

Ari Korpus

Dr. Keith

History 10

4.9.24

## Sidney B. Viele Jr, Engineer Hill, and the Battle of Attu

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after January 1, 1922 and on or before June 30, 1924)

SERIAL NUMBER 493 NAME (First) Sidney B (Last) Viele ORDER NUMBER 12706

2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Street) 710 Surpise St Stoughton Mass

3. MAILING ADDRESS Same

4. TELEPHONE 675 5. AGE IN YEARS 18 6. PLACE OF BIRTH New Falls New York

7. NAME OF ADDRESS PERSON WHO IS ALMOST KNOWN TO YOU Mrs Mary Coddell 710 Surpise St Stoughton

8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS Springdale Engineering Co

9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS Canton Norfolk Mass

I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.

D. S. S. FORM 1 (Revised 6-1-42) 616-5100-3 Sidney B Viele

On May 11, 1943, the 7th U.S. Infantry Division landed on the island of Attu, Alaska, to reclaim it from the Japanese Imperial Army<sup>1</sup>. Among these soldiers was a nineteen-year-old man named Sidney B. Viele<sup>2</sup>

Born on November 23, 1923, in Glen Falls,

New York, Sidney was 5' 11," weighed 152 pounds, and had a dark complexion, brown hair, and blue eyes according to his draft card.<sup>3</sup> After moving to Stoughton, Massachusetts, Viele enlisted in June 1942, joining the 7th Infantry bayonet unit.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, on May 29 of the following year, Sidney tragically died fighting in the Battle of Engineer Hill at Attu.<sup>5</sup> However, his sacrifice was not in vain. Sidney B. Viele and the 7th U.S. Infantry Division were fundamental to the Battle of Attu and the United States's Alaskan war effort. Viele sacrificed his life to win the

<sup>1</sup>Bruce Gardner and Barbara Stahura, *Seventh Infantry Division World War I, World War II, Korea and Panamanian Invasion, 1917-1992: Serving America for 75 Years*, Google Books (Nashville, TN: Turner Publishing, 1997): 56, [https://www.google.com/books/edition/Seventh\\_Infantry\\_Division\\_1917\\_1992\\_Worl/ZKwKPqI-MboC](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Seventh_Infantry_Division_1917_1992_Worl/ZKwKPqI-MboC).

<sup>2</sup>PVT Sidney Viele Jr, *Find a Grave*, accessed April 6, 2024, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/3961397/sidney-viele>.

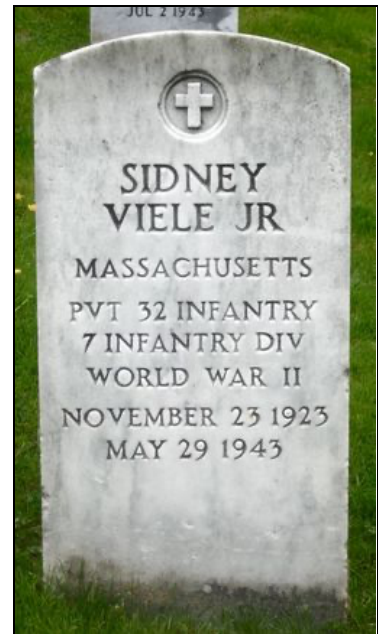
<sup>3</sup>National Archives at St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri, *Draft Registration Cards For Massachusetts, 10/16/1940-03/31/1947*, Record Group: *Records of the Selective Service System, 147*, Box 993, accessed on Ancestry.com, <https://www.ancestryclassroom.com/discoveryui-content/view/195408674:2238>.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*; *PVT Sidney Viele Jr*.

<sup>5</sup>*PVT Sidney Viele Jr*; John Haile Cloe, United States, and National Parks Service, *Attu: The Forgotten Battle*, Google Books (Anchorage, AK: Department of the Interior, 2017): 108, <https://www.google.com/books/edition/Attu/-t6J21RGruEC>.

critical conflict of Engineer Hill, weakening Japanese military forces and allowing for advancements toward major naval victory.

