

# The Island of



LONGITUDE *Censored* LATITUDE *Censored*

## THE ALEUTIANS AND SHEMYA

Cold stepping stones into the sea  
Bereft of mortal's boot;  
Brown tundra tusks untrod by man  
Except for Aleut.

Unfriendly hands climbed on these stones,  
And blade was drawn from sheath;  
But freemen stained the rocks with red --  
The Aleutians showed their teeth.

For months cold winds, warm sweat and men  
On Isle Unknown remained  
Shut off from world-wide eyes and ears;  
To tasks unknown were chained.

The jowls of nowhere blew fierce winds  
And seaborne fogs rolled in,  
Yet midst the gusts embattlements  
Were built and manned by men.

Day after day till months made years  
Lone planes roared out to sea  
To meet and thwart the Nippon fleets  
And turn the enemy.

This treeless, mountainless, unknown isle,  
Though swept by all that blows,  
Has mem'ries hav'ring overhead  
In sentinel-like repose.

The mem'ries of the thousands who  
Have hewn volcanic stone --  
The planners, blasters, builders -- all  
Who've fashioned crude a home.

Cold stepping stones into the sea  
Form, link by link, a chain  
That binds the shores of Shemya isle  
To Freedom's honored Name.

----- Jack Hamm



## JAPS "CONQUER" SHEMA

It was dusk-- a gray, bleak, cold dusk, so characteristic of that part of the world. Standing on the bridge of the lead ship the Captain surveyed the numerous boats carefully scattered within the convoy's pattern. Inwardly he was pleased. That saké he had taken with his meal had added to the ever present feeling of contempt he had learned to hold for the Americans. Hadn't he and his fellow men chased the much-vaunted U. S. Army and Navy all over the Pacific? Well, maybe he hadn't but some of his friends had. Of course, he had been in charge of the landing crafts for the glorious invasion of Attu. Good thing, that landing. Not an enemy encountered. He'd done so well that he was now entrusted with this vast convoy of some 12 ships whose mission was the invasion of the Semichis. Shouldn't be any trouble, on this mission. The scouts had reported no signs of any enemy. Those Americans, didn't know potential air strips when they saw them. Well, we Japs will show them how to fight a war. What's all the commotion, eh? A Plane? Where?

Through a sudden break in the overcast sky could be seen one lone bombing plane clearly marked with the white star of the United States Army Air Forces. Obviously the plane had spotted the convoy for it swung to pass directly over the enemy's powerful invasion force that lay bobbing on the sea. As the co-pilot turned in his seat to watch this group of ships disappear behind the plane's tail he hollered, "Joe, Joe look they are turning around". Joe, the pilot, too busy flying his plane, could only reply. "Well, I'll be damned---"

Such was the Japanese "invasion" of the Semichi Islands. That's how close they came. But for a lone plane, which in all probability couldn't have called enough firepower to drive them away, the Japs would have occupied Shemya-----

### U. S. WAS IN LUCK

General of the Army George Catlett Marshall in his "Biennial Report to the Secretary of War" revealed that Japan's strategic plan--its climax an invasion



of the Aleutians, bombardment of the U. S. Northwest and the seizure of critical areas, had "initially failed when she missed the opportunity of landing troops on Hawaii." The General went on to report that in those days of late 1941 and early 1942 the U. S. had had much good luck in the war before it had much good management. The good luck was due to our enemy's failure to capitalize on the overwhelming odds that were in its favor. Our luck could not have held out indefinitely without constructive-counter measures to even these odds and eventually tip the scales in favor of the Allied Nations.

#### WHAT WERE THESE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS IN 1941?

They weren't much different than they'd been for centuries before fog-bound, windswept, volcanic islands, sticking up from the waters to mark a division line between the Bering Sea and the Pacific Ocean. Upon occasions a Japanese, Russian, and even an Alaskan fishing boat could have been seen plying the waters up and down the Aleutian "chain." Some enterprising fishermen expanded their main business of fishing by hunting and by setting out foxes on the islands. These foxes would live, eat and multiply during the subsequent years so that when the fisherman returned to hunt he had a rather sizeable colony from which to take pelt or furs. This then was the civilization of the Aleutian chain until 7 December 1941--- barren-desolate-uninteresting-----

#### ALEUTIANS WERE GATEWAY TO YOUR HOMETOWN

Sometime back in the year 1940 you remember a new conception of war came into being. People were writing, talking, preaching global war. This meant war would be fought all over the world. This meant even such barren, windswept, desolate places as the Aleutians were a potential battlefield. We know now that Japan's plans showed the Aleutians as their northern invasion route to the United States. We knew then that it just wasn't a good idea to let the enemy get any closer than you could help. The Aleutians were an inviting gateway to our front door. We had to shut the door. From 7 December 1941 thru April and May 1942 the flood of



Japanese aggression flowed pretty well unchecked throughout the whole Southern Pacific area. By June 1942 the Japs were ready to enlarge their hold on the Northern Pacific. On 3 June 1942 Dutch Harbor, which was a far Western United States installation on the chain at the time, was bombed by the Japanese Air Force. Dutch Harbor has been described as an awful looking place surrounded by snow capped mountains. The roads were mud and slush, knee deep. It rained and snowed all the time and the winds blew a gale. It was miserable. It was inconceivable that troops could live there two years at a time. There were no women and no liquor. Ham and eggs cost \$1.50. A wrist watch, which would have cost \$20.00 in the States cost \$70.00. If Dutch Harbor was this bad, what of the places yet to be inhabited and settled?

