



RELEASE: 170-66

TWO SAIPAN FISHERMEN RESCUED

Saipan, Mariana Islands, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Oct. 25 . . . Two fishermen adrift five days in a small boat were picked up Saturday, Oct. 22, 83 miles west of Saipan by a Japanese fishing boat.

Vicente Matagolai and Jose Aguon of Saipan were spotted Friday afternoon by an aircraft from the Joint Sea-Air Rescue Center, Guam. A food parcel was dropped near the helpless 14½ foot motor boat but the men were not able to retrieve it from the water. A rescue craft was to be dispatched the following morning to bring in the fishermen and the defunct boat.

Early Saturday morning Captain Ichō Onoda of the Kaihō Maru No. 18 picked up an object on the radar screen. Investigation revealed two men in a boat. Matagolai and Aguon and the boat were returned to Saipan aboard the Kaihō Maru. Captain Onoda of Shimizu, Japan, said he had not been aware of the search for the missing fishermen as the Kaihō Maru is not equipped for voice communication.

Matagolai and Aguon were taken to the Torres Memorial Hospital upon their return to Saipan. Medical reports indicated that they were in good physical condition following their five-day ordeal. Sunburn and thirst were their only discomforts, according to the men.

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They had carried a large supply of food when they set out on their fishing trip Tuesday morning.

Search planes from the Joint Sea-Air Rescue Center had been patrolling the waters around Saipan since Wednesday afternoon in an effort to locate the missing men.

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