

PERIL TO GUAM SEEN IN JAPAN'S ENTRY INTO WAR

Strategic Importance of Little Island Now Used as Cable Station Pointed Out by Specialist.

Should Japan seize the island possessions of Germany in the Pacific she will, at one stroke, gain an immense strategic advantage in case of conflict with the United States. Germany would not be the only loser, and our trade routes to and from the Orient, either by way of San Francisco or the Panama Canal, would be imperiled as they are not now to the same degree. We have plenty of cause for concern. So writes a specialist not so sure of Japan's pacific intentions in the Pacific, and his especial concern is over Guam, our little cable station in the mid-ocean. He notes that we took the island with the thought of turning it into a coaling station for our ships bound to and from the United States to the Philippines. A few years later Guam logically became a halting place for the trans-pacific cables, and now that it will lie right in the trade route of our modern ships of commerce speedily to and from the Far East via the Panama Canal this lonely island will have a renewed significance to us. To protect our future merchant craft and to give us a strategic point of vantage in the vast Pacific, Guam becomes again what it was in the distant day of Spain's secret, selfish trading between the Philippines and the kingdom of Mexico and Peru plus a modern purpose quite undreamed of in the centuries gone.

GUAM TO BE FORTIFIED.

We are going to fortify Guam so that it will be able to resist any assault that a foe's squadrons may make. At the same time the island will be turned into an advance naval base of supply and the harbor of San Luis d'Apra will become a haven where whole fleets of our biggest dreadnaughts can lie at anchor awaiting the call to distant duty. This call will either come by way of wireless or will trace its path over the contours of the Pacific's depths and bring its message through the sunken cables in the form of mirror flashes or the zigzag dots and dashes upon the recorded tape. Or, on the other hand, ready transports will be hastened to the shores of China, with battalions of marines prepared for any emergency work performed by its employees.

The saving of the Potomac was a daring engineering feat. The rescue of the tug was effected only after the most difficult kind of work in the ice fields off Newfoundland.

ON ERRAND OF MERCY.

The Potomac, the finest tug in the navy, was dispatched to Newfoundland from Norfolk, Va., January 25 to cut out the American schooner Hiram Lowell of Bucksport, Me., which was fast in the ice. The crew of the Potomac also received orders to liberate the schooner George Campbell, which was also held in the ice, but the latter vessel was destroyed the day the tug left Norfolk.

The Potomac reached Bay of Islands on February 3 and two days later sailed to the rescue of the Hiram Lowell. Immediately the remaining tugs were sent into the ice and was blown out to sea in a blizzard to become caught in the ice herself. Consul Gould had given the captain of the tug explicit directions as to the location of the Lewell, and when he did not hear from her in a few days he ordered lookouts along the coast to keep a sharp watch for the Potomac. On February 9 he received a report that she was fast in the ice, drifting westward. The man whom hired in Newfoundland benefited more than he did, notwithstanding that at an expense of only \$6,000 to the government, he saved a vessel valued at between \$150,000 and \$200,000.

ISOLATION A PROTECTION.

The isolation of Guam, lying 1,500 miles east of the Philippines, is another source of protection, because any threatening squadron must come equally far if not farther from its own base of operations and the nearest drydock it can command.

To invite grave injury at such a distance from facilities of repair is not the course likely to be pursued by a thoughtless commander, and here again nature has helped to some Guamanians just so much more effective for our purpose as a naval advance base from which our fighting ships in the far Pacific can be dispatched to the best strategic advantage for the scouring of a wide zone in that part of the world.

Climatically Guam is much superior to the Philippines and our marines at Axana will substantiate this claim by their transfer from Cavite.

The hottest days of the summer seldom register a temperature in the shade of more than 82 degrees Fahrenheit, while the mean average range during the cooler months scarcely ever less than 50 degrees.

Lying in the sweep of the northeast trade winds, there is always a refreshing breeze, and the nights are cool, though not of a temperature calling for substantial covering.

The climate is likewise much more salubrious and invigorating than that of the Philippines because Guam's shores are washed by the flow of the north equatorial current. In short, the temperature conditions are singularly equable.

ORDERED TO RESCUE TUG.

On the day of his arrival back at Bay of Islands with the crew of the Potomac, he wired the Secretary of the Navy of the condition of affairs, and he was ordered, by telegraph, to save the Potomac. It was a most unusual order, as the Navy Department had no reason to believe that Consul Gould knew anything about seafaring life. Naval experts of Newfoundland declared it would be impossible to save the vessel; that she was sure to be crushed by the ice in the Straits of Belle Isle.

"But he had salved my own ship considerably in the time I have been here. I have been stationed at Bay of Islands, and felt that the Potomac wasn't going through the Straits of Belle Isle," declared Mr. Gould in Boston the other day. "My knowledge of her position in the ice, a close study of the drift of the ice and the other conditions that prevailed gave me confidence that the Potomac could get out."