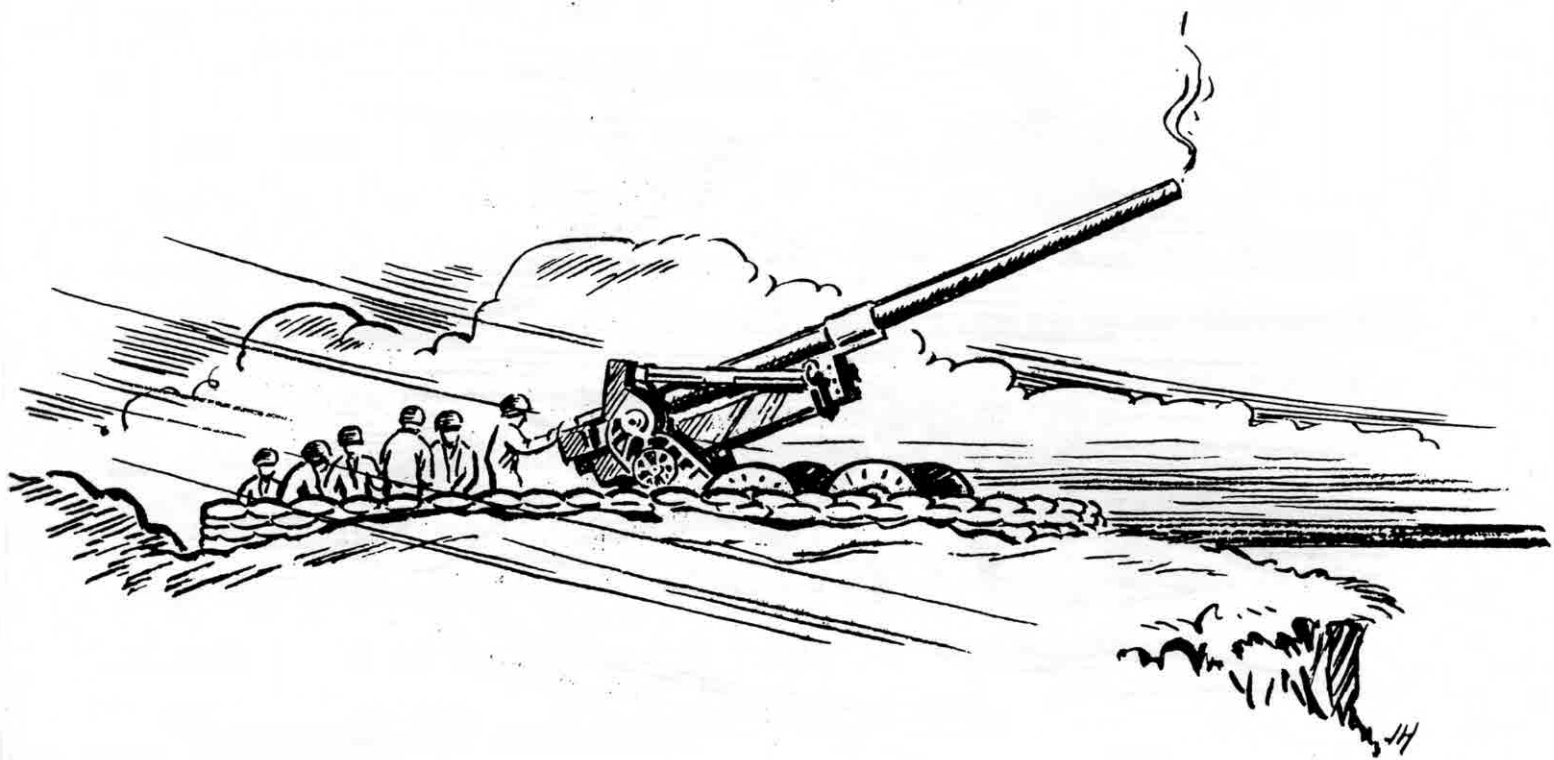
The Jap Task Force from which these planes had been flown also brought forces that invaded, took possession of, and began to put up defenses on Attu and Kiska. This was the beginning of the war in the Aleutians-----

#### WE FIND TWO ENEMIES---JAPS AND WEATHER

For a period of months fighting was confined to the air when and if the weather permitted. The Japanese were busy not only making airstrips but also putting in defense against submarines, naval, air and ground attacks. The U. S. worked feverishly to augment the service, combat, and air units already stationed in Alaska and the eastern Aleutian chain. Neither side was bothered by enemy actions one half as much as it was by the Aleut weather. After the Dutch Harbor attack it became standard practice for one of the heavy U. S. bombers to take off from Umnak, and acting as a weather plane fly the 600 miles to Kiska, wire back weather conditions, and return. This was aerial warfare at its worst efficiency. To operate against the Japanese with any degree of deadliness we needed land bases closer to their installations at Kiska and Attu than Umnak. By 10 September 1942 Adak had been made tenable for aircraft with the result that from this time on the main base of operation against the Japs at the end of the chain was this island. The tempo of warfare was stepped up and though the Japs occasionally







attacked Adak they were never allowed to take the offensive, By November another base at Atka enabled the Air Corps to operate more efficiently-----

#### RACES FOR BASES

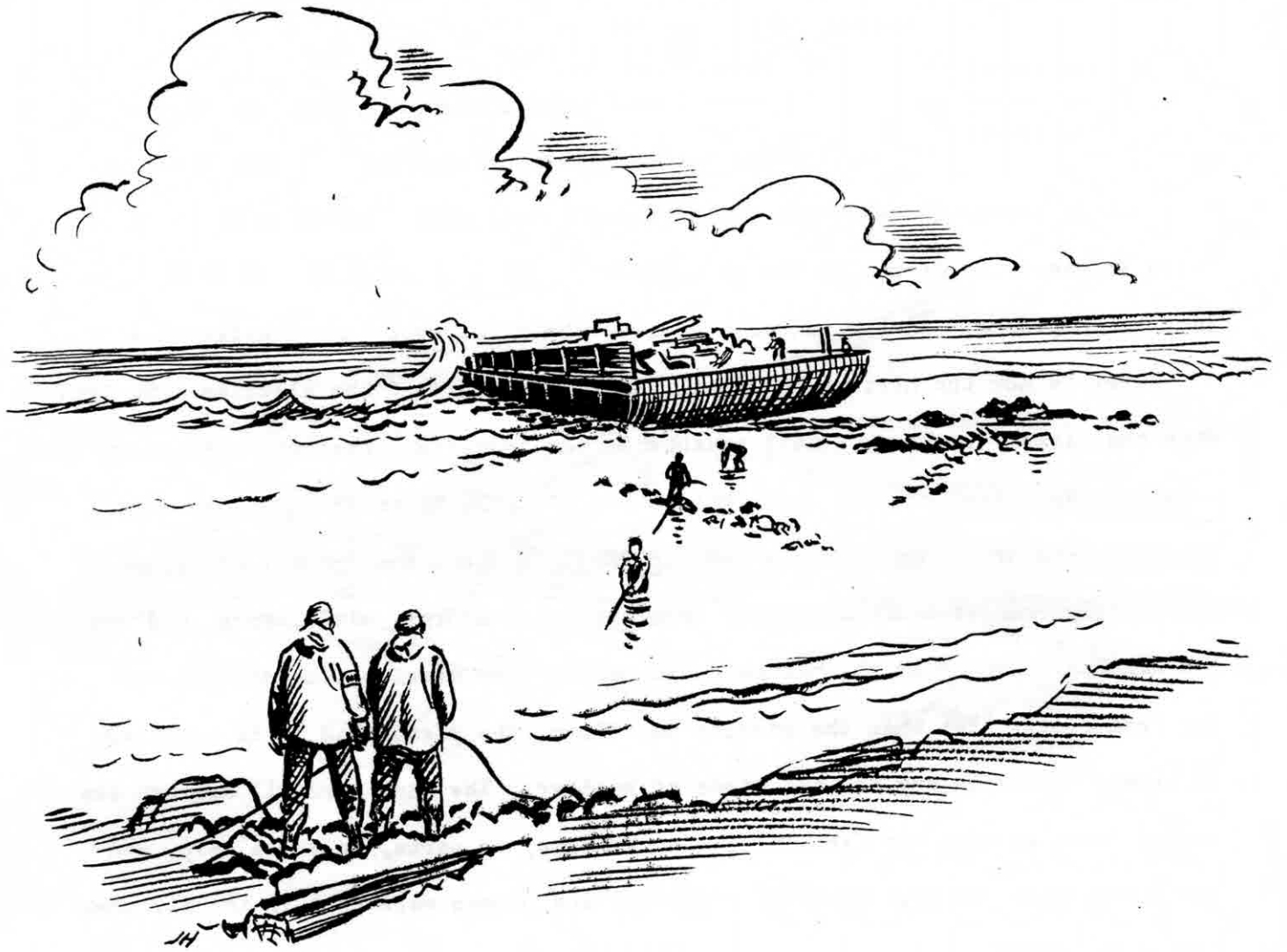
Still the battle for bases continued. Aerial observation by our flyers had spotted a convoy-- later dispersed by one plane-- headed for the Semichis. By December it became obvious that the Japs had intentions of occupying Amchitka, 58 miles southeast of Kiska, to obtain a better location than they already had for land based planes. And so in December 1942 the U. S. occupied Amchitka-----

That is how the history books will show this phase of the Aleutian campaign. What the history books will fail to show is the terrific, constant, almost overpowering fight that our men made against the elements in their effort to engage the enemy and drive him from his toehold in the Western Hemisphere. We've seen how the flyers were constantly kept from flying by storms, winds, fogs, and freakish weather. Even when the planes could take off on missions, conditions were far from ideal. Yet when the mission was flown, the planes had to be repaired, serviced, babied in any and all kinds of weather. The odds were all against the ground crews as were the facilities-- no hangars, no parts, no extra help, and time after time, no rest or sleep. Somehow the planes were kept in the air when they were needed.

