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When the confusion and fog of the early June days had cleared away, the scouts of U.S. Task Force #8 found the Japanese task force in possession of Kiska and Attu. The occupation had probably taken place on 6 June, but the weather had prevented air reconnaissance until the 8th. No official report could be made until the 11th. The following day heavy bombers of the Eleventh Air Force made their first attack on Kiska, a distance of over 600 miles from the base at Umnak. A squadron of B-24's had been moved up and it was a force of these Liberators that made the initial attack. One was lost, but the mission by no means failed, for it hit and damaged two cruisers and one destroyer. A few days later, on the 18th, another attack accounted for a transport in Kiska Harbor.

For the rest of the summer of 1942 the pattern of events worked itself out in something like this. Whenever the weather permitted, bombing and strafing missions were at work over Kiska and Attu in an endeavor to whittle down the enemy as he was trying to augment his force. Reconnaissance was left mostly to the Navy, though the Eleventh Air Force sent out one weather mission, usually flown by a heavy bomber, about every day.

The weather proved to be an enemy even more serious to the American fliers than the Japanese. A mission from Umnak might look forward optimistically to dodging the antiaircraft fire which the enemy delivered, but not to travelling over some 600 miles of deadly cold water under weather conditions that could change more rapidly than the planes could

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By Lt. Arthur E. Bergman

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fly. Even the most up-to-date information could not with certainty forecast the weather far enough ahead to cover one of these long-range attacks in a region where the storms themselves were incubated. During that summer only 10 to 15 per cent of U. S. mission reached the target and bombed. Those that were not recalled in accordance with adverse weather information frequently found the target completely overcast with fog or low hanging clouds. On an average of 82 per cent of the time the ceiling in the Aleutians is below 5000 feet, with visibility less than 6 miles for an average of one-third of the time. Consequently, many of the bombing runs had to be made at low altitude or even by dead-reckoning, with bearings taken from the old volcanic crater which provided almost the only landmark in the outer islands. Of course, the weather worked both ways, and discouraged the enemy from undertaking very many long-range raids with the few heavy, four-engine flying boats they had assembled at Kiska.

The Japanese spent the summer consolidating and expanding their position. Even during June it was estimated that they had doubled their installations. They apparently concentrated their efforts on defense, anticipating just such long-range attacks as they received from the Unak base. Their radar warning system seems to have worked with very good results, for the U. S. bombers almost always encountered rigorous and immediate antiaircraft fire—usually concentrated on breaks in the cloud formations and usually accurate. In spite of serious blows to their shipping, delivered by the Army bombers and by the Navy's

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submarines, they continued to supply their bases more than adequately.

By 1 September the situation had become clearly unstable: neither side could afford to continue the routine thrust and parry which had been necessitated by the extreme distance separating the opposing bases. The Japanese had settled down for a breathing spell beyond the point where U. S. bombers could operate without discouraging risk. They had gained the respite they needed, had adjusted their plans to meet the situation created by the establishment of U. S. air bases at Umnak and Cold Bay, and were ready to extend their control of the Western Islands. Unless they could extend their control eastward along the causeway, they would be seriously threatened in the bases they already occupied by U. S. efforts to extend their striking power to the westward, and they seem to have had no doubt about the need for holding a strong position in the Aleutians. From such a position they could guard against any junction of forces between U. S. and Russia, prevent any serious attempt against Japan proper by way of the Kurile Islands, and constitute a constant and very real threat to U. S. positions. For exactly the opposite reasons it was clear to U. S. authorities that bases should be established from which operations against Kiska and Attu could be conducted more frequently, more readily, and more effectively. All strategic considerations pointed in that direction; and in view of the fact that the Japanese were reported reconnoitering Adak and Amchitka and other potential operating bases between Kiska and Umnak, it appeared that action to be successful would have to be undertaken very soon.

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Toward the end of the summer, therefore, the Aleutian campaign became focussed on those islands which could be made into operating fields for land-based planes. For the time being it was a question of Adak in particular, for that island not only possessed good terrain for constructing landing strips but lay at a convenient distance between Umnak and Kiska--convenient, that is, for the side that could get there first. Happily for the allied cause, the American forces were able to land successfully on Adak on 31 August.

