

Death Railway

T O U R S

School Group Historical Tours



'To Remember the men of the Death Railway'

Death Railway

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Australian Historian Guided

Corporal (Ret) Andrew Mason is the Manager of Death Railway Tours and the son of an exPOW who served in Malaya, Singapore and Japan. He is an ex RAAF Policeman and worked at many military establishments domestically and internationally through his RAAF career. He represented the RAAF in 1998 at the Hellfire Pass Museum opening and is a member of the Thai-Burma Railway Centre. He is published on the railway with his book titled, 'A Different Brand of English'. Andrew has a Bachelor Degree in Emergency Management, a Post Grad Diploma & current Level 2 First Aid.

Overview of the 9 day Historical tour

We will visit several cemeteries in Kanchanaburi—where each student will 'adopt a soldier' in each of those cemeteries making their visit much more personal.

We will visit former POW Camps like Hintok Road, Konyu River and Tamarkan; we'll walk over the famous 'Bridge Over the River Kwai' and the students will learn about the conditions the men endured at places like Hellfire Pass, Three Tier Bridge and the 7metre Embankment etc.



They'll learn of the cruelty to our troops, the starvation, tropical ulcers and disease that took many of our lads well before their time. Students will learn about the guards and engineers who managed the men with an iron fist and they'll see where some POWs escaped the clutches of the guards, where acts of brutality were carried out and evidence of the 'Speedo' & Hammer and Tap etc.

We'll link the main visit at the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery to other POW sites; visiting Australian Soldiers in the cemeter-

ies and then visiting the camps, cuttings or structures where those heroes died; together with adopting soldiers.

A mix of Australian military history fused with local ancient Thai Culture will ensure the student has a broad experience and one that they will remember forever.

Some fun activities will include a cooking course, a River Jump into the River Kwai, Karaoke and shopping at various markets and stalls.

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Memberships

- Thai-Burma Railway Centre—Foundation Friend.
- Returned Servicemen's League (Service).
- MCC War Veterans Club.
- RAAF Police Association.
- Full Tour Agency Public Liability Insurance

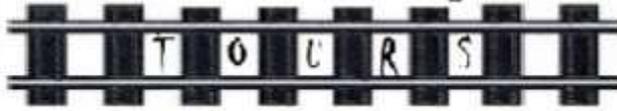


Inclusions

- All tours led by the company Manager and Australian War Historian.
- All participants will receive a company polo shirt and hat.
- All participants will receive a signed copy of the book 'A Different Brand of English'.
- A hardcover travel diary with colour photographs.
- Return economy International flights from Australia from Melb, Syd, Bris or Perth.
- Transfers and air-conditioned vehicles.
- All meals and entrance fees.
- Excellent hotels in Bangkok and the River Kwai.
- Rates: AUD\$4,200 per person. (twin share)
\$ 650 (single supplement).
- **Teacher Special Offer:** Min 12 students and 1 x Teacher travels free (economy airfares and tours included)



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Day 1

Hotel: Park Plaza Bangkok – Park Plaza Hotel on Soi 18 Sukhumvit area of Bangkok – right in the heart of the city with spacious, modern and classy rooms. A rooftop pool, fitness centre, free WIFI, 24 hour Concierge and free Tuk Tuk Service from hotel to Sukhumvit Road.

Dinner at the famous Cabbages & Condoms Restaurant – 1900 hours. This restaurant was established to promote an increased understanding of family planning and was started by a Thai Official – Mr Mechai Viravaidya.



Day 2

Breakfast: Park Plaza Hotel. Lunch: Riverside Restaurant. Dinner (Set Menu) Park Plaza Hotel

Bangkok City Tour:

Wat Pho – Temple of the Reclining Buddha. (0900hours). The 46m long Buddha covered in gold leaf made himself a giant to look down on the devil; this site is also where Traditional Thai Massage originated.

Royal Grand Palace. The first city landmark on any itinerary that was once a Royal Residence surrounded by huge white walls and occupies a massive city block. We will visit the Royal Chapel & halls used today for Coronation ceremonies.

Wat Prah Kaew – Temple of the Emerald Buddha. The most sacred Buddha image in the Kingdom. The temple was built to house a green Buddha image carved from one piece of Emerald Jade that King Rama 1 had brought from Vientiane when he captured the city in 1778. He built the temple and enshrined the famous 'Emerald' Buddha as a symbol of Siam's regained nationhood.

Lunch at a Riverside Restaurant.

Khlong (Canal) Tour on a Long Tail Boat on the Chao Phraya River. See city life on the river as we pass stilted houses, mansions, high-rises & kids playing in the river.