#### AN AAF, ASF, AGF, AND NAVY SHOW

The headlines in those days told of the bombing of our planes but usually neglected to mention that without the Ground Forces to build and protect these newly-taken airstrips and without the Service Forces to overcome impossible obstacles to bring service, to "keep 'em flying", our progress in the Aleutians would have been vastly retarded.

While the Army and Air Forces fought the elements on the ground and the air the Navy did prodigious work charting the waters throughout the heretofore unmarked coves, channels and waterways of the chain. This was only a small part of its job, for as the need for more western bases arose, it was the Navy that moved



the ground forces toward closer contact with the enemy-----

The fight went on in spite of all adverse conditions.

#### WE STRIKE BACK HARD

From December of 1942 until April 1943 we prepared various phases of an all-out invasion of Attu, figuring to capture this island and thereby cut off Kiska garrison which would become an easy prey at a later date. On 11 May 1943 Attu was invaded.

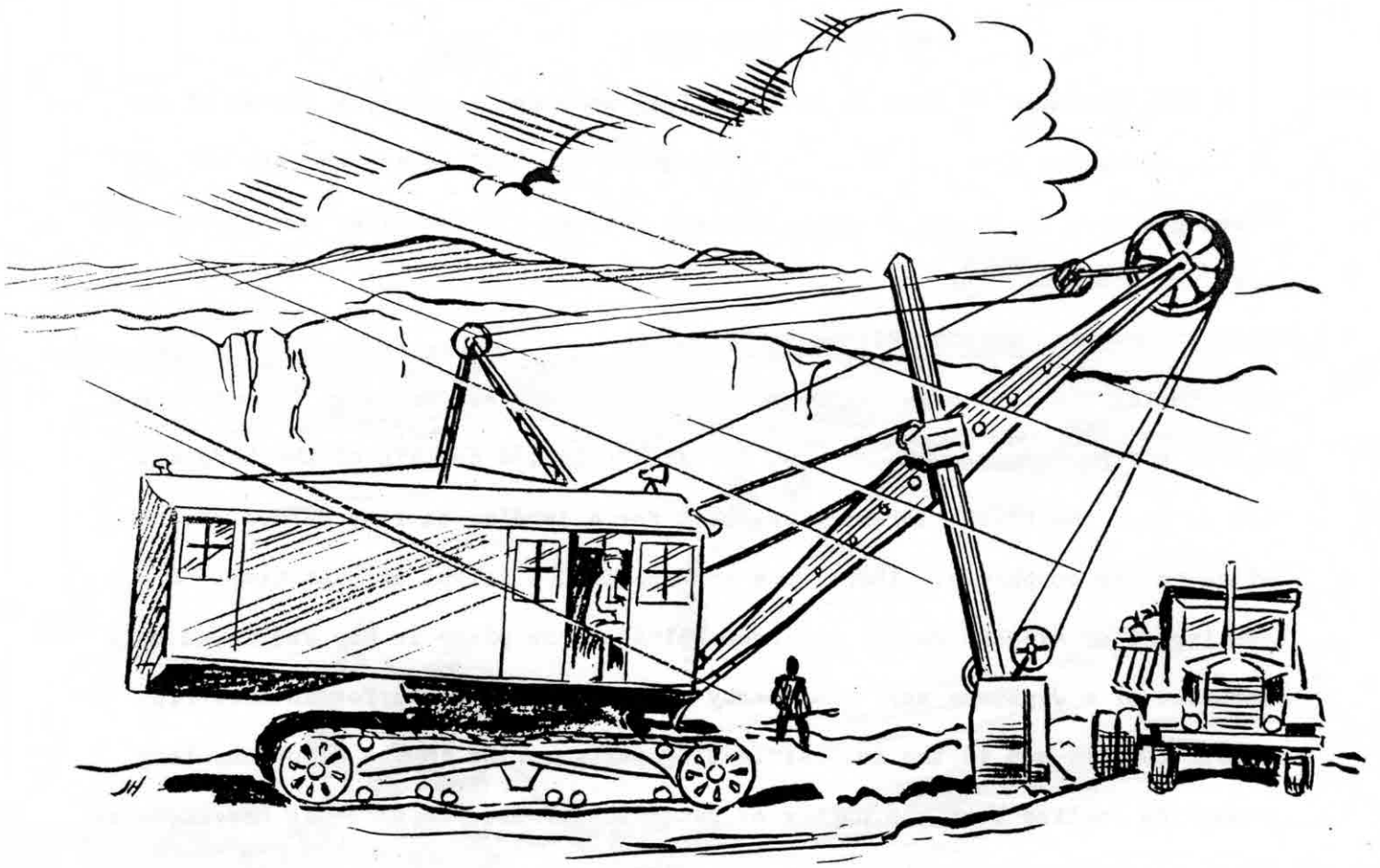
#### SHEMYA SEIZURE SLATED

During the last days of the Battle of Attu another campaign from Attu was in the offing. Brig. Gen. John E. Copeland selected certain of the hardest troops from the Fourth Infantry Regiment for a landing on tiny Shemya some 40 miles to the southeast. There were no Japs on the island at that time. A contingent of Alaskan Scouts had reconnoitered the place in May and found only evidence of a Japanese surveying party which had made tests for an airstrip site. But the men in the initial landing party served in the Aleutians long enough to realize that the perils of natural elements can prove as hazardous as those encountered by engaging the foe. And Japs or no Japs, the landing was destined to be a difficult one.

#### INFANTRY FACES FOG, REEFS, WAVES

Under cover of a thick fog, landing barges, loaded with Americans from the Fourth Infantry approached the shores of Shemya after six hours of uncomfortable, sickening voyaging over heavy seas.

A single dilapidated trapper's cabin, long before deserted, and two Russian graves were the only signs of former habitation greeting the occupation force. High waves whipped by lashing winds, broke furiously against the jagged shoreline. The barges tore over partially submerged reefs, ripping open hulls as the frail craft came to rest atop exposed rocks. Briny ice-water flowed between the reaches of ramps and solid ground. Men waded through the surf burdened with supplies of food and tent material strapped to their backs. The Army had arrived



on Shemya. The date was 28 May 1943. Ashore fox-holes were dug and tents set up. But the canvas shelters were soon discovered to be useless if exposed above ground. Finally, the tents were used to bundle in, rather than as shelters until excavations could be dug below the surface as protection against the wind.....

#### WE WHITTLE AN AIRFIELD FROM TUNDRA

A construction program was immediately begun on a twelve-hour day schedule. From the dark hour of six in the morning till the equally dark hour of seven in the evening, troops labored, grading the tundra, piling in rocks and laying steel mattings for the essential airstrips. After regular duty hours, details were organized, involving most of the personnel, for the purpose of constructing defense installations. But in June 1943, Japan was a powerful enemy which proved a constant threat to the security of America. And to counter this threat, American soldiers were asked to exert almost superhuman efforts.....

