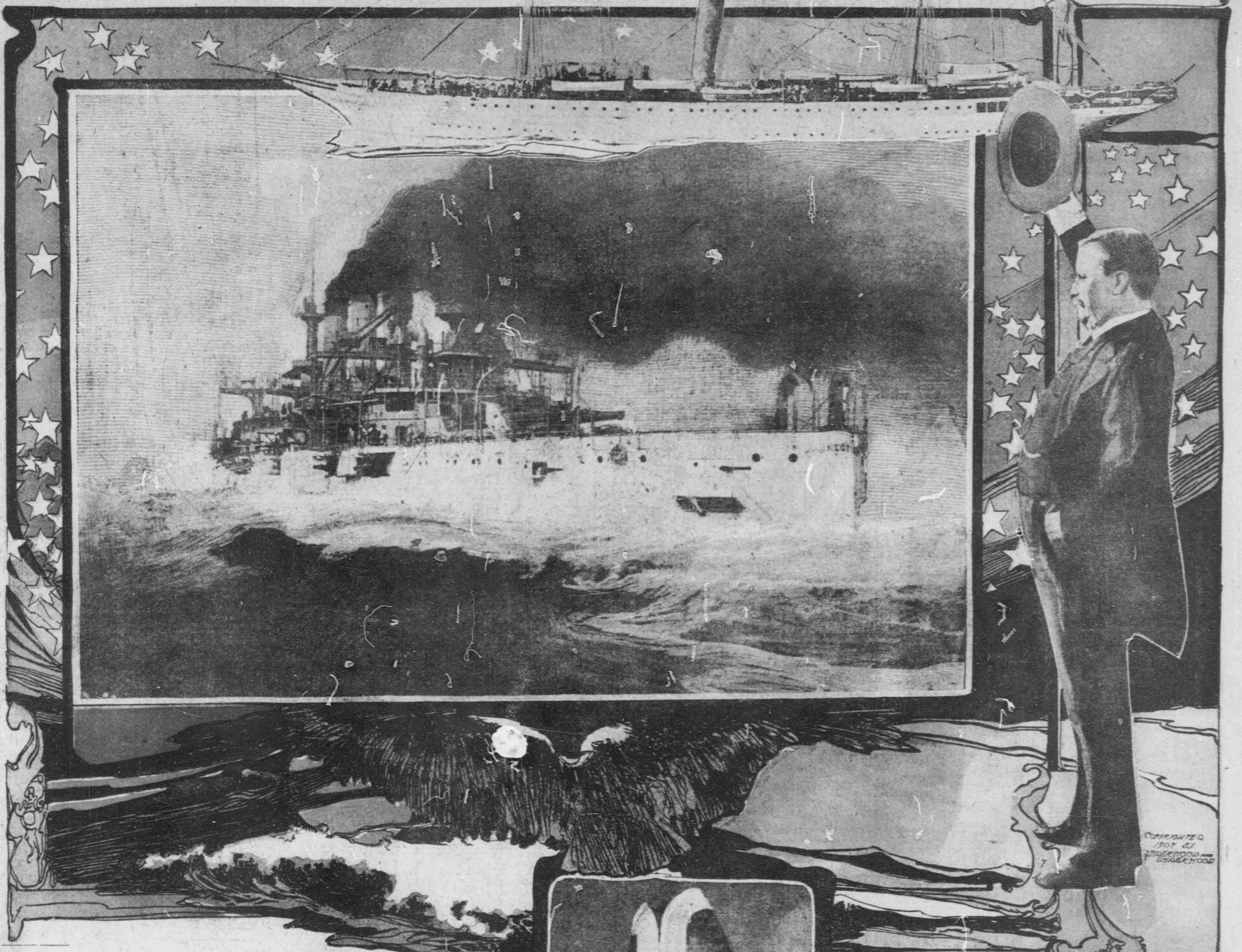


# FLOWER of the NAVY'S ships and MEN Make up the GIANT PACIFIC FLEET



Will Venture  
Forth on the Most Hazardous  
Voyage Ever Undertaken by So Big a Fighting  
Flotilla—Leaves Hampton Roads December 16

**T**HE very flower of the United States navy's ships and men, on December 16, will depart from Hampton Roads. Popularly known as the Pacific fleet, it will be the greatest fleet of battleships ever sent on a long cruise, the greatest flotilla of torpedo boats that ever essayed such a hazardous journey, with the most thoroughly equipped consort of auxiliary vessels.

