

Canadian-Chinese Flier Fools Japs to Aid Kin

Late last year Albert Mah, 23-year-old Canadian-Chinese, received word through circuitous channels that his mother and his 13-year-old sister were in dire straits in Japanese-occupied China. Money which he and his brother Cedric had been sending them failed to arrive. They were ill-fed, poorly clothed.

Albert, then a pilot with Canadian Pacific Air Lines at Quebec City, consulted his brother, who was working for the same company in a similar capacity at Winnipeg, and decided he had to do something about it.

After securing his release he obtained a pilot's job through Pan American Airways, which operates the China National Aviation Corporation, flying from Kunming to the interior parts of China, often over Jap-occupied territory. Then Albert Mah dropped from view for months.

Today he is again in the news. Somehow, by means known only to himself and a few others, on his first "off period" from China National, he penetrated the Jap lines on foot, by bicycle, and any other means of transport he could find.

Unable to speak Chinese or find an interpreter willing to risk the dangers of the journey, Mah, wearing his official uniform, floated down a coastal river in a junk for three days. Then, by gestures, he bargained with sedan chair coolies, who carried him through the Japanese lines. He walked for three days over rough trails and rice paddies, and then made the rest of the trip by bicycle.

"Crossing the mountains by a path through a pass, I was forced to go within six feet of a puppet Chinese sentry," Mah said. "Because he looked so miserable, shivering in the cold, I threw him 20 Chinese dollars."

As he rode into his mother's village he met his younger sister, whom he had last seen in Prince Rupert, B.C., walking along a street. His mother took his arrival calmly and invited him in for tea.

When Mah returned to Kunming, by bicycle and sampan, he brought his 13-year-old sister with him. She will go back to Canada to school.

Looking back on his trip, Mah said: "In many things I did look stupid. I guess I'm just lucky."

His mother, fearing she could not endure the physical hardships entailed in the journey, remained with friends in Canton.

Today Albert Mah is back "flying the hump" with precious war goods for embattled China.



Albert Mah.

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