Gem Factory Visit. Covers 1.8 acres area, our tour will visit the factory and see how gems are made into fantastic jewellery. From Diamonds to Sapphires, Ruby's and Emeralds.

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Day 3

Bangkok – Kanchanaburi & Death Railway

Rod Fa (Train Market). Check out an unusual market selling all sorts of items and collectibles; situated on train tracks where six trains pass daily.

Sugar and Coconut Village. See where they make coconut products and an Atap style (raised) Thai home.

Damnoen Floating Market visit – including a Longtail boat ride on the Damnoen Canal – see locals selling all types of goods on boats with market stalls catered towards the tourists.

Ban Pong Railway Station. We visit the station where the POWs alighted and most walked north to camps further along the Railway. F Force had to walk some 300kms mostly at night to get to their destinations. Guards were reported as brutal on this trek that began at Ban Pong.

JEATH Museum. An acronym for Japan, England, America/Australia, Thailand and Holland. There is a long Atap Hut to see with war time photos. At the rear a statue of the Japanese Interpreter Nagase who was depicted in the recent movie 'The Railway Man' based on the book by ExPOW Eric Lomax.

Boon Pong's House. We visit Mr Pong's Shop and the small tribute dedicated to the man who helped smuggle much needed medicines to Weary Dunlop and others.

Japanese Headquarters Kanchanaburi – the two-storey building where the Japanese commanded the Death Railway for the region. (External view only).

Lunch on a floating restaurant on the river.

Thai Coffee & Tea Tasting at a local venue. Try something new and different with a Thai Style beverage – definitely unique.

Kanchanaburi Old Town Food Market – wander through the market and check out what the locals are selling – some strange looking critters for sale; see the rare Julian's Golden Carp locally known as 'Yesook'.

Kanchanaburi War Cemetery. Southern cemetery where approx 7,000 lads are buried with 1,362 Australians. We will visit the memorial to the 300 Cholera victims (two plots) and we will personally visit more than 20 soldiers, hear their stories and see photos of many of those soldiers at their gravesite. We will visit the four mates who escaped & executed. We will visit several men who died in Hellfire Pass – one of which was murdered. We will visit men who died at Konyu River & Hintok camps including Dutch and English soldiers.



After Dinner Documentary—featuring Sir Edward Dunlop, Jack Chalker and ExPOWs.

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Day 4

Breakfast at Felix Hotel.

Lunch (Set Menu) – Floating Restaurant adjacent the River Kwai Bridge.

Dinner (Set Menu) – Home Phu Toey.

Longtail boat ride along the MaeKlong River. Under the 'Bridge Over the River Kwai' to Chungkai War Cemetery. View the bridge and river life – we might be lucky and hear a barge going past playing 'Colonel Bogey March'.

Chungkai War Cemetery. The smaller of the two cemeteries in town with 1,740 lads buried here (with one female) mostly British. We will alight from the Longtail boat, pass a great example of a Spirit House and learn more of Thai culture. At the cemetery we will visit **several individuals, one from the sunken ship the 'Prince of Wales' and one lad who was only 22 years of age, which we will have a special tribute for.** We visit four other lads (the 'Chungkai Four') who **escaped, were captured and executed as a result.** We will see where Sirs Albert Coates and Weary Dunlop worked as well as Captain Markowitz of Canada at the POW Hospital.



Chungkai Cutting. Visiting the site of the cutting on the railway near the temple.

Khaopoon Cave and Small Atap Hospital Hut. The caves date back centuries and are dotted with Buddha relics as you pass by. Some narrow areas to navigate – if this is not your thing you can wait topside – no problem. Some small Fruit Bats inside and an elderly lady who was a young girl here in WW2.

Taklien Railway Station. Here was a British POW Camp and it is this camp where the men we visited in Kanchanaburi War Cemetery escaped from – **the 'Kanburi Four'.**

Lunch (buffet) at **Tham Krasae Restaurant** – overlooking the Wampo Viaduct.

Wampho Viaduct. We walk the viaduct built in 17 days mostly by Australians. We will see where the POW camp was situated and light an incense stick inside Krasae Cave that was once a Japanese Air Raid Shelter and store facility. We will marvel at the work these men engaged on the cliff face of the Kwai Noi River and see evidence of their work. (Those scared of heights can drive around to the restaurant).

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Day 4 Continued....

Ride the Death Railway – Special Class Carriage. We travel for about 70 mins in the train and enjoy a coffee or tea traveling over Wampho Viaduct and Thai countryside.



Bridge Over the River Kwai. We visit and walk over the famous bridge and view where B24 Liberators from the USAF blew it up – we'll see what was original and what was replaced post war by the Japanese. We'll see where the wooden bridge was situated and tell a story about one of the cement pylons – does it really contain a body?

