

Diary of P.O.W. Life

(During 3½ Years in the Hands of the Japs)

1942 to 1945



THE AUTHOR

THE LATE MR. R. A. WANLESS, A.I.S.P

Originally handwritten,
this diary was prepared in England in 1946

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THE LATE MR. R. A. WANLESS
TAKEN IN 1941
IN PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

INTRODUCTION

Born on 4th June, 1896 at Roselea, Beveridgewell, Dunfermline, Fife, Scotland, Richard Wanless was educated at Perth Academy. During the First World War, he served in the Scottish Regiment “The Black Watch” and became a Despatch rider. During his service he was awarded the Military Medal and mentioned in Despatches. A landmine exploded killing everyone in the area except him; when he woke up in hospital his right arm was set in a sling with the elbow bent up, on being told that this was to enable him to eat as the elbow would never bend again, he insisted that it be re-set, only slightly bent, into a car-driving position; this was done and he was invalided out of the Forces.

Later, in 1919, he went out to Malaya and became a Rubber Planter working for Gibson and Anderson, a Scottish Company. He first worked on Sungei Rengam/Sungei Way Estates in Selangor. Apart from the years of the Japanese occupation of Malaya, when he was a prisoner of the Japanese, he was an Assistant Manager and Manager of Rubber Plantations from 1919 to 1951. Returning to Malaya in 1946, he resumed managership of Bukit Selarang Estate in Kedah. He retired in 1951.

He married Sarah Jones Brown in March 1926.

When the Second World War started he was on leave in Australia but insisted on returning to Singapore as he was in the Home Guard. He was taken prisoner in 1942, for 3½ years, and after a period in Singapore’s Chengli, he worked on the Burma Railway

He was re-united with his wife and two sons after the war.

He and his wife retired to Clarkston, Glasgow, he died peacefully at home in Glasgow on 24th November, 1980 at age 84.

What follows is his own account of those 3½ years under the Japanese.

Diary of P.O.W. Life

1942 to 1945

My original diary was destroyed by the Japanese but I hope that the following will give some idea of the life we had to lead.

On the 15th February, 1942 Singapore fell to the invaders. Since the Jap hordes landed on the island, they had made steady progress. They cut the water supply and shelled the town with our own captured guns and their long range mortars. The mortar shells were of a very poor make and apart from the loud noise did very little damage. Heavy bombing of the dock areas however continued with regular pattern bombing. Civilian casualties were very much heavier than the military and the hospitals were overflowing.

On the 13th, Black Friday we called it, things began to get hopeless. The main military depots were in the hands of the enemy. Dead and dying were lying all over the town and fires were raging without water to put them out. All the available artillery was massed in the streets firing at targets spotted from the high buildings. On this day small ships left with women and children, manned by volunteer staffs.

Due to naval information not being decoded these ships ran into the Jap navy in the Banka Straits or were bombed by the hordes of Jap bombers that patrolled the exits from Singapore. The casualties among these evacuees were very heavy. Military men who were saved and eventually returned to our military P.O.W. camp in Chengi related their experiences. Many were in the water for hours and others landed on islands where disease and malaria reduced their numbers at an alarming rate. Some were stranded for three months, living on what rations they had saved from the ships and what they could find on uninhabited islands, before they were rescued by the Japs. On February 14th the guns were running short of ammunition and on the 15th we signed the unconditional surrender.

Much has been written about the fall of Singapore but what people do not realize is that the actual fighting strength of our troops was very small indeed! There were a lot of Indian troops in the Pioneer Corps plus British and Indians in the administration side leaving a comparatively small number of actually trained fighting troops, and most of those had fought a losing battle for 500 miles down the length of Malaya, leaving behind many units cut off by the enemy. We had no tanks, no planes and no navy to guard the coasts and the Japs had it all their own way, with unlimited fresh troops at their command.

The taking over of Singapore by the Japanese was done in an orderly manner as far as the prisoners' was concerned. We were left on our own and on the 17th ordered to make our way, without Jap Guards or interference, to the Eastern end of the island to Chengi a peacetime military encampment. We were ordered to walk the 16 miles. The Jap 1st line troops were kept out of the town and special Units were entrusted with the takeover.

I did not like the thought of the long march with all our kit so I asked our newly arrived major, only 8-days in Singapore, to go by car, but he refused as his orders were to walk. We found a one-wheeled machine gun carrier and loaded our packs on to this and off we went pushing this vehicle. The eight salvage officers had six cars and a police van, so I persuaded the officer who drove the police van to stay behind with me and our old major, and try to take out the van past a Jap guard.

We succeeded, after the Japs made us empty the van of some military stores, and off we went. We soon met up with the other party, took all on board and for safety followed a Jap lorry out of the town and then off at full speed to Chengi arriving there fresh and fit, before the main body. We were given a room in No. 5 Bungalow, Fairy Point and set to work to clean it out. I did some scrounging and found army sheets, stretchers, cushions and a saucepan. I kept a stretcher, 21 sheets, and a cushion for myself and the rest was shared among the other seven and all were happy. We had brought sufficient rations for

a few days. I had made up the ration bag and our first meal was tinned soup, tinned oysters, tinned meat and tinned strawberries and cream. A real feast! They last for a very long time. The first week, apart from the shortage of drinking water and food, was like a holiday by the sea with swimming twice a day and nothing to do. But oh what food! Rice, so badly cooked that it was almost uneatable, and watery tea. The rice was cooked by a so-called army cook sergeant and his staff for about 250 of us, but I am afraid the army never taught their cooks the art of rice cooking except for puddings. A couple of volunteer Malayan officers took it upon themselves to show how rice should be cooked and what a change! But the sergeant took offence at this and the officers had to withdraw, so back to bad rice again. With this rice as food, no meat and little else we lost weight rapidly over a lb (pound) a day and very soon I had lost 2½ stones.

A certain amount of food was brought in by the units, by lorry, on their day of arrival and these were ordered to be pooled and issued by the R.A.O.C. to all units. Some of the Headquarters units, where the generals fed, failed to comply with this order. At a later date I was to benefit by this, but the principle was all wrong and this was one of the many that showed up the regular officers as being selfish and all out for their own gains. At a later date it was amusing to hear the regulars discussing how they were going to claim compensation for articles they never possessed and they were always counting up the amount of bank balances that would be accruing to their accounts while prisoners of war. Others were hoping that their wives would not be able to draw on these balances and that they would have to take up some wartime job to make money for themselves. P.O.W. life seemed to bring out the worst in most people and many secrets became public property.

The Japs, after a few days, made arrangements to supply us with food, i.e. rice, a little vegetable and occasionally meat from the huge stores that we left in Singapore. The civilian internees were put into Chengi Jail quite close to us although we were not allowed to contact them, but ways and means were soon found to overcome this

A letter would be written, and then thrown into a drain round the outer wall and when the inmates came out to keep the drain clean they picked up the letter and left another. That was one of the ways.

The end of the island was wired off leaving us this area to ourselves, but soon each area was again wired in, with Dannet wire, still leaving us quite a large area for every unit. These were then made separate areas for Command H.Q., Southern area 11th Division, Australian 18th Division and the Hospital area. The Japs supplied flags and arm bands so we organised ferry services between the areas and provided we moved under the protection of one of these flags (for parties over 3) and armbands we were allowed to travel to other areas, without hindrance, provided we saluted the Sikh sentry who was on duty on the road between each area. Inside the wired-off areas there were no guards or Japs and we administered our own areas with Malayan Command in supreme control.

For administration purposes we were still on active service. The Japs were very smart as this situation allowed them to maintain the security of the P.O.W.s with the minimum of manpower. They allowed us to hold Divine Services, concerts, orchestral bands, lectures and even the teachers from Raffles College held classes in advanced education. They also allowed each area to have a canteen and made arrangements for us to order our requirements from a firm in Singapore that supplied our needs at reasonable prices. The Japs built up a stock of a month's supply of rice and allowed us to issue it according to the laid down ration scale. The Japs have different scales of diets for heavy work, light work and hospital patients. We even had an issue of 10 cigarettes a week for three or four months. The scale of rations was enough to keep one alive but there was a grave shortage of the necessary vitamins especially A and B. The lack of Vitamin A caused eye trouble and blindness. A shortfall of B caused Beri Beri. This initially causes puffiness in the legs and later comes Beri Beri in the stomach which caused many deaths. We were very short of fats. After the first few weeks our diet caused us to have constipation and the record was 21 days. I did 17 days without requiring to go to the

bathroom. The doctors and they were all our own British doctors, said that rice turned into water and believe me it did. I have been up as many as six times during a cold night. After this spell of constipation the opposite occurred and then dysentery set in full force. Also Dengue, Diphtheria and Vitamanosis were common problems. There were 3,400 sick and wounded in the Roberts' hospital at one time and deaths, especially of young men, were increasing at an alarming rate. We were short of the necessary medicines as the Japs had taken away most of our drugs. At this time I was threatened with appendicitis, but the surgeon put me on water only and it subsided.

We now left our beautiful seaside bungalow and moved to an Officers Mess, Royal Artillery on the Top of a hill in a lovely large building, with a beautiful view of the Naval Base on one side and the sea on the other.

I made contact with Jimmy and other Malayan friends in the Southern Area.

We saw the Japs sweep the channel to the base and then there followed the Jap fleet, or I should say, a small part of it, together with six large submarines.

We were ordered to hand in all cameras, signaling apparatus and wireless sets. Failure to do so would be punished by death. We lined the roads on three occasions while high ranking Jap officers passed by in cars 32 in one procession inspecting their captives and on one occasion took a movie of those on one side of the road. At a later date they made a movie in Singapore, of the taking of it, using P.O.W.s as the enemy. Officers who were sent to take part in it refused to go.

There were about 48,000 British and Australian prisoners in Chengi the Indians having been sent to another camp, where they underwent hardships of a severe nature to try and get them to join the Indian National Army. Some joined at the request of the few Indian officers who went over to the enemy, but the majority refused.

