

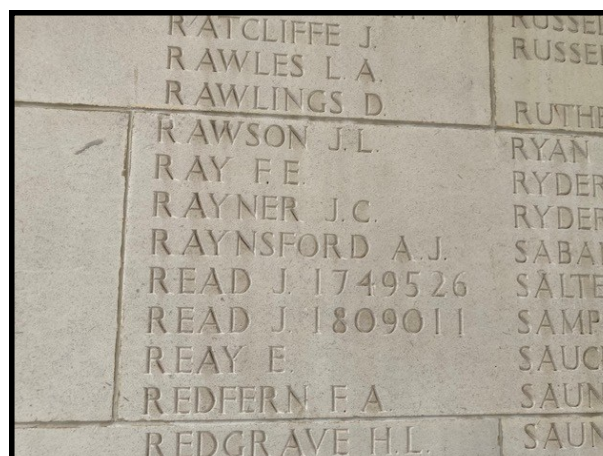
WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

REMEMBERING THE ASTONS DURING WW2

'THE FORGOTTEN WAR'

Frederick Ernest Ray. 1914-1944.

by Judy Barradell Smith.





*Fred's childhood homes in the Astons, on the left Carrimers Farm Cottage,
and on the right Sheephouse Farm Cottages*

Remembering the Astons during the First and Second World Wars

Our publications:

The Astons Home Front, the role of women during WW1

We will remember them: remembering the Astons during WW1.

'Wee Joe.' From Galloway to Flanders Fields.(WW1)

A History of the Aston Tirrold & Upthorpe War Memorial: 1921-2021.

We will remember them: remembering the Astons during WW2.

The Forgotten War : Frederick Ernest Ray. (WW2)

Early Life:

Frederick Ernest RAY was born on 27 February 1914 in a cottage (now demolished) on Chalk Hill, Aston Tirrold. He was the seventh of eleven children born to Georgina Maria RAY (nee HAZELL, 1881 – 1957) and James Henry RAY (1876 – 1934). His father was an agricultural worker employed by Francis John Kynaston CROSS of Manor Farm, with the family living in a 'tied' cottage on the estate.

Registration District WALLINGFORD.								
1914 BIRTHS in the Sub-District of CHOLSEY in the County of BERKS								
Columns:— 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8								
No.	When and Where Born.	Name, if any.	Sex.	Name and Surname of Father.	Name and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Rank or Profession of Father.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.
104	Twenty sixth January 1914 Aston Tirrold Rd.	Frederick Ernest	boy	James Henry Ray	Georgina Ray formerly Hazell	Farm Labourer	Georgina Ray mother Aston Tirrold	Elmwood March 1914

The children born to James Henry and Georgina Maria RAY were in date order: Ivy Bessie born 1901, Elsie May born 1902, William Ernest born 1904, Georgina born 1905, James William born 1907, Cyril Henry born 1911, Frederick Ernest born 1914, Albert Kitchener "Kitch" born 1915, Kathleen Everline "Helen" born 1918, Leslie George born 1921 and finally Edna born 1926.

His birth certificate shows his name as Frederick Ernest RAY, and yet most of his records, including his WW2 ones, show his middle name as Edward and not Ernest. He had an older brother called William Ernest RAY. Was this a mistake made by the Registrar, or maybe he chose to change it, albeit informally, during his life.

I will use the name Fred rather than Frederick in this history, as I am sure that is what he would have been called by family and friends.

Georgina's daughter Elsie told me the story that when Fred was born (at which time they already had seven children) the family were living in a small two up two down semi-detached cottage. Georgina had asked Mr. Cross if he could allow her and her family to use the other half of the cottage, which was at that time unoccupied and in a semi-derelict state. Mr. Cross agreed and sent some men to repair the cottage, paint it, and knock a door through both up and downstairs, thus joining the two halves. Georgina now had two extra bedrooms for her growing brood, and a far larger house.

In the 1911 census the family are shown living at this cottage on Chalk Hill, and are still listed as there on the polling lists for 1920, and on the 1921 census (see next page).



The cottage on Chalk Hill (right) where Fred was born.

ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

SCHEDULE.
Prepared pursuant to the Census (Great Britain) Act, 1910.

This space to be filled up by the Enumerator.

Number of Registration District 119
Number of Registration Sub-District 1
Number of Enumeration District 1

Name of Head of Family or Separate Occupier } James Ray.
Postal Address Chalk Hill Road.
Aston Throld.
Wallingford.

