

Hong Kong Men Reported in Fair Condition

By WILLIAM STEWART

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SHAMSHUIPO CAMP, Kowloon, Sept. 6—(CP Cable).—
Cmdr. Peter MacRitchie, of Toronto, senior Canadian naval
information officer, the first member of the British naval
force to reach this prison camp where more than 2,000 Allied
servicemen have been held by the Japanese, said the prisoners
looked better than he expected.

He said after visiting the camp
last Thursday they appeared in
much better health than he had
anticipated because of recent good
feeding and the fact that the tropical
sun had given them a tan.

Lt.-Col James Home of Quebec,
commander of the Canadian prisoners
at the camp, said in a statement
that the majority of the Canadians
at Hong Kong were "in fair condition."
He said "According to medical advice,
with good food and improved living
conditions they should soon return
to a normal physical state."

Col. Home said Canadian deaths
from all causes at Hong Kong since
hostilities began until last Friday
totalled 419. The number included
290 killed in action, died of wounds
or missing, and 129 died of sickness.
The figures did not include deaths
from sickness in camps outside
the Hong Kong area.

Canadians in Hong Kong at the
time the statement was issued last
Friday numbered 369. Those who
left for camps in Japan at various
times in 1943 and 1944 numbered
1,184.

Col. Home said 1,974 Canadians,
including two nursing sisters, arrived
at the British Far East colony
Nov. 16, 1941.

His biggest task is to send to
Canada a complete list of Canadian
personnel in Hong Kong as casualties.
He said he would do everything
possible to obtain passage for the
prisoners as soon as possible.

The Empress of Australia, peace-
time trans-Atlantic liner, arrived at
Hong Kong Tuesday with some
3,000 R.A.F. personnel who will
temporarily aid naval forces in the
occupation of the Hong Kong area.

Rumors were prevalent that the
ship, fitted as a troopship, might
possibly be used for the evacuation
of prisoners of war or internees.

Cmdr. MacRitchie said he was

overwhelmed by the joy which his
presence created among the prisoners.
"The emotional strain was so great
I had a tough time," he said.

MacRitchie tasted what he called
"horrible bread and bad stew,"
although it was the best food the
prisoners had had for some time.

The prisoners were given their
first taste of Allied beer in ages,
and the other ranks among the
prisoners were taken to the mess
decks of the Prince Robert by sea-
men and fed steaks.

The warm climate and ideal
fresh-air location of Stanley camp,
overlooking Repulse bay, were
factors in enabling the 2,000 inter-
nees to survive more than 3½
years of Japanese occupation with-
out very visible effects.

Most, however, show signs of
their long internment, are thin and
weary and anxious to return home.
One doctor who was at the camp
said that of several locations for
imprisonment under the Japanese
Stanley camp undoubtedly was the
best.

The worst feature of their experi-
ence was the diet, largely of rice.
There was a ration of powdered
milk for children, however.

A Welsh doctor, Alen Thomas of
Penmaenmawr, Carnarvonshire, on
the basis of his knowledge of nutri-
tion, made careful calculations and
decided he and his American wife
might become parents during inter-
nment without ill effects on Mrs.
Thomas or the child. The child is
not yet born but the doctor's theory
was confirmed by births of several
children since 1942.

VANCOUVER, Sept. 6—(CP).—
Encouragement to families of Can-
adians now being released from
Japanese prison camps was given

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CONDITION FAIR

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Wednesday night by Col. Dick Malone, of Canadian Army public relations, in a broadcast from Radio Tokyo which was rebroadcast by the C.B.C.

"You have heard stories of bad treatment in prison camps," Malone said. "It is important the families of the men back home in Canada should not become alarmed and think that all our men are in bad condition."

"The actual percentage of Canadians rescued to date which can be considered serious cases is very low. Only a dozen that I have seen so far were in serious need of hospitalization, and of these just five were bed cases