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From: Officer-in-Charge.  
To: The District Intelligence Officer, 13th Naval District.  
SUBJECT: ATKA and PRIBILOF Native evacuation to KILLISNOO and FUNTERS BAY -  
Southeastern Alaska.

ATKA NATIVES

On the morning of June 24, 1942, two whites and eighty two ALEUT natives from ATKA, on board the S.S. DELEROF, arrived at KILLISNOO, site of an abandoned cannery, Chatham Straits, Southeastern ALASKA.

Mr. and Mrs. James R. MacGEE, Bureau of Indian Affairs teachers, are in charge of the native group which comprises fifty two males and thirty females.

Ex-native Chief William DIRKS, age 63, and the newly elected Chief, Steven GARDNER, are among the native ATKA evacuees.

The buildings at KILLISNOO, although in a somewhat dilapidated condition, give ample dry shelter and lend themselves to quick repair.

The fishing season is just beginning in this area and ample employment will be available at the ANGOON cannery, approximately one mile away.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs are cognizant of their needs and are sending emergency supplies by special boat.

Mr. and Mrs. MacGEE were contacted upon the arrival of the writer at KILLISNOO and the following facts were ascertained regarding the events leading up to the evacuation which took place June 13, 1942, at 0230.

The MacGEES stated that the first indication that the JAPANESE might become active along the ALEUTIAN Islands was the appearance of two four-motored flying boats circling off the southwestern end of the Island during the latter part of January 1942. That this fact was not reported to them by the natives until late in February at which time they considered it "old news" and no report was made of the incident.

The question was asked - how they knew these flying boats were Japanese, and Mr. MacGEE stated that he had asked the same question of the natives and that they had said that "They (planes) were just like the ones that landed on the water near their fishing boats two years ago."

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Ex-Chief DIRKS was asked if he had ever previously seen any JAPANESE planes, to which he related the following story:

"That seven summers ago, which would be 1935, a small Japanese vessel came into ATKA Harbor and anchored for about a week. That four 'big Japanese men' who could speak their language would come ashore each day and then go back up into the hills and make 'little rock piles' and place a Japanese flag in the center in memory of famous Japanese men. That these men would return to the village with roots from various plants and would show the people how to cook them and to make tea; that they tasted very good and that they now collect many of these roots each summer and store them for winter use, and that the people of the tribe do not get sick as much as they used to. Ex-chief DIRKS further stated that these Japanese men would bring presents and candy ashore which his people liked very much, and that the day before the Japanese vessel left ATKA Harbor two Japanese planes landed in the harbor and were tied up to the stern of the vessel, and that everyone on board ship seemed very happy that the planes had arrived."

From the description of the planes it appeared to the writer that they were pontoon, single engine, biplanes.

Ex-chief DIRKS stated that his people did not see any more Japanese airplanes around ATKA until two summers ago (1940) after the fishing season (August) at which time two big flying boats with "two engines on each side" landed in the water near one of the fishing boats returning to the village, and inquired where they were from and where they were going, and then flew away "without coming to the village or giving them any presents." That no other planes have been seen until now (June 4th).

Ex-chief DIRKS further stated that since he was a young man, Japanese fishing boats have been coming to the Island from time to time for water, which is easily obtained from a waterfall close to the beach, but that none of the fishermen were "as nice as the big Japanese men who came with the airplanes."

Mr. and Mrs. MacGEE stated that they have been stationed at ATKA for about one and one-half years, and they they could not give any additional information on previous visits of Japanese to ATKA other than confirm the statements herein related which they had previously heard.

The MacGEES stated that on the morning of June 4th, about 1030, three Japanese planes with single pontoons flew over the entrance to ATKA Harbor and that on June 5th a U.S. Navy PBY landed for gasoline and took off. That on June 7th or 8th, they were not certain, an airplane tender, name of which they could not remember, and eighteen PBYs arrived, and that ATKA was used as a base. The MacGEES further stated that from the date of arrival until their evacuation on June 13th, these planes would come in, gas up, and leave. That many of them did not come back and that most of them which did were full of bullet holes. That the crews of these planes came ashore to sleep in the school house. That everything possible was done to help them, such as furnishing blankets, keeping hot coffee on the school stove, and water to wash with, etc., that wound crew members were placed aboard the airplane tender. That on the morning of June 12th a Japanese plane machine gunned the village without any

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apparent damage, and that they later heard it had been shot down. That on the evening of June 12th they were notified that they would have to evacuate during the night, and that gasoline was then poured on and about all the buildings and everything set on fire.

That three damaged PBYS which were in the harbor were likewise set on fire and were completely destroyed. That twenty-two natives were so frightened that they went up into the hills and could not be found the morning of June 13th at 0230 - the time they were evacuated on the HEATHER. That on June 15th a Naval vessel, name unknown, came into ATKA Harbor and sent up flares which attracted the natives who then came to the village from whence they were flown to DUTCH HARBOR in PBYS - seventeen in one ship, and five and an unknown number of Navy personnel in the second plane.