Beginning on May 11, 1943, Sidney's 7th Infantry spent two weeks working their way across Attu to reclaim it from the June 1942 Japanese invasion.<sup>6</sup> The Japanese attacked in small groups, and the over-waist-deep snow, below-freezing temperatures, and high casualties left the 7th Infantry with only 800 able-bodied men by the time they occupied the three key hills of Chichagof Valley (Fish Hook, Buffalo, and Engineer) on the



evening of May 28.<sup>7</sup> However, at three-thirty the following morning, a thousand Japanese soldiers charged toward Engineer Hill in what Japanese radio described as a “gallant offensive,” smashing through American infantry units and destroying communication devices.<sup>8</sup> Japanese



Colonel Yamasaki hoped to break through the hill and reach Massacre Bay, claiming American supplies and waiting for reinforcements.<sup>9</sup> But Sidney's 7th Infantry fought bravely and, after many casualties, emerged victorious in defeating

<sup>6</sup>United States, National Park Service, and Alaska Regional Office, *The Battle of Attu: 60 Years Later*, Google Books (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 2004): 2,

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/The\\_Battle\\_of\\_Attu/wInMeRiedO4C](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Battle_of_Attu/wInMeRiedO4C); Kenneth J. Deacon, “Combat Engineers: 43. Attu, May 1943,” *The Military Engineer* 59, no. 387 (1967): 25, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44571982>.

<sup>7</sup>States, *The Battle of Attu*, 2.; Eugene Burns, “Eyewitness of Action on Attu Describes Fighting in Snow,” *The Washington Post*, May 17, 1943, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/eyewitness-action-on-attu-describes-fighting-snow/docview/151619437/se-2?accountid=4314>.

<sup>8</sup>Deacon, “Combat Engineers.”; “Japs Picture Fight to Last,” *The Times Leader*, May 31, 1943, <https://basic.newspapers.com/image/105959739>.

<sup>9</sup>Fern Chandonnet, *Alaska at War; 1941-1945: The Forgotten War Remembered*, Google Books (Anchorage, Alaska: University of Alaska Press, 2007): 111, [https://www.google.com/books/edition/Alaska\\_at\\_War\\_1941\\_1945/p01bFVagOJYC](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Alaska_at_War_1941_1945/p01bFVagOJYC).

Yamasaki and ending the Battle of Attu. Engineer Hill was the bloodiest engagement at Attu: 549 Americans died, including Sidney B. Viele.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, Viele and his unit succeeded. One newspaper from May 30 reported that the “enemy force was annihilated” and sighted the victory as “the first American soil to be regained by our forces in this war after seizure by the enemy,” marking it as a critical turning point in the U.S.’s efforts in its Aleutian campaign.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, their loss at Attu forced the Japanese to redistribute their forces in the Pacific, allowing the U.S. to make significant gains in the Solomon Islands.<sup>12</sup> Ultimately, Sidney B. Viele Jr’s death represented a major U.S. Alaskan victory and a true feat of bravery. He was a hero not to be forgotten.

### Image Descriptions

1. Sidney B. Viele Jr’s World War II Draft Card from June 30, 1942.<sup>13</sup>
2. Sidney B. Viele Jr’s gravestone, located in Sitka, Alaska.<sup>14</sup>
3. A sign memorializing the conflict of Engineer Hill in Attu.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Lisa Hupp, *Engineer Hill on Attu Island in the Aleutians*, May 25, 2023, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, May 25, 2023, <https://www.fws.gov/media/engineer-hill-attu-island-aleutians>.; *PVT Sidney Viele Jr.*

<sup>11</sup>“Fall of Attu Admitted by Japs: Bitter Bayonet Battle Wipes Out Last Large Enemy Force on Island,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 31, 1943, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/165408832/F548AC98E17D4BD8PO/15>.

<sup>12</sup>United States, National Park Service, and Alaska Regional Office, *The Battle of Attu: 60 Years Later*, Google Books (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 2004): 4, [https://www.google.com/books/edition/The\\_Battle\\_of\\_Attu/wInMeRicdO4C](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Battle_of_Attu/wInMeRicdO4C).

<sup>13</sup>National Archives at St. Louis, *Draft Registration Cards*.

<sup>14</sup>*PVT Sidney Viele Jr.*

<sup>15</sup>Hupp, *Engineer Hill*.

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