

1,440 ON GRIPSHOLM WILDLY HAPPY HERE; RETICENT ON TRIALS

Civilians Freed by Japanese Burst Into Song at Sight of Statue of Liberty

FBI CHECKS ON ARRIVALS

Overcrowding and Poor Food in Camps Described but Most Are Healthy After Voyage

Sun-tanned, healthy and ecstatically happy, but exceedingly reticent about many of their experiences, more than 1,000 of the 1,440 passengers—1,222 Americans and 217 Canadians—aboard the diplomatic exchange liner Gripsholm debarked yesterday after the 18,353-ton Swedish ship docked at Pier-F', Jersey City.

Two hundred of the passengers were still on the ship late last night, awaiting the same exhaustive examination that agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and officers of Army and Navy Intelligence already had given their companions. Navy press relations officers expressed hope they would all be cleared by midnight, but said that many of the passengers, including some already cleared, would voluntarily remain on the Gripsholm until this morning.

An undisclosed number of those aboard were removed by the FBI to Ellis Island for further investigation. The officials in charge of the search were reluctant to discuss this aspect of the arrival, but it was recalled that when the exchange ship Drottningholm docked last June they found among the expatriates a man named Herbert Earl Friedrich Barr, who subsequently was convicted of espionage.

Canadians Take Sealed Train

The Canadians on the Gripsholm were among the first to land. By an agreement between the Canadian and the United States Governments they were escorted to buses which took them to a special train, which was sealed and guarded en route to prevent anyone from having access to them as they were speeding north to Montreal.

Joy at their safe arrival in this country and concern lest some careless remark might be carried back to their former jailers and infuriate the Japanese against the 6,800 Americans still remaining in the internment camps seemed to be the emotions most strongly felt by the hundreds who passed the gantlet of questioning and were permitted to land.

Their delight at their return, which prompted those on deck when the big liner passed the Statue of Liberty to burst spontaneously into "God Bless America," was visible in every countenance, from those of children of 3 or 4 to those of gray-haired missionaries who were back home after thirty, forty or more years in the East.

Others Remain Prisoners

But even though they were bubbling over with the sheer happiness born of freedom, it was evident that not for a minute did they forget their unfortunate former companions who are still at the mercy of the Japanese. As 9-year-old Suzanne Hazard of San Francisco put it when reporters and photographers clustered about her and her 8-year-old mister Joan:

"We can't tell you all of the things about the camp."

Before they were permitted to leave at least one of the internment camps, it was learned, some of those who arrived yesterday were sternly warned by Japanese officials not to criticize conditions upon their arrival here. This warning was reinforced by the injunctions of State Department officials on the Gripsholm, who are even now hoping to arrange another exchange and wish to avoid antagonizing Japanese officialdom.

Those who would tell about the camps at all gave almost unanimous testimony to the terrific overcrowding and the entire lack, of privacy that marked them; to the poor quality of the food and the scantiness of medical supplies. But they also told of the gallant community efforts to make the best of their hard lot.

Majority in Good Health

Perhaps the most surprising feature of the debarkation was the glowing good health of the great majority of the arrivals, Many of them had put on from eight to twenty-five pounds during their, voyage on the Gripsholm, which began

on Oct. 22 at Mormugao, Portuguese India. They had been bronzed by the tropical sun as they steamed peacefully through the Indian Ocean, around the Cape of Good Hope and north through the . Atlantic.

Missionaries—with the 504 Protestants representing thirty-five denominations, and the 162 Catholics almost equally divided between priests and black-robed nuns—made up the largest group among the repatriates, but there also were many business men and their families, and a surprising number of Government officials who had failed of exchange on the Gripsholm's first trip last August.

The big Swedish liner, her sides emblazoned with the blue and yellow Swedish flag and gigantic white letters that said: "Diplomat. Gripsholm Sverige," arrived at 8 A. M. yesterday at Quarantine, where she was boarded by representatives of the FBI, Army, Navy, the State Department, the United States Public Health Service and the customs and immigration authorities.

An early morning mist hung over the Upper Bay as the big ship, her rails lined with eager passengers, moved toward the last stop on her 21,000-mile voyage. To Navy personnel and newspaper photographers who went down the bay in the crisp morning air the Gripsholm seemed ghostly as she first loomed up through the fog.

Crowded on the after promenade deck were a mass of Americans, men, women and children, who began to sing "God Bless America" spontaneously when they caught their first glimpse of the Statue of Liberty on Bedloes Island. The melody was quickly taken up by those in other parts of the big vessel until it rang loud and clear across the waters of the bay.

