

# Pacific Dominated by Three Great Powers

## America, Britain, and Japan Hold Strategic Islands

(Continued from page one.)

limited by fuel capacities to about 4,800 miles. A well balanced war fleet contains various units, those capable possibly of steaming across the Pacific and back without refueling and those that would have to refuel somewhere on the way. A rendezvous between a warship and a fuel ship thousands of miles from their base might be extremely hazardous in the time of war.

Therefore arises the importance of islands, especially islands upon which are established naval bases or fueling depots. Not only are islands important as fueling depots, but also as airplane, radio, and cable stations, as refuges for ships in severe storms, as bases in which to assemble fleets and from which to launch operations, and as outposts of defense. The Pacific has islands suitable for naval bases, although few actually are thus utilized. It has a much greater number of remote little islands that for centuries have been nothing more than roosting places for sea birds and which only today—since the beginning of transoceanic flying—have become potentially valuable as landing places for planes. Many of these barren or rocky islands would require expenditure of varying great sums of money to convert them into adequate air bases, although it is a safe assumption that the sheltered lagoon of many a distant atoll would serve even now in an emergency as a safe resting place for a harassed seaplane.

The nations that control the islands of the Pacific are the ones that control the ocean itself so far as naval operations are concerned. Without its islands and other bases in and on the Pacific and in the far eastern waters included in the map on page one, Great Britain would be virtually helpless in these parts of the world. Likewise would the United States of America be at a great handicap in the western Pacific without its defended naval base at Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands and to a lesser extent without its other insular possessions in the Pacific, most important of which are the Philippines, slated to become completely independent in 1945; Guam, the American Samoas, and the Aleutian Islands. Japan, because of its favorable location in the western Pacific, is strategically placed for defense. For taking the offensive at sea, however, it is not so favorably situated. It does have outlying islands, a majority of which it controls under mandates, that possibly could be converted to naval uses in the event of hostilities. Agreements and treaties that limit or prohibit fortifications on previously unfortified islands may become only scraps of paper, naturally, when a nation such as Japan becomes involved in a naval war.

With the exception of the Dutch possessions in eastern waters, the French possessions in the far east and in the Pacific, a few tiny spots belonging to Portugal, northern Pacific islands possessed by Russia, and some Chilean islands in the East Pacific, the whole expanse of sea shown in the map on page one belongs, because of naval power and prestige, to the three aforementioned nations, America, Great Britain, and Japan.

German influence and ownership disappeared from the Pacific as the result of the World war. All of Germany's islands lying north of the equator were handed over to Japan to be administered under mandates. And all of the German islands south of the equator were turned over to the British to be governed, also under mandates.

To Japan under these mandates went virtually all of the islands in a portion of the Pacific 2,500 miles long from east to west and 1,200 miles deep from north to south. To be exact, in this vast stretch of ocean Japan acquired 623 islands, including the Marianas group (with the exception of Guam, which belongs to the United States of America); the Marshall Islands; the Caroline Islands, including

islands, eight of which—Savaii, Nuulua, Manono, Apolima, Upolu, Fanuatapu, Manua, and Nuutele—are administered by New Zealand, and the remaining six of which—Tutuila, Aunuu, Ofu, Olosega, Taa, and Rose—are under American rule. Swains Island in 1925 was made a part of the United States administrative district of Samoa. Although there are good reef-protected harbors at Saluafata and Apia, both on the island of Upolu, the one really fine harbor in the group is that at Pago Pago in the American Samoas. The American government maintains a naval station at Pago Pago. Although the navy department classes this base as fortified, it admits the equipment and defenses are out of date.

In addition to the previously mentioned mandated islands Japan has other islands that are



(Associated Press photo.)  
An anti-aircraft regiment, part of America's defense forces in Hawaii, passes the reviewing stand, on which are members of the congressional commission studying the island's pleas for statehood.

Yap; and the Pelew (or Palau) Islands. All of these groups had been annexed by Germany or purchased from Spain by Germany in the period between 1885 and 1900.

Nauru Island, which was annexed by Germany in 1888, passed by a mandate of the league of nations to Great Britain after the World war. To Australia went, likewise under a mandate, the territory of New Guinea (formerly German New Guinea), which includes the northwest quarter of the island of New Guinea; the New Britain archipelago, which, with scattered other islands, was called the Bismarck archipelago during the German régime; and the former German Solomon, or Bougainville, Islands. Germany and Great Britain had divided the Solomon group in 1899, and Germany had acquired the islands of the former Bismarck archipelago in 1884.

