



# Kiska Island

**CAUTION - Military ordnance and explosives from World War II remain on Kiska and Little Kiska Islands. These items are extremely dangerous and should not be touched, picked-up or moved.**

## History

Japan invaded Kiska Island in June 1942. Japanese troops struggled for a year against harsh weather, terrain, inadequate clothing, and attack. While the Allied forces planned a final invasion of Kiska, the Japanese evacuated troops, under the cover of fog. Expecting intense fighting and heavy losses, American and Canadian military forces invaded on August 15, 1943, only to be greeted by abandoned Japanese camps, weapons and equipment.

## Caution For Island Visitors

Large amounts of ordnance and explosives were stored, used and disposed of on Kiska and Little Kiska Islands. During the first half of 1943, Allied planes dropped over 3 million pounds of bombs on both Kiska and Little Kiska islands. Many of these bombs may not have exploded as intended. Other ordnance left on the islands after military demobilization included countless numbers of Japanese and Allied artillery, mortars, small munitions, grenades and land mines as well as Japanese booby traps.



Artillery shells litter the island.

Although military activities on Kiska and Little Kiska were concentrated in certain areas, ordnance and explosives may be encountered anywhere on and around these islands. Military shipwrecks are located in the water or on-shore around the islands; among them a Japanese mine-carrying vessel, midget submarine, and merchant ship. Remnants of military aircraft, bunkers, tunnels, guns and munitions can also be found on the islands. When war operations in the Aleutians were halted, much of the remaining ordnance was buried by the American military; these dumps



Piles of abandoned ammunition.

contain shells, fuzes, bombs and other explosives. But even long-buried items can eventually be brought to the surface by natural events such as earthquakes, storms, wave action or soil erosion. Military ordnance and explosives are designed to destroy equipment and kill/maim people. Regardless of harsh conditions or age, explosives remain lethal and can become more sensitive to movement. Weather and soil conditions may alter appearances so that today shells and fuzes may appear rusty and be difficult to recognize. Many items may be partially or totally buried, with little or no portions visible through the vegetation or soil. These items may appear as rusty pipes or pipe fittings.

## What You Should Do

If you discover something you think may be military ordnance:

- **DO NOT TOUCH, REMOVE OR DISTURB**
- If possible, identify area on map
- Record size and shape **WITHOUT TOUCHING**
- Take a photograph of the item

All types of explosives represent serious hazards; they can be more deadly than when initially dropped or fired during battle. For your safety and the safety of others, assume that all ordnance and explosives are live and may explode.

Until the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducts site investigations and attempts to remove known military ordnance and explosives, the public should take extreme caution in accessing these islands.

**Please report all findings to either:**

**Alaska Maritime  
National Wildlife Refuge  
95 Sterling Highway, Suite 1  
Homer, Alaska 99603  
(907) 235-6546**

**Alaska Maritime National Wildlife  
Refuge - Aleutian Islands Unit  
Box 5251  
Adak, Alaska 999546  
(907) 592-2406**

**Department of the Army  
176<sup>th</sup> Ordnance Detachment (EOD)  
Fort Richardson, Alaska 99505-6078  
(907) 384-7603 or (907) 384-2307**