



Gunner Jeffrey Tite - 956443

148th Field Regiment (Bedfordshire Yeomanry), Royal Artillery

Born 26th July 1919

Died Wednesday, 22nd September 1943

Age 24

St Catherine's Memorial

Congregational Memorial

Burbage War Memorial

Chungkai War Cemetery, Thailand

Plot 2, Row N, Grave 1



Jeffrey Tite was born on 26th July 1919 the son of Arthur and Harriet Tite of Burbage. In September 1923, at the age of 4, Jeffrey attended the Burbage National School and by this time the family were living at 60 Windsor Street, Burbage. Prior to joining the Bedfordshire Yeomanry in 1939, Jeffrey was employed as a gardener for Mr W Flavell of The Lodge, Lutterworth Road, Burbage.

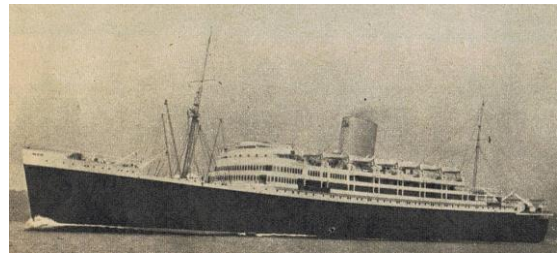
Jeffery Tite, along with another Burbage casualty Harry Dodson, joined the 148th (The Bedfordshire Yeomanry) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery towards the end of 1939, after war broke out following the German invasion of Poland on 1st September 1939 and the declaration of war by Neville Chamberlain two days later.

In September 1939, the 148th Field Regiment were based in Luton, Bedfordshire and based on an account by Kenneth S Burns¹ who was posted to the 148th Field Regiment in 1940, their service career would have taken the following path up to their arrival in Singapore.

In 1940 they trained in Norfolk and they also received field gun training at Larkhill on Salisbury Plain. Later they continued their training in Hawick in the Scottish Borders, then three months in Rochdale, followed by a training camp at Trawsfyndd in what is now Snowdonia National Park and finally, before embarking overseas, to Monmouth.

¹ www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/52/a3847052.shtml

On October 30th 1941 they embarked on S.S. Andes, a commandeered passenger liner and by account the whole of the 148th Field Regiment were on this ship including Jeffery Tite and Harry Dobson. The Andes set sail on 1st November with an escort of three destroyers.



SS Andes

They were escorted by both British and American destroyers, although America was not yet at war, during the crossing of the Atlantic to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Then onward travelled on the USS Wakefield, with a stop at Trinidad, to Cape Town, arriving on 8th December 1941 the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour.



USS Wakefield (formerly SS Manhattan)

After a four day stay in Cape Town, they were rerouted to the Far East setting sail and arriving in Bombay 14 days later. Following arrival in Bombay, (now Mumbai), they travelled to Poonah, (now Pune, a former garrison town of the British Army), staying for two weeks, upon which they were redirected back to the USS Wakefield for onward travel to reinforce Singapore.

The USS Wakefield set sail for Singapore on 19th January 1942 arriving on 29th to find the island under bombardment by the Japanese.

The Japanese had taken most of Malaya by this time and where only 30 miles away, and following the water supply being cut to the garrison and Singapore residents, Lieutenant General Arthur Percival, the Singapore commander, surrenders to the Japanese on 14th February 1942.

Jeffery Tite and Harry Dodson had become Prisoners of War and were probably detained in Selarang Barracks in Singapore.

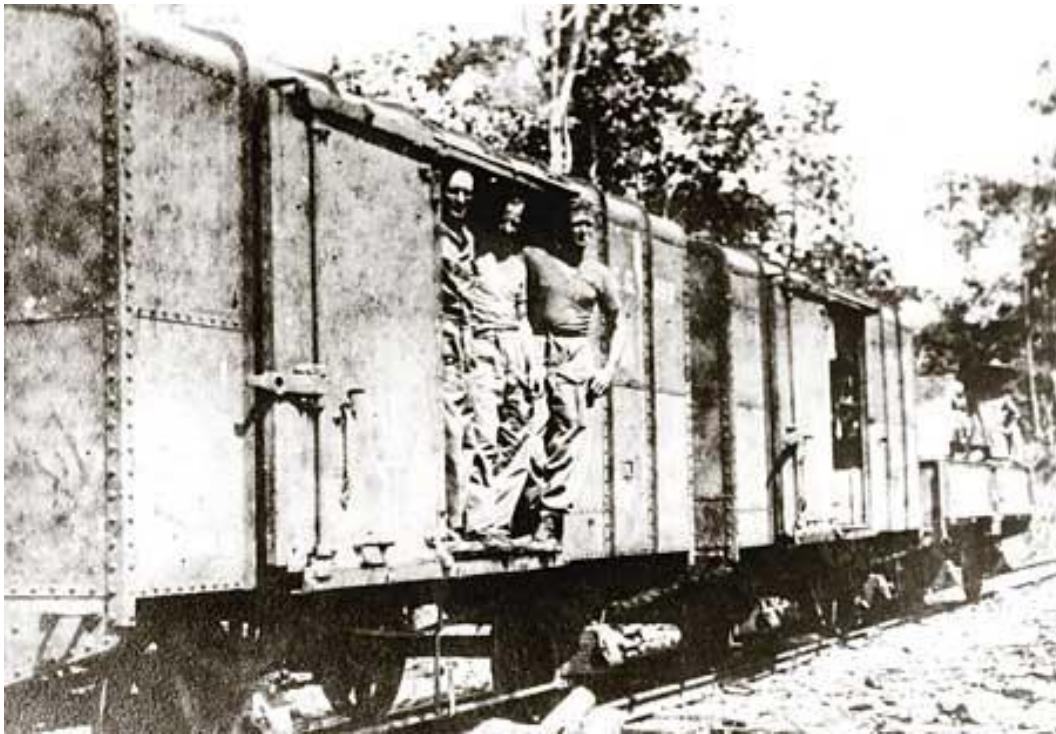


The British surrender to the Japanese on 15th February 1942

Jeffrey Tite and Harry Dobson were then transported to Thailand. Eventually Jeffrey and Harry arrived at a station called Bam Pong and the realization that they are to build a railway to provide a means for the Japanese to expand through Thailand across Burma and into India.



