

CHAPTER I

GENERAL INFORMATION

GEOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY:

Attu is the Western most island in the Aleutian chain and the largest of the Near Island Group (38 miles long by 14 miles wide). It is comprised of rugged mountains, narrow valleys, and a rocky coastline. The island is tundra-covered, and naturally treeless. During the summer months, Attu displays a beautiful variety of wildflowers.

On the southeast side of the island, overlooking Pyramid Cove and Massacre Bay, is USCG Loran Station Attu. The station is situated between two mountain ranges, with Mount Terrible as a backdrop to the west.

WEATHER:

It would be difficult to describe Attu's weather in terms of "typical days" or "average temperatures". The weather is not only unpredictable but often quite localized. While one valley may be enjoying a warming sun, an adjacent valley may be shrouded in fog.

In recent years, spring has brought clear, sunny weather with occasional snow flurries occurring until late May. Snow disappears rapidly from the lowlands in June and by July only scattered remnants of winter remain. Temperatures are mild, usually 40 - 50 degrees, with outside activity requiring a light jacket. Melting snow from the hills, midsummer rain, and fog provide ample moisture to transform the tundra into a rich green carpet.

Fog becomes predominant in summer; snow and rain characterize mid to late fall, bringing an end to summer's array of wild flowers. The mountains may or may not lose their entire snow cover before late September, when snow again returns to the hills. The season's new snow covers the inland mountains and hills first, while the hills nearest the ocean may shed early snows several times before winter's final onset in December. Winds from the North bring snow in late fall and winter and fair weather in spring and summer. High winds become more frequent and may exceed 100 miles-per-hour. Snow and fog are common throughout winter and a snow accumulation of several feet is not unusual. Although the temperature seldom falls below 15 degrees Fahrenheit, strong winds limit outside activity.

HISTORY:

The Aleutian Islands may be beautiful, but are by no means conducive to an easy life. Its native Aleuts, out of necessity, relied upon the sea for their livelihood and means of existence. These Aleuts are similar to the Eskimo in their language and hunting skills and, in common with the Northwest Coast people, their social class system provided for slaves.

Their villages were never far from the sea, which provided their food and clothing. The young men of the villages hunted seals, sea otters, and even whales. Aconite poison was made from the flower monkshood. This poison was used on spear and javelin points to kill whales which would eventually float ashore. Old men of the villages would fish in the streams and bays while the women and children gathered sea urchins, mollusks, birds eggs, berries, and plant roots for food.

Furs from sea mammals provided a source of clothing for the Aleuts and in the mid 1700s, attracted Russian merchants. In 1741, Vitus Bering's expedition brought back news of the discovery of the the Aleutian Islands and their wealth of furs. With sailors hungry for adventure and merchants greedy for wealth, ships were sent forth from the Kamchatka Peninsula in search of these rich islands. As many as 60 Promyshkenniks and Cossacks would venture forth in a ship only 45 feet long across a vast and unforgiving ocean, to trap and shoot fox, seals, and sea otters. Many of the vessels fell victim to rough waters and rocky shores, but those reaching the Aleutian Islands were justly impressed by its richness in fur bearing animals. Often one crew would return with as many as 200 fox, 1,500 sea otters and an equal number of seals. Soon Attu and its native Aleuts were bypassed for islands farther east where fox and sea otters could be slaughtered in even greater numbers.

The Aleuts were probably never very numerous on Attu, although at one time there were about one thousand Aleuts in the Near Island group. The Aleuts were concentrated on the southern, eastern, and northeastern shores.

Attu is the site of the only World War II battle to be fought on the North American continent. When the Japanese invaded Attu in 1942, there was one settlement of Aleuts in Chichagof Harbor consisting of only 45 people. These were taken to Japan where many died of disease and poor living conditions. After the war, the surviving Aleuts were taken to Atka.

The Japanese invasion of Attu in May of 1942 was unopposed, and no attempt to retake the island was made until a year later. The U.S. invaded the island on May 11, 1943. The Japanese numbered 2600 troops. At the end of the battle only 28 of the 2600 Japanese survived. At the conclusion of the battle, there were about 16,000 American fighting men on Attu. Most of these left Attu at the end of the war, leaving only a small number of U.S. Navy personnel to maintain a communication station until 1949.