In this fight against the Japs, who tried to force them, many were tortured to death. I see three of the Indian ring leaders are now (1946) on trial by the British. Around about this time, April, rumours were rife that Germany had been beaten and bets of 1000 to one were taken. I refused to believe it and was lucky to contact an Australian who was operating a wireless set. He offered to supply me with a daily written BBC Bulletin. I used to collect them two or three times a week and give out the news to the 400 officers in the building. At first many would not believe me, but would rather believe the exaggerated gossip. I also supplied the news to the Volunteers until they were able to get and operate their own set. My major would not believe my news and we had words on many occasions over the subject of rumours. He said my news were defeatist rumours and believe me they were grim at that time. However, I converted them all when I gave one of Churchill's speeches word for word for 40 minutes. I was then reported to General Heath for being in possession of written BBC news. It was actually a copy of the same as he was getting, although he did not know it.

The colonels and majors were all on my side.

A conference of Brigadiers was held and I was ready for an interview, but the Colonel in charge of our unit from Malayan Command put up my case for me. My plea was that Malayan Command had failed in their duty to contradict the wild rumours going around the camps and as I was in possession of true news; I thought it my duty to give it out.

The outcome of it all was that the General gave me permission to be the official news distributor for the area, but I was not to carry about written news. Consequently I could not go anywhere without being stopped and asked 'What is the latest news'? I refused to repeat any rumours and I did not distort any of my news. Nonetheless I still continued to get the written news sheets, read them in the W.C. until I knew the words by heart, then destroyed them and everyone was happy. About this time large parties were working in Singapore -

on the docks, making a shrine at Bukit Timah for the fallen and on other duties for the Japs. They were better fed than we were, while the work not too hard. There were also opportunities to augment their low wages by flogging (selling goods) after stealing from Jap stores. Many volunteers started stalls selling food and cigarettes that they were able to buy from the Chinese who were extremely helpful. They used to break out of camp and contact the Chinese traders who helped as much as possible. Petrol had a ready market at \$21 a gallon and the Australians who did most of the driving of lorries made a good thing out this with the help sometimes of the Jap guard of the convoy. One day an American speaking senior officer gave a party a lecture saying that it was a serious offence to steal. He arrived in a big car and when he left, the car went a few hundred yards and stopped for want of petrol. The car had been milked while he was giving his lecture.

Wireless parts and sets were collected and sent back to the Chengi camp. The sick used to be sent back to our hospital as did the officers for dental treatment. One day an officer came back and in a suitcase he had three wireless sets. All these were put into working order or stripped and made into small battery-operated sets and later on every party that left for Thailand or other areas took a set with them. The Japs used to supply us with English printed papers with exaggerated gains for them, but reading between the lines the war situation was fairly accurate. Knowing the true news the reading of these papers TOKIO TIMES etc. gave us many a laugh.

We also had a black market that operated from the day we arrived in Chengi. The "Gordons" who knew that area well organised parties that went out at night, even to Singapore, and brought back food-stuffs at a price, but they had a good market. The prices were usually 10 times the pre-war price. I used to buy sweetened condensed milk at 6 shillings a tin, with fish at the same price although later on the price dropped to half; a 2lb tin of jam at 12/6 (Twelve shillings and sixpence); cigarettes at one time were 8 shillings for ten. I had \$11 when I was taken prisoner and £50 in travelers' cheques. I was able to dispose of £25 for \$150 and all this went on food.

The Japs seemed to have plenty of shipping as we saw convoys of 100 merchant ships on their way to Singapore on one day and 10 or 20 ships in convoy were a regular daily occurrence.

We heard many stories of the drastic steps the Japs used with the Chinese. One day they caught a Chinaman in the market overcharging for meat and cut off his head. Another time five Chinese heads were placed on stakes as a warning, but that same night the Chinese heads were removed by the Chinese and five Japanese heads put in their place.

Early on the Japs rounded up all the Chinese volunteers they could find saying that they were going to put them into our camp. They brought them out in lorries to the beach and turned a machine gun on them. When our men went out to bury them they found only one who was not dead. We smuggled him into our hospital and he recovered. Another true incident that occurred during the battle was when the military hospital at Alexandria was taken after bitter fighting in that area. The Japs said we had been firing from the hospital and they came in and bayoneted the doctors who were doing an operation together with others not in bed. Later they came back and made some 200 who were able to walk to get up and they were marched off. That was the last that was seen of them. That however was an isolated case in the heat of battle although there is a story of other wounded being killed.

About June all officers above the rank of Lieutenant Colonel were ordered to get ready to be removed to Japan, along with engineers, making up a party of 2000. This was later reduced in size, but they left in ships packed like herrings. The Japs used to ship their own men one to a ton of shipping tonnage and more or less did the same with their prisoners. I am glad I never did a sea trip with the Japs.

Also about this time an exchange ship that had gone to South Africa brought back some Red Cross supplies from the South African Government. These were very welcome and they included some

medical stores. Later on, in September, another large consignment arrived with medicines, food and clothing. We each received a felt hat, an army pair of boots and a singlet. Also there was plenty of tinned milk, meat, cocoa, dried vegetables, cigarettes, etc. etc. They were very welcome indeed. The first serious incident took place on August 1st when we were ordered to sign a printed statement:

“I hereby promise on my word of honour that I will not try to escape or help others to do so.”

Our senior officer, now the Colonel of the “Manchesters” in consultation with his staff refused to allow us to sign as it was against Army regulations. After a few days of arguing with the Japs they ordered us all to proceed to an area that in peacetime was the barracks of one British Battalion at Selwang. 15,000 officers and men were crammed into this area with only two water taps and no latrines. After further conferences the Japs made it known that we would stay there until we signed. They then shot three men who had tried previously to escape, refused to supply us with food and also threatened to bring the hospital patients there too. Sickness began to increase and the doctors advised the signing. On the 3rd day we signed, the Japs took away their guards and machine guns and we went back to our old billets. That was the only serious incident that took place while we were in Chengi. We spent our time reading, gardening, playing chess, going for walks and attending concerts. These were as good as any muse hall, complete with scenery, costumes and band. Apart from the poor rations, our captivity in Chengi was like a holiday.

After about two months of captivity the Japs paid 10 cents a day to all fit troops and 25 cents to all officers, but nothing to those sick in hospital. The working parties in Singapore were paid at a slightly better rate. From August 15th 1942 all officers were paid according to the rates paid to Jap officers, but no one received more than \$30 in cash. \$60 was cut for accommodation, clothing (not supplied) and food. The balance was placed to our account. On transfer to Thailand this balance was given to the Officer in Command of the party

o be handed to our new administration on arrival, but we actually changed this into Thai money and paid it out to each officer. In the whole of the Jap occupied areas, the Japs issued military money except in Thailand where the Thais still controlled their own finances. Our bank balances and pay received were signed for after each pay day. We received our month's pay about the 18th to 23rd of each month. From our pay we gave sums, decided by a committee, for the hospital and extra messing to the camps according to the needs of the individual groups. It varied from a few dollars to \$15 according to the number of sick and the food supply provided each month.

When the war finished the Japs offered to pay out our bank balances, but we refused to accept them as we would lose on the rate of exchange. Since arriving home we have been informed that all deductions to our pay have now been credited to our accounts again. These deductions were the total the Japs paid to us, plus our bank balances that the British army deducted each month, but not our contributions to the hospitals.

All the money I got bought food but not cigarettes. Most prisoners did the same. Tobacco in Thailand was however very cheap and for a long time one could buy local tobacco and papers and make cigarettes at 100 for half the price. The Japs used Tokio time over the whole of their administration area and this was to our advantage as it reduced the period of darkness by two hours before lights out. We got up at 8 am – lights out 10, 10.30 or 11 pm according to who was in charge of our camps.

In October 1942 Parties of 600 were formed to go to Thailand and I left on the 4th of November in "N" Party. We were taken by lorry to Singapore and left by train – 30 of us to a steel covered goods wagon and in the heat of a tropical day; it was most uncomfortable. We were however allowed to keep our doors open and I was fortunate in being at a door all the time. We travelled, night and day, for 4½ days. I hope never to experience a trip like that again.

We received two rice and vegetable-water meals a day. As usual there were all sorts of rumours of a very good camp, electric light etc. that of course never came off.

Malaya looked the same as ever. The Japs had organised work on the estates and I saw large gangs of Indians clearing lallang and attending to the estates, but no tapping of trees. All the railway bridges, every one of which had been destroyed on our retreat down the country, had been repaired or replaced by temporary bridges, while the steel bridges were being lifted and repaired. They jacked up the steel bridges cut out the damaged areas and put in new girders or cut out the damage parts and put in new sections. On our journey the natives seemed to be very afraid of the Japs and would not come near the train. Some information was however given to some of the volunteers who were able to contact the natives they knew. Eventually we reached Penang and then the Thai border and that is the last I have seen of Malaya although I have something more to say about it at a later date.

We crossed the Thai border and at the first station at which we stopped we saw a decided change in our reception. The Thais were extremely friendly and continued to be on our side right up to the end. They were not afraid of the Japs. In fact our guards on the train treated them with a certain amount of respect, as if they were a little afraid of them. We were given free fruit and cigarettes and they offered to buy our Red Cross hats, fountain pens and watches at quite good prices. In fact right up to the end they were willing buyers of all these things - also clothing and gold, and gave very good prices for them. We eventually arrived at Bang Pong, stiff and sore, and were given attap huts to rest in for three days before proceeding further on our journey.

