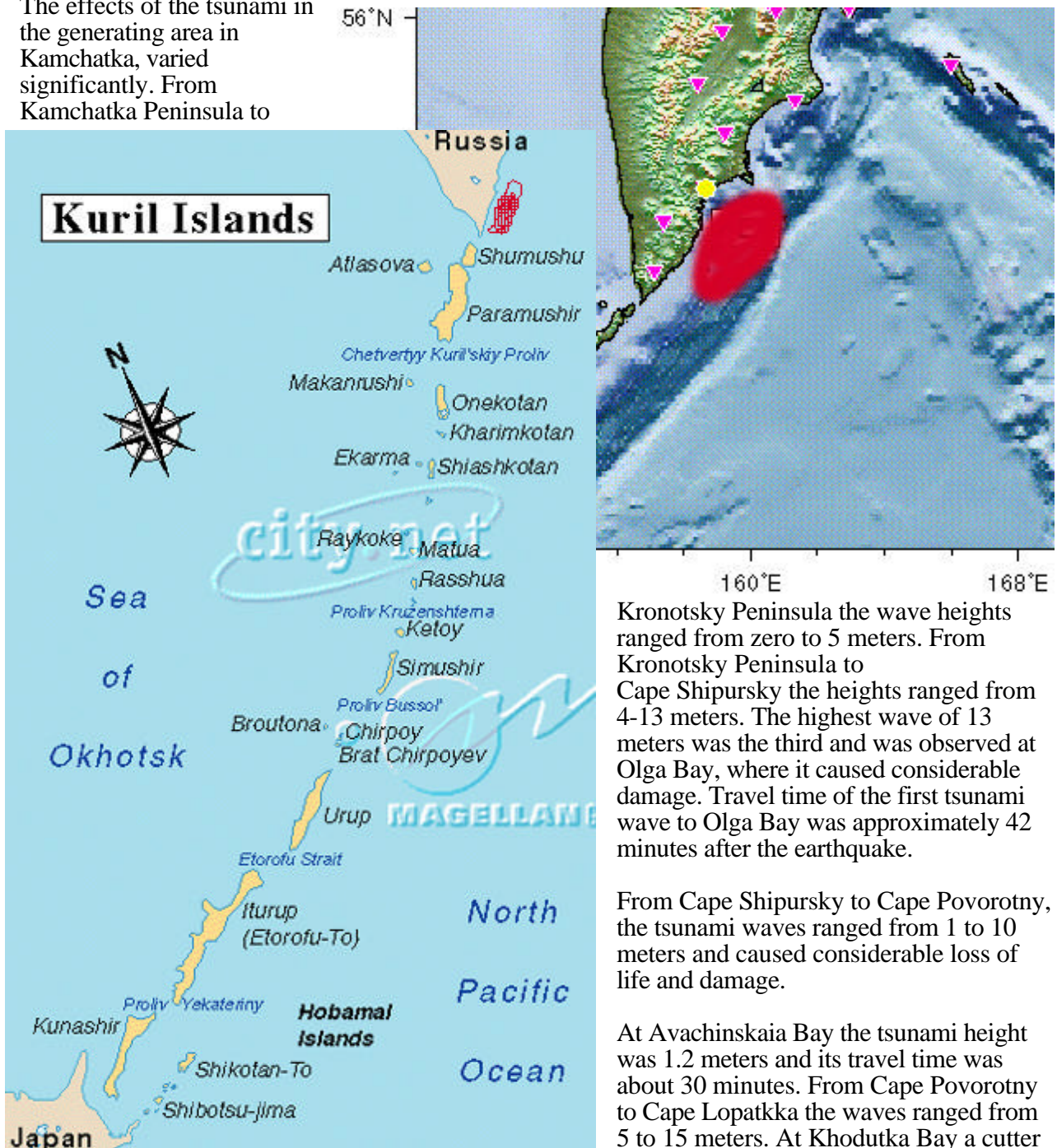


The 4 November 1952 Kamchatka Tsunami



A strong earthquake (magnitude 9.0) off the coast of Kamchatka Peninsula generated a great destructive Pacific-wide tsunami on November 4, 1952. Its waves struck the Kamchatka Peninsula, the Kuril Islands and other areas of Russia's Far East, causing considerable damage and loss of life. The tsunami was widely observed and recorded in Japan, but there was no loss of life or damage there. There was considerable damage in the Hawaiian Islands and some damage in Peru and Chile.

