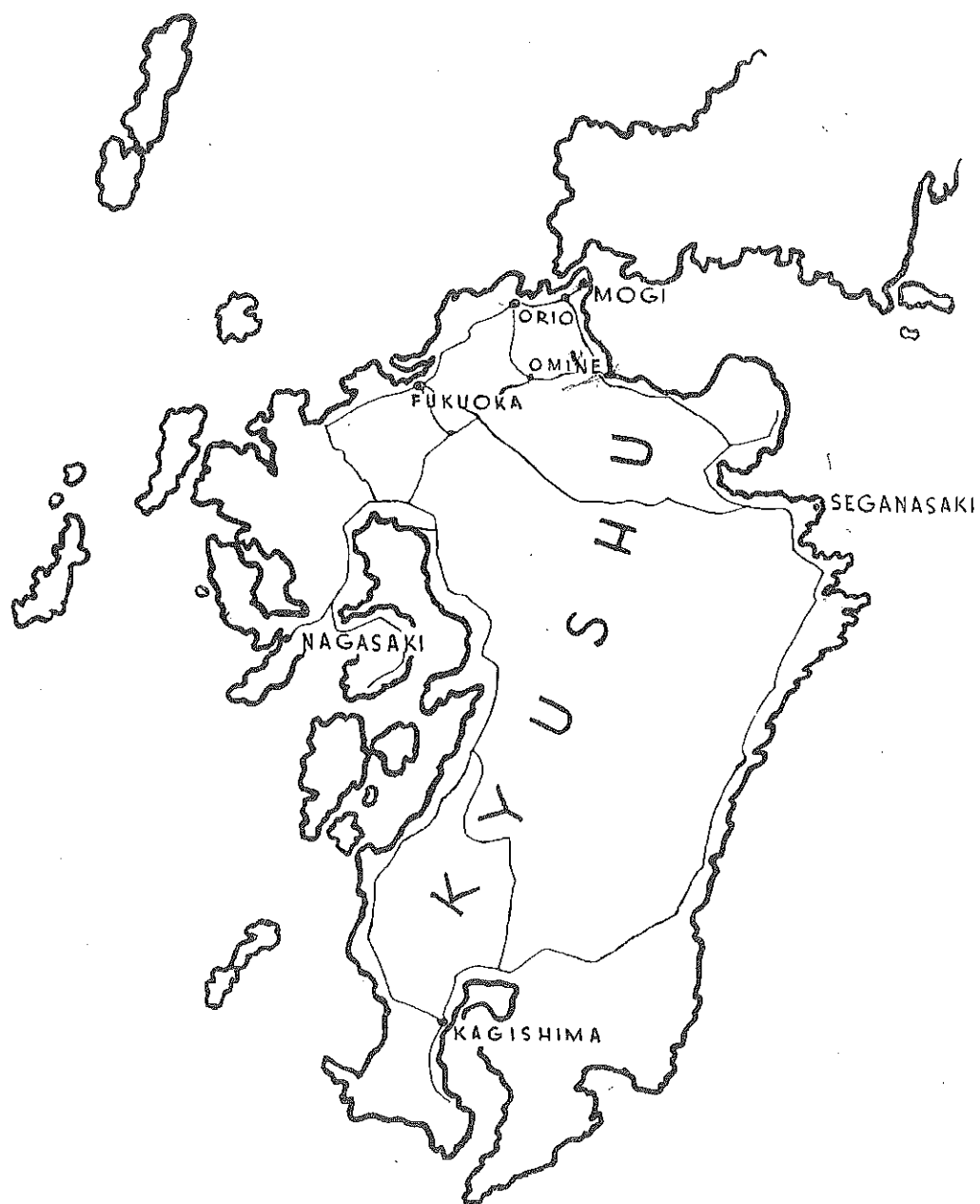


'THE LAST PHASE'

AT OMMINE





# Foreword . . . .

To be asked to write a foreword for a book of such fine qualities, I deem a great honour, but, as these sketches are completely self-explanatory, there is little for me to add.

"Omine" is the Japanese name for a small mining village near Kawasaki, on the island of Kyushu. Here, the Japanese were working a coal mine and a cosmopolitan crowd of us, Prisoners of War, was collected to do labouring duties. Our camp strength of some seven hundred was made up of Canadians, Englishmen, Australians, Dutch and Americans. We were, as you can see, a very mixed bag of soldiers, sailors, airmen and civilians, herded together for but one purpose . . . down the mine.

The conditions of the camp were very bad in respect of food, medical supplies and clothing. Sick men were made work on surface jobs and one had to be particularly sick to get a day's "Yasume" (holiday). Fortunately, the morale of the camp was excellent and this factor alone accounts for our low death roll. To individualise is a far too difficult task, but I can say that we owe our higher status of morale to those who took great risks in collecting war news and those who organised and took part in the concerts. We, in Japan, could see that the Japanese people were war weary and that their morale was breaking down through the news of defeats, lack of food and clothing and, in fact, all amenities. Furthermore, it was obvious that the fighting strength of Japan had been distributed outside the country, leaving her in the particularly weak state of numerical strength only. Nevertheless, we expected their fanatical leaders to fight on to the last and that eventually Japan would be invaded. The new super bomb, as Japanese papers described the atomic bomb, proved too much and we Prisoners of War were liberated in the only easy manner.

Following the capitulation we spent a further three weeks in Japan, living under very strange circumstances. Fortunately for us, we found the Japanese most amenable to discipline and the men soon had Japanese doing work for us.

The difference in physical appearance of the men was amazing. In the short space of three weeks some men recovered up to thirty pounds of lost weight and actually sailed from Japan looking like normal human beings.

The picture they presented on their return home does not, unfortunately, convey to the general public a true story of the condition they were in and of their sufferings as Prisoners of War. This book does. It shows unbelievably true pictures of these men as they were as forced coal mine labourers for the Japanese, and to Geoff. Tyson I offer my heartfelt congratulations for his excellent production.

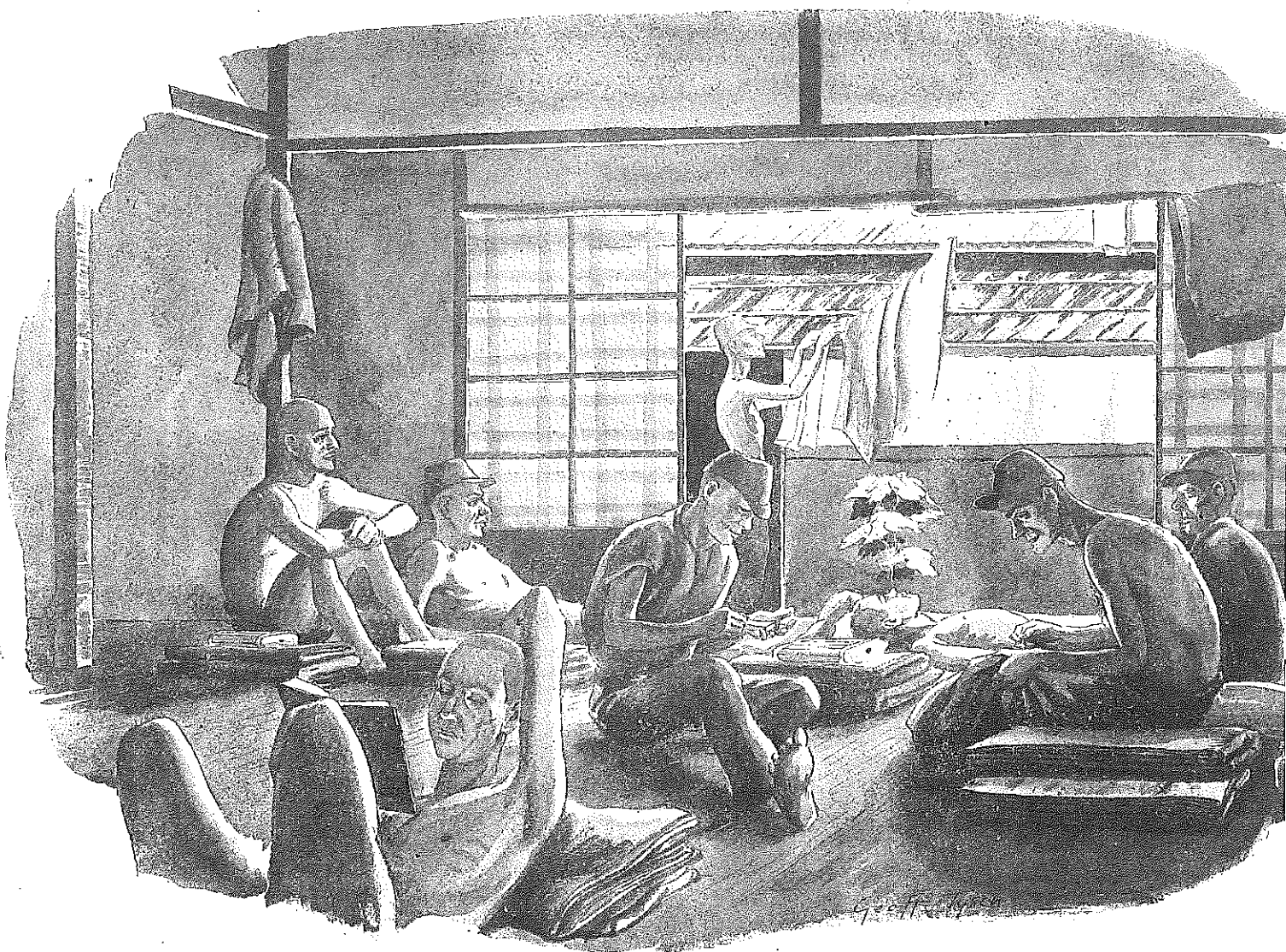
*Ron Williams*

### *Acknowledgment*

In presenting these sketches made during our last two months in Japan I wish to express my appreciation and thanks to Ron Williams, not only for writing the foreword, but for obtaining from the Nip. commandant permission for me to sketch on Yasume days at Omine; to Cyril Goodman for permission to include verses from his song, "Roll On That Boat"; to Syd. Barber for the use of his ideas in some of the sketches; to Ivor Griffiths for his time and trouble in taking names and addresses of those who wish to have copies of this book, and, finally, to all those chaps who stood still for just a few minutes longer, thereby enabling me to make the sketches more convincing.