Here we witnessed a few incidents between the Thais and the Japs. One day the Japs violated one of the temples, trouble broke out and a few Japs were killed. The Japs later got their own back, but it was evident that there was bad feeling between the two parties, even though they were supposed to be allies of Japan. Woman and children

were beaten. One day a Thai was caught buying clothes from us. He was brought into our camp and 12 of our officers were lined up and ordered to hit him. One after another the officers refused. This made the Jap wild and he hit the officers before ordering the Thai to hit them also. He also refused and was beaten up. Our officers then indicated to him to hit them, by signs, as no one spoke Thai. So he eventually gave a token hit on each officer's face and the incident closed except that an official complaint was made to the senior Jap officer. I sold my fountain pen for \$8, my Sam Browne belt for \$11 - and with this I bought fruits and eggs. On the 3rd day we were packed into lorries and taken 60 km to a camp on the civil aerodrome strip at KanjinBuri. It was raining heavily and there was three inches of water over the area. We went on parade to be checked. Next day we left again to the river a mile away, ferried across and marched three miles to another camp at Chungkai. Here I should say we were lucky as former parties had walked all the way from Bang Pong.

At Chungkai we were packed so thick that there was no room to lie down on the platforms, so I lay on the damp ground and contracted a chill. It rained all night and the next day we were off at 9 am on a 9 km march - 600 of us strung out in a single file with three guards. We walked along the railway track, across paddy fields, through water up to our knees and lost our way. Therefore it was not till 4 pm that we arrived at our camp on the banks of the river. The cookhouse was 15 feet under water as the river had risen some 25 feet. The camp was 12 inches deep in mud and there was no accommodation ready for us. We crowded into the three huts already filled and the next day got on with the job of erecting our huts. In 3 days we were all fixed up but continued to build as 3,000 were going to arrive, 600 every four days. The food was on the whole rotten, but there was a little village, built for the purpose to sell us local produce. There were over 30 stalls selling bananas, eggs, fish, cooked goods, biscuits, curries, cigarettes and soap. These Thais moved up country when the parties went to new camps and did they make a fortune! The men were all working but on 10 cents a day only - later increased to 25 and 30 cents. The officers received 2 months' pay and believe me I had two or

three egg omelets a day and a good curry or fish. There was always plenty of sweetened coffee on sale at 5 cents a cup. Officers did no work until the end of December. However we heard that the officers in the next camp were being made to work. Our Jap camp commandant was against work for officers, but the Engineer officer in charge of the railway thought otherwise and with a flourish of a rifle shot our Engineer officers. Then a fierce looking guard arrived and ordered everyone on parade. There was a lot of face slapping and our Colonel from the "East Surreys" came in for a lot of it, but give him his due he stood up to them. Three so-called Doctors arrived and everyone was medically examined. Those who were passed fit later received a slapped face and were told to go to work. I worked my war wound and got away with it, so I did no work on the railway. The officers were put on to bridge building. Unseasoned wood cut from the jungle was pulled to the site and with a man-handled pile-driver the piles were driven in. It was a rough job but the trains did run across it. By the end of January 1943 the embankment for 8 km of track was completed with three long bridges, 11 spans in two of them, and the parties were moved off, on foot, up country. It was three days walk, but then I was sent back to Chungkai that was to become a base hospital camp. That suited me all right. 100 officers and about 500 men were also sent back. The work on the railway at that time was not hard but the hours were long, from daybreak 'till dusk, with breakfast in the dark.

The day after I arrived in this Chungkai camp (Thai Camp No. 2) I was asked if I would give assistance with a wireless set that would not work. I did so and trained up the operator for a week. After that he continued on his own with me as his technical advisor. There were two brothers both Malaysians and between them they gave out 702 daily news sheets up to the time batteries ran out in July 1945. The operator a young man is now quite grey. I soon offered to work at the hospital boiling water for skin diseases. There were 500 to 600 to be treated each day so we had water to boil irrespective of the weather being wet or dry. I soon found that the camp although quite good was a depressing place with everyone sick. Nonetheless the food was quite good as was bathing in the river etc. On the 1st of April I volunteered to help

in the wood yard with an officer who was given the job. I moved out to this place about 400 yards away from the camp and found that we two officers, a warrant officer and a sergeant would be living there on our own without any guards. The job was to supervise the checking in of firewood delivered by the Thais and re-issued to the camp. Later on we had a working party from the camp each day cutting extra wood in the nearby hills. I did the receiving and issuing while the other officer did the field work. Well it was a lovely job and we did not feel like prisoners as we could go where we liked. We did extra cooking, our cooked food being brought out to us by our Sergeant batman and the extras he cooked for us. The work was hard but it kept me fit. Wood would start to arrive before breakfast and again in the evening. At one time we had 10,000 in the camp.

The Thais were quite good to us and the Japs treated us well. I should have said that from the 15th of August, 1942 our guards were Koreans and they hated the Japs, so when I mentioned our guards I mean Koreans. The camps were run with a Jap officer, a Jap Sergeant for discipline and perhaps another couple of Japs and the others were all Koreans and believe me the Japs were cruel to the Koreans, but the Koreans are cruel too. Seemingly since Japan took over Korea they have treated them like dirt. As far as I know the Koreans were not included in the fighting forces.

For three months at the wood yard we received no pay, although they did give us our back pay on the 1st payment. We had to get money, so we worked a racket selling the wood that we supplied to the Jap cookhouses and washhouses back to them. When they asked for wood we entered their issue in the books in excess and the Thai who was in with us would put in an addition total when we told him. He drew the money and gave it to us. In this way \$60 a month went into our messing account for extras. From about June the sick were coming down from up country until we had about 5,000. The deaths were on an average of 250 a month with as many as 15 a day being buried during the last few days of the old moon. It was observed that this happened each month and dropped right down with the new moon.

We had cholera, dysentery, viternanois and general debility as the main causes of death. The sick parties were sent down from up country in dreadful condition, half starved and as thin as rakes and sick. Many died within a few days while others lingered on for weeks. Tropical ulcers mainly on the legs were difficult to cure and many had to have their limbs amputated with a heavy death rate after the operations. I was told by one of the amputees that there were about 150 amputees alive in Thailand and 50 came home in the same ship as I did. They were all very cheerful.

In this camp we had a lot of Dutchmen all sick from up country. They were a sorry lot and did not try to get well. They would lie on their beds night and day until an order was given that all convalescence patients must take a walk round the camp each day. From that day onwards they started to improve. On the whole they hated us, the British, and used to say they were the prisoners of the British and not the Japs, but they would rather be in a camp with a British Camp Commandant than a Dutch one. This camp was surrounded with a token bamboo fence with a guard of one sentry relieved every hour at three places and it was easy to walk out of camp at any time of the day or night. The surrounding hills were covered with bamboo and the Japs gave permission for us to collect this to augment our firewood ration. I have seen 900 men a day go out to the hills for a walk, or to sell something to the Thais, and bring back a bundle of wood to justify their absence. When they went out or returned they had to salute the guard, if wearing a hat, or bow if not wearing a head covering. We had a very good canteen that sold all sorts of cooked foods, coffee, hot sweets, lime drinks, fried fish, cooked meat, cakes, fruits, tobacco, peanuts, sugar, coconut oil, pig fat, buckets, basins, matches, eggs, sweets, meat pies, candles, toilet paper in rolls, toffee and tablet, and the prices were very reasonable. The canteen bought two cattle a day, killed and skinned the beasts and sold the meat at 20 cents (i.e. 3½ pence) a lb (pound). The skins were dried and tanned and made into sandals. Sports were held every month or so when the Japs officer would attend and give all the winners presents. The Japs also competed but only in races of their own. Football was however played

against the Japs on many occasions without any incidents. Provided one saluted the Jap officers' guard room and sentries one had little to complain of. Failure to do so meant a kick, or face slapping, or the butt of a rifle in one's ribs. Medicines were very scarce and sheets and any kind of cloth was used for bandages. We did however receive ample injections every 6 or 12 months for cholera, plague, TAB and Dysentery.

Stories were brought down by the sick of cases of ill treatment, beatings etc. and of starvation diets. A month after the embankment and bridges were completed the rails and sleepers were laid with no ballast and light diesel trucks drawing six wagons brought up more rails and sleepers. This was later followed by heavy ballast trains and then military stores. By the middle of October 1942 the line was linked up with the line being made from Burmah and military stores, lorries, guns, soldiers and horses were brought from Bangkok and Singapore and sent right through after Chening trains at NonPladuk where the Burmah line branched off from the main Thai railway from Bangkok to Penang. Thousands of Indians Chinese and Malays were sent up country and we heard later that their lot was even worse than ours. Cholera, dysentery and malaria swept through these camps with heavy loss of life. They had little or no medical treatment as the Japs gave practically no drugs. British doctors did what they could, but conditions were pitiable.

On Sept 23rd I was transferred to a camp at NonPladuk, the No 1 Group Headquarters and I was sorry to lose my good job. In this new camp, the first built in Thailand, our huts were wooden ones with sides and windows. It was quite a small camp in paddy growing country, close to a railway station, a goods yard and the main line. In fact we were right slap up against these areas. The camp held about 3,000 and half that number worked in the railway yards, the workshops and the nearby Jap base camps containing petrol and stores etc.. After about a month I volunteered for a checking job in the canteen. Two hours work a day, with the first choice in the new stores that arrived every day. I did myself quite well here as we could buy soup, meat or

pea, pies and a lot of various curry sambals, bananas and eggs. Again as long as one obeyed orders one had nothing to worry about. With few sick here it was a happier camp and the men had quite a lot of money as there was a ready market for axes, files, saws, nails, and any kind of metal. All these items the men managed to steal from the Jap stores and the Thais paid them high prices and provided they were not caught in the act they made good money. Surprisingly few people were ever caught. In one camp 12 men were caught selling tools to the Thais. They were court-martialed and given 6 or 12 months in the Singapore jail. The money was taken off them and strange to relate they received the money back when discharged. One man died. The work was hard and feeding poor, but they all said that they received a very fair trial.

