

PEARL HARBOR Uncle Sam's New Gibraltar of the Pacific



Part of the American fleet at anchor in Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Hawaii, one of the United States' greatest naval bases.

FAR out in the Pacific Ocean there is a sprawling chain of saltwater lakes in a tropical island. A winding lagoon leads past a coral reef to the open sea. Purple mountain ranges form a background, and the whole is as peaceful a bit of South Sea landscape as one would care to see.

To be more exact—it used to be peaceful. Go there now and you will see oil tanks, airplane hangars, barracks, dry docks, warehouses, machine shops and all the other shore-going implements of a great fleet. You will see great warships at anchor in the harbor. You won't see the gun emplacements around the entrance, but they are there all right.

This peaceful bit of inland water goes under the name of Pearl Harbor. Situated in the island of Oahu, Hawaii, eight or ten miles from Honolulu, it is one of America's greatest naval bases, the center of one of the two or three mightiest military and naval strongholds on earth.

You can get an idea of the extreme importance America's army and navy men attach to this Hawaiian Gibraltar by reflecting that no less than \$56,000,000 of the taxpayers' money has been spent on Pearl Harbor, with an added \$18,000,000 going into nearby Hickam Field, the army's airport. In addition Maj. Gen. Hugh A. Drum, commander of the Hawaiian department of the army, urges a \$49,000,000 five-year plan to strengthen the island's already formidable defenses.

How come? Is the rich territory of Hawaii worth that much to Uncle Sam?

Undoubtedly; but the point is that these great sums are not being spent to protect the Hawaiian islands but to protect the mainland of the United States.

For Hawaii is not simply an outpost of the American defense system; it is the key point of the whole Pacific Coast defense. It protects Washington, Oregon, California and the Panama Canal. Army and navy men say confidently that as long as it is maintained as a great army and navy base, no invading foe will ever strike American shores from the Pacific.

A glance at the map shows why that is so.

America's line of defense in the Pacific forms a great triangle. At the top there is Alaska, with its chain of islands slanting off to the southwest. At the bottom there is the highly-fortified Panama Canal zone. At the center, forming the apex of the triangle, is Hawaii.

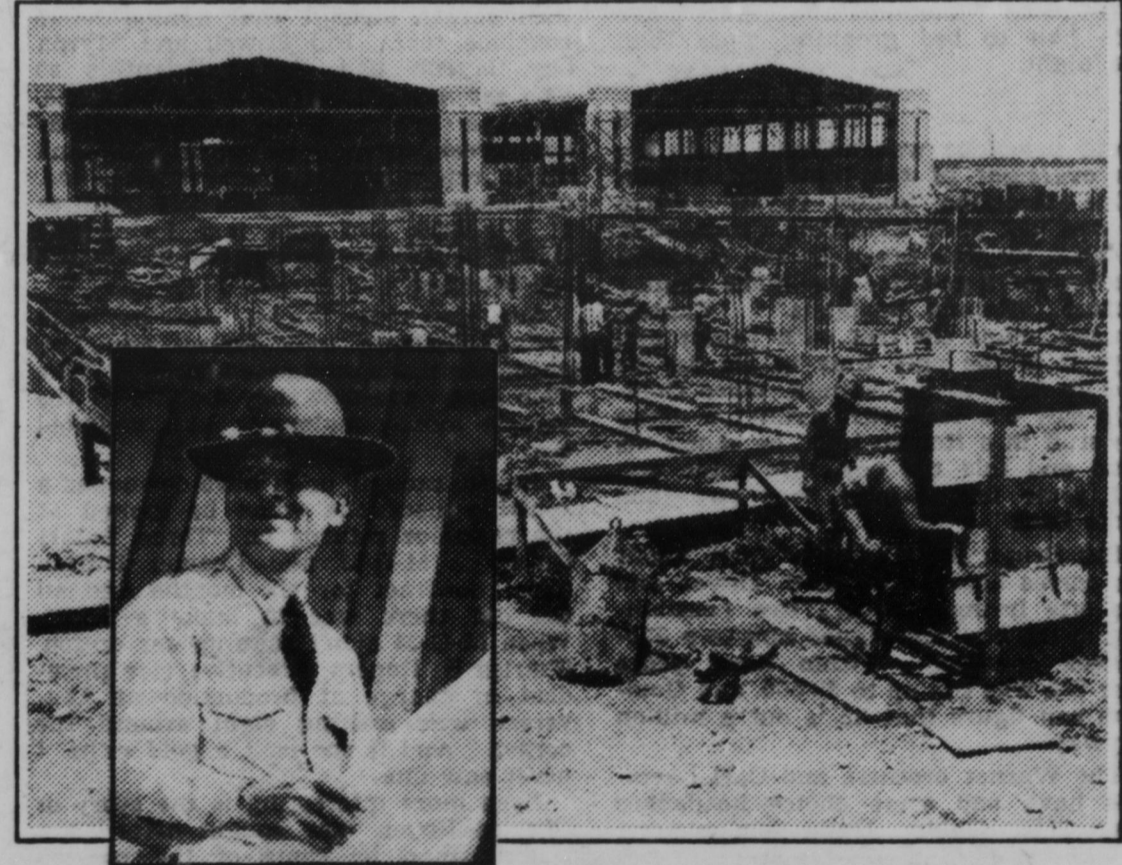
ANYONE coming to America from Asia or the South Seas has to pass within effective range of the Hawaiian base. Instead of spending untold millions to make the harbors on the mainland impregnable, it is far simpler and cheaper to make Hawaii itself impreg-

nable. No hostile fleet would dare steam for the mainland, because in so doing it would have to expose its flanks and communications to direct attack. Hawaii would have to be taken care of before anything could be done to the mainland.

