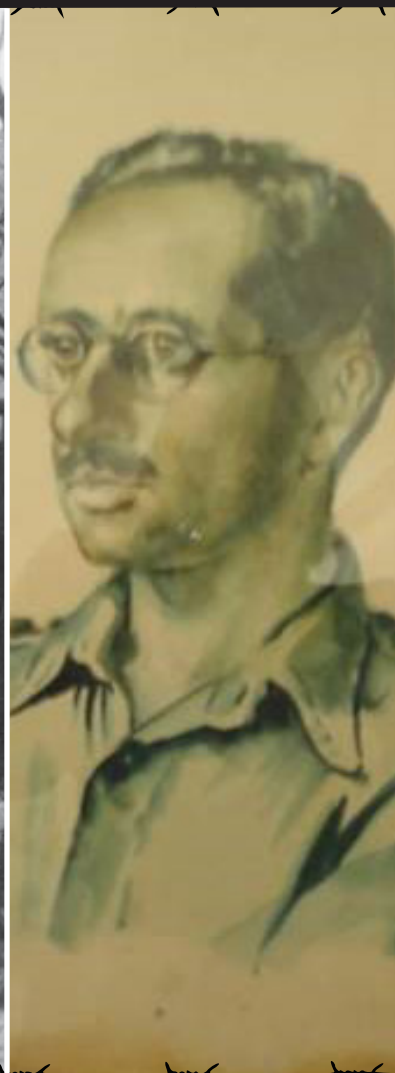


# Secret Art of Survival

Creativity and ingenuity of British Far East prisoners of war, 1942 - 45

KS2 and KS3 Teaching Resource



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*From a sketch of below decks on England Maru, Singapore to Taiwan late 1942, by Padre F. Stallard, © courtesy Stallard family*

# Introduction to the resource

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This resource explores a hidden history of the Second World War, centred on the war across Asia, as Japan brutally expanded its empire throughout the region. This resource has been created by the Secret Art of Survival project, which is the latest element of the Captive Memories FEPOW (Far East prisoners of war) history programme. The project is a collaboration between the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine who have been treating and working with FEPOW survivors since 1945, and the Victoria Gallery and Museum who have curated the Secret Art of Survival exhibition. The Secret Art of Survival exhibition provides a unique and fascinating glimpse of the battle to survive extreme adversity in wartime and the self-help strategies used by British servicemen, including making art to record their lives and as therapy.

During the Second World War thousands of Allied servicemen became prisoners of the Japanese. Japanese military philosophy held that anyone surrendering was beneath contempt. As a result, their treatment of captives was harsh. Working as slave labourers on a starvation diet, many died. Brutal punishments were handed out for the most minor breach of camp rules. FEPOW hurriedly documented daily existence in pencil, pen and ink, wherever they found themselves, in large transit camps, industrial work camps, jungle clearings or on tropical islands. FEPOW artists captured both the beauty and the horror of the landscapes.



*View from Haroekoe Island, Moluccas, 1944 by FI/Lt F.R. Philips, © Philips family*

FEPOW who were doctors, chemists and engineers before the war improvised medical equipment and drugs denied to them by the Japanese. A number of FEPOW artists charted the doctors' battle to keep men alive: from ingenious life-saving inventions made from bamboo, tin, rubber and scrap to full operating theatres and dental surgeries in jungle camps. Others documented how faith and hope played a vital role, drawing and painting the small bamboo churches and concrete chapels and loved ones at home. Making each other laugh was crucial to morale and survival and is evidenced in the many cartoons drawn and performances produced.

## How to use the resource

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The activities have been inspired by the real-life stories of FEPOW featured in the Secret Art of Survival exhibition. The 'secret' in the title has two elements; firstly, it was forbidden to document anything in the camps and punishment was severe. Secondly, most of the work in this exhibition remained secret for many years, as even when it was brought back home it was hidden away as the men found it difficult to share the memories it evoked.

- Each activity includes instructions, equipment needed, worksheets and additional information and National Curriculum and skills links.
- The activities have been designed for KS2 and KS3 students but can easily be adapted for older/younger students.

# FEPOW Fact Sheet

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During the Second World War, 50,000 British servicemen became Far East prisoners of war (FEPOW), having been captured by the Japanese between December 1941 and March 1942, in places as far apart as Hong Kong, Singapore and the islands of Java and Sumatra in what was then known as the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). Many British servicemen were conscripts or volunteers and took their civilian skills into captivity.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941 was part of Japan's military government's expansionist policy to rid the Far East of western colonial rule. Seizing British, Dutch and American colonies also gave the Japanese access to much-needed tin, rubber and oil – the raw materials of twentieth century mechanised warfare – and these were in plentiful supply in the western-held colonies of Malaya, the Dutch East Indies and the Philippines. With lightning speed and efficiency, the Japanese military forced the British, then the Dutch and the Americans, into surrendering these territories in one humiliating defeat after another.

FEPOW were subjected to years of neglect, malnutrition, disease and slave labour. They were moved at the whim of their captors around a vast area, by sea, train and on foot, to wherever a labour force was required. FEPOW worked on railways, docks, down mines and clearing tracts of jungle. The death rate for the British was nearly 25%, in contrast to just over 4% for British prisoners of war (POW) held in Europe. When the Japanese finally surrendered on 15 August 1945, three months after the war had ended in Europe, just over 37,500 British FEPOW were liberated from camps.

At least 20,000 of these men (as well as hundreds of civilian internees) disembarked in Liverpool between 8 October and the end of December that year; the remainder either returned via Southampton or, in the case of a few, flew back and were the first to arrive home during the September

# To find out more visit:

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**[www.captivememories.org.uk](http://www.captivememories.org.uk)**

*This is the dedicated site on FEPOW history produced by Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and features images, audio and histories*

**[www.vgm.liverpool.ac.uk](http://www.vgm.liverpool.ac.uk)**

*This has specific pages on the Secret Art of Survival exhibition including images of artwork and the stories of the men who made them*

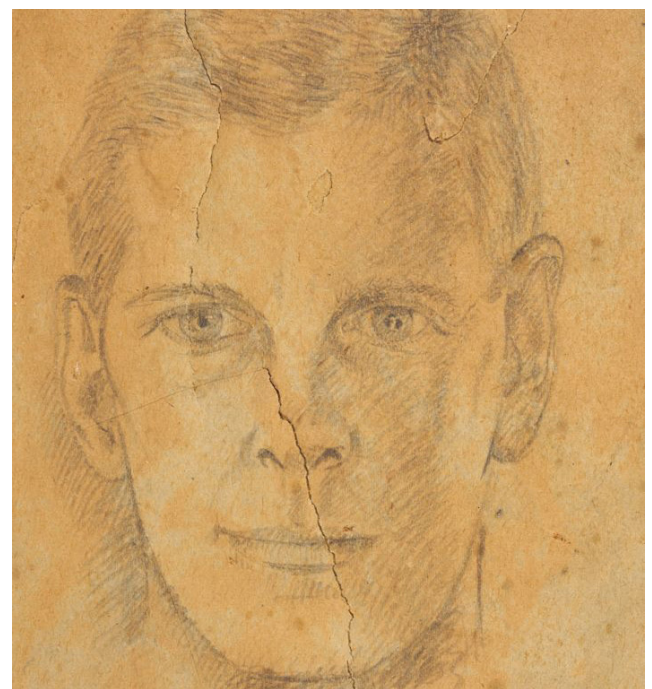
**[www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)**

*The Imperial War Museum website includes illustrated histories of the war in the Pacific*

A new book accompanies the Secret Art of Survival exhibition 'Captive Artists, the unseen art of British Far East prisoners of war' written by Meg Parkes, Geoff Gill and Jenny Wood and published by Palatine Books.

