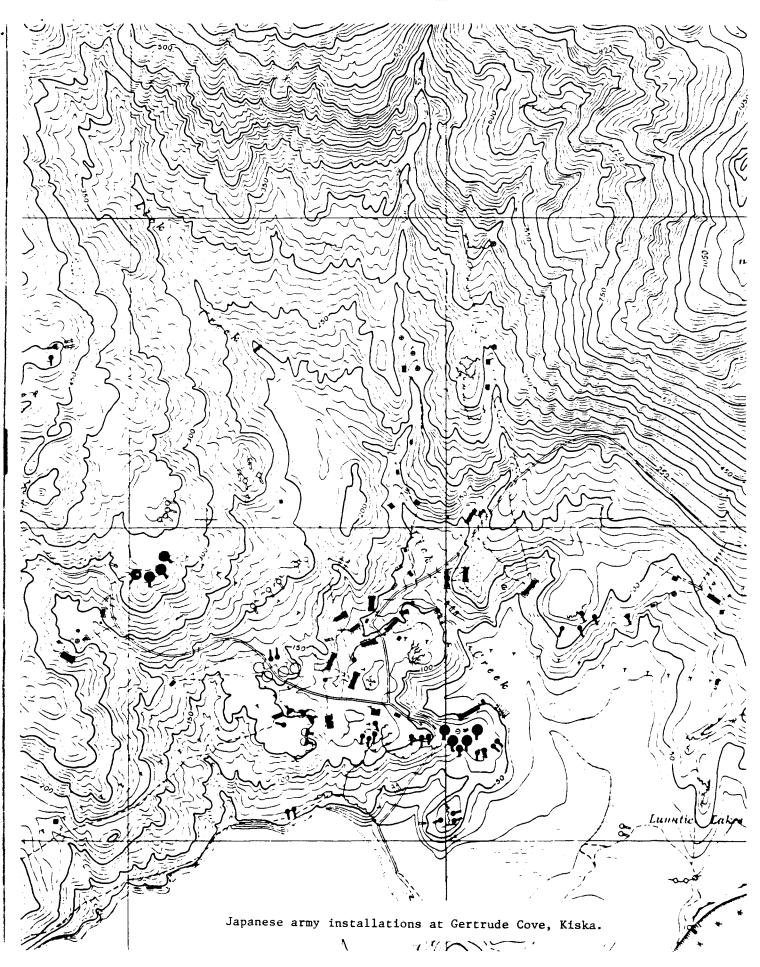












### ALASKA TOPOGRAPHIC SERIES THIRD JUDICIAL DIVISION 52 53 S $\boldsymbol{\mathit{E}}$ Sturdevant Rock Pillar Rock Northeast Rocks 577 52° ALEUTIAN 576 575 Sea Lion Rock Cape St Stepher