I began to like this camp and we had concerts, football, basketball and even tennis for a short time, 'till the Japs booked the courts all the time. We had no wireless in this camp as the British officer previously in charge had ordered its destruction. In a camp at Kanjanburi one had been found and the Japs had started a search for other sets in other camps. In the same camp they also found a notebook belonging to a major with written instructions on how to overthrow the guards and take possession of the camp. Needless to say the Japs were alarmed, two officers were beaten to death and the major was tried and got two years in Singapore. However we secretly received, from outside, both Chinese and Thai newspapers and were able to get the war news. The wireless set at Chungkai still continued to work and occasionally we received a bulletin to check up on what we knew. It was a great comfort to get news especially when the tide turned and we could note the progress and think of the day we would be free once again. We had officers who could read Chinese, Jap and Thai papers and occasionally we were able to get cuttings from the Bangkok English paper. English papers were also occasionally received from Singapore, Penang and Rangoon through various sources. This was now 1944 and we noticed a lot of aerial activity especially in the night. We seemed to be on a direct course for the bombers on their way to Bangkok. We rejoiced in this attention to far-off targets as the planes had to

come from India.

Life went on as usual and parties from other groups were being brought down and sent off to Singapore through this base marshalling yard. It was rumoured that we would be sending a party with the last convoy. Why they sent them via Singapore and not Bangkok was a mystery. The parties usually stopped for a few hours and we supplied them with a meal. They had all received new clothes a white singlet and a pair of shorts made from thin cotton coloured cloth - red, pink, blue and checkered. They looked like girls bloomers. They were told that they would get thicker clothing when they got to Japan. Round about July, 600 prisoners left our camp on this trip, but before they went they were to be introduced to an attack on our camp by bombers. I may mention that we hardly ever saw a Jap plane after 1943. However, one night in June 1944 we heard the drone of planes in the distance and we did not trouble to get out of bed. Then we heard a nearby crash and everyone was alert, but still thought we were quite safe as we thought our people knew where we were. Bombs began to fall fast and furious about half a mile away and then one plane dropped a stick of anti-personnel bombs across our camp. Our casualties that night totalled 80-odd killed and 250 wounded, as we had no slit trenches in which to take shelter. Then, by good luck a train of oil and stores had been hit in a siding and the planes then concentrated on this target, destroying some 70 trucks and an engine. What a blaze! But it shook everyone in the camp. Shrapnel came flying through our hut and the blast sucked some of the walls down. We had a Thai canteen, but after that night the Thais moved and would not return. A couple of days later we had slit trenches dug to hold the 3000 of us and we felt happier for the future. The Thai women working on the goods yards made a collection and gave the money for the wounded. The papers and Tokio radio advertised the fact that we had bombed a P.O.W. camp. Due no doubt to the monsoon weather, no further bombing took place 'till September when planes came over one dark night and passed us by, but later they returned and dropped bombs along the railway with no damage to us. During a small raid one evening about 7 pm some damage was done to the goods yard and we had one casualty due to

splinters coming into the camp.

Later on quite a lot of daylight bombing raids took place on bridges and marshalling yards in Bangkok and surrounding targets. We had a lot of air raid warnings although no planes came our way, but the Japs told us that 71 planes (and sometimes they gave other numbers) were bombing the railway up country almost daily. Then on the 7th of December a warning was given about 7 pm. We got out to our trenches and were amazed to see 10 four-engine bombers coming straight towards our camp at about 10,000 feet. The Japs Bofor battery, manned by free Indians, put up a great show but the planes carried on and then we saw the bombs released and down we got. They pattern bombed the station railway headquarters and the railway. From that raid we had nine killed by blast, our cookhouse wiped out and a hut badly damaged. Then a few minutes later from a different direction another 11 aircraft were seen coming our way and then another 10 behind them. We did not feel at all happy although I was not afraid. The second lot pattern bombed the yards and the 3rd dropped fire bombs. Shrapnel fell all over the camp but there were no further casualties. But what a mess our bombers made. Out of 80-odd buildings only one was left standing. Fire destroyed everything and the bombs damaged large numbers of railway trucks. The fires lasted all night. Some of the incendiaries fell into our camp and half the hospital, together with a hut, were burned out, including the drugs they contained. Our main stores of drugs were however stored in two attap-covered pits and were safe. After that raid I was convinced that the R.A.F. knew we were in that camp, but the targets were so important they had to be destroyed. They made such a good job of it that they never needed to return.

The same thing was happening to other targets. Leaflets had been dropped previous to these raids. They were printed in Thai with pictures of bombs dropping and read:

“Death on the railway Keep clear of the railway. Do not work for the Japanese on the railway. Death on the railway”

We were too close to the damned railway not to be undisturbed by these leaflets.

During two of the previous raids many of the men, and some of the guards, ran out of camp for safety and this upset the Jap headquarters. Two men actually never came back and were never found, although it was known that they had not been injured. The Japs then ordered a four metre moat 10 feet deep to be dug round the camp to keep us in. Our camp (British) commandant asked for our camp to be removed away from the railway or if this was not possible to evacuate the huts close to the railway and build others on the other side of the camp. The latter they agreed to. It is no exaggeration to say that many of the officers and men were badly shaken after each raid. The guards also hated our bombers and were first in their heavily timbered covered trenches while ours were the open ones. But we put on our packs and folded blankets over our heads. This saved many wounds from spent splinters.

About this time at Kanjanburi, a raid picked out two Jap camps and a headquarters camp and laid them low, while two adjacent P. O. W. camps were untouched. Our guards were funny that time. They said "Nippon camps finished P. O. W.'s OK" and seemed to be quite pleased about it. We knew that the European war was going well and in fact a pamphlet dropped by the R.A.F. in English gave us a lot of war news and had written across it "It's in the Bag boys" but we said the bag was still open!

Well life went on as usual without any more scares. We knew the railway was out of commission in places but the Japs had our men working hard to rebuild the bridges and treated them fairly well wherever there was a senior Jap in charge. Most of the worst camps were where a junior sergeant or 1st class private was in charge of the work. At Christmas we had a swell day with sports and bumper meals and the Japs brought in Thai whisky and all 3000 of us had a nip. We always said that the Japs would treat us better when they were losing. They used to tell us "*Burmah finished.*"

In January 1945 we were told that we, the officers, were all going to a new camp in Indo-China and we were all set to leave in a few days: Then we were told it was all off as the Jap General in Saigon had refused to have us. So we were sent to a camp at Kanjanburi instead. It was the usual story - a 1st class camp fit for officers. If it had not been for the Jap officer who took over that camp it might have been OK.

A British officer of the "Gordons" gave us a lecture one evening on his experiences when he was charged and court-martialed by the Japs for shooting and killing a British Prisoner of War. He said that in a small camp well up the Burmah Railway a British Tommy was dying of cholera and the Jap sergeant in charge ordered one of the Korean guards to have him taken out of the camp and shot. A British major and a Scots Lieutenant witnessed this and as the Korean was scared stiff of the disease he was in the point of shooting from a distance and no doubt he would have only wounded the sick man. The major asked the Lieutenant to take the rifle from the guard and shoot at close quarters. He did this. Later on when the major went down country he reported this incident to a Jap officer who ordered the Kempe-tei, the Jap military police to investigate the case. The two British officers were taken to Bangkok and charged with the murder of the Tommy. When they arrived at the jail they were stripped of all their clothes and ordered to have a bath and given prison clothes and put into a cell to sit cross legged all day without leaning on the walls. This is a very uncomfortable position for any European. After about a fortnight of this they were dressed in their army clothes, handcuffed and taken by walking to the court. They were instructed to keep the handcuffs hidden from the Thais but they exposed them as much as possible. The trial was taken by a Jap General. On reaching the court they saw the Jap Sergeant also under arrest, but he had been badly manhandled and had a black eye and other marks on his body. The trial was a full court-martial. It carried on all day and all the next. On the 2nd day, three doctors cross examined the officers and after an absence of only 5 minutes returned with typewritten sheets recording their verdicts, obviously prepared beforehand. One said the soldier was dead before the shot was fired. One that he was still alive and the

third that he was dead and the beads of sweat that the officers said they saw were drops of dew from the trees. The prisoners were acquitted and commended by the General for the way they had conducted themselves during the trial. They were taken back to the prison, but allowed their bedding with an apology that better accommodation was not available. Later that night they were awakened by the General coming into their cells. He offered them cigars and cigarettes and told them that the next day they could have the day in town before going back to camp.

Sure enough, the next day they proceeded into town with an escort. The first place they went to was Whiteaway Laidlaws, a large European store in peacetime now run by the Thais. They did some shopping and tried to sell a watch. The price offered was not enough but one of the girl attendants asked what they wanted and she paid them their price. On paying their bill 10% was knocked off and on asking why they were told "*Because you are British*". They then went to a chemist and among other items bought some good soap. While they were there the Thais refused to sell this good soap to some Japanese. Next place was a cafe where they asked for lunch. The waitress gave them a separate table from their guard and supplied the officers with their food before attending to the guard. At the end of the meal she presented the bill to the Japs who paid up with a smile. They then proceeded by car back to their camp.

The attitude of the Thais in Bangkok was definitely pro British and we found that to be the case since coming into Thailand. While working in the wood yard an educated Thai visited us late one night and among other things told us that as soon as the British were in a position to help them they would rise against the Japanese. This we later were told was to take place the same month as the Japanese signed the peace terms.

On the 24th of January we left the camp and walked a mile to a train (open goods wagons) waiting in a siding that had previously been bombed. While waiting for the engine an air raid warning was over.

The planes did not come near us and later we proceeded on our way and arrived at our camp in the early hours of the morning. Due to the altered arrangement we had a lot of reconstruction to do to accommodate 3000 officers. We actually rebuilt the whole camp. The food in this camp was good but with 90,000 dollars a month paid to us it was difficult to get sufficient canteen stores for us to spend our money. I took a job in the cookhouse cutting up vegetables to keep me fit. We had a very good library a concert party and a band of 36 instruments, but our Jap camp commandant was a nasty man and if it had not been for him this would have been a very good place. He was very strict about saluting him and there were many face slapping incidents. We however were able to stop the Koreans from slapping and hitting us after two or three incidents were reported to the Jap officer. We had quite a lot of medicines for our hospital. Later on however some officers refused to carry water to the Jap hospital and a few days after the Japs staged an incident that misfired. They were so mad about this when our British Colonel in charge of the camp and our interpreter were complaining about this incident, tempers seemed to get out of hand and the interpreter, who at one time had worked for the Japs in the Jap Embassy in London, seemingly gave them a bit of his mind with the result that he was badly beaten up and put into the cooler, after standing in front of the guard room until he collapsed. We were all confined to our huts for 14 days. We were not allowed to lie down, play cards, read books during the hours of 8 am to 1 pm and 3 pm to 6 pm. As we would not work for the Japs we were not allowed to work for ourselves so the cookhouse had to be run by the handful of other ranks that we had. They worked long hours and did wonderfully well. The interpreter was in solitary confinement for three months right up to the day we were freed.

