

Grenadiers Leave 'Frisco

Repats Never Want to See a Jap Again

By PETER INGLIS

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FORT McDOWELL, San Francisco Bay, Oct. 3—Two hundred and forty-five Canadian soldiers are resting today in this U.S. army base looking from Angel island across the misty bay at the San Francisco skyline. They are relishing the simple pleasures of eating, of smoking Canadian cigarettes, of lying on their bunks doing nothing, and more especially the most fundamental of all pleasures—being free men on the soil of their own continent for the first time in four years. Tonight with 104 more Canadians who were due to dock today on the transport Admiral Rodman they leave by train for Canada.

Once in a while they turn their eyes from San Francisco's glittering towers to the nearer penal rock of Alcatraz and their faces take on the same weary grin they wore at noon Tuesday when the transport Ozark warped alongside Pier 7 on the Embarcadero and a navy band on the dock followed up O Canada with Don't Fence Me In.

These first repatriates to come home by sea know about prisons and fences. What they know is told best by the only officer in their number, Capt. John A. G. Reed of the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps who was attached to the Winnipeg Grenadiers and was captured with them at Hong Kong on Christmas, 1941.

Capt. Reed appears on the nominal roll as a Toronto man because his wife lives there now but when he enlisted he was working in Vancouver. Here is his story:

He and most of the men with him were kept at Hong Kong until the beginning of 1943 when they were transferred to Japan first to camp Tokyo 3-D. Between Tokyo and Yokohama then to the notorious coal mine slave camp Sendai No. 1. Their treatment at the camps varied.

Their diet was "rice and soup three times a day, day after day after day. The soup was made of what we would call roadside weeds." The conditions under which Capt. Reed worked as a

medical officer were "atrocious by our standards."

He confirmed stories told by earlier repatriates who came home by air that the Canadians were treated for diseases of malnutrition by the burning of their bodies with lighted wicks. "It's the theory of counter-irritation," he explained. "Something that we've stopped since 1800. The Japs told me that if I didn't allow my men to be treated in that way they would beat the men and starve them."

"The treatment itself was carried out by Japanese medical orderlies. I managed to get all the men who were actually working free of the burning and I managed to keep the extent to which it was applied to the others to a tenth of what the Japanese would have done."

Capt. Reed knew of many cases of Canadians being wantonly beaten by their Japanese guards.

S/Sgt. Ernest West, whose wife moved to Vancouver three years ago from their former home at 115 Rose st., Fort Rouge, Winnipeg, recalls with bitterness the days when he pulled the teeth of some 150 Canadians without anesthetic, while anesthetics sent by the Red Cross lay undistributed in Jap warehouses. "I am not a dentist, but I had to work as one in Japan because our two dental officers, Capt. W. Cunningham, of Winnipeg, and Capt. J. C. M. Spence, of Fort William, were left at Hong Kong."

All these men still approach the idea of freedom almost tentatively as if they were afraid it would blow up in their faces.

The experiences in Japan they will talk about willingly with surprisingly little bitterness, but when they are home they want to forget about them. They never want to see a Japanese again. Then they will forget.

There is for instance Pte. Jack Goodey, whose family has moved from Winnipeg to Vancouver since he went away. He says: "I don't want any sympathy from anyone when I get home. I just want to go home and go to work."

Pte. Goodey and Pte. Charles Cardinal, of Ross ave., Winnipeg, who was standing with him as he told his story, were at Shimadagawa, in the Tokyo area, one of the "bad camps." "They had us doing coolie work carrying rice and beans in 180 pound sacks. We did that on three bowls of rice a day

and cigarettes when we could get them.

"We were right in the middle of the Tokyo fire (when American Superfortresses gutted most of the city). It was beautiful, just like the 24th of May. We stood on our beds and cheered. A lot of the boys were beaten. I was marked myself a couple of times by the Japs for not understanding their orders in Japanese.

"The Japanese are the most ignorant people I've come across. I've got no kind word for any of them. They left our boys sick lying there and they had medicine and they wouldn't give it to us. What little Red Cross stuff arrived they stole. I spent a lot of time worrying about my family and my girl friend. Her name is Miss Mervyn Weeks. She lives at 824 Mulvey ave., in Fort Rouge, Winnipeg."

For Miss Weeks he is bringing home a bracelet he has laboriously made out of the first Jap aircraft shot down at Hong Kong. The engraving of her name on it was done with endless patience with an ordinary needle.

Pte. J. H. Humicky, of 90 Morley ave., Winnipeg, carries a faded picture for which "I would have had my head cut off if I'd been caught." It shows the wreckage at Camp Niigata, No. 5-B, after a ramshackle building collapsed on New Year's eve, 1943, and killed eight Canadian prisoners. It also shows the camp hospital an open frame work without windows.

"We lost 100 men the first winter we were there." Pte. Gerald Mabley, whose family when he last heard lived at Ste. 1, Parrish apts., Winnipeg, had ribs broken when the Niigata building caved in. "I was lucky. The boys next to me were killed."

Pte. Stanley Olsen of 1177 Dominion st., Winnipeg, walked off the Ozark with a Japanese rifle slung over his shoulder. He is one of many who recall the Tokyo fire raid. "We weren't afraid at all. It was a wonderful sight to see the fire bombs raining down."

Pte. Guy Stewart of 433 Borebank st., Winnipeg, wants to get established in civilian life fast and although he is 27 "I think I'll go to school and take a business course. You see when you lie on your back for four years you do a lot of thinking."