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"Grenadiers Magnificent"

LEADER DESCRIBES LAST BRAVE STAND

WITH THE R.C.A.F. IN INDIA, Sept. 5.—(CP)—Maj.-Gen. C. M. Maltby, the British general who surrendered Hong Kong to the Japanese, said here Tuesday night that during the defense of the crown colony one company of the Winnipeg Grenadiers fought so magnificently that the Japs believed the sector was held by two battalions.

"When it was over," Gen. Maltby said, "the Nips could not believe they had been opposed there for three days by only one company. They were incredulous and indignant and they showed it by slapping the faces of the Canadian officers of that company when they interrogated them."

Gen. Maltby also recalled that the last words of Brig. John K. (Jake) Lawson, of Toronto and Ottawa, who commanded the last stand of the Canadians at Hong Kong, were: "It's getting pretty hot here now—I'm smashing the phone and going outside to fight it out."

Gen. Maltby, just released after three and a half years as a prisoner of Japan, told an R.C.A.F. public relations officer:

"I want the world to know that those boys, inexperienced as they were, fought gallantly, and those who died, died with their faces in the right direction."

Gen. Maltby served out his imprisonment as a coolie gardener in Formosa. On his release he paid high tribute to the Winnipeg Grenadiers and Quebec Royal Rifles and said: "I am proud that I had the honor of commanding such a gallant body of men."

He recalled his last telephone conversation with Brig. Lawson which was punctuated by the whine and smack of machine gun bullets. The brigadier's body was found and buried by the enemy.

Brig. Lawson's aides—Col. Patrick Hennessy of Ottawa, and Maj. Charles A. Lyndon of Edmonton—were also killed that day.

"The Canadians," said Gen. Maltby, "had no time to learn the ground they had to fight over. Their primary task was seaward defense of the island's southern shores but they were actually required to carry out local counter-attacks against the enemy advancing from the landward side."

The Japs' first landing from the mainland was at 10 o'clock at night. By daylight they had overwhelmed the forces defending the northern shores of the island and had gained the heights. The defenders of the south shores, the Canadian brigade among them, had to turn and fight their way up the steep slopes in an effort to dislodge the enemy. The odds were six to one against them but the battle lasted 17 days."

The Royal Rifles of Canada had "fought gallantly in heavy gear up the steep hillsides," had fought to exhaustion after suffering heavy casualties.

The Canadians were "a fine husky looking group" when they arrived in Hong Kong. For the past three years and more many of them have been working in factories and as laborers or coolies, to use the eastern term. It may be many weeks before all the survivors are found and evacuated.

Gen. Maltby himself had no opportunity of keeping touch with the Canadians after the surrender.

"When I begged permission to visit hospitals and prison camps I was curtly refused," he said. The Japanese officers told him "you forget that you are a prisoner-of-war and are less than a Nipponese private."

So bad were the conditions in some prison camps that at one camp the Japs had placed a sign "officers are forbidden to eat the pigs' food."

Except through smuggled information filtering in from underground sources he knew little of the fate of the men he had commanded. In the summer of 1943, he said, a diphtheria outbreak occurred in the prison camps and "seemed to hit the younger element rather badly."