

DIVISION OF
 PRESS INTELLIGENCE
 GOVERNMENT
 INFORMATION SERVICE
 BUREAU OF THE BUDGET
 Tempo V Bldg.

SYM.

PC

Star
 Washington, D. C.
 143
 DATE

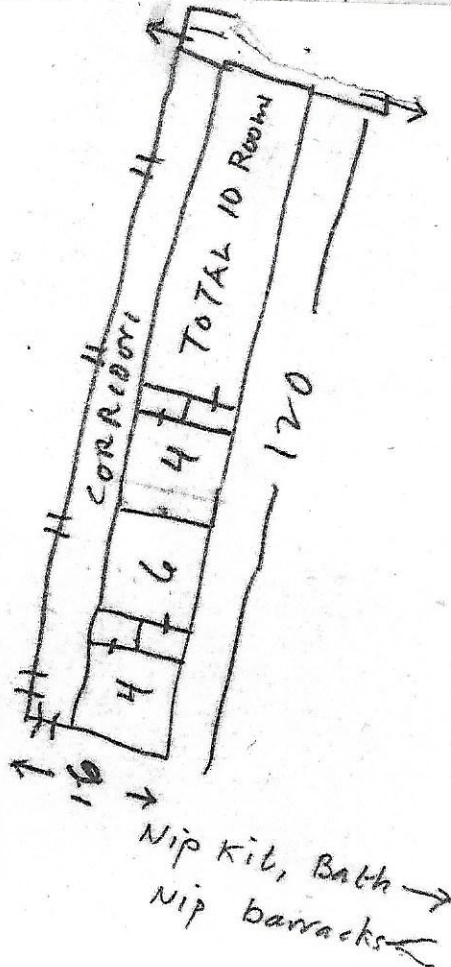
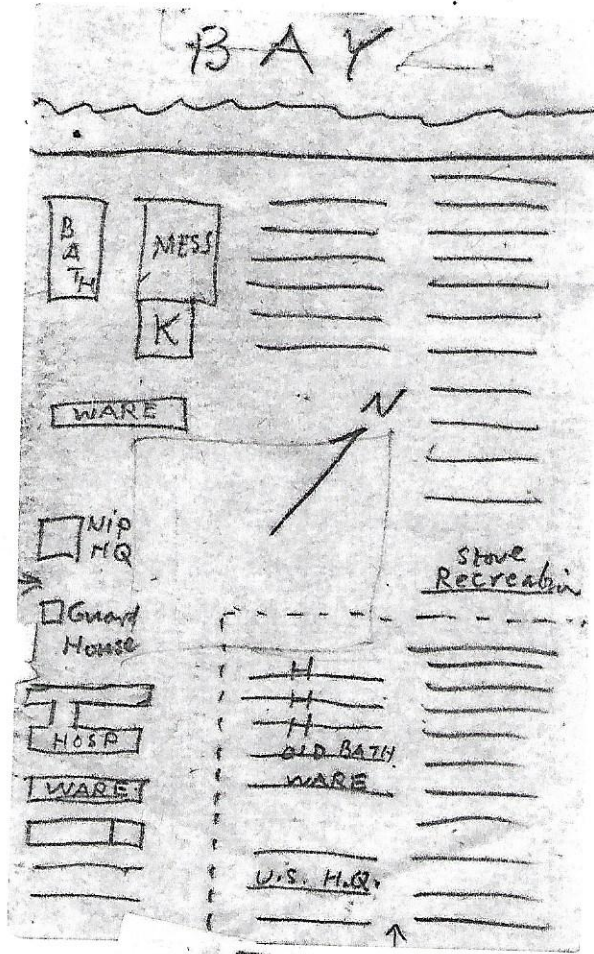
JAN 30 1946

**Americans Injured Selves
 To Avoid Work in Mine**

YOKOHAMA, Jan. 30 (AP).—Testimony that American prisoners of war dreaded Japanese coal mines so much that they "purposely broke their arms to get out of work" was introduced today at the war crimes trial of Capt. Isao Fukuhara, former commandant of Omuta prison camp.

A deposition by Pfc. Clarence E. Coffelt of Oklahoma City said the prisoners were afraid of being killed or disabled in the Mitsui mines and purposely injured themselves.

In an adjoining courtroom, Hiroj Honda denied charges that he mistreated prisoners at the Sendai prison camps, of which he was commandant. Honda said he gave orders that prisoners must be "well cared for" and treated equally with Japanese workers.



RG 331

AFFIDAVIT OF CLARENCE EUGENE COFFELT, PFC, U.S.M.C., #295242

STATE OF CALIFORNIA :
 : SS
County of Alameda :

Clarence Eugene COFFELT, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

My permanent home address is 329 South East 40th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. I am 24 years of age. I was taken prisoner at Corregidor on 7 May 1942 and was interned in the Philippine Islands until about 1 July 1944, at which time I was moved to Japan and interned from 3 Sept 1944 until liberated on 13 September 1945 at Camp No. 17, Fukuoka Area.

While at the Fukuoka Prison Camp, I witnessed several beatings and other atrocities committed by camp guards none of whom I can identify, which it was generally known were sanctioned by the Camp Commander. The my entire stay and was reportedly killed by the Chinese after the prisoners were liberated. In April or May 1945, the Camp Commander personally administered Class MOREY (phonetic), of the Fourth Marines, across the back and face and putting one of MOREY's eyes out. The reason was that MOREY, in charge of a work detail, had taken his men into a shelter to get out of the rain.

In February 1945, camp guards in full view of the Camp Commander's quarters forced a U.S. Army enlisted man, name unknown, whom we nicknamed "Gum Drop", to kneel in the snow with a bamboo pole held behind his knees for over twenty-four hours. When "Gum Drop" had not passed out after about twelve hours, cold water was poured over him and froze to him and forced to remain another twelve hours or so. At the end of this time all of his toes on both feet were frozen and subsequently had to be amputated by Captain HEWLITT, Medical Corps, U.S. Army. All of the guards had a practice of beating with a club prisoners who failed to carry their "bento" or rice rations to their work in the coal mine, while other guards would administer beatings if their rations were consumed in the mine or before entering it. One such incident occurred in about June 1945 when all of the prisoners who were found not to have their "bentos" with them, having already consumed them, were beaten with clubs across the back and legs and on their faces with fists for ten or twelve minutes.

Prisoners were forced to work in the mines for twelve hours or more a day under conditions which were so dangerous that several were permanently disabled. Some prisoners purposely broke their arms or in other ways injured themselves to get out of work because of their fear of being killed or disabled. Private First Class CARR, first name unknown, U.S.M.C., died in late August 1945 from a foot infection contracted in the mine after having been forced to return to work before his foot injury was cured. Captain T. H. HEWLITT, Medical Corps, U.S. Army, would have records of injuries sustained by prisoners in their mine duty.

23 October 1945

/s/ Clarence E. Coffelt

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 23rd day of October 1945 at Oakland, California, U.S.A.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

/s/ Robert E. Curtiss
Lieutenant, U.S.N.R.

/s/ Everett Checkett
EVERETT CHECKETT

tion changed to RESTRICTED by
of check sheet CINCOPF, 22 Oct 49.
22 Oct 49) DRB. Downgrading of
Evidence Documents, by Major
Bishop, QMC.