# Fort Abercrombie

After Japan captured two of the Aleutian Islands in June 1942, war was a frightening reality for Kodiak residents.

## Cast in Concrete

Fort Abercrombie, an outpost of Fort Greely, was one of many military installations quickly built to defend Alaska's coastline. After the U.S. declared war, 150-200 soldiers continuously manned the fort. In 1943, Fort Abercrombie boasted three large concrete bunkers, a few smaller concrete buildings, a 40-foot observation tower, two 8-inch naval guns, and a secret Signal Corps Radar 296 transmitting station.

## Kodiak's Watchdog

Soldiers stationed here performed an important job—to watch for approaching ships, determine whether they were enemy vessels, and if they were, sink them before they got too close to Kodiak. Soldiers used triangulation techniques to plot a target's position.

## A Commanding Presence

After Dutch Harbor was bombed, Kodiak assumed a major role in supplying the Aleutian Campaign. During the turbulent months between October 1942 and March 1943, Fort Abercrombie stood ready to protect the Kodiak Naval Operating Base and deter enemy attacks. Although Kodiak never saw enemy fire, the contributions of the men and women stationed here were invaluable to the defense of the U.S. coastline.

Military personnel constructing the Plotting and Spotting Building at Fort Abercrombie

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During the war, radios and azimuth telescopes were employed in the triangulation process to calculate an object's location.

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By knowing the baseline distance and the azimuth of the target from the Base End Stations (A and B), using true north as a reference, the distance to C can be calculated.

A Base End Station — Base End Station B

Japan bombed Fort Mears on Amaknak Island, June 3, 1942

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The *SS Northwestern*, grounded and burning after a raid on Dutch Harbor during WWII, June 3 and 4, 1942

University of Alaska, Fairbanks, UAF-1970-11-18
San Francisco Call-Bulletin, Aleutian Islands Photographs

Corporal Walter Dangel

www.dangel.net/250thCoastArtillery

*"A ship came in and we...lit it up and our guns were trained on it...When I looked at the ship through the scope, I recognized it as a small tanker...from Standard Oil...I told the commanding officer that I recognize...the Alaska Standard. And he says, 'Hold fire.'"*

—Corporal Walter Dangel, retired, Battery G 250th Coast Artillery A.U.S.

Observation Tower and Distant Electrical Control (DEC) shelter at Miller Point

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