

# WE'RE AT WAR!

"I believe in the future, he who holds Alaska will hold the world, and I think it is the most strategic place in the world."

—General William Mitchell, 1935

## Preparing for the Storm

In 1939, Alaska began preparing for war as a sense of urgency grew like a dark storm brewing on the horizon. That year, construction commenced on three Alaska naval air bases at Sitka, Kodiak, and Dutch Harbor; army garrisons soon followed. Troops began to arrive in March 1941, transforming small coastal towns into white-capped seas of tents teeming with soldiers and sailors.

## Extra! U.S. Declares War!

Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, plunging the U.S. into World War II. An attack on Alaska seemed imminent and the territory experienced a sudden, frenzied influx of military personnel and frantic construction. Panic spread as the military imposed scheduled blackouts and controlled all means of communication with the outside world.

## Kodiak Steps Up

On June 3 and 4, 1942, Japan bombed Dutch Harbor and invaded two Aleutian islands, Attu and Kiska, later that same week. Six days after the first attack on Dutch Harbor, the military commissioned the Kodiak Naval Operating Base. The base served as a place where pilots stopped to resupply, refuel, and service their planes during the Aleutian Campaign.



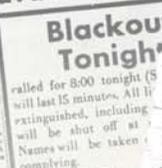
A navy photographer captured the above image of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941, just as the USS Shaw exploded.  
National Archives photo no. 80-5-18871



Left: Newspaper headline from Kodiak Mirror, December 7, 1941.  
Courtesy of www.kodiak.org



Below: Newspaper headline from Anchorage Daily Times, June 3, 1942.  
Courtesy of US State Library, Anchorage



Below: Smoke rising over Dutch Harbor. Notice the Japanese dive bomber flying over the radio tower to the right of the column of smoke.  
Photo courtesy of Alaska State Library, ASD-PSB-29 Series 7, Russell Photograph Collection, 1941-1942, ASD-PC-88

### THE PACIFIC OUTPOSTS

DISTANCES SHOWN IN STATUTE MILES

In 1924, the U.S. Army adopted "War Plan Orange," a national defense plan that called for defending the strategic triangle formed between Panama, Hawaii, and Alaska, to protect the Great Circle Route.