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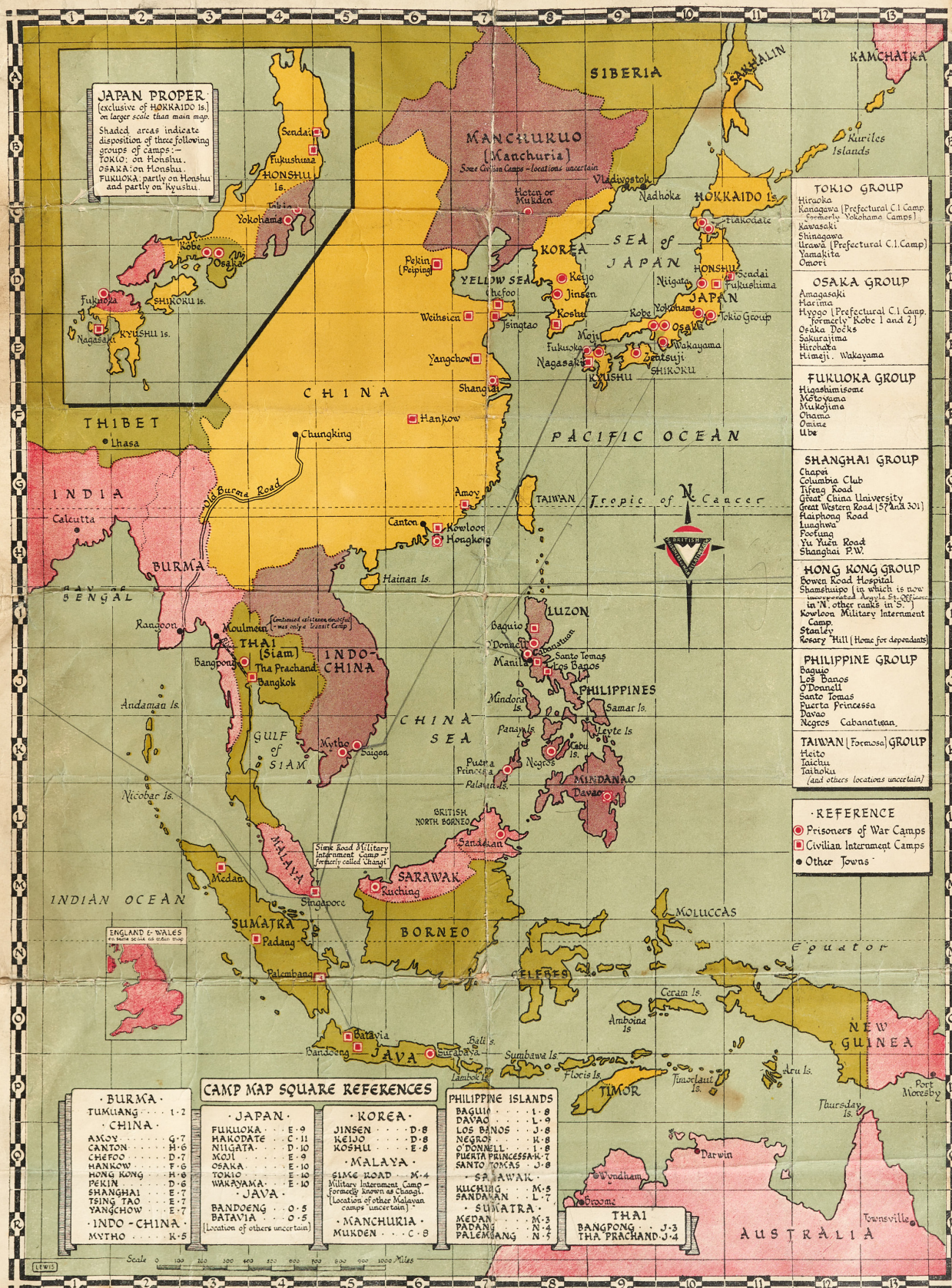
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*Portrait of Fergus Anckorn, 1945, by William Wilder,  
© Anthony Wilder*

# Map of the camps

## British Prisoners of War Relatives' Association PRISONER OF WAR AND CIVILIAN INTERNEE CAMPS FAR EAST



Revised up to January, 1945

PUBLISHED BY THE BRITISH PRISONERS OF WAR RELATIVES' ASSOCIATION  
16a, ST. JAMES'S STREET, LONDON, S.W.1

PRICE 1/-; By post 1/2

Map of the camps, courtesy M. Parkes

## FEPOW and LSTM (Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine)

LSTM is the oldest such teaching institution in the world, founded in 1898. Its work with FEPOW forms the longest-running project in the School's history, running for 75 years.

The initial focus was the clinical care of those FEPOW patients who presented to LSTM for medical help immediately post-war, many of whom lived in northern England and had disembarked at Liverpool docks. Some needed treatment for years.

Since 2000 LSTM's focus has shifted to recording the medical history of this unique collaborative project. Over 65 FEPOW veterans were interviewed as part of LSTM's Captive Memories oral history project.

### Secret Art of Survival

The FEPOW art investigation began in 2012 sparked by Prof Geoff Gill and Meg Parkes' academic research studies.

Their investigation has so far uncovered 69 artists, who have been classified as 'unrecognised' i.e. some had work in archives, but most were largely unknown outside of research. Forty of these artists are represented in the Secret Art of Survival exhibition. NB since it opened a further four "new" artists have come to light.

Below are the stories of 5 FEPOW men in their own words. They represent the experiences, skills and ingenuity FEPOW used in order to endure the harsh and deadly conditions of the camps and work parties.

You can read below about the men, students will learn more about these men in the role play activity.

### 1. Ronald John "Jack" Spittle

Aged 27, Private, Royal Army Medical Corps, from Buckinghamshire

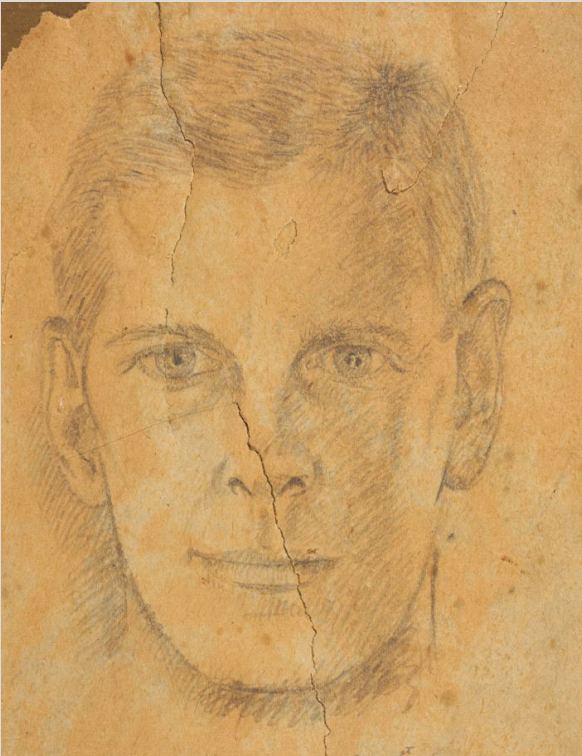


*Jack Spittle, photograph courtesy B. Spittle*

- Known as Jack
- Sent as part of a specialist squad to Singapore to do anti-malarial work destroying mosquito breeding grounds
- Engaged to Sybil during the war. He saw her letters (very few of which got through) as his 'salvation'
- Lived in huts and cramped barrack buildings
- Wrote about the types of diseases faced by those in the camps and lack of vitamins

## 2. Fergus Anckorn

Aged 23, Gunner, 135 Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, from Kent



Portrait of Fergus Anckorn, 1945, by William Wilder,  
© Anthony Wilder

- Youngest member of the magic circle aged 17, oldest member when interviewed in 2007
- Survivor of the Alexandra Hospital Massacre, Singapore 1942, two days before the Fall of Singapore (15 February, when the majority of British servicemen were captured)
- Appeared in the final of ITV's 'Britain's Got Talent' in 2016, with the winner serviceman/magician Corporal Richard Jones
- Before he became a prisoner, Anckorn was injured during the Japanese bombing. His right hand was badly injured
- He also had a bullet in his kneecap

## 3. Derek Fogarty

Aged 19, Leading Aircraftsman, Royal Air Force, from Hampshire



Photograph of Derek Fogarty at home December 2007,  
courtesy M. Parkes

- Was blasted by an explosion and went deaf and numb on his right-hand side
- Had back problems from carrying earth
- Helped build an airfield on a coral island in the Moluccas
- He was later shipped to Sumatra to work on the jungle railway
- He believed that having a small group of friends saved his life
- As time went on he said food got more scarce
- Had a girlfriend at home

## 4. Captain David Arkush

Aged 27, Dental Officer, Royal Army, Dental Corps, from Inverness



Portrait of Capt Arkush by A. G. Old, Thailand 1943,  
© courtesy the Arkush family

- Qualified as a dentist at the University of Liverpool in 1937
- Sent to Singapore Island in 1940, worked in the army dental service at Nee Soon, assisting medical staff in hospitals in Singapore when the Japanese invaded. He was sent to work in Thailand
- Prisoners kept a secret radio in some of the camps. This is how they heard news from home. Radios were run by batteries which they had to smuggle into camp. Occasionally medical staff said they needed batteries for torches as there was no electricity and they used them in the radios
- There were two orchestras in Chungkai camp in Thailand

## 5. Nowell Peach

Aged 28, Flight Lieutenant and RAF medical officer, from Bristol



Nowell Peach photograph, courtesy M. Parkes

- Worked with the surgical team at the No. 1 Allied General Hospital in Java before the Dutch East Indies fell
- Made a small carving of a native women's head out of wood at the start of his captivity
- Medical officers made vitamins from fermenting fruit
- Started to suffer with vitamin deficiency and his ankles started to swell up
- In one camp there were only three latrines (holes in the ground used as toilets) for thousands of prisoners and they had to queue up to use them



# ACTIVITY 1 - WHAT CAN THE SECRET ART TELL US?

'The Secret Art of Survival' exhibition at the Victoria Gallery and Museum in Liverpool (October 2019 to March 2020) displayed a range of art works created in secrecy by British FEPOW.