*Geoff. Tyson*

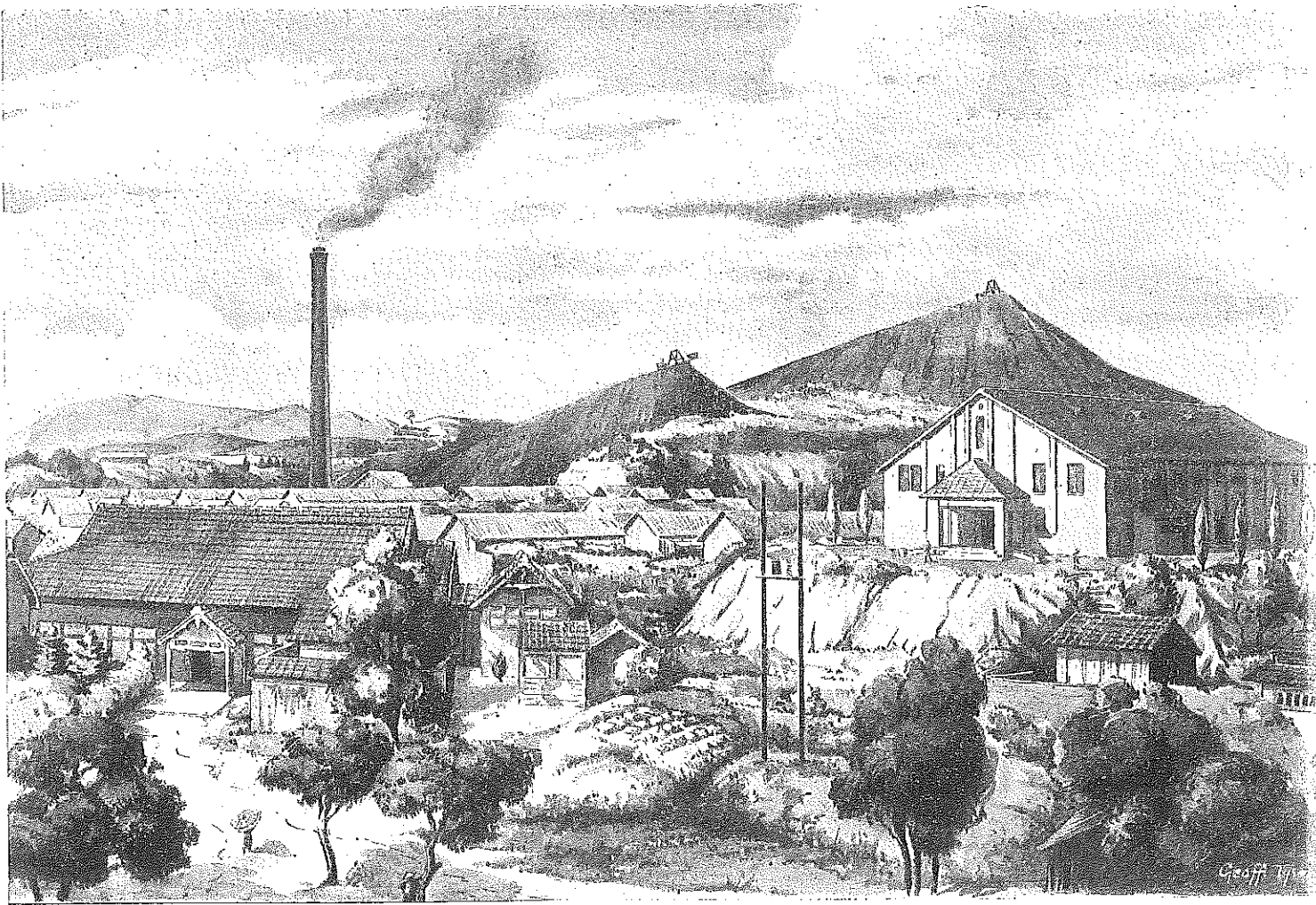




30th June, '45:

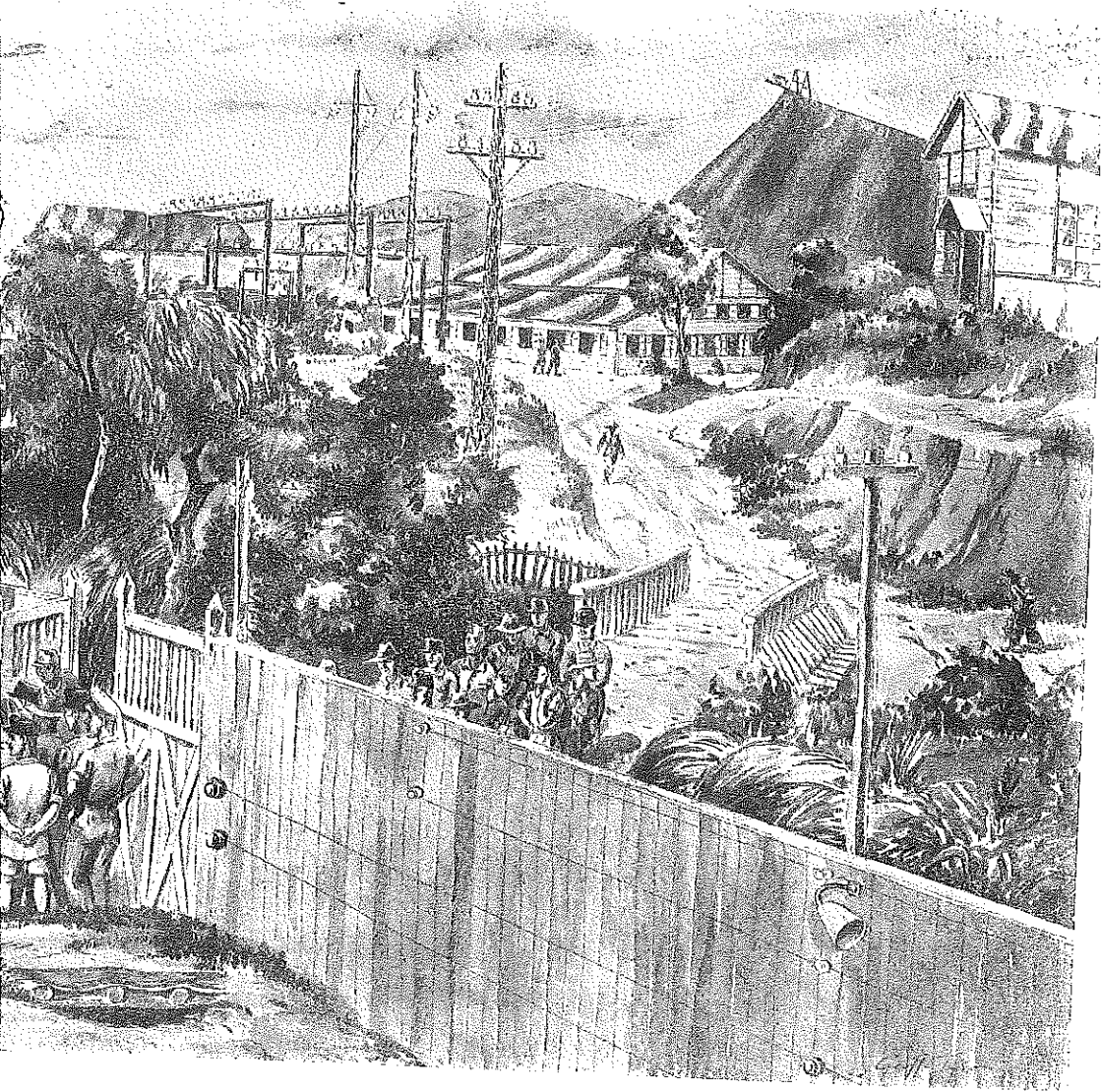
### *Settling in at Omine*

. . . Draft arrived from Nagasaki  
and Yasume'd for 10 days before  
starting work in the mine. . . . .



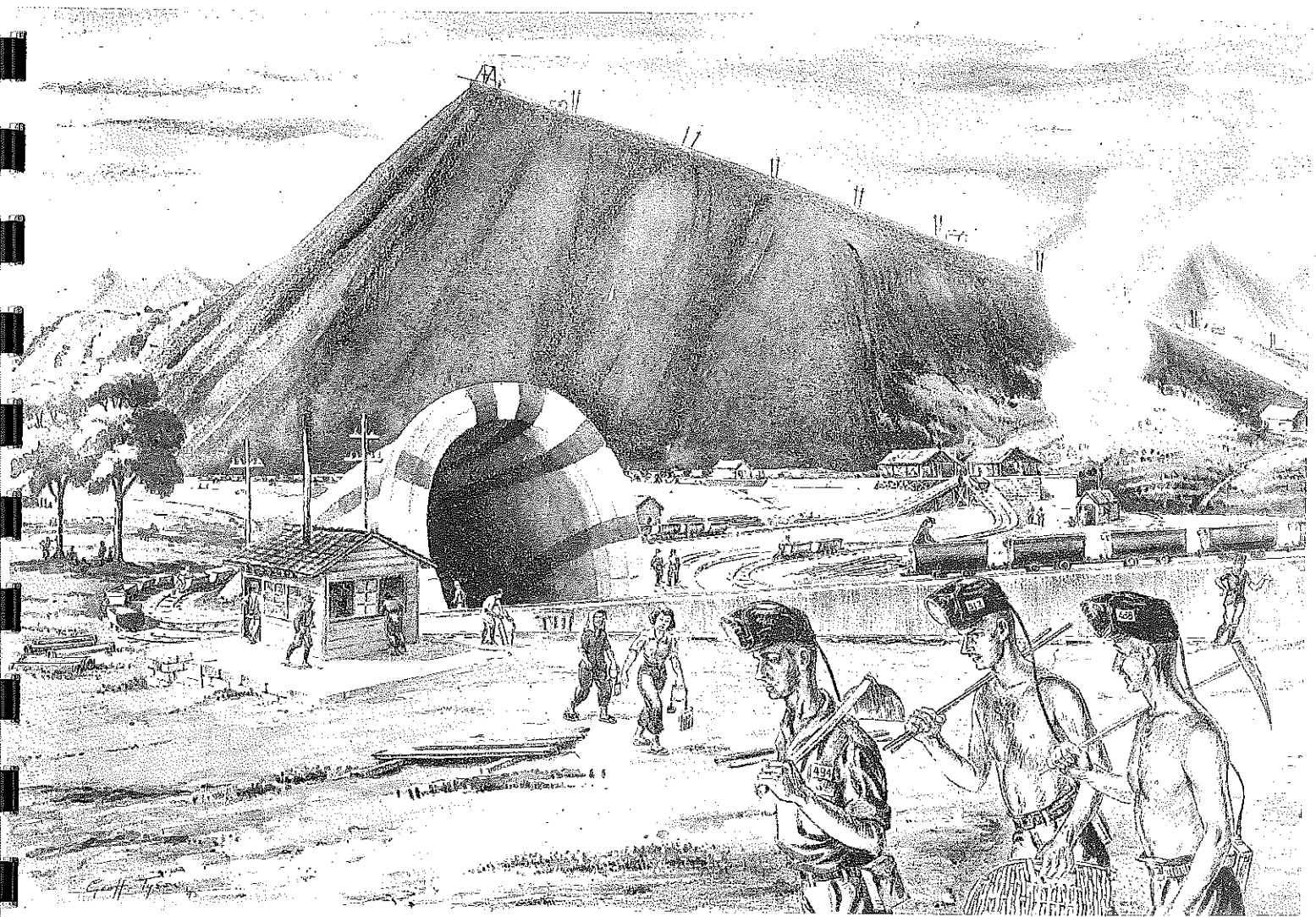
*View from Upstairs looking North-East*

Showing the Social Hall, Hospital and Steam Plant  
for the surrounding district.



