# St. Lawrence Island, Alaska

**Gambell Sites** 

**GIS-BASED HISTORICAL TIME SEQUENCE ANALYSIS** (HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS)

**PRODUCED BY THE** USACE ENGINEER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER **TOPOGRAPHIC ENGINEERING CENTER** 

September 2000

**Final** 



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## Gambell, AK - Site Locations





**US Army Corps of Engineers** 



Gambell, AK







# Gambell, AK General Study Area



**US Army Corps of Engineers** 



Gambell

Tro

Nayvagh

Lak

T LAWRENCE I

#### Sevuokuk Mtn.

**1984 Image Mosaic** 



1

# Gambell, AK - Objectives & Background

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Analyze a series of historic aerial photographs, historical maps, and ancillary data/documents for the 2,542 acre area we shall refer to as the Gambell Sites.
- Determine if there are features on these photos that could be indicative of possible burial and/or areas of general ground disturbance and/or possible historical, cultural features. These features may be potential areas of interest for possible HTRW disposal and/or conventional ordnance disposal, requiring further site investigation.
- Map the location of historical features of interest onto a current aerial photo base produced for the site.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

- Some of the features identified represent new or refined data found during the Topographic Engineering Center's (TEC's) analysis of historical aerial photography and therefore are meant to be used in addition to the data found in previous investigations and the Archive Search Report. Some information used in this report was provided by USACE Huntsville and **USACE** Alaska District.
- Data is presented in Geographic Information System (GIS) form and additional information for features is provided on the CDROM. ArcView is the common GIS display mechanism, though .dxf files are provided in addition to the arc coverages.







## Gambell, AK

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This report presents the results of a historical aerial photographic analysis (GIS-based historical time-sequence analysis) for an area known as the Gambell Sites located on Saint Lawrence Island in the state of Alaska. This study was compiled for the U.S. Army Engineering & Support Center, Huntsville, Alabama by the United States Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC), Topographic Engineering Center's (TEC) Operations Division (CEERD-TO), located in Alexandria, Virginia.

The Terrain Analysis Branch (TAB) of the Operations Division was tasked to search for and collect historical photographic records and map data relevant to the Gambell area. The objective of this study was to locate any sites that may be of interest for further investigation. These sites may be linked to buried waste or equipment and/or ordnance and explosives (OE) activities. OD was asked to map any such sites identified on the historical aerial photography (AP). For the purposes of this study, the entire Northwest Cape peninsula was examined south to a line where the sand spit terminates on the western coast.

#### SITE LOCATION and HISTORY

The study area for the Gambell Sites is located on Northwest Cape, St. Lawrence Island, in the Bering Sea. It is 36 miles from the Chukotsk Peninsula, Siberia, and 200 miles southwest of Nome, Alaska.

The Gambell Sites were established in the 1950s as part of the surveillance and intelligence-gathering network of the military. Seven individual leases were initiated by the DoD in this area. The first lease agreement was implimented in September 1950, and the final lease was terminated in September 1973. Various units of the U.S. Army and the U.S. Air Force utilized the area. Prior to lease terminations, all DoD-owned material was demolished and/or buried on site.

The Air Force established an installation in September of 1950 with a lease consisting of 1,580 acres. A base camp was built on the western base of Sevuokuk Mountain and a radar site was built directly above this camp on the mountain top. The Air Force abandoned this site in 1956, though the lease ran until September of 1962. The Army occupied several sites from 1954 through 1963, with a main base camp located just north of Troutman Lake. The Navy laid communication cables from the village of Gambell up Sevuokuk Mountain and across to Dovelawik Bay and then south to Brunnell Cape. A final lease by the Gambell National Guard was terminated in September of 1973. The military presence was essentially gone by the late 1970s.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

In preparation for this report, research was conducted for historical aerial photography (AP), maps and some textual information. Information and photography were gathered from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in College Park, Maryland and other sources. The analysis was primarily based upon the interpretation of black and white AP over the project area, spanning the years 1948 through 1994. Stereo-paired aerial photographs were analyzed for 1948, 1955, 1972, 1973, 1980, 1984, 1985, and 1994. Orthophoto base maps was produced using 1984 color infrared AP and 1994 true-color AP.