Even though FEPOW knew they were forbidden to keep writing materials, or produce journals or make art, they were driven by an artistic urge or medical need, to record the unrelenting battle to survive. Their artwork depicted all aspects of FEPOW life, from the realities of living and working in extreme conditions, finding beauty and solace in the tropical flora and fauna, to morale-boosting cartoons. Artworks were kept hidden: rolled up inside bamboo tubes in walking sticks and artificial limbs, buried in bottles and tins under huts or with the dead.

The exhibition split the artwork into themes: the environment, camp life, medical ingenuity and survival.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

The men faced many life-threatening issues and problems. Ask students to use [worksheet 1](#) to answer the following questions and write and/or draw what they discover from looking at some of the examples of the artwork on [worksheet 2](#)

### Ask the students:

- **Can you find examples of the challenges the prisoners faced within the pictures?**

*Answers could include: The environment, work, weather, disease, isolation, food, lack of communication with home.*

- **Can you find what would help them survive within the pictures?**

*Think about:*

*The materials they had available*

*The types of skills the men had*

*The drawings themselves*

*The drawings were often hidden because the men knew they were forbidden to keep any records and would be punished if they were found.*

- **Where do you think they would hide the pictures to keep them secret?**

*Answer: One place the men hid the paintings was in the bamboo*

*Bamboo picture [worksheet 3](#)*



Greetings card, back page, 1944 by Jack Chalker, © and courtesy N. Pearson

## EQUIPMENT

- COLOURING TOOLS: E.G. PENS, PENCILS, INK, BRUSHES AND PAINT
- RECORDING SHEET (WORKSHEET 1)
- IMAGES OF ARTWORK (WORKSHEET 2)
- BAMBOO PICTURE (WORKSHEET 3)



## CURRICULUM LINKS:

- HISTORY
- ART AND DESIGN

## SKILLS

- INVESTIGATION
- OBSERVATION
- CREATIVITY

# WORKSHEET 1 - WHAT CAN THE SECRET ART TELL US?

The men faced many life-threatening issues and problems.

- **Can you find examples of the problems and challenges they faced within the pictures?**
- **Can you find what would help them survive within the pictures in the gallery?**

Think about:

The materials they had

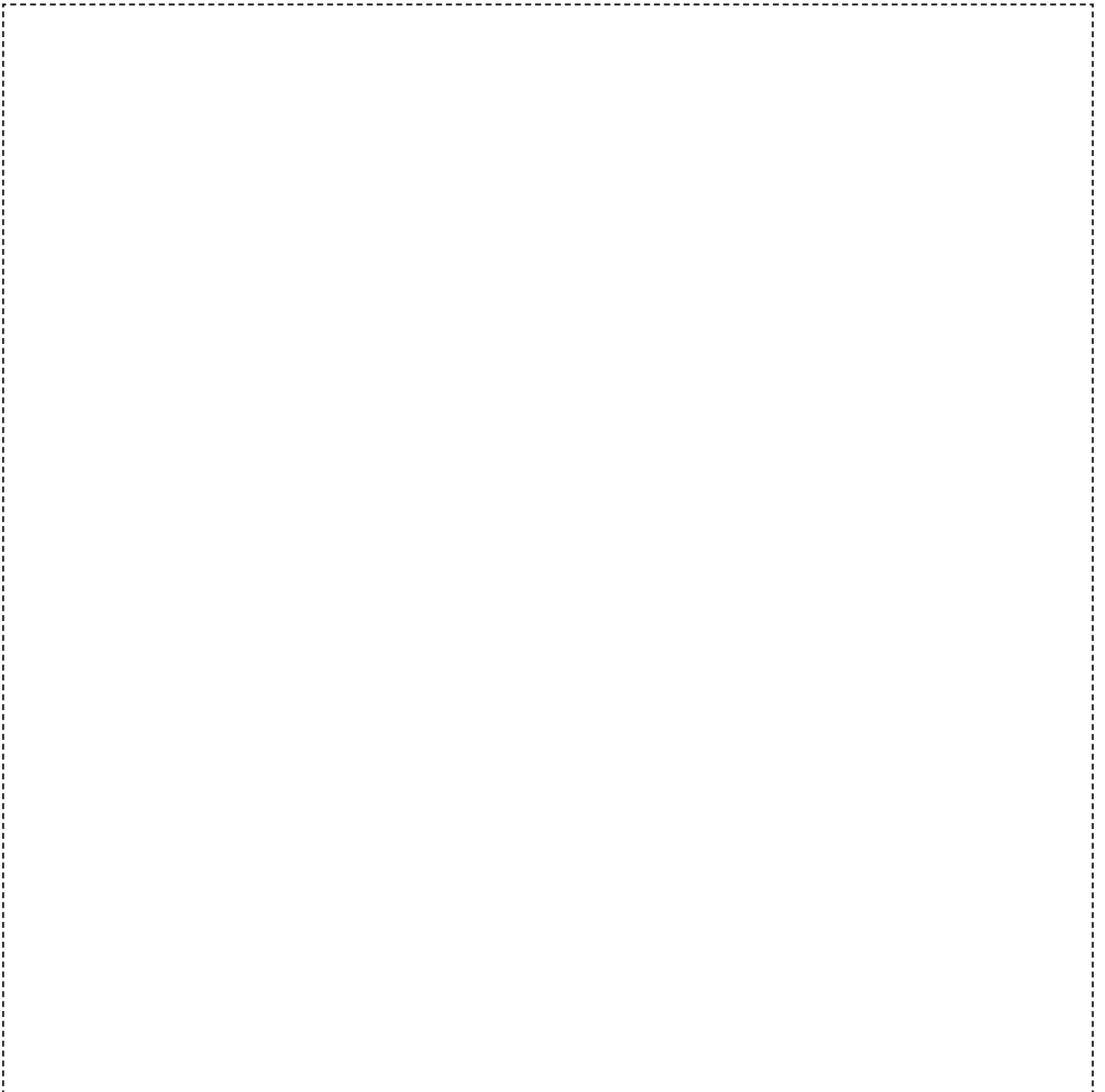
Their individual skills and talents

The drawings themselves

The drawings were often hidden as the men would be punished if they were found.

- **Where would they hide the pictures?**

Write and draw your answers below



## WORKSHEET 2 - EXAMPLES OF PICTURES



*E Troop lines, tented camp, 1942, sketch by Driver Donovan Clarke, © Clark family, courtesy C. Tuffrey*



