

JOHN EARL BAKER, WRITING FROM SHANGHAI TELLS OF CONDITIONS IN WAR-TORN CITY AND COUNTRY

Relative of Thomasville People and an Occasional Visitor Here, Baker Is an American Prominent In Chinese Affairs and Gives First Hand Information.

SAYS U. S. PRESTIGE AT LOW EBB

Baker Reports Jap Planes Concentrate On Bombing Hospitals, Mission, Schools.—Mrs. Baker, Former Thomasville Woman, Safe In Szechwan.

One of the best informed men on Chinese affairs, economic, financial and governmental among the American residents is the Hon. J. E. Baker. He has been executive secretary of the China International Famine Relief Commission and advisor to the government on several occasions. During a recent visit to Thomasville with his wife, who was the former Miss Willy Smith, he made an address before a civic club on Shanghai and Chinese matters that was intensely interesting. He has written the editor a letter which it is felt will be read with great interest both due to its contents and the fact that it comes after due deliberation and mature experience by an able, efficient and thoroughly posted observer.

Mr. Baker says:

It has occurred to me that your readers may find a news interest in the war that is going on out here. Incidentally, if you see fit to publish this, quite a number of my old friends will then know where I am and what I am doing.

During the summer I was up in Szechwan, one of the remotest provinces of China which has just begun to get interested in modern progress. I was there organizing famine sufferers into a highway building organization and preparing to do the same for railway work, and with the end of next month will cut off the funds for further highway work. So, I have come back to Shanghai to find out what the next move is. I have left my wife in Szechwan for safety. This letter is being written while the bombardment goes on for possession of the North Station, a mile and a half distant. It is the second day of what the Japs gave out as the beginning of a "big push" to take Shanghai. Yesterday they were stopped cold. I haven't heard the results of today's fighting, so far. Very few people stop their daily work for reasons of war.

My trip from Szechwan had its thrills. I was in Hankow during one bombardment from the air. It lasted only ten minutes. Supposedly, the seven planes were trying to bombard the arsenal. Actually, I think they were trying to hit the hospital. Either that or they are the world's worst marksmen. They hit a tenement district alongside the English Methodist Hospital, a mile away from the arsenal and across the river. They killed 150 poor

coolies and cruelly wounded as many more. They also dropped a bomb close to a Catholic school, killing two boys who were looking out of the window.

They are specializing on hospitals and schools. Those that fly the American flag seem to receive special notice. At Nantungchow, they failed to hit the American hospital the first day, so came back the next day, power-dived and completely demolished it, killing over fifty patients, nurses and doctors. At Weishan, they did about the same thing. At Nanchang, they destroyed the Methodist Mission School and one of the houses before "doing in" the old airport. Apparently, they haven't found the modern airport.

In Nanking they took two days to finish off the Central Hospital, the newest thing of that sort we have. That and Central University are about all they have seriously damaged in the capital city although one day 92 planes visited it.

In Tientsin, they polished off Nankai University the first thing before paying much attention to military objects. After intimating that Wuhu might be a city for foreign refugees, they sent a fleet of planes there yesterday which dropped 100 bombs. I was there Monday night and everybody was happy at the prospect of peace there. What the damage is, we have not heard yet.

Chinese airmen are giving the Japs lots of trouble but are so few in number that they cannot cover all points nor seriously interfere with mass raids. They have brought down somewhere about 80 planes, since the beginning. Five Japanese planes returning from the bombardment of Canton, finding themselves unable to fight off the Chinese planes who were trying to trail them to their base, and thus discover where to direct a counter-bombing expedition, deliberately committed suicide by power-diving into the sea in formation. One of the trailing Chinese airmen was aboard ship coming down from Hankow. Between Nanking and Shanghai, I saw three disabled Japanese planes being hauled to the Chinese rear for rehabilitation.

How will it end? Who knows? But the Chinese are putting up a splendid battle. It is pretty much of a case of human flesh against high explosive. But the Chinese know

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