A doctor who had been up country in the Tamil camps returned back to ours. He had a gruesome tale to tell of thousands of Tamils dying for want of the necessary medicines. He said that in one camp the deaths were 1000 a month and the treatment meted out to them by the Japs was terrible. Thousands also bolted to die in the jungle or secure work with the Thais.

`We witnessed a lot of bombing of two railway bridges over the river that was half a mile away. The planes used to come down to 200 feet to deliver their loads of bombs despite a Jap anti-aircraft battery in the vicinity. After each raid the work would start again on the rebuilding, only to be knocked down soon after its completion. One morning some planes came over at daybreak and saw a train on the railway that runs 200 yards away from our camp. One plane released its bombs and they were seen to be released before the plane which was coming towards us reached our camp. We saw them pass over our heads and overshoot their mark. Another coming in the opposite direction released their load which all fell in our camp killing three and wounding about eight. Another tried machine gunning the engine but again the bullets fell in our camp wounding a few more. These were all American planes. A British plane then came on the scene flying only a few hundred feet up and it seemingly saw what damage was done as they all then flew away much to our relief. We heard later on from the R.A.F. that within two days they were informed that there were three new burials in our Graveyard.

It was later discovered that paratroopers were actually in the hills close to us, in fact, their outer perimeter was only half a mile away and they could look into our camp with their glasses but the Japs did not know they were there. At this time we were being searched at weekly intervals and each time the Japs would take something away. All knives, pencils, paper were taken away from us. All valuables were handed in to the Japs who issued us with official receipts. After the end of the war these valuables were actually handed back to their owners. In this camp the guards were outside the camp fence with an outer fence to protect the guards from the Thais. We also had a moat four metres wide inside the inner fence. All our wooden stools were taken from us in case we used them for brickbats, also all walking sticks and the cookhouse knives, cut throat razors etc. were handed into the Jap Guard room each evening and withdrawn in the morning. The R.A.F was now dropping leaflets every week and some occasionally fell into the camp. If not the Thais were sure to see that we got one of them.

When the Chungkai officers arrived they managed to bring their wireless set and enough torch batteries to last six months. As a search was made on entry to the camp they dismantled the set into small parts, then put them and the batteries inside rice bread rolls and baked them in the oven. Each officer had two rolls and two hard boiled eggs as their rations. The Japs did not spot this. Consequently we were able to get the news for a full month after the German war in Europe was over. Then our batteries let us down. Some of the senior officers were all for destroying the set. The operators refused to do so. When pressure was brought to bear upon them they said that if they were given the order in writing they would do so, and that they would present it to the War Office when they were free. From that day on no more was said to them, as the senior officers would not have liked this to be brought to the ears of the War Office.

In July we were informed that we would be moving to another camp 100 miles east of Bangkok and we would move in parties of 400. Eight parties in all. The 1st parties would build the new camp. I volunteered for the 3rd party and on the 31st of July at 4. 30 pm we left our camp carrying all our personal kit. A train was brought close to our camp and we entrained in open trucks, 28 to a truck. We left the station at 8 pm and when we arrived at NonPladak an air raid warning was on, so we all detrained and proceeded to a safe distance from the railway. Then we were delayed 'till the afternoon due to a derailment further up the line. At 3 pm we left by train again and proceeded to a river where we detrained and walked over a makeshift bridge to the other side. The main steel bridge had previously been bombed and a wooden one had just been completed. The first engine to test it overturned on the embankment but trucks were being pushed over singly. At 8 pm we boarded another train sitting on top of empty oil drums.

There were also hundreds of sick Jap soldiers on the train who had come back from Burmah. These soldiers and officers were in a terrible condition sick and suffering from fever and vitamins and were receiving no attention. A Jap officer told us that they were treated as cowards by the Japs. They explained that our bombing had been

terrific and it had taken them 80 days to get back and hundreds had died on the way. Some of our officers and men gave them food and cigarettes. The same officers and men had been in the same condition themselves in 1943 during our worst period on the building of the railway. When we arrived at Bangkok North station we found that this had been completely destroyed by our bombers. We were loaded on barges and towed for 4 hours past Bangkok to godowns on the banks of the river. There we stayed two days for a rest before proceeding further. Here we were fed by a party of other ranks who had made this their headquarters, doing work for the Japs.

On one occasion a Thai lorry passing our door threw in a packet of cigarettes. The Japs spotted this and came in and demanded the packet that one of the officers had picked up. He denied having it but eventually had to give it up. Inside there were cigarettes and written on the packet was "I thank you". He was beaten up. However the Jap officer said we had behaved ourselves and allowed us, contrary to standing orders, to give the other ranks some money for cooking our food. We left \$200 to be spent on extra food for the sick. The Japs bought eggs and bananas for us, on payment, for an extra ration on our last lap of our journey. We left again by train at 4 pm and proceeded to another station in Bangkok. Here again our RAF had caused terrific damage to all the buildings and workshops. We waited there 'till 9 pm hoping all the time that the R.A.F. would not return that night. We eventually left and arrived at our destination at 3 am. Here we had tea and left at 4 am with all our kit on our backs for a 25 mile march. We did it in 23 hours more dead than alive. I just managed it, but I hope never again to even try a similar march so heavily laden.

A party of officers had recently returned from Singapore and here are some of the stories they told us. They left our camp in 1944 with a party to go to Japan via Singapore. Malaya they said did not seem much changed although they noticed that rubber had been cut out in areas to provide land for food growing. In Johore they noticed that villages had stockades around them to keep out the bandits that were numerous in various parts of the country. They eventually

arrived in Singapore after a tedious and uncomfortable journey in still-covered good wagons. They had their own group of Korean guards with them and they treated them well on the journey. They were taken to a camp in Singapore and found that the party of 1500 ahead of them had not yet left for Japan. They had actually left on a previous occasion but had returned after a few days due, no doubt, to the submarines being active. This was September and they were put out to work in the docks and to undertake other work in the meantime. Food they said was poor but extras were bought to supplement their daily rations. Work was not hard and they were able to steal items at the docks and sell at good prices to the Chinese. In fact they had more money than they knew what to do with. Some sick were sent out to the Chengi camp and they brought back some scathing remarks about that camp. They were of the opinion that many of the officers and men were deteriorating both mentally and physically with a lot of red tape still noticeable. One day they were told that the trip to Japan was off as the seas were too dangerous for shipping. Our men were glad to hear this. The Jap officer said that the extra rice and dried vegetables sufficient for six weeks, they had taken with them from Thailand would be released gradually to augment the Singapore issue.

The Indian P.O.W.s in the same camp and the Chinese outside were very good to them. In January 1945 they were told to get ready to sail to Saigon where the officers would go to an officer's camp where they would meet us and the men from other camps. They set sail all in one ship packed like sardines with two other ships laden with scrap metal and three destroyers. Outside Singapore they anchored for three days and then set sail. The 1st night everything was O K. The 2nd, about 11 pm, they heard a loud explosion and one of the transports went down and another at 6 am, and then a destroyer. That afternoon the Japs called the senior British officers to a conference and said "Tonight is the crisis" and as many men as possible would sleep on deck. However the night was quiet and only one transport with all the P.O.W.s and two destroyers arrived safely in the mouth of the river leading to Saigon. Going up river 82 masts of sunken ships were counted. This was the result of a concentrated air

raid lately carried out by the American Air Force. At Saigon they were told that 60 destroyed planes lay strewn on the Jap airfields and the Jap controlled oil tanks had been burnt out while those belonging to the French were left intact. A train journey followed and on arrival at an unnamed town they went into barracks. In the early hours of the following morning fighting broke out, between the French and the Japs. This was when the Japs took over from the French and before long the French troops were also captured and made P.O.W.s. The officers now left on their own, leaving the men and the medical officers. Here all the P.O.W.s and officers were given new American clothes. A Red Cross supply. The old clothes were bundled up and taken with them and when transferring from train to ferry, train and lorry the Japs did the coolie work carrying the British officers' kit. So ended a five-month round trip.

Back to this new camp for officers that we were constructing. The work was hard. Officers carrying long bamboos had 26 km to walk each day, doing five trips and carrying three bamboos between two officers. Others were busy building huts boundary fences and Jap huts and offices. Everyone, the old, the lame and the lazy had to do something. I made tea for the workers at 11 am and 4 pm, so again I picked a winner. This went on daily with 400 new officers arriving every four days. All played out with exhaustion, and with skinned and blistered feet. On the 14th of August our Jap senior officer arrived and the 1st thing he did was to punish all those who had disobeyed orders during our transfer. Four officers were made to stand in front of the Jap guard room for an indefinite period: one for accepting a dollar from a Thai; two for the cigarette incident in Bangkok; and the last a Dutch officer. The Jap said that he would treat them as beggars till the end of the war. Our own senior officers told us that we might require to make a stand if the condition of these officers required it. A repeat of the Kanjanburi incident - when the interpreter was made to stand until he collapsed and later placed in the cells on rice and water, where he still was - would not be tolerated without some sort of a show from us. The next day, the 15th of August, 1945 was as usual a Jap holiday, in celebration of Obon, a festival to commemorate deceased ancestors.