Mr. MacGEE stated that they and the natives were unable to take hardly any personal effects with them, and that most of the natives were without clothing and had only what they were standing in. That Navy personnel did everything possible "To take care of our needs" and that "they will always have our undying gratitude for their many kindly deeds."

The MacGEES gave the following miscellaneous items of information:

That the reported Japanese fleet off KISKA Island on June 12th consisted of: 3 Airplane carriers; 2 Heavy cruisers; 2 Light cruisers; 6 Transports, 23,000 ton class; 6 submarines.

That it was reported that three four-motored, pontoon type, bombers were shot down on June 11th. That three Zero fighters were shot down June 12th. That between four and five thousand Japanese troops were landed on KISKA Island, and that a portable metal landing field was under construction on the north side of KISKA Harbor. That the Japanese had effected a landing on the west side of KANAGA Island on June 9th.

Mr. and Mrs. MacGEE stated that they were accustomed to hearing Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. JONES, Bureau of Indian Affairs teachers on ATTU Island give their weather report twice daily by radio, and that the last report heard was on the morning of June 7th which would tend to indicate the invasion date of ATTU by the Japanese.

#### PRIBILOF NATIVES

On the morning of June 24, 1942, 294 native evacuees from ST. PAUL Island, and 165 natives from ST. GEORGE Island, on board the SS DELEROF, arrived at FUNTERS BAY, site of an abandoned cannery on Chatham Straits, Southeastern ALASKA.

Mr. Carl M. HOVERSON is in charge of the ST. PAUL natives, and Mr. Daniel C. R. Benson is in charge of the ST. GEORGE natives.

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Mr. HOVERSON stated that he and his wife, and 294 natives, were evacuated from ST. PAUL Island on June 16th at 0400, on the S.S. DELEROF. That ample notice was given to allow personal effects and supplies to be taken.

That considerable supplies were left at the station which included the following larger items:

- 200 tons of coal
- 17,000 barrels of seal oil
- 20,000 gallons of low grade gasoline
- 2,000 pounds of sugar
- 12,000 pounds of canned goods
- 250 pounds of black powder
- 25 cases of dynamite.

That only the radio man was left on the Island to await the arrival of Army personnel.

The complete instructions were left with the radio man for destroying all supplies should an invasion attempt be made, which included the destruction of the radio shack.

Mr. HOVERSON stated that Mr. BENSON had made the same arrangement on ST. GEORGE ISLAND, and that he felt certain that none of the supplies would be available to the Japanese should they attempt an invasion.

MR. HOVERSON further stated that no Japanese planes have been seen about the Island this year or any other year. That the only Japanese who have come to the Island have been fishing students who under International agreement are allowed to observe the killing and marking of seals.

Mrs. HOVERSON related the following story. "That these fishing students, as they are known, are between the ages of twenty to twenty-five, and usually number between thirty and forty. That they are "very clever" and play a game which the Japanese class "Look see and draw picture" which is directed by a ship's officer called the Fishing Commissioner.

The game goes like this. The group gather at a convenient place on the beach and are then sent in groups of four and five to the various buildings of the settlement and are given from five to ten minutes to inspect the premises at which time they return to the central gathering place and draw what they have seen.

Mrs. HOVERSON stated that it was "remarkable" how well the pictures were drawn - "just like photographs". That these drawings would give exterior and interior views in addition to a floor plan with dimensions which would be within a few inches of the correct measurement. That in 1939, one of the students was showing her his sketches of the radio "shack" with all the equipment in place, and size of rooms, whereupon the Fishing Commissioner came up and "scolded him severely", and sent him back to the ship and that she did not see him again during their stay.



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Mr. HOVERSON stated that by International agreement the Fishing Commissioner was allowed to look at all the records pertaining to the killing of seals and the shipment of skins. That it was necessary to have some one on hand at all times or the "Commissioner would be into all the records of the station".

Mr. HOVERSON further stated that the natives were asked each year if the U.S. Government had issued them guns and ammunition; if they practiced shooting; that they would like to have them demonstrate their ability and that the best shot would be given a prize. This request was never granted.

Mr. HOVERSON stated that the natives are very loyal Americans and bitterly dislike the Japanese. That during the annual festival in early December, 1941, the theme of the "Masked Dance", an annual celebration, was the killing of their enemies. That last year they included the Germans, Italians and Japanese. That in the case of the Germans and Italians they were only shot, but that the Japanese were shot, hung, and then cut to pieces.

Mr. HOVERSON stated that the natives were very much impressed by the visit of the U.S.S. CHARLESTON to the Islands in 1941. Especially so by the kind attitude of Captain PARKER and the funny stories told by Captain SHERRY - probably Commander SHERWOOD.

No additional information was available regarding Japanese activity.

/s/ R. J. SCHOETTLER

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