



**Newsletter**

**August 2016**

Hello fellow travellers,

Please find below some recent topics, developments and experiences of Death Railway Tours.

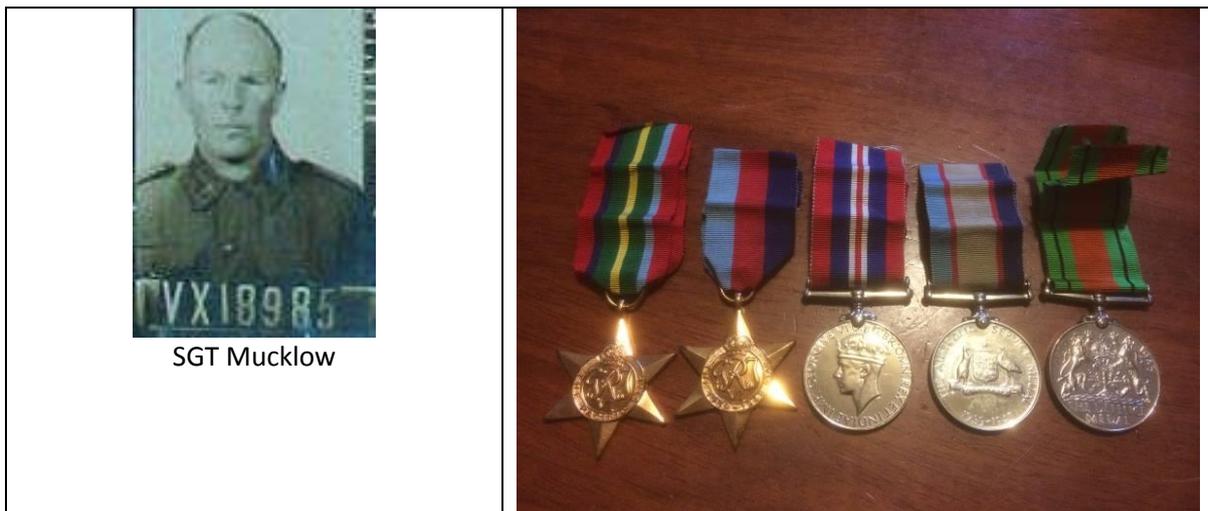
**Sergeant Charlie Mucklow Medals**

I have come into the possession of Sergeant (SGT) Charles Mucklow's war medals. SGT Mucklow died in Tamarkan POW Camp (Thai/Burma Railway) of dysentery on 29 Jan 1944; he was from Nathalia Victoria and was a Truck/Tractor Driver before the war.

He would never have seen his medals as they were all issued of course well after the war. I will bring them back to Thailand and we will commemorate the SGT at his grave on 11 November this year at Kanchanaburi War Cemetery.

Ribbons are original and are in pristine condition (along with the medals) – they appear to have been in storage for a very long time. I will get them court mounted at Solomon Brothers in Melbourne.

The company I purchased them from had their shop burnt down this year and they lost a lot of memorabilia. Fortunately they stored the SGT's medals (and others) in their fireproof safe.



# Death Railway

## TOURS

### **75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore – Australian Ex-POWs of War Memorial**

15 February 2017 is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fall of Singapore. Commemorative events will take place around the world – however there will be our own commemorative event at the National ex-POWs Memorial at Ballarat on the day hosted/arranged by the Trustees of the ExPOWs Memorial/Veterans Affairs. Below is the media release – see you all there at 11AM Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017:

The Trustees wish to advise that the 2017 Anniversary Service will be held on Wednesday the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017 in conjunction with the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore arranged by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. At this stage The Trustees envisage a long day with the 13<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Services commencing at 0700 hours (7am), followed by breakfast (by invitation) at 07.30 hours (7.30am), the Opening of the Grieving Mother Project by the Arch of Victory & Avenue of Honour Committee at 0930 hours (9.30am), Wreath Registration for the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service is at 10.30 hours (10.30am) and the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore Commemorative Service commencing at 1100 hours (11am).

I'm happy to take any current or former tour clients along the wall of ExPOW names and highlight the ones we have visited in Kanchanaburi and Thanbyuzayat on the day. Please bring your camera.

### **My plan for the day** – for those who wish to join Malani and I:

- Accommodation: I've booked a room at the Best Western Bakery Hill Motel (1 Humffray Street South, Bakery Hill, Ballarat, Australia 3350) Ballarat.
- 1100 hours – Participate in the Commemorative Service for the Fall of Singapore.
- 1200 hours – walk along the names of POWs – re-highlight some railway men we personally visited in Thailand and Burma.
- 1800 hours – dinner at the Ballarat Leagues Club – (52 Humffray Street Ballarat) (4 minute walk from the hotel to the Leagues Club).