The day after, the Jap commander left the camp early. The first bamboo carrying party to arrive said that the Thais were trying to tell them something. They wrote "14" on the ground, put their hands up and said "Japan". Our officers made this out to mean that Japan had capitulated. Unbelievable! However the Koreans had told us that we were using an atom bomb that flattened whole towns with just one bomb. Other parties had the same story to tell. At noon the Jap officer returned, immediately sent for our senior officer Lieutenant Colonel Toosey and told him that we were British officers fighting for our King and he was a Jap officer fighting for his Emperor. He gave a long lecture and then said he would release the officers who were being punished if they would sign a declaration to behave themselves in future.

In the evening another party arrived from Bangkok and they had the same tale to tell. Later the same evening Colonel Toosey gave out at a conference that he was of the opinion that the war was over and asked for no incident to take place as he did not think it wise. It took a lot of believing and I amongst most of us did not sleep much that night. I personally believed it, but after the day of rumours would not have taken a bet on it. On the 18th of August a large car arrived at the Jap office. Colonel Toosey was sent for and officially told that the rumours were true. We would require to remain inside the camp until orders were received from the British and we were officially handed over. It was the intention of the Japs to safeguard us until then. Colonel Toosey complained about the short rations we were receiving and he was promised better supplies from then on.

That evening we had a Thanksgiving Service followed by the singing of all the National Anthems. We erected flag poles and flew the British, Dutch, American, Australian, Russian and French Flags. The last four had to be made and the Japs actually sewed on the stars for the American Flag for us - on a Singer sewing machine. Our illicit wireless set that had been dismantled and packed with the Jap officer's kit, inside a large horn (musical instrument) to escape detection while transferring to this camp, was rebuilt and the Japs were approached

for a supply of torch batteries. The Japs asked why we wanted these as we had no torches, all having being confiscated previously by them. On being told it was for our wireless set that had been in operation during the last three years and escaped detection they were amazed.

However next morning they delivered the goods and we had a bulletin read out in each hut that evening, to be followed by a morning and evening one daily. Next day Captain Neguchie was taken away to Bangkok. Later we heard that as soon as he left Kanjanburi, the 2nd in command immediately allowed the interpreter to be free and transferred to hospital where he was in a bad way and immediately had a blood transfusion. This officer had all along been against the Captain's conduct and on a previous absence of the Captain had given the interpreter the best of food and allowed us to give him what help we could. He however said that the interpreter was Captain Neguchie's private prisoner and could not set him free. The Korean guards also supplied him with vitamin pills. When the war was over this case was reported to the Jap Higher Command who instigated an enquiry with the result that Captain Neguchie was tried by them and given, we heard, three years imprisonment.

Now that the war was over our senior officers began jockeying for position to take over our camp from Lieutenant Colonel Toosey, a junior Colonel but a good one. Next day Colonel Toosey handed over, having been in charge of venous camps as he had been the Japs selection for No. 1 Group Headquarters camp and later No. 7, the officers group. He played for the gallery but made a good camp commandant. He knew how to get the best from the Japs for the benefit of all. He also kept us well informed of any incident and what he proposed doing about it. He was liked by all, including the Dutch.

On the 20th of August Colonel Warren from the marines arrived from Bangkok in a Jap lorry with Red Cross supplies. He came around with a large revolver given to him by the Japs in case they met bandits on the way. He gave us a long speech relating what had happened in the camp that we had left up to date. He took away a request

that we should be one of the 1st camps to be evacuated as we were in an isolated camp next door to 2000 Jap fighting troops unknown to us having just arrived from China. Also, our huts were only partly built with everyone sleeping in the ground and there was only a very poor water supply. Furthermore, our food had been getting worse instead of better.

Senior officers who had been in charge of Group camps left the same day to take over the administration from the Sergeant Majors who had been left in charge of the other ranks when all officers had been removed in January this year. This left another Colonel in charge of our camp. The Jap quartermaster (QM) arrived and the Colonel complained about our short rations. The QM was very distressed and said that he had done his best, but the Thais refused to sell to him. The Colonel said he was sure the Thais would sell to the British. The QM then told him to order three times the normal meat and vegetable rations and present the bill to the Japs. The extra rations were to make up for the previous shortages. Our Colonel soon got busy and rations on a larger scale arrived that night. He also asked the Thais to supply larger quantities of meat, eggs and vegetables and charge them to the British Government. This they did, but most of the meat was pork and many of us were ill with the richness of it. Beef was soon substituted and we did ourselves well - 2 lb of meat a day. The Korean guards were now disarmed and they left as soon as the Japs disowned them, as Korea had seemingly been given her independence.

23rd August. The Koreans today were sent out to repair the road. Work on our camp now stopped as we were of the opinion that any further work would be for the benefit of the Japs and not us. For firewood we used the fence round the camp and all extra building materials.

24th August. Radio news still gives us no signs of an early release. Further Red Cross supplies arrived by lorries from Bangkok. Colonel Morrison arrived and said that on the next day a party would leave for Bangkok and our removal would be completed by the 31st.

We were all pleased about this. Thai Red Cross Doctors arrived and took our stretcher sick cases away in ambulances to a hospital (a French mission in Bangkok). We were now issued with vitamin pills daily. We heard that an American paratroop officer, who had been operating in this area for the last few months, would visit us tomorrow. I had not been feeling well lately and I had my blood tested and was told I had malaria BT so I started on quinine. After a few days I felt better.

The American paratroop officer arrived and with two revolvers, a belt studded with a supply of bullets and a dagger on his belt. He had a well groomed moustache and looked as if he had been a film actor. He told us that he had been dropped by plane with a wireless and operator and a Thai. He had been well supplied with arms dropped from the air and he was training up the Thais in the neighbourhood. He said that the Thais were on our side and were dying to get at the Japs who they hate like poison. He asked us what we would like and all sorts of items were mentioned. He promised to wireless this to headquarters and a plane would arrive and drop the goods.

28th August. Our meals today were, Breakfast: rice, porridge, sugar, fried bread (rice), scrambled eggs and tea. Lunch: rice and a meaty stew, tea. Dinner: rice, baked sweet potatoes, roast pork, sliced boiled beet: jam tart, tea. The 1st mail left the camp today although I had previously sent some letters off through an officer going in to Bangkok. The local French priests who were in hiding in the district came into camp. These Frenchmen had managed to get out of Indo China when the Japs took over at the beginning of the year and escaped detention. They were given all the old clothes etc. that we would not now need, as most of us had been given new clothes from the Red Cross issues.

29th August. A wireless flash given out at 10 pm informed us of the signing of the S.W. Asia Peace Treaty at Rangoon and that all P.O.W.s in Thailand would be flown out to Rangoon. Cheers!

30th August. Colonel Craig, who had been dropped at Bangkok and was in charge of all the units operating in Thailand, said that every party had a wireless set and transmitter to keep in touch with him and his secret wireless in the town. The Thai Army that was concentrated round Bangkok was ready to operate against the Japs and the end of the war just relieved us of being in a nasty position. At one time the Japs threatened to shoot all P.O.W.s if the bombing of Japan did not stop. This may or not be true. I think however that all the officers were put into one camp to be held as hostages if anything happened in Thailand.

31st August. We were told that 13 planes were going to drop supplies at Nakon Paton our base hospital camp and if conditions were poor they would come over here. If not, planes would be over the next day for us. They did drop everything at Nakon Paton today.

Saturday 1st September. We were up early waiting for the sound of planes. Large ground strips showing, "P.O.W. 2000 officers" were laid on the ground. Planes were heard but supplies were all dropped on a neighbouring other ranks camp and then we saw three men hanging from parachutes gliding into the same camp. Later about noon another plane came circling round our camp, but as we were close to a 900 foot cliff the air currents were bad and off it went and dropped its cargo in the same camp, much to our disgust. A party had left early this morning by lorry to Bangkok. Later we were informed that another party would leave at 11 pm with myself included. It rained most of the night, but after two burst tyres we arrived at the airfield too late to get away that day.

2nd September... Peace was being signed in Tokio today and we were told there would be no planes today. We were not supposed to go out of the aerodrome but some of us went into the village and had a good Chinese meal and iced coffee and enjoyed it so much that we had the same again. In the aerodrome we saw our first white woman for over 3½ years. She was Danish, complete with lipstick and rouge

and well dressed. She had also been an internee and was opening a canteen that day for our benefit. At 4 pm she gave each of us a cup of tea with milk and sugar, a packet of cigarettes, two biscuits, two bananas and two custard apples. She looked so pretty that many queued up twice just to have a look at her. I posted more letters again today. Later on that evening we went out for another meal. This time steak, eggs and tomatoes and coffee.

3rd September. Up early and standing-by for our plane. The organisation was good. All in numbered parties in lots of 25 on five-minute notice. Watched the first planes arrive and then a formation of 10 with the General who was to be in charge of Thailand. The planes were bringing in an Indian Brigade and we were going back in the empty planes. 60 had now arrived and we were off at last on our 2½ hours flight to Rangoon, in Dakota's travelling light, only 25 passengers, owing to monsoon conditions making flying difficult at times. We went up to 11,500 feet above the hills and through clouds. At this stage all the flying personnel - five of them - were all looking out. The two pilots and three heads of the others, peering through the doorway into the cockpit. The wireless operator was also standing by. This made some of us very nervous as we did not know what was wrong and we had quite a few bumps and could see nothing but fog through our windows. 'The nose of the plane now dropped and down we came. The tension was over and the crew came back and told us we could take out our ear plugs and that everything was OK. On looking out we were down to a few hundred feet above the jungle and heading for the sea, now seen ahead of us. We circled round an island about 100 feet above the sea and off on a beeline to Rangoon. We were fed on tinned biscuits, cheese, tinned fruit and jam and a packet of cigarettes and matches. The crew could not do enough for us. Later we heard that one plane crew and passengers were lost and no trace found and another had to pancake into a paddy field. All later being taken off from a strip of sand on the shore, after a relieving plane had been smashed up on the rocks. We landed just as a very heavy downpour of rain blotted out visibility delaying later planes from landing on this aerodrome.