Two days before Colonel Castner, G-2 for ADC, led a party of intelligence scouts to Adak, slipping in to the island at midnight on rubber boats launched from submarines. Between periods of hiding from Japanese reconnaissance planes they managed to survey the island's possibilities and to signal watchful PBY's which in turn carried word back to the waiting task force. At dawn on the 31st a convoy of cargo boats and transport scows carrying troops, guns, and engineering equipment moved in on Adak under cover of the Navy guns. Bombers and fighters from elements of the Eleventh Air Force provided an aerial screen for the landing force while the Navy's PBY's conducted wide sea searches.

Work on the landing strip and on gun emplacements began at once. Taking a leaf from the Japanese book of tactics, the U. S. forces took advantage of a stretch of obscure weather which, while it certainly added to the difficulties of landing and of construction, kept the enemy from becoming a serious nuisance. To occupy them still further and keep them busy at Kiska and Attu, Eleventh Air Force bombers conducted missions to the Kiska area. Incredible as it may seem, on the

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very day of the landing a flight of P-38's accompanied the bombers in what was at that time one of the longest fighter combat missions ever flown--from Umnak to Kiska, a matter of over 600 miles. By 10 September enough of a runway had been shaped out of the volcanic soil of Adak to permit a bomber to land. Fighters and bombers moved in between that date and the 13th under the eye of General Butler himself. This mushroom field, constructed almost over night, cut down the striking distance between the opponents by about one-half.

Without losing a moment, General Butler turned the advantage the new advanced base gave to the side which had the striking force. On the very next day (the 14th) the first major attack was launched from Adak against Kiska. Twelve B-24's, each with two tons of high explosive and incendiary bombs soared over Kiska harbor at wave-clipping levels, supported by 14 P-39's and 14 P-38's. They shot down 5 Japanese planes and bombed 3 surfaced submarines, a 4-engine bomber, 3 large cargo vessels and 2 minesweepers. About 500 of the enemy were killed by the furious strafing of the camp area, while the bombers set the buildings on fire with their incendiaries. The only U. S. casualties were suffered as a result of the collision of 2 P-38's, both overzealous after the same target.

The raid of 14 September 1942 had proved beyond doubt that, once within striking distance of the enemy, the Eleventh Air Force could strike hard. It also inaugurated a new phase of the Aleutian campaign during which the speed of the air war became suddenly increased. It

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was now possible to send bombers to Attu with good effect and to provide Kiska missions with fighter escort. Under fighter protection the bombers could make low-level attacks with intensity and so increase the accuracy of their bombing and at the same time relieve themselves of at least some of the limitations placed on them by the low ceilings so prevalent in the islands.

It was also possible now for the Japanese to counterattack with greater ease than before. But they were never allowed to take the offensive except for a few retaliatory raids over Adak. Since the early days of June it had been evident that the Eleventh Air Force could more than match air power with the Japanese. With apparently limited resources, the enemy had originally elected to hold a position to which reinforcements could be brought with less risk than to a base nearer Alaska. As time went on, they found it impossible to do more than maintain a minimum force because the U. S. attacks kept their reinforcements cut down about as rapidly as they came in. Such reinforcements as they could muster they brought in crated and boxed from Paramushiro on small transports. There they usually assembled at Attu, though sometimes they sent them directly to Kiska. But in spite of energetic effort in this direction, their air force seldom if ever exceeded 14 planes and was usually much smaller. No sooner would they assemble a few single-float or double-float aircraft than a raid by the Eleventh Air Force would either destroy them in the air or wreck them in the water. As yet they had no facilities for land-based aircraft. On

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29 September 1942, for example, U. S. planes accounted for 5 Japanese fighters in combat over Kiska; on 5 October 1942 they destroyed 6 more. On 9 November 1942 a force of 4 P-38's and 1 B-17 strafed and bombed 8 enemy fighters in Holtz Bay, Attu, where they were probably awaiting transfer to Kiska after having been brought in and assembled there. This left the Japanese virtually without air support. On the average American fighters destroyed half the fighter opposition they encountered on each raid. The result was that, even when they had planes to work with, the Japanese avoided combat as far as possible and pressed their attack on bombing formations only at the moment when the target was reached, hoping no doubt to distract the attackers to such an extent that their efforts could be negligible.