Japanese & All Nations Memorial. We visit the memorial and look at the emblems surrounding it dedicated to the men who perished on the Death Railway. Whilst here we view the former Tamarkan POW Camp site where one of our lads we visited in Kanchanaburi War Cemetery died from dysentery and malnutrition.

USA Memorial. We visit the American memorial for those who perished on the railway. As Americans repatriate their war dead, none of them are buried in the cemeteries.

Tamarkan POW Camp site where one of our lads we visited in Kanchanaburi War Cemetery died from dysentery and malnutrition.

Locomotives and Kampong Diesel Truck outside display.

Onyx Jewellery Shop – a local lady makes & sells stunning Onyx jewellery; great for presents and gifts for loved ones back home and very affordable.

Floating Restaurant at the Bridge Over the River Kwai for dinner (Set Menu). The bus will return us back to the hotel – This is a restaurant you can spend some time in – chill out and marvel at the famous bridge. It is a restaurant that floats on the river and one you will always remember because of where it is.

Felix Hotel Kanchanaburi - A 20 hectare hotel in the heart of Kanchanaburi. You can walk the 250m to the Bridge Over the River Kwai (from the hotel) for private walks along the bridge. It has lush & beautiful gardens, privacy and space with the backdrop of the MaeKhlong River. Two large swimming pools for a refreshing dip, two Tennis Courts, a Snooker Lounge, Fitness Centre, 2Km of Jogging Track, bikes and canoe hire. Simply the best place to stay in all of Kanchanaburi – right next to the Bridge.

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Day 5

Breakfast at Home Phu Toey

Lunch at Hintok River Camp Restaurant. (Set Menu)

Dinner Home Phu Toey (Set menu)

Hellfire Pass (Museum & Cutting) and walk to Hintok Station

0845 hours start. Today's activities include:



Hellfire Pass Museum.

A dedicated museum to the cutting and area that will highlight the struggle, history and suffering via a balanced theme of history telling across all nations. It opened in 1998 after Paul Keating attended an ANZAC Day service there in 1994 allocating \$1.6 million to the project. It sits on Royal Thai Army land a short distance from the cutting.

Hellfire Pass Cutting.

Ironically began on 25 April 1943 and was one of the toughest sections of the entire railway – it is 500m long. Estimates put the death toll around 700 men who cut and tore through this monster in several months during the 'Speedo' period. We will walk through and marvel at the 'Hammer and Tap' men, the labour intensive struggles of limestone rock removal and witness evidence of drill bits. We will see where one Australian Private escaped the clutches of 'The Silent Basher', where LT Itchinoi and others prowled & where other events of bastardisation took place.

As a fitting salute we will place the photo of an Australian Digger in Hellfire Pass who died there – the same soldier we visited in the cemetery. We pause to remember the Aussie Private that was murdered right there in Hellfire Pass who we also visited back in the cemetery.

Hellfire Pass – Hintok Station (3km walk).

We walk the 3 km one way journey past the former sites of the trestle bridges and the 7m Embankment that still sit immaculately today and we can see the hardship required with sheer muscle, sweat, tears and man hours required for the unrelenting task. We visit the site of the 'Three Tier Bridge' where one exPOW story is retold about his run-ins with 'Billy the Bastard'.

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Day 5 continued...

Konyu River POW Camp. The first POW camp of the Australians who worked on Hellfire Pass and the region; it is where Dunlop Force initially set up and where trade on the river occurred.

Lunch at Hintok River Camp Restaurant. The site of the former POW Camp on the river. From this area men worked on Compressor Cutting by having to scale the adjacent jungle.



Mountain Rock Pool at Hintok River Camp. After a big walk through Hintok, the Three Tier Bridge to Hammer and Tap Cutting etc; we'll take a well-deserved relaxing dip in the rock pool after lunch. Over-looking jungle and the Kwai Noi River below, we'll kick back and sooth the muscles with a truly unique view of the river. We will be supplied with a clean towel and a change room; BYO bathers. (Non-bathers can relax pool side or at the restaurant over a long lunch).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=nnET1xGKtz0

Hintok Mountain POW Camp. Also known as Hintok Road Camp, this camp was the northernmost camp of the Hellfire Pass area – it was where Dunlop Force moved to from Konyu River Camp. This camp was some 5 kms from the rail trace and was difficult to get to the railway line due to the massive hills – it was also well away from the supply of the Kwai Noi River. A massive Cholera outbreak occurred here where 'Cholera Gulch' quarantine area was set up to segregate the sick. 57 Aussies died here at Hintok Mountain. Several of the lads we visited in Kanchanaburi War Cemetery died here of Cholera.