*Inside medical officers' hut, 1943, by Fl/Lt F.R. Philps, © Philps family*

# WORKSHEET 2 - EXAMPLES OF PICTURES



View from Haroekoe Island, Moluccas, 1944 by Fl/Lt F.R. Philps, © Philps family



G. S. Coxhead,  
The Red House,  
St. Mary's Way,  
Gerrard's Cross.

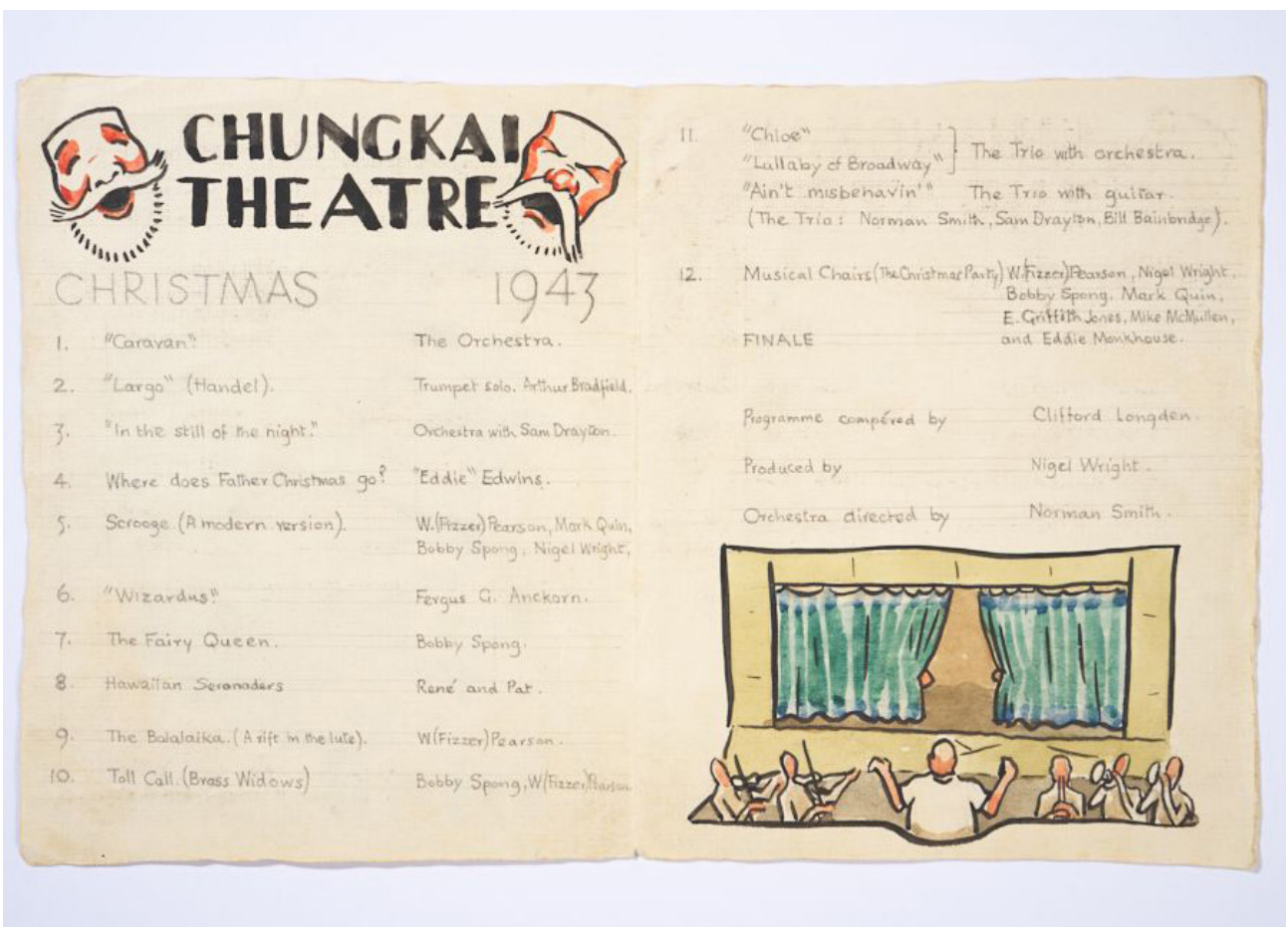
P. O. W. CAMP  
ON THE ISLAND OF INNOSHIMA  
INLAND SEA OF JAPAN.

Camp view, Japan, drawn by Gunner G.S. Coxhead, © courtesy of J. Coxhead

# WORKSHEET 2 - EXAMPLES OF PICTURES

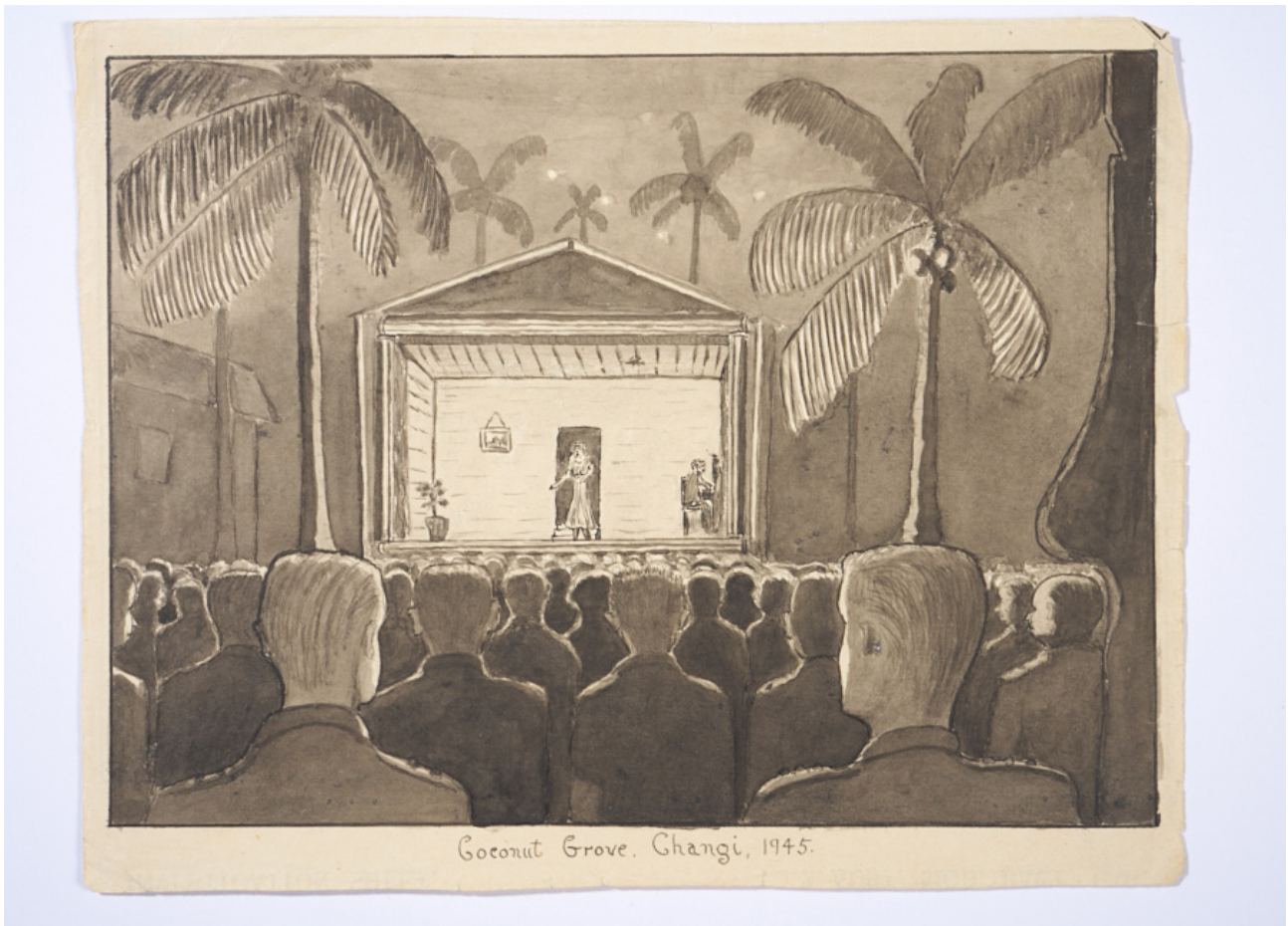


Tropical butterfly, Thailand 1943-44, painted by Sgt Jack Kemp, © J. Upcraft and courtesy W. Bird



Chungkai theatre programme, 1943, by L/Bdr R.G. Brazil, © courtesy N. Pearson

## WORKSHEET 2 - EXAMPLES OF PICTURES



Coconut Grove. Changi, 1945.

Coconut Grove Theatre, Changi Gaol, Singapore 1945, painted by Capt T. Wilson, © courtesy the Wilson Family



Dysentery hut  
Kranji POW camp  
atmosphere  
of great suffering

very overcrowded  
and filthy - most give impression

Sketch of Dysentery hut, Kranji POW camp Singapore, 1945 by W.G Norways, © courtesy of G. & T. Norways



Greetings card, back page, 1944 by Jack Chalker, © and courtesy N. Pearson

# ACTIVITY 2 - DETECTIVE CHALLENGE

The prisoners faced challenges that nothing could have prepared them for.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

Ask the students to use the evidence in **worksheet 4** to list the types of challenges the prisoners faced.

### Ask the students:

- What does the evidence tell you?
- What are the main challenges faced?
- How would you feel?
- What would you be worried about?
- What would be different from life at home?

Students can record this on the detective evidence report on **worksheet 5** or draw the camp and label it with the challenges.