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## T O U R S

### Portland Grave Change – Kranji War Cemetery (Singapore).

Corporal (CPL) Rod Breavington was a Northcote Policeman (Victoria) before WW2 – he joined up and later was promoted in the field during the fighting in Malaya and Singapore.

He escaped the Fall of Singapore and was on the run with three other troops including one other Australian (Private Victor Gale). Unfortunately they were all captured and in September 1942 they were executed on Japanese orders on Changi Beach – the latter the scene of the 'Sook Ching' - Chinese 'ethnic cleansing' by the Japanese.

Protests by Australian Commanders fell on deaf ears – the CPL held a picture of his wife as he died – the Sikh Guards either aimed deliberately to wound or were poor shots – Breavington was stuck many times but not killed – he yelled at the Indian Shooters (known by the men as traitors) to "For God's sake, shoot me through the head and kill me". Blackjack Callegan (Officer in Charge of the Australians at Selarang), said Breavington was the bravest man he had ever seen.

In Kranji many years ago – I thought the grave was incorrect as I stood in front of it – the CPL had used his rank to try and get his mate off the capital charge by saying he ordered his troop to escape. He could only do that if he was a higher rank – as an ex-Military Policeman I knew a charge of 'failing to comply with orders' could only be successful on a number of 'proofs' – one had to be a higher rank.

Through the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) I got Rod Breavington's grave to highlight his correct rank and ensure his promotion he received during the fighting and later as a defence of his mate was actually reflected for all to see. My thanks to the CWGC.



Above: Photo taken by me in about 1999 or 2003.

Right: Photo taken this year by CWGC. (2016)



Full story located at:

[http://www.deathrailwaytours.com.au/files/The%20Corporal%20and%20His%20Pals%200\(A%20mission%20to%20Change%20his%20grave%20stone\)5.pdf](http://www.deathrailwaytours.com.au/files/The%20Corporal%20and%20His%20Pals%200(A%20mission%20to%20Change%20his%20grave%20stone)5.pdf)

# Death Railway

## T O U R S

### **US Pilots Shot Down – Japs Cut out Their Liver and Brains**

I have always baulked at discussion on this topic because of how horrific it is – so I'll be fairly succinct on the subject.

DR Mengele and the Nazis were not alone with conducting experiments on human prisoners during WW2. The Japanese war Unit 731 did the same and they did tests on subjects with Plague; frostbite and chemical/biological effects on the body to the testing of bombs, grenades and flame throwers on victims. People taken into the harsh Japanese winter and near frozen to death so the Japanese could try and treat frostbite. Chinese victims appear to be the most nationalities from my readings on the subject however downed American Pilots along with Koreans and Russians also suffered the abovementioned fate as well.

Learnings from Unit 731 were used in China to kill during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sino-Japanese War with biological weapons. No Unit 731 Medical Personnel were brought to justice post war as the Americans signed a treaty to hand over their experimental results. 400 prisoners were executed before the surrender to cover up the Unit's activities and the site burned down. They released mice they had been testing the bubonic plague on.

For more reading visit: <http://www.unit731.org/> warning – the website is pretty nasty reading. In a strange turn-around for the Japanese they have opened a new Museum in Kyushu University that offer some details of this Unit 731's history.

Below is a photo of a group of Americans who were shot down in their B29 Superfortress – many of them subjected to the tests by Unit 731. More information on these flyers:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3028694/U-S-POWs-shot-Japan-70-years-ago-dissected-ALIVE-macabre-experiments-controversial-new-exhibition-shows.html>



RIP lads.

# Death Railway

## T O U R S

Looking forward to our next tour in November 2016 – super keen to have SGT Mucklow's medals on hand for the commemoration there.

### **Patrick – Thai Tour Guide**

For those who have been on early tours with me I bumped into Patrick this ANZAC Day (2016) and he was happy to see me. He's hard to understand at the best of times – but when he's excited it's even difficult for me (LOL).

I tried hard to get Patrick as my local guide but it didn't work out with his managing company. Patrick's uncle was killed by the Japanese and on one occasion in Thailand we presented him with some flowers in memory of his uncle – he was very emotional on that day – Patrick is a great Thai man and one that does his country proud.



Charlie and his team in Thailand have been an excellent addition to our tours – given Charlie grew up in Kanchanaburi was also a bonus. Charlie finds it funny that I have shown him places in town he has walked past as an adolescent and not known the history of – like Boon Pong's House and Japanese HQ etc.

I had a friend who lived in Singapore – and in 2003 I took him on a tour of the western side of his island and showed him around the WW2 areas – he was surprised I knew more of his island than he did – he later became famous on 'his' island on 'Singapore Idol'. I went to a Karaoke bar with him one night and wow – the lad could sing – so I could see why he did well.

### **Graduate.**

After 7 years of study I finally finished my Bachelor in Emergency Management with Charles Sturt University – it's been a labour of love – but finally got there.

Bring on November...

Andrew