The American occupation of Adak and subsequent action led rapidly to another crisis in the Aleutian air war, to another situation in which neither side could afford to sit still. Again it became a question which side could take aggressive action first and most effectively. Again the strategic weight centered on air power; and once more the Eleventh Air Force had superiority in the air.

For that reason Japanese action would necessarily be directed either to neutralizing the U. S. base at Adak from which most of Kiska's grief had originated since the 14th of September, or to secure a base more favorable than Kiska for operating land-based planes which alone could meet the Eleventh Air Force with opposition in kind. The only other alternative would be to dig in still more deeply on Kiska and Attu and

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try to withstand whatever siege might be imposed on them or to withdraw, a move which in the Japanese plan of strategy would be the last resort. Pressure from the American forces indicated that a siege would be disastrous; submarine and bomber attacks on shipping had already produced a shortage of food and clothing as well as planes and that situation would only deteriorate still more unless checked by aggressive action. But the aggressive possibilities also presented difficulties. To neutralize the U. S. position at Adak would require carriers, none of which were apparently available, and at least two divisions of ground troops with suitable support and supply and with the assurance of about 50 per cent casualty. To establish a new base for land-based aircraft seemed much more feasible. Potential ones existed at several points, including Amchitka, Sheayo, Agattu. Kiska and Attu could also be developed for this purpose. Occupation of Amchitka or some flanking action such as occupation of the Semichis seemed most likely. With these possibilities in mind, the American forces had to shape their plans for aggressive action.

By the middle of October the opposing forces stood in about the following strength: in addition to heavy ground forces at Unak, the U. S. forces had at Adak 3 heavy bombardment squadrons (2 B-24's and 1 B-17) and 3 fighter squadrons (P-40, P-39, P-38). Most of these planes, with the exception of the P-39's which were out of commission as a result of mechanical trouble, were in fighting shape. The Japanese had about 5,000 men on Kiska with adequate ground armament.

SECRET

They had built several camps with hangars, shops, huts, radar stations, and heavy, medium, and light gun emplacements. Since the raid of 14 September they had dispersed or camouflaged their facilities very cleverly. Currently, they were noticed to be building a submarine base.

Japanese plans seem to have been in a state of flux at this point. It was obvious that if Kiska were to be kept (and there appeared to be little doubt on that issue), some rearrangement of forces would have to be made. At first it looked as though they planned to concentrate their entire strength at Kiska. They had evacuated Attu about 22 September. But Attu possessed virtues, both as a potential base for land planes and as a reinforcing depot for the main force at Kiska, so about 20 October Japanese forces were once more operating from Holtz Bay. It was also obvious that something must be done to relieve their supply situation. They were still able to bring in a couple of transports per week supplemented by submarine supply and the use of 50 foot barges to run supplies through the many dangerous waters near Kiska. But their shipping losses had been heavy. Moreover, the increasing garrison of Kiska presented increasing demands for supply; and, as early as September, food and clothing were subjects much on the minds of the Japanese authorities.

Late in November 1942 the enemy made an attempt to establish itself on the Semichis, where the best site existed for a landing field within effective distance of the U. S. forces. A convoy was reported on its

way to occupy the Semichis, but, when spotted by Navy patrol planes while still west of Attu, it decided to return to Paramushiru rather than risk attack. This action appears either to have been over-cautious or to have reflected less striking power than the situation required. Had the plan been carried out, the Japanese would have gained freedom of action almost equal to that which they had possessed in June.

