

A MESSAGE TO "THE FOLKS":

Grenadiers Happy And Well at Guam

By **GORDON ROOT**

(Tribune Far East Correspondent)

GUAM, Sept. 28—To Mrs. Tom Sinclair, of Lockport, Man.: Four years in Japanese prison camp hasn't done a thing to your husband, Mrs. Sinclair. He is here in Guam, well, very happy to be free again, but chafing a little at the delay in getting home to you and the three children.

To Mr. and Mrs. David Boyd, 500 st., Winnipeg; to S. R. Laidlaw, 41 Springside ave., Winnipeg; to Mrs. A. Wheatcroft, Kirkville Park, Man.: Your sons, Bob, Bill and Gordon have traveled this far on the journey home and will be on their way across the Pacific before very long.

To Garnet McKnight, 1095 Spruce st., Winnipeg: Two of your sons, Elmer and Melville, left here Thursday for Winnipeg. Gerald is still here, but will be homeward bound soon.

To 700 Canadian veterans of Hong Kong who have been brought here from prison camps in Japan the U.S. navy hospital is a dream of paradise come true. About half of them have already left for Canada, but the remainder who are awaiting transportation are having a wonderful time. They haven't forgotten home and

they're anxious to be on their way back, but in the meantime they are enjoying this grand American hospitality.

They are not all at hospital because they're sick, but because it's a nice place to stay. In a beautiful setting amid cocoanut palms, a setting that would do justice to any Hollywood version of a tropical island, they are relaxing and enjoying themselves.

Sgmn. John Douglas, 1945 Barclay st., Vancouver, was worrying a little about the dependents' allowance his mother was getting but was reassured when he learned it would carry on while he was a prisoner.

R.S.M. Oscar Charles Keenan, of Winnipeg, is still looking after "his boys" just as he did during the battle for Hong Kong and the long years of prison that followed.

Pte. David Wallace, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Wallace, 648 Simcoe st., Winnipeg, figures he got by pretty easily in the Japanese camps. Wallace was one of a group of Canadian prisoners who were moved north to work in the iron mines.

"When they put you in a new camp," he said, "they gave you a paper to fill out asking what you'd

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GRENADIERS HAPPY

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like to do. It was a ten-to-one chance you wouldn't get it. I had done a little carpentry work and I asked for that but I was sure surprised when they put me in the carpenter shop. I got by pretty easily but the boys who were working in the mines caught hell."

C.Q.S.M. Bill Laidlaw, whose home is in Winnipeg now but who used to live in Vancouver, recalled his meeting with a former Vancouver Japanese whose name was Innoye but who was nicknamed "The Kamloops Kid" by Canadians.

"We first met Kamloops Kid when they took ten of us to a radio station to make a broadcast. He was very friendly that day and told me he went to King Edward high school in Vancouver. But when they moved us to Shamshuipo camp he was an interpreter there and a typical Jap. He said he had been made to feel inferior in Canada and he was out to get Canadians. One day he beat up Major Atkinson and Captain Morris and told them to take it like white men. He said we would be going back to Canada as slaves."

The men had reason, too, to remember the activities of the notorious Sgt. Watanabe at central headquarters in Tokyo.

"We used to have to salute when he came into the room, said Cpl. Robert Acton of Victoria. One day I pulled my hand down before he did and he saw me. He knocked me down three times then made me take off my overcoat and stand at attention outside his office from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. It was in January and very cold."

Sgt. Clifford Newcomb, 460 Roberta ave., East Kildonan, Winnipeg, told of the time Watanabe decided to give the Canadians a lesson because someone had left "the lid off a can of paint.

"He lined 45 of us up outside and beat us with a stick. Rfn. Ralph Coleman was hit across the mouth and it broke his teeth. He was knocked out but a Jap stooge held him up with a stick while Watanabe beat him."

The men have little respect for the intelligence and ingenuity of the Japanese.

"It was the easiest thing in the world to fool them," declared Staff Sgt. Bob Boyd. "They'd get the idea we were hiding something and come in and tear the camp apart but would not search us. Another time they'd go through our clothes with a fine tooth comb but wouldn't touch the camp.

"One day they heard we were getting cigarettes from Jap workers in the shipyard and that one of the boys in particular had some. They came into the camp and searched him for 10 minutes and couldn't find anything. All the time he was standing there with his arms stretched out and a package of cigarettes in each fist."

There were ways, too, in which the men were able to sabotage the Japanese war effort.

Sgt. Laidlaw was one of 14 prisoners working in the shipyards who were put to work cutting

threads by hand in three-inch holes in propeller blocks.

"We noticed the taps were made in the United States and couldn't be replaced and we found that by giving a heave when we got to the bottom of the hole it would break the tap. We did that several times so they took us off that job and put us on smaller threads. We did the same thing there and we wound up sweeping out buildings. They never did find out that we were breaking tools deliberately."

Probably the toughest period in camp, they said, was the four-day period from Aug. 11 to 15, when the Japanese surrender was being negotiated. A radio smuggled in by an American prisoner kept the men fully informed of developments and from the time the first Japanese peace overtures were announced until the surrender was

completed they could not sleep or eat.

When the armistice finally was completed and the emperor announced the surrender to the Japanese people, residents in the northern village where the prisoners were held were shocked. They had been led to believe the war was going well and they were so stunned many broke down and cried.

Lack of mail from home since they were released has been disappointing to Canadians, but they feel the folks have written and it has gone astray.

Pte. William Rodgers, 1882 W. Fourth ave., Vancouver, received his last letter from his mother, Mrs. Jessie Rodgers, in March. It had been written a year ago. Although he had lived in Vancouver for only four months before enlisting, Rodgers plans to return to the coast city.

At the hospital, I also talked to Cpl. Ernest Whitfield, son of Mrs. H. G. Owen, 21 St. Thomas rd., Winnipeg; Sgt. John Milloy; Wawanesa, Man.; Cpl. Raymond R. Sellars, Lac du Bonnet, Man.; Pte. Wallace Hill, Ingelow, Man. All were eager to tell the folks at home they are well and anxious to get back.

Others here are Pte. William Inchett, Winnipeg, and Pte. James Houston, Headingly, Man.

Among those who have already left Guam is Capt. J. G. Reid of Winnipeg, medical officer for the Grenadiers, who is carrying complete medical records of the health during imprisonment of the prisoners for whom he cared.