

# Atka May Be Left Without Communications

The tiny village of Atka out in the remote Island of Atka on the Aleutians is facing a future that may leave it without outside communication this summer.

The only link of communication the village has now is the U.S. Navy tug that comes to the village once a month and the Navy has told the village that this service will be discontinued when the summer comes.

The tug makes the monthly trip from the neighboring Island of Adak where the Navy maintains installations. The distance between the two islands is about 120 miles.

John Nevzoroff, the Chief of Atka, with the assistance of the local teacher, wrote

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# ATKA IN DANGER OF LOSING COMMUNICATIONS...

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an open letter asking for help to ward off the impending difficulties of the village.

Nevzoroff said that the people of Atka were faced with the problem they cannot solve by themselves. For the past years, he said, the U.S. Navy has been providing monthly tug transportation to Atka.

"We have been told that this service is to be discontinued," Nevzoroff wrote.

He said if this happens, the village will have no way of getting mail at all; that the airstrip was not in good enough shape at the present time and that the village dock was not likely to last much longer.

"We need your help," said Nevzoroff. "We either need to get the airfield fixed or we need to get new docking facilities and some arrangement for the continuation of surface transport.

"The village has only 100 people including children so our ability to pay very much is limited. We have heard that it might be possible to obtain a floating dock from the Navy to put in here but we do not know how to go about getting it.

"We have also heard that rural development funds might be available but again we do not know how to get them.

"The Navy informs us that

the tug service is to be discontinued this summer so we need help quickly.

"Please give us any information and help that you are able to."

Not knowing exactly to whom the letter should be addressed, Chief Nevzoroff allowed some of his people to send copies of the letter.

Nadesta Golley, an agent of the State Department of Health and Welfare on the Island of Atka, sent a copy to Mrs. Margaret Hafemeister, district representative of the department in Seward, who forwarded the information to Tundra Times.

In a footnote to Chief Nevzoroff's letter, Nadesta Golley wrote:

"I guess you can imagine the alarm we feel. To top it off, Atka does not have wire connection with ACS. A native cannot send a personal message through Adak."

Although the Navy tug service is welcomed by the people of Atka, it apparently has its shortcomings.

"Since the only means of communication with the

Island is by mail which goes by barge from Adak once a month, it therefore takes two months from the time you write a letter until you get a reply because the barge just does a turn around, not waiting for people to read their mail and reply," said Mrs. Hafemeister.

Mrs. Hafemeister further said that the people of Atka have no justice nearer than Cold Bay some 500 miles away and that only itinerant law enforcement through the State Troopers was available.

The Island has no Public Health Nurse service only occasional medical service only occasional medical service through travelling teams out of Alaska Native Medical Center.

"Likewise due to limited staff and funds we are not able to give the service we would like to," said Mrs. Hafemeister.

"I hope that you will be able to do something to assist in securing continuing mail service and communications for these poor folks at Atka."