In December the enemy was noticed trying another approach. This time they were apparently contemplating the occupation of Amchitka which had the positive virtue of offering a site for a landing field, and which, on the negative side, constituted a standing threat to Kiska itself, should American forces occupy it. The latter had been well aware of the strategic importance of Amchitka. Lying within 85 miles of Kiska harbor it offered a position of unrivalled power to a force strong enough to exploit it under the very eyes, as it were, of the enemy. And the Eleventh Air Force had been able to more than maintain its inferiority in the air, in spite of the constant, if not copious, flow of air reinforcements from Japan.

On 12 February 1943 U. S. forces occupied Amchitka. Probably the enemy felt scarcely able with its already strained supply line and its relative weakness in air protection to extend itself farther in the direction of the U. S. air power. Whatever the reason, its failure to follow up reconnaissance of the island in effect doomed its garrisons at Kiska and Attu. As in the occupation of Adak, the Eleventh Air Force provided support for the landing operation by pounding the Kiska installations, thereby keeping the Japanese air striking force (about 9

SECRET

single-float planes and 4 twin-float planes) tied to its bases. Units of the XI Fighter Command with a squadron of R.C.A.F. fighters attached for tactical control, supplied necessary cover and air warning service for the advanced bases at Cold Bay, Unalakleet, Dutch Harbor, Kodiak, and Adak. Planes of the fleet Air Wing Four provided the wide sea search necessary for locating enemy forces. As at Adak, the chief enemy during the landing was the weather. Gales and williwaws with gusts up to 60 miles and loaded with sleet and snow harassed the U. S. forces. The result was that of the very considerable losses suffered by the Eleventh Air Force, all were operational losses. In addition to bad icing conditions and poor visibility, the air striking force was hampered by the fact that Adak landing field had been flooded by excessive rains, making uninterrupted operations from that strategic point impossible. Consequently, Amchitka was vulnerable until the landing strip could be completed. But the Japanese gave little trouble. Owing in part to the thick weather which could be made to work for other agencies than the Japanese army, they apparently failed to notice the activity on Amchitka until 24 January when they dispatched a series of light and generally ineffective attacks on the harbor.

Even these token efforts came to an end when on 17 February 1943 Warhawks and Lightnings landed on the new Amchitka fighter strip. From that date a new phase of the campaign began. U. S. fighters commanded the air over Kiska and, more important, for the first time regular shuttle-bombing of that island by fighter aircraft became possible.

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The first such mission was sent to Kiska on 3 March 1943 and from then on it became standard procedure for P-40's and P-38's to carry anything up to one 1000-lb. demolition bomb each for the systematic reduction of the Japanese garrison. When it became possible to have bombers at Amchitka, the Japanese not only suffered increased hammering at both their island bases but found it next to impossible to bring in supplies systematically by surface transport. In short, the Aleutian campaign became more than ever a battle of supply--and a very unequal one at that. Though the enemy seemed to possess capabilities for offense which the U. S. forces could not overlook, the occupation of Amchitka made the position of the Japanese in the Aleutians in the long run untenable. Only a powerful task force, strong enough to fight its way through the naval and air blockade, could hope to establish the Kiska or Attu garrisons on anything like a level with the U. S. task force, to say nothing of driving the Americans from their positions in the outer islands. And pressure elsewhere made any such move unlikely.

Throughout March and April of 1943 units of the Eleventh Air Force made increasingly severe bombing attacks on Kiska or Attu. Every installation and each item of shipping suffered its share of the attacks. Special attention was given to landing strips then under construction on both islands. The enemy had tried to compensate for its failure to establish advanced land-plane bases by constructing landing strips at home. The Kiska project was so thoroughly discouraged by American bombing sorties that it was never completed. The Attu strip

SECRET

proved more successful. During these weeks, an average of 46 sorties per day operated over Kiska alone for those days on which bombardment was possible. Now that the distance from the target had been shortened, conditions were so much more favorable for operating in doubtful weather that only 13 per cent of the sorties to Kiska were abortive as compared to 26 per cent from September 1942 to March 1943.