Ambulances backed right up to the planes and we stepped from plane to car and off we went to a reception in a brick house and we sat down to tea and cake, sandwiches and tinned fruit followed by another issue of cigarettes and matches. We were attended to by elderly members of the A.T.S., flown from India two days previously, for the sole purpose of welcoming us back to civilization. After a short rest off we went in ambulances to a reception area where we had tea again and here the first item on the programme was the sending off our 1st free cable to our relations telling them that we were free and safe in British hands. Then we filled up various forms and were medically examined by doctors and off again to a hospital. By this time it was getting near lights out time. A hot meal was ready waiting for us and before we went to bed we all received a bottle of beer.

Every evening after that there was an issue of whisky, 20 to a bottle, except Sundays when the issue was beer. This hospital situated in the university buildings was opened the day before and electric light was in progress of being installed from a portable motor-driven plant. We were in darkness in our ward except for one oil lamp, but the next day our ward was wired up and lights on that evening. We had proper hospital beds, mosquito nets, mattresses and sheets, pyjama trousers and jackets. It had been over 3½ years since sleeping in comfort of this nature and we all had a restless night. We missed our hard beds of bamboo slats, but after a couple of nights we enjoyed the comfort. Next day and every day after we had a bar of chocolate, 20 cigarettes and a box of matches, one tab of mapricrine against malaria and two vitamin tablets. I was on the full malaria course of 9, 6, 6,6,3,3,3,3,3,3,3 and then one a day of mapricrine 'till 14 days after arriving home. The course did not agree with me so I also had a big dose of salts daily. Our doctor was a lady from Belfast and our nurses were very good. The doctor told us that unless we were ill and required her services we were only lodgers and could go and do what we wanted all day.

The day after our arrival we went to the QM stores and were fitted out with two Burmah green, twill, uniforms, underwear and footwear and

from the Red Cross a bag containing 50 cigarettes, comb, razor, blades, shaving brush, soap, toothbrush and paste, writing material, a pencil, a cake of soap and a hand towel. We were on half rations and they were ample for us. The water supply that had been badly damaged by the bombing was very erratic and a bathing place was erected outside in the square surrounded by the hospital. No screens were erected until later on. The nurses used to walk through the group of men having their baths on their way to the various blocks.

One of the first things we did was to visit Rangoon to see the sights. We were four miles out and we went out onto the main road and waited. Thousands of army lorries ambulances and jeeps were passing up and down. Within a few minutes a jeep would stop and offer us a lift into town. An Indian military police officer gave me my first lift but later colonels, majors and other drivers would stop and offer us a lift. Everyone was most kind and helpful to us all. The map office gave us any military map that we fancied and even went to the trouble of printing a map showing our railway from Thailand to Rangoon, with all the camps marked on it. I was unlucky the day I went there as the issue was out of stock, but a new supply was being printed.

The town was in a dreadful mess. All the main government buildings had been bombed or burnt out and only a few natives in the town. They were however opening up the native shops as fast as possible but prices were high. We had a very nice tea in a Burmese shop with cakes (iced) included. The docks had also been badly hit but the temples with their gold leafed spires were intact. The roads were in a shocking condition. The civil prison surrounded by a high brick wall was intact. We saw what was left of the Jap headquarters. It had been absolutely leveled to the ground.

On 7th September we received £5.10s from the field cashier in Rupees, \$70.

8th September. I was sent to the eye specialist and received a pair of glasses a week later.

9th September. Lord Louis Mountbatten visited the hospitals and received a warm welcome. He gave a talk to the patients in each hospital and said that as he was flying to Singapore the next day he had to welcome us here in Rangoon before leaving. He laughed and joked with the men and gave us a short instruction lecture on the Japs and Burmah. In Burmah he mentioned the shortage of equipment, but despite this the Japs had suffered casualties at the rate of 6:1 for the whole of the campaign. In the battle, just a short way from Rangoon, the Japs lost 12,000 killed from their total of 22,000 troops in action. Our losses were one for every 60 Japs killed. Very few Jap prisoners had been captured, but he assured us that every Jap and every Korean that had had anything to do with our P.O.W camps and every Kempe-tei (Jap military police) would be placed under arrest pending a full enquiry. All culprits would be severely dealt with. Very comforting news! The war had finished sooner than expected, but the landing in Malaya took place on the original day planned for it. Shipping was therefore short, but when the landing was completed these ships would return to take us home. From the 15th to 24th of September, he said that all 15,000 of us now in Rangoon would be on the high seas. Food was short in Rangoon and the troops there were on half rations so that we could get the other half. He also mentioned that his wife had also been visiting P.O.W. camps in Thailand and she would also be going to Singapore.

A friend of mine in a camp in Thailand was there when she arrived. All the men were dressed up in the new uniforms dropped by planes when she arrived - except two who had been unlucky. These two were sent into hospital and covered themselves with a blanket. When she asked them what was the matter they were at a loss to explain. One however said Bronchitis. When she passed the Australians hut on her way out she turned round and said "*The tension is off boys on with your Gee Strings*".

13th September. I, along with 100 others left our hospital for a transit camp to await shipment. We all had to fill in Atrocity Forms relating any ill-treatment to ourselves or others. giving the names or nicknames for the perpetrators. Many of the guards had been nicknamed by us such as Babyface, Hatchetface, Undertaker and other names better left unsaid. This camp is a tented one with Ashfelt huts for canteen, picture house and dining halls. The roads were all steel plated (interlocking) used for roads and aerodrome landing strips in Burmah. We were allowed to buy a bottle of beer a day and one bottle of whisky and one of Gin at home prices before we left. I did not buy the spirits as I thought it was like bringing coals to Newcastle. More letters were sent off and up to this time I had received no reply to my cable or letters and did not know if my wife was still in Australia or at home. I was put in charge of a party of 50 men for the trip home. Before leaving I was reduced to only 43, the others either having gone off in previous parties or gone sick.

On the morning of the 16th we left by lorry and went on board the Worcestershire that sailed with the tide on the 17th at 11 am. At last we were on our way home. Next day we ran into monsoon weather and I had to retire to bed for a couple of days. The O.C. Troops on board, a Colonel was like a fussy old woman and soon found himself in trouble with the 200-odd officers on board. Before long he had to change his ideas. Some of our senior officers threatened to report him to the War Office, so he came off his high horse. When we arrived at Colombo at 11 pm we had a wonderful welcome from all the navy ships and shipping in harbor, searchlights showing "V"s and hooters sending out the Morse code "V" until we anchored safely in harbour. The skipper over the loudspeaker told us that he had received a message welcoming us into port from the Naval Command. It was a great welcome.

Next day we were all allowed ashore and lorries fitted up with padded seats and two pretty ATS, Wren and other girls to each lorry were waiting to take us to places of amusement. I and 5 others went to a Wrennery where six girls entertained us. We were given as much

beer as we liked followed by a sumptuous tea. Our stay was short as we had to be back by 4.30 pm sailing at 6 pm. Before leaving we were given a bottle of beer in our pockets, two packets of cigarettes and two handkerchiefs each and the girls came with us to our boat. An Indian pipe band played us farewell as we left. O.C. Troops refused to allow beer, a present from the navy, to be brought on board. The General in Colombo headquarters of S.E.A.T. was told of this and he promised to see that a supply would be put on board at Suez. Sure enough it arrived and from then until we arrived at Liverpool everyone on board could buy two bottles a day. The weather now improved and the troops and officers again went about without shirts. Here I might mention that shirts were seldom worn all the 3½ years we were prisoners. In fact we went native and wore out Jap Happies as we called them - a Jap issue of clothing – a loin cloth. The order to the army in Rangoon after we arrived was to expose the body to the sunshine as much as possible. They had noticed that we all had benefitted by this practice. We saw staff officers in Rangoon trying to get a tan on their bodies walking or driving about the town carrying their bush shirts. We had a good trip, slow at 14 knots and arrived at Suez where we tied up to a wartime pier at Adabiya. Here we had another welcome. Here we were also to be fitted out with warm clothing. There were entertainments: cinema, swimming, another Red Cross bag, drives to Sandy Beach, bands, free teas and Post Offices. A decorated train drew up and 400 at a time were taken a couple of miles away to a clothing centre. The organisation there was of a high order and before we knew where we were, we were fitted out with the best of clothing including underwear, pyjamas etc. By evening we were on our way again and next day I received some letters, the first since being free and now I knew that my family were at home waiting for me. That relieved me of all my worries.

At Gibraltar we called in for half an hour, landed a sick P.O.W. for hospital treatment, took on a little mail and a Red Cross issue of apples and grapes. We were now on our last lap for home. Another Red Cross bag was issued to all and some clothing divided equally to all drafts. A pound packet of tea from the Ceylon Tea Manufacturers

Association a few bars of soap, chocolate, cigarettes and biscuits to each and every one of us. The weather and sea through the bay was ideal and at last we sighted the coast of Ireland and here we were!

Told that we could not be accepted by the Liverpool Port authorities until Tuesday morning we slowed down and then anchored at the mouth of the Mersey. Fog delayed our departure next morning and at 11 am we tied up and received a great welcome. A band played us in. Large crowds of relations of the P.O.W.s were there and many others. A General of the British Army read out an address of welcome from the King and Queen. The Lord Provost of Liverpool addressed us, followed by the General for the army and some high naval officer for the navy. All this took place while we were being tied up. Within a few minutes of the gangways connected to the ship the first party of P.O.W.s was ashore and taken to a godown where the Red Cross had tea and food waiting for us. Also, 1½ lb of chocolate, cigarettes and matches. We were soon off in lorries through the streets of Liverpool lined with school children waving flags and grown-ups all giving us a wave. Factory workers were at all the windows waving and cheering to us. It was a very impressive welcome back to England to the fog and cold. And so ends my experiences of a P.O.W.