*N.B. The evidence gathered in this activity (Activity 2) can be used with Activity 3: Role play*



Sketch of below decks on board England Maru, Singapore to Taiwan late 1942, drawn by Padre F. Stallard, © courtesy Stallard family

St George's outside view, 1943, by Lt E.F. Stacy, © J. Stacy and courtesy Cordingly family



## EQUIPMENT

- PENS OR PENCILS
- EVIDENCE (WORKSHEET 4)
- DETECTIVE EVIDENCE REPORT (WORKSHEET 5)



## CURRICULUM LINKS:

- HISTORY
- ENGLISH
- ART

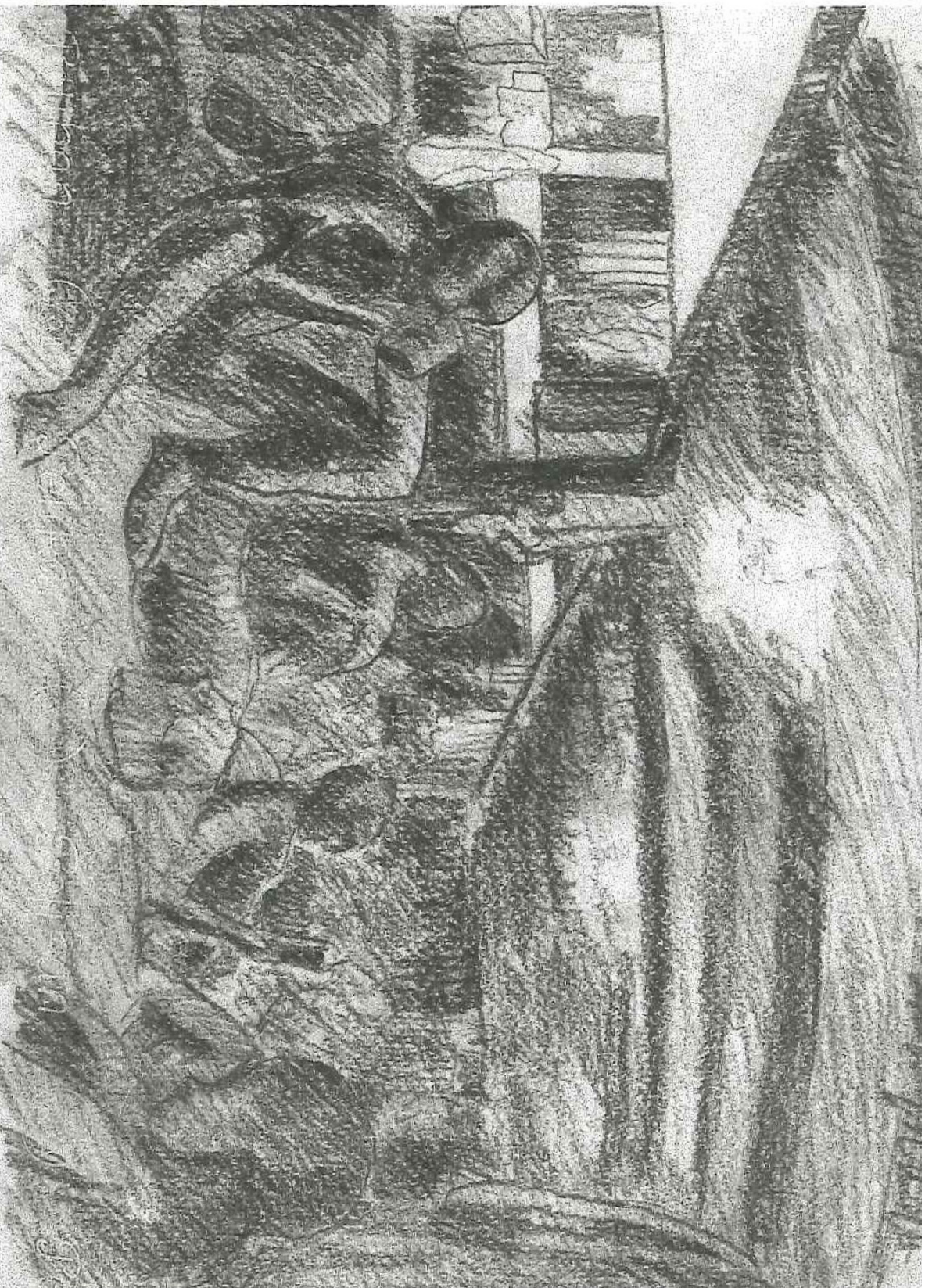
## SKILLS

- OBSERVATION
- WRITING
- INVESTIGATION



## EVIDENCE 1: TRAVEL BY SHIP

The men were confined to the holds of small ships for the whole of long and arduous journeys.



*Sketch of below decks on board  
England Maru, Singapore to Taiwan  
late 1942, drawn by Padre F. Stallard,  
© courtesy Stallard family*

# WORKSHEET 4

## EVIDENCE 2: LOCATION

The men were put in prison camps in different locations. This could include the jungle, mines and industrial sites or in towns and cities.

Those prisoners whose camps were in the tropics would encounter: monkeys, snakes, water buffalo, wild boar, elephants, chickens, ducks, pigs and insects including flies, mosquitoes, butterflies (from the minute to the huge), spiders, red soldier ants, scorpions, snails, termites, beetles, lice and fleas.

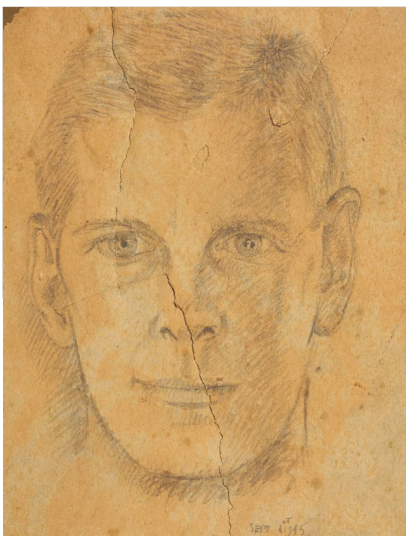


Photograph of Derek Fogarty at home December 2007, courtesy M. Parkes

### Derek Fogarty

*"A whole family of black scorpions fell out of what we'd touched...on this wagon, by the side of the road..."*

*"It was like jungle in the vicinity and there was this whole family of wild boar and it was there I learnt that whatever else you do you don't argue with wild boar because they're the most ferocious animal in the jungle...I loved the animals and I loved to hear the monkeys."*



Portrait of Fergus Anckorn, 1945, by William Wilder, © Anthony Wilder

### Fergus Anckorn

*"And then I'd spend the rest of the day in the jungle on my own, looking at the creepy crawlies and the snakes and the lovely flowers and things like that."*

# WORKSHEET 4

## EVIDENCE 3: FOOD AND RATIONS

- The men were not getting enough calories for the amount of work they were doing.
- They were not getting enough vitamins.
- The prisoners were sometimes able to supplement their rations by buying eggs, peanuts and gula malacca (type of palm sugar made from the sap of flower buds from the coconut palm) but the supplies were short and irregular.
- No additional or special rations were allowed by the Japanese for sick men.



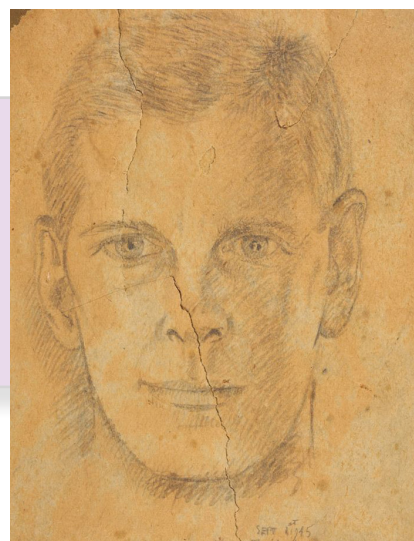
### Derek Fogarty

*"Things got worse and worse...food was very short and where we didn't have much rice and we used to have what they called tapioca flour which they made...ongle balls, which was like unleavened bread and it was a dirty brown colour."*

Photograph of Derek Fogarty at home December 2007, courtesy M. Parkes

### Fergus Anckorn

*"I think we had 60 grams of rice a day and in some camps there were vegetables, if there was a buffalo that had been killed, that went in the pot."*



Portrait of Fergus Anckorn, 1945, by William Wilder, © Anthony Wilder



### David Arkush

*"... a canteen in the camp and you could buy food there, you could buy a sort of meat stew, if you had money you could do everything, and there was a tremendous amount of buying and selling."*

Portrait of Capt Arkush by A. G. Old, Thailand 1943, © courtesy the Arkush family

# WORKSHEET 4

## EVIDENCE 3: FOOD AND RATIONS

December 1942  
(Ounces per man per day)

Rice (polished)	24.7
Sugar	0.7
Salt	Nil
Oil	0.09
Tea	0.08
Vegetables	16.2
Pork or Dried Fish	1.0
Wheat flour	Nil

Rice polished - One ounce gives 110 calories but has very few vitamins. The rice was stored in hot and damp conditions for long periods of time.

Sugar - One ounce gives 100 calories but is deficient in all vitamins.

Oil - One ounce gives 257 calories and vitamins A, B1 and the B2 complex are present.

Vegetables - The rations included Chinese radish, pumpkin, sweet potatoes and dried cabbage. Of these, pumpkins contain vitamin A and sweet potatoes B1.

Pork and dried fish - The amounts supplied gave negligible quantities of calories. Pork, however, contains vitamin B1 and the B2 complex.

Wheat Flour - This ceased to be a ration after the middle of 1942.



Food queue at Kranji POW Hospital camp, 1945, photograph by Bill Norways, © courtesy the Norways family

# WORKSHEET 4

## EVIDENCE 4: WEATHER AND HEAT

The quotes below describe some of the prisoners' experiences with the weather.