#### FIRST BOMBER LANDS ON SHEMYA

The first bomber landed on the flat island of Shemya from a mission over the Kuriles on the 11th day of September 1943. It was an unscheduled landing by a B-24 which had taken off from Attu earlier in the day. The plane and crew had been shot up pretty badly, with the pilot sustaining the loss of one arm. Shemya was already beginning to prove its worth.

Work on the airstrip eased up somewhat for the GI's. Civilian construction companies moved crews in to improve on the hurried job initially completed. After that the soldiers were employed in erecting more substantial living quarters and strengthening defensive installations.

Men continued to arrive on the tiny island to replace others going back to the States as well as to man additional installations. The population of this recently deserted spot was swelled by soldiers and civilians. A community began to mushroom from the desolate, tundra-coated rock.

#### CIVILIZATION COMES TO SHEMYA

Permanent buildings were erected, but like the early tents, they too were



constructed in holes as protection against the ever blowing wind. Pacific huts, prefabricated and shipped in crates, were set up in a day's time. Only the tops of these oval dwellings could be seen above the protective mounds of dirt. After a few months, a semblance of civilization grew out of the northern wilds. Recreation facilities kept pace with tactical construction.

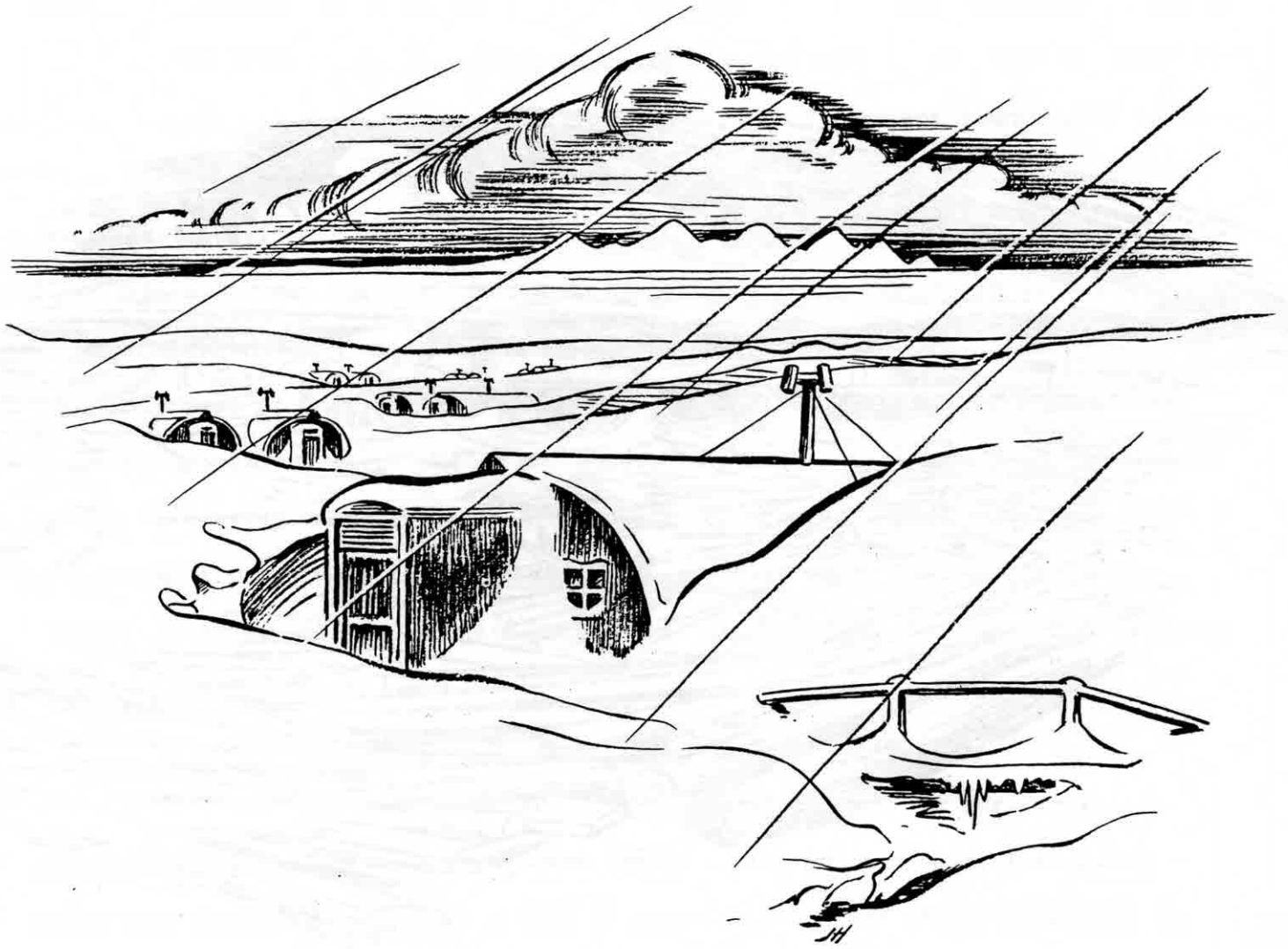
Organization mess halls and recreation huts were constructed as rapidly as possible until every unit could boast of one in its area. Roads were improved, and electricity and oil stoves were put in the huts. A sewage system was undertaken.

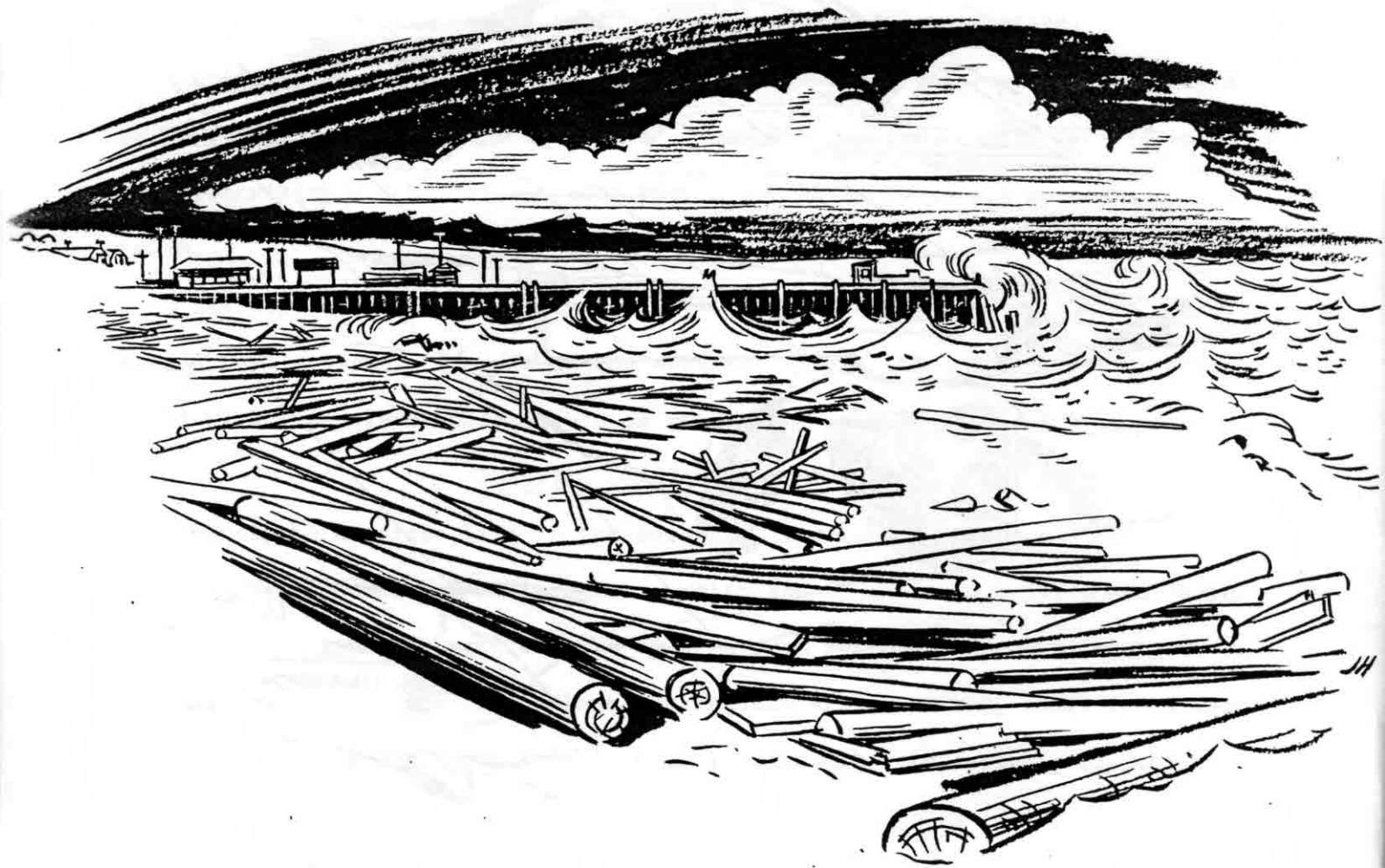
The popular jeep completely lost its original appearance on Shemya and was turned into a sedan. Because of the weather, these little vehicles were provided with improvised enclosed bodies resembling custom built automobiles.