NOTICE.
This Schedule must be filled up and signed by, or on behalf of, the Head of the Family or other person in occupation, or in

Above: 1911 census

FOLLING DISTRICT D. PARISH OF ASTON THROLD

No. (a) (b) (c) (d)	Sex	Religion	Age	Name in full.	Residence or Property owned, or lease of non-resident occupier.
109	R	O		Mox, Robert Oswald	Copse Style
110	HO	HO		Painter, Anna	Lower End
111	R	O		Painter, Thomas Henry	Do.
112	R	O		Perry, William	Baker Street
113	R	O		Popc, David	Biggs Cottages
114	R	O		Popc, Edwin	Aston Street
115	HO	HO		Popc, Emma	Biggs Cottages
116	R	O		Popc, Jonathan	Baker Street
117	HC	HC		Popc, Martha Maria	Do.
118	R	O		Popc, Mary	Aston Street
119	R	O		Popc, Ellen	Do.
120	R	O		Popc, Roland	Biggs Cottages
121	R	O		Popc, Ellen	Do.
122	HC	HC		Ray, Georgina Maria	Springfield
123	R	O		Ray, James Henry	Do.
124	HO	HO		Savage, Elizabeth Esther	Chalk Hill
125	R	O		Savage, Harry	Do.
126	R	O		Savage, Thomas	Do.
127	HC	HC		Slide, Flora Eleanor	Lower End Farm
128	R	O		Slide, Joseph Harold	Do.
129	R	O		Smith, Norman John	Aston Street
130	HO	HO		Smith, James	Do.
131	R	O		Smith, Joseph	Lower End
132	R	O		Smith, Joseph Robert	Church Lane
133	HO	HO		Smith, Edith Charlotte	Elmgarth
134	HC	HC		Smith, Elizabeth	Church Lane
135	C	O		Smith, Paschal	Do.
136	R	O		Smith, Thomas Frederick Augustus	Elmgarth
137	R	O		Strang, James	Aston Street
138	R	O		Sutton, John Craven	Slide's Farm
139	HO	HO		Sutton, Margaret	Do.
140	R	O		Tate, Thomas Fredrick	Lower End
141	R	O		Tate, Archibald	Baker Street
142	HO	HO		Tate, Edith Alice	Do.
143	R	O		Tate, John Alfred	Do.
144	HO	HO		Wadley, Ray, Elizabeth	Lower Hill Barn
145	R	O		Wadley, William	Do.
146	NM	O		Warren, Christopher	Finch's Farm
147	R	O		Warren, Edward Peabody	Do.
148	HO	HO		Warren, Margaret Cecil	Do.
149	HO	HO		Whicker, John Harold	Spring Street
150	HO	HO		Whickello, Anne Edith	The Choopars
151	R	O		Whickello, Frederick William	Do.
152	R	O		Whickello, William Aston	Do.
153	R	O		Willing, Charles Robert	Chalk Hill
154	HO	HO		Whitton, Gertrude	Do.
155	HO	HO		Williams, Emma Georgina	Lower End
156	R	O		Williams, William	Do.
157	O	C		Wright, Constance Maria Charlotte	The Chestnuts

Above: 1920 electoral roll

In 1921 the family moved to one of the new estate farm cottages on Carrimers Farm which Mr. Cross had built on the London Road (A417) in 1905. At that time there were six children still at home, including Georgina, aged 17, helping her mother in 'home duties'.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Please read the Instructions and Examples given on the back, and then fill up the Schedule carefully and in full.

AGE AND SEX	RELIGION AND BIRTHPLACE	EDUCATION AND OCCUPATION	Place of Birth	Mar. Status and Marital History
1. James Henry Ray, Head, 48, 4, M, Married, Brighton, Sussex	Form labourer	The F. J. Cross, farmer	Carrimers Farm, 200, 1/2, London Road, Wallingford, Berks.	
2. Georgina Ray, Wife, 40, 2, F, Married, Reading, Berks	Home duties			
3. Georgina Ray, Daughter, 17, 2, F, Single, Aston Throld, Berks	Nothing with Home duties			
4. James William Ray, Son, 13, 3, M, Single, Aston Throld, Berks	Labourer			
5. Cyril Henry Ray, Son, 10, 9, M, Single, Aston Throld, Berks	Labourer			
6. Frederick Ray, Son, 7, 3, M, Single, Aston Throld, Berks	Labourer			
7. Albert Kitchener Ray, Son, 6, 3, M, Single, Aston Throld, Berks	Labourer			
8. Kathleen Evelyn Ray, Daughter, 3, 3, F, Single, Aston Throld, Berks	Labourer			

5 3 3 3 17 1

Georgina Ray, 17, for James Henry Ray

Census taken on Sunday 24th April 1921. (Copyright National Archives).

In September 1939 the government carried out a nationwide survey to record the population for the purposes of issuing ID cards and ration books.

Frederick Ernest RAY is listed as working as a General Farm Labourer, aged 14, and living at Sheephouse Farm Cottages on the London Road, together with his now widowed mother Georgina and siblings Cyril Henry Ray, Albert Kitchener Ray, Leslie George Ray and Edna Ray.

All the boys were listed as working on the farm as General Labourers.

In the autumn of 1940, Fred was married to Emmerline Gertrude Groves in the Wallingford Registration Area. She was aged 20, and he 26.

