

CHARLES STANLEY SMITH (1919 - 1993)

Born:	Nambour - 19 August 1919
Parents:	Walter Smith and Eveline Butt
Occupation:	Labourer
Status:	Single
Lived:	Conondale and Woodford

Service:	Australian Army
Service Number:	QX20870
Conflict:	Second World War 1939-1945
Enlisted:	Brisbane - 3 April 1941
Unit:	2/10 Australian Field Regiment
Rank:	Gunner
Embarked:	Sydney - "HMT FF", 29 July 1941
Disembarked	Singapore, 16 August 1941
POW:	Yes - Entrained F Force, Burma-Thailand Railway
Recovered:	Changi POW Camp - 8 September 1945



The story of F Force is one of the most terrible of the Burma-Thailand Railway. They were one of the last labour forces to leave Changi, Singapore, in mid-April 1943. F Force consisted of 3,662 Australians and some 3,400 British prisoners of war (POWs). Many of these men, particularly the British, were unwell even before they left Singapore. They were isolated in far up-country Thailand, remote from food and medical supplies and drenched by monsoonal rains. F Force lost 29% (1,060) of the Australian POWs and 60% (2,036) of the British POWs.

F Force's hardships began when they were sent to Thailand by train. Packed into suffocating metal railway trucks with little food and water, even dysentery sufferers had few opportunities to relieve themselves. On reaching Ban Pong in Thailand, F Force was then forced to march over 300 km to camps near the border with Burma



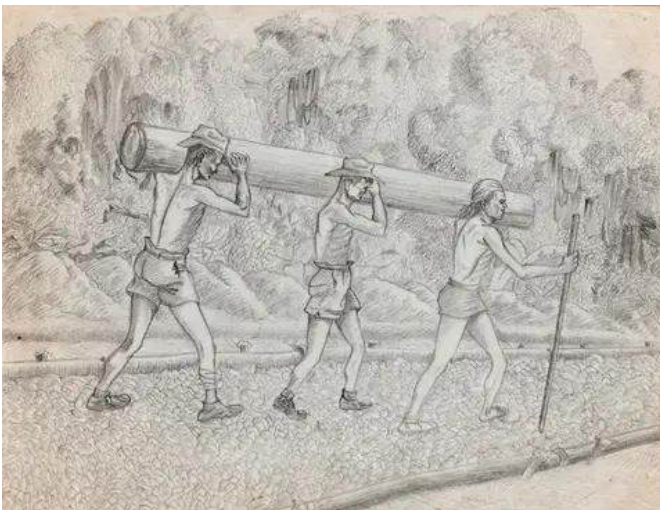
information courtesy AWM

Arriving up-country in early May, F force was ultimately spread across at least six camps progressing towards the Burma border:



- Konkoita (No. 4 camp)
- Shimo (Lower) Ni Thea (Nieke)
- Shimo (Lower) Songkurai (No. 1)
- Songkurai (No. 2)
- Kami (Upper) Songkurai (No. 3)
- Changaraya (No. 5).

From May to October 1943, as the railway progressed, POWs moved between these camps. Australians were mostly located at Shimo Ni Thea, Shimo Songkurai, Kami Songkurai, Konkoita and Tha Khanun. *(courtesy Anzac Portal)*



Courtesy Australian War Memorial

