

BY ART BROTHERS

The Story of the Nine Maidens



The Russian island of Sakhalin over the years has been under control of the Russians, Japanese and, since the end of World War II, the Russians again.

Russia took the island back by sea landings at the two warm water ports and south from the Russian-held north end of the California-size island.

In 1992, I did an Area Coverage Design (ACD) outlining what had to be done to upgrade the region's telephone system. Global Crossing executives liked it. They upgraded the capital city, Yuzno, with a population of 500,000. Sent me a letter saying the ACD was very good. So did both the FBI and NSA, as

the island was a "black" area off limits and virtually unknown to foreigners.

In later years, Rick Hunt contracted with various major international (read that: U.S.) oil companies to provide them data communications by satellite. He eventually crossed tracks with me. I keep saying the only way he can provide the bandwidth oil companies need is through undersea fiber optic cables running from the island to the worldwide net. Seems I'm the only American alive who has stood on the both ends of the old, abandoned 1934 Japanese submarine cable between Sakhalin and Hokkaido. I'm working on that for him now.

In August of 1945, after the Japanese surrendered to the Allies, the Russian army landed at both of the island's warm-water ports. (On the west side, the second largest city is Kholmsk.) A major task was to capture intact the telephone office. Inside they found nine young Japanese telephone operators. These Nine Maidens knew that they would be captured by the Russians and likely treated brutally. To preserve their honor, they made a suicide pact and took their own lives.

There is a little-known memorial to these girls in the Japanese city of Wakkanai, some 50 miles south of Sakhalin in a museum that has some of the chronology of contacts between Japanese and Russians. The switchboard and

headset is of the type the girls manned. (Alan Smith of Salt Lake City took the pictures, which I now share with you.)

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