#### ALEUTIAN SOLUTION---WORK

Merely to describe life in the desolate Aleutians during World War II as a day to day schedule of tedious labor which seemed never to cease would be inadequate. To say that work was the by-word from sun-up to sun-down would be an understatement. In the first place, during the winter months, there was a light in the sky only a few hours a day. From late November to early April, the sun would rise not earlier than 10:30 and would set a few hours later, around 4:30. Yet work would begin at 6:00 in the morning and continue, sometimes, till 11:00 at night. It wasn't work, either, it was a furious struggle, against the elements. Japan was a threat to prepare for, but the elements of the North offered problems to be reckoned with at the moment. Then, too, the monotony of the daily routine, the seeming unimportance of routine drudgery while fellow-soldiers were doing so much in other parts of the world- these and other factors made life on Shemya a poor one at best.

All did not go as planned in the construction of a strong fortress on Shemya Island. It can't even be said with any degree of accuracy that the mission was accomplished monthly. To stake a claim in defiance of nature means trouble- lots





of trouble.

Docks were laboriously built and breakwaters installed off what was considered the most protected beach on the island. But shortly after the completion of these shipping facilities a furious storm, lasting from the 11th to the 15th of October 1944, invaded the area. As the result of four days of constant pounding by an enraged surf, the docks were reduced to kindling and a great part of the breakwater was washed away.

This unforeseen accident proved an almost disastrous loss to an island so wholly dependent upon shipping for its provisions. Too many men had arrived since the early days of occupation to be supplied by landing craft or parachute, but a store of provisions large enough for several months had been laid away in warehouses to provide necessities in just such an emergency. To augment these stores, transshipment yards were set up on Attu 40 miles away where supplies, bound for Shemya, could be unloaded. Planes and barges shuttled these supplies to the island during the entire winter.

#### JAPS FEEL STING OF 11th AIRFORCE MEN ON SHEMYA

In the meantime, bombers of our 11th Air Force were paying regular visits to the Kuriles, Paramushiro, Shimushu and Araido. Military and naval installations along with canneries, furnishing much of Japan's food, were priority targets on these islands.

Shemyaites had heard about Japan's plan to bomb and attack the U. S. with long-range balloons, and our flyers in the western Aleutians had been instructed on what to do if they saw one. On 24 January 1945, an unidentified object was spotted at 29,000 feet over Agattu. It proved to be a balloon, presumably sent from Japan. Tracer bullets from the 343d Fighter planes sunk the balloon into the sea 25 miles southwest of Buldir Island.

On 13 April men of the 343d on Shemya again had a chance to test their aim with bullets from the P-38's. Out of 12 balloons seen over the western Aleutians, they shot down nine of them, flying 40 sorties from Attu and Shemya.



SHEMYA

# ALEUTIAN ISL

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DUTCH

Bering Sea

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ISLANDS  
UNIMAK  
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TRINITY IS.