On 15 April the heaviest attack to date was made on Kiska. One hundred twelve planes participated in raids which began at 7:30 A.M. and did not end until 8:30 P.M. Ninety-two tons of demolition and fragmentation bombs were dropped by heavy and medium bombers and by bomb-laden fighters. Following the bombing runs, the fighters strafed anti-aircraft positions and parked aircraft. Photos taken subsequent to the attack showed damage to the submarine base, main railway and radar position. Ten buildings were destroyed and many more damaged. A small vessel in the harbor exploded and sank. Of the attacking force, one plane (a B-24) was shot down.

An event took place on 24 April 1943 which, if it did not determine the course of the campaign, at least emphasized the hopelessness of the enemy's position. Apparently in an endeavor to aid the garrisons at Attu and Kiska in force sufficient to change the latter's fortunes, the Japanese had dispatched a fairly heavy naval force to convoy supplies to the islands. A lighter U. S. naval force engaged it between Attu and the Kommandorski Islands and so battered it that it was forced to turn back. This attempt to run the American blockade represents the last known effort to supply either garrison by surface vessels. From then

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on, whatever supply was received had to come by way of submarines, a method totally inadequate for anything ultimately more ambitious than a delaying force.

In May the intensity of the aerial attack shifted from Kiska to Attu as a result of plans to occupy the latter. The recapture of the island began on the 11th and the first combat sorties in support of the landing were sent on that day. During the following 19 days air support missions were dispatched daily with only two exceptions when weather conditions forced the cancellation of all air operations. Reports show 559 sorties, including weather and reconnaissance missions with the P-38's performing more than their share (30 per cent). Approximately 156 tons of bombs were dropped on Attu and about 35 tons more were intended for Attu but were taken to Kiska as a secondary target because of bad weather or visibility at Attu. Coordination of air and ground operations was carried out by a liaison officer who assigned targets to the various flights or sent them to Kiska if conditions were not favorable at Attu. U. S. troops received supplies from B-24's which dropped provisions when the need arose.

On two occasions during the Attu action the Japanese sent aircraft up in opposition to the U. S. task force. On 23 May, between 12 and 15 Mitsubishi two-engine land planes attacked U. S. naval vessels near Holtz Bay, but scored no hits. The following day brought 16 Mitsubishi bombers in an attack mission over U. S. positions on the island. They were intercepted by 5 P-38's which shot down 5 of their number and may

SECRET

have destroyed 7 more at the loss of 2 P-38's and one pilot. The enemy jettisoned their bombs as soon as they saw the Lightnings approach.

The value of the air arm had been demonstrated mainly during the weeks of routine bombing that preceded the landing. Afterwards, though useful in sporadic bombing and strafing of enemy positions, it was sadly limited by the weather which had in other ways favored the campaign. One-third of the planes sent up failed to reach the primary target. "Am still fighting weather in addition to Japs" was the comment made by an air officer which epitomized the air action in general.

After the completion of the Attu campaign the full power of the Eleventh Air Force could be turned on Kiska. As in the case of Adak and of Amchitka, the occupation of Attu gave the American forces a suddenly enlarged area of activity and made possible an abruptly accelerated air campaign. It was now feasible to operate from Attu as well as from Adak and Amchitka. The Japanese had left a landing strip on Attu which could readily be turned to the use of the U. S. bombers; and the loss of this landing field deprived the enemy of the only useful one they had. Since the only hope the Japanese had of matching American air power in the Aleutians lay in establishing facilities for ground-based aviation, this constituted a doubly serious reverse.

During June and July the tempo of the air attack on Kiska increased almost daily. So completely were the elements of the Eleventh Air Force in command of the air that they were able three times to go far beyond

the Aleutian battle area to strike at the Paramushiru-Shumishu staging area from which, if at all, any enemy reinforcement worth considering would be dispatched. On 10 July 1943, 8 Mitchells were sent from Attu to Paramushiru. A solid overcast prevented reconnaissance, which was the main object of the mission, but the planes dropped 16,000 pounds of bombs on a dead-reckoning time run. Seven Liberators had been sent to follow the Mitchells but were diverted to engage cargo vessels discovered by PBY radar contact. In low-level attacks, they sank two ships and damaged two others. On 13 July and again on 11 August raids were made on Paramushiru. During the latter attack 9 Liberators scored hits on several buildings near the naval base and fought off sharp fighter resistance at the expense of 2 of their own number.

