Secret Details Of Jap Balloon Bomb Disclosed

Forests of British Columbia In Danger From Attack Of Incendiary Bombs

Widespread fires in the vast forest areas of British Columbia and extending onto the rich grain lands of the Prairie Provinces might have materialized, had the Japanese been able to continue the war and so maintained their incendiary bomb attacks by balloon on Canada, it has been disclosed by National Defence Headquarters.

The bombs, first of which were discovered at Minton, Sask., early last January, cascaded down in unknown quantities from the Pacific coastline to the Western Ontario border, and had their fiery loads not been smothered in the snowy vastness of the West, some rich areas would have fallen prey.

Disclosing some hitherto secret details of the Japanese device, the army said some of the bombs were of the high explosive type but any which were detonated fell in unopen country and no material damage or loss of life occurred.

Fragments of the balloons, which began falling on the United States and Canada last December, have been found as far south as Mexico and north to Alaska. In Canada to date 250 recoveries, from tiny parts to complete balloon, have been made, with the latest at McBride, B.C., August 4.

Danger For Years

The army statement warned that it was possible the balloons recovered were only a fraction of those completing the lower stratosphere journey from Japan and there was danger for years to come of unsuspecting campers, trappers and tourists detonating unexploded anti-personnel bombs.

The self-destroying mechanism on many of the balloons did not function and the picric containers, designed to explode the paper balloon, can be just as dangerous as the unexploded bombs.

Although no definite clue has been unearthed as to the object of the attacks, it is believed the Japs eventually hoped to gain information on weather conditions, prevailing wind currents and behavior of their balloons for future systemized flights.

Research experts, inter-service bomb disposal squads, air force personnel, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, civilian police, Indian trappers and forest rangers joined as a co-operative force to comb the great hinterlands of the West to recover and render the missiles harmless.

R.C.A.F. pilots were successful in shooting down several of the balloons.

Ingenious System

The balloons, constructed of tough paper, 33 feet in diameter and carrying 19,000 cubic feet of hydrogen gas, were designed to operate at a height of nearly five miles and to stay aloft for about one week.

This was done by an ingenious system of dropping ballast whenever the balloon dropped below its operational height. If the balloons went too high, gas was automatically released from the balloon. The merchanism, with its battery and aneroid barometers, was so arranged to release the bombs after all ballast had been dropped.

On the main balloon there were 19 shroud lines, each 45 feet long, gathered together at the lower end and knotted to a steel ring. When completely filled, the balloon was capable of lifting, at its operational height, a weight of 250 pounds.

Self-Destroying Devices

The outside steel ring, or "chandelier," contained 72 holes with blow-out plugs in all but two holes. These contained long green fuses which were ignited by friction ignitors when the balloon was launched and after burning through two 33-foot pieces of safety fuse—taking approximately three-quarters of an hour—two plugs were blown out and their springs allowed the connection of the aneroid barometer to a battery. As long as the balloon stayed at a proper height there was no need for any mechanical operation.

The weapon was fitted with two self-destroying devices. The standard Japanese picric acid demolition block was tied to a wooden block in the inner ring with detonator and fuse through one of two holes. The other hole was fitted with a 60-foot length of safety fuse which led to a flash charge fastened in a sleeve cemented to the balloon.

When the last bomb was released, a contact detonated the balloon and ballast release gear and both were destroyed.

Made of Paper

All of the balloons found were of paper construction, except one of rubberized silk which carried a radio transmitter in place of the usual incendiary cannister. This gave rise to the belief that these balloon armadas were accompanied by at least one balloon-borne radio.

Standard signals picked up by a listening post from such transmitters permitted the enemy to plot the course of the balloons across the Pacific and procure valuable information about prevailing winds.

WHAT CAN YOU SPARE THAT THEY CAN WEAR? . . . Used clothing is wanted for overseas relief . . . Take it to your local clothing collection dept.

AIR HERO SETS UP AIRLINE INTO ONTARIO TOURIST HAUNTS

His score 11 Nazis planes destroyed, a probable and seven damaged. Sqdn.-Ldr. Bert Houle, D.F.C., and Bar, Massey, Ont., is seen with his mother when he returned home. Now he's setting up an airline into the north country of Ontario.

This sign marks Houle's airfield. He's only employing veteran R.C.A.F. personel and plans a feeder-line for T.C.A. as well as a service for tourists seeking the best hunting and fishing spots.

MEMORIAL TO JEWISH CANADIANS

As the result of a fund started by Jewish Canadians, during the European fighting, the sum of £500 has been raised for the purpose of establishing a "Canada Memorial Grove" in the Holy Land. This is the equivalent of 1,400 trees. On Sept. 5 a scroll commemorating this project was presented to Lieut.-Gen. the Hon. P. J. Montague, Chief of Staff, CMHQ, by Pte. Lillian Meltzer, St. John, N.B., on behalf of Jewish members of the Navy, Army and Air Force. The group which participated in the ceremony are shown here, left to right: Capt. W. Epstein, Calgary; Pte. Meltzer; Lieut.-Gen. Montague; Col. J. Logan-Veneta, Chief Protestant Chaplain, of Ottawa; Col. M. O'Neill, Chief R. C. Chaplain, of Edmonton, and Maj. Gershon Levi, Senior Jewish Chaplain, of Montreal, who made a speech. S/Ldr. Jacob Eisen, RCAF Chaplain, of Edmonton, was present also.

LIFE RETURNS TO ATOM-BOMBED NAGASAKI

ROAD BACK to new life in Nagasaki. Families, like one above with loaded cart, trek in to find homes.

NEW HOME for bombed-out Nagasaki family above is built from pieces of tin found among debris. Mother and her son are eating their usual meal—rice. Photo is one of first showing rebirth of city.

BOMBED-OUT occupant of home that stood in place of this mass of rubble in Nagasaki has found new place to live. Jap characters on the board give his new address.

BURNED atomic bomb victim above was Japanese prisoner of Japs at Nagasaki.

CLEANUP of ruined city is under way, as picture above shows. Roadway is open for at least one-way traffic and homeless victims of Nagasaki atomic bomb gather possessions and hunt shelter. This photo was taken in center of devastated area.