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ANCHORAGE

PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND

ISLANDS

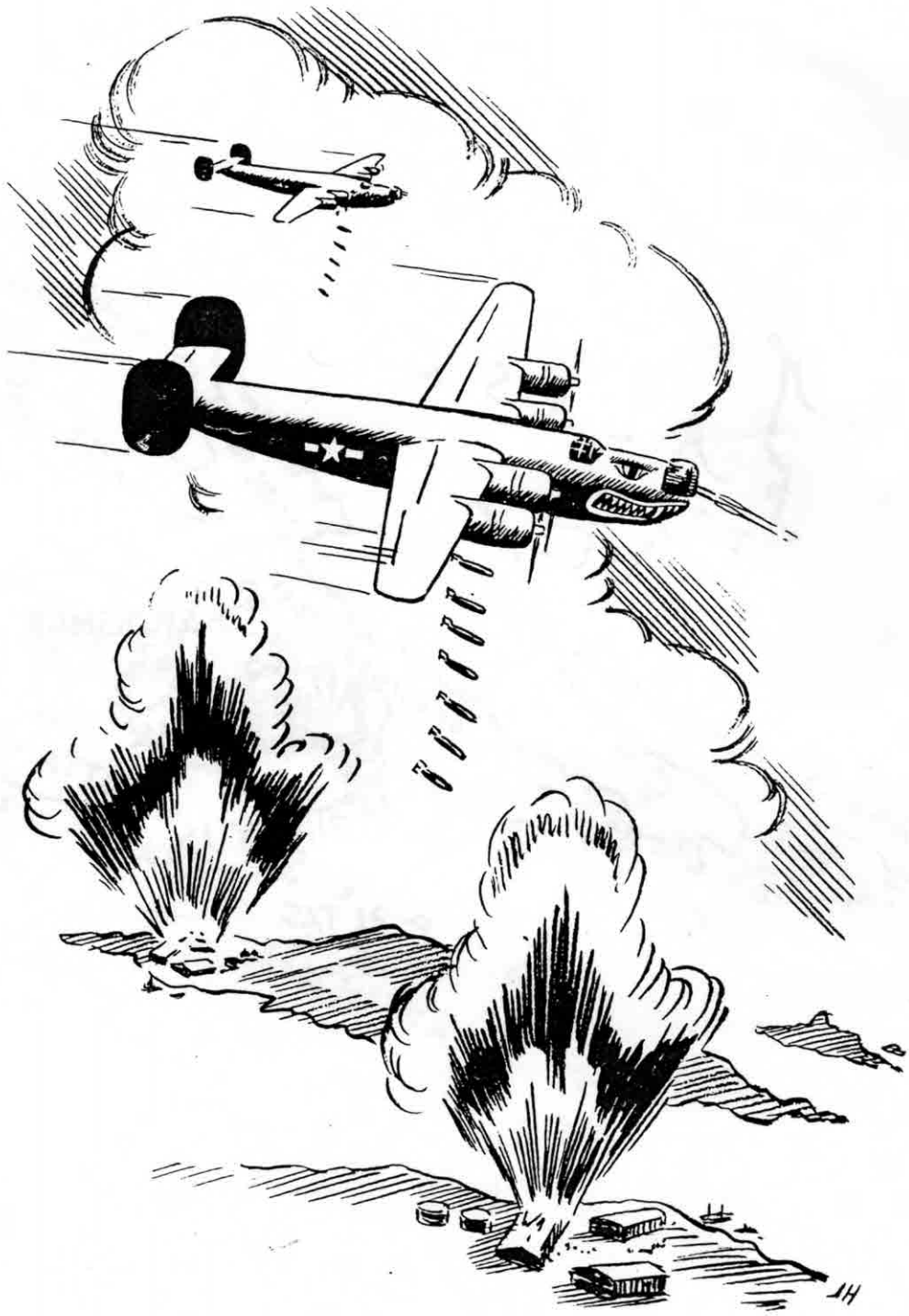
UNIMAK

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Most successful raid in the history of the Shemya-based 404th Bombardment squadron was flown on 11 May 1945 against enemy shipping at Kataoka Naval base. A 12-plane flight led by Capt. Robert Wickman and Lt. Charles Weniger, found shipping easily visible for a change through a clear sky. Several direct hits were scored on a destroyer escort, and much damage was done to shipping in the harbor.

On 19 June 1945, Lts. David Long and Paul Clinkenbeard, of the 404th, flew 2,700 miles over water on the longest mission ever piloted from the Aleutians. Going south as far as the island of Uruppu in the Kuriles on a photo reconnaissance mission, they were aloft 15 hours and 30 minutes. This ranked with the longest over-water combat mission flown anywhere in the world-----

The Nips knew the planes attacking them so regularly were Aleutian based, but they couldn't guess what island was their home base-----

#### SUPER-SECRECY SHROUDS SHEMA

Shemya was identified merely as APO 729. Its secrecy was well kept, despite rumors that Tokyo Rose had referred to the island by name on her radio program a number of times. Jap subs patrolled the waters in search of information. One was forced to the surface and sunk just off Shemya's shore by a destroyer on 20 June 1944. The craft was rammed twice before it finally went down. But despite the vigilance on the part of the enemy, they could still only guess what was going on. And their guesses were remarkably inaccurate, as evidenced by their own actions:

1. On a bright moonlight night during the summer of 1943 a flight of Japanese bombers was detected approaching the area of Shemya. It was thought they had perhaps gotten wind of the powerful fortifications on the island, but, they flew over, oblivious of the prize target below them and dropped the bombs in the waters around Attu. Again they had guessed wrong.

2. Toward the end of the war in July 1945, propaganda broadcasts from Tokyo reported that American mountain troops were being trained on Agattu for an invasion of the Northern Kuriles. The Nips sensed considerable activity in the

Western Aleutians. They guessed close, but Agattu, even though it can be seen very plainly from this island, still isn't Shemya. Their propaganda only proved how little they really did know.

As the island built up, men had more leisure time to spend, weaving yarns about their experiences in civilian life and the hardships of Aleutian service. They spoke in the colloquialism of the islands. Sudden flurries of snow and wind reaching velocities in excess of a hundred miles an hour were referred to as "williwaws". Cots were spoken of as "sacks" and what passed for soil in the Aleutians was called "tundra". Every hut had a pet dog or mascot. In letters home Shemya was referred to as "our island paradise". Life on Shemya was a stoic existence from beginning to end. But there were bright spots, such as the time the Ground Forces had a laugh on the Air Corps when a submarine was spotted by a patrol plane and reported sunk. A dead whale was found in the vicinity a few hours later.

#### JAPANESE EMPIRE SURRENDERS--WAR IS OVER!

Few who were on the island Sunday, 12 August 1945 will forget what happened that day. Dedication services were being held in the new Post Chapel. Japan was on her last legs. Hirohito and his premier even then conferred on surrendering. It was a sunny, pleasant day, and men who'd been on Shemya two years were happier and yet more serious than usual. As the Chaplain prayed the congregation bowed heads, staff officers were tapped quietly on the shoulder and rushed to Post Headquarters. In clipped words they were told by Brig. Gen. John Goodman, island commander, that Shemya had been alerted against Kamikaze attack as a last desperate gesture by the beaten Nips. Unidentified planes had been picked up on a ship's radar 500 miles southwest of Shemya that morning. Throughout the afternoon and night Army and Navy planes and fighting ships from ComNorPac at Adak patrolled the waters of the western Aleutians and toward the Kuriles. But the Japs, either discouraged by quantity of our patrol planes, or for some other reason, never showed up.

Next day, on 13 August, men of the 404th Bomb Squadron climbed into their flying suits and took off in their planes to bomb the Kashiwabara staging area on



Northern Paramushiro. They knew the end of the war was near, hoped against hope that this mission would be their last and that they could climb out of the planes on return to Shemya, knowing that they'd never again have to face enemy fire in this war. It was their last mission, and the last bombing mission flown from the Aleutians. The six planes on the flight used airborne radar equipment to paste the Japs through the 10/10 undercast, with Major Gen. Brooks, CG of the 11th Air Force, in the lead plane.

One day later, on 14 August, the Japs officially gave in. Sirens on usually dignified Post Headquarters building blared for 10 minutes. Extra beer rations were given to all soldiers. The next two days were officially holidays. Thus Peace came to Shemya.

#### THERE'VE BEEN SOME CHANGES MADE

That's history now. The war is over and those on Shemya are carrying on a different work in helping safeguard the peace. The island as it stands today is a far cry from the bleak, empty mass of tundra on which the original invasion party landed. Permanent churches, theaters, a gymnasium, school, hangars and administration buildings stand in bold relief against the williwaws, as concrete proof of the work performed by the Army, Navy and civilians of this island. Landing strips thickly populated with a variety of planes, innumerable vehicles moving busily about the network of roads laid upon the island's surface, a constant stream of boats running to and from the island's piers-- all these activities and others are ever present indications of the importance of this base, played in whipping the Japs.

The Island has "reconverted" from furnishing a base for air action against a known enemy to becoming, with Attu, the westernmost outpost in a group designed to protect the United States from invasion through the northwest Pacific area, Alaska and Canada.

## MORE CIVILIZATION

Civilization had continued to assert itself more strongly on Shemya as the war drew to a close. In September of 1945 for the first time in the island's history, men could go to school at night. Williwaw Tech opened with 530 students in 35 subjects, ranging from Typing to Philosophy. On-duty education, begun locally in October to occupy the time of troops awaiting transportation home, drew 643 students. About the same time a modern movie house, the Downtown Theater, equipped in Stateside fashion, opened. Shemya now has three theaters.