The inferior range and striking power of the air arm, combined with systematic sea and air patrols conducted by the Navy, gradually made the position of the Kiska garrison untenable. During June and July greatly increased enemy submarine activity had been noticed, indicating that the only supply line left open to the garrison lay under water, and the vigilance of navy and air force made even that tenuous line insecure. In June at least 3 enemy subs were sunk in the neighborhood of Kiska (on 11th, 13th, and 22d). The heaviest attack delivered by the Eleventh Air Force bombers in any one day took place on 4 August. Six missions from Adak and 12 missions from Amchitka, involving flights of B-24, B-25, P-38, P-40, and A-24 aircraft, pounded Kiska with a total of 304,114 pounds of high explosives and incendiaries within a period

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of ten hours.

As early as 22 July photo reconnaissance indicated what might have been preparations on the part of the garrison to evacuate the island. On the 28th, the Kiska radio lapsed into silence. Early in August photographs showed trucks parked in roads in the same places day after day and gave evidence of little if any activity in the harbor areas. It is altogether likely that the main body of the garrison left the island on the night of 28 July 1943. But it left behind a remarkably cleverly organized rear-guard which managed to hold the U. S. task force with its overwhelming power at bay for more than two weeks. Almost every day for the first two weeks of August the naval force shelled Kiska installations and the AAF bombers delivered a crushing weight of explosives. Though the Navy's guns drew no answering fire from Kiska's shore guns and though the bombing mission encountered practically no antiaircraft opposition except scattered bursts of small-arms fire, the American task force took no chances. Reconnaissance over Paramushiru on the 11th had showed a large surface force still assembled there capable of reinforcing Kiska, and it was believed that the Kiska garrison might have abandoned the main camp area only to resort to a perimeter defense. Whatever may have been the enemy's plans in detail, there was no question about his complete evacuation of Kiska, for when U. S. forces landed on 15 August 1943 they encountered no opposition at all—not even any Japanese soldiers.

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The Aleutian campaign ended in this decisive, if slightly anti-climactical, victory. The Japanese had been forced not only to give up any attempt to press their invasion of the Western Hemisphere but to abandon even those positions which they had clearly valued for their defensive importance. Nothing but ocean now lay between the Japanese outposts in the Kurile Islands and the American base at Attu. And the Eleventh Air Force had demonstrated that it was feasible to operate aggressively from that base. The Aleutian campaign had given the American forces mastery in the North Pacific and the strategic value of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands had been proved. More than that, the campaign had illustrated the preeminence of land-based air power in that region.

In the process of fighting the Japanese in the north, the Eleventh Air Force had amassed a great deal of knowledge about fighting under the unique conditions imposed by Aleutian weather and terrain. Most valuable of all tactics developed was that of low-level bombing which permitted increased accuracy in bombing small targets, such as ships, and allowed the bombing missions in some degree to circumvent the weather by approaching their target from beneath the perpetually low ceiling. This method of attack had first been used on 11 June during the early days of the campaign and was developed as the air war progressed. Oddly enough, the chief difficulty encountered in this deck-level attack arose from the faulty operation of the time-fuses. An instance recurred in which a bomb was seen to pass entirely through a cargo ship without

SECRET

exploding, leaving no damage behind it except two holes in the ship's hull. Gradually, however, that problem was met and solved in that, during the later months of the campaign, low level attacks were delivered with deadly effect. During the cold weather almost constant trouble arose from equipment improperly winterized, a fact which incapacitated a large number of planes. As for the planes themselves, the test of combat pronounced the P-38, the B-25, and the B-24 the most useful in their respective categories for operations in the north. Long range and the ability to land safely on rugged and imperfect fields proved to be the qualities most valued in the bombers. The ability to combine range, ^{and} speed/protection with deadly strafing and bombing effect made the P-38 the most valued plane of them all in the late stages of the campaign when the U. S. bases had been moved within convenient reach of the target.

