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THE JAPANESE EXPANSION IN THE PACIFIC
7 DEC. 1941 - 12 SEPT. 1942

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MacArthur and the war against Japan --

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INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers, in general, the Japanese Expansion in the Pacific from 7 December 1941 to 12 September 1942.

In order to show the reader why the Japanese had to expand in the Pacific, it is necessary to give some of the reasons leading up to it.

Many there were but some of the chief reasons were; The Japanese were in need of Rubber, Coal, Iron ore, Tin, Rice, Oil etc., to increase a dwindling reserve since some of those commodities were cut off by the United States, Britain and the Netherlands; also the other two members of the Tri-Partite Pact would have a little less difficulty in their war. If the United States was occupied in the Pacific so that Britain and Russia would not be getting any or as much of the supplies of war she was getting. Also, Japan's foreign policy under General Tojo, that country's relations with the United States and Britain had steadily grown worse. A free hand was demanded to liquidate the "China Incident" once and for all, and had declared that until the United States and Britain refrained from supplying arms to China and recognized Japan's leadership in the Pacific, no peaceful settlement was likely to be reached.

The Japanese first struck at Pearl Harbor on the 7 December 1941 at about 0600. The attack on Pearl Harbor was made by 360 planes in two waves. Torpedo bombing being chiefly relied upon. (2)

This surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the chief Naval Base in the Pacific, was one of "infamy." Hits were scored on naval craft lying at anchor in the Harbor and two battleships were sunk; other military installations were hit, including Hickam Field, United States Army air base. Casualties amounted to about 4,500 of which about 2,300 were fatal. This was a "day of infamy." The Japanese in doing this, were thus able to prolong the war ~~going for~~ as long as it did. On the same day the Japanese occupied the International Settlement at Shanghai. With this simultaneously Japan struck at the Philippines; Hong Kong; Thailand and the Malay States. (3) Japan depended on the crippling of the United States Fleet at Pearl Harbor for its entire campaign. The "sneak attack" was successful. (4)

After Pearl Harbor the Japanese followed their attack on the Philippines; ^a Attempting landings on the West Coast of Luzon in the Philippines; between Vigan and San Rernando. They were repulsed by American and Filipino troops. Some parachutists who had been dropped near Vigan were rounded up. Then later in the day Japanese troops in considerable force established themselves at Aparri on the northern tip of the island of Luzon. They, the Japanese, being heavily engaged by the defenders trying to push Southwards. Manila, the chief town of the Philippines, was raided twice that day. Nichols Airfield, Fort McKinley and the naval base at Cavite about eight miles southwest of the Capital was raided as well. (5)

(3) A-3, p. 577; (4) A-4, p. 519; (5) A-5, p. 584, 591.

On the 22nd of December 1941 the Japanese, after their initial attempt to gain control of the Philippines, landed a force of about 100,000 men, together with tanks, in the Lingayen Gulf area of Luzon. They also made landings on Mindanao, the second largest island of the Philippines. The fighting here took place in the Davao area. This was also the day, after an heroic defense lasting fourteen days, that the small garrison of 400 Marines at Wake Island, the naval base, 3,000 miles to the northeast, surrendered. (6)

During the ensuing days the Japanese raided town after town in the Philippines other than the Capital, Manila. By this time, December 31 to be exact, the forces of Americans and Filipinos faced with overwhelmingly superior numbers of enemy troops backed by tanks and dive bombers, were forced to evacuate Manila and Cavite and fall back to shorter lines. Actually the Japanese entered Manila on January 2, 1942. (7)

Christmas day 1941, after resisting Japanese attacks for seven days and rejecting three demands to surrender, the British Colony of Hong Kong capitulated, Thailand having been conquered 21st. December 1941. (8) Now, the Japanese could send more troops to over-come the British at Singapore in Malaya, also the Philippines. The Japanese thought the Philippines a much harder "nut to crack". They, the Japanese, could get Singapore "out of the way" have more troops "free" to send to the Philippines and thereby cut off any threat of a counter attack by the United States, since with land-based planes they could attack any shipping that the United States might try to send to the Philippines.

This proved successful for on the 15th. February 1942 Singapore fell. (9) Fighting in Burma was begun on 20th January 1942 when Japanese and Thai forces crossed the frontier into Burma. Burma never was fully conquered but the majority of Burma was conquered 13th May 1942. (10)

Borneo was already landed upon by the Japanese, at Sarawak on 16th December 1941. The British there withdrew to Dutch Borneo, where they joined up with Dutch troops on 1st January 1942. On the 10th January 1942 the enemy landed at Tarakan, Dutch Borneo and also on north Celebes. Oil installations on Tarakan were destroyed by the Dutch before they surrendered on 13th January 1942. January 22, 1942 the oil wells at Balikpapan, on the east coast, were destroyed to prevent them from falling into enemy hands. This same day the Japanese landed at Rebaul, New Britain and New Ireland in the Bismark Archipelago, thereby threatening New Guinea and bringing the War dangerously close to Australia. At this point Indo-China must not be overlooked for the Japanese had landed there and occupied it about 27th. July 1941. (11).

The fighting in the Philippines at this time, was going on with only slight gains made by the Japanese, during the time the United States forces went into Bataan, to shortly after the fall of Singapore. During this time that the American-Filipino forces were resisting the Japanese, it had its effect, and it was also felt, because the enemy was being held to a sizable portion of Japanese strength and it called for additional troops if they hoped to conquer the Philippines quickly.