Military Career:

Fred joined the Army at some time in 1940 according to his attestation report (joining up papers), although no precise date or place of joining up is given. I think it very likely that he was responding to a general 'call to arms' after the Dunkirk evacuation, which had taken place between 26 May 1940 and 4th June 1940. Fred would have known that two men from his own village had died during the evacuation:

- **James Peter Aldridge**, serving in the Royal Berkshire Regiment, had died on 25th May on the retreat to Dunkirk, aged 18.
- **Ivor Leonard Lillington**, serving in the Royal Artillery, who was evacuated off the beaches at Dunkirk, but died at sea before reaching Dover, on 1st June, age 38.

Fred was placed in the 125th Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Artillery (service number 1096294), part of the 18th Army Division, and sent north for training. After his embarkation for Singapore his wife Emmerline would never see him again.

In 1942, his Regiment were sent out to Singapore as part of a last-ditch attempt to strengthen the forces defending the island. The British military command had never expected an invasion from the north overland through the Malayan jungle, so its guns were trained seawards, not inland. Below is a graphic account by Captain Ridley and Major MacKenzie, both in the 125th Anti-Tank Regiment, which recounts the embarkation and journey of the Regiment to Singapore.

'On 28 October 1941, the officers and men of the 125th Anti-Tank Regiment embarked on board the S.S. Oronsay at Avonmouth, Bristol. They sailed up the coast towards Scotland and then crossed the Atlantic north via Iceland to arrive in Halifax, Nova Scotia on 8 Nov 1941. Here they transferred to the US troopship Dickman. They arrived in Bombay on 27 December 1941 having travelled via Trinidad and Cape Town, South Africa.

In Bombay they transferred onto The Empress of Asia for the onward journey to Singapore via Java and Sumatra. The Empress of Asia with all the men on board was approaching Singapore, when it was bombed by the Japanese on 5th February 1942. It survived but had suffered much damage. On the following day The Asia and its escort ships, plus the destroyer HMS Exeter, were attacked again by Japanese aircraft. This time, badly wrecked and burning, all the men were ordered to abandon ship'.



Fred training in Sunderland, 1940

Survivors from the Empress of Asia were taken off by other Allied ships and were landed onto Singapore Island, and regrouped around Serangon on the northeast of the island. Only one person lost their life in the attack, but many sustained burns and other wounds. They had lost nearly all their vehicles, equipment, and ammunition, and were left with just their rifles and a few small mobile guns.

Batteries A and C of the 125th Anti-Tank Regiment were then positioned on the Bukit Timor Road - shown by the arrow on this map. which runs north to south in the centre of the island.



The Battle for Singapore:

The Fall of Singapore, also known as the Battle of Singapore, took place in the South East Asian theatre of the Pacific War, with fighting lasting from 8 to 15 February 1942. Singapore was the foremost British military base and economic port in South East Asia and had been of great importance to the British defence strategy in the interwar years. (*Singapore was considered so important that Prime Minister Winston Churchill ordered Percival to fight to the last man*).

Prior to the battle, Japanese General Tomoyuki Yamashita had advanced with about 30,000 men southwards down the Malayan Peninsula. The British had destroyed the causeway between Singapore Island and the south most tip of Malaya, which forced the Japanese into an improvised crossing of the Johore Strait, just above the red arrow. They attacked the weakest part of the island defences, and established a beachhead on the Island on 8 February 1942.

The British had erroneously considered the jungle terrain impassable, so the swift Japanese advance quickly outflanked the defending Allied defenses forces. The British Commander Lieutenant-General Arthur Percival had failed to reinforce the island's defences, and although he commanded 85,000 Allied troops (more than the Japanese assault force) many units were under-strength and lacked battle experience.

Communication and leadership failures beset the Allies and there were few defensive positions or reserves

near the beachhead. The Japanese advance continued, and the Allies began to run out of supplies of arms, food, and water, as Japanese aircraft continuously bombed the civilian water supply on the Malay mainland.

There had been a huge influx of about 80,000 civilians onto Singapore Island many of whom had fled south from the mainland in front of the Japanese advances and were now crammed into the remaining area of Singapore city that was still held by Allied forces. They were unable to evacuate by ship as the Japanese were daily bombing the city and harbour. Many hundreds of civilians were killed or injured.

The Japanese however were also almost at the end of their supplies and Yamashita wanted to avoid costly house-to-house fighting. So on the afternoon of 15 February, and for the second time since the battle began, Yamashita demanded unconditional surrender. Percival capitulated, and the British, Indian, Australian and local troops and civilians became prisoners of war, joining the 50,000 already taken in Malaya.

The capture of Singapore resulted in the largest British surrender in its history. Huge criticism was leveled at the British military command for responding so late in the day to the pleas of the city's commanders for more guns and troops, both from those in charge of the defence of Singapore and also from the Australian Government, who had thousands of troops based in Malaya and the Singapore region.



Lieutenant-General Arthur Percival (right), led by Ichiji Sugita, walks under a flag of truce to negotiate the capitulation of Commonwealth forces in Singapore, 15 February 1942.

