

# Niihau Called Alcatraz By Military Garrison

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This is the concluding story in a series of exclusive Advertiser articles on Niihau, information for which was gathered in a senate survey of the mysterious island, headed by Senator Francis H. I. Brown.—The Editor.

Military personnel stationed on mysterious Niihau have only one kind word to say for the lonely hump of volcanic rock and coral. This is it: "The only thing we like here is when we get our mail from the states."

Uncle Sam's friendly, gum-chewing GIs have won favor with the women of every nation in the world, including enemy nations, but they haven't even "dented the surface" on Niihau.

### PICTURE PAGE

For a full page of pictures on mysterious Niihau, where time stands still, turn to page 12 of today's Advertiser.

In addition, the "blue laws" against drinking and all things frivolous, promulgated by the Robinson family for Niihau, ap-

ply to a large extent to military outposts on that island.

GIs point to what they consider the only iron-clad contract against fraternization in the world, which has been maintained for five years.

Because the island is entirely private property, the military services signed a contract with the Robinson family covering their entry into this sanctuary.

The military services agree (Continued on Page 8, Col. 7)

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that the men will not drink on the island, that beer or any other liquor cannot be kept or served at military stations and barracks, that the men avoid social intercourse with Niihauans and that they will not attend their church services or other social functions.

An attempt by the Robinson family to have written into the contract a prohibition against use of tobacco on the island proved unsuccessful, according to the men.

What little contact developed during the war years showed the GIs that Niihauans live under the strictest type of paternalism which regulates their going and coming from the island, prohibits their use of tobacco and alcoholic beverages and keeps away from the sanctuary all outside influences including teachers, ministers, and movies. An occasional newspaper from Honolulu is permitted to reach Niihau.

### Select Own Minister

The minister for the only church is selected from Bible reading Niihauans. These simple Hawaiian folk usually spend their entire Sunday at church because they apparently are prohibited from performing even the simplest tasks on the Lord's Day.

The church is a non-sectarian group but comes closest to being Congregational. It serves as the only policing agency on the island.

These strict regulations date back to the days of Aubrey Robinson, father of the present owners of the island, who headed the clan until he died a few years before the war at the age of 82.

He was known as a strict, practicing Protestant, a charitable man who paid his debts and taxes. He was also known as a recluse. When he died he left an estate appraised at about \$3,400,000.

Reports that anyone who leaves Niihau is never permitted to return, are not correct, according to military personnel on the island. At least two men, one an internee and another a man who was drafted for army service, have been known to return in the past five years.

GIs, whose gripes dubbed

Oahu "the rock," consider Niihau a prison from which there is no escape—another Alcatraz or Devil's Island.

Very few official groups from the territorial government have ever visited Niihau. An exception was former Governor Lawrence M. Judd who, during his term of office from 1929 to 1934, made a personal visit to the island.

The Robinsons have always discouraged "contaminating" visits by outsiders including those of the board of agriculture and forestry, the board of health and the school department.

In this week's visit by the Senate committee headed by Senator Francis H. I. Brown, very few residents could be contacted.

They were informed by Lester and Aylmer Robinson who guided the party that "the two teachers are away," or the "people are out in the hills working," or "the minister isn't around."

### Balk at Pictures

When an Advertiser photographer attempted to take pictures of a typical Niihau home, he was told that the "Hawaiians resent having their picture taken unless they can take a picture of you and make you an exhibit."

At the ranch headquarters the photographer was again instructed not to take pictures "because the war years have not permitted proper maintenance of the buildings."

Attempts to photograph an ancient horse drawn carriage used at ranch headquarters also proved unsuccessful and one of the Hawaiians grabbed the shafts to tow the vehicle safely inside the ranch barn.

When Senator Charles H. Silva of Hawaii asked the committee be permitted to see a gathering of Niihauans, Aylmer Robinson pointed out that the people were scattered and could be called together only after a considerable elapse of time.

He also pointed out that it was now "one o'clock" and if the party expected to "reach Kauai by nightfall, it should leave soon."

(T) end of a series