GEOGRAPHY

Aleutians Have Long Days

Night obscures these important islands for only five hours out of each 24, but there is a great deal of rainfall and fog.

➤ THE LONG daily hours of daylight and twilight which come during the summer months in the northland now illuminate the Aleutian Islands, for nearly 19 hours out of each 24. The hours of daylight will constantly increase up until about the end of June. This means longer days for daylight bombing of the Japanese bases on Kiska.

Dutch Harbor is at about the same latitude as Edmonton, Canada, 300 miles north of the United States-Canadian line and the Glacier National Park in Montana. It has a far different climate, however, because the warm Pacific current sweeps the Aleutians and causes more uniform and higher temperatures, together with much rainfall and fog.

The Aleutians stretch westerly 1,200 miles from the end of the Alaska Peninsula nearly to Siberia. Attu, the western American island, is less than 800 miles from the southern tip of the Kamchatka Peninsula. This in turn is only about 800 miles from the north coast of Hokkaido, the north island of Japan proper, and about 1,400 miles from Tokyo.

The Aleutian Islands have been described as a string of barren, rocky, treeless islands, stretching like stepping stones from Asia to North America. The ancestors of the American Indians and Eskimos probably followed these stepping stones in their hazardous migrations from Eastern Asia to Alaska, and then to the south and east. It would seem that the Japanese thought they could use the same stepping stones to reach the American continent. But now they will be used in reverse.

The importance of the Aleutians to the American armed forces is strategic. First they must be cleared of the enemy. Then they can be used for bases between America and Asia. They are close to or on the shortest routes across the Pacific.

The great circle route from San Francisco to Tokyo, 5,225 miles, passes south of the Aleutians. The 5,000 mile great circle route from Seattle to Tokyo almost touches the islands. The air route from Fairbanks, Alaska, passes over them. From Seattle to Dutch Harbor is 2,200 miles, and from there to Attu about 850 miles. Safe harbors and airfields along the Aleutians are of the utmost importance to the Allied Nations at war with Japan when the all-out attack on the Japanese homeland begins. They are important also in delivering aircraft cargoes of food and war equipment to Russia.

The Aleutian Islands can not be used for food production except for fish. They lack the necessary soil. Most of them are uninhabited. They can be used the year around for military bases. They seldom have below zero temperature. But they are always chilly, damp and foggy. The fogs constitute the greatest difficulty in making full use of them.

Science News Letter, May 29, 1943

MEDICINE

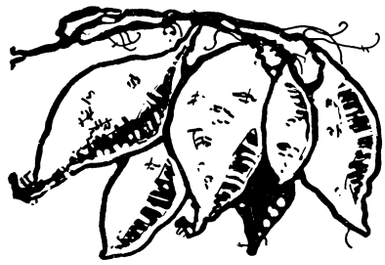
Polio Foundation Makes Three-Year Grant

➤ THE National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis has made a three-year grant totalling $120,000 to the University of Michigan School of Public Health for continuation of a long range program of study of infantile paralysis and other virus diseases ranging from influenza and atypical pneumonia to chicken pox and mumps. The grant was announced in a joint statement by Basil O'Connor, president of the Foundation, and Dr. Alexander G. Ruthven, president of the University.

Science News Letter, May 29, 1943

GENERAL SCIENCE

NATURE RAMBLINGS
by Frank Thone



Jungle Campcraft

➤ FLIERS forced to bail out or make crash landings in jungle or desert will have many of their worries taken away by a neat, stoutly bound little book placed in the emergency kit of all aviators flying in the tropics by the Army Air Forces, which tells how to make life possible, and even reasonably comfortable, under wilderness conditions. It might have been called *Every Man a Crusoe,* but it is more prosaically titled *Jungle and Desert Emergencies.*

Ingenious instructions, compactly presented, tell how to turn a parachute into a tent, its pack into a knapsack, any piece of suitable fabric into a lining for a miniature cistern to catch rainwater. Or the parachute can also be turned into an effective fish net.

Don't be afraid of wild animals, the fliers are told: they're at least as much afraid of you as you are of them. Much more to be feared than serpents or leopards are the much smaller flying and creeping things—mosquitoes, ticks, mites, botflies, leeches. All of them bring dis-

comfort, some of them bring deadly sickness.

