

SRH-303

NAVAL SUPPLEMENTARY RADIO STATION

OTTER POINT, UMNAK ISLAND, ALASKA

CERTIFIED TO BE UNCLASSIFIED
by Director, NSA/Chief, CSS



Date: 20 July 1984

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NOTE: The attached document was prepared by Naval personnel with access to various historical records with the objective of bringing diverse records into a usable narrative history of a Naval activity. The document does not constitute an official Navy history and no claims are made regarding its completeness and accuracy. Prepared at NAVSECGRUDET Crane, Indiana
7 April 1980

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Naval Supplementary Radio Station
Otter Point, Umnak Island, Alaska

In a Commandant, THIRTEENTH Naval District letter of 15 December 1941, it was recommended that the Strategic HFDF Station located at the Naval Air Station, Dutch Harbor, Unalaska Island, be moved to Umnak Island which the Army was then developing as an air base but that the Dutch Harbor HFDF equipment itself remain in place to support Naval Air Station, Dutch Harbor, operations. On 12 February 1942, the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-20G) disapproved the request for the relocation and stated that the Strategic HFDF Station would remain at Dutch Harbor. The Model DY HFDF equipment installed at Dutch Harbor would be reassigned to the Naval Air Station when replaced by the Collins HFDF equipment (the Model DAB).

In a 2 March 1943 COMTHIRTEEN letter to the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, the subject of the move of the Strategic HFDF Station from Dutch Harbor to Umnak Island was raised again. Based on earlier correspondence, the natural radio conditions at Dutch Harbor were apparently less than desirable and, perhaps, had further deteriorated through increased electro-magnetic interference as the Dutch Harbor area expanded with the World War II build-up. Whatever the reason, VCNO's letter serial 0829620 (date unknown) approved the latest request to move the Model DAB HFDF equipment to Umnak Island. On 2 May 1943, COMTHIRTEEN queried if a decision had been made on also moving the Dutch Harbor Model DAH and Model DP direction finder equipments to Umnak. BUSHIPS' 062325Z MAY 43 to COMTHIRTEEN stated that, subject to VCNO authorization, BUSHIPS was agreeable to the movement of the Model DAB, DAH, and DP direction finder equipments from Dutch Harbor to Umnak Island provided that technically acceptable sites with communications facilities could be found. BUSHIPS' 141815Z MAY directed COMTHIRTEEN to proceed with the installation of the Model DAB at Umnak Island for supplementary use if the

Army was agreeable. VCNO's 152202Z MAY to COMTHIRTEEN authorized the move of the Model DAH direction finder equipment but stated that the use of the Model DP equipment at Dutch Harbor could be discontinued for supplementary work since the Model DAH and Model DP equipments were not both required at Umnak. COMTHIRTEEN's 192349Z MAY reported that the Model DAB for the Umnak installation was at Puget Sound, Washington, awaiting shipment. An estimated completion date for the Umnak station was given as 1 July 1943.

On 1 June 1943, COMTHIRTEEN forwarded to the Commander, Alaskan Sector, the plans and specifications for the construction of a building for the Model DAB direction finder at Umnak. COMTHIRTEEN also requested that a representative be designated with whom the Radio Material Office engineers could consult relative to the installation of the Model DAH-1 equipment and choosing a suitable site; especially since the equipment had four 100-foot towers which could be a hazard to aircraft. Umnak Island was described as a mountainous volcanic island about 60 miles west of Dutch Harbor. The site selected for the Model DAB direction finder was at Antler Point on a flat plateau five miles west of the Naval Air Facility at Otter Point. The only natural obstacle for HFDF operations at the site was Tulik volcano, six miles to the northwest. Since the installation of the Model DAB HFDF at Antler Point represented a transfer of the Naval Supplementary Radio Station from Dutch Harbor to Umnak, it would also be necessary to transfer one TBK-11 transmitter, as well as two Model RBG and one Model RAS receivers. The Model DT direction finder installed at Dutch Harbor would remain there. COMTHIRTEEN' 292351Z JUN informed VCNO that completion of the DAB building and associated facilities was projected for 10 July or earlier and all equipment installation should be finished by 18 July.