Stereoscopic viewing was performed on the collection of historical photos. Film and paper based aerial photo material were used in the analysis. Features assessed as possible sites of interest were identified and labeled. Photos with these features of concern were scanned on a high-resolution scanner at 200 to 600 DPI resolution in TIF format. The historical aerial photos were rectified to the 1984 digital orthophoto.

All of the identified historical features were digitized on their respective rectified image. These features could then be placed onto the current 1984 and 1994 orthophotos as vector overlays.

The image rectification was accomplished using ERDAS IMAGINE 8.3 software. Vector layers were generated using ArcView 3.2 software. Shape files were created. The digital data was transferred to a CD-ROM. The digital orthophoto and rectified aerial photos are in tagged image file format (TIF) with an associated "world file" or .tfw file. The tfw file contains the pixel size, and upper left geographic coordinate for the image file.

The orthophoto, rectified photos and corresponding vector layers are georeferenced to the Alaska State Plane (Zone 9), NAD83 (datum), and GRS 1980 (spheroid) Zone #6301. Units are in feet.

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The review of maps and photos for the site reveal numerous changes in the area over time. Features mapped for the area include pits, disturbed ground, possible trenches, and some possible mounded material. Many of the features occur in burial areas identified in previous studies.

A digital version of this report is on CD-ROM media. The CD-ROM also contains the historical features in vector layers (for use in a GIS system).





#### **Documents Reviewed** Gambell, AK

**Documents Reviewed** 

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Site Summary Update - Saint Lawrence Island. December 1999.

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Masters, P.M. and Zimmerman, M.R., "Age Determination of an Alaskan Mummy: Morphological and Biochemical Correlation." Science, Vol. 201, 1 September 1978.

Staley, David P., (Environment and Natural Resources Institute, University of Alaska, Anchorage. Archeological Work Plan for 1992 Construction Projects in Gambell, Alaska. April 1992.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, Archives Search Report – Findings for the Former Gambell Site. Revised March 1998.

U.S. Army Engineer District, Alaska, Final Phase II Remedial Investigation, Gambell, AK. December 1998.

U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Gambell – Its History, Population, and Economy. January 1977.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region X, Site Inspection Report – St. Lawrence Island – City of Gambell, Alaska, September 1994.

U.S. National Archives. Multiple still photographs. July 1972, July 1960, 1959, 1953, 1955.

USGS, St. Lawrence, Alaska, Map, Scale 1:250,000. 1948.







# Gambell, AK - Aerial Photography

<b>NOTE: FOR CERTAIN</b>
YEARS ONLY
PARTIAL COVERABE
WAS AVAILABLE









## Gambell, AK - Aerial Photography

### **Aerial Photographic Coverage Extent** by Year







1948	
1955	
1958	
1972	—
1973	

- 1980
- 1984
- 1985
- 1994



# Gambell, AK - Span of Analysis



**Disturbed Ground** 

**Trenches** 

**Pits** 

**Mounded Material** 

Depressions

**Buildings of Interest** 

**Cultural Features of** Interest







#### **1984 Aerial Photo**



### Gambell, AK - Archeological Sites



**US Army Corps of Engineers** 





### Gambell, AK - Pre-DOD Features



**1994 AERIAL PHOTO WITH 1948 FEATURES** 

**US Army Corps of Engineers** 



# Gambell, AK - Features of Interest

#### Sep 1953 North Beach, Gambell



**Village of Gambell** 





#### 1953 Army Site from Mtn.



#### 1953 View of North Beach from Mtn.









#### 1959 North Beach and Sevuokuk Mtn.

#### **Ancient Village Site**



# Gambell, AK - DOD Leased Timeline

<b>DOD Component</b>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Air Force	Aircraft Control and Warning	Sep 1950 - Sep 1962
Army	Gambell Army Site No. 1	Oct 1954 - Sep 1963
Army	Gambell Army Site No. 2	Jan 1955 - May 1958
Army	St. Lawrence Island Army Site	Jan 1956 - Dec 1963
Army	Gambell National Guard Site	Mar 1962 - Sep 1973
Army	Gambell Army Station	Nov 1963 - Dec 1963
Air Force	Gambell Communications Annex	Jun 1960 - Sep 1962