The western Samoan Islands, former German possessions, were mandated to New Zealand after the war. Thus today this important group of islands, lying 13 to 15 degrees below the equator, is under divided jurisdiction, the western islands under a New Zealand mandate and the more easterly islands under American ownership. The Samoan group consists of fourteen

not included in Japan proper. There are Formosa (Taiwan), which was ceded to the Nipponese government by China in 1895; the southern half of Sakhalin Island (Karafuto), which was ceded to Japan by Russia in 1905; the Pescadores Islands, which are administered from Formosa; the Bonin Islands, called by the Japanese the Ogasawara Jima, which were claimed by the Japanese government in 1861; the Kuril Islands, or Kuriles, to which Japan took title about 1875 as the result of an agreement with Russia; and numerous unimportant smaller islands and islets in and near Japanese waters.

Besides her home naval bases Japan has fortified bases at Futatabi-Ko on the Bonin Islands, at Bako on the Pescadores, at Ryojun in Manchukuo, at Chingkal in Korea, and at Amami-o-Shima in the Riuikiu group of tiny islands that stretches down in a southerly direction from the tip of the southernmost Japanese main island of Kyushu. The Kuriles are undefended. These last named are the islands that stretch out toward the Kamchatkan peninsula and are relatively near the extreme westerly end of the American-owned Aleutian Islands.



(Tribune photo by Swain Scalf.)  
The U. S. S. Langley, airplane carrier, at Sitka, Alaska, as photographed from the fore deck of the U. S. S. Dal.

ecutives. The forts there have been dismantled. Much has been written of late about the American-owned Midway and Wake Islands. These tiny groups have been the centers of attention principally from the fact that trans-Pacific airway stations have been located upon them.

Undefended and apparently remote from the scene of possible naval operations are the Aleutian Islands, which are a part of the territory of Alaska and which extend 1,200 miles westward from the extremity of the Alaskan peninsula toward the peninsula of Kamchatka. Their ap-

parent remoteness is due to the fact that they are far north, but a glance at the globe will show that they actually lie in an almost direct line between Seattle and Tokyo. In other words, these islands, because of their location, might become of extreme importance to the American government in the event of a war in the Pacific. The most westerly of the Aleutians is barely 2,208 miles from Yokohama and less than half that distance to the more easterly and northerly of the Japanese-owned Kuriles.

The Aleutian Islands comprise four groups, the Fox, Andreanof, Rat, and Near Islands. Attu, the farthest west of the Aleutians, actually lies in the eastern hemisphere, although the international date line has been bent around

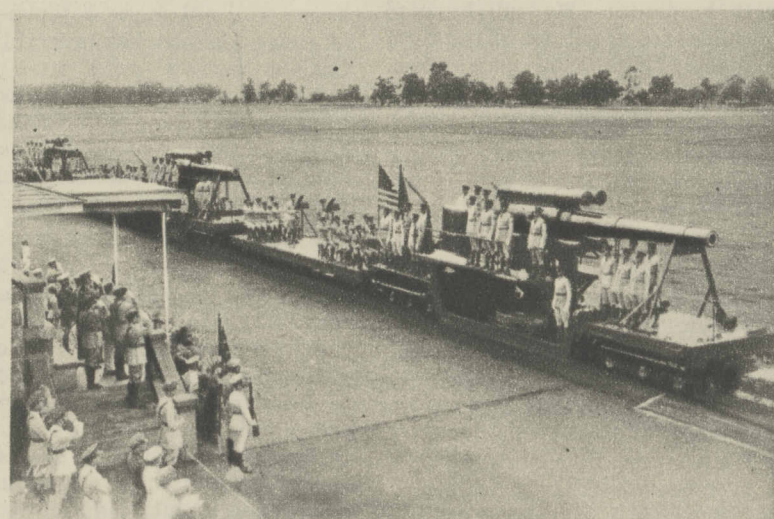
it to place it in the same time belt as the other of the islands. The finest harbor in the islands is Dutch Harbor, a deep landlocked bay in Unalaska, most important of the islands. This is the headquarters of the United States coast guard fleet that patrols the seareries of the Pribilof Islands. On the island of Atka, farther west, is an excellent harbor at Nazan bay. Although the Aleutians frequently are draped in fog, they are not at so great a disadvantage in this respect as to bar them as the scene of aerial maneuvers. In fact, these islands actually have been utilized as bases for naval planes that have been operated in conjunction