Prisoners of War:

Regimental and Prisoner of War reports indicate that most of the men in Fred's regiment were initially sent to Changi Prison on Singapore Island, but later on those without injuries were sent to work on clearing the debris from the invasion. Afterwards many of them were taken from Changi and sent to work in the jungle on the Burma/Thailand railway, intended to speed up supplies to the Japanese forces.

In 1943 a British Military List of missing Allied soldiers was issued entitled 'Expeditionary Forces previously reported missing, now reported POW'. The list gives the soldiers' names, ID number, rank and Regiment. This presumably means that some families did not get confirmation of their missing relatives whereabouts until nearly a year later.

Frederick E RAY's name was on that list (see arrow below) but without any mention of where he was held other than the word 'Malaya' at the top of the listing.

(Previously shown with Rank as A/Bdr.)

950043	POLAND	Gnr.	R.W.	155 Fd.Regt.
917058	RAINE	A/L/Sjt.	W.T.	125 A.Tk.Regt.
1558234	RANSCOMBE	Gnr.	F.H.V.	" " "
1606973	RATOLIFFE	Gnr.	D.V.	85 A.Tk.Regt.
1094294	RAY	Gnr.	F.E.	125 A.Tk.Regt.
900693	REID	Gnr.	F.G.	148 Fd.Regt.
923120	REY	Gnr.(Dvr.i/c.)	D.C.	88 Fd.Regt.
909720	REEVES	Gnr.	G.	125 A.Tk.Regt.
1055003	REIDAN	W.S./Sjt.	V.C.	" " "
1061045	RENDALL	Gnr.	G.W.	88 Fd.Regt.

An account by Captain Ridley and Major MacKenzie recalls the nightmare train journey to Siam (*now Thailand*) where many of the men were put to work, which arrived at Ban Pong on 18th October 1942. The story of how they survived, including the novel experience of eating snake stew, makes amusing reading in what were otherwise the grimmest of ghastly conditions.

Between 180,000 and 250,000 civilians and over 60,000 Allied prisoners of war were subjected to forced labour during the construction of what became known as the Death Railway. Of those around 90,000 civilians and more than 12,000 Allied prisoners died.



1945. A harrowing image of three Australian POWs in one of the Railway camps (copyright IWM).



The men were literally worked to death, fed a diet of mostly just rice. It has been estimated that men may have been fed as little as 500 calories a day, and lost a third to a half of their body weight.

They were subjected to atrocities beyond belief, and had no access to medicines to fight off the diseases associated with tropical jungle conditions - dysentery, malaria and tropical ulcers - which were rampant in the camps, and contributed to the deaths of nearly one in four prisoners. The American Red Cross sent parcels to the camps along the railway between 1943 and 1945, but the Japanese took most of them (they themselves were on near starvation rations), leaving just one parcel to be distributed amongst six men. Men in some camps never received any parcels .

Fred's Story:

Fred's report of capture (page 11) shows him as being at Number 4 Camp, called Wan Yai (or Wan Yi), in Thailand - approximately 123 kilometers north from Ban Pong, just north of Wampo (see blue arrow on the map on the next page). It was one of many camps adjacent to the route of the proposed railway supplying men to work on the notorious Burma/Thailand railway. 12,609 men were recorded as living there in 1942. The camp commandant there was named as Lt Colonel Sotomatsu Chida. The report is written mostly in Japanese and has several inaccuracies on it, including date of birth, middle name and mother's name. But I am led to understand that a captured soldier was required only to give name, rank, and number, so it is possible that British soldiers may have been encouraged to deliberately give inaccurate information.

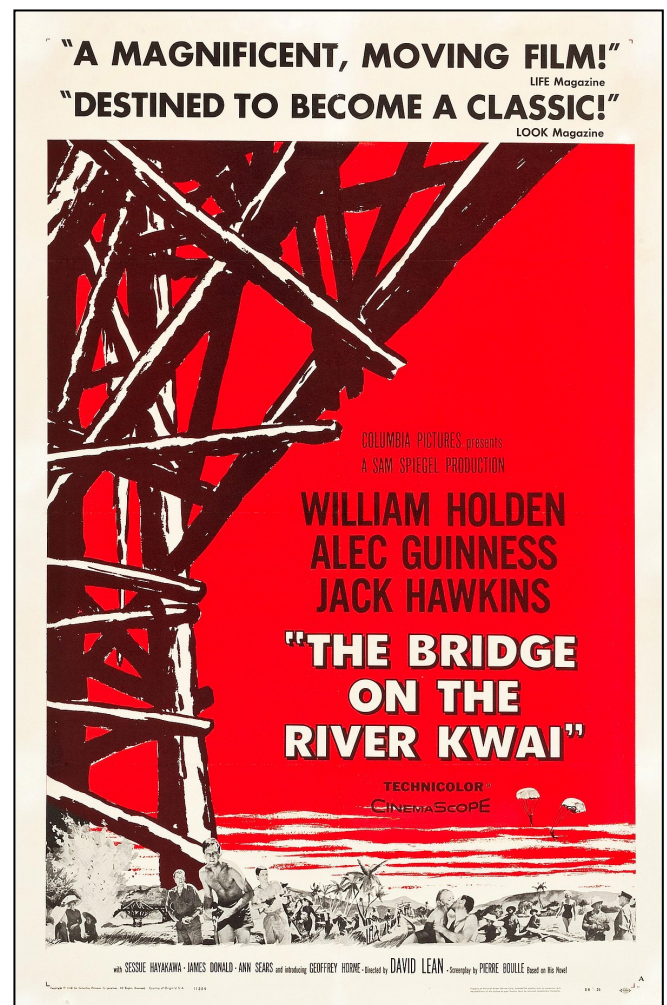
The record of Fred's service number is correct (1096294), and the camp he was sent to initially (given top left) is as recorded in his other records, so we can be confident that it is Fred's record of capture.

