

Sgt. Fred Palmer

No.5 and 1/5 Commando

FORMER LOCAL P.C.

WITH COMMANDOS IN HONG-KONG

Expecting to start the long trip home from Hong-Kong to Hartlepool shortly is Sergt. Fred Palmer, of 6 Rokeby Street, Central Estate. When release under Class B comes through for him he will change from one uniform to another, from the battledress and famous green beret of the Commandos to the dark blue of the Durham County Constabulary.

Before he joined up in 1942, Sergt. Palmer had served with the police force in Durham City, Felling, Darlington, Stockton, West Hartlepool, and Billingham. He was an officer of the West Hartlepool battalion of the Boys' Brigade. With the Commandos he saw action all through the great series of landings down the Burma coast, writes a military observer. He was wounded in the Arakan and again at the Battle of Kangaw Hill.

When the Commandos, who were all ready for the invasion of Malaya when the Japanese surrendered, arrived in Hong-Kong they went quickly to work rounding up stray Japanese soldiers and bandits and organizing Chinese villages that had been hard hit by four years of Japanese occupation. Sgt. Palmer supervised the distribution of the Government rice ration, a godsend to the tough, friendly Chinese villagers. With these villagers he learned to enjoy the delicious Chinese food served at celebration dinners, and he learned to eat it with chopsticks too!

A peace-time friend of the sergeant's, Sgt. Tom Ainsley, recently returned home to Clifton Street, Hartlepool, from the same Commando unit in Hong-Kong.

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