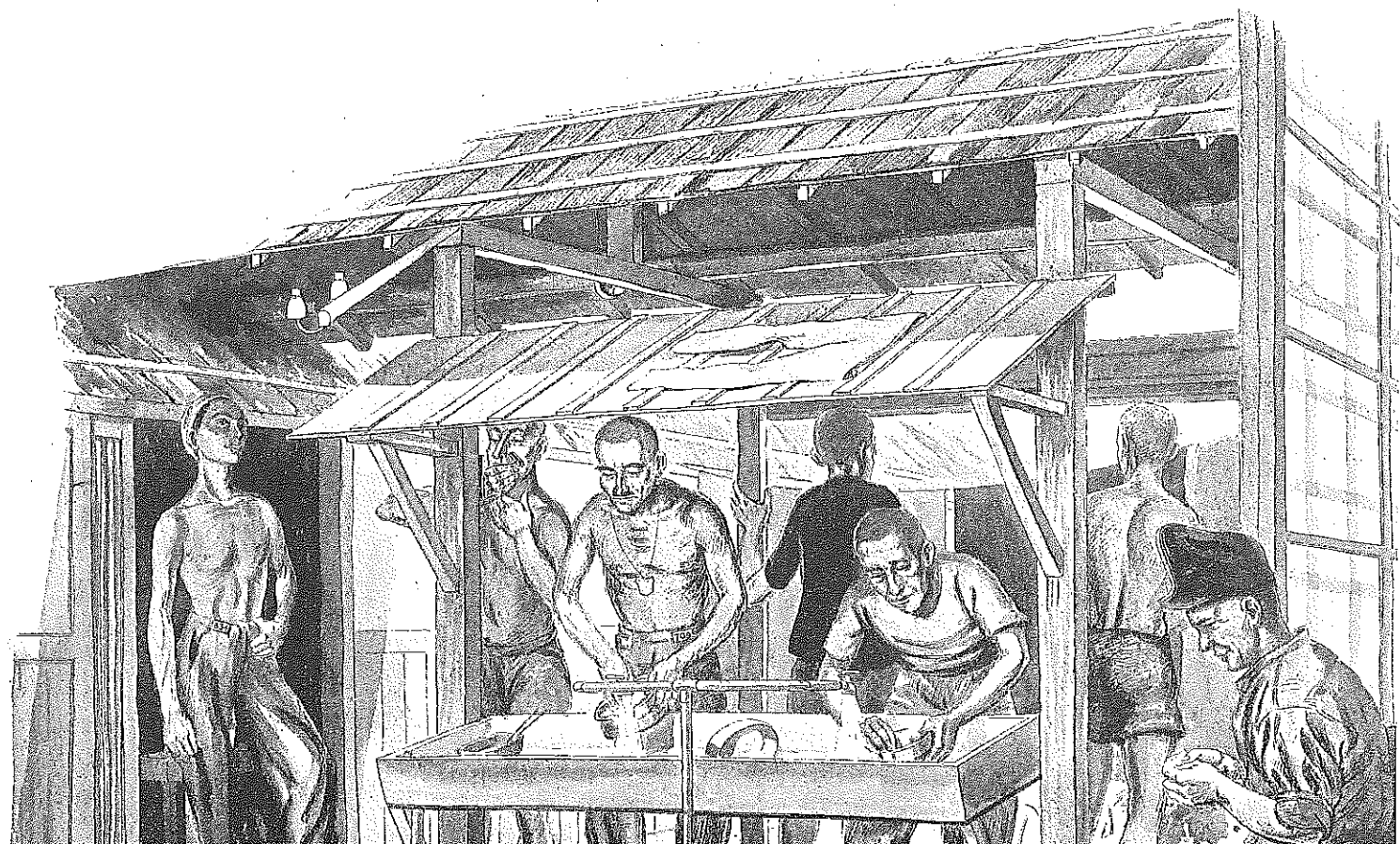
## Garden Party Returns to Camp

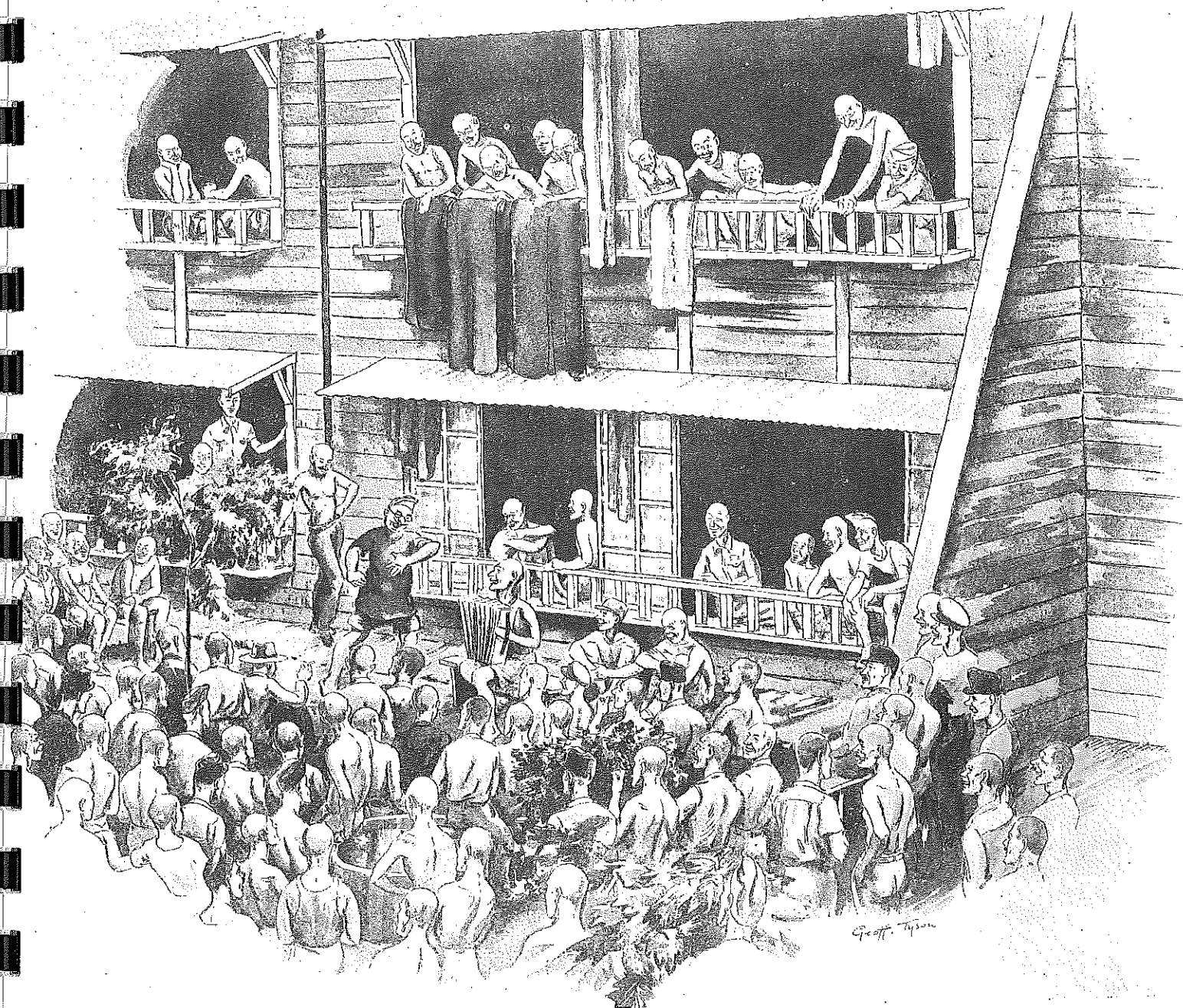
Checking in at the Camp



*The Mine Head*



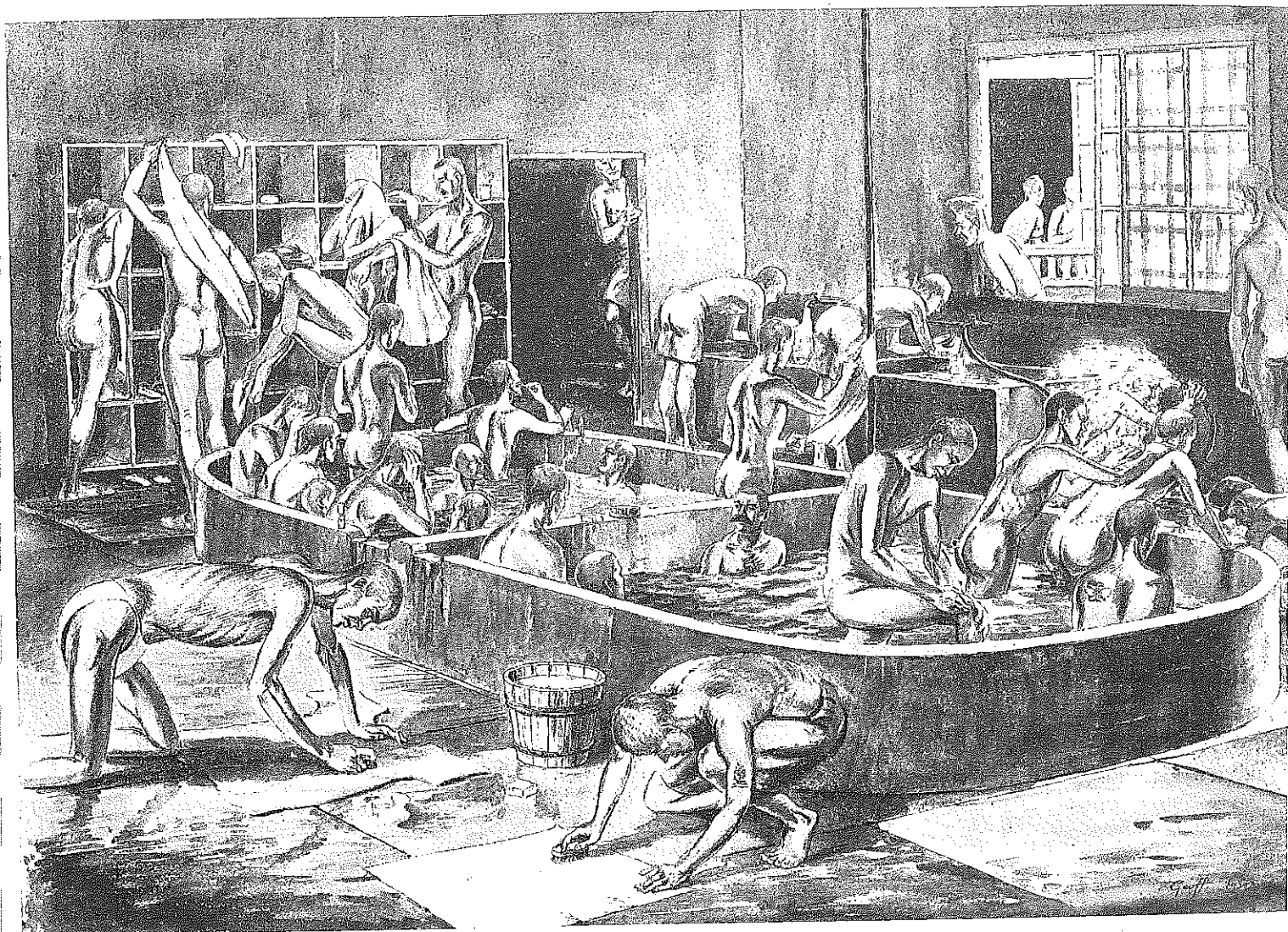




20th July, '45:

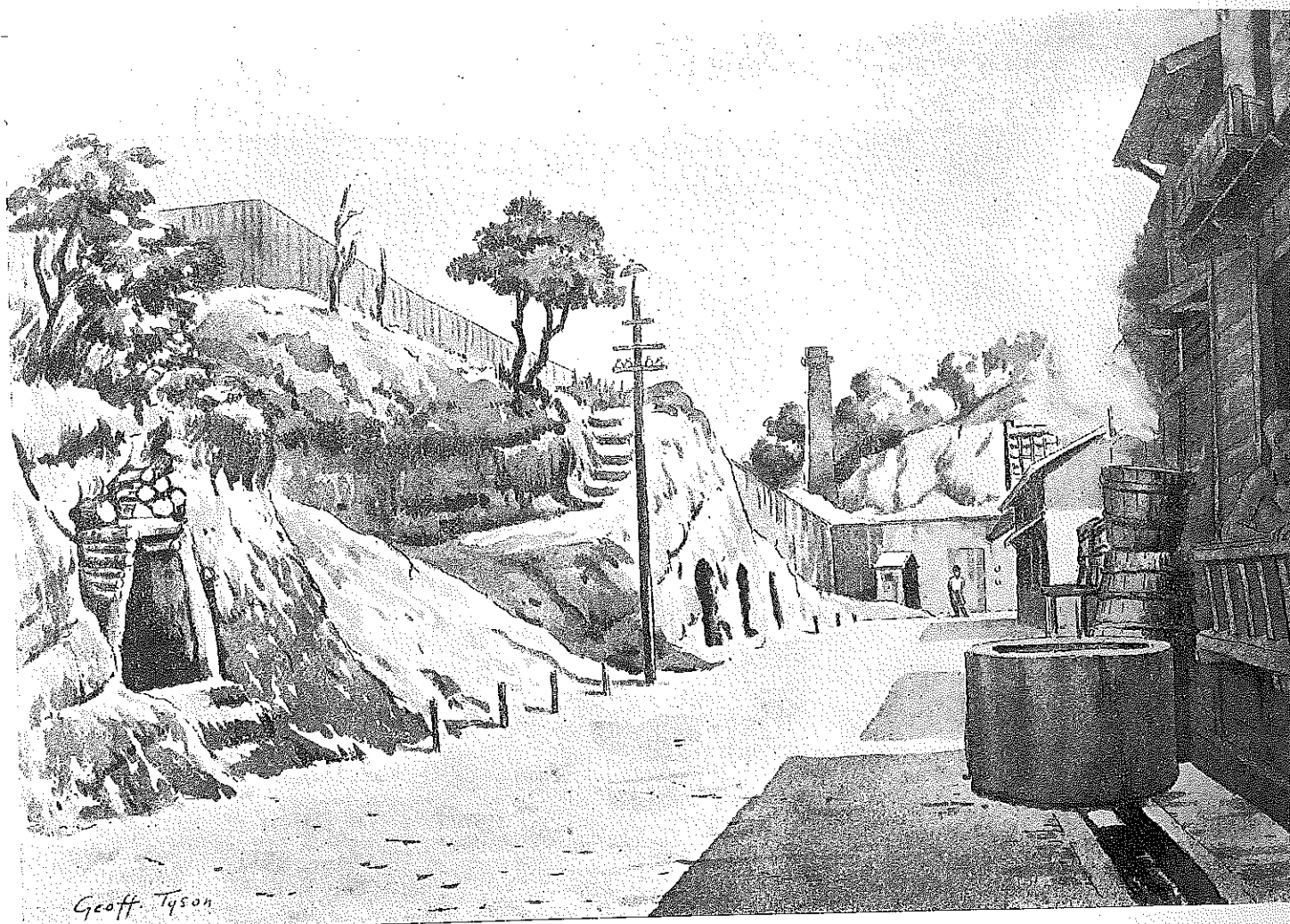
## *Sing Song in the Garden*

Bill Collier "In The Mood."



*Bath Room, Nip-Style*

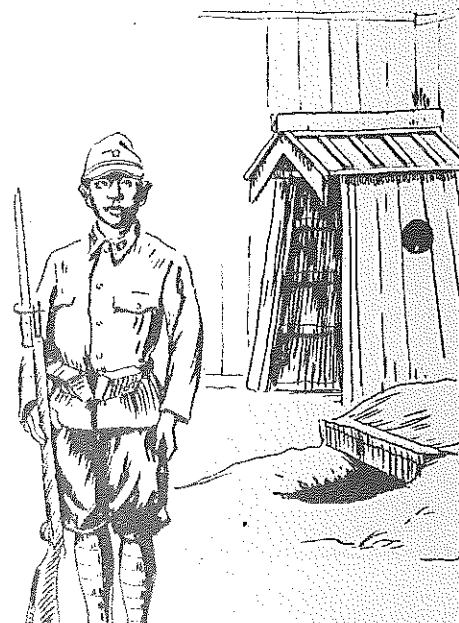




Geoff. Tyson

## *Front of Camp from Entrance Porch*

Showing Parade Ground and Air-raid Shelters.

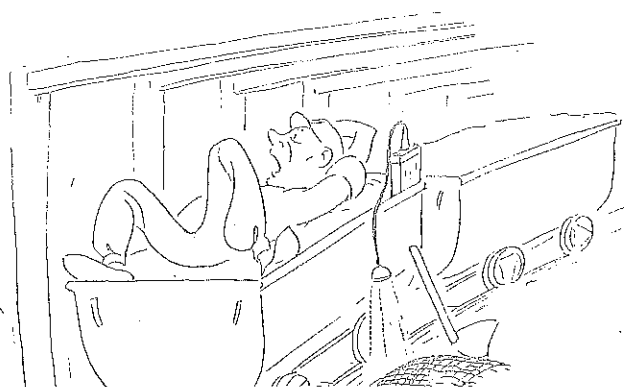




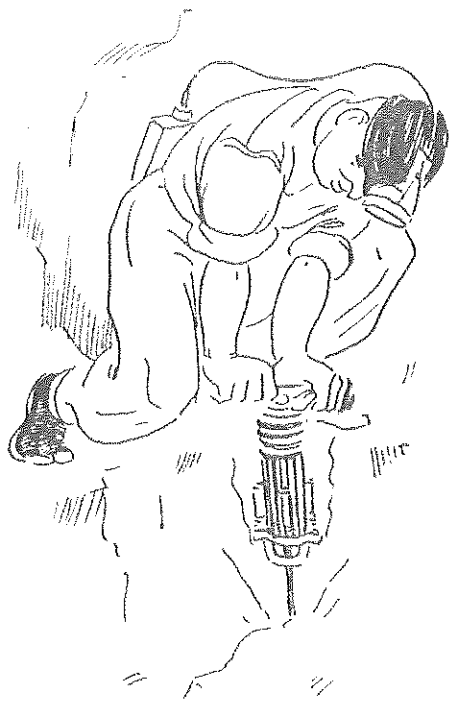


### *Drilling ready for the 'Mito'*

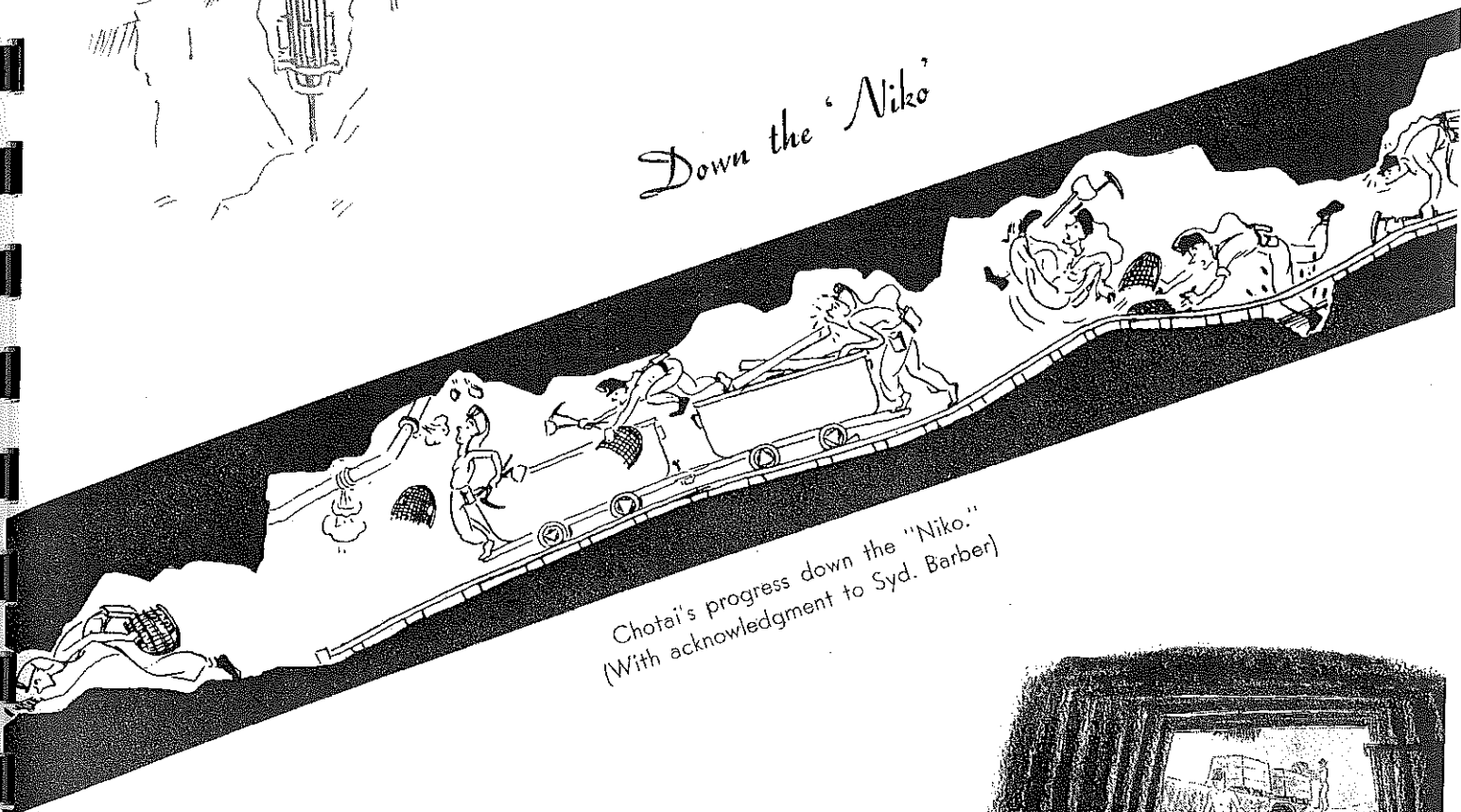
"No more going down the mine,  
No more coming up agine;  
That arrangement suits me fine.  
ROLL ON THAT BOAT"



