Atrocity Stories Are Far From Lies

By TRENT FRAYNE

Montreal, Dec. 2.—The story of the war in Japan came haltingly from Mrs. Hugh T. Macklin and what she didn't tell with her lips was revealed in the depths of her eyes.

Young and attractive, she came down from the steps of the repatriates' sealed train today with her 7-year-old daughter Bonnie, and what she said was always said reticently because her husband still is behind in Japan. But her eyes were dark and they frequently flashed when she talked.

"The last time the Gripsholm brought people to America there was much talk," she said. "One man even wrote a book about Japanese atrocities. The Japs made it tougher for us in the camp and I know, because the man who wrote the book had come from our camp.

Atrocity Stories Not Lies.

"I can't tell you much, but I can assure you that none of the atrocity stories were lies. I read the Reader's Digest and Collier's on the ship and I can assure you none of it was exaggerated."

She stood there thoughtfully for a moment.

"The man you want to talk to, my friend," she said at length, "is the last man to come away from Japan. I suspect he will have a story for you."

Mrs. Macklin's husband was a British Army officer at Hong Kong. She had known many Canadiens there, she said. She and her husband had entertained them often.

Did she see any fighting?

"Yes, I saw much fighting. I saw them fighting in the streets, and I saw them fighting outside my front door. It was very bad.

"We were evacuated to a hospital which they told us wouldn't be bombed. It was bombed continuously. It was bombed 19 times one day and the noise of the bombs became a sort of silly symphony."

Soldiers who survived told her that they weren't fighting men, they were fighting trees and shrubs.

"The camouflage was wonderful, as camouflage goes. The soldiers didn't know if they were shooting at trees or men. They never knew if there were men behind the shrubbery.

"I hate the Japs intensely, but I must admit nothing stops them," she said grimly.

Outnumbered, Overpowered.

She said she was in no position to judge whether Canadian troops were poorly equipped or poorly trained. "But I know the British were at the absolute peak of their training. They were simply outnumbered and overpowered by force of numbers."

The seige of Hong Kong island lasted two weeks and during that time they underwent almost continuous bombing.

When she was asked about treatment in internment camps her lips said it was all right and her eyes said it wasn't. Mrs. Macklin doesn't like the Japs. She doesn't like them at all.

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149
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