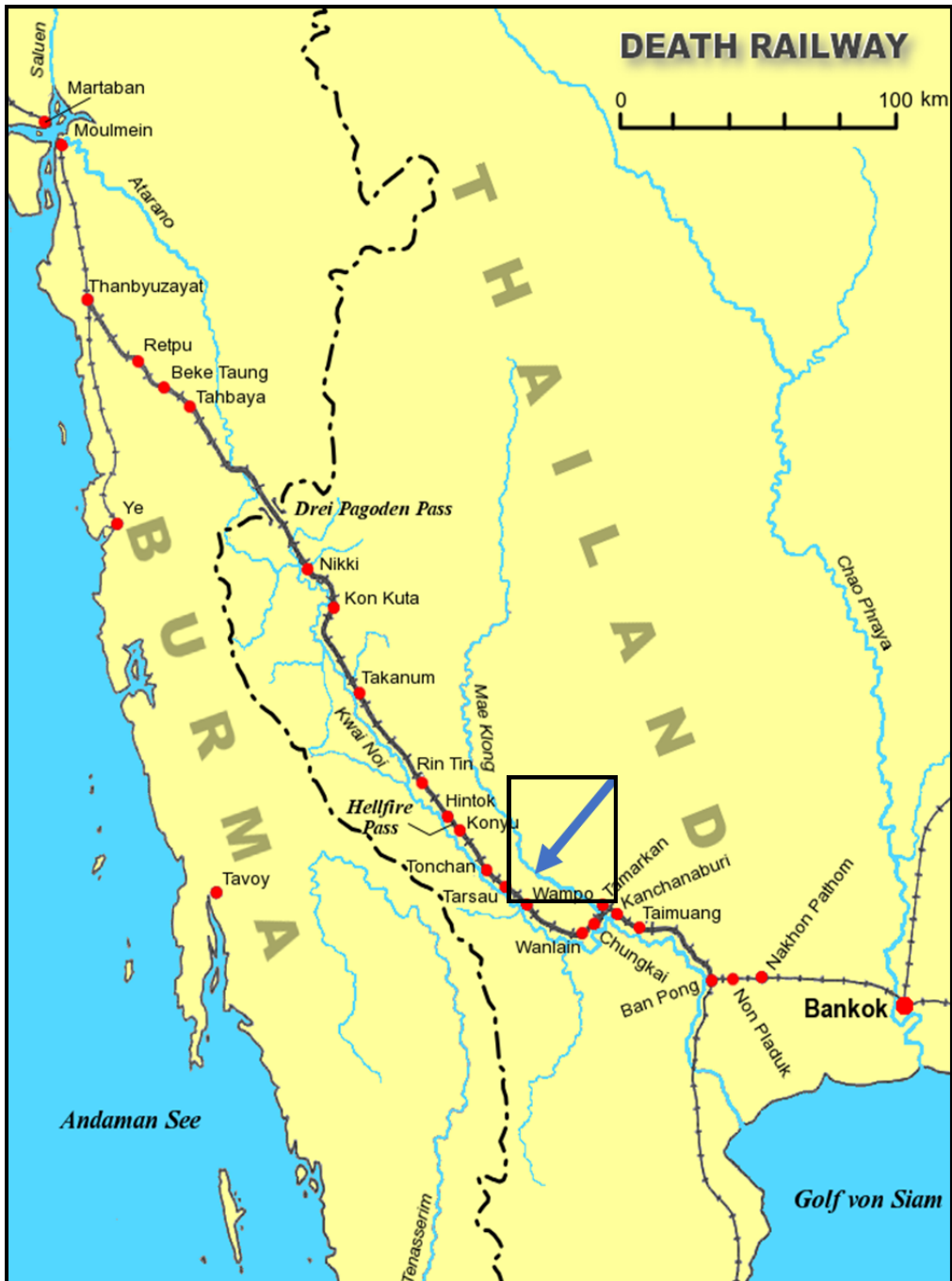
His date of capture is 15 February 1942, the day when Singapore fell, which confirms that that is where he was captured.

We know that Frederick RAY survived his time working on that railway - he was young and probably extremely physically fit from doing years of agricultural work.