A book that is highly recommended for further information on the war in Alaska, the Aleutian Islands and on Attu is:

THE THOUSAND-MILE WAR, by Brian Garfield and published by Bantam Books. The ISBN number is 0-553-27527-5

Upon the departure of the Navy, the U. S. Coast Guard renovated the present station building to house the Loran "A" and Loran "C" stations. The current building was commissioned at 1150 on 15 November 1960. By December 1980, Loran "A" was discontinued.

CHAPTER II OPERATIONS

Loran C:

The word "LORAN" is an acronym for "Long Range Aid to Navigation"

The basic Loran-C element is a pair of transmitting stations synchronized to develop useful navigational information. The difference in time of receipt of pulses from these stations can be measured by the user on a special receiver designed for this purpose. From the time difference, the user can plot a line of position, and by repeating the procedure with other station pairs the user can accurately determine his position.

Loran Station Attu transmits Loran-C signals as part of the NORPAC (North Pacific) chain on rate 9990 as the X-ray secondary. St. Paul Island, in the Pribilof Islands, is the Master Station for the NORPAC chain, while Port Clarence, near Nome, Alaska, is the Yankee Secondary station, and Narrow Cape, on Kodiak Island, is the Zulu secondary station. Also we are part of the Chayka (US/Unified Nations) chain on rate 5980 as the Xray secondary. Petropavlovsk, in the Unified Nations, is the Master Station for the Chayka chain, while Kurilsk, also in the Unified Nations is the Yankee Secondary station.

The Loran C system offers a larger coverage area, greater accuracy, and higher power than the old Loran A system.

Attu is equipped with AN/FPN-44 transmitters and a 625-foot guyed tower.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The teletype communications net includes the Seventeenth District Communications Center, the North Pacific Loran Chain, and the Chayaka Loran Chain.

HF SSB (Single Side Band) communications are also used between the Loran C stations in the North Pacific Chain.

A continuous guard is maintained on 2182 KHZ, the International Distress Frequency.

In addition to the teletype and SSB, Attu has commercial telephone systems.

CHAPTER III
STATION ORGANIZATION

The following is the Authorized Personnel Allowance for Attu:

Commanding Officer:	CW04
Executive Petty Officer:	ETC
Engineering Petty Officer:	MKC

ADMIN:		ENGINEERING:		OPERATIONS:
HS1	1	MK1	1	ET1
1				
FS1	1	DC1	1	ET2
1				
FS3	1	EM1	1	ET3

TOTAL ASSIGNED: 20

DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Administrative Department

The HS1 is assigned as the Administrative Department Head, and serves as the Administrative Assistant to the Commanding Officer. He/she performs the administrative tasks normally delegated to an Executive Officer. In addition to his/her administrative duties, the HS1 is expected to fulfill his/her medical, sanitation, health, and hygiene responsibilities.

The station storekeeper handles all aspects of his/her rate. Procurement of supplies and the maintenance of the station's financial records are the storekeeper's primary concerns. The assigned personnel leave Attu with many new skills, and a broad knowledge of the workings of the Coast Guard.

Engineering Department

The Engineering Department's most important duty is the operation and maintenance of the station's power plant. Primary station electrical power is supplied by Caterpillar D-3512 Electric Sets. Three of these sets are installed in the generator room with a rated output of 250 KW each. Since the normal station load ranges between 140 KW and 190 KW, any one set is capable of carrying the station's load. With three generators, one is online, one is stand-by, and the other is free for preventive maintenance, corrective maintenance or overhaul.

Additional responsibilities of the Engineering Department include maintenance of the station's heating and fresh water system, care and maintenance of the fire fighting equipment, and operation of the sewage plant. Engineering also performs vehicle maintenance, runway maintenance, and the large task of snow removal.

Operations Department:

The Operations Department is under the direct supervision of the ETC. The electronics personnel are responsible for the proper transmission of the LORAN C signal and the maintenance and repair of all electronic gear. Rotation between the Transmitter Building and the Timer Room gives the technician a well rounded knowledge of the equipment.

CHAPTER IV
RECREATION AND MORALE

HIKING:

Several gravel roads lead from the station area to Holtz Bay, Chichagof Harbor, Alexai Point, Murder Point, and part way up the Peaceful River Valley, making nearly one fourth of the eastern end of the island readily accessible. For those seeking a more challenging trek, Attu's hills and mountains offer such an opportunity. Mt. Terrible rises 2,280 feet and is about a mile from the station.

