Survives Execution, Soldier Repatriated

Ottawa Man Once Left For Dead By Japs Describes His Rescue By Chinese Civilians

(By James P. Rennie, Special Correspondent for the Hamilton Spectator and the Southam Newspapers)

Victoria, Oct. 12.—Hands tied behind his back, wounded five times by bullets and shrapnel and still tethered by a length of rope to three comrades murdered by the Japanese, a young Ottawan was left for dead, lying at the edge of Repulse bay, near Hong Kong, on December 27, 1941. Thursday, in the reconditioning centre near Victoria, the same young fellow, very much alive, was packing his kit for the last leg homeward from a Jap prison cage.

Wounded Men Butchered

He is Pte. Leslie Canivet, 24-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Canivet, Ottawa. Only 19 when he enlisted in the R.C.C.C. in Ottawa, he came through almost four years of captivity in Hong Kong and many months in hospitals with flying colours. He was scheduled to leave Victoria for his home to-day.

It was December 23, 1941, when he found himself trapped in a house at the edge of a small cliff on Hong Kong outskirts.

Japs fired the house from one side, rushed into the ground floor and butchered wounded lying there. While this was going on, Leslie and three Tommies jumped from an upstairs window on the cliff side of the house.

"We scrambled down the cliff and planned to make our way to Stanley," he said. "We were forced to swim the head of Repulse bay, about two miles across, and when we reached the other side I was exhausted."

Fire on Tethered Soldiers

While escaping from the house, Leslie was hit on the right jaw with a fragment of shrapnel. This wound went unattended until he landed in a Canadian military hospital on January 1 with his three British mates. He attempted to cross a high hill to Stanley, but when Japs spotted them they were forced into hiding in a small cave and remained there until found on December 27. When captured by several Jap privates, the four had their hands tied behind them and were linked together in single file by another length of rope. After a march of about one-half mile, a car loaded with Jap officers was encountered and these men and the private's captors went into a huddle on the roadway.

"After quite a pow-wow which we couldn't understand, we were turned around and ordered to march to the edge of Repulse Bay," Leslie related. "We were ordered to sit down and had just done this when the Japs a short distance away, opened fire. I was hit on the left shoulder and fell flat on my face. The other three men, still tied to me, were killed and they rolled over in such a way as to conceal me a bit. The Japs didn't even stop to see what kind of job they did but walked away when the shooting ended."

During the shooting Leslie was hit again on the left arm, right hand and left hip. It was some time after the Japs left that some Chinese cut Leslie free from his dead mates and told him he was "on his own."

Recovers from Wounds

"I stayed hidden another four days but I had lost a terrific

(Continued on page 10, column 6)

amount of blood and finally I saw a Red Cross car out on a Jap pass to scrounge food," he said. "They took me to a hospital where I stayed eight months, and then was transferred to Shamshuipo prison camp."

At Shamshuipo he fared "not too badly" as a result of light work assignments due to wounds. He participated on some of the forced labour assignments but most of his captivity was spent in doing clerical work and serving as a batman for various officer captives.

He still bears the scars of his face wound and expects to undergo a period of hospitalization for his njured shoulder, not properly healeded under cruel Jap hospital regulations.

Rousing Welcome

Victoria, Oct. 12. — (CP) — Crowds that rushed the gate at the government drydock, knocking guards off their feet and delaying the unloading of the American troopship S.S. Gosper last night, gave British and Canadian liberated prisoners from Japan the most rousing welcome yet tendered a troopship arriving here.

One of the first men off the giant transport was Lieut. Francis G. Power, of the Royal Rifles of Canada, who was met by his parents, Hon. C. G. Power, former Canadian minister for air, and Mrs. Power, of Quebec City.

High - ranking naval officers greeted Capt. Oliver L. Gordon, who commanded the cruiser H.M.S. Exeter when she was sunk in the battle of Java Sea in March, 1942.

Canadians aboard the vessel included: Lt. Alexander S. Black, Fergus, Ont.; Capt. Winston R. Cunningham, Windsor; Rfmn. Norman R. Henderson, Toronto; Cpl. Kenneth R. Jackson, Toronto; Rfmn. William J. Lee, Oshawa; Capt. George M. Billings, Kingston; Lt. William F. Nugent, Lindsay; Cpl. Raymond J. Herbert, Renfrew; Ffmn. Michael J. Kane, Renfrew; Lt. Joseph R. E. Davignef, Paroneuf, Que.; Capt. Edmund L. Hurde, Bulwer, Que.; Lt. Angus A. MacMillan Quebec City; Capt. Charles E. Price, Quebec city; L.-Cpl. James G. Heath, Richmond, Que.; Rfmn. Einar Hellsten, Quebec city; Rfmn. John Herman, Quebec city; Rfmn. Elvin E. Herring, Scotstown, Que.; Rfmn. Clarence Hunt, Bury, Que.; Rfmn. Allen Kelso, Ellurierville, Que.; Rfmn. Richard C. F. Lafoe, Richmond, Que.; Rfmn. Leopold Leblanc, Lac Noir, Dolbeau, Que.; Rfmn. Wesley Leggo, Gaspe, Que.; Rfmn. Jack Lodge Runnymede, Bonaventure, Que.; Pte. James J. Hurley, Middleton, N.S.; Rfmn. Westely Irving, Flatlands, N.B.; Cpl. John S. Johnson, Sackville, N.B.; Capt. Njallo, Bardal, Winnipeg; Lt. Hugh E. Mackechnie, Winnipeg; Capt. John A. Norris, Winnipeg; Lt. John E. Park, Winnipeg; Lt. Alexander Prendergast, Killarney, Man.; Pte. John Downey, Winnipeg; Pte. Andrew D. Harvie, Neepawa; Pte. Alexander J. Hinkle, Winnipeg; Pte. John Hoosa, West Kildonan, Man.; Sgt. Joseph Hopper, Winnipeg; Pte. George A. Humphrey, Winnipeg; Cpl. Douglas A. Jeffrey, Winnipeg; Pte. Clifford L. Johnston, St. Boniface; Pte. Frank W. Jones, Winnipeg; Pte. Reginald A. Kerr, Winnipeg; Sgt. Joseph Kitkoski, Winnipeg; Pte. Basil Kohut, Winnipeg; Pte. William Kyrnisky, Winnipeg; Pte. Marcian Lafortune, Vassar, Man., and Pte. Alfred S. Johnson, Fyfe Lake, Sask.

149
WAR
PACIFIC
1941
JAPAN
PRISONERS
CANADIANS

213-819-824