

VANGUARD OF FLEET STARTS FOR PACIFIC

Admiral Rodman's Armada on Way to West Coast.

EPOCH IN HISTORY MARKED

For First Time U. S. Sea Force Is Divided and Value of Canal Is to Be Fully Tested.

OLD POINT COMFORT, Va., July 19.—The Pacific fleet was well on its way tonight on the first leg of its long voyage to the west coast.

None of the pomp and ceremony which marked the departure of the world's greatest fleet from Hampton Roads in 1907 attended the sailing today of the armada under Admiral Hugh Rodman. That is being reserved for the entrance of the ships into the Golden Gate about the middle of August, where President Wilson is expected to review them.

The superdreadnoughts and swift destroyers weighed anchor at 8:30 A. M. and turned their bows seaward on a voyage that is to furnish the first real test of the Panama canal and carry to the people of the Pacific coast the first great fleet assigned to their defense.

Fifty Destroyers in Line. Swinging out of the capes the fleet turned southward in cruising formation with the six superdreadnoughts, which, with two others, are to form the backbone of the Pacific naval defense, steaming within a triangular screen made by 50 destroyers.

In that formation the ships will remain until the end of the first leg of the voyage at Colon.

The beginning of the voyage marks an epoch in American naval history. For the first time the fleet has been divided, with exactly half of its power assigned to guard the western seaboard. For the first time also the strategic value of the canal is to be fully tested when Admiral Hugh Rodman moves his armada through to Pacific waters.

Admiral Rodman had set 8:30 for the sailing hour. He would tolerate no delay; wait for no stragglers, his commands were to be obeyed with characteristic force. The first submarine saw barges, gigs and motor sailers hurrying on last-minute errands. The roadway was busy with them. Below decks stokers toiled and black smoke clouds rose over the fleet.

All Ready for Voyage. Gradually the stir died away. Boat after boat was hoisted, dripping to its checks on deck. Nimble, barefooted jacksies hastened about the rigging and making all shipshape aboard for the voyage.

Promptly at 8:30 a destroyer stole slowly out from its place in line behind the battleships. A double string of signal flags on the New Mexico, where Admiral Rodman's four-starred flag flapped lazily above the hooded top of the tall cage mast, showed that the order had been given to begin the voyage.

The fleet moved off smoothly toward the sea, slipping smoothly down the channel. Another followed and then another, spaced at perfect intervals. They formed a line toward the sea, drawn up in two columns.

First to leave her anchorage, the flagship New Mexico circled slowly and swung into the water lane between the destroyers. On her heels came the Mississippi. In order, the Wyoming, Arkansas, New York and Texas steamed down the moving lane, the tenders closed in behind and the whole fleet moved off across the bay to the open.

Other Ships to Follow. Formidable as the fleet looked standing out on the voyage that will end for some of the ships only after a call at Honolulu in mid-Pacific, it represented only part of the fleet that will be sent to the Pacific. The destroyers he took out with him were but a quarter of those he commanded. In reserve at Atlantic yards the others await crews to man them.

The main base of the Pacific fleet will be Puget Sound, Wash. That is the destination of the battleships, the craft that sailed today and also of ships of the supply and fuel train, of the submarines, repair and mother ships, of the six pre-dreadnoughts, four big armored cruisers and seven light cruisers, the mine planters and mine layers and all the rest of the 219 vessels assigned to Pacific waters. Other elements of the fleet are moving individually, day by day, toward their new posts. Some will be sent to the coast. After the main fleet has passed through the canal, there will be a steady procession through the great waterway until all have assembled in the Pacific.

The sailing of the great fleet today marks a complete change in naval policy, a change growing out of the defeat of Germany in the great war. Not while the German fleet existed nor while German eyes were leveled covetously at the rich and undeveloped resources of South and Central America could American naval strength have been divided.

The composition of the Pacific fleet tells its own story. The three most modern ships of the line in the navy, the New Mexico, Idaho and Mississippi, are headed west. The people of the western coast are to see for the first time ships of this type and size.