he regarded as too far removed from the possible theater of operations to figure importantly any strategic defense plan. The former senator may have been correct in 1922 in discounting the value of these islands for defense purposes, but today—ten years later—it is pointed out that the Aleutians are hardly less important than the Hawaiian Islands for the defense of the continent, lying they do, on the flank of operations in the Pacific. Modern American naval strategy should deem them highly valuable for offense purposes. A fleet based on Dutch Harbor or Nazan, for example, could strike westward effectively and have a shorter distance to steam to one based on Pearl Harbor. It is well within the realm of feasibility that either one or both of these harbors could be fortified relatively fast in case of emergency or more leisurely as a matter of preparedness.



Two seaplanes of the American round-the-world flyers of 1924 at rest in Chichagof harbor, Attu Island, most westerly of the Aleutian Islands.

Ranking first in importance among American Pacific possessions from a naval strategic standpoint are the Hawaiian Islands, 2,600 miles from the American home naval base at San Diego and 5,245 miles from the Panama canal. The naval base at Pearl Harbor in these islands is strongly protected, the farthest west adequate defense of the United States of America. At Pago Pago, in the American Samoas, as mentioned before, is a naval station in a superb harbor. Its defenses also, as previously mentioned, today are obsolete. At Cavite, across the bay from Manila, in the Philippines, is a naval base, which is inadequately protected, and on the island of Guam are only a few American marines and naval ex-



(Photo by Signal Corps, U. S. Army.)  
Eight-inch railway guns belonging to the United States coast artillery in Hawaii.

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with fleet maneuvers. Kiska Island, one of the Rat Island group, is shown on maps as a naval reservation. The navy department says it has been used as a fueling base and that planes have been operated out of it in maneuvers and authorized flights.

By terms of the Washington arms limitation treaty the Aleutians were included among those American possessions that were to remain in statu quo so far as fortifications were concerned. Since they had not been fortified previously, they are not today fortified. Former Senator Miles Poindexter of Washington, back in 1922, said he did not look with apprehension upon the inclusion of the Aleutians in the fortifications status quo. These islands

Of the three great naval powers that control the Pacific in the far eastern waters, Great Britain holds by far the most territory. Beginning with Burma, the Straits Settlements, and the Federated Malay States that show at the extreme left in the map on page one, reader may note that under British flag is a great deal of land, including a sizable portion of the big island of Borneo, more than half of New Guinea, the whole of the great island continent of Australia, with Tasmania, the twin islands of New Zealand, and innumerable lesser islands in the Pacific, among them Norfolk Island, Tokelau Islands, the Fijis, the Solomons, the Tonga Islands, the Gill Islands, the Ellice Islands, remote Pitcairn Island, famous for its associations with the tins of the Bounty.

The British empire has strongly defended bases at Singapore, Hongkong, Sydney, Auckland, and Esquimaux; undefended bases at Rangoon and K George sound.

France's islands in the Pacific include Tahiti (Society Islands), New Caledonia, New Hebrides, the Marquesas Islands, the Tuamotu archipelago, and the Austral Islands. Its only defended naval base in that part of the world that is shown in the map on page one is at Saigon, French Indo-China. The Dutch own eastern waters Java, part of Sumatra, Madura, the Lingga archipelago, Banka, Iton, the Celebes, the Moluccas, Menado, Amboyna, Ternate, of New Guinea, the Timor archipelago, Bali, Lombok, Sunda, and many small islands. Not any of these adequately fortified, and the Netherlands, not being a power, could not figure actively in a war in the Pacific. Portugal possesses the island town of Macao, off the coast of China and Portuguese Timor in eastern waters. Russia holds the north half of Sakhalin Island and Commander Islands, both undefended.



American army machine gunners in a demonstration of how they would defend the coast of Oahu, Hawaiian Islands, against a landing force from a hostile fleet. (Associated Press photo.)