

JAPANESE WARNING GAGS REPATRIATES

Gripsholm Passengers Say 'Talk' Means Reprisals on 'Americans Left Behind'

RIO DE JANEIRO, Nov. 16 (AP)

There is great fear among the repatriates aboard the exchange ship Gripsholm that some irresponsible person might say something that would get back to Japan by radio and cause the Japanese military police to visit reprisals upon the heads of thousands of internees left behind in China, the Philippines, Japan, and elsewhere, it was learned here today.

These fears are based on definite warnings given by Japanese officials as the repatriates left the camps for embarkation. One warning came from A. Kodaki, Philippine chief of the Japanese External Affairs Department, and S. Kuroda commander of the Santo Tomas camp at Manila.

Kuroda called attention to the possibility of reprisals against other internees in the event any repatriate sensationalized isolated incidents that Japanese authorities felt were exaggerated or untrue. Kodaki admitted that the Japanese made many mistakes in handling internees, but said they had tried to rectify them.

On the night of last Sept. 24 Kodaki appeared before the internees and made a speech. He spoke of the lucky ones going home and the less lucky remaining and hoped that the former would not forget those staying behind. He told the latter, "Be patient; wait your turn."

He hoped the day soon would come when all could say farewell to the camp.

Pootung Called "Worst" Camp.

Approximately 850 men, including 154 Americans, in the Pootung internment camp at Shanghai are facing "a harder lot every day," John Francis Harris of Panama City, Fla., said on the arrival here of the repatriate liner Gripsholm yesterday.

Mr. Harris was interned eight months at Pootung, where he served assistant American liaison representative between the American prisoners and the Japanese authorities.

Pootungers "lack food, medicines and other essentials and things are growing worse," he said.

Mr. Harris expressed belief that Pootung, with the exception of Hong Kong, was the worst camp in China primarily because "the Japanese don't seem to care much about it."

"They apparently think that because it is composed entirely of men they can get along on less," he declared.

Mr. Harris is anticipating his first reunion in two years with his family—Mrs. Peg Harris and daughters, Jil, 6, and Lyn, 5. They live at 178 Gretna Green, Brentwood Heights, Calif.

Mr. Harris was in Japan for RCA from 1932 to July, 1942, when he went to Shanghai.

"This war will be a long hard pull," he said. "Perhaps I represent a minority opinion but I think the Japanese know they are going to get licked. Yet they are going to put up a stiff fight."

While at Pootung, which is across the Whangpoo from Shanghai's famed Bund, Mr. Harris lived with eighty other men in one room of a warehouse that had been condemned three years previously. With virtually no equipment, the internees cleaned the ancient buildings, cleared the grounds of rubble and made the place as comfortable as possible.

"Everyone there now," he said, "is hoping there will be another repatriation."

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