15

# Gambell, AK - DOD Leased Areas









**US Army Corps of Engineers** 





16









### Gambell, AK - STUDY AREA 1



**DOD** Leased

Property





# Gambell, AK Installations in Northern Area

Army and Air Force Installations in 1955

General Locations in Northern Area





N



### **Features Identified from 1955 Aerial Photos**



#### **1955** Aerial Photo and Features

















1955 and 1973 Identified Features on

more current Aerial Photos

Note: the 1973 Depression no longer apparent in 1980 and **1994** aerial photos





**US Army Corps of Engineers** 



#### **1994** Aerial Photo





Panning to the East from the

previous slide area



**1980 Aerial Photo** 

**US Army Corps of Engineers** 









**Identified as Military** Landfill in Site **Investigation Report** 

N









Army Facility North of Troutman Lake with Detail of Possible Ammo Facility









September
1953
Oblique
<b>Aerial Photo</b>













**1994** Aerial Photo

**Features Identified from 1955 Aerial Photography** 



#### **1994** Aerial Photo









1953

Oblique

Photo



**Approximate Location** on 1994 Aerial Photo

**1994** Aerial Photo With **1955** Identified Features



**Possible Debris** 

**Burial Feature** 

found only on

**1953 Oblique** 

**Photo** 

**US Army Corps of Engineers** 





#### **1953 Oblique Photo**

#### Note: ASR Army Site #1 1954 - 1962













**US Army Corps of Engineers** 









**1955 Aerial Photo** 

1955 Feature on 1994 Aerial Photo

**US Army Corps of Engineers** 







#### **1980 Identified Features**






## Gambell Sites, AK - RUNWAY AREA



**Mounded Material and Leaking Drum Stack Found near Runway Evident in 1972 Aerial Photos** 

#### **1994** Aerial Photo with Mounded Material **Identified from 1972 Aerial Photo**









## Gambell Sites, AK - July 1960 Ground Photos





July 1960

**July 1960** 











#### Gambell Sites, AK 1953 - Ground Photos



**1953 North Beach** 



**US Army Corps of Engineers** 

Handling of Drums 1953 - North Beach







U.S. Air Force Installation "Camp" - July 1952









**July 1952** 





















**Details from Figure 2-2 of Site Investigation Report** 

**US Army Corps of Engineers** 





**45** 









46



**1980** Aerial **Photo** 















#### South of **Troutman Lake**













**US Army Corps of Engineers** 

Identified as Former Radar **Power Station area in Table 2-1** 

#### 1955 Features on 1994 Aerial Photo











**Photos** 





# **Aerial Photo**



52









## Gambell Sites, AK

#### Gambell Sites, Alaska Summary of Findings



A DAY



### Gambell Sites, AK - Study Area 1



#### **1994** Aerial **Photography**







1953/55/73 Trenches, Disturbed Ground, and **Depressions** (approximate)



**Historic Features** on 1994 Aerial Photo **Base Map** 





**1994** Aerial Photo









#### **1994 Aerial Photo**







**1980 Aerial Photo** 





#### **Base of Sevuokuk Mountain**



#### **Top of Sevuokuk Mountain**





**Former Air Force** 

Facility

Building footprints found on.

**1980 Aerial Photos** 





**Disturbed Ground** 

**Previous Location of** 







Disturbed Ground and Outdoor Storage were ID'd from 1955 Aerial Photos

Buildings and Pit were ID'd from 1955 Aerial Photos









Aerial Photo







## Gambell Sites, AK

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**US Army Corps of Engineers** 

U. S. Air Force camp and west face of Sevu





July 1952

