

POWDER MAGAZINE EXPLODES.

Stock of Explosives at Mindi Amounting to Over 450,000 Pounds Totally Destroyed.

The Mindi powder and dynamite magazine maintained by the Supply Department, under the direction of the Depot Quartermaster at Mount Hope, situated at a point near the Gatun-Colon wagon road, about five miles from Colon and two miles from Gatun, was destroyed by an explosion at 9.20 a. m., on Sunday, July 5, together with its contents, consisting of 435,525 pounds of dynamite, and 15,394 pounds of Trojan powder.

The day watchman, a West Indian named Gilbert Wint, was instantly killed, and his body was found shortly after the accident lying in the bush about 72 paces distant from the magazine. The family of the night watchman, a West Indian named James Richards, consisting of himself, wife, and seven children, who lived in a small house about 300 yards south of the magazine, escaped with slight injuries. The magazine was entirely demolished, a wall of the detonator house, situated about 150 feet distant, was drawn out, allowing a part of the roof to fall in, while the watchman's house was completely wrecked.

An investigation made by the Zone police authorities shows that Arturo Richards, a young son of the night watchman, noticed smoke rising over the crest of the hill nearest the magazine a few minutes before the explosion. He at once notified his father, who, with all the other members of the family then in the house, started for a place of safety. The elder Richards was the nearest to the magazine when the explosion occurred, and, although thrown to the ground, escaped with a severe shaking up. One of the children, a little girl, had her arm bruised, and was subsequently removed to Colon Hospital. The day watchman, who lived with the Richards family, went on duty at 6 a. m. He returned later for his morning meal, but was seen by no one after he returned to his work again. The night watchman had been in the Canal service as a powderman for over seven years; the day watchman was a comparatively new man at the work.

The shock was strongly felt in Mount Hope, Colon, Gatun, and contiguous territory; and some damage, consisting of broken window glass, etc., was caused. In the vicinity of the magazine, vegetation was shorn off close to the ground, and trees of considerable size were broken down. The blast tore a large hole in the earth where the magazine stood, and deposited the material from it, and from the adjoining side of the hill, in a huge mound in front, 12 to 15 feet in height. The bed of the Mindi River nearby was filled to a height of from 10 to 12 feet, the barrier completely damming the stream and causing it to seek a new course. Considerable animal life within a radius of several hundred yards was destroyed, as evidenced by the carcasses of deer, iguanas, etc., found by the people who visited the scene.

Upon the first alarm, the Chief of the Division of Police and Fire Protection despatched the automobile from the Cristobal fire station to be on hand in case of need. Police from the Gatun station left at once to render any aid that might be required. The Depot Quartermaster procured a locomotive and a flat car which was run over the main line and the powder house spur to the scene.

The greater part of the stock of powder and dynamite on hand in the magazine was received on the Isthmus on May 28. Since that

time, it has been inspected at the intervals required by the regulations, and, in addition, readings of temperature have been taken daily. The explosion is thought to have been due to spontaneous combustion. A detailed statement of stock in the magazine is, as follows:

Class.	Pounds.
45 per cent dynamite, 1 1/4 x 8.....	210,875
60 per cent dynamite, 1 1/4 x 8.....	180,200
60 per cent dynamite, 2 x 8.....	44,450
45 per cent Trojan powder, 1 1/4 x 8.....	3,794
60 per cent Trojan powder, 1 1/4 x 8.....	11,600

The stock of caps and fuses in the detonator house were uninjured.

The magazine had been in use ever since October, 1908. The following description of it appeared in THE CANAL RECORD of October 21, 1908:

"The magazine is located one and one-half miles southwest of the Mindi spur, and is so surrounded by hills that an explosion would not seriously affect the nearby villages of Cristobal, Colon, Mount Hope, and Gatun. It is built into the hillside in such a manner that at the back and sides it is surrounded by earth. Hollow concrete blocks, 12 inches thick and bullet proof, have been used for the walls, and the roof is composed of concrete reinforced with old Belgian rails and water-proofed. The magazine is 112 feet long, 48 feet wide, and nine feet high inside. The concrete roof keeps the interior dry and cool. Ventilation has been provided by air flues which open under the roof. Six hundred thousand pounds of dynamite can be stored in the building. Near it, and yet so far away that an explosion in one would not affect the other, is a detonator house. It is 33 feet six inches long, 17 feet three inches wide, and 10 feet high inside. It is also built of concrete blocks, and has a ceiling of reinforced concrete, with a corrugated iron roof above it."

Isthmian Sunday School Association.

The regular quarterly meeting of the Isthmian Sunday School Association will be held in the Union chapel, Cristobal, on Sunday, July 12, at 1.30 p. m. An appropriate program, with special music, is being prepared. Delegates will be present from the Zone Sunday schools, and all interested are invited to attend. Train leaves Panama at 11 a. m., and returns from Colon at 4.30 p. m.

Tide Table.

The following table shows the time of high and low tides at Panama for the week ending July 18, 1914:

DATE.	Low		High	
	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.
July 12.....	12.47	6.55	1.13	7.14
July 13.....	1.30	7.37	1.58	7.56
July 14.....	2.14	8.16	2.43	8.38
July 15.....	2.58	8.58	3.31	9.23
July 16.....	3.43	9.43	4.22	10.14
July 17.....	4.35	10.32	5.16	11.13
July 18.....	5.32	11.30	6.14

75th meridian time.

Stages of the Chagres River, Gatun Lake, and Miraflores Lake.

Maximum heights of the Chagres River, Gatun, and Miraflores Lakes for the week ending midnight, Saturday, July 4, 1914. All heights are in feet above mean sealevel:

DAY AND DATE.	STATIONS.				
	Vigia.	Alhajuela	Gamboa.	Gatun Lake.	Miraflores Lake.
Sun., June 28.....	125.75	92.20	84.88	84.90	53.71
Mon., June 29.....	125.75	92.25	84.96	84.98	53.70
Tues., June 30.....	136.90	99.95	85.01	85.02	53.42
Wed., July 1.....	128.20	94.49	84.77	84.85	53.41
Thurs., July 2.....	126.25	92.75	84.80	84.80	53.47
Fri., July 3.....	125.90	92.42	84.85	84.84	53.59
Sat., July 4.....	127.80	93.75	84.81	84.85	53.86
Height of low water to nearest foot.....	125.0	91.0			