Right. The classic film from 1957 which portrayed the suffering of the prisoners of war. Above: The Bridge today.





Aerial picture taken in 1945 of one of the POW camps next to the railway.

收容所 Camp	泰 昭和 年 月 日	番 號 No.	馬本馬道3
姓名 Name	Ray, Frederick Edward.	生年月日 Date of Birth	1914.2.27.
國 籍 Nationality	英	所屬部隊 Unit	No. 1094294 125 Anti Tank Regt RA. 18th Division.
階級身分 Rank	Gunner 兵	捕獲年月日 Date of Capture	昭和17年2月5日
捕獲場所 Place of Capture	SINGAPORE シンガポール	母ノ名 Mother's Name	Ann
父ノ名 Father's Name		職 業 Occupation	労働者
本 籍 地 Place of Origin	6 Clapcot Way. Wallingford, Berks	特 記 事 項 Remarks	
通 報 先 Destination of Report	E. Ray. 6 Clapcot Way. Wallingford, Berks		

Fred's POW record in Japanese, with English additions.

Japanese Hell Ships:

When the railway was completed in 1943 the Japanese started to move prisoners of war and civilian workers out of Thailand. Some time in late summer 1944 Frederick and other prisoners were transferred from his camp onto a ship bound for Japan with the intention of using them as slave labour in Japan.

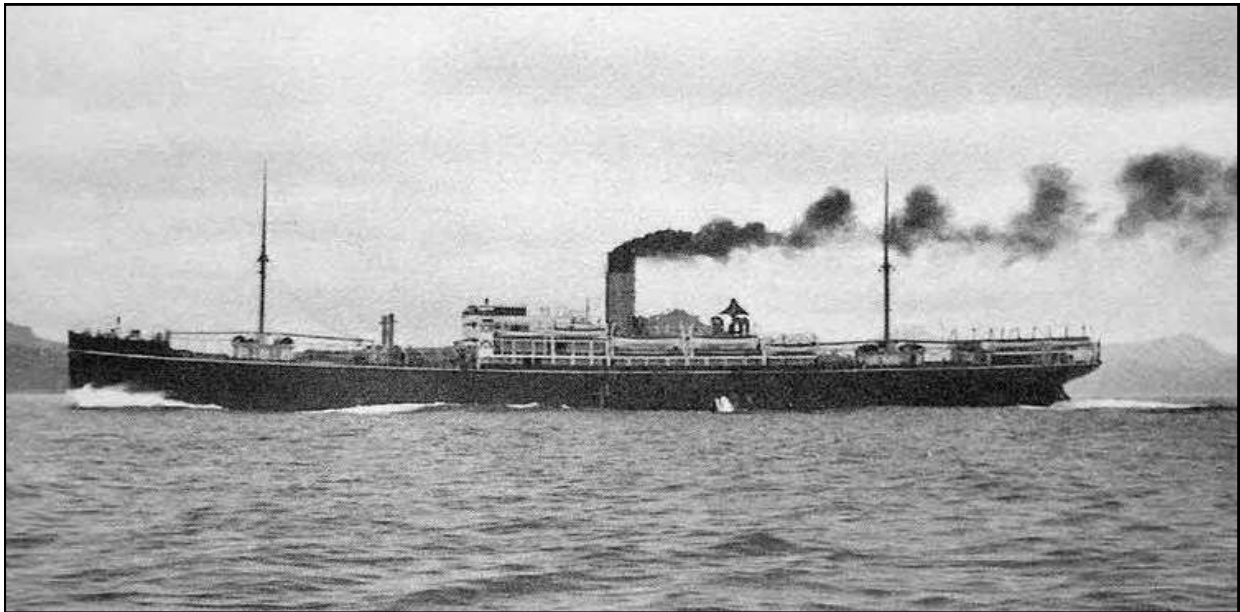
Men were loaded by their thousands onto boats, which also carried food and materials, especially rubber, bound for Japan. At this time Japan was being kept partially blockaded by US boats who were targeting any vessel thought to be carrying food or materials to Japan. These Japanese transport boats were called Hell Ships.

It was originally thought that it was unknown to the US command that these ships had thousands of prisoners of war on board. However it was later revealed that the US had recently broken the Japanese naval code and were fully aware that some of these ships carried POWs - but to have not torpedoed those specific ships would have revealed to the Japanese that their codes had been broken. The Japanese could have identified the merchant vessels they used for prisoner transport by painting a white cross on the ships, but they refused to do this, violating the terms of the Geneva Convention protecting prisoners of war. The US had also discovered that the Japanese were deliberately marking ammunition and supply ships with the Red Cross insignia, which would have forbidden Allied shipping firing on, so by 1944 the US Navy were shelling these ships.



USS submarine Growler.

May 1943.



*Rakuyo Maru circa 1944 The 9,419-ton ship was built in 1921
by Mitsubishi Company at Nagasaki*

There are harrowing accounts of how prisoners and captured civilians suffered in Japanese internment camps and death marches during World War Two (for example the film *Bridge over the River Kwai* or Nevil Shute's *A Town Like Alice*) but few people know much about the atrocities on board Japanese Hell Ships.