HISTORICAL DATA PERTAINING TO THE ELEVENTH AIR FORCE

- 1935 Wilcox Bill (H.R. 7022) provided for an Alaskan air base.
- 1940
12 Aug Maj. Everett S. Davis and two enlisted men reported to the Alaska Defense Force, under the command of Col. Simon Bolivar Buckner. This was the vanguard of the Eleventh Air Force.
- Dec The advanced echelon of the 23d Air Base Gp. arrived at Fort Richardson on 1 December 1940. By the end of December, 25 men of the 23d Air Base Gp. had arrived in Anchorage and were in suitable housing.
- 1941
Feb The Alaskan Defense Force was reorganized as the Alaska Defense Command, under the Fourth Army, with General Buckner as Commanding General and Major Davis, in addition to his other duties, became Chief of Aviation, Alaska Defense Command.
- 14 Mar Units of the 28th Composite Group arrived in Alaska.
- 29 May The Air Field Forces, Alaska Defense Command, was activated as the supreme Air Corps organization in Alaska.
- 2 June Major Davis assumed command of the Air Field Forces, Alaska Defense Command.
- 17 Oct The Air Field Forces became Air Force, Alaska Defense Command under command of Lt. Col. E. S. Davis.
- 26 Nov Construction of an air field at Unak approved, providing an advanced operating base in the Aleutians.
- 31 Dec Provisional Pursuit Interceptor Command activated.
- 1942
15 Jan Alaskan Air Force activated from the Air Force, ADC, Col. E. S. Davis in command.
- 5 Feb Alaskan Air Force redesignated Eleventh Air Force, Col. E. S. Davis, commander.
- 17 Feb Col. L. A. Dunlap assumed command of Eleventh Air Force.
- 8 Mar Col. William O. Butler assumed command of Eleventh Air Force (promoted to Brig. Gen. 17 March 1942).
- 14 Mar XI Interceptor Command activated.

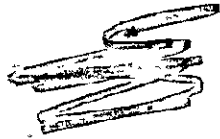
- 3 June Japanese task force attacked Dutch Harbor and was met by apparently unexpected opposition from AAF units that had been rushed to the newly constructed bases at Unak and Cold Bay.
- 11-30 June Six bomber missions to Kiska successfully carried out. Others cancelled owing to weather.
- 11 June The Japanese force, having given up any further efforts in the region of Dutch Harbor, was reported on Attu and Kiska in the outer Aleutian Islands....Eleventh Air Force long range bombers made the first concerted attack on Kiska.
- 21 June Provisional XI Air Force Service Command activated.
- 1-31 July Eight successful bomber missions flown.
- 1 July XI Bomber Command (Provisional) activated.
- 30 July Eleventh Air Force Service Command (redesignation).
- 30 Aug-
3 Sep U. S. ground forces landed on Adak, supported by air and naval forces.
- 1-13 Sep Construction work in progress at Adak, continuously covered by patrols of B-26's, P-38's, and P-40's.
- 13 Sep Last raid on Kiska by Eleventh Air Force planes from Unak base....Adak field became operational.
- 14 Sep-
Dec The speed of the air war during this period was accelerated as a result of operations from the advance base at Adak. Raids were now conducted on Kiska with the aid of fighter support. Bombers could now be sent to Attu.
- 14 Sep First major raid on Kiska from Adak by Eleventh Air Force planes. Our aircraft executed a coordinated low-altitude bombing and strafing attack on enemy shipping and installations at Kiska. Two minesweepers were sunk, direct hits were scored on three large cargo ships, several small vessels and barges. Large fires were started in the base and camp areas. Four Zeros and a biplane floatplane were shot down in flames and seen to crash. One four-engined patrol plane was burned in the water. We lost two planes as a result of a collision.
- 22-23 Sep Reconnaissance of Attu on this date indicates Jap forces have evacuated the island.