Men can benefit from monkeys, if they use their wits a bit. For one thing, they can watch what the monkeys eat. Anything that a monkey eats, a man can eat. Also, they can eat the monkeys. There is no need to waste precious ammunition on them, either. Several ingenious methods for trapping them are figured, including the old trick of getting the monkey to put his hand into a small hole in a coconut shell for a tempting bait; the animal won't unball his fist once he has grasped the prize, and so gets caught.

But of all man's enforced relations with nature in the jungle, those with plants are most important. Plants offer by far the best supplies of food: fleshy roots, like sweet potatoes or yams run wild; edible shoots, like those of bamboo, big ferns, and palm buds; familiar fruits like bananas, pineapples and coconuts; less familiar ones like hogplums, star apples and the unspeakably malodorous but nutritious durian.

Four of the more dangerous poisonous plants of the jungle are also listed: sanbox, manzanillo, cowitch, and the deadly strychnos. All species mentioned in the text are pictured in clear, unmistakable line drawings.

Most of the booklet is devoted to the problems of survival in the jungle; staying alive in the desert may be just as difficult, but not as complex a job. Mainly it has to do with conservation of water, protection against sun and heat, and food sanitation. The desert-stranded flier is warned against eating food which friendly Arabs may offer him: offered with the best will in the world, it is almost certain to be contaminated with germs more dangerous than poison. Buy or barter raw food and cook it yourself; then you will be safe, is the counsel.

This guidebook is the result of exhaustive research by the Safety Education Division of the AAF Flight Control Command. Noted scientists were interviewed, every available authority on life in the jungle and desert was consulted.

No detail was overlooked in trying to make the book practical and readable. The cover is vermilion so it can be readily distinguished against jungle or desert background if lost. The binding glue contains insect-repellent powder and the pages are water-resistant. The type face and illustrations are especially designed for reading under adverse lighting conditions. The book itself fits easily into the hip pocket.

Science News Letter, May 29, 1943

PUBLIC HEALTH

D. C. Fights Malaria

Clean-up of mosquito breeding areas intensified as nation's capital received three cases of malaria from foreign countries.

➤ THE FIGHT to protect the nation's capital against malaria, which some scientists believe may be the great plague of the present war, is being intensified, Dr. George C. Ruhland, District of Columbia Health Officer, announced.

There are three "bona fide cases of malaria" in Washington now, the health department records show. The patients have recently returned from foreign countries where they had been employed on government business.

Importation of more cases of malaria and possibly other communicable diseases are anticipated by Dr. Ruhland because of modern swift air transportation which brings people to Washington from Africa, India or the Southwest Pacific in a few days instead of weeks.

Only one type of mosquito transmits malaria in the Washington area. This is the Anopheles quadrimaculatus, familiarly known as "the quad." A survey, part of a program for "control of malaria in war areas," was made by the District of Columbia Health Department and the U. S. Public Health Service last summer. This showed that the chief breeding grounds for "the quad" around Washington are in the areas around Oxon Run Creek and in the Potomac River in the vicinity of Oxon Bay. A few malaria mosquitoes were found here and there throughout the city but not in sufficient numbers to warrant alarm.

As a result of the survey findings, extensive oiling, ditch digging and draining operations were undertaken around Bolling Field, Blue Plains, the National Arboretum and the grounds of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, where a number of paresis patients are receiving malaria treatment.

Oiling, "dusting" with Paris green and mosquito trapping will be intensified in about a month when the mosquito breeding season will be at its height. Dusting operations by airplane will be extended to include the Marine Base at Quantico, Va.

Dr. Ruhland invited the public to report suspected mosquito breeding places to the Health Department which will investigate to determine whether or not the malaria mosquito is involved.

"We are particularly suspicious of the fish pond with the sprinkling water fountain," Dr. Ruhland said, adding that tin cans and other receptacles which fill up with water and the smaller stagnant pools are usually only sources of the pest mosquito which does not carry malaria.

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● RADIO

Saturday, June 5, 1:30 p.m., EWT

"Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over Columbia Broadcasting System.

Dr. Boris Berkman, president of the Milkweed Products Development Corporation, will speak on "Milkweed as a War and Peace Crop."