

Death Railway

T O U R S

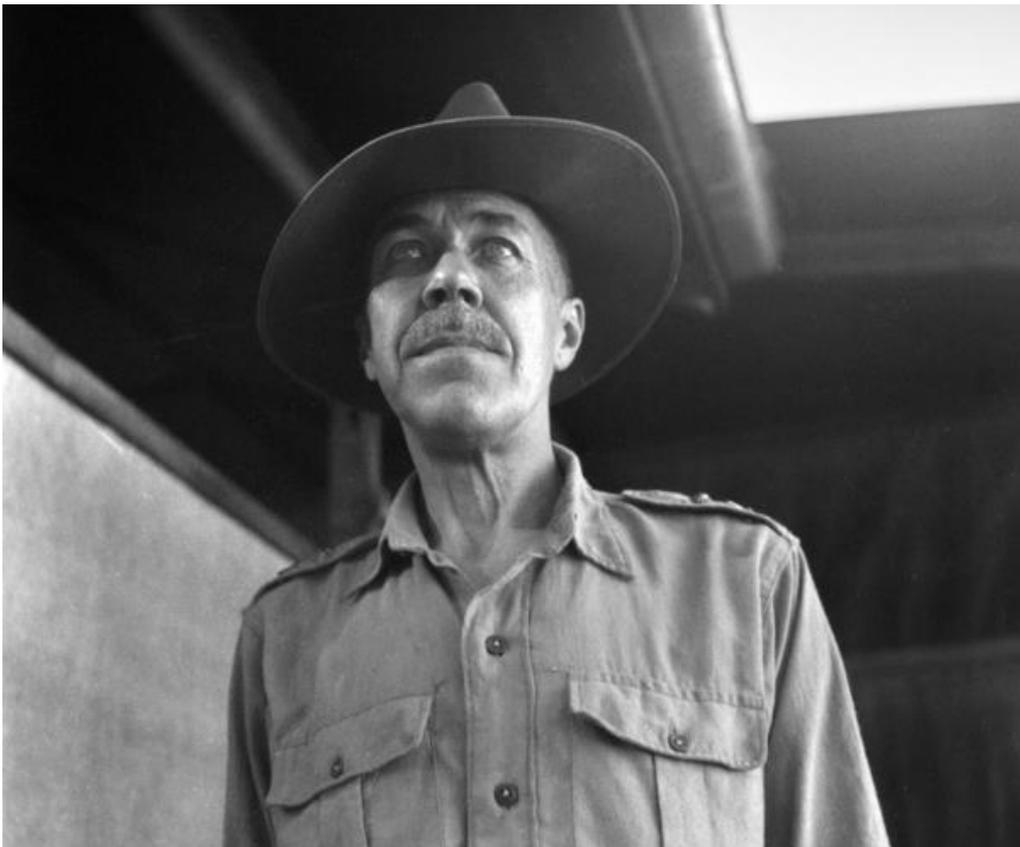
What brought Black Jack to tears?

The harsh treatment and deaths of so many of his men on the Death Railway brought Black Jack Galleghan to tears.

WW1 veteran Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Galleghan was a hard man. Known as Black Jack because of his dark complexion and fierce constitution, Galleghan was the company commander who led the 2/30th Battalion in its ruthless ambush of the Japanese at Gemencheh River.

He was a disciplinarian of renown and had been twice wounded on the Western Front in WW1.

It is said his officers fear him more than they did the Japanese, and the history of the 2/30th Battalion records one soldier as saying: "Black Jack may be old, but I would not swap him now for the Duke of Wellington."



Black Jack Galleghan after the war. (AWM 116880)

On December 21, 1943, as he surveyed the bony, abused remnants of his pride and joy, the 2/30th Battalion, Black Jack cracked. By then, Galleghan was the commander of the AIF prisoners in Changi. Within a year he would be deputy commander of all Allied POWs in Malaya. Four days before Christmas 1943 (the line was finished in October

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The logo for Death Railway TOURS features the words "Death Railway" in a large, black, hand-drawn font at the top. Below it, the word "TOURS" is written in a smaller, black, hand-drawn font, with each letter centered within a rectangular box. These boxes are arranged in a row, resembling a section of railway tracks with vertical posts.

1943 at a place call Koncoita); Callaghan watched the return of F Force (my dad was in J Force); a group of 3662 Australians who had been working on the Death Railway. Out of that 3662; 1,438 members of F Force did not return. (2,710 Australians perished all told on the Death Railway).

Sergeant Stan Arneil of the 2/30th was one of those who made it back and was present that day. In the book 'Hellfire Pass' he says:

"The people from Changi stood back and uttered not a word. It was quite strange. We lined up on the road as best we could. Those who couldn't stand up straight were on sticks. And those that couldn't stop shaking with malaria were held by their friends. We thought this was what we should do as soldiers to show that we were not beaten."

"The Sergeant Major dressed us off and we stood in a straight line as he went over and reported to Colonel Johnston. Johnston went over to Black Jack Galleghan and he said, "Your 2/30th all present and correct, sir". And Galleghan said:

"Where are the rest?" Johnston said:

"They're all here, sir"

And we were. Black Jack Galleghan, the iron man, broke down and cried. It was an incredible scene.

We wanted to show them we were soldiers."

Source: The Australian