In a report dated 1 August, it was stated that the HFDF station at Dutch Harbor was decommissioned at 221500Z July and recommissioned at its new location on Umnak

Island at 231100Z July. The new coordinates for the station were $53^{\circ} 21' 44.97''$ North $167^{\circ} 54' 52.523''$ West on a plot of nearly level ground measuring 1800' x 1800' at Antler Point, Umnak Island. The Model DAB HFDF equipment was located in the exact center of the plot. Power for the station was initially provided by two 12.5 KW gasoline generators and would eventually be provided from a power plant being constructed by the Army. Quarters had been constructed about 800' from the DAB building and consisted of a galley, mess hall, sleeping quarters, an office, and the operations room. A Ship's Cook had been assigned from NAS Dutch Harbor and he had been given a security indoctrination. Communications between the DAB building and the operations room was by a teletalk system. (see Appendix A)

In the station's monthly report for August 1943, the station reported considerable interference and unstable bearings during the latter part of the month due to the Northern Lights. However, a definite improvement in overall operations was reported from that experienced at the former Dutch Harbor site. The only EMI reported was from an Army radar which was used intermittently during the evening hours. The replacement of one of the gasoline generators with a 20 KW diesel generator eliminated slight ignition noises. The second gasoline generator was relegated to a reserve status.

In response to a query on the station's equipment status, the Naval Supplementary Radio Station, Otter Point, Umnak Island, Alaska, reported, as major items of equipment, one Model TBK-11 transmitter installed in the Naval Air Facility, Otter Point, transmitter room; two Model RAS-3 receivers; two Model RBK-1 receivers; one Model RBC-1, one Model RBA-1 and one Model RBB-1 receiver; one Hammarlund HQ-120 receiver, and the Model DAB HFDF equipment. Apparently the Model DAB direction finder had not been installed as originally planned. Remaining at the old site at Dutch Harbor were a Model DT HFDF equipment, two XAB/HRO receivers, and miscellaneous equipment.

In the September monthly report, the station reported having three Model RBA-1,

one Model RBB-1, and three Model RBC-1 receivers.

In a 15 October letter, the Radioman in Charge, RMC R. J. Rox, USN, informed the Assistant Director of Naval Communications (OP-20G) that RMC Boardman Barron Jones, USN, would be completing a three-year tour outside the continental United States in December 1943, as would RMI Jack Wiborn Cornell, USNR, in January 1944. On 15 November, ADNC (OP-20G) reported that orders on the men would be requested when reliefs became available in December. On 27 December, OP-20G requested that both men be transferred on or about 10 January 1944 from Umnak to the U. S. Naval Radio Station, Point St. George, California. (see Appendix B for other personnel assigned to the Umnak station)

On 3 May 1944, OP-20GX requested that the callsign "NHG" be reassigned to the Supplementary Radio Station at Umnak and the station letter designator "K" had been transferred with the station from Dutch Harbor to Umnak.

The monthly report for October 1944, was signed by Chief Radio Electrician C. R. Coyle as Officer in Charge. He reported that during the month, all coordinated tracking was carried out by flashes from _____ with bearings forwarded by radio back to net control. The reports for November 1944 and subsequent months were essentially the same indicating that the total mission for the station was HFDF.

