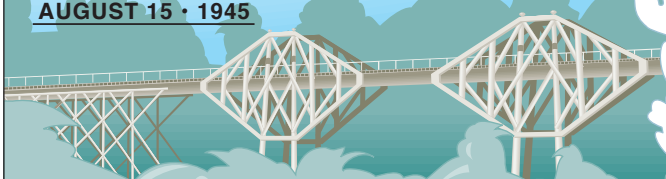