Home Phu Toey Resort (Check In). Set in the jungle of the River Kwai with pool, villa/log cabin style accommodation with a recent upgrade, high on the mountain overlooking the river; loads to see and do at the resort, Click on the link below for an introduction:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=2UKXH003BrY

Hotel & Dinner - Home Phu Toey (Set Menu).

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Day 6

Breakfast at the Felix Hotel
Lunch - Thai Food Cooking Class.
Felix Hotel for dinner



Weary Dunlop Peace Park. We will visit the park and see the massive statue of Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop at Khun Kanit Wanachote's property. Khun Kanit was great friends with Sir Edward and so dedicated part of his resort to the great man and the railway. See stories and artefacts and a memorial to the medical staff.

Jack Chalker Gallery. Visit the gallery and see the many paintings Jack made during his days as a POW. Hear of some stories of Jack and how those paintings got him into strife on occasion.

Longtail Boat – with 4 or 6 Inline Isuzu diesel outboard from Home Phu Toey to Hintok River Camp. We'll cruise echoing among the Kwai Noi River as we head through the jungle and over to the River Camp.

Lawa Cave visit with beautiful stalactites and stalagmites with several chambers to view via the local Mon Village and fruit trees.

Longtail Boat to the Floathouse.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=MUb-20aup3g

Longtail Boat to Tarsao Hospital and POW Camp site. A visit to these former prisoner sites which are currently located in the grounds of the Pung Waan Resort.

Sai Yok Noi Waterfall. A picturesque waterfall area popular with Thai families on weekends. We will visit the fall and in particular see the war time locomotive perched high on the hill. We will see up close bamboo trees and their spikes that were substitute hypodermic needles used by the POW Doctors.

Namtok/Tarsao Station. This area is where the Tarso POW Camp and station existed and is the current day end of the line for the Death Railway. Visit the J Station Plaque.

Prasat Muang Singh – The remains of two Khmer temples that date to the 13th and 14th centuries; declared a historical park in 1987. Built in the Bavon style, the temple relates to the Khmer Kingdom and were utilised around the same period as its more famous cousin: Angkor Wat.

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Day 7

Breakfast at Felix Hotel (Set Menu)

Lunch – The Floating Restaurant

Dinner – River Kwai Jungle Rafts (Set Menu)

Thai Burma Railway Centre. View the artefacts, stories, dioramas and history as told in the two story museum. View info boards pertaining to the timelines of events, medical aspects, summary of deaths, planning construction and logistics etc.



Kanchanaburi War Cemetery. Final visit and tribute to several of the 'Known Unto God' soldiers.

Thai Isaan Food Cooking Class. We will learn to cook Thai food from the Isaan province. Choose any three dishes from the menu and you will learn to cook those dishes like a pro. Take your new found skills home and delight family and friends with sumptuous Thai dinners and stories of your cooking day in Kanchanaburi.

Kanchanaburi Lookout – View the whole valley of Kanchanaburi surrounded by mountains – great spot for those panoramic photos.

Bridge T-Shirt Market – T-Shirt shopping opportunity.

Floating Restaurant at the Bridge Over the River Kwai for dinner – (Set Menu). Meet in the lobby at 1900 hours.

Karaoke Night - Who will take out the king or queen of Karaoke? Sing up a storm in our own hotel.



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Day 8

Breakfast at the Jungle Rafts
Rose Garden Show and huge buffet lunch
Dinner at the Park Plaza

Nakorn Pathom Chedi & Temple. Nakhon Pathom is one of the oldest cities and important Buddhism centres in Thailand. Phra Pathom Chedi which means 'Holy Chedi of the Beginning' is regarded as the oldest Buddhism structure in the Kingdom and dates back to the 3rd Century BC. The Chedi or 'Stupa' with its large orange dome is visible from far and the passing POWs would have seen this on their way north to the work parties.



Nong Pladuk Railway Station. Was the terminus of the pre Death Railway with large material work-shops – was also a target late in the war for Allied Air Power. We will visit the station, see inside the Station Masters Office and Stone of Remembrance.

International buffet lunch at the Rose Garden. Wow – lots of food choices.

Elephant Show at the Rose Garden including demonstrations on how the Elephants work in water, pull logs & work with their Mahout etc.

Rose Garden at Sampran– Thai Culture (Arts & Crafts) Complex including: a. Silk processing/ Umbrella painting; b. Thai Music & dance/weaving; c. Have a go at pottery and garland making; d. Fruit carving; to a herbal pavilion, with e. Sword Fighting and Thai Boxing.

Farewell Dinner at Silom Village – a sit down dinner with traditional Thai dancers dressed in their full national regalia dancing and performing aspects of the Ramayana.



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Day 9

Breakfast at the Park Plaza Hotel.

Transfer to Suvarnabhumi (Bangkok) Airport.



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