

Cheering Grenadiers Reach San Francisco

By STANLEY MONCRIEFF Canadian Press Staff Writer

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 12.—(CP).—Her decks lined with cheering liberated prisoners of war, including 70 Canadian soldiers captured at Hong Kong, Christmas Day, 1941, the U.S. transport U.S.S. Rixey docked here Thursday.

The Canadians, members of the Winnipeg Grenadiers and Royal Rifles of Canada, told of stories of starvation and brutal treatment while in prisoner-of-war camps.

From the dock some were taken immediately by ferry to Fort McDowell, an island in San Francisco Bay, and others were transferred to hospital for medical examination.

The men have regained a considerable amount of lost weight, but still are not completely accustomed to humane treatment and associating with the general public.

Often they stand and stare at a person, giving the impression of being half-fearful of absorbing at a moment's notice more brutal beatings.

Pte. A. H. Gootch, of Winnipeg, said: "What a fizzle that Hong Kong affair was! We didn't have a ghost of a chance. We were all alone without air or sea assistance, but we put up the best fight we could. . . ."

"It took the little Nips 18 days to take our little island despite their tremendous advantage in odds. If I had been them, I would have thrown in the sponge right then."

When asked about Red Cross parcels, Gootch said: "In our camp each man received four parcels during the entire imprisonment, but even then they had been opened and the cigarettes and chocolate removed. Later the Nips would come up and tatalize us with the stolen contents by eating it right in front of us."

"Prisoners working in shipyards would openly sabotage the building of ships," said Pte. E. W. Cole, Swan River, Man.

"We would drill misplaced holes in the plates and whenever the Nips came across it they would laugh and ridicule us for being stupid and ignorant," he added.

Among the 70 repatriates were Pte. L. Aitken, Winnipeg; Pte. H. E. Creedon, Kinosota, Man.; Pte. A. Devillers, Winnipeg.

Pte. W. Fostey, Portage la Prairie; Pte. J. S. Houston, Headingly.

Rfsmn. A. D. Lapointe, Kirkland Lake, Ont.; Pte. H. G. Lawson, Oak Lake, Man.; L/Cpl. R. J. Nixon, Battleford, Sask.; L/Cpl. M. Price, Norwood, Man.; Cpl. W. C. Purse, Darlingford, Man.

Pte. H. J. Thibeault, Hudson, Ont.; Pte. W. J. Tuckett, Winnipeg; Pte. S. A. Vale, St. Vital, Man.; Pte. D. Wallace, Winnipeg; Pte. G. W. Wheateroft, St. James; Pte. G. E. Williams, Laurier, Man.; Pte. A. Taharychuck, Arran, Sask.

Pte. E. J. McKnight, Winnipeg; Pte. J. A. Jackson, Neepawa; Pte. M. A. Kudlovich, Winnipeg; Cpl. J. G. Willis, Yorkton; Cpl. N. Hiscox, Winnipeg; Pte. F. Gidilwich Ashville, Man.; Pte. J. A. Malloch, Lucky Lake, Sask.; Pte. A. M. Lousier, The Pas, Man.; Pte. R. A. Smith (address unknown); Pte. G. E. Mitchell, Kenville.