

scared. Some of us were soaked to the skin, we had to find something dry, and one woman wore a beautiful white surplice with lovely embroidery on it, and a khaki coat!

I wore a priest's cassock for two days, and some of the men wore blankets like lap-laps and we raised a laugh when morning came—and with it the most desolate scene.

The mud mixed with pumice was like cement, and before we could try and get back to Rabaul, cars had to be scraped to lighten, and trees cleared from the roadway constantly—and windscreens wiped, as mud was falling like rain.

After crossing the first wash-away 50 yards wide, the road disappeared completely, we then came to the deserted house of one of the managers of Carpenter's plantations. Some cars had continued on, but were blocked by a very big wash-away, and 70 people had to take shelter in a deserted hotel. We joined 25 others in the manager's house and found some pumpkins and flour and coconuts. Everyone was glad to eat pumpkin scones and drink coconut milk.



The steam from the crater was billowing up in great clouds and was terrifying, as we were in a direct line with the crater and the wind was in our direction, We could not get away; the sea was in front, the mountains behind, and on either side a wash-away.

Sunday was the longest day any of us can remember. We were anxious. The wash-away might extend to the house. Then at mid-day the Matupi crater blew up, and we had even more rain and mud. As soon as darkness came the electrical storm returned with renewed rumblings from the crater, and distinct explosions quite apart from the deafening continual thundering, and lightning just played through the house.

During the afternoon we saw the "Montoro" sail past. She picked up most of the people at Nodip. Later two schooners came round the coast and sailed out again. They were looking for us, we learned afterwards.

At 7 a.m. next day three men set off with ropes to try and get across the wash-away and found that a schooner was looking for us. Two small boats were sent to pick us up, and when we finally got aboard we found that the Japanese skipper had hot tea and cabin biscuits for us. There were about 70 of us, Whites, Chinese, Malays, Halfcasts and Native boys. There was no colour bar, we shared the same cups and the same fare.

About noon, just as we had picked up the Chief Justice, we ran on to a reef and stuck fast amidships. We were all sent aft to lighten the ship, but in spite of all efforts to move the schooner, we stuck there until dusk.

We only had a billy of soup watered down for all. Then at dusk we were taken off in two little boats and ours went aground. Eventually the women and children were carried to the beach by the men. Tired and unkempt we all walked to a planter's home, some distance, but, as it had already sheltered 30 refugees for two nights, all we could find were a few native potatoes and a cup of tea. We left at day-break, as the schooner had been refloated. We picked up natives at various places and got some coconuts, and drank the milk and ate the nuts and finally arrived at Kokopo at 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday. All agreed that it was an experience, and wondered that there were not more accidents and fatalities. The electrician for Rabaul went out to take photos and was never seen again; also the wireless operator from the Golden Bear has disappeared. Two hundred natives were trapped and killed in the hills near the Crater."

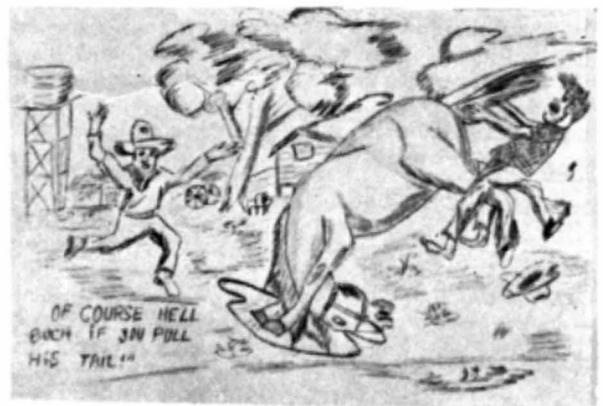
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CHRISTMAS PARTY AT GULARGAMBONE

There was a wonderful gathering of parents at Gulargambone Aboriginal School on Tuesday 10th December for the annual Christmas tree. Santa Claus was kept very busy distributing presents from the beautifully decorated tree. After the old gentleman departed, the children were entertained at a party and had many wonderful things to eat and drink. The Christmas Party was arranged by the Parents and Citizens Association which had been collecting funds throughout the year, by holding social functions every few weeks.

Parents attending the Party also had an opportunity to say good-bye to the Headmaster, Mr. C. Collins, and the Assistant Teacher, Mrs. Hocking, who have both been transferred to other schools.

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Les Franks, of Cobargo, was responsible for this lively drawing.