SPEIER'S WORK APPRECIATED

Harbormaster Said to Be Getting Results in Washington.

A letter received yesterday by President H. L. Corbett of the Portland Chamber of Commerce from Congressman McArthur further confirms word received here last week relative to the work of Captain John Speier, harbormaster of Portland, who has been in Washington explaining Portland harbor facilities to navy department officials in view of the forthcoming visit of the Pacific fleet. The letter urges that Captain Speier be retained in Washington for some time to continue his work. The message follows: "Captain Jacob Speier and I called upon Secretary Daniels today and he promised to send a portion of the Pacific fleet to Portland during the latter part of August. We placed before him facts and figures relative to the depth of water at the bar and in the Columbia river channel, and also told him of the advantages of the Portland harbor. We also gave this information to the bureau of operations. I believe we succeeded in correcting certain erroneous opinions that existed relative to our channel and harbor facilities. "I am very anxious to have Captain Speier remain here for some time in order to continue his information to the bureau of operations, for we do not want any hitch in proceedings later on. "Our harbor facilities have been persistently misrepresented by rival cities on the Pacific coast and it is well to have someone on the job who knows the facts and can counteract the campaign of misrepresentation that has been carried on.

"Captain Speier can also be of very great assistance in urging our claims for harbor improvements and the deepening of the Columbia river channel before the board of army engineers and members of the congressional committees on rivers and harbors. As long as Captain Speier is here it is unnecessary to figure out anyone as a representative of the Portland Chamber of Commerce, for he is doing more valuable work than a regiment of ordinary men could do for our community. His technical knowledge of shipping conditions and of the channel and harbor and the handling of vessels is of the greatest value, and I am sure you agree with me that these things are of vast importance to us at the present time."

20,000 HOSTAGES IN JAIL

Petrograd Executions Said to Range From 50 to 100 Daily.

HELSINGFORS, Friday, July 19.—Twenty thousand hostages are reported to have been arrested in Petrograd in the last three weeks and Petrograd newspapers publish almost daily lists of from 50 to 100 persons who have been executed for various reasons.

FIRES SWEEP NEW AREAS

(Continued From First Page.)

fires that have been dispatched from Missoula, the national forest, and to obtain 50 men who are coming from Butte and Great Falls. The fire has been burning several days. Several conflagrations have occurred in the Blackfoot country within the last two weeks. Mr. Byrne spent Friday trying to head off the progress of the flames. He soon found, however, that the fire is very serious and that all the timber of the Blackfoot, considered among the best in Montana, besides ranches, livestock and other property, is threatened. He came to Helena for help.

Helena Situation Improves. The situation shows improvement in the Helena forest, says Charles McHarg Jr., the supervisor. The Beaver-creek fire is well under control, but the Elkhorn blaze, east of the Missouri river near Holter, is popping up again.

The Jimtown fire, also in the Big Belt mountains, across the river north of Helena, is being contained successfully and with no high winds there is little danger of further spread of the flames, says Mr. McHarg.

MISSOULA, Mont., July 19.—Rapidly spreading fires in the Coeur d'Alene country covering many thousand acres and new fires raging over large areas of northern Idaho today were causing much concern to forest service officials of district No. 1, comprising western Montana and northern Idaho.

All available men were sent from Montana points and from Spokane today to combat the flames. Fires near Thompson and St. Regis, Mont., were blazing over unlimited territory, destroying everything in their path. Near Missoula the Swartz creek fire was reported very dangerous and as having done much damage.

Agitators Hamper Fight. The Rattlesnake fire, northeast of Missoula, which has burned over between 4000 and 5000 acres, is being checked, though serious fears are entertained concerning it because of labor troubles. Forest service officials said today that agitators have been found in this district, and that two dozen men quit their jobs this morning, saying down their tools as the flames were rushing through the woods on their heels. It was said they demanded 14 hours' pay for 12 hours' work.

