

Strategy Of Alaskan Defense Centers On 3 Big Air Fields; 24,000 Troops To Be Assigned

By CLARKE BEACH

WASHINGTON—Military planners intend to have 24,000 Army and Air Force troops in Alaska by June 3, 1952. They believe that will be ample defense for the territory. They agree with Gov. Ernest Gruening of Alaska that the present force of 7,500 men there is "next to nothing." But they differ with some officials who have urged that very heavy forces be placed in the territory. Large masses of fighting men could not be used there, they say, either by attackers or defenders. They could not be provided in the field with the vast amount of supplies and equipment needed for modern warfare.

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There is only one railroad of any length, the narrow gauge one from Anchorage to Fairbanks, single-track most of the way. Highways are few and inadequate. None of them, including the new 2,000-mile Alaska (formerly Alcan) highway, that stretches from central Canada into the heart of Alaska, has a hard surface. The long, deep winter freeze in the Arctic would wreck any surface but 18-inch reinforced concrete. The roads are best in winter, when they are frozen and the bridges are intact. Bridges often are washed away in the spring floods—and 177 bridges cross major rivers on the Alaska highway alone.

A limited amount of extra-wide-track tractor equipment can be moved across country, but it would confront snow as deep as 50 feet in some of the passes in winter—and the tundra becomes muck in the summer, when the ice melts above the permafrost. Tank trucks and other wheeled vehicles could run only on highways.

The program by mid-1952—as soon as housing and support facilities can be provided—is to garrison each of the two large interior airfields near Fairbanks with 2,000 Air Force and Army troops. They are Ladd and Eielson fields, about 40 miles apart. Heavy stockpiles of oil, ammunition and other military needs will be laid in. Then the remaining 20,000 men will be stationed near Anchorage, at the Army's Fort Richardson base and

Sheriff Alleged Present At Flogging Of Negroes

ROME, Ga., Feb. 24.—(AP)—Sheriff John W. Lynch of Dade county was pictured Thursday as consorting freely with Ku Klux Klansmen lashing the bare backs of seven negroes behind a church.

The government began to develop this picture at the trial of Lynch, three deputies and six others on civil rights charges in U.S. District court.

Its key witnesses were two of the victims of the floggings at Hooker, Ga., across the Tennessee line from Chattanooga, the night of last April 2.

Charles Milton Roberts and LeRoy Woods testified the sheriff was present when the white-sheeted men seized them and five other terrified negro youths at the home of Mamie Clay, also a negro.

Roberts said he appealed frantically to the sheriff for protection. "The sheriff," he related, "turned his back and walked off."

The Air Force's Elmendorf field. Mobility Planned By Air.

In case of attack on the interior air fields, men from Anchorage could be flown in. If more help were needed, reinforcements from the states could be brought up by air. It would, theoretically, take 6,000 men to defeat 2,000 holding strongly fortified positions. To land 6,000 men in the tundra around the fields and keep them supplied with equipment by air, while under aerial attack from the fields, would be a colossal feat.

The Alaska strategy centers on the three big air fields. As long as they are held firmly Alaska will be safe, the military thinkers believe. A successful amphibious landing on the Alaskan coast will be impossible as long as the U. S. Navy maintains its present world supremacy, in the opinion of the Army men.

The strategists acknowledge that the territory could be seized now with comparative ease. To them, however, it doesn't seem so attractive an objective as some officials have claimed. It could not be used as the starting point for a large-scale attack on the interior of the continent by mass armies, because of the supply difficulty.

The Russians, for example, couldn't load their ships at any closer port than Vladivostok. And that 3,900-mile communication line would be far more than the Russian merchant marine or navy could maintain at this time.

Production Of Wax From Bark Will Soon Start

SPRINGFIELD, Ore., Feb. 24.—(AP)—Commercial production of wax from Douglas fir bark will start here next week at the Oregon Wood Chemical company plant.

Charles B. Hudson Jr., company president, said some two tons of wax a day would be produced at the outset and production would be up to about eight tons daily in six weeks. He said the ultimate output was uncertain.

The wax-from-bark process was developed by Dr. E. F. Kurth of the Oregon Forest Products laboratory, Corvallis, a state research institution financed largely by a tax on the lumber industry.

The wax is described by laboratory chemists as nearly identical to beeswax. Hudson said he expected it would be found superior for some commercial uses, to carnauba wax, which is obtained from the wax palm tree of Brazil and is imported in large quantity.

The fir wax has been produced in a pilot plant for some months, with about 120 pounds obtained from a ton of bark.

The plant here was built by the government during the war to produce alcohol from wood waste. It was barely in production when the war ended and last fall the Oregon Wood Chemical company leased it from the War Assets administration.

Wax will be only a by-product. Hudson said, with molasses for stock feed the principal wood extract.

The Kurth process involves pumping hot benzene through a tank of ground-up bark, then separating the benzene from the wax which it dissolves, by steam distillation.

Midwesterners Favor Sen. Taft For President

CINCINNATI, Feb. 24.—(AP)—A committee of northern and southern Republicans has been formed to nominate a midwestern man for President in 1952.

A southerner will be the nominee for the vice-presidency if the committee has its way, William J. Reardon, local industrialist and chairman of the group, announced.

No names were mentioned, but local party leaders indicated the midwesterner favored for the presidential nomination is Senator Robert A. Taft, Cincinnati.

Reardon, who issued a formal statement, suggested the vice-presidential nominee should be a Texan. He declined to name other members of the committee at this time.

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