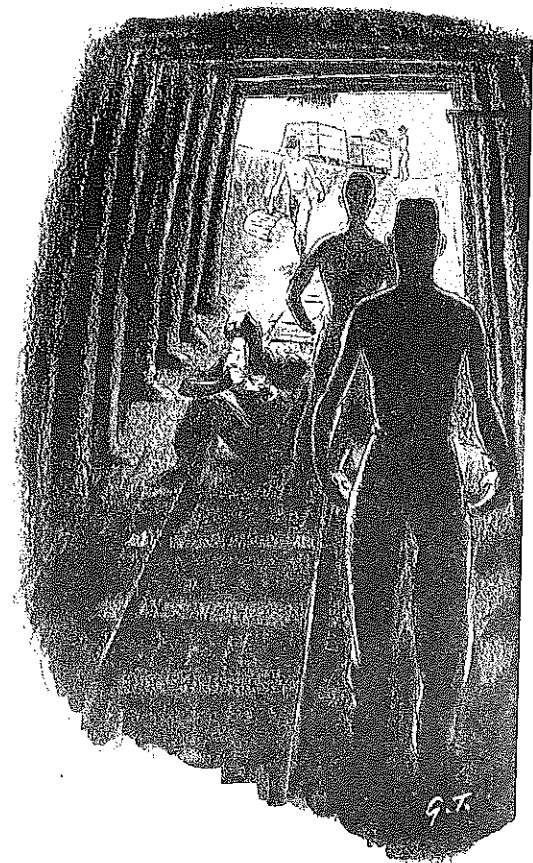
HITLER!



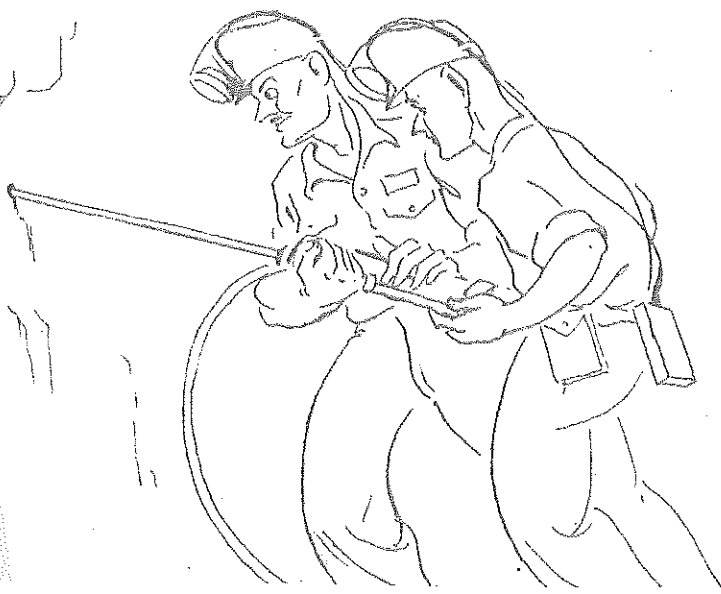
# Down the 'Niko'

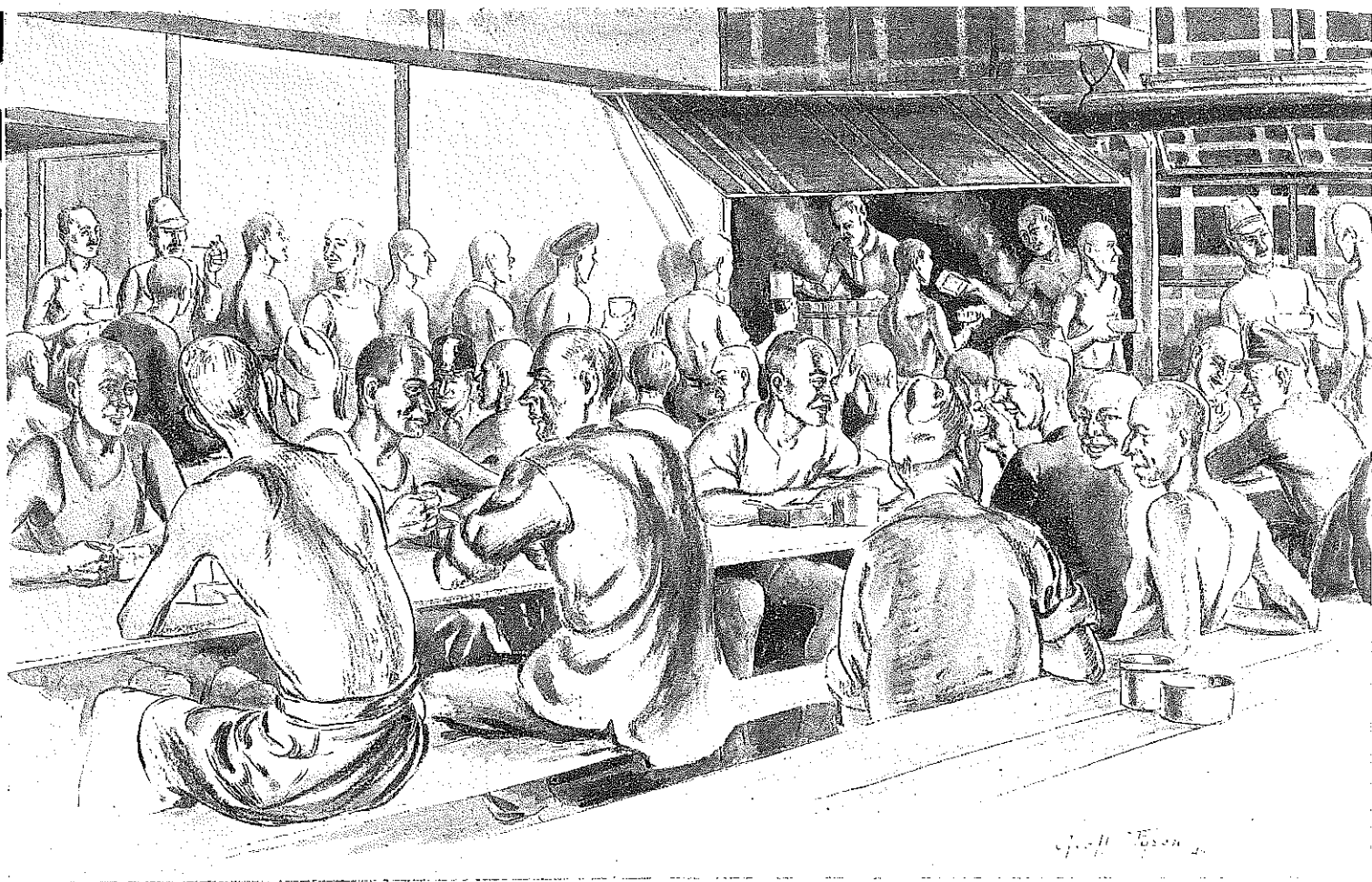


Chotai's progress down the "Niko."  
(With acknowledgment to Syd. Barber)



The Lamp-shed Tunnel





*Night Shift Breakfast in the New Hall*

"No more lining up for chow,  
No more bobbing down to bow;  
We're finished with all that now!  
ROLL ON THAT BOAT"



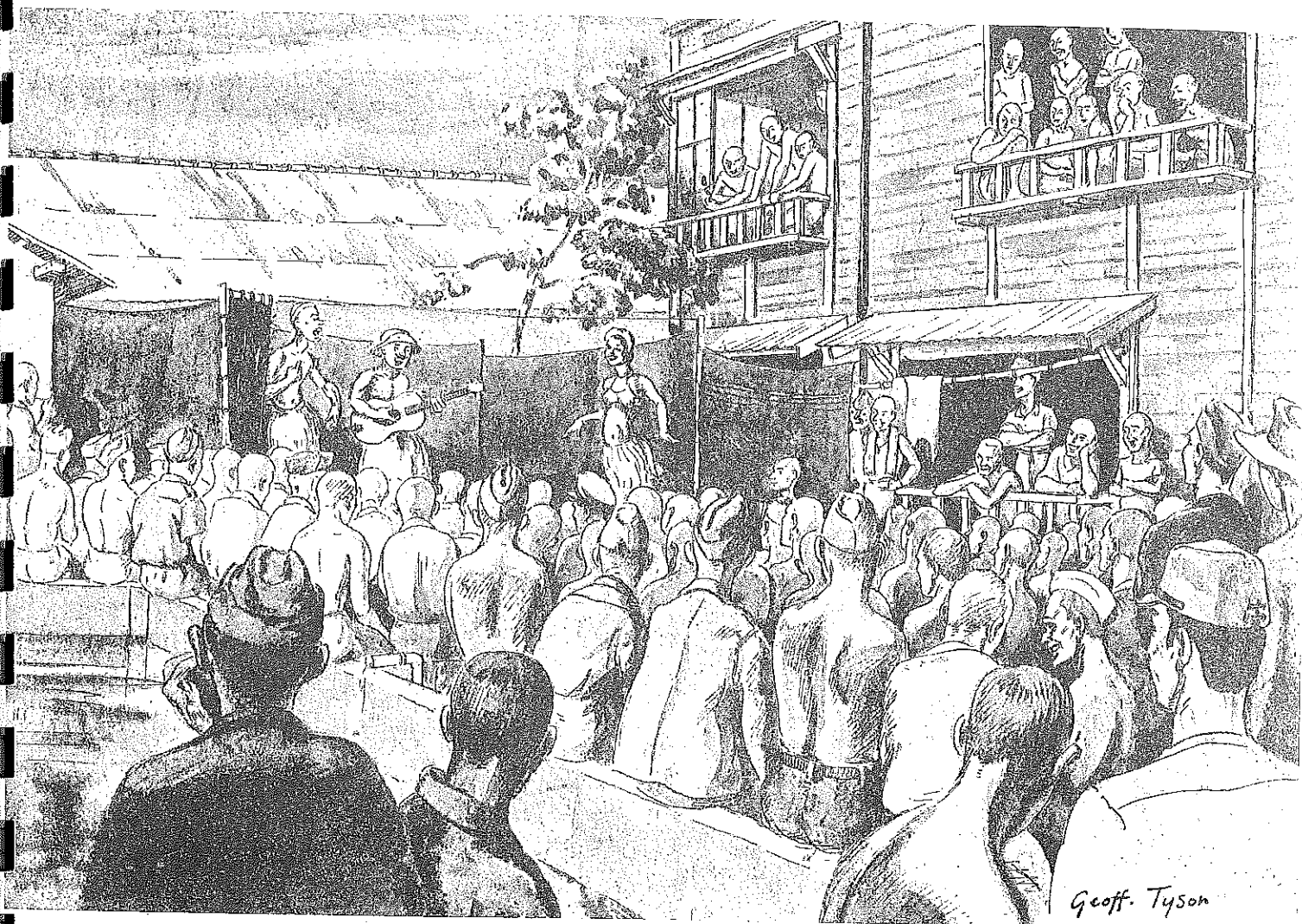


31st July, '45:

## *"Browned Off"*

In the Air-raid Shelters on Yasume Day.