Photograph of Derek Fogarty at home December 2007, courtesy M. Parkes

### Derek Fogarty

*"And then you were walking from ice cold sand, which when it was wet it was ice cold, across white hot, red hot sand where it's in the sun I mean the temperature would be well over the hundred, y'know burning your feet."*

*"We weren't allowed jackets and we weren't allowed hats, so it was pretty horrific heat-wise and horrific standing in the wagon."*

### Maurice Naylor

Aged 22, Gunner, 135 Field Regt from Manchester.

He was captured in Singapore and was sent to work on the Thai-Burma railway. Having trained as an administrator he volunteered to work for Lt Col. Toosey in the POW camp office at Tamarkan camp in Thailand.

*"We hardly got any equipment anyway, if we were lucky to still have a pair of boots that were usable. And all we wore was a Jap Happy, a sort of loin cloth, and we got used to it, we acclimatized to it, it was very hot. Singapore is a very hot island; I mean it's humid as well as being hot."*

*"They're hot countries so getting dry wasn't really, normally a problem, soon as it stopped raining, you'd be ten minutes, quarter of an hour and you'd be dry again. And we only had shorts, and if you were lucky you...had a shirt."*



Photograph of Maurice Naylor, aged 90, courtesy M.Parkes

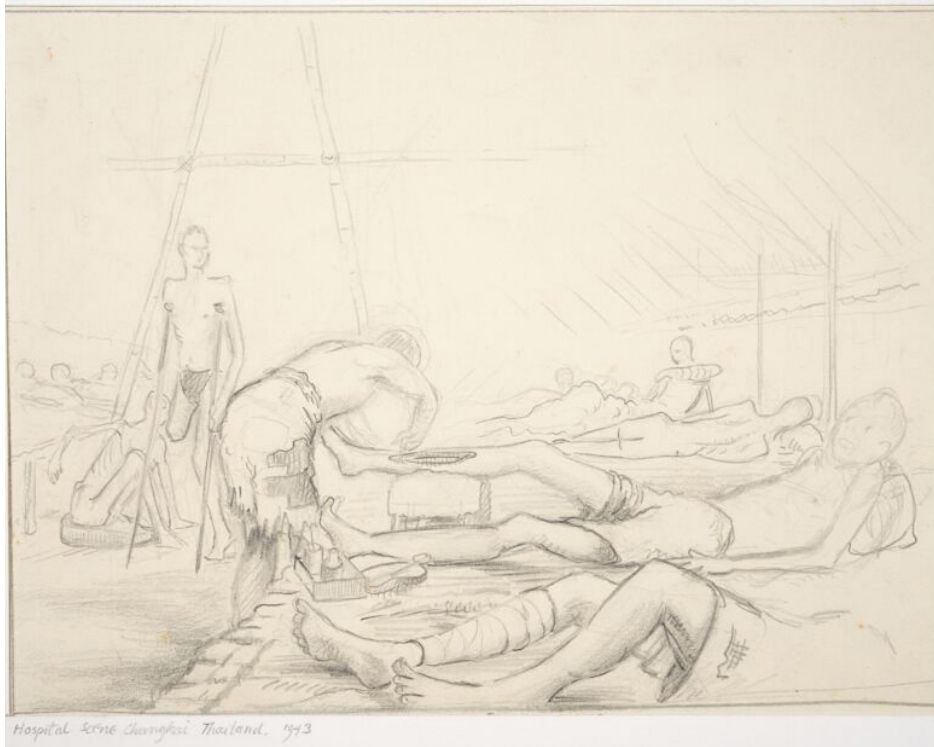
© LSTM FEPOW oral history interview with Maurice Naylor, 2009

# WORKSHEET 4

## EVIDENCE 5: DISEASE

Common illnesses faced by the prisoners of war were:

- Dysentery
- Malaria
- Malnutrition – lack of vitamins
- Infectious diseases like cholera, tuberculosis, diphtheria
- Tropical ulcers



*Ulcer ward, Chungkai Hospital camp, Thailand 1943, by William Wilder, © A. Wilder*



*Sketch of Dysentery hut, Kranji POW camp Singapore, 1945 by W.G Norways, © courtesy of G. & T. Norways*



# ACTIVITY 3 - ROLE PLAY: HOW COULD THE MEN HELP EACH OTHER TO SURVIVE?

Although the men faced extreme conditions and had to tackle many problems, each one of them had a range of different skills and abilities. Men became a team, 'bands of brothers', in small groups keeping each other alive, fed and safe. The information gathered by the Captive Memories oral history interviews has been used to create role play cards for five of the men.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

Ask the students to take on the role of each of the five men using the role play cards in [worksheet 6](#).

### Ask the students:

- 'Hot seat' interview each man in turn and find out more about them.

*Hot seating: A pupil takes on the role of one of the men on the role play cards, answering questions as if they are that person using the information provided.*

- Ask them to use the information they have found in [Activity 2](#) to see which problems and challenges they can tackle and overcome as a team.
- Pupils could create their own questions or use some of the below:
  - What is your name?
  - How old were you when you were captured?
  - Where are you from?
  - What did you do in the army?
  - What skills do you have?
  - What are your strengths?
  - How could these help us overcome the challenges we have found?
  - What kept you going when you were a prisoner?
  - What else can you tell us about yourself?



Portrait of Capt Arkush by A. G. Old, Thailand 1943, © courtesy the Arkush family

### EQUIPMENT

- ROLE PLAY CARDS X 5 (WORKSHEET 6)
- QUESTIONS
- INFORMATION GATHERED FROM ACTIVITY 2



### CURRICULUM LINKS:

- HISTORY
- ENGLISH
- DRAMA

### SKILLS

- ORACY
- INVESTIGATION
- READING
- PERFORMANCE





Jack Spittle, photograph courtesy B. Spittle



Jack Spittle's bird observation notebook during captivity in Singapore, © courtesy B. Spittle

### PRIVATE RONALD JOHN "JACK" SPITTLE

**Name:** Jack Spittle, Royal Army Medical Corps

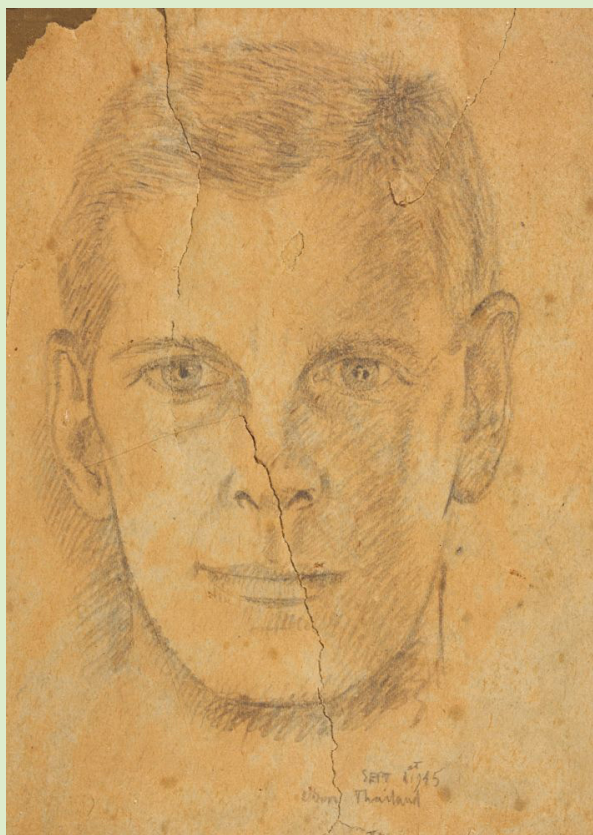
**Age:** 27 when captured

**From:** Slough, Buckinghamshire

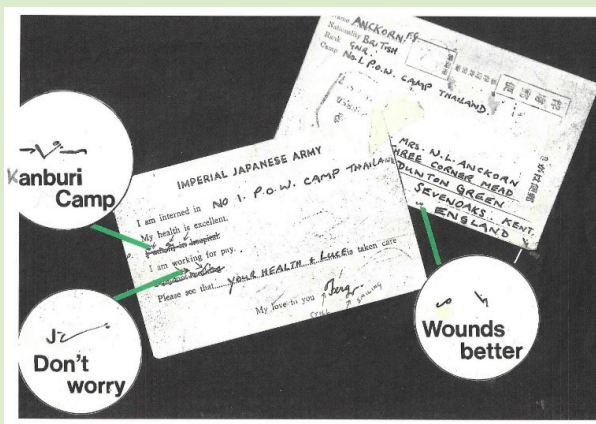
#### **Key skills and strengths:**

- Trained in public health and sanitation (keeping things clean)
- Went to the Army School of Hygiene and was a trained orderly in the anti-malarial squad in the Royal Army Medical Corps
- He worked at Roberts Hospital in Changi POW camp where he was a prisoner of war
- A keen amateur entomologist (studied insects) and ornithologist (studied birds)
- Knew how to create anti-fly spray and handwash
- He wrote copious notes on whatever paper he could find including backs of envelopes and cardboard packages

© LSTM FEPOW oral history interview with Jack Spittle



Portrait of Fergus Anckorn, 1945, by William Wilder, © Anthony Wilder



Explaining the shorthand crossings out, by Fergus Anckorn, © courtesy F. Anckorn

### FERGUS GORDON ANCKORN

**Name:** Fergus Anckorn, Gunner, 135 Field Regiment, Royal Artillery

**Age:** 23 when captured

**From:** Sevenoaks Kent

#### Key skills and strengths:

- He worked on the earth party helping build the Thai-Burma railway working 18 hours a day
- Sent a coded message on a postcard from a camp in Thailand, using Pitman's shorthand to cross out unwanted statements, to his journalist parents back in England so they knew he was alive
- He was taught how to do massage for people who had muscle wasting and vitamin deficiency
- Found a way to keep the mosquitoes away by turning a blanket into a sleeping bag, getting inside and buttoning it up tight at night time. He said this was his way of avoiding malaria which killed many people
- Loved languages and learnt Dutch
- He said it saved his life being able to do magic as the Japanese loved his magic in the camps. He did tricks which involved touching food as Japanese guards thought all prisoners of war were 'verminous' and would not eat anything they had touched
- Distracted Japanese guards with magic whilst on working parties on the railway so that they could get longer breaks

Can you spot Fergus on the Chungkai theatre programme on page 13?