It is estimated that 14,000 Allied POWs died on the Hell Ships. Many starved to death (there was so little food that one POW resorted to eating undigested oats in horse manure in the ship's hold); others suffocated when they were crammed into spaces that reached 120 degrees.

In addition to those who died on board 20,000 Allied POWs are estimated to have died when the transport ships carrying them were attacked by Allied submarines and aircraft.

One of these ships was the SS *Rakuyo Maru* which was transporting 1,317 Australian and British POWs from Singapore to Formosa in Sept 1944. (Another ship in the convoy which was also sunk was the SS *Kachidoki Maru* with 950 prisoners on board).

One of SS *Rakuyo Maru*'s survivors (Private Roydon Charles Cornford, 2/19 Battalion NX 44955) wrote his account of survival in 1982. The survivors saw a lot of dead POWs floating around. They took life jackets off the dead Japanese and burst them open to use the kapok to wipe the oil out of their eyes and off their faces. At one point, when it started to rain the prisoners looked up to the sky with open mouths to catch any water they could.

While drifting in the sea not knowing what would happen to him, Cornford wrote, "We never once talked about not surviving." When he was rescued, Cornford pleaded with his rescuers not to grab his arms because they were just blisters and sores.

On 12 September 1944 US naval ships began shelling and then torpedoing the two unmarked boats which were close by the eastern side of the HAINAN ISLAND (Hainan Dao), Latitude 18.0 N + Longitude 114.0 E, near the North Shore of Tsinghai Bay off China.

The *Rakuyo Maru* was hit by 2 torpedoes fired by the USS submarine *Growler*. Her second torpedo hit the bow of the *Rakuyo Maru* and penetrated No 1 hold which was filled with rubber. A third torpedo hit her engine room which then stopped her, and she was unable to move and began to sink at 6.00pm. By 6.20pm her position was recorded as roughly at Latitude 18-32N Longitude 114-29E.

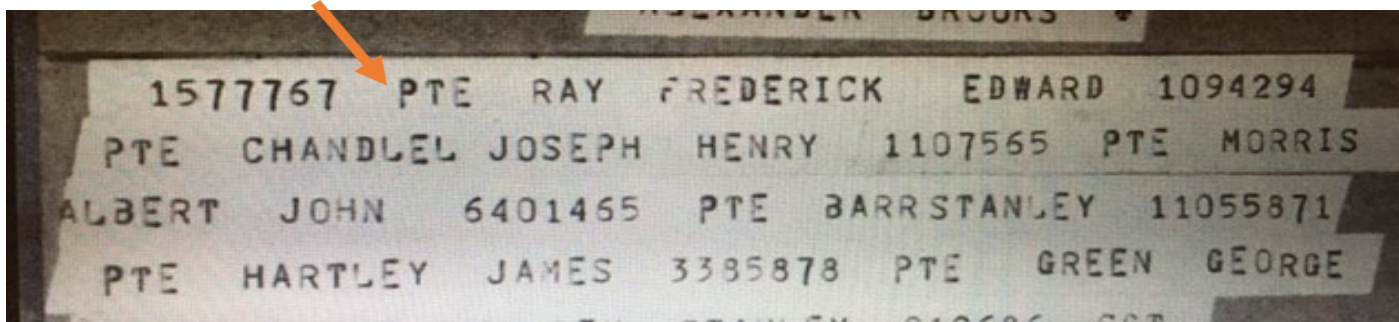
She had sunk completely by 9.00pm and some of the Japanese escort vessels started to pick the Japanese crew out of the water. After rescuing the Japanese crew and shooting any POW trying to climb on board, these escort boats repeatedly and deliberately ran up and down through the masses of men clinging to debris or lifeboats in the sea, mowing them down and killing or injuring hundreds.

At the time the escort vehicles departed approximately 1,200 POWs were in the water. Eyewitness accounts of the few survivors said that at daylight the next day Japanese fighter aircraft appeared flying low over the sea and machine gunned some of the remaining survivors floating in the sea. Three days later the USS Submarines Pampanito and Sealion spotted debris and wreckage and some men in rafts. After identifying the men as Allied POWs they called for nearby ships and submarines to aid in the rescue.

In total they rescued only 159 British and Australian men from the sea. The survivors were taken to Saipan. A fierce typhoon blew up the same day so if there were any other scattered groups of survivors it is very unlikely any of them survived.

Fred was on that ship, and is listed as one of about 1,141 POWs recorded as drowned or presumed missing. Below is an extract from the telegram sent regarding the sinking sent to the Red Cross in Geneva. The front page reads 'Tokyo Cable following missing from sinking of transporter ship torpedoed 12/9/44 by enemy submarine.' The list extends to several pages, and includes the name of Frederick Edward RAY with his service number 1094295 (below top line).