Now it happens that military men say that the island of Oahu, locale of Pearl Harbor, is capable of defense against a

entire division—20,000 men—is housed. Inland, also, is Wheeler Field, an air corps stronghold. Military reservations dot the landscape. There are military roads winding up into the mountains. There is an immense munitions depot at Lualualei, near the western shore.

The defensive system is constantly widening out, with Oahu as a center



Construction of the huge new hangars at Hickam Field near Honolulu is going ahead steadily, with Capt. H. B. Nurse (above) in charge.

larger force than the Allied military and naval expedition that tried to storm Gallipoli during the World War. Two hundred warships, transports and tenders, it is said, would be required to carry and support a force capable of attacking Oahu at all.

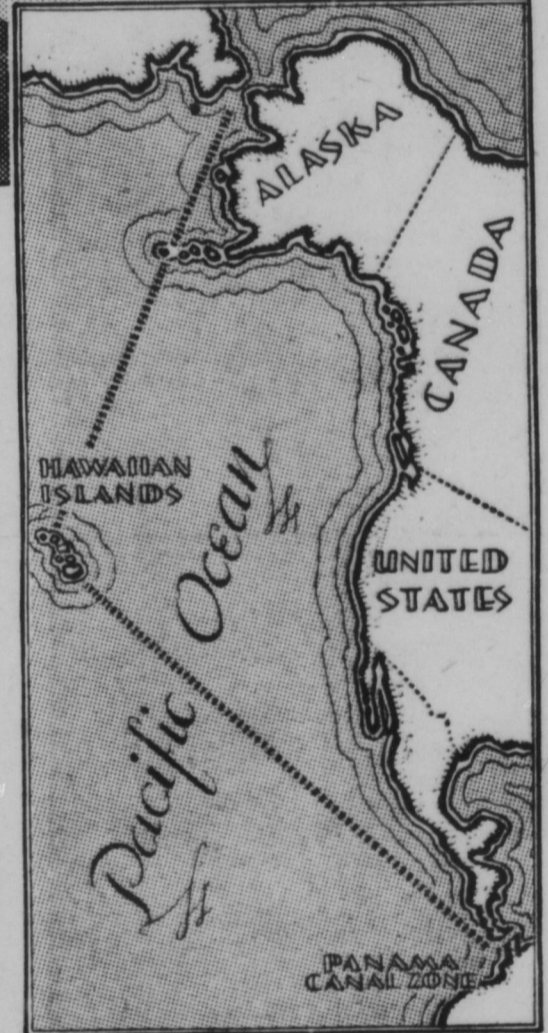
Hickam Field, for example, when completed, will be the largest U. S. army airport. Each of its 12 big hangars, 500 by 125 feet, will accommodate an entire squadron of land planes. Two big double hangars will house seaplanes which will alight in the waters by Fort Kamehameha, commanding the entrance to Pearl Harbor. A landing apron, on the side toward the fort, will measure 5400 by 800 feet.

And Hickman Field is only one of Hawaii's defenses. There are five coast defense forts. Inland, there is the military city of Schofield Barracks, where

The navy has taken over Kure or Ocean Island, beyond the new commercial air station at Midway and more than 1300 miles northwest of Honolulu. It also holds French Frigates Shoal, potential seaplane base, halfway to Kure, and Johnson Island, which is 8000 miles to the southwest.

And while the army is co-operating in the development of flying fields on the other islands in the Hawaiian group, the tiny islets near the equator, which Hawaiian schoolboys recently colonized to establish American sovereignty, also fit into the picture. At present, these islands are observation and radio stations for a commercial air route; in case of war they would serve admirably as advance military posts for observation work.

Of all of this elaborate network of defense, Pearl Harbor is the center. It



This map shows how America's line of defense in the Pacific forms a great triangle.

is the snug and secure anchorage where the whole fighting fleet of the nation can lie at anchor, invisible from the sea. On its shores are a navy yard, a submarine base, a powerful radio station, fuel storage plants, barracks, dry-docks and so on.

ABOUT to be built is an enormous \$10,000,000 floating drydock which will be moored in Pearl Harbor. This huge contrivance will be 1018 feet in length, 175 feet wide and 70 feet high. It will be able to berth the largest naval craft afloat.

When the navy decided to build it, it discovered that the building would probably have to be done on the west coast—for the drydock will be too big to go through the Panama Canal. It is reported that the dock will be self-propelling, so that if necessary it could steam out into the open sea and pick up a disabled warship. However, it is believed that when completed it will be towed to Pearl Harbor.

It seems almost as if nature had laid out Pearl Harbor with an eye to its naval uses. Its haven is completely hidden from view from the sea. A landing force coming ashore on the opposite side of the island could not get at it because of the towering mountains of the Koolau range. On the western coast of the island the Waianae mountains form a similar natural barrier. Only a short stretch of coast needs to be protected.