

# Death Railway

## T O U R S

### The Railway Man

By Eric Lomax

Wonderful hooks and backstory with this book – it's great to have links for what is to come, so you get an understanding of what fueled future events. Reading about how he got into trains on that Bridge in Scotland and seeing the mechanical beasts below stirred something in that young man.

"They were beautiful machines; the most beautiful machines produced in the industrial revolution." (Eric Lomas 1995: 16).

His attraction to steam locomotives was evident as he traveled the country in search of rare and impressive 'articulated kettles'. He would look for lines and study their schedules; always hoping for a train to present on a line that was different or not normally traversing those tracks. He didn't like the term 'Trainspotter' he thought he was more involved than merely standing on a platform and recording train numbers.



Pictured right is a shot of the 'Flying Scotsman' a locomotive that Lomax adored in his younger days; later serving with the British Signals as a young Lieutenant (LT) he would see up close the Death Railway and its main locomotive the Japanese C56 (pictured below).

Being in the Signals Corp he could satisfy his mechanical and electronics interests and use these attributes to great lengths in Kanchanaburi during the building of secret radios.

Unfortunately, the guards discovered radios hidden in the huts and all men who were involved were badly treated. They were bashed with pick-axe handles by drunken Japanese Sergeants, thrown in ditches, put in cages in the Kempeitai HQ in Kanchanaburi.

LT Lomax was last to be bashed by the Sergeants – he states that the anxiety of watching knowing your number was next was agonizing. He protected himself with his arms during the first flurry and sadly both his forearms were broken; he suffered broken ribs, damaged hip and bruising to his entire body from the pick-axe brigade.



A nearby doctor who was to treat these men later, counted the blows so he had some form of idea about what condition these men would present. He stated he counted 900 blows in total.

"A hefty Japanese Sergeant moved into position, lifted his pick-handle, and delivered a blow across Smith's back that would have laid out a bull. It knocked him down, but he was trodden on and kicked back into an upright position. The same guard hit him and gain, hard. All thugs now set to in earnest. Soon little could be seen but the rise and fall of pick-helves above the heads of the group and their sickening thuds as blows went home on the squirming, kicking body,

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periodically pulled back onto its feet only to be knocked down again.  
(Lomax: 1995: 118)

Lt Lomax made a map of the railway – for an enthusiast this seemed the right thing to do – it would also assist in any future escape attempt. When being collected by the Kempeitai (Japanese Military Police); he went and retrieved the map from its hiding place in a hollowed bamboo in the latrine. Later a search of Lt Lomax’s possessions was conducted and the searchers located his map.

They interrogated LT Lomax by simulated drowning in a bathtub full of water. They also put a cloth over his mouth and poured water from a hose over his mouth and nose whilst assaulting him with a bamboo stick. Throughout the ordeal he maintained his innocence, and couldn’t get them to understand he was a train fanatic – a person with a major interest in the operation of a railway, its locomotives and wagons.

He was subsequently court martialed by a Kangaroo Court and found guilty – he was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment in Outram Road Goal in Singapore – a place of cruelty and severe punishment. He got out of Outram on several occasions to convalesce in Changi Prison, back with friends.

I read this book in two days and enjoyed the style, descriptions and the great survivor LT Eric Lomax. The film was released in 2012 starting Colin Firth and Nicole Kidman. A great tribute to the man who loved trains. This is an epic book.

Below is news article about Eric Lomax:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyG1NAaiIxx>

Bibliography:

Lomax, Eric (1995) The Railway Man – Vintage Press

Wikipedia

Youtube