Forest service officials are endeavoring to locate the principal instigators of the trouble, it was said, and will arrest any who are found under the law. If successful, "Unless the work of the alleged agitators is checked, they said, and the men held on their tools, it is feared the fire cannot be controlled.

The Henderson fire, in western Montana, has already covered 11,000 acres and there is said to be no prospect of stopping it, as the flames have crossed the divide into Mulligan Gulch and are steadily creeping northward. The brush and new forests planted a few years ago by the forest service in that region.

The Cold Creek fire, which surrounds St. Regis on the north and south side of the river, is said to be the most serious in the district, threatening ranches and small towns in the vicinity. It will be exceedingly difficult to control, it was declared, on account of its having jumped the river. It is said six sections of land south of the river and five sections north of the stream, about 7000 acres in all. The flames are about two miles from the front. It is planned to make a stand against this fire from Dry Creek tomorrow, Supervisor White of the Coeur d'Alene said.

New Fires Are Reported. Slight headway is being made against the Nigger gulch blaze, according to reports received today, while the Rock creek fire, Loop road, yesterday, was caught immediately and is now under control. Numerous small fires have been reported during the last week in the Helena forest, some of which it is impossible to place crews on all of them.

Slightly more than 100 men were sent into the Ashley lake fire, in the Blackfoot forest today. This is the largest blaze in that district. Spreading northward over a mile front, the Lander's Point fire is causing much trouble in the Blackfoot forest, while in the Flathead forest the Sullivan creek fires, spread over two forks of the stream by high winds during the night, are covering a great area.

A new fire in the Selway forest all but destroyed a fire-fighters' camp, the crew being engaged in a desperate battle before it was saved. The first had been thought under control, but was fanned to life by the high winds and rushed 30 miles over the mountains in less than an hour.

A novel development of the day was the discovery of a band of sheep belonging to the Northwest Sheep company of Portland, Or., which was reported destroyed two days ago. The sheep were caught between two fires, abandoned by their herders and left to their fate. Efforts later to find them were fruitless, but today a rancher reported that a large part of the band had been found safe, though hundreds had been lost.

HELENA, Mont., July 19.—Eighteen thousand sheep and 700 cattle grazing in the national forest near Fleisher in the Big Blackfoot country are threatened by a forest fire near Landers Fork, which has already burned over 1000 acres of the best state timber lands and which is now within a mile of the federal reserve. All the timber of the Blackfoot, ranches and livestock are endangered.

The Sun river fire north of Gilman has covered several thousand acres of timber and is considered unusually serious.

EVERETT, Wash., July 19.—Property in the vicinity of Silver Lake is still in danger, owing to brush fires which continued to burn today. Observers say the result will be serious if the wind should happen to change.

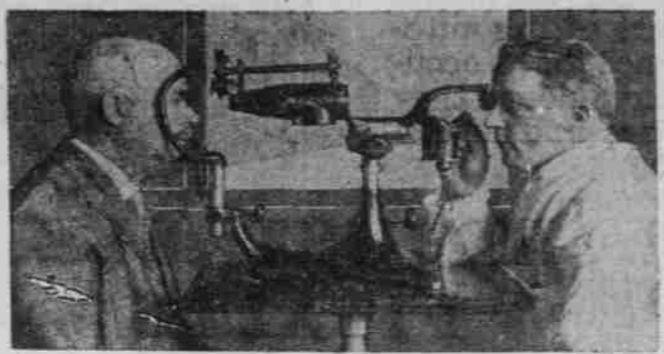
CASCADE FOREST IS GUARDED

Force of 35 Men Builds Trails and Watches for Fire.

EUGENE, Or., July 19.—(Special)—No fires have yet occurred in the Cascade national forest this summer, according to Robert S. Wallace, acting supervisor, with headquarters in Eugene. Several small blazes have started in the Sustaw forest, but have not been allowed to spread.

Acting Supervisor Wallace said 35 men are at work in the Cascade forest watching for fire and building trails.

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