First of all the work was divided into three parts. It was necessary to get men aboard the Potomac and keep them there, half a dozen were engaged to board the icebound craft, build and maintain fires in her boilers and prevent the loss of the tug. A shore crew was secured to provide fuel, and several hundred bags of coal were brought to the ship.

The second part of the expedition consisted in making arrangements to have a vessel pick up the Potomac the moment she should become free, and to this end the steam trawler, the Wren, of Halifax, had been chartered. It was feared that when the Wren arrived she might be unable to get into the harbor of St. John's, and so the steamer was chartered to bring the Potomac to the Spanish port of Santander.

When Magellan discovered Guam in 1521, the island boasted a population of quite 50,000 souls divided into more than 50 separate kingdoms within the small area of a tribe more than 200 square miles. When we took possession of the island native inhabitants numbered about 5,000 persons. Disease and too much intermarriage had worked the dreadful change. With the efforts of medical services introduced by us, the birthrate has increased markedly and the mortality has also been reduced.

QUELLS MUTINY ON POTOMAC.

Upon his arrival, however, the crew mutinied. They apparently foresaw the escape of the tug with the breaking up of the ice, and they made unreasonable demands.

They were not satisfied with the pay agreed upon, although the wages might be considered exorbitant. However, once in a while the disturbance becomes a good deal more violent, and then buildings are toppled into ruins and the boats which can do during the period of the "queulls" matter possibly of four or five minutes, to get down on all fours and take the medicine thus in the least unpleasant way.

Writing of the natives, he notes that the Chamorros, for so the natives are called, are a very distinct improvement upon the Malays, from whom they are said to have sprung. They are unquestionably a civilized people that once enjoyed a civilization of their own which was far superior to many particulars to those brought to them by the West Spanish masters.

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SICK HORSE ANSWERED CALL.

Reported for Duty When Mail Train Whistled—Died Later.

HILLSDALE Sept. 14.—Quite a remarkable incident is reported from the village of Ossipee.

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GROUNDS FOR PRAISE BY ROBERTS.

Lord Roberts, who wrote a book on "Forty-one Years in India," speaks highly of the native troops as they are now organized, though he did not think much of the Sepoys of early days.

"I have seen a number of regiments in India, and these are the descendants of Brahmins who were drawn from the plains of India by the Moslems centuries ago, and their faith is a form of Brahminism."

The Gurkhas are little fellows, but splendid fighters as their record in the Afghan wars will show. They are not from India proper, but from Nepal, an independent state in the Himalayas, northeast of India. Nepal has been friendly to the British for many years and the Gurkhas are not discouraged from enlisting in the British army. Nepal has a standing army of her own, 20,000 strong. There are 20,000 of them in the army of India, in ten regiments of two battalions each. They are the descendants of Brahmins who were drawn from the plains of India by the Moslems centuries ago, and their faith is a form of Brahminism."

The other native troops of India are picked men from the northern part of the country. Those of the south are no longer worked with as army material. Outside of the Sikhs and Gurkhas the native regiments are of different faiths and are brigaded with British troops.

Even after the great value of the sturgeon began to be appreciated by the army, the innumerable and unmarketable fish incidentally caught in seine gill nets and pots were thrown back into the water. Even in the present generation we have seen the shores of the Potomac River in the vicinity of Mount Vernon littered with the remains of thousands of these magnificent fish, witness to the cruelty, stupidity and profligacy of man. The same thing has been observed everywhere.

"A possible relief may be afforded through the transplanting in our waters of young sturgeon from other countries. A supply of young fish of very desirable species inhabiting the Danube and the Caspian Sea has been offered by the Russian Government.

The largest and most inoffensive fish of our ocean, the sturgeon, has been in our waters for years considered to be not only valuable but nuisances, and whenever they became entangled in the fishermen's nets they were knocked on the head and thrown back into the water. Even in the present generation we have seen the shores of the Potomac River in the vicinity of Mount Vernon littered with the remains of thousands of these magnificent fish, witness to the cruelty, stupidity and profligacy of man. The same thing has been observed everywhere.

"When fisherman awakened to the fact that the eggs of the sturgeon were valuable as caviar and the flesh as food, another senseless chapter in the history of the world was written. They followed the most ridiculous and senseless fad, in admiration for Gurkha Sikhs, Douglas, Rajput, Jats and selected Moslems, who says "Bobs" in his book. "I thoroughly appreciate their soldierly qualities. Brigaded with British troops I would be proud to lead them against any European enemy."

The Sikhs are especially noted for their devotion to their God, who made a shield of his body to save Lord Roberts in one of the Afghan battles.

For all the work was divided into the officers and crew had abandoned the Potomac, leaving everything but light effects aboard the seemingly doomed craft. It was necessary to get the crew of the tug back to Bay of Islands, and for three days the consul put the 37 men through a course in snowshoeing, as the trip had been made afoot, and over the snow-covered mountains. After two weeks' snowshoe trip the party arrived at Bay of Islands, February 25, having been just two weeks.

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