Photograph of Derek Fogarty at home December 2007, courtesy M. Parkes

### DEREK FOGARTY

**Name:** Derek Fogarty, Royal Air Force

**Age:** 19 when captured

**From:** Fareham, Hampshire

#### **Key skills and strengths:**

- Moved scrap iron and bombs and had to carry hundreds of pounds of manganese ore in sacks
- Made rope
- Became a fully qualified pig breeder
- Helped build a camp using wood and bamboo and dug latrines in just three days
- Helped dig wells and create a football pitch

- Believed that the bonds between prisoners was what helped keep people alive. The Dutch word that is often used is kongsi, meaning a clique, a ring, to describe this close group of friends

© LSTM FEPOW oral history interview with Derek Fogarty, 2007

### Derek, on bonding with other prisoners:

*"If you have marched 30 or 40 miles with somebody and you have been through combat with people you have something which is a bond. You've been a prisoner for months, you have been through troubles together, you've shared your water bottle together. A lot of you were frightened and you were all scared in a lot of ways and you talked to people and you bonded like two brothers. You looked after them when they were sick, if a person was sick took them water and you did their washing, and you can never describe the bonding we were so close and it got closer and closer over the years. People would die for their mates that is how close things got."*

# WORKSHEET 6

## ROLE PLAY: DAVID ARKUSH



Portrait of Capt Arkush by A. G. Old, Thailand 1943,  
© courtesy the Arkush family

### DAVID ARKUSH

**Name:** Captain David Arkush,  
Dental Officer in Army Dental  
Corps

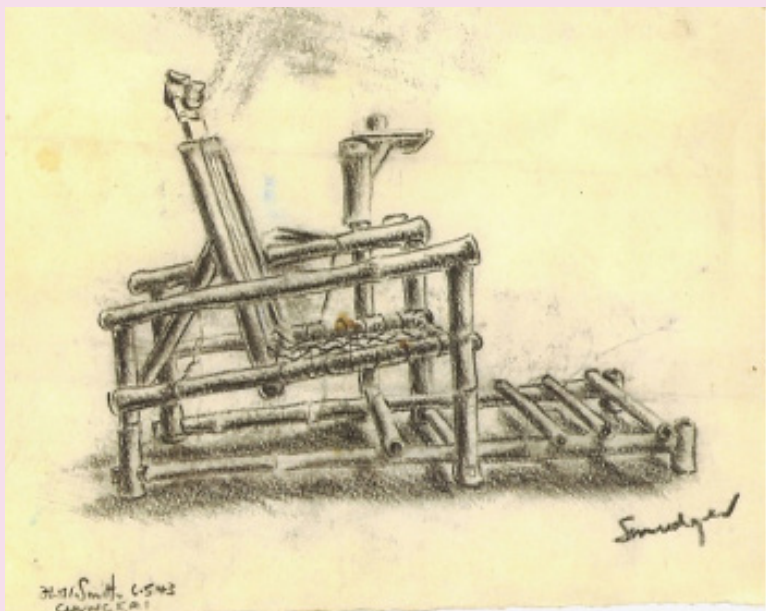
**Age:** 27 when captured

**From:** London

#### **Key skills and strengths:**

- Worked as a dentist in Roberts Hospital, Changi POW camp, Singapore
  - In Thailand he had a dental chair made for him
  - He took plaster impressions to make dentures
  - He was allowed to leave the camp to find pain killers and could buy things from the local shop
- He was allowed to take patients to the POW dental officer in the nearby camp as he had better equipment
  - He could trade things in the local town and bought things such as earphones to hear the radio (a secret radio in the camps)

© LSTM FEPOW oral history interview with David Arkush, 2007



Bamboo dental chair made at Chungkai  
Hospital camp Thailand, sketched by  
Lieutenant F. Ransome-Smith,  
© courtesy C. Ransome and Museum of  
Military Medicine



Former Fl/Lt Nowell Peach holding the home-made patella hammer he had made in 1943 in Tandjong Priok POW camp, Java, photograph courtesy M. Parkes

### NOWELL PEACH

**Name:** Nowell Peach  
RAF Medical Service

**Age:** 28 when captured

**From:** Bristol

#### **Key skills and strengths:**

- Carried out emergency surgery
- Spent hours going through the Gray's Anatomy medical text book and made lots of notes that helped him pass medical exams on his release
- To avoid malaria he made sure he wore long sleeved tops and long trousers and stayed in his mosquito net at night time
- Looked after people with dysentery and those suffering from vitamin deficiency disorders
- Worked in St Vincentius hospital staying on the wards to look after the men
- He designed a special leg support to help a man with foot drop to walk again - by tying a band below the knee and another one around the foot with string to hold the foot up
- Played chess and badminton in the camps
- Drew many pictures of birds in a diary he kept

*"I also had a stainless steel handle made, to carry razor blades, used as a scalpel."*

*"I got again the engineers to convert a normal iron bedstead into an orthopedic bed ...They made wheels to go up and down on the side rails of the bed and then a sort of pulley at the end so you could pull the sliding part down, and so you could put the patient on this to extend his hip joint."*

# ACTIVITY 4 - INVENTOR CHALLENGE

The men in the camps had to be inventive when trying to solve certain problems. They only had the materials available to them in the camp to work with. For example, David Arkush had a dental chair made for him out of bamboo and tools such as Nowell Peach's patella hammer were made out of the materials the men could find (worksheet 7)

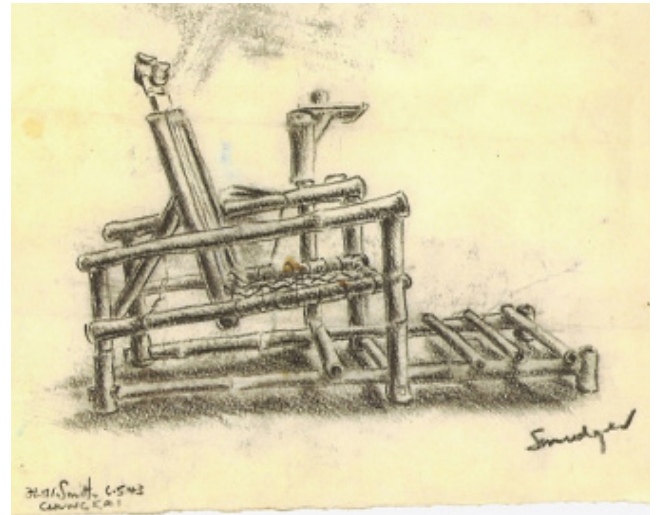
## INSTRUCTIONS:

**Imagine you only have the following materials:**

- scrap wood, wire, broken razor blades
- string, rope, material from clothing
- latex tapped from rubber trees that could be used as a type of glue
- bamboo in various lengths
- kapok (a bit like cotton), the buds provided a fine silky material for stuffing pillows and pads for the injured/sick
- (NB FEPOW did steal some work tools from the Japanese workshops)

**How could you use these to solve the following problems?**

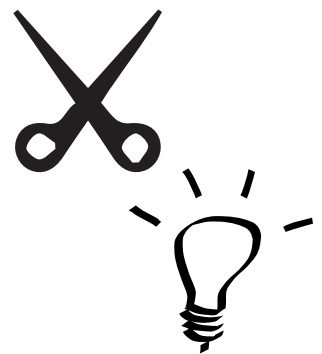
1. Moving water from stream to camp
  2. Cooking food
  3. Keeping the sun off you
  4. Keeping mosquitos off you
  5. Moving bags of rice
  6. Sleeping comfortably
- **Draw your inventor blueprint labelling each part**
  - **Pupils could try to make their own inventions**