Bam Pong Station



Account by Sidney John Stebbeds of 5 Battalion, The Suffolk Regiment

We are taken to Singapore railway station where we are crowded into steel cattle wagons. On average about 35 men to each of these wagons; about 30 of these made up a train. So around 1000 men, plus guards with machine guns at the ready were on the move to Thailand. What we are taken there for was anyone's guess. It took about four days to get to our destination. A journey I will never forget. Most of us now were suffering from dysentery, and with no toiletry facilities being available, most of us were experiencing a very hectic time. A lot of stoppages occurred as regular trains took priority over our train. So when we stopped in a siding, nine times out of ten it would be in full sun, and being steel trucks we are accommodated in, you can imagine what the temperature is like.

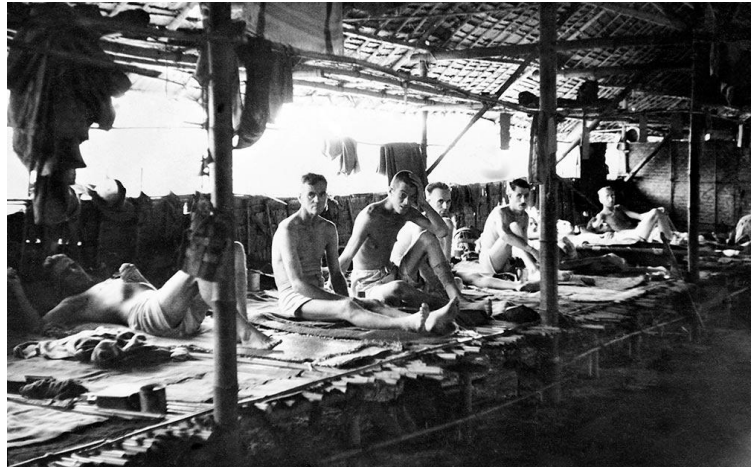
A railway from Thailand to Burma had previously been surveyed pre-war and it had proved too costly in both time and labour, it was estimated that 60,000 labourers would be needed for 5 years. The Japanese did not have 5 years to dominate the region but they did have 250,000 prisoners of war for free labour.

At this time the line ended a Ban Pong and from here you would march to the section of the railway you had been allocated to often marching at night because it was cooler.

Kanchanaburi 25 miles

Nam Tok 67 miles

Finally, after the march we were housed in bamboo Huts.



Jeffrey would have been employed on the Railway until the time of his death on 22nd September 1943 from malnutrition.

By 1943 the family were living at 20 Freeman's Lane, Burbage.

THAILAND-BURMA RAILWAY CENTRE

POW DEATH RECORD

website: www.tbrconline.com

SERVICE No.	956443
RANK	Gunner
SURNAME	TITE
OTHER NAMES	JEFFERY
NATIONALITY	British
UNIT	148 (The Bedfordshire Yeomanry) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery.
FORCE (GROUP)	xxx
WORK AREAS	xxx
DATE OF DEATH	22/09/1943
PLACE OF DEATH	Chungkai Camp
FIRST BURIED	Chungkai New Cemetery, Grave No. 0499
CAUSE OF DEATH	Polyvitaminosis, Septic Renphyces
AGE	23
NEXT OF KIN	Arthur and Harriett Tite, of Burbage, Leicestershire.
CEMETERY (NOW)	Chungkai
GRAVE No.	2. N. 01

CHUNGKAI WAR CEMETERY

**LEST
WE
FORGET**

GRAVE NO: = PLOT, ROW, GRAVE
 FIND PLOT NO ON MAP
ROWS ARE IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER
GRAVES NUMBERED FROM LEFT TO RIGHT IN ROW
 EG: **1. A. 5** = PLOT 1, 1ST ROW, 5TH GRAVE FROM LEFT

Reported in the Hinckley Times:

“Mrs A Tite of 20 Freeman’s Lane has received news that her son, Gunner Jeffrey Tite, a prisoner of war in Japanese hands, died on September 22nd 1943 from avitaminosis. He was 24 at the time of his death.

Gunner Tite who joined the Army in 1939 was taken prisoner when Singapore fell. Before the war he was employed as a gardener by Mr W Flavell of Lutterworth Road, Burbage.”

Gunner J. Tite
Mrs. A. Tite, of 20, Freeman’s Lane, Burbage, has received news that her son, Gunner Jeffrey Tite, a prisoner of war in Japanese hands, died on September 22nd, 1943, from avitaminosis. He was 24 at the time of his death.
Gunner Tite, who joined the Army in 1939, was taken prisoner when Singapore fell. Before the war he was employed as a gardener by Mr. W. Flavell, of Lutterworth Road, Burbage.

Hinckley Times 6th July 1945



Chungkai War Cemetery

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.

Chungkai was one of the base camps on the railway and contained a hospital and church built by Allied prisoners of war. The war cemetery is the original burial ground started by the prisoners themselves, and the burials are mostly of men who died at the hospital. There are now 1,427 Commonwealth and 314 Dutch burials of the Second World War in this cemetery.





Chungkai War Cemetery



Gunner Jeffrey Tite (1919 – 1943)