With the exception of parts of the island that are off limits due to un-exploded ordinance, the extent of one's journey is limited only by time and the ambition of the hiker. The station has backpacks for overnight hikes. Overnight camping requires at least two companions for safety and the Commanding Officer's approval.

A good pair of waterproof hiking boots is recommended.

PHOTOGRAPHY:

The island's snow-capped peaks and summer array of wildflowers are enough to satisfy the most ardent shutterbug. But Attu has much more to offer the photographer, either amateur or professional. North American and Asiatic birds, landing craft, Quonset huts rusting into oblivion, and assorted remnants of World War II are some subjects for the camera along with spectacular sun rises and sunsets, rolling and breaking seas, and other breath-taking scenery.

BIRDWATCHING:

Attu is on the migration route of a small part of the population of some Asian species of birds not seen elsewhere in the United States. Groups of birdwatchers come to Attu to stay in the old LORAN "A" station building for a few weeks in the spring. These groups have set many records for seeing birds not found in other parts of North America.

If you have internet capability, you can visit the Attu birdwatchers site at <http://attu.com>

FISHING:

Salmon return to Attu's streams about mid-July and Dolly Varden are present year-round. The abundance of fish makes for good eating and only a small number of disappointed anglers. The station personnel can use the morale smoker so that smoked salmon may be enjoyed long after the last of the fish depart.

HUNTING:

Attu is a part of the Aleutian National Wildlife Refuge. But hunting for fox is permitted with appropriate licenses and stamps. Hunting licenses can be purchased in the exchange at Support Center Kodiak.

SPORTS:

Sports available at the station include bicycling, basketball, volleyball, trapshooting, snowshoeing, snowboarding and skiing. The station has 12-gauge shotguns and 22. cal rifles which may be checked out for shooting. Personnel reporting to Attu may also bring their privately owned firearms. Firearms must be checked-in with the Weapon Custodian immediately upon arrival.

QUAD-RUNNERS (ATV):

We have 3 Quad-Runners (ATV's) for morale use to explore parts of the island, or just get around and have some fun. In order to ride a morale ATV, you must have a current ATV Safety Institute certification. To obtain an ATV Safety Institute certification before you arrive you can check at your current unit for a free course. If not, you can call the ATV Safety Institute at (800)447-4700 for the instructor nearest you. Currently we do not have a certified instructor aboard, so you must obtain a certification prior to your arrival to Attu.

BEACH COMBING AND SOUVENIR HUNTING:

Beach combing sometimes turns up glass float balls used by Japanese fishermen on their nets. These may range in size from four to sixteen inches in diameter, with the smaller ones more commonly found on Attu. Storms may uncover other "treasures" previously hidden in the sand.

The island of Attu has been designated a National Historic Site. Consequently, no World War II souvenirs or Aleut artifacts may be taken off the island.

INDOOR RECREATION:

For indoor recreation, there are several options. The station has a satellite receiver which receives various programming through AFRTS (Armed Forces Radio & Television Service. The station also participates in the Navy Motion Picture Service (NMPS). This service provides 8mm cassette tapes of the latest movies. Currently the station has an inventory of over 200 titles (8mm and Beta tapes) which are shown by request.

There are four hookups (VHS, BETA & two 8mm) to the station's inhouse video system for playing movies.

The "Rec Deck" has a pool table, dart board, large screen tv, video game and a bar that is open evenings (beer, wine coolers and soft drinks only). The drinking age for the State of Alaska and the station is 21 years of age. Alcoholic beverages other than beer and wine coolers are not permitted aboard the station.

A sauna, hot tub and weight room are also available. The weight room includes a variety of benches, squat rack, leg press machine, lat machine, calf machine, leg extension, a full compliment of dumbbells, 5-100 pounds, and an assortment of other equipment. Exercise room consists of a Lifecycle, Stairmaster, rowing machine, and treadmill.

CHAPTER V
MISCELLANEOUS

PERSONAL NEEDS:

EXCHANGE: Attu's exchange is a satellite of the Kodiak Exchange. The store stocks merchandise including toilet articles, tobacco products, uniform items, tapes, candy, and other sundries. Items not contained in the exchange, such as stereo equipment, may be special ordered through the parent exchange in Kodiak.