The effects of the tsunami in the generating area in Kamchatka, varied significantly. From Kamchatka Peninsula to



Kronotsky Peninsula the wave heights ranged from zero to 5 meters. From Kronotsky Peninsula to Cape Shipursky the heights ranged from 4-13 meters. The highest wave of 13 meters was the third and was observed at Olga Bay, where it caused considerable damage. Travel time of the first tsunami wave to Olga Bay was approximately 42 minutes after the earthquake.

From Cape Shipursky to Cape Povorotny, the tsunami waves ranged from 1 to 10 meters and caused considerable loss of life and damage.

At Avachinskaia Bay the tsunami height was 1.2 meters and its travel time was about 30 minutes. From Cape Povorotny to Cape Lopatkka the waves ranged from 5 to 15 meters. At Khodutka Bay a cutter

was thrown 500 meters back from shore. On the West coast of Kamchatka Peninsula, the maximum tsunami runup at Ozernoe was 5 meters.

At Alaid Island of the Kuril Island group, run up was 1.5 meters. At Shumshu Island it ranged from 7-9 meters. At Paramushir Island the waves ranged from 4-18.4 meters. At Severo - Kurilsk on Paramushir Island, the second wave was the highest reaching maximum run up of 15 meters. It destroyed most of the town and caused considerable loss of life. At Onekotan Island tsunami run up was 9 meters, while at Shiashkoton Island it was 8 meters and at Iturup Island 2.5 meters. Waves of up to 2 meters were observed at the Komandorsk Islands and at Okhotsk. At Sakhalin - Korsakov a 1-meter tsunami wave was observed.

The tsunami was recorded or observed throughout the islands of the Pacific. In New Zealand waves reached height of 1m. In Alaska, in the Aleutian Islands and in California waves of up to 1.4 meters were observed or recorded. By far the largest waves outside the generating area were observed in the Hawaiian Islands. Fortunately, no human lives were lost in Hawaii from this tsunami, but damage was extensive, estimates ranging from \$800,000- \$1,000,000 (in 1952 dollars).

The tsunami caused damage on Midway Island. Elsewhere in the Hawaiian island chain, the waves destroyed boats and piers, knocked down telephone lines, and caused extensive beach erosion. The north shore of the Island of Oahu experienced higher waves of up to 4.5 meters. The island of Hawaii experienced run up to 6.1 meters. In Hilo, a small bridge connecting Coconut Island to the shore was destroyed.



Flooding at Midway Island from the 1952 Tsunami (U.S. Navy Photograph)

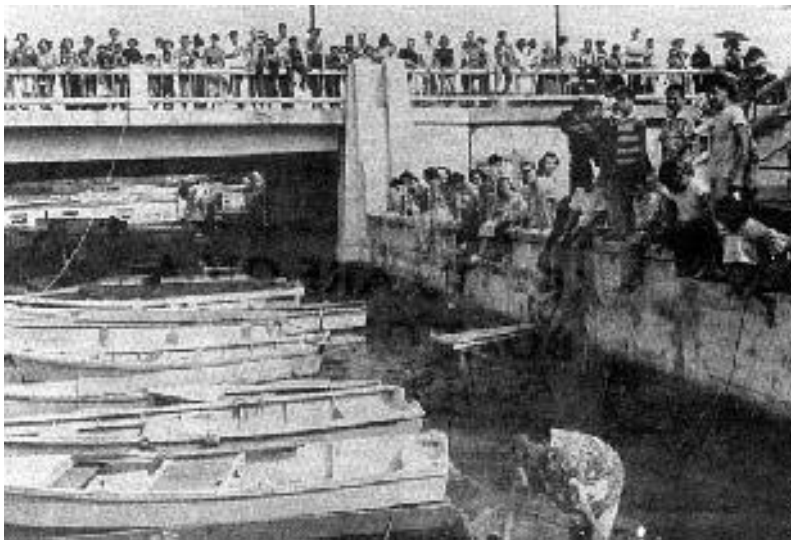


Photo of people gathered at the Ala Wai Boat Harbor in Honolulu watching the withdrawal of the water that left boats sitting on harbor mud - An example of very foolish thing to do during a tsunami.