Sixteen of the heaviest battleships that sail the seas; six speedy and ruthless torpedo destroyers, small but seaworthy; a miscellaneous array of colliers, tank ships, and tenders.

Their destination is the Pacific, their course nearly 14,000 miles.

Their mission is a peaceful maneuver in the naval program of the Administration, a mission which is to prevent war by maintaining a great naval force at a high state of efficiency.

**W**HEN the great white ships, with sailors at attention and pennants flying, churn their way past Fort Monroe, past the President and the Mayflower, past Old Point and the scene of the monitors, past Cape Charles, and Cape Henry they will plunge into the Atlantic not to return for many months, perhaps never again to see the land-locked Chesapeake or the Virginia lowlands. Some ships may remain on the west coast, others may be sent to the Philippines, others may join Admiral Sbrere in the Special Service Squadron, more—and the American nation is praying that no such thing will happen—may strew their wreckage along the Strait

of Magellan or sink beneath the train-  
guns of Japan.

The journey of this fleet is absolutely unparalleled in naval history. No such force was ever sent so great a distance, no such force was ever collected into a single cruising unit in a time of peace. The Spanish armada was but a child's toy compared to this array of monster vessels; Lord Nelson, the great war dog of Great Britain, never beheld so many mighty engines of destruction, or dreamed that so many millions of dollars could be represented in a battle line.

The reason for it is not plain to the majority of the people. The Government tells them it is a practice maneuver, but only after an explanation

has been sought. The inception of the cruise is said to have started in the mind of President Roosevelt and his suggestion was eagerly seconded by Secretary Meyerhoff, a Californian, who is not averse to having his native State view the interesting panorama. It is reasonable to suppose that the Navy Department wishes to establish two spheres of usefulness for its ships so that the requirements of the dual coastline of the United States may be protected. It also seems reasonable that both officers and men will obtain an experience which could have come to them in no other way, yet the main body of the people, when they consider that the great armada is on its way to the



ADMIRAL EVANS. THE CONNECTICUT. ABOVE, THE MAYFLOW.

Most Amazing Cruise to Fulfill Peace Mission as a Warning to Japan.

Pacific, will see it in no other light than as a warning to Japan. The people are not easily persuaded that there may be diplomatic reasons behind it all, that the voyage may be a little diplomatic courtesy to Japan which the Japanese will welcome with banquets and banquets. He does not take much stock in the reports that Ambassador Aoki finds great consolation in the trip. He thinks only of the scrappy Jap, the conqueror of the Russian bear, who may be spoiling for a fight. Then does he find great comfort in the reflection that within a few months the United States will have in the same ocean a collection of battleships which represent 50 per cent more power than the entire Japanese navy.

While this movement of sixteen of the navy's twenty-four battleships is not officially or diplomatically considered as a threat or even as a warning to Japan, the people who cast their votes and pay the bills are content to consider it as such, and the wisest students of history are content to look back a few years to the days, not more than a half century ago, when the United States sent another squadron to the Pacific as a warning to the Japanese. That time it was also a mission of peace, according to the diplomatists, but it was a forced peace, a peace with the big

stick. The world wanted to trade with Japan. Japan did not want to trade with the world. The United States took it into its head that there must be trade, and sent Commodore Perry around that way to see if an understanding could not be reached or at least a real misunderstanding. The fleet was a powerful one for those times, and the Japanese saw the point, and there was trade. It was a peaceful mission, peacefully accomplished with hisling guns and murmured threats. But the impression made on Japan was a good one, and since that time that country has been most friendly.

Since Commodore Perry's day the world has moved along some, and no part of it more rapidly than the island of the Mikado. The Japanese met Perry with banners and spears, today they would meet Admiral Evans with the most approved weapons known on land and sea. In naval power they are inferior to the United States, in equipment they are undoubtedly as far advanced.

One need not be a deep student of history to appreciate the vast advance which has been made in our own naval power since the days of Perry's squadron. Any one of the ships, even the colliers, could destroy a whole squadron like those that sailed to Japan in the old days.

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