

Mystery of the Missing Munitions

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

The U.S. Navy has called on Kodiak residents to provide information about possible WWII ordnance left on or around the archipelago.

In 2011, a Navy historian from Washington state travelled to Alaska to conduct research on the sea defense areas the Navy used in WWII. During his visit, he identified three sites that needed to be looked at further: Kiska Island, Unalaska and Kodiak. But in an unfortunate turn of events, the historian died, and left behind a mystery more than 70 years in the making.

-- (Navy Mystery 1 : 39 "We don't know why he was there to start with, we don't know why now, 70 years after the end of WWII. So it's going to take us a little bit to get those details, but we want those details. And what we're looking for is we've gone out to residents of Alaska and asked for their help. We'd like to know what they know, what stories they've heard from parents or grandparents and help us complete the picture of what occurred on those three island during WWII so that we can complete a preliminary assessment to determine if we need to look for more things than we originally know about.")

That's Leslie Yuenger, the public affairs officer for Naval Facilities Engineering Command Northwest. She said little is known about what WWII ordnance on these three islands, especially in the marine environments.

-- (Navy Mystery 2 : 43 "Kiska
Island, the 65th Artillery Gun Battalion held training exercises
which potentially included over water. So there may be some things underwater
that we need to at least go verify. There was a sea plan operation center there
from 1943-44. Over on Kodiak we know there was an anti-aircraft training center
range where they had artillery training as well as coast defense exercise area.
Both of those sites had training ranges that stretched over the water. And then
over on Unalaska there was a coastal defense site there with anti-aircraft
artillery training exercises from 1942-46. That's pretty much our starting
point.")

Younger said until people come forward with information, the mystery of the historian, what prompted in his search, and any relics hidden in surrounding waters, will remain a mystery. If you or someone you know can help shed some light on the topic, contact Tom Abbot at 206-438-2004.

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