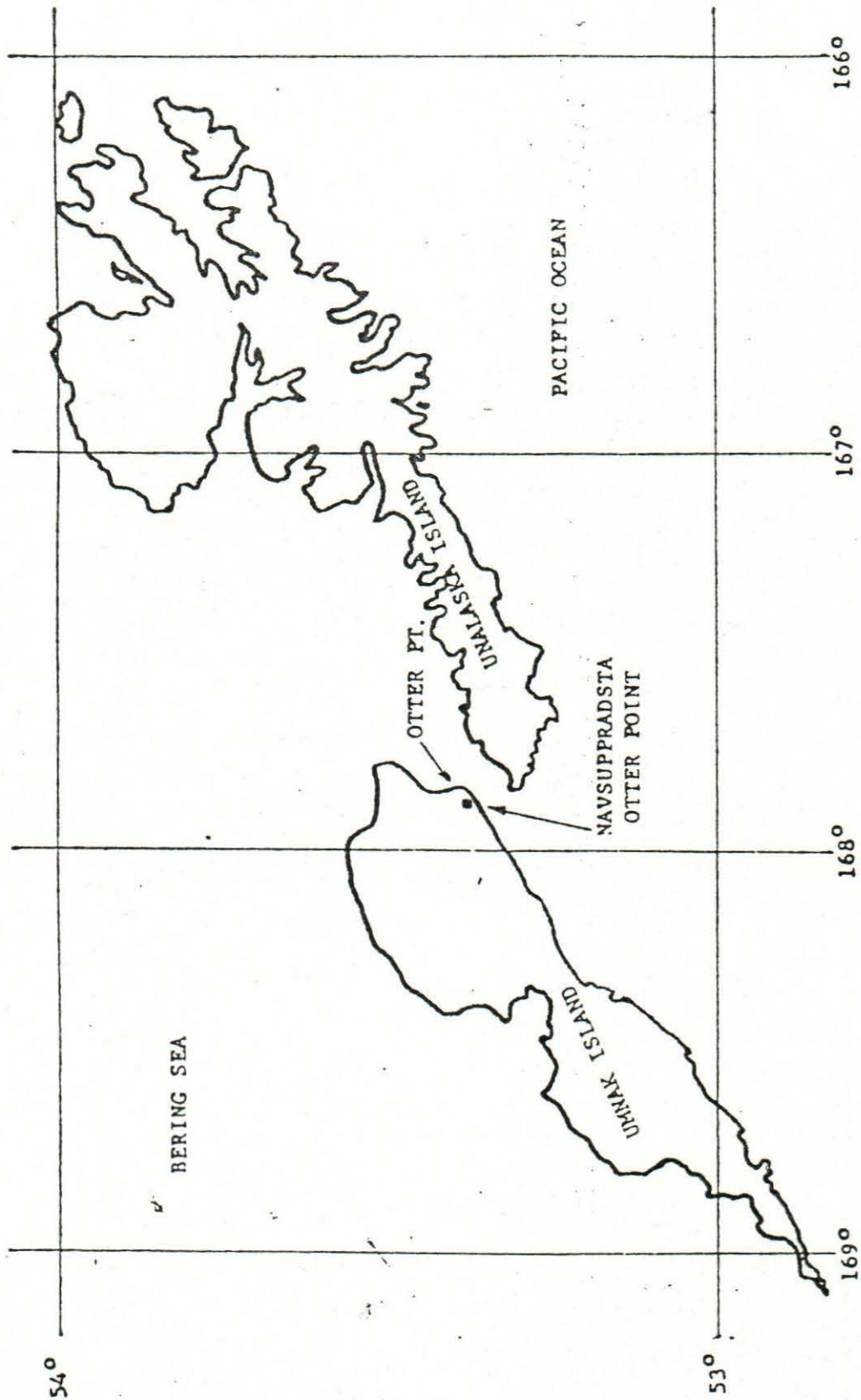
In the monthly report for March 1945, it was recommended that the TBK-11 transmitter be replaced since it had been in use for almost three years without a major overhaul and was in need of major repairs. It was also requested that a diesel-trained Machinist's Mate be assigned to the station since, due to inclement weather, electrical power from the Army's power plant was not reliable and, apparently, the station's diesel generator had to be used often. The TBK-11 was replaced by a TBW-4 in April and overhaul of the TBK-11 was initiated.