It was 9:55 A. M. when the Gripsholm finally was berthed at Pier of the American Export Line in Jersey City, but it was almost two hours before the first of the arrivals came down the gang plank. Navy press relations officers, however, brought out a few crumbs of information for the small army of waiting reporters and photographers.

Red Cross Outfits Many

The American Red Cross, which had been named by the State Department as the official relief agency for the occasion took 20,000 pounds of clothing aboard the liner and outfitted many of the arrivals from head to toe. It also provided ambulances for a dozen stretcher cases among the homecoming men

and women, and motor transportation for many others who were not in the best of health.

A staff of volunteer workers manned a Red Cross booth where the passengers, on debarking, were able to claim waiting letters and telegrams. Twenty thousand messages were on hand. The Red Cross also acted as the official agency for putting repatriates in touch with their families, who were not allowed on the pier by the State Department for reasons of security.

One of the largest gatherings of newspaper, radio and newsreel representatives in many years was waiting on the pier, in a section reserved for them by the Navy. Indicative of the widespread interest in the arrivals was the presence of reporters from many small and medium size cities, such as Fargo, N. D., and Lincoln, Neb., which normally would not be directly represented at even the biggest news story in this city.

When at last the first few passengers were escorted by Navy public relations officers into the press section the reporters, who had been stamping impatiently on the cold stone floor of the barn-like pier, descended on the unfortunates in such numbers that it was impossible for anyone to get half a dozen coherent words from those being interviewed.

The confusion was so great that one veteran reporter remarked: "These people are going to go home and tell their friends that the atrocities began on their arrival in New York." Navy press relations officers tried vainly to maintain some semblance of order, but it was not until late in the after-noon, when the trickle of passengers had grown into a stream, that the situation improved.

8-Week-Old Baby Debarks

An eight-week-old baby, Gretchen Penelope Whitaker, with her older brother and sister, J. Paul and Andrea, and their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Whitaker of Apponaug, R. I., was among the first off the ship. Little Gretchen was born on Oct 2 on the Japanese exchange ship Teia Maru, en route from the Far East to Mormugao, where the exchange took place.

At first the tiny youngster seemed contented, but after a long wait in the cold and drafty pier she began to protest audibly. A group of gold-braided Navy officers shielded her from view while her mother effected necessary replacements. One of them asked Mrs. Whitaker, a pretty young blond woman, how the baby had stood the trip.

"Listen to her squalling," she re-plied with a smile.

Claude A. Buss, 59, of Sunbury, Pa., who was executive assistant to Francis A. Sayre, United States High Commissioner to the Philippines, was among the arrivals. He said that the United States must always maintain armed forces strong enough so that the Japanese will never dare attack us again." However, he added that "we will have to learn to get along with Japan and they with us."

"We should not dominate them, because they will try to come forward again," he said. "Nobody likes to be suppressed. We must come to some friendly basis with them and allow them to keep their emperor, who is the basis of their national life and religion. No other form of government would be acceptable to them."

Says Japanese Are Confident

The Japanese people still believe that they are going to win the war, although their leaders may have begun to have their doubts, according to Carl Mydans, photographer for Life Magazine, who was on the Gripsholm with his wife, Shelley Smith Mydans. They were interned first at Santo Tomas University in Manila, and later in Shanghai. He said that food was bad and medical supplies scanty in both places.

"The average Japanese soldier is a little guy who thinks he's good," Mr. Mydans observed. "He has been told he's tough and he believes it."

He expressed his pride at the spirit with which the Americans confined in the internment camps have stood their hard lot and said that even the Japanese had commented on their organizing ability and the way in which they have created a community life for themselves within prison walls.

An eyewitness of an incident resulting from the raid on Tokyo led by Maj. Gen. James A. Doolittle in April, 1942, was among those on the Gripsholm. He was James R. Beasley of Savannah, Ga., an employee of the American Tobacco Company, who spent ten months in an internment camp.

He said that about a week after the B-25 bombers had raided the Japanese capital he saw a Japanese river boat going upstream past the camp where he was confined at Ning-po, China, about an overnight boat trip from

Shanghai. It carried the wreckage of a B-25, he said, and two American fliers who were under heavy guard.

Royal Arch Gunnison, newspaper and radio correspondent who represented the Mutual Broadcasting System in Manila, said that Japanese propaganda was utilizing to the fullest possible extent and with considerable success reports of disunity and labor troubles in the United States.