- 25 Sep A strong force of Army bombers and pursuits accompanied by Royal Canadian Air Force planes attacked shore installations and ships at Kiska. Seven seaplane fighters were destroyed on the water and an eighth was shot down, and one transport was damaged.
- 29 Sep U. S. planes accounted for five Japanese fighters in combat over Kiska.
- 5 Oct Six more Japanese fighters destroyed.
- 12 Oct The Field Hqs., Eleventh Air Force was established at Adak.
- 7 Nov Occupation by Japanese of Holtz Bay, Attu, reported, the first indication of enemy activity in Attu for some time.
- 9 Nov U. S. heavy bombers destroyed eight float berms at Holtz Bay, Attu.
- 20 Dec Heavy and medium bombers escorted by fighters dropped 52 500-lb. bombs on Kiska and the area was thoroughly strafed by fighters.
- 1943
- 12 Jan Anchitka was occupied by U. S. forces. An airfield was constructed there which placed the striking force of the Eleventh Air Force within 63 nautical miles of Kiska.
- 17 Feb P-40's and P-38's landed on the new Anchitka fighter strip. The advent of these fighter planes gave the U. S. forces command of the air over Kiska.
- Mar-Apr The air offensive launched from Anchitka, against Attu and Kiska increased in tempo. An average of 46 sorties per day operated over Kiska alone on days during which bombardment was possible.
- 3 Mar P-40's and P-38's of Eleventh Air Force began shuttle bombing of Kiska.
- 27 Mar The Advanced Field Headquarters, Eleventh Air Force, was established on Anchitka under command of Col. J. V. Hart, Tactical Commander of the Eleventh Air Force.
- 15 Apr Heaviest attack to date on Kiska, 112 planes participating in raid which dropped 93 tons of demolition and fragmentation bombs, damaging submarine base, main railway and radar positions, many buildings, and one small vessel. Of the attacking force one plane, a B-24, was shot down.

- 24 Apr The Japanese made the last known attempt to supply their Aleutian garrisons by surface vessels. A Japanese naval force was engaged by a lighter U. S. naval force between Attu and the Komandoreki Islands, and forced to return to its base.
- 11 May U. S. forces made landings on Attu, supported by Eleventh Air Force and naval gun fire. This action resulted in complete occupation of the island by 1 June.
- June- July During this period Kiska was subjected to increasingly heavy bombardment from Eleventh Air Force planes.
- 10 July The Paramushiru-Shimushu area in the Northern Kurile Islands was bombed for the first time by Eleventh Air Force bombers. Eight B-25's participated in this attack, dropping eight tons of bombs, and scoring hits on the southern part of Shimushu Island, Paramushiru Strait, and Northern Paramushiru Island. No AA fire and no enemy aircraft sighted.
- 18 July Six B-24's attacked Paramushiru-Shimushu area.
- 11 Aug Paramushiru and Shimushu in the Kuriles were raided by nine Aleutian-based B-24's.
- 15 Aug Kiska was occupied by ground troops without opposition.
- 8-15 Sep On the 13th, eight B-24's and 13 B-25's of the Eleventh Air Force attacked Paramushiru and Shimushu Islands in the Kuriles. Four of our planes are known to have been lost and six others failed to return. Seven planes landed on Kamchatka and the fliers were interned by Russia.
- Oct A few scattered enemy planes attacked the Aleutians from time to time.
- 1944
- 17 Mar- 15 Nov Eleventh Air Force activities consisted of intermittent bombing attacks and reconnaissance missions on the Kurile Islands.
- 17 Mar B-24's of the Eleventh Air Force bombed Matsua Island, in the deepest aerial penetration made into the Kuriles to date, less than 500 miles from the Japanese mainland at Hokkaido. No opposition was encountered.
- 10-19 Apr Enemy installations in the northern Kurile Islands were subjected to daily attack by small numbers of Navy Venturas and Eleventh Air Force B-24's from 10 April. Paramushiru was bombed seven times, Onkotan Island was attacked twice and Shasukotan and Matsua were each hit once. Installations on Shimushu, the northernmost island were attacked three times. No planes were lost. Only once before--in mid-March-- had there been such a sustained attack against the Kuriles.

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