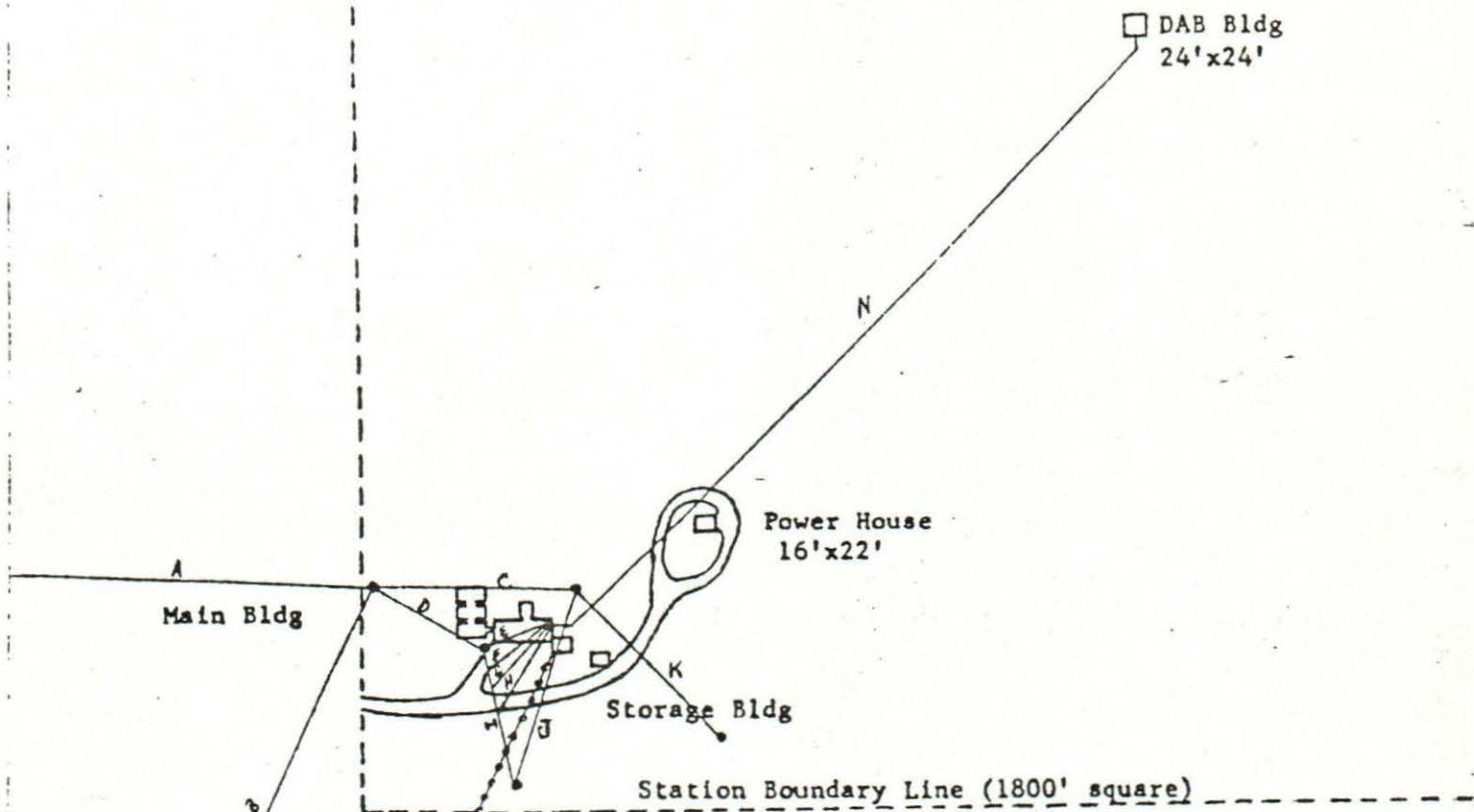
In a Fleet Radio Unit, Pacific Fleet letter dated 27 April 1945 to ADNC on the subject of a reorganization of the Pacific Strategic HFDF Net, it was proposed that

the Umnak station either be closed or turned over to the Coast Guard. Apparently the Umnak station was offered to the Coast Guard as proposed by FRUPAC because it was noted on 26 June that a CDR Brallier, USCG, had stated that the Coast Guard would not be able to use the Umnak station since construction had already begun on a new Coast Guard station at Unimak. CNO's 291801Z JUN informed COMSEVENTEEN that the progress of the war in the Pacific was such that the Naval Supplementary Radio Station at Umnak was no longer required. Since the Coast Guard did not want the station for their air-sea rescue net, it was proposed to decommission the station on 1 August unless COMSEVENTEEN required the station for other purposes. All station personnel would be transferred to other supplementary activities. All equipment would be made available to disposition except the Model RBA, RBB and RBC receivers which would be transferred to the Naval Supplementary Radio Station.

In his 010630Z JUL, COMSEVENTEEN reported that the Umnak station was not required for local operations and, in any case, its usefulness was particularly limited since there were no other Naval installations nearby. Apparently the Naval Air Facility at Otter Point had been decommissioned. On 2 July, ADNC (OP-20G) reported that Umnak would be decommissioned on 1 August 1945.