MAIL: Because air operations are so dependent upon weather, mail service is very irregular. Letters may take up to three weeks to reach their destination while packages may take up to eight weeks. Coast Guard C-130 logistic flights from Kodiak service Attu once every two weeks. However, these flights are delayed 15 days 30% of the time.

LAUNDRY: The Station has washing machines and dryers to meet the needs of the station personnel. Soap and bleach are provided, or you can purchase popular brands from the exchange.

MID-TOUR LEAVE: For those who so desire, it is usually possible to take mid-tour leave between the fifth and eight months of duty on Attu. Often a military flight to or from Elemendorf Air Force

Base in Anchorage can be utilized to defray travel expenses.

VISITORS: Attu is often visited during the summer months by birdwatchers, authors, members of the Fish and Wildlife Service, WWII veterans, and Coast Guard vessels on patrol. This provides a pleasant diversion from the normal routine as well as offering an educational opportunities.

ATTU BOUND HELPFUL HINTS:

Before coming to Attu you should check to be sure that you have a complete seabag, this includes Full ***Dress Blue***. Working uniforms should be in good condition and you will find it advantageous to bring along one or two extra sets of work uniforms. Personnel inspections are held on a quarterly basis.

Obtain an ATV Safety Institute certification before you arrive if you wish to ride the ATV's. Currently we do not have a certified instructor aboard. Check at your current unit to see if there is an instructor available there. If not, you can call the ATV Safety Institute at (800)447-4700 for the instructor nearest you.

Personal effects can be mailed ahead of time to your new address:

(Name)
USCG LORAN STATION ATTU
PO BOX 190090
KODIAK, AK 99619-0090

Packages should be sent to:

(Name)
USCG LORAN STATION ATTU
PO BOX 190090 BLDG 26
KODIAK, AK 9.9619-0090

It is most important that your mail contain the correct zip code if it is to reach the correct destination.

Attu's commercial telephone numbers are (907) 392-3315/3316

Civilian clothes may be worn after working hours and on the weekends when not on duty. You will probably wish to bring a good pair of hiking boots, a parka, and good outdoor-type clothing. The station provides foul weather clothing for the winter months, but thermal underwear and waterproof hiking boots are a good idea to include in your household goods shipment.

Although there is a stereo system on the recreation deck, most personnel also wish to have their own personal stereo in their room. Cassette tapes and CDs may be purchased from the station exchange. There is a TV in every room. VCR's are a popular item to bring.

As previously mentioned, firearms may be brought to Attu although there is limited hunting. The station has a morale shot gun, 22 caliber rifles, 357 and 9mm handgun that may be checked out by qualified personnel.

If you have any inclination toward fishing, you may wish to bring your own fishing gear. A light rod and reel capable of handling an occasional 10-15 pound fish and frequent 1 to 4 pound fish will be sufficient for your needs - a "medium" trout rod is ideal. Fishing rods are available through the morale locker. Fishing tackle can be purchased from the exchange.

Cameras are a must.

Plenty of hobby material should be brought along to see you through the foggy or snowy days. The Library has thousands of paperback and hardcover books by a variety of authors.

There is very little cash on Attu; it is very difficult to get cash on and off the island. Business is most efficiently conducted by checking account. You should open an account prior to arriving in Alaska. Direct Deposit is mandatory.

For personal calls, calling cards are the easiest way of using the telephone from Attu. The "ALASCOM" telephone service system is incompatible with most of the new competitive telephone services. Check with ALASCOM sales and service at 800 478-6500 as soon as possible if you plan on making personal calls other than collect.

AT&T and SPRINT calling cards work with the ALSCOM system but when using the MCI calling card you must dial the toll free number for MCI and go through the MCI operator.

Computer E-mail and internet connection is capable from your room, or from the units morale computer. Bringing your own computer is recommended.

Major Bank Cards and other credit cards via toll free numbers are the fastest way for ordering from various companies while on Attu.

OTHER RECREATION GEAR:

- (3) ATV Quad Runners - (3) Mountain Trail Bicycles - (2) Kayaks
- Camping Gear - Fishing Equipment (Salmon Fishing type) - Ski Gear (both Downhill and Cross country) - Snowboards - Snowshoes - Computer with CD ROM & Internet capability - Nintendo, Super Nintendo, Sega/Sega CD, Sony Playstation - Fitness Equipment - Weight Room
- Morale Shot Gun, 22 caliber rifles, 357 & 9mm handgun.