Among the faces going home for retirement to civilian life in December was that of Brig. Gen. John B. Goodman, who had been island commander and was an infantryman. Taking his place was Col. Frank G. Jamison, who had been airbase commander--- Winter came to Shemya with a raging fury of wind and snow, which hit hardest from January 1946 to March. Although installations were by this date well prepared for the rigors of weather in the Aleutians, heavy snow was not expected. It came in January and even 75 to 100 mile winds didn't blow it all off. Few weeks in the next two months didn't have their days when a minimum of traffic moved on the island. Engineers battled desperately, working around the clock. Men driving in such a storm could see traces of a road only fleetingly.

Winds blowing at 75 miles an hour for a whole week can make life miserable in many ways. Going to sleep to the tune of a rattling stovepipe and waking up to that same sound isn't soothing. But many will remember with pleasure some of the meals they prepared in the well under a space heater designed to warm their huts. Sacking in all day was occupation during that weather.

Picking up speed with its new staff, the Shemya Sentinel boasted the "largest mimeograph paper in the army" by March when it hit eight pages daily---Organizations felt the pinch of personnel losses due to readjustment more strongly as winter progressed. Not until spring did replacements begin to equal losses. On 22 March Col. Joseph W. Utter, Post Executive Officer, left for return to civilian life. He was replaced by Lt. Col. Leonard Cox.





## SHEMYA IS PUT ON GREAT CIRCLE ROUTE

Constellations began flying from Tokyo to the U. S. via the Great Circle route, which passes very near Shemya. Attu became a sub-base of Shemya. The Army Transport Command put Shemya and Adak on its Great Circle route to the Far East.

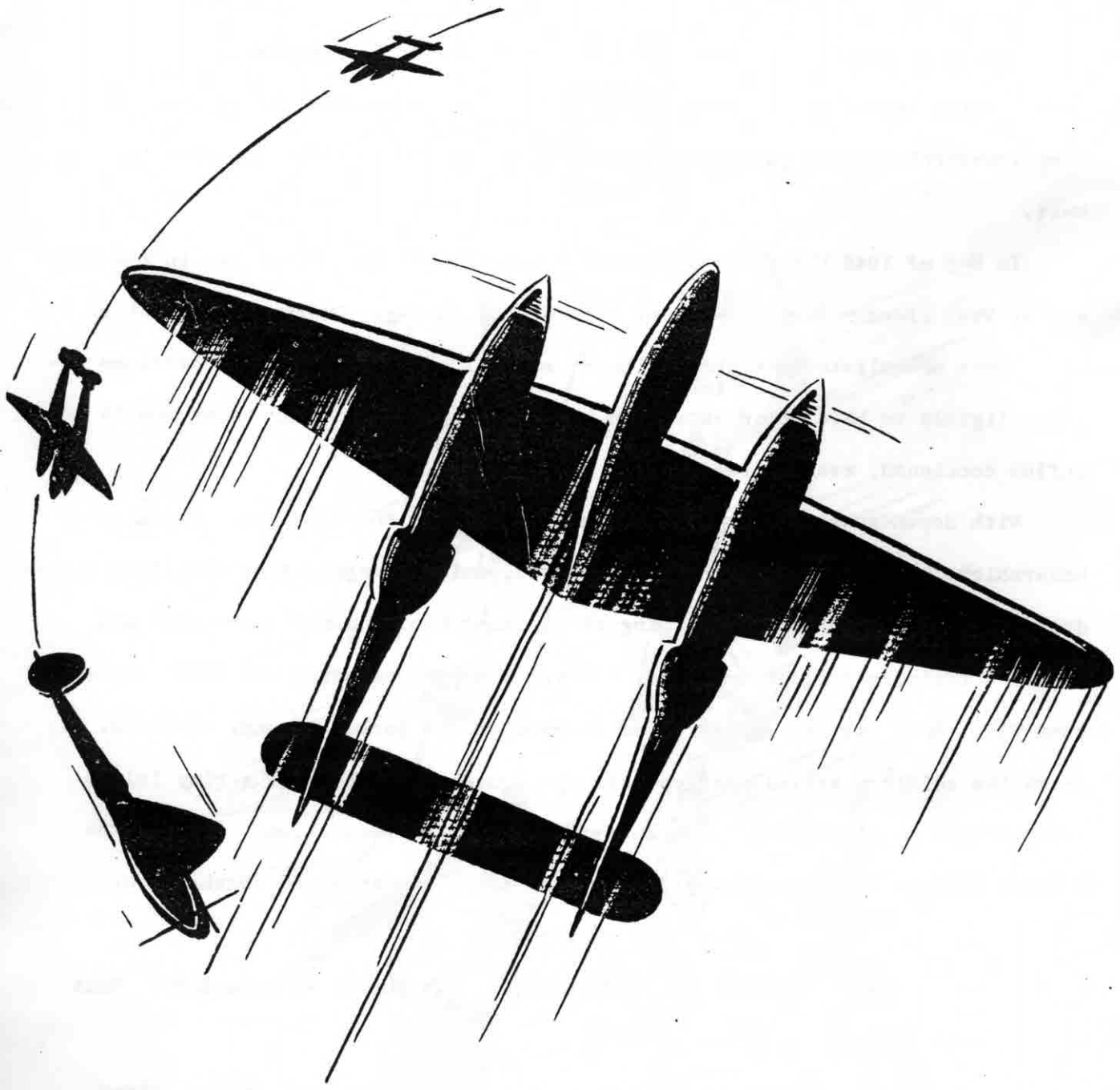
In May of 1946 the first woman dependent of a Shemyaite arrived in the person of Mrs. Eleanor Burcky, wife of Maj. Claude Burcky. Quarters were set up for dependents of enlisted men and officers, and all who signed to stay overseas became eligible to have dependents join them. During the ensuing three months the influx continued, even to babies.

With dependents came rules and civilization for the soldiers. In place of undershirts and bare chests in public places, uniform regulations specified proper dress. As age and military training of arriving replacements decreased, the island's training program enlarged. Infantry drill, parading and inspections became SOP. What wartime soldiers had learned on the parade grounds of the U. S., peacetime soldiers assimilated on taxiways, roads and tundra of a tiny island which lacked 40 miles of being the westernmost U. S. possession. In June the 3,000th student registered at Williwaw Tech since its start 10 months before.

### STRATEGIC SHEMYA

From a strictly military point of view why was Shemya so important? What was its part in winning the war?

1. It provided the major base of operations against the Kuriles, where considerable damage was done by the Air Force.
2. It offered a landing strip to planes flying lend-lease and other strategic materials to our Russian ally.
3. It denied the Japanese-
  - a. Bases for offensive operation against the United States.
  - b. Easy access to a prolific fishing area-- the Japs needed fish for food.



c. Freedom of Naval movement in the Northern Pacific ocean.

d. Use of numerous troops that were tied up against a possible thrust by the United States from the Aleutians.

4. It provided weather stations for the U. S. Army and Navy, thereby enabling forecasts of favorable and unfavorable bombing weather for planes operating from bases far south of the Aleutians.

5. It provided a testing ground for various types of clothing, equipment and weapons.

Just how much damage was done in the Kuriles by the 11th Air Force operating from its bases in the Aleutians and in conjunction with the Navy can be determined from the following figures:

"Reviewing two years of offensive operations, approximately 270 combat missions have been flown resulting in an incalculable amount of damage to ground targets by bombs, rockets and heavy-caliber machine gun fire. Without assistance from friendly fighters, sharpshooting bomber gunners have taken a toll of 109 Japanese aircraft destroyed or damaged in aerial duels. Most of these were fighters, and 57 of them were definitely or probably shot down.

