

JAPANESE TAKING BIG CHANCES NOW

Lightning Stabs in the Pacific
Must Win Quickly if at All—
Little Luck in Philippines

FOE GETS PUSHED AROUND

American and Filipino Forces
Show How to Use Tanks and
Coast Artillery in Battle

By **ROYAL ARCH GUNNISON**
North American Newspaper Alliance.

**UNITED STATES ARMY HEAD-
QUARTERS** in the Far East, Phil-
ippines, Dec. 22—The battle of
Lingayen Gulf may tell the story
of the United States' future in the
Pacific.

Like everything else that they
try in the Far East the Japanese
must succeed in their first en-
deavor or lose face. An initial gain
of face gives a definite advantage
in morale to the fighting and home
forces. Japan, with Hong Kong
desperately on the defensive, has
been feeding a victory story to the
people living in flimsy bombable
houses and to the Japanese farm-
ers who have been pulling in their
belts for the hard Winter ahead.

It is evident to military ob-
servers in the Philippines that Ja-
pan is taking the gravest chances
and risks today. Premier Hideki
Tojo's whole Nazi-inspired strategy
depends on quick footwork in all
parts of the Pacific—lightning
stabs packing knockout wallops.
Put another way, Emperor Hiro-
hito is trying to jujitsu lanky
Uncle Sam, chubby John Bull and
determined Flying Dutchman with-
in the earliest possible time limit.

Japan Pressed for Time

Each day finds the time getting
shorter and shorter and the going
harder and harder for the Japanese
from the standpoint of war sup-
plies, armament, gasoline, bombs
and plane construction, not to men-
tion the steady loss of warships
and troop transports to British,
Netherland and American planes,
ships and shore batteries in the
Philippines and Malaya.

Today's fighting in the Lingayen
sector is critical, but the initial
successes against the carefully re-
hearsed Japanese landings give the
greatest confidence to the Filipino
divisions which repulsed today's
major Japanese attack and knocked
back the first Lingayen attempt a
week ago.

The Lingayen tank battle is the
first encounter of World War II
between American tank units and
any enemy. The fact that Ameri-
can tank crews came out victorious
in the battle after "fierce fight-
ing" adds to the credit of the ma-
noeuvers and preparations made
for the use of tanks in this jungle
and flooded rice paddie country.

This was also the first encoun-
ter in the Far East of American
artillery with the enemy. The de-
struction of several troop trans-
ports and the disabling of Japa-
nese destroyers supporting the
landing parties shows the deadly
aim of American artillerymen.

Here at Army and Navy head-
quarters, where I was checking
hourly today, I found neither pes-
sism nor optimism—just an un-
shakable conviction that man for
man the Filipino and American
forces can out-slug, out-think and
out-fight any forces the Japanese
put into this battle whether in the
air, on water or on land.

Reports from the Lingayen sec-
tor and Vigan, farther north, indi-
cate that, individually, Filipino and
American troops are superior to
these Japanese "percussion cap"
troops, which obviously are the
best that General Tojo can throw
out in the hopes of getting their
hooks in the Philippines.

Likened to Low Countries

Lingayen Gulf, where the Jap-
anese are trying to establish
"bridgeheads," is to the Philippines
what the Low Countries were to
Europe when the Nazis smashed
through to overrun France. I flew
over the gulf less than three weeks
ago. The water is deep and the
beaches good. In some places the
jungle comes right down to the
edge of the water and in others
there are sections of open country.
There are many fishing villages
and anchorages. But there are no
inlets in which the Japanese could
hide or get protection from air at-
tacks by United States and Filipino
planes.

I learned that the eighty Japa-
nese transports used in the attack
were supported by only a few naval
vessels and these were not of the
heavier types. This would seem
to indicate that the Japanese were
afraid they might lose their more
valuable warships to Admiral
Thomas C. Hart's submarine fleet,
which is out hunting.

While the Japanese attack un-
doubtedly was preceded by most
careful planning, the element of
chance plays an important role
since they are risking all on a
gamble of early success. The Lin-
gayen attack seems to indicate that
the reason the Japanese have not
launched large-scale bombing at-
tacks against civilian Manila is
that they hope to take it intact.