"The morale of the average Jap soldier today is good," Mr. Gunnison continued. "He doesn't learn of the losses on other fronts. They are always 'strategic withdrawals to shorten our lines.' In my opinion the Jap is going to be hard to beat. He will be just as difficult as the German at his worst. The Japs are prepared for a hundred-year war."

Roy C. Bennett, managing editor of The Manila Bulletin, whose friends in this country had been fearful that something might have happened to him in the absence of any positive information, is alive and well, according to several of the repatriates, who reported that he is now confined in the Santo Tomas camp in Manila.

After fifty-six years' residence in China, Dr. John Calvin Ferguson, 77, of Newton, Mass., arrived here in the company of his daughter, Mary Esther Ferguson. He went to China originally as a missionary, but later turned to other fields and at the outbreak of the war was publishing the Chinese language newspaper Sin Wan Pao in Shanghai.

"It is going to be a long story before the war in the Pacific is over," he commented. "It depends a great deal on what happens in Europe. Japan went into the war with confidence in victory and the Japanese still think they can win."

Chinese are dying at the rate of 100 a day in the streets of Peiping at present, according to Dr. Ferguson, and probably three times that many are dying daily in Shanghai. He said that the Japanese allow the bodies to accumulate until they can haul them away in cart loads.

On fifteen different occasions the propaganda newspaper circulated by the Japanese among the inmates of the Chapel camp at Shanghai reported that the United States Fleet had been annihilated, according to Mrs. Jessie F. Nichols of Los Angeles, who returned with her 12-year-old son Donald. Her husband, an insurance broker, is still in the camp. She said the diet there was very monotonous, consisting of fish, rice and cabbage.

Many of those among yesterday's arrivals were not interned by the Japanese immediately after the outbreak of the war, but were permitted to keep their freedom, under observation, in various parts of occupied China, until late last winter and early last spring. One of these was W. T. Alexander, Far Eastern manager for the Colgate-Palmolive-Peet Company, who was at liberty for some months in Shanghai before being interned at Pootung Camp.

He was crowded into a single room with 126 other men, he said, and in all 1,100 men were jammed into the camp, which occupied an abandoned tobacco warehouse across the Whangpo River from the Shanghai bund. He said that the food was very bad.

"Several times the men in the camp preferred to go hungry rather than eat the food that the camp kitchen was forced to serve," he said.

"We got to thinking that the United States was not doing anything," he added. "Nobody doubted the outcome of the war, but it seemed that we were making awfully slow progress."

The Rev. Montgomery Hunt Throop of Ithaca, N. Y., who was in Japan with the Episcopal Missions, seemed disinclined to discuss details of his stay in the Shanghai internment camp. Asked about conditions there he merely raised his hands and said "Oh gracious" and let it go at that. He said he thought he detected signs of discouragement among the Japanese before he left. He found the talk changing from confidence in victory to wonder about "What will we do if we lose this war?"

John F. Harris, an official for the Radio Corporation of America,, who had spent eleven years in the Orient, regained, on the journey home, twelve of the eighteen pounds he had dropped during internment. He told of the lack of mail, except local letters, and said he found the Japanese exchange ship somewhat crowded. There was plenty of room for all, though, on the Gripsholm. He looked fit.

Mrs. Katherine Holt Walter, who was born in Shanghai, was anxious about her husband, a sergeant of United States Marines. She saw him for the last time on Dec. 4, 1941, three days before Pearl Harbor and heard later that he was on Corregidor. There has been no word from him since, so far as she knows. Mrs. Walter was seized by the Japanese in Manila. She was on her way to Forest Hills in Queens to meet her husband's parents for the first time.

Edgar S. Wise of Stowe, Pa. who was district passenger agent: for the American President Line in Shanghai, had spent seven months in the Chapel prison camp. He was seized on the President Benjamin Harrison. Mr. Wise warned that "the Japanese make a formidable enemy and that their morale holds." He said he was not mistreated, but that food was inadequate. He lost thirty pounds at Chapel but regained ten on the Gripsholm.

Isaac Sasson, lace importer, whose home is at 1926 Sixty-Fifth Street in Brooklyn, was aboard with his wife and their three children. They were taken at Shanghai and spent several months at Chapel, sharing a hut with two other families. Jackie, 10, and Maurice, 14, recalled one bright hour on the Japanese exchange ship. It was when the Japanese permitted them to listen in on the world series. The Japanese followed the games with keen interest and seemed to approve when the Yanks won.

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