Eighty-seven enemy vessels of all types, by the most conservative estimate, have been sunk or severely damaged in Kurile waters. Aleutian-based bombers and search planes have accounted for a destroyer escort and a transport, at least three sizeable cargo ships, 22 coastal freighters and numerous picket boats and fishing craft. Light naval units sent a medium freighter, a smaller cargo ship and a seagoing tug to the bottom of the Okhotsk Sea, probably sunk another small freighter and have heavily damaged a fourth. In 12 surface bombardments naval task forces have destroyed or damaged hangars, warehouses, radio stations and ammunition and gasoline dumps at Matsuwa and Paramushiro airstrips.

## BOMB TONNAGE DROPPED IN 1945

During the period of 1 January 1945 to August 1945, there was a total of 393 tons of bombs dropped by the 404th Bombardment Squadron. Of this amount 56.3% were dropped by planes using the airborne radar system.

The months of May and June shared the credit for being the busiest months of the year with approximately 88 tons being dropped. The primary target for this period was the Kataoka Naval base on the island of Shimishu.

These results have been achieved despite incredible hazards and handicaps of weather and distances unequalled in other combat zones, at a cost of 16 medium and 7 heavy bombers lost in combat to enemy fighters and anti-aircraft. The normal complement of these 23 aircraft is 143 officers and men. No damage has been inflicted, nor a single casualty suffered, on any of our naval vessels by enemy action in Kurile operations."

## WHY SHERMYA TODAY?

Where does the history of Shemya end? What is the island's future? If the information were all available, it would be classified secret, as is much of the data describing what is on Shemya today. In a sense this is still a secret base. But some things are obvious:

1. Shemya is the most important base in the western chain of bases guarding against attack through the Arctic circle, Alaska and Canada. Experts say any future attack against the U. S. would begin from the Arctic circle.

2. Shemya is almost directly on the Great Circle route-- shortest flying distance from the U. S. to the Far East. If the planes of the U. S. Army are to make such flights, they must have bases on which to land for refueling and in case of bad weather-- which condition exists more than often in the Aleutians.

3. If the U. S. is to be prepared to defend her shores, the U. S. Army must be able to operate in all climates it might encounter. This means flying in williwaws, fog, and all kinds of Aleutian weather. One doesn't become a good Aleutian



pilot overnight. Some of the toughest flying weather in the world is encountered hereabouts.

Some say five bombs would destroy Shemya. That can be said of any island. And if anything is worth defending- we think the U. S. is- it is worth defending in depth. Any one base may be knocked out, but the more and stronger the bases a nation possesses the more impervious she is to attack.



CHRONOLOGY OF SHEMYA

1941

Dec 7-- Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

1942

Jun 3-- Dutch Harbor, Alaska bombed by Japanese. Jap landings at Attu, Agattu and Kiska follow.

Aug 31-- Adak occupied by U. S. forces.

Sep 13-- First raid on Kiska made from Adak by 11th Air Force. Intensity of these raids started to increase.

Oct 7-- Atka taken by U. S. forces. Construction on airstrip began.

1943

Jan 12-- Amchitka occupied by U. S. forces. 11th Air Force now based 600 miles nearer enemy.

Mar 23-- Kiska being regularly bombed from Adak and Amchitka.

Mar 26-- West of Attu U. S. light naval forces exchange long range gunfire with Japanese convoy and force its withdrawal.

Apr 1-- Kiska and Attu bombed with increased vigor.

Apr 30-- Kiska bombed for 145th time during the month.

May 11-- U. S. forces land on Attu.

May 22-- Battle of Attu enters its final phase.

May 29-- Organized resistance of Japs on Attu ends.

May 29-- Shemya occupied.

Jun 3-- Shemya occupation completed.

Jun 6-- Kiska bombarded by U. S. surface units. Action is repeated on July 9th, 11th, 14th, 15th, 20th, 22d, and 30th, as the air attack continues intermittently.

Jun 11-- Attu casualty figures released:

	<u>JAPS</u>	<u>U. S.</u>
Dead	1900	342
Wounded	0	1135
Missing	0	58
Prisoners	24	0

Jul 22-- Kiska bombarded from the sea and bombed by U. S. and Canadian flyers.

Aug 15-- Light anti-aircraft fire encountered over Kiska.

Aug 13-- First planes landed at Shemya airfield for permanent station.

Aug 14-- First mission- the bombing of Kiska, flown from Shemya.

Sep 9-- Post Exchange opened.

Sep 19-- Radio Station WXLO's opening night postponed due to fire.

WXLO was on the air by the end of the month.

Oct 21-- 3 Army Nurses accompanying Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker toured the island. These were the first women to set foot on civilized Shemya.

Nov 1-- Post CP officially opened.

Dec 23-- Errol Flynn and Martha O'Driscoll entertained troops in the Navy theater.

Dec 23-- On Xmas eve the USS Scotia went aground in Shemya harbor loaded with urgently needed equipment and supplies. Though some of the cargo was salvaged, the vessel broke into two pieces in January taking millions of dollars worth of property to the bottom of the harbor.

1944

Jan 17-- 5 nurses arrived to join the 329th Station Hospital Staff. These were the first women to be stationed on Shemya.

Mar 15-- Record mission flown to within 960 miles of Tokyo.

Mar 15-- Olivia de Havilland visited Shemya to entertain the troops.

May 13-- Uptown Theater opens.

Oct 13-- Main docks badly wrecked by severe storms. The supplying of Shemya became a critical problem.

#### 1945

24 Jan-- Balloon, (thought to be Jap), shot down over Agattu by 343d Fighter pilots from Shemya.

21 Feb-- Bank opens for business.

3 Mar-- "The Aleut", main PX, has gala opening.

13 Apr-- Nine Balloons, thought to be Jap, shot down over Western Aleutians by 343d Fighter Pilots of Shemya.

11 May-- Best Bombing mission of war for 404th Bomb Squadron.-- flown from Shemya against enemy shipping at Kataoka Naval base.

19 May-- Service Club opened.

19 Jun-- Longest mission ever flown in Alaskan theater went from Shemya to Uruppu in Kuriles, 2,700 miles over water.

1 Aug-- Laundry "taken in" by new, modern method. Field Laundry closed.

12 Aug-- Post Chapel dedicated.

12 Aug-- Island alerted for Jap suicide attack which never came.

13 Aug-- Last Bombing mission over Kuriles from Shemya, by 404th.

14 Aug-- Peace- Japan capitulates-- Two-day holiday.

10 Sep-- Williwaw Tech opens with 530 education-hungry students.

10 Oct-- On-duty education begins, with 643 Shemyaites studying non-military subjects during day.

10 Oct-- Midtown theater opens.

12 Dec-- Brig. Gen. Goodman goes home. Col Frank Jamison takes over as island commander.

#### 1946

14 Jan-- Winds averaging 75 MPH give island its worst damage to electrical lines.

23 Jan-- Teletype communication to Shemya blocked by weather.

Jan to Mar-- Raging storms-- 75 MPH winds for week at a time. Deep snows stop traffic many days.

1 Mar-- Shemya News Sentinel enlarged to eight pages.

22 Mar-- Col. Joseph Utter, island executive officer, goes home and Lt. Col. Leonard Cox replaces him.

4 Apr-- First civilian woman dependent, Mrs. Claude Burcky, arrives.

9 Apr-- First Constellation airplane lands on Shemya, flying Great Circle route from Tokyo to U. S.

24 Jun-- Williwaw Tech registers 3,000th student.

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