The decommissioning took place as scheduled. In his 092101Z AUG 45, the Officer in Charge reported that the Naval Supplementary Radio Station, Umnak Island ceased operations at 010001Z August and was completely decommissioned at 071800 local. All personnel had been transferred to the Naval Operating Base, Dutch Harbor, where they were awaiting transfer to their ultimate duty stations.





- A. V-type Receiving Antenna (240.5°)
- B. " " " "
- C. All-purpose Receiving Antenna
- D. " " " "
- E. " " " "
- F. One-half Wave Antenna (8350 kHz)
- G. " " " " (8000 kHz)
- H. " " " " (8995 kHz)
- I. Antenna
- J. V-type Receiving Antenna (162°)
- K. " " " "
- L. Transmitter transmission line
- M. Rhombic Antenna (162.5°)
- N. Underground communication cable

PLAN OF NAVAL SUPPLEMENTARY RADIO STATION, OTTER POINT

Scale 1/2" - 100'

UNALASKA I. →

→ SUPR. STA.

→ POWER

→ DAB

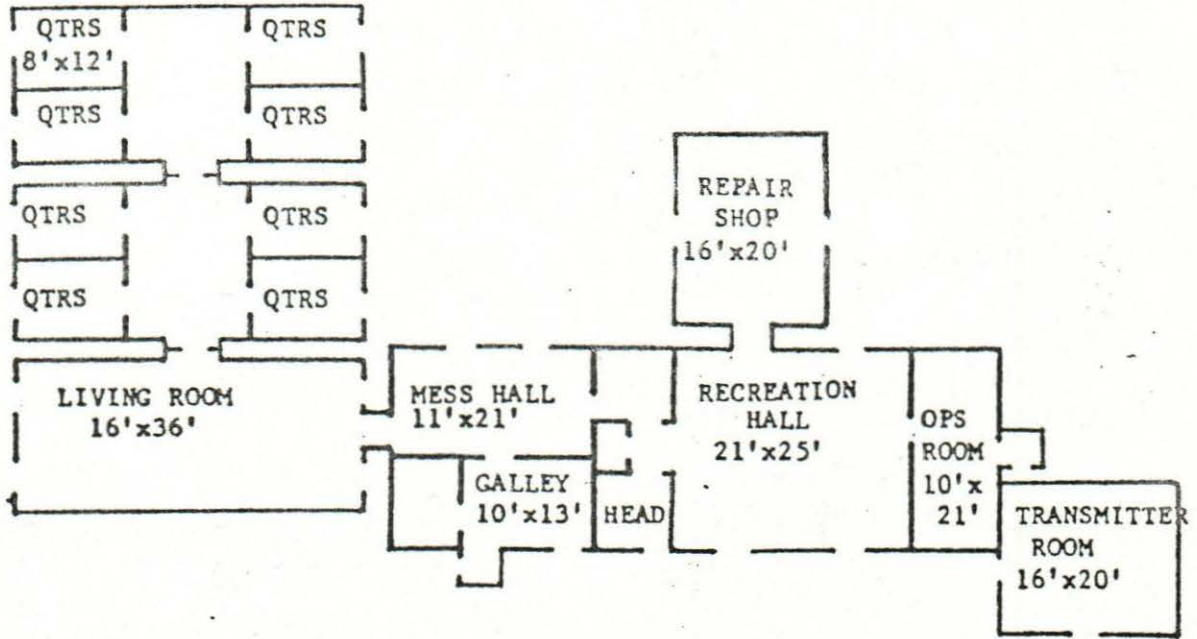
SHIP ROCK



UMNAK

FIG. 22

0009



MAIN BUILDING PLAN

Scale 1" - 20'

