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FROM HONGKONG TO LONDON: PERILOUS JOURNEY
OF 37 YEAR OLD SCOT WHO ESCAPED

The first man to reach England after escaping from Hongkong following the capitulation, has just arrived in London.

He is David Mercer MacDougall, a 37 year old Scot, of the Colonial Civil Service, who first went to Hongkong in 1929.

He has a wonderful story to tell of Chinese loyalty and co-operation in Hongkong under the Japanese attack. The Civil Defence Services were manned chiefly by Chinese. Their A.R.P. activities were maintained effectively and with the utmost steadfastness to the last.

Their heroism in fire fighting, says MacDougall, cannot be too highly praised. They carried out the most efficient food control. To preserve law and order they manned what were called Street Guards. These were concerned with maintaining traffic control to watching for possible looters. Chinese women worked as nurses, cooks, and in all manner of ways. Chinese sappers in the face of fierce fire coolly carried on at demolition work.

In fact, the coolness of the Chinese in the face of the enemy was an outstanding feature. In the midst of the bombs and shells even the rickshaw coolies jog-trotted along with their vehicles.

The result of all this was that there was neither panic nor rioting on the island. Nor was there any food shortage, though in places the Japanese shelling led to temporary scarcity.

The Japanese tried hard to undermine the civilian morale.

They showered leaflets on the town. They set up loud speakers in the harbour that blared out that Hongkong's position was hopeless. But it was all quite without the desired effect upon the Chinese.

MacDougall escaped a few hours after the fall of the Colony, but although our troops had ceased fire the Japs were still shelling many places. MacDougall's escape was made as a member of a party headed by a famous Chinese Admiral, Chan Chak, who years ago lost a leg in the service of his country. At the outset there were four Chinese in the party, and six or seven whites. Later they were joined by a number of naval volunteers.

Finding a small launch they set out, but soon Japanese snipers and machine gunners on the shore, and then shelling, compelled them to abandon the launch and take to the water. There were severe casualties and the Admiral was shot in the wrist and MacDougall got a bullet in the back. A long swim to an island followed. It is a tribute to his vitality that the fifty year old Admiral, with his one leg and his arm now disabled managed to reach the island at all. Hiding on the island till dark, the party eventually made its way to the China coast in a motor torpedo boat.

As news of the Admiral's presence spread, Chinese guerillas appeared to welcome and assist their party. A hazardous journey through the Jap lines to Free China followed. In the very dangerous areas the party travelled at night. The guerilla leader, named Leung, was a great fighter who had already given the Japs much trouble. The journey through the Jap lines lasted twelve days, and at last, four weeks after leaving Hongkong, MacDougall reached Chubking. From there he flew to Calcutta and eventually to England.

One of his outstanding impressions of the Chinese is their intense gratification at the knowledge that Britain and China are Allies.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

Note: Photograph of Mr. MacDougall is obtainable from B.I.P.P.A.