

Comment by C.W.J.

I expect the book tells you about the country. The plains reach a little beyond Kamburi, but from there on its all hilly & at times mountainous. Nothing but jungle the whole way beyond CHUNGKAI, except an occasional cleared area where there were villages; but there was nothing beyond Takanun. The jungle varied, but was often very thick, & full of the toughest kind of prickly bamboo growing in enormous clumps, which is one of the most unpleasant things nature ever produced.

We were sent up from Singapore in batches of 500, & then allotted to the various groups in Siam. I was lucky to be sent to Group 2, which at first was responsible for the lower section round CHUNGKAI. We did the journey from Bampong to Kampuri by lorry. Both these places are small towns & Kamburi is the last place with roads & proper houses etc going north.

All the rest of the way from Kamburi up to Kilo 226 we had to walk & carry all we possessed. The worse stretch I remember was between WAN PO & TARSAC when we did 24 miles in a day. Group 2 moved up to carry on with a new section of the line farther up when the lower section was completed early in '43, & so we had the long march of 100 kilos from TARSAC to TAKANUN, which became the new base camp. We had some warning of this march & so only carried the bare minimum. We never saw the stuff we left behind at Tarsac again as it was looted by our own people there! There were no proper roads of course, but merely rough tracks which could sometimes take lorries in the dry season. When the monsoon came, they were impassable & all supplies were sent up by barges on the river, towed by small diesel motor boats called by us "pom-poma" on account of the noise they made.

In our first camp at WUN LUN we weren't made to work on the railway at once, but after Xmas '42, they threatened to get violent if officers didn't work, so we had to start. There was an officers working party of over 300 here & we began on bridges, but it was a mere holiday compared to what came later, & also the food was good. By April '43 the Japs began shouting "Speedo, speedo," on every occasion & the pressure of work increased until its peak was reached at TAKANUN where they had us out on parade before dawn & stopped after dark.

We came back from Kilo 224 to Chungkai by train. I left KAMBURI in early June 1945 for the new camp at east of Bangkok, NAKON NYOK.

Bill's itinerary.

BAMPONG. Arrived Nov 11th 1942.

WUN LUN. Nov 42- Feb 43.

TARKALIN Feb & March 43.

WAN PO. April 43.

TAKANUN. May- July 43.

KILO 226. July to October 43. Furthest point.

KILO 224. Oct 43 - March 44.

CHUNGKAI. March 44- March 45.

KAMBURI. March 45 - June 45.

NAKON NYOK. June 45- Liberation August 18th 45.