The Japanese shortly after the fall of Singapore sent some of their best, most seasoned troops to the Philippines, both from Singapore and China to reenforce the already overwhelming forces the Japanese already had in the Philippines, especially on Luzon. These completely overwhelming odds of enemy finally forced the troops, that had so valiantly and heroically fought the Japanese, to surrender on Bataan on April 9, 1942 (Philippine Time) and later those forces of American and Filipinos fighting on Corregidor finally surrendered on May 6th. 1942 "Philippine Times".

On June 13th., 1942 the Navy Department announced that Japanese landings had taken place on Attu and Kiska Islands in the Aleutians only 1,300 miles from the Alaskan Mainland and only 600 miles from Dutch Harbor, the new American naval base. (12)

The Japanese in March 1942 had conquered Sumatra and Java. It seemed now that after they conquered New Guinea they could then move to Australia and really ^{cut off?} out of any help the United States might send to Russia, Britain, and China, in the far east. This seemed about the final touch. The Japanese were ~~only~~ able to conquer only part of New Guinea, that portion from Rabaul to the north west tip of New Guinea, excluding that portion due west of Rabaul to the South westerⁿ-most part.

At the farthest extent of Japanese control they were in a position to exploit resources never before dreamed of.

(12) A-12, p. 705

They had in Manchuria wheat, manufacturing, cattle, coal; Formosa, ^hChampor; China-----Wheat, Rice, Tea, Corn, Tobacco, Manufacturing; Korea-----Gold, Rice, Lumber; Philippines---Copper, Fish, Lumber, Rice, Sugar, Copra; Thailand-----Rice, Teak, Cotton; Malaya-----Tin; Sumatra-----Tin, Coal, Oil; Java-----Oil, Rice, Coffee; Borneo-----Oil, Lumber, Rice, New Calidania----Nickle, to mention a few of the resources available for exploitation.

No mention has been made of the whereabouts and activities of the United States forces of land, sea and air. This was purposely left out to show the reader what could have been the outcome if the Japanese had had the foresight, planning, along with a few more forces, they might have been "The People" with whom the World would have had to deal with in the Orient, for years to come. The reader must remember this is purely a personal observation, for instance the attack on Pearl Harbor. Rash though it was, even succeeding, there was not the necessary drive to follow through, take and hold, even though they held the Philippines, parts of China, Manchuria, Korea, Formosa, Burma, Thailand, Indo-China, Malaya, Sumatra, Java, Celebes, Mariana Island, Marshall and Gilbert Islands, Solomon Islands, parts of New Guinea, New Ireland, and the rest of their holdings. Their policy was one of apparent hatred toward other peoples and not one of exploitation for betterment, but only betterment for a few Japanese. This is just one of the causes for their down fall which was eventually to come.

The United States forces after the setback at Pearl Harbor and the Philippines, along with Guam and Wake, were not standing still. Forces which had left the United States before 7th December 1941 and after were diverted to the

^{and}
ⁱⁿ
South to Java, Sumatra, Australia, (India) later. From
Australia, United States Forces were building up to where
in August of 1942 they were making thrusts, faints, ^{and} attacks/
(finally, on the Japanese. At Pearl Harbor the United States
Navy was being conditioned into the most formidable forces
ever known in the history of the world. The United States
Air Forces as well was being molded into it's greatness. In
short, although it took time, the lesson learned from the be-
ginning of World War II to the time the United States forces
started moving, had the lasting effect that this writer be-
lieves is needed to ^k Keep a ^t Peace in a world of greed and
selfishness. It has not been the idea of the writer to go
into ^t lengthy discussion of what is right or wrong but to show
as stated in the opening paragraph the extent of Japanese
Expansion in the Pacific.

The lessons learned are so varied that much greater
minds than the one possessed by the writer, are trying to
enumerate them. The writer does think that the first and
foremost is preparedness. Another is a continued vigilance
over all parts of the world, what with modes of travel being
what they are. The Democratic way of life far surpasses all
other ways. If the allied ^s of United States Forces could have
concentrated enough forces together at any one place the
Japanese could have been stopped at the beginning, because
the Japanese used only small forces in making their thrusts
and attacks.

Distrust, more than any other factor, has deterred the Russians from the creation of an effective army in East Germany. The Alert Units have been purged three times. The last purge, in the spring of 1951, resulted in a twenty percent turnover, largely at the officer and NCO level. Communist party loyalty, rather than military efficiency and experience, became the criterion for rank, and the former nazi officers and NCOs were replaced with eager young communists. (12) The organization, training and doctrine are now entirely that of the Soviet Army. No longer can the Alert Units be described as a hard core of Wehrmacht veterans welded into a fighting unit. Now they must be considered as typical communist military organizations in which party standing takes precedence over military ability and all ranks are riven with party spies. Due to the historic German military ability, as well as their traditional anti-slavism, Russian fears of the incidence of and potential dangers from subversion in the Alert Units are undoubtedly much greater than in similar connections in their other satellites. It may be assumed that the political emphasis and controls in the Alert Units are at least as strong as, and probably stronger than those in any other Russian-sponsored army.

In spite of the above mentioned factors, the lukewarm morale and high desertion rate of the Alert Units does not mean that they may be completely discounted as military formations. There appear to be sufficient competent communists or opportunists in the ranks, as well as the command and staff positions, to

(12) C. L. Sulzberger, NY Times, 16 Jun 52, p. 5, col. 5, TIS Library