

3. Aleutians

On May 30 three columns of United States troops, which had landed at Holtz Bay and Massacre Bay between May 11 and 17 for the purpose of clearing all Japanese from the island of Attu, converged on Chichagof Harbour. On a ridge not far from the beach the Japanese garrison, established on the island in June 1942, made its last stand and was wiped out. Only a few snipers and isolated groups were left to be dealt with singly. The Tokyo radio announced that 2,000 Japanese had perished in the Attu operations, and exploited the story of the Attu garrison in an appeal for increased war production at home.

It was impossible for the Japanese to send supplies or reinforcements to Attu after the American forces landed in mid-May. It is true that fifteen Japanese bombers attacked United States naval vessels off the island on May 22 and that on the following day sixteen bombers attacked American ground troops, but the Japanese aircraft were driven off with losses by United States fighters and-particularly on the second day - seemed indifferent as to where their loads were dropped. They came, apparently, from a base in the Kurile Islands.

The incompleted flight strip on Attu was found to have been constructed by the Japanese without the help of modern machinery. Less than a week will be required to put it into service. Air attacks have now been resumed on Kiska, the only point in the Aleutians where the Japanese still have a foothold.