

Aleutian Islands in World War II Photograph Collection, circa 1942-1944

Overview of the Collection

Title	Aleutian Islands in World War II Photograph Collection
Dates	circa 1942-1944 (inclusive) 1938 1948
Quantity	22 photographic prints ((1 box))
Collection Number	PH0604
Summary	Photographs documenting Japanese and American activities in the Aleutian Islands of Alaska during World War II.
Repository	University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Special Collections University of Washington Libraries Box 352900 Seattle, WA 98195-2900 Telephone: 206-543-1929 Fax: 206-543-1931 speccoll@uw.edu
Access Restrictions	Open to the public.
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for encoding this finding aid was partially provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Historical Background

During World War II, in June, 1942, the Japanese seized the Aleutian Islands of Attu and Kiska. These islands are part of the chain of Aleutian Islands, located off the tip of Alaska, and provided the Japanese with a base from which to limit Allied air and sea operations in the North Pacific. In an effort to recapture the islands, the United States established airfields on Adak and Amchitka Islands in August, 1942. Plans were made in the spring of 1943 to recapture Kiska and Attu. It was eventually decided to bypass Kiska, and American and Canadian forces landed on Attu on May 11, 1943. Air and naval units supported the operation. The Japanese on Attu defended their position intensely, and the fighting continued until May 30, when Japan announced the loss of the island.

On August 15, 1943, a powerful Allied amphibious force, including a U.S. infantry division and elements of the Royal Canadian Army, assaulted the island of Kiska, where the Japanese had developed their largest base. To the surprise of the Allies, they found that the Japanese, under cover of heavy summer fog, had secretly evacuated the island. In August, 1943, the island was declared secure, thus ending the Aleutian Islands Campaign. During 1944 the Canadians left and U.S. Army presence in Alaska dropped from a high of 144,000 to 63,000 personnel. Although interest in the Alaskan theater waned, it was in the Aleutians that the Allies won their first theater-wide victory in World War II, ending Japan's only campaign in the Western Hemisphere.

Content Description

The collection contains photographs relating to Japanese and American activities in the Aleutian Islands during World War II and includes portraits, images of artillery and naval vessels, scenes of servicemen participating in leisure activities, and a photo of a shrine on the island of Attu. The collection also shows evidence of the fighting on the islands, including images of downed Japanese airplanes and the graves of Russian pilots.

Use of the Collection

Alternative Forms Available

[View selections from the collection in digital format](#)

Restrictions on Use

Restrictions may exist on reproduction, quotation, or publication. Contact Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries for details.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Source: Cowlitz County Museum, 1991.

Processing Note

Processed by Sue Kennedy and Jocelyn Spicer, 2002.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Japanese Presence in the Aleutians

Container(s)		Description
Folder	Item	
1	1-3	Japanese military personnel [view]
1	4-6	Japanese artillery with personnel on Attu Island [view]

Container(s)		Description
1	7	Interior of quarters on Attu Island [view]
1	8	Dugout on Attu Island
1	9	Shrine on Attu Island [view]

Allied Presence in the Aleutians

Container(s)		Description	Dates
Folder	Item		
2	10	Airplane at base [view]	
2	11-12	Naval vessels [view]	
2	13	Artillery	
2	14	Soldier working on jeep	
2	15	Personnel office and other buildings [view]	
2	16	Soldier in quarters [view]	1944
2	17-18	Boxing match with onlookers, Adak Island [view]	July 4, 1944

Casualties of War in the Aleutians

Container(s)		Description
Folder	Item	
3	19-21	Japanese airplanes shot down on Adak Island [view]
3	22	Graves of Russian flyers killed on Sherry Island [view]

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Artillery--Alaska--Aleutian Islands--Photographs
Attu, Battle of, Alaska, 1943

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Soldiers--Alaska--Aleutian Islands--Photographs
World War, 1939-1945--Alaska--Aleutian Islands--Photographs

Geographical Names :

Adak Island (Alaska)--Photographs
Aleutian Islands (Alaska)--Photographs
Attu Island (Alaska)--Photographs

Form or Genre Terms :

Photographs

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Visual Materials Collections (University of Washington)

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