*Bamboo dental chair made at Chungkai Hospital camp Thailand, sketched by Lieutenant F. Ransome-Smith, © courtesy C. Ransome and Museum of Military Medicine*

### EQUIPMENT

- PAPER, PENS
- MATERIALS IN SCHOOL TO MAKE INVENTIONS
- EXAMPLES OF INVENTIONS (WORKSHEET 7)

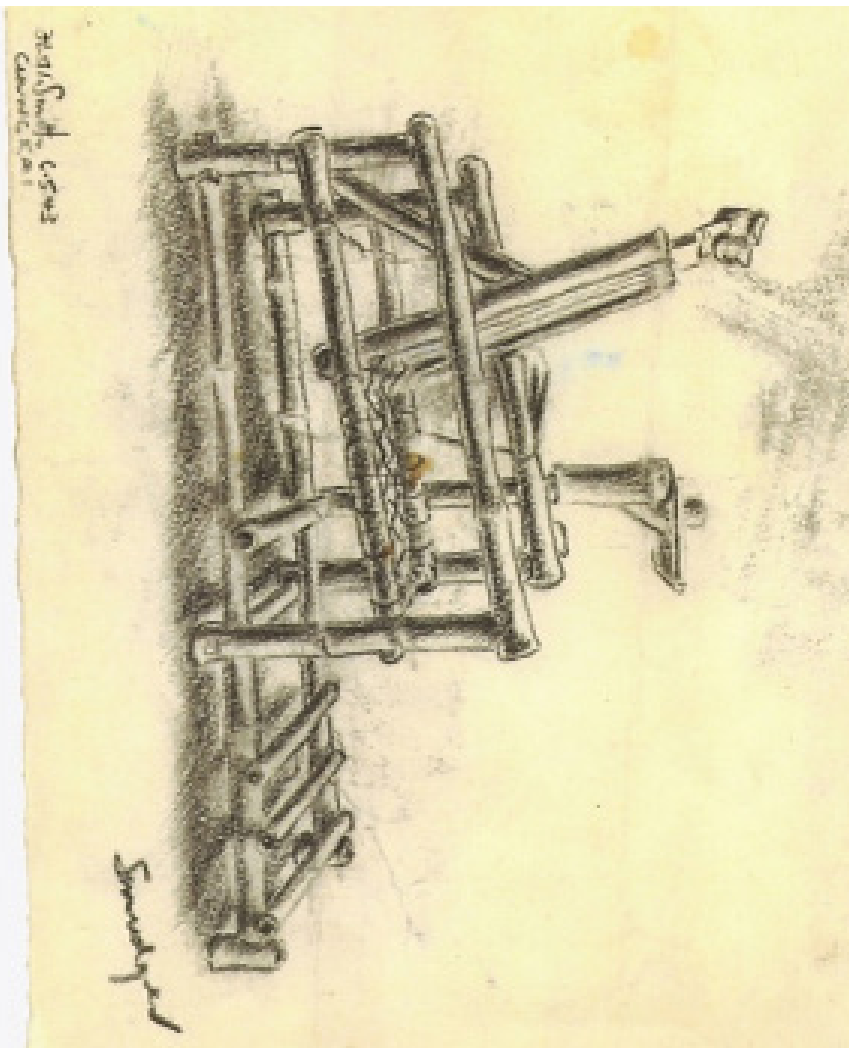


### CURRICULUM LINKS:

- HISTORY
- DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

### SKILLS

- CREATIVITY
- WRITING



A patella hammer for testing reflexes,  
photograph courtesy M. Parkes

Bamboo dental chair made at Chungkai Hospital camp Thailand, sketched by  
Lieutenant F. Ransome-Smith,  
© courtesy C. Ransome and Museum of Military Medicine



# ACTIVITY 5 - POSTCARDS HOME

The prisoners were occasionally allowed to write home. Often their postcards were not posted. Their words were censored.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

Ask the students to imagine they are writing a postcard to a member of their family from the prison camps. They could write from the point of view of one of the men they have found out about.

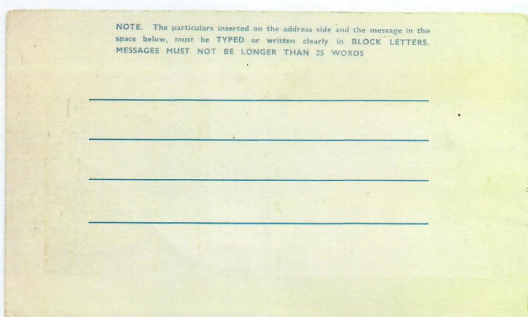
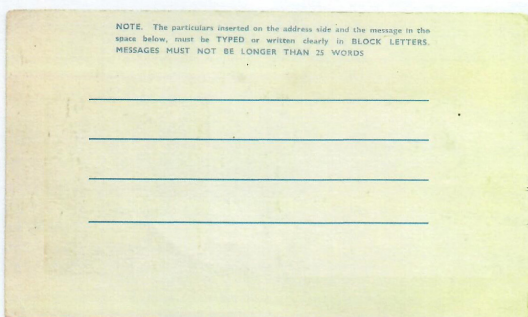
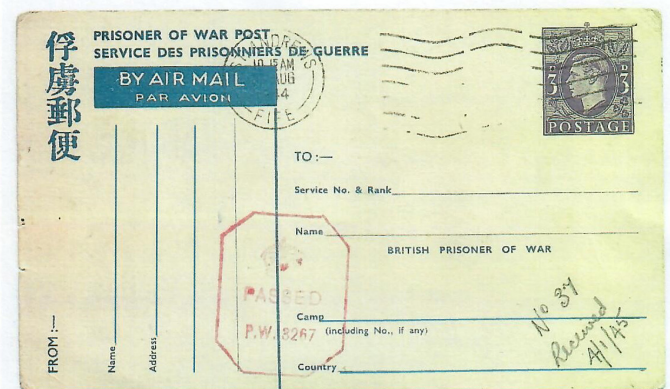
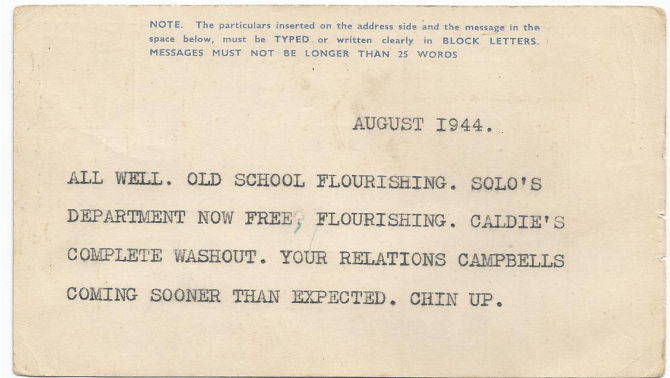
Use the templates on **worksheet 8**. They may only use 25 words for their message on each postcard.

- Postcard 1: Write a postcard home hiding the truth about life in the camps. (The prisoners were not allowed to tell the truth)
- Postcard 2: Write a postcard home imaging you could tell the truth about life in the camps

### Think about:

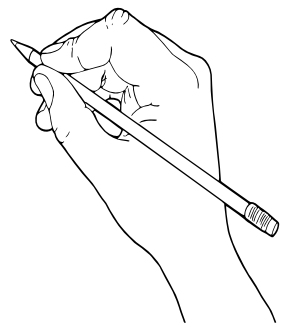
There is also a war at home. What would the prisoners be worrying about for their families?

*Original postcard sent to Capt Duncan in camp in Japan received early 1945, courtesy M. Parkes*



## EQUIPMENT

- PENCILS OR PENS
- POSTCARD TEMPLATES (WORKSHEET 8)



## CURRICULUM LINKS:

- HISTORY
- ENGLISH

## SKILLS

- CREATIVITY
- WRITING



# WORKSHEET 8

## POSTCARD HOME

Postcard 1: Write a postcard home hiding the truth about life in the camps.  
(You would not be allowed to tell them the truth)

NOTE. The particulars inserted on the address side and the message in the space below, must be TYPED or written clearly in BLOCK LETTERS. MESSAGES MUST NOT BE LONGER THAN 25 WORDS

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Postcard 2: Write a postcard home imagining you could tell the truth about life in the camps. You only have 25 words

NOTE. The particulars inserted on the address side and the message in the space below, must be TYPED or written clearly in BLOCK LETTERS. MESSAGES MUST NOT BE LONGER THAN 25 WORDS

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This resource was written and produced by Lorna Kernahan and designed by William Evers-Swindell for the Secret Art of Survival: Creativity and ingenuity of British Far Eastern Prisoners of War, 1942 - 1945.

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*Taken from view from Haroekoe Island, Moluccas, 1944 by Fl/Lt F.R. Philps, © Philps family*