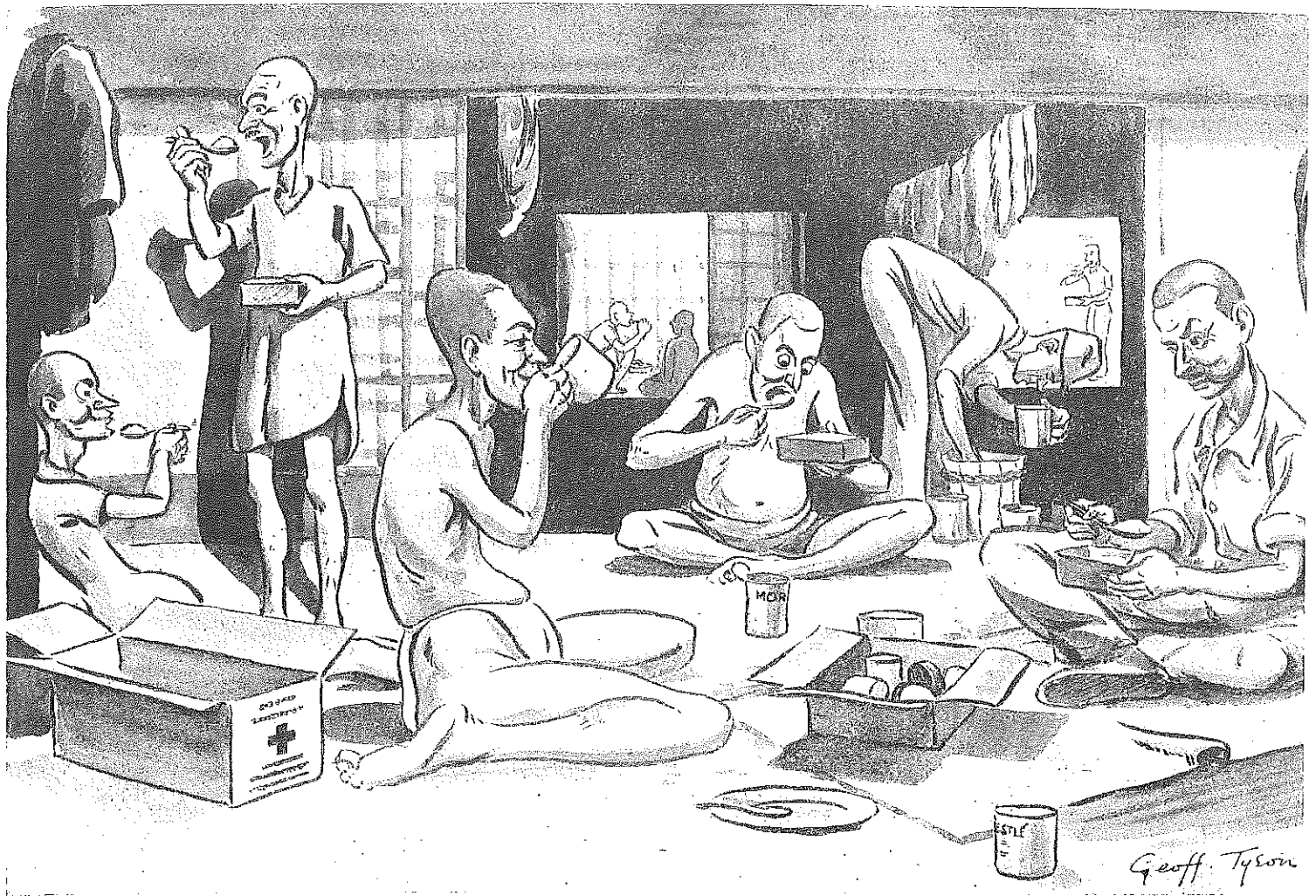




31st July, '45:

### *'Spooks' at the Lido Pool*

... A memorable theatrical date—being Cyril's debut, on his birthday, as producer of non-stop variety; and Lulu's first public appearance at Omine.



18th August, 45:

### *3 a.m. – Sleepless Night*

No one will forget Yasume Day, 15th AUGUST, the Nippon Harvest Festival day, which, in the afternoon became a day of mourning . . .

The camp concert was postponed . . .

No air-raid siren all day . . .

At evening "Tenko" word given out, "No outside work to-morrow . . ."

No siren all night . . .

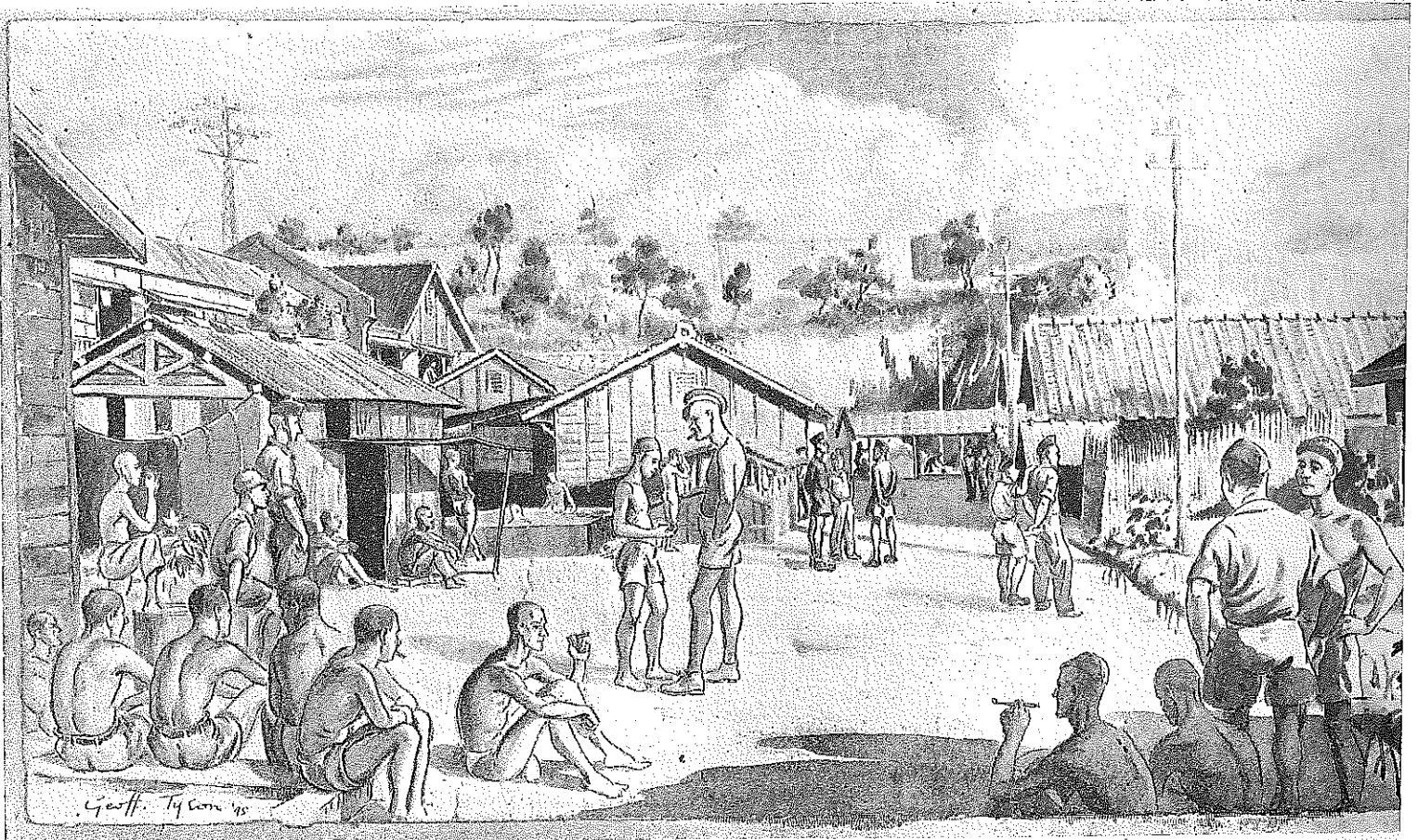
16th August, '45: A day of rumours and endless discussions . . .

"The nip. orderly-sergeant let the boys into the pumpkin patch! . . ."

"The Brown Bomber had been seen weeping in the guard-house yesterday! . . ."

Again, at "Tenko," "No work outside to-morrow . . ."  
No siren all night . . .

17th August, 45: When the Red Cross supplies were given out and the Fukuoka draft returned, everyone was convinced that THE WAR HAD "HAD IT!"



## *Waiting for Evening "Tenko"*

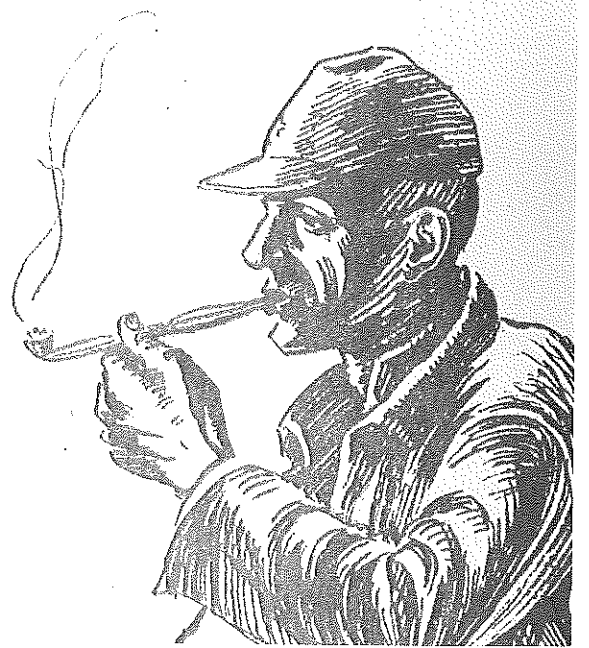
When the Nip guards were still in charge

"No more running fast as hell  
When we hear the 'Tenko' bell;  
No more will we hear them yell.  
ROLL ON THAT BOAT."