The Japs we found had a one track mind. If at any time they were on the war path any irregularities they found us doing they would continue on this subject until a fresh one cropped up and the previous one would be forgotten. They had the habit of being able to work themselves up to an uncontrollable temper and then we could expect the worst. For the slightest mistake the sentry would dress us down in Japanese - Greek to most of us - and his temper would rise and then he would start punching, kicking and sometimes using the butt of his rifle on our ribs. To make the insult worse he was using our own rifle captured in Malaya. I have seen the sentry then sorry for his behaviour and he would open his cigarette case and offer a cigarette. The Japs and the Koreans did not see eye to eye in punishments given although in many cases the orders for ill treatment would be given by the Jap Sergeant or officer and the Koreans had to obey. But in many

cases the guard would treat any defaulter standing in front of the guard room with consideration especially if placed there by one of the Japs. One never knew where you were with them so the safest thing was to be sure not to be caught.

We had a set of Regulations affecting the P.O.W. camps. Some sixty-odd rules, although usually only about 30 would be translated into English, were read out to us periodically. They related to what we could not do and what we could have in our kits and what we had to do to obey the orders, usually with a different interpretation, according to the mood of the Jap officer in charge of each camp.

The Koreans were very interested in the progress of the war and used to tell us that Churchill was No.1. They said Germany was no good and Japan finished. In fact they were pleased that Japan lost, as they had been ill treated by the Japanese since the annexation of Korea.

I record here the impressions that will always live in my memory:

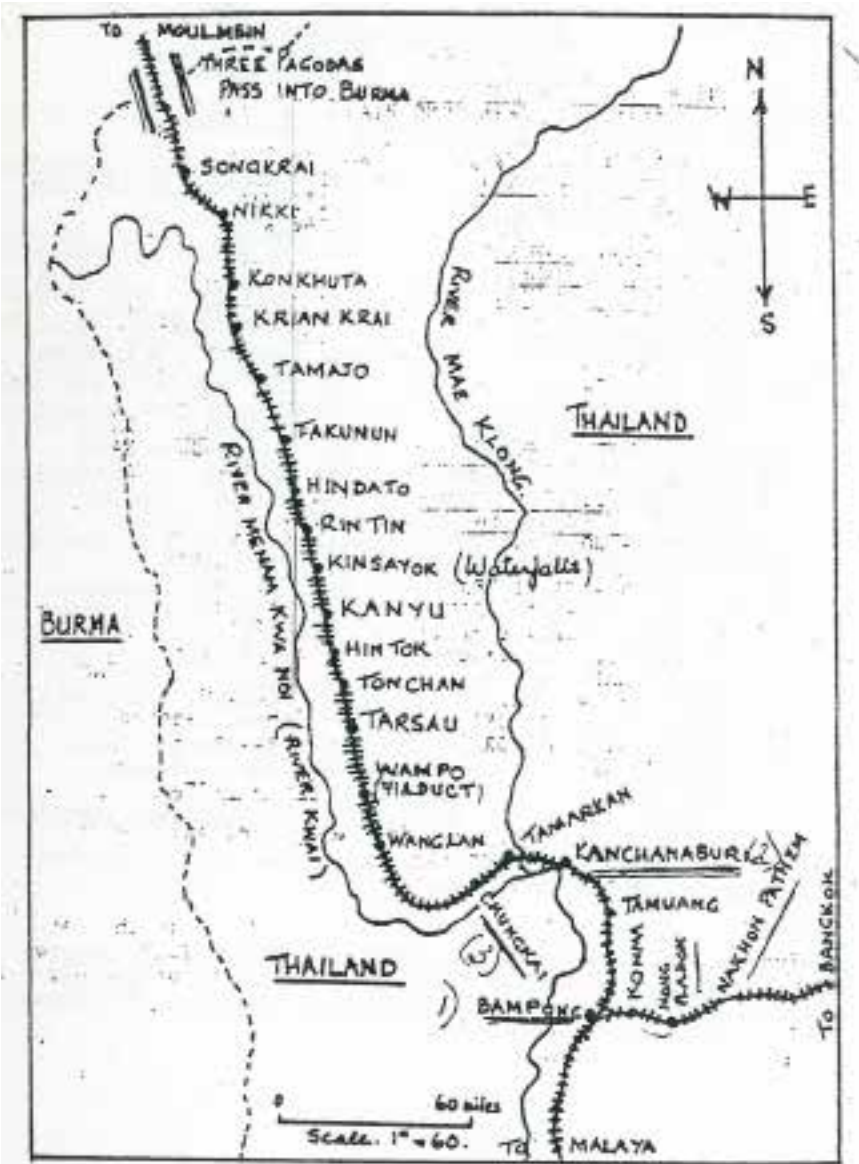
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- First when we were told that Singapore had fallen and we were prisoners not knowing what our fate would be.
- When cholera broke out in our camp at Chungkai, Thailand and men were dying daily.
- When train and boat loads of sick, living skeletons arrived at the same camp from up country, many to die in a few days or linger on for weeks.
- When our deaths in the same camp of 5,000 rose to 15 a day averaging 250 a month or at the rate 3,000 a year.
- When the 1st stick of our own bombs landed in our camp at Non Pladuk causing about 300 casualties.

- When 31 bombers in three waves pattern bombed the railway yards and part of our camp.
- Our air raid warning, a Jap bugle call, which had the same effect as the siren at home.
- When we received the wireless news of the fall of Germany.
- When we heard the 1st rumours of the end of the Jap war and when we heard over the radio that we would be flown out of Thailand to Rangoon.
- Stepping out of the plane in Rangoon free at last in British hands.

MAJOR P.O.W. CAMPS ON THE KWAI RAILWAY

From October 1942 to August 1945 (From Lucas Records)



THE RAILWAY BUILT BY BRITISH, AUSTRALIAN, DUTCH,
NEWZEALAND AND AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

**LOCATIONS OF SITES AND BRITISH, AUSTRALIAN, DUTCH,
NEWZEALAND AND AMERICAN **P.O.W. CAMPS**
ON THE KWAI RAILWAY 1942 – 1945
(Kilometre distances all from NONC PLADUK)**

KM 002 KONMA (Transit Camp)
KM 005 BAN PONG (BANPONG)
KM 013 RUKKE
KM 026 TAMANOI
KM 039 THA MUANG (TAMUANG)
BASE HOSPITAL CAMP
No 4 Group P.O.W.'s

KM 041 TUNG TUNG
KM 047 KAO DIN
KM 048 PAK PRAGE
KM 049 TING NA TALEA

KM 051 KANCHABURI*
(Cemetery 12,000 Graves)

KM 055 THA MAKHAM (TAMARKAND)
KM 067 CHUNGKAI
(Cemetery 12,000 Graves)

KM 069 WANG LAN (WUN LING)

KM 078 TAPON (WON YEN)

KM 088 BANKAO

KM 098 TAKIVEN (TA KI LEN)

KM 108 ARROWHILL (WANG SING)

KM 110 LUM SUM (For Waterfall)

KM 114 WAMPO (Double Viaduct)

KM 121 CHONG KAP

KM 125 WANYAI (WANG YAI)

KM 130 TARSAU (THA SOE)
BASE POW CAMP FOR
RAILWAY 1942

KM 139 TONCHAN (Spring Camp)

KM 147 TAMPI

KM 155 HINTOK

KM 166 KANYU 1, 2, & 3
(Cholera Camps)

KM 168 KINSAYOK (SAI YOKE)

KM 172 KINSAYOK MAIN (Waterfalls
Also Cholera Camp)

KM 181 RIN TIN (LIN THIN)

KM 190 KUEI (KUIY, KUI YONG)

KM 198 HINDATO (Hot Springs)

KM 208 BRANKASSI (PRANG KASI)

KM 218 TAKUNUN (TAKANUN)

KM 229 NAMAJON (NAMU CHONYAI)

KM 237 TOMAJO (TAMAGYO)

KM 244 TAMURON PATO

KM250 KRIAN KRAI (KREUNG KRAI)

KM 258 KUN KANTA

KM 262 KONKHUTA (KONHUITA)
(Railway Meeting Point
October 1943)

KM 273 TEIMONTA

KM 282 NIKKI (NIKHE)

KM 294 SONGKRAI (SANKURAI
KEUNG KUAI)
(Three Pagodas Pass,
Thailand - Burma)

***The home of Nai Boon Pong Sirivejabandhu and his brother (“Our man on the River Kwai”)**

Above details taken from “Towards the Setting Sun” by James Bradley and “Out in the Midday Sun” by Kate Caffrey (from the diary of Colonel C. J. Brerton, of Officers’ P.O.W. Battalion “H” Force.)

GLOSSARY AND NOTES

Names of Towns As in the Diary	Current Spelling
Chengi	Changi
Kanjaburi	Kanchanaburi
Non Pladuk	Nong Pladuk
Bang Pong	Bam Pong
Burmah*	Burma/Myanmar
Tokio	Tokyo

*The spelling with an “h” is said to be one of the quirky idiosyncrasies of British transliteration of foreign names.

The Singapore Home Guard

A Singapore Local Defence Corps was formed in September 1940 and subsequently became known as the Home Guard. It was a separate organisation, from the Volunteer Forces and the Police with its own officers and with the primary objective of maintaining the preservation of Internal Security. Invalided from the military during the 1914/1919 World War with a permanently disabled arm, this was the one organisation which allowed Mr. R. A. Wanless to take an active role in the defence of Singapore. He quickly volunteered and when the invasion of Malaya took place he immediately returned from leave to play his part. This led to his capture and imprisonment

British Regiments and Corps in the Diary

The Gordons – The Gordon Highlanders

The Manchesters – The Manchester Regiment

The East Surreys – The East Surrey Regiment

R.A.O.C. – Royal Army Ordnance Corps

Other Military Terms in the Diary

A.T. S - Auxiliary Territorial Service, the women's branch of the British Army in World War II

Bofor – A Swedish gun manufacturer

Tommy - The name Tommy for any soldier in the British Army is particularly associated with World War I, when the paybooks issued to all British soldiers used the name “Tommy Atkins” to illustrate how they should be filled in.

Wrennery – The barracks of the Womens' Royal Naval Service (W.R.N.S.)

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