PERSONNEL ROSTER

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK/RATE</u>	<u>DOR</u>	<u>SVC</u>	<u>SVC/FILE NR</u>	<u>REPORTED</u>	<u>TRANSFER</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
BURKS, Donald Leon	RM3 RM2 RM1	6 Jun 45	USN	316-96-01	2 Feb 44		Arr fm Bainbridge Island
BLAKEY, Rodney William	RM3 RM2	1 Oct 43	USNR	414-36-41	Jul 43		Arr in move fm Dutch Harbor
CORNELL, Jack Wiborn	RM1 RMC	1 Jan 44	USNR	401-37-11		10 Jan 44	Dep to Point St. George, CA
COYLE, C. R.	CRE		USN				Officer in Charge
DAVIS, Thomas (n), Jr.	Sic		USNR	869-30-99	15 Nov 44	May 45	Dep to Commander , Unalaska Sector
FENTON, Clement Beaven	RM3 RM2		USNR	710-47-65	2 Feb 44		Arr fm Bainbridge Island
FOX, R. J.	RMC		USN		Jul 43		Radioman in Charge. Arr in move: fm Dutch Harbor
HELLING Vincent Elwood	RM3 RM2 RM1	16 Jun 45	USNR	872-66-03	2 Feb 44		Arr fm Bainbridge Island
HULL, Randolph Wesley	RM3 RM2 RM1	1 Jan 44	USNR		Oct/Nov 43	7 May 45	Arr fm Bainbridge Island. Dep for Castroville, CA
JACQUES, Ephraim Oliver	RM2 RM1	1 Nov 43	USNR	414-37-27	Jul 43		Arr in move fm Dutch Harbor
JONES, Boardman Barrow	RMC		USN	274-14-97		10 Jan 44	Dep for Point St. George, CA
KELLER, Frank (n)	RM2 RM1	1 Jan 44	USNR	414-36-82	Jul 43		Arr in move fm Dutch Harbor
MARDIS, Algie Brownlow	RM2 RM1	2 Feb 45	USNR	604-69-08			
MARTELL, Edwin Charles	RM3 RM2	1 Oct 43	USNR	414-41-49	Jul 43		Arr in move fm Dutch Harbor

0011

PERSONNEL ROSTER

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK/RATE</u>	<u>DOR</u>	<u>SVC</u>	<u>SVC/FILE NR</u>	<u>REPORTED</u>	<u>TRANSFER</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
MCCOY, C. C.	SC1		USNR		Jul 43		
MCWILLIAMS, Robert H.	RM3 RM2		USNR	670-48-31	Jul 43	7 May 45	Arr in move fm Dutch Harbor. Dep for Castroville, CA
QUALE, William H.	RM1		USNR		8 May 45		Arr fm Castroville, CA
ROGERS, John B.	RM1		USNR		8 May 45		Arr fm Castroville, CA
SMITH Jack T.	RM2 RM1	1 Apr 45	USNR		7 May 45		Arr fm Castroville, CA
STEINERT, Richard L.	RM3		USNR	761-77-32			
THOMPSON, Chester Ervin	RM2 RM1 RMC	1 Jan 44 5 Mar 45	USNR		Oct/Nov 43	7 May 45	Arr fm Bainbridge Island. Dep for Castroville, CA
TUCKER, Howard Charles	RM1		USNR	402-74-17	Jul 43		Arr in move fm Dutch Harbor
VODEN, Gorre Stewart	RM2 RM1	1 Nov 43			Jul 43		Arr in move fm Dutch Harbor
WATTS, Ray T.	SC2		USNR	875-94-35	8 May 45		
WOODMAN, William Fenderson, Jr.	RMC		USN	359-97-25	Jul 43		Arr in move fm Dutch Harbor

0012

129B

UMNAK

Umnak Island is a mountainous volcanic island 60 miles west of Dutch Harbor. The surface soil is volcanic ash of low conductivity. A Model DAB direction finder is located at Antler Point, a flat plateau five miles west of the Naval Air Facility at Otter Point. Arrangement of facilities at the Supplementary Radio Station, at Antler Point, is indicated by aerial photographs, Figures 20, 21, 22, and 23. Tulik Volcano, six miles to the northwest, is the only natural obstacle in the vicinity of the site. Results from the Umnak DAB installation compare favorably with results obtained by the DAB installation at Amchitka. Because of the low electrical conductivity of the volcanic soil, the Antler Point site is not recommended for a Model DAJ direction finder installation. Tween Point, located four miles west of the present Supplementary Radio Station, and illustrated by Figures 24, 25, and 26 has been investigated, because of its large area of flat sloping terrain and its remote location from any source of man-made interference, as a possible location for a complete supplementary radio activity, with directional antennas for intercept and Model DAJ and Model DAH direction finders. Sufficient area exists for such an activity, but the soil is volcanic ash and cinder material, with very low electrical conductivity. In the light of information contained in reference (c), relative to soil requirements for the Model DAJ and Model DAH direction finders, the Tween Point site does not appear satisfactory for this purpose.