

STOP USELESS RESISTANCE.

When the Japanese Force makes its attack, Hongkong cannot be escaped from the most fierce bombardment from the Japanese Air Armada. Even with no aid from the land force, it is certain that Hongkong will be smashed into pieces from the air.

British officers, we appeal you to consider the very fact. Do not kill your men in meaningless resistance! Remember, the Japanese Forces will guarantee the lives and limbs of those who will surrender.



December, 1941: Thousands of leaflets were dropped by the Japanese Air Force over Hong Kong before the attack. The original is a prized possession of Elvie Arnold's.

going to come out of their budget.

The heroism of the Royal Rifles and the Winnipeg Grenadiers has been dealt with in several books, including C.P. Stacy's "Six Years of War", the Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War. Whatever the logic behind why the two battalions had been sent for, and what subsequently occurred, it must be seen in light of the intelligence available at that time. The Soviet Union had just entered the War on the Allied side, and there was reason to believe they would engage the Japanese along the Sino-Soviet border. The Japanese themselves did not make up their minds to invade the south Pacific theatre until July, 1941. Help was on the way to Singapore and Hong Kong by way of two British capital ships, the "Prince of Wales" and the "Repulse". There would be time to equip and train the Canadians, as Prime Minister Mackenzie King noted in his diaries.

It is a great credit to the loyalty of the

staff at the Trade Commission that, not only did Elvie Arnold not take advantage of the evacuation to Manila, but two members of the local staff were in uniform to defend the Colony. William Poy was a member of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Force, and Chow King Yee served with the Special Police. At this distance, it is difficult to see why they, as Chinese, would not fight to defend their homes, but it must be remembered that in 1941, the local population stayed aloof of the War. In a Colony where every third person was a refugee, warfare was left to the British and Japanese. Chow King Yee would be decorated three times by the British after the War for meritorious service during the black days of 1941, and William Poy's Hong Kong Volunteers would emerge with honour and win high praise from historians.

On Sunday, December 7, the Volunteers were mobilised and at 8:00 am the next day, the Japanese bombed Kai Tak airfield. The unexpected speed with which the enemy penetrated all defenses is well documented, but no records describe the effects on the Trade Commission in the weeks that followed. The Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Building was too conspicuous a target for enemy gunners to ignore. By the time the Colony surrendered on Christmas Day, the granite face of the structure was scarred and pitted where shells had struck and bounced off. Only one granite block was dislodged, but all the windows were shattered. The building had already been looted, and the pavement in front was littered with glass and paper. Passersby recall seeing a "dud" bomb buried in the middle of the tram lines in front of the main entrance, and someone placed a potted palm from the Bank's lobby beside it. Like its landlord, the Trade Commission was closed for the duration.

The cessation of the brief but desperate fighting found the civilian population coping with starvation, overcrowding, looting and darkness. As Paul McLane lived in the Mid-levels, his apartment building would have been without water or electricity since December 20th. Failed lifts, spoiling refrigerated food, toilets that would not flush, were some of the minor inconveniences that he might have endured. Perhaps, like other civilians, McLane watched the Japanese