

Warrior — Anguyartaasqaq

QANGIQ, ANGUYARTAASQAT AGELLRIIT SWAACIT NUNIINUN. – LONG AGO, WARRIORS WENT TO THE TLINGITS' LANDS.



Photo: Daniel Harmon, Alutiiq man from Woody Island, serving in the Vietnam war. Harmon Collection.

In the Gulf of Alaska, Native people traditionally raided each other's communities to avenge a wrong, secure hostages, and obtain wealth. Members of the elite class led raids. These were wealthy individuals who maintained their status by accumulating goods and slaves. On Kodiak, such individuals mobilized adult men to attack villages both at home and afar. Historic accounts tell of battles waged in the Aleutian Islands, Cook Inlet, and Prince William Sound.

Before embarking on a raid, warriors met in the community men's house. Here they received food, water, and gifts from the family of the man leading the raid. Warriors then took turns dancing and recounting their ancestors' successes in war. Then the host offered each a gift as a token of the riches they were soon to obtain.

Early the following morning, the warriors departed in large, open skin boats. Historic accounts indicate they painted their faces, wore vests of wooden armor, and armed themselves with bone-tipped spears, bows and arrows, wooden clubs, and large wooden shields. The object of a raid was to kill adult men, take women and teenagers as slaves, and gather large quantities of plunder.

However, with the help of mediation, hostages might be freed and returned to their homes.