The original telegram was sent by the Japanese to the British authorities listing all those who had been on board the Rakuyo Mara. The war against Japan at this point was still ongoing. The Japanese had provided the Red Cross with a casualty and missing list referring to the boat being hit by "enemy torpedoes" which was factually correct as it was a USA submarine that sunk the boat. The full details of what actually happened were released later on by the USA navy.



Below is the Royal Artillery record for Frederick Edward Ray.

His entry in red on the far right says 'Presumed killed in action at sea while POW.'

1094292	RADBOURNE.	<i>Fredk</i>	29. 3. 46 Z (T) Res.
		DISC AGE LIMIT	
	O.C. NO. 4485 A.C.	EEAO. 63/1	
1094293	RANDALL.	<i>Charles</i>	<i>To Pioneer Corps 1944</i>
	O.C. NO. 4005/2 A.B.	EBBM. 209/3	
1094294	RAY.	<i>Fredk: Edward</i>	<i>Presumed killed in action at sea 12-9-44. While Po. W. auth. death cert. C. Jap Hds</i>
	O.C. NO. 45 A.B.	DUPA. 109/3	
1094295	READER.	<i>bcib. Stanley</i>	PARA. 890 (XVI) K-REGS 11244.
	O.C. NO. 4485 Z.H.	EDEK 265/2	
1094296	REYNOLDS.	<i>Fredk:</i>	29. 3. 46 Z (T) Res.
		DISC AGE LIMIT	

A Foreign Land:

The Singapore Memorial and its associated graveyard is an official site of the Commonwealth War Grave Commission, and is located in KRANJI Cemetery, 22 kilometers north of the city of Singapore overlooking the Straits of Johore.

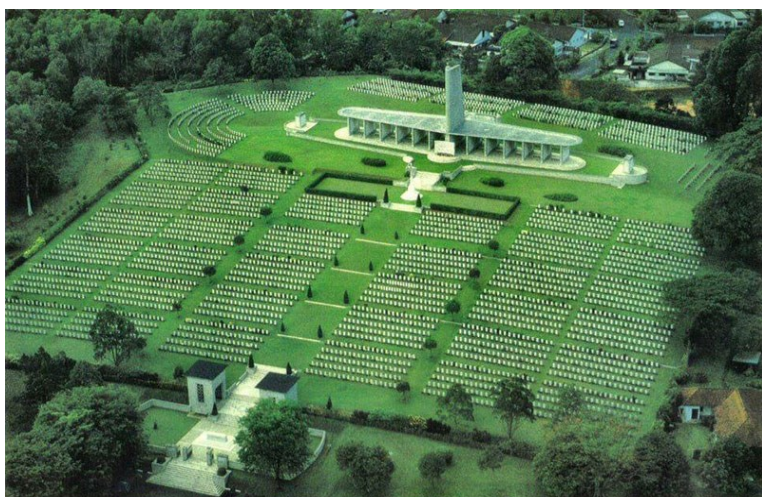
There are gravestones numbering over 4,000 civilians, men, women, and children who were killed at or soon after the invasion in 1942, and those of some of the servicemen who died trying to protect Singapore. In addition, there are the graves of POWs who died in the notorious Changi Prison on the island.

Carved onto the stonework of the memorial are the names of 24,319 men who died either in POW camps, or in the building of the Burma/Thailand railway, or who - like Frederick Edward RAY - were lost at sea and have 'No Known Grave.'

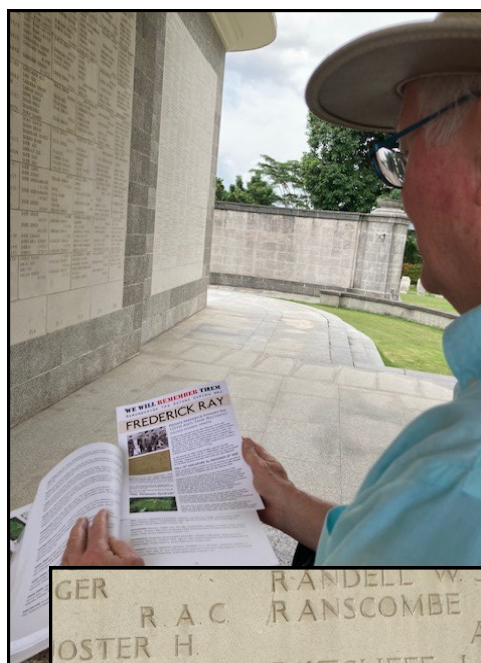
Frederick Ernest RAY's name is recorded on the Singapore Memorial, Column 28 Row E. He was 30 years old when he died. He left behind a widow, his mother and his siblings. He is remembered on the Astons war memorial, and in St. Michael's Church on the Astons muster roll of all those from the village who served during the Second World War.

My husband and I were able to visit KRANJI Cemetery in 2023, and left his story for others to read.

Rest In Peace.



Singapore War Memorial at Kranji.



THE ASTONS HISTORY PROJECT

Discovering and recording the Astons through the ages



astonshistory94@gmail.com

<https://www.theastons.net/history/the-astons-at-war>

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