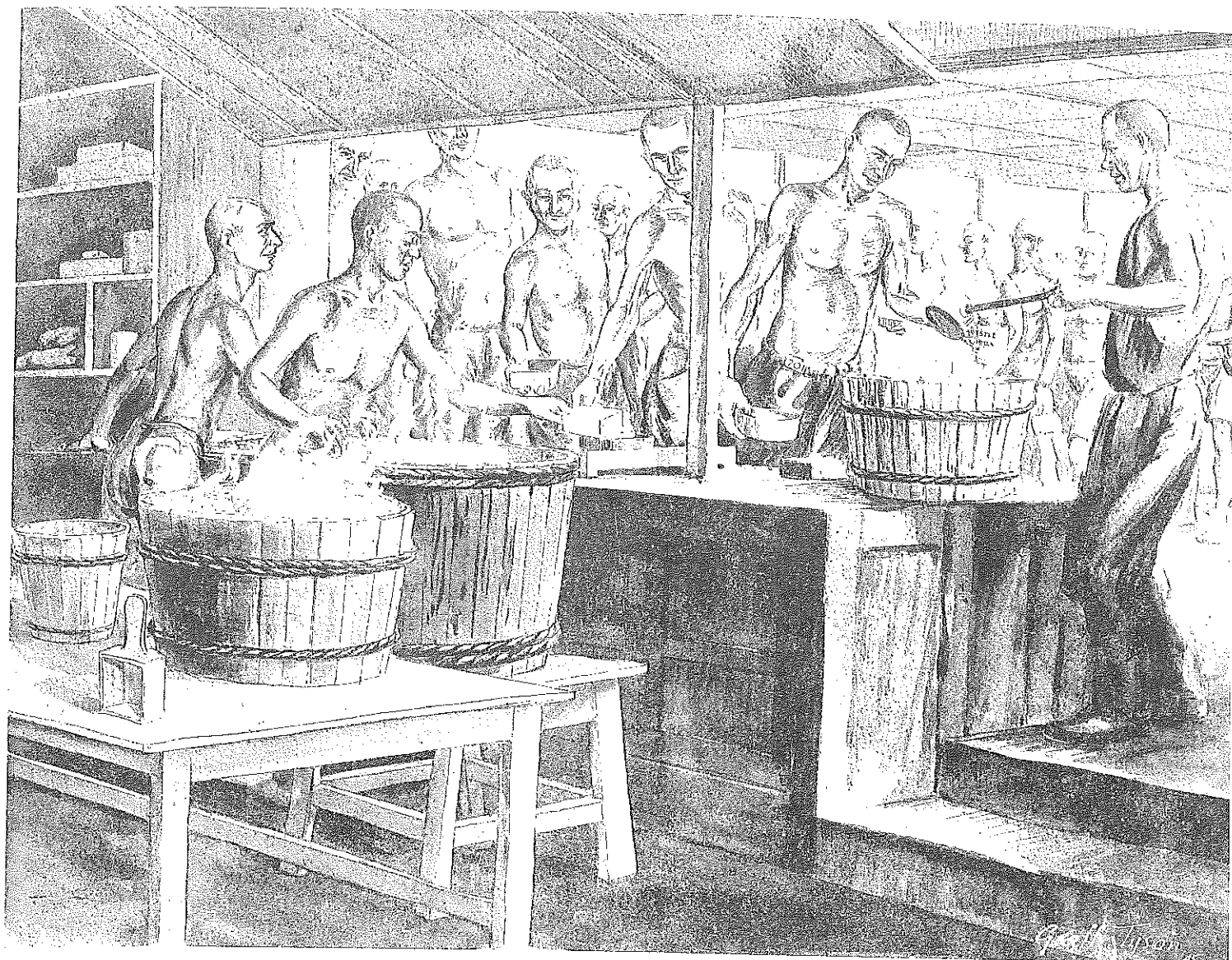
## *Smokes became very short*

One packet of hairweed bringing 100 yen

"No more scrounging rolls of 'hair,'  
No more will tailor-made's be rare,  
We'll all have 'takson' fags to spare.  
ROLL ON THAT BOAT."





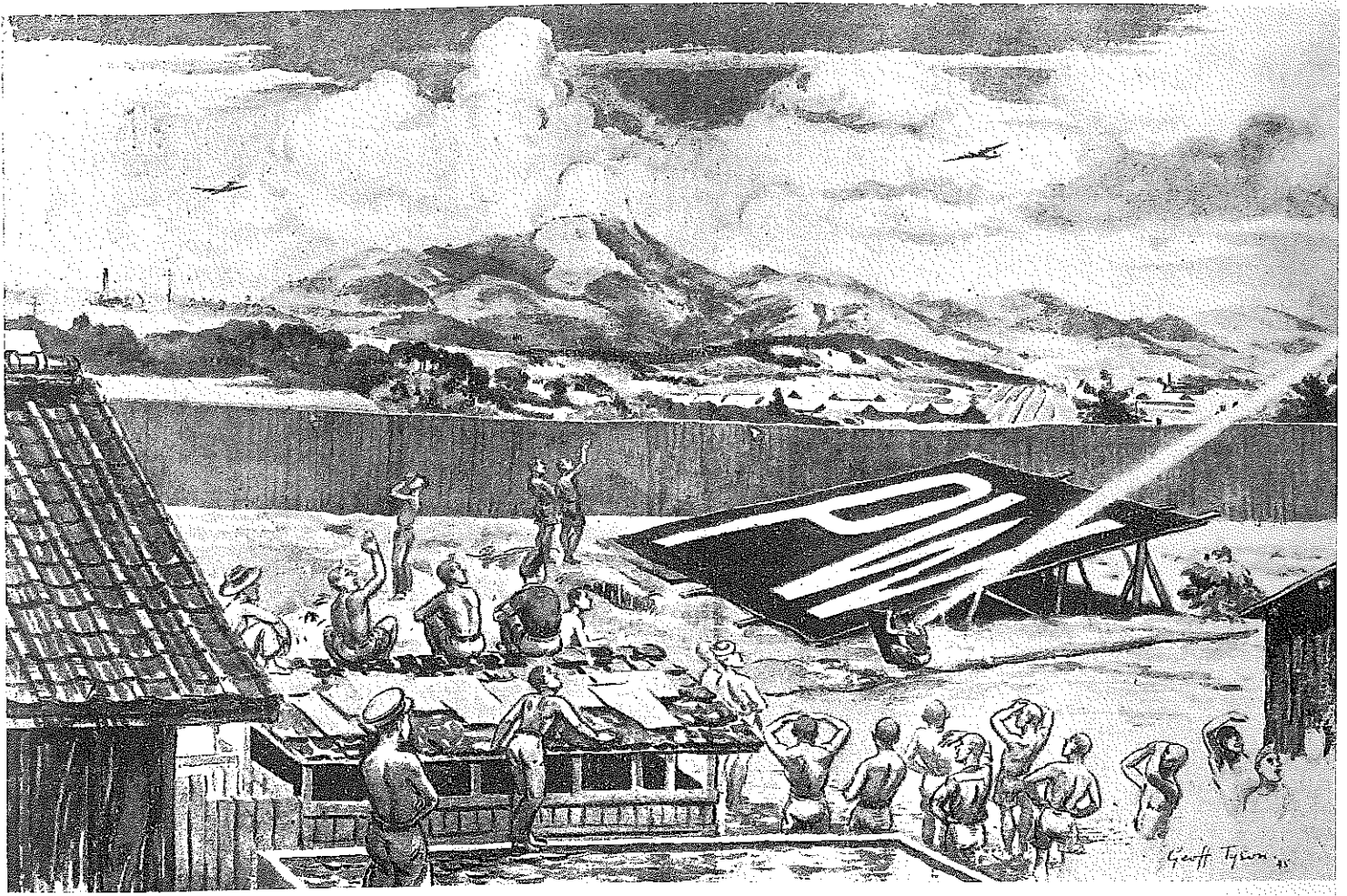


### *The Old Dining Room from the Kitchen*

The Red Cross supplies ran out . . . the big pig was killed and eaten . . . rice and bean stew came back three times a day and, on 27th August, '45, there was only breakfast and a late supper on account of the breakdown of steam, owing to Omine catching the tail-end of a typhoon.

"The kitchen's working like a dream,  
There's nothing there, or so 'twould seem;  
No lights! No bowls! No water! No steam!  
ROLL ON THAT BOAT!"

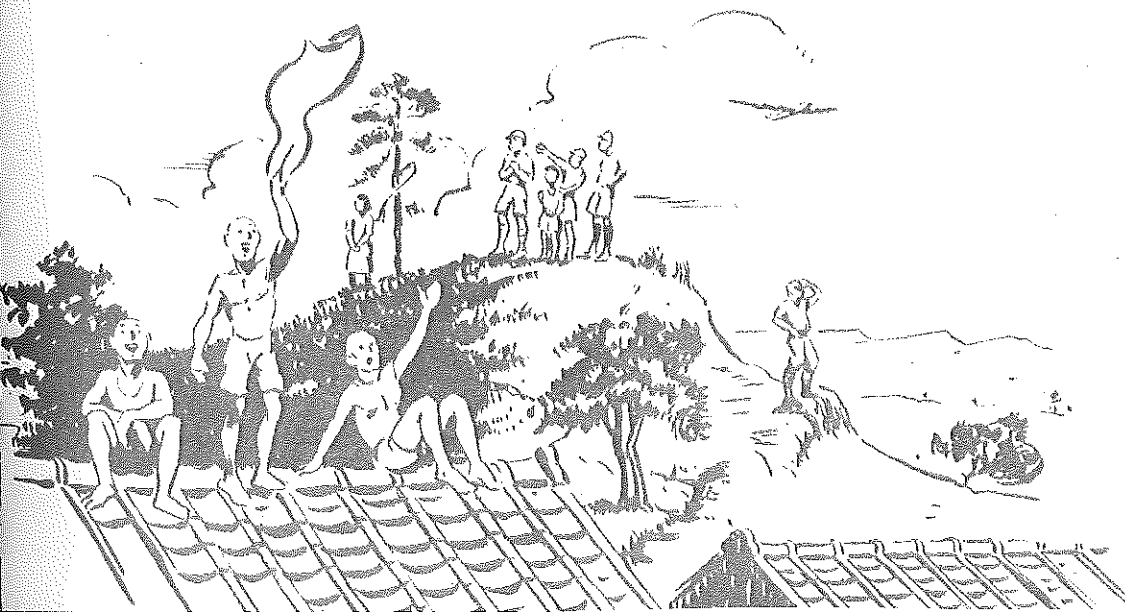




28th August, '45:

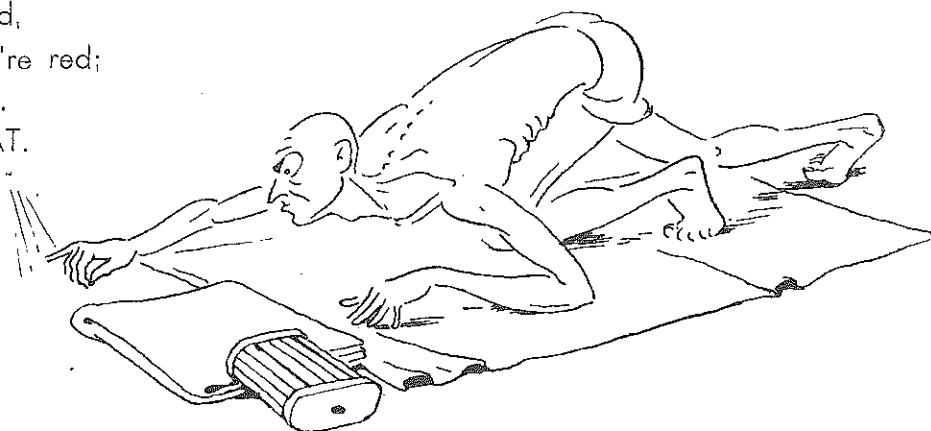
*'Shorty' Portia brings in the Planes by Mirror Beam*

The U.S. 'planes came looking for the camps, but it was not until Shorty started flashing the barber's mirror that they found Omine camp and dropped supplies.



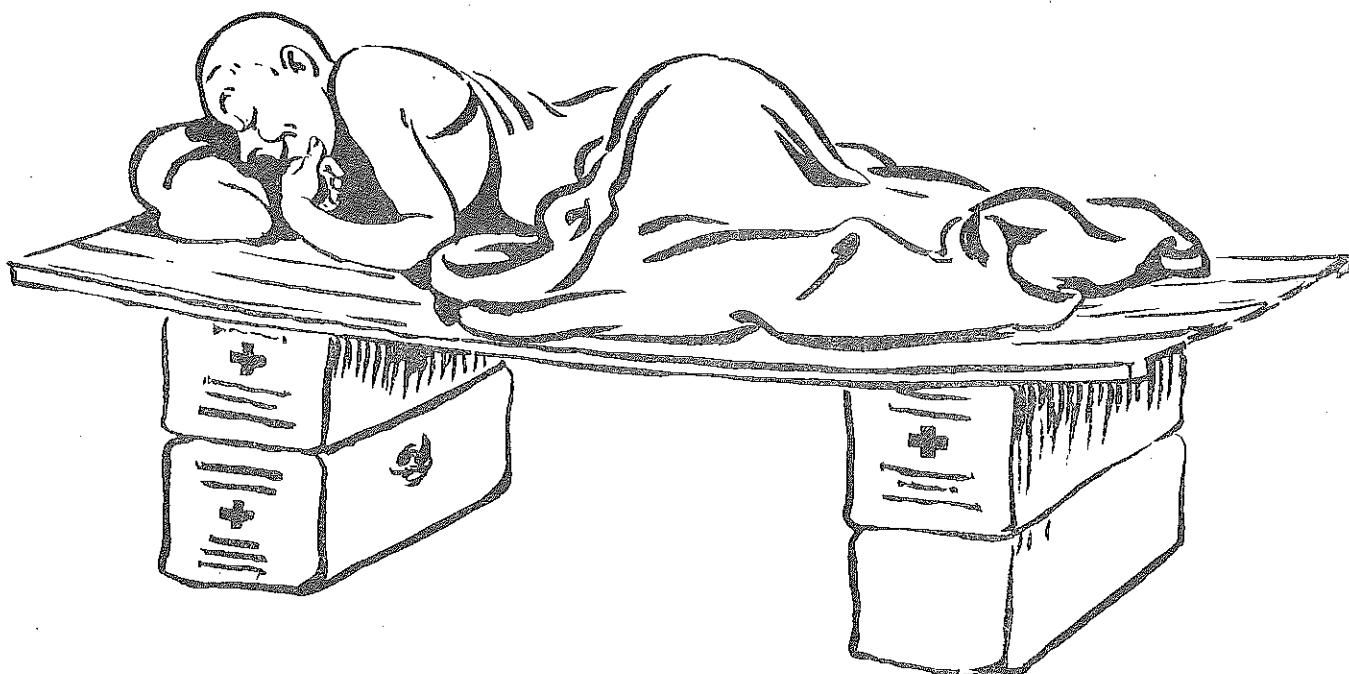


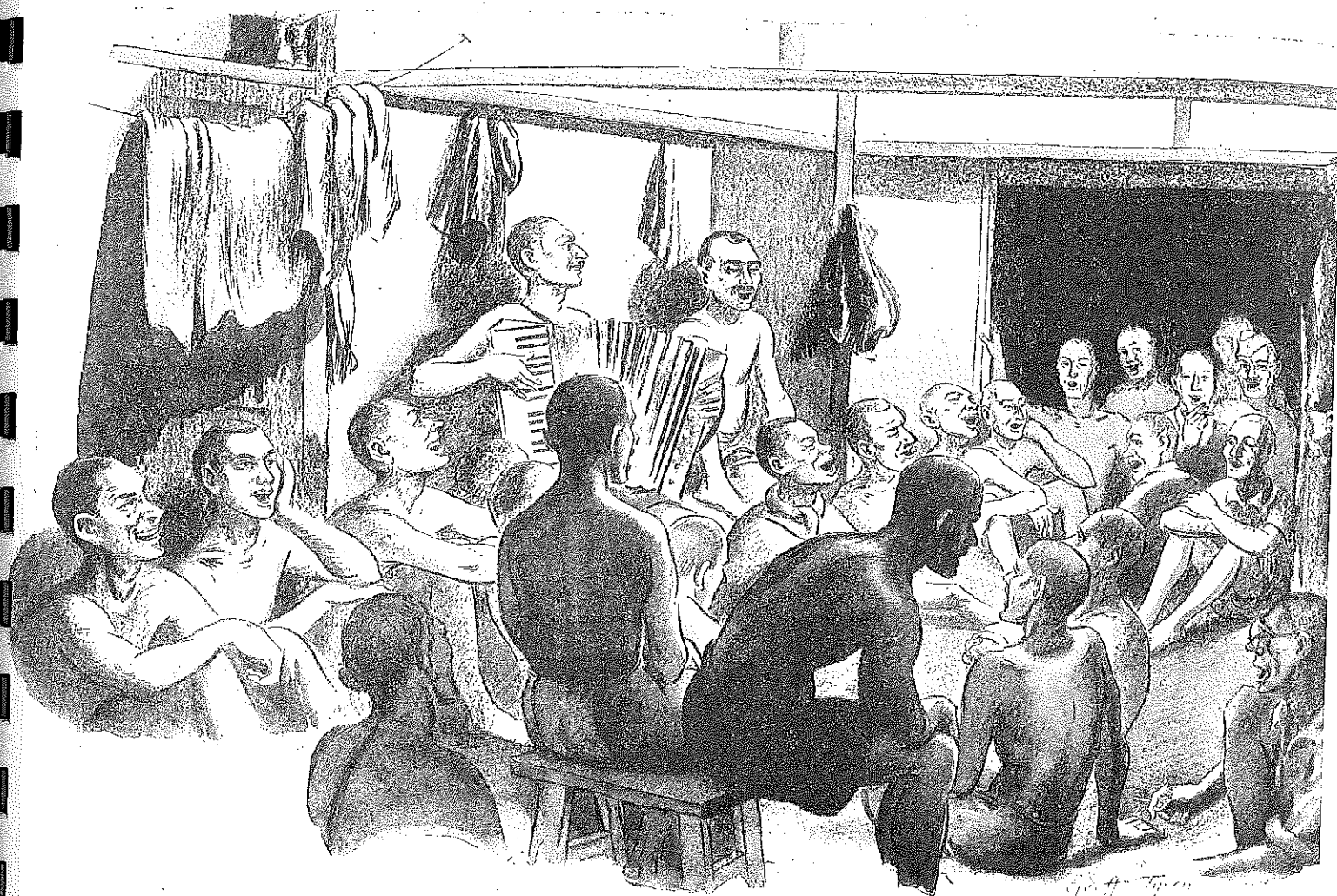
No more fleas inside your bed,  
No more scratching till you're red;  
Never were they better fed.  
ROLL ON THAT BOAT.



## FLEAS!!

In July flies and fleas brought one cigarette per hundred from camp headquarters and a hundred could be caught on one blanket if you were quick enough. By 28th August half Omine had left their sleeping mats to the fleas and got above them with the aid of a few Red Cross boxes and a "benjo" door or mess table.





28th August, '45:

## *Sing Song in 6 Chotai Barracks*

Music by Les Law, compered by Stan Davies.  
Bill Collier announced, "We Fly to Manila."



## *Aftermath of First Drop*

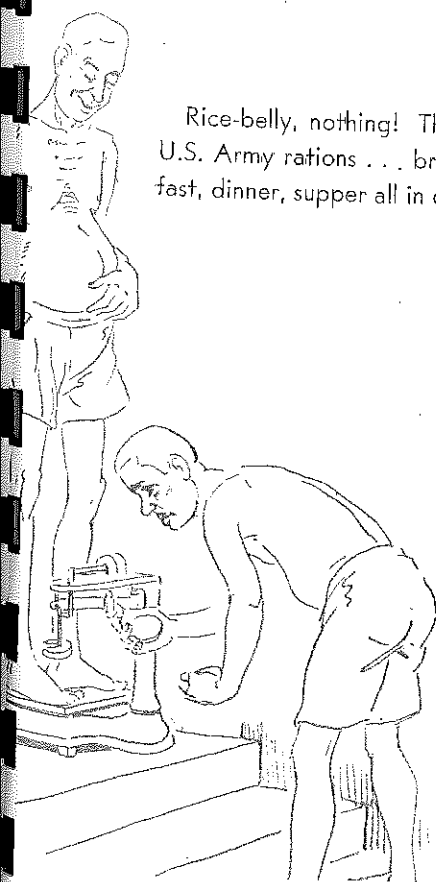
By U.S. Army Prisoner-of-War Supplies' Planes



Rice-belly, nothing! That's  
U.S. Army rations . . . break-  
fast, dinner, supper all in one!

## *Two into One goes easily*

Frenchy and Bilson share a  
pair of Red Cross coveralls.







30th August, '45:

## *Second Food Drop*

By United States Army P.O.W. Supplies' Planes



*Queen Wilhelmina's Birthday*

Pinned to the Dutch flag a piece of orange parachute silk represents the pennant of the "House of Orange."



*P. O. W. Cemetery for Omine Camp*

Men who died from sickness and mine accidents.





4th September, '45:

### *Back to the Barter System*

Food short again. Bean and pumpkin soup and rice main diet . . Men leave camp with clothes and exchange them at farm houses for fowls, vegetables, etc. Many parties set out to visit other camps.



## *The Last Days at Omine*

Full of American food . . . smoking American cigarettes . . . Korean boys to do the cooking and cleaning . . . just waiting for the boat ticket.



"For any day you'll hear the call:  
'All Aboard! One and all . . .'  
So, be it big, be it small,  
Motor, schooner, yacht or yawl,  
Any blinkin' boat at all . . .  
ROLL ON THAT BOAT"



## *Saganasaki, Christmas 1944*

From photos presented to Mr. Ron Williams by a Nip. officer.

