

POST CODE: B63 2UL **ADDRESS:** Churchyard, St Peter's Church, Church Road, Cradley

GPS Location: N. 52.4633639 W. -2.08807059 **Memorial Location:** Section H6, Row 3, Grave No 24

TROMANS, JAMES HENRY

Sapper1909661, Royal Engineers. Died 17/08/1943 aged 24yrs whilst a prisoner of war.

James Tromans was born in 1919 and was the son of Peter James and Elizabeth Tromans of Cradley.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
PETER
Beloved husband of ELIZABETH TROMANS
PASSED AWAY MARCH 3RD, 1962
AGED 68 YEARS
ALSO THEIR SON SAPPER JAMES HENRY TROMANS
[DIED WHILST A POW IN JAPANESE HANDS]
AUG 17TH 1943
Their duties nobly done

Location Information

The village of Thanbyuzayat is 65 kilometres south of the port of Moulmein, and the war cemetery lies at the foot of the hills which separate the Union of Myanmar from Thailand.

Historical Information

The notorious Burma-Siam railway, built by Commonwealth, Dutch and American prisoners of war, was a Japanese project driven by the need for improved communications to support the large Japanese army in Burma. During its construction, approximately 13,000 prisoners of war died and were buried along the railway. An estimated 80,000 to 100,000 civilians also died in the course of the project, chiefly forced labour brought from Malaya and the Dutch East Indies, or conscripted in Siam (Thailand) and Burma (Myanmar).

Two labour forces, one based in Siam and the other in Burma worked from opposite ends of the line towards the centre. The Japanese aimed at completing the railway in 14 months and work began in October 1942. The line, 424 kilometres long, was completed by December 1943. The graves of those who died during the construction and maintenance of the Burma-Siam railway (except for the Americans, whose remains were repatriated) were transferred from camp burial grounds and isolated sites along the railway into three cemeteries at Chungkai and Kanchanaburi in Thailand and Thanbyuzayat in Myanmar.

Thanbyuzayat became a prisoner of war administration headquarters and base camp in September 1942 and in January 1943 a base hospital was organised for the sick. The camp was close to a railway marshalling yard and workshops, and heavy casualties were sustained among the prisoners during Allied bombing raids in March and June 1943. The camp was then evacuated and the prisoners, including the sick, were marched to camps further along the line where camp hospitals were set up. For some time, however, Thanbyuzayat continued to be used as a reception centre for the groups of prisoners arriving at frequent intervals to reinforce the parties working on the line up to the Burma-Siam border.

Thanbyuzayat War Cemetery was created by the Army Graves Service who transferred to it all graves along the northern section of the railway, between Moulmein and Nieke.

There are now 3,149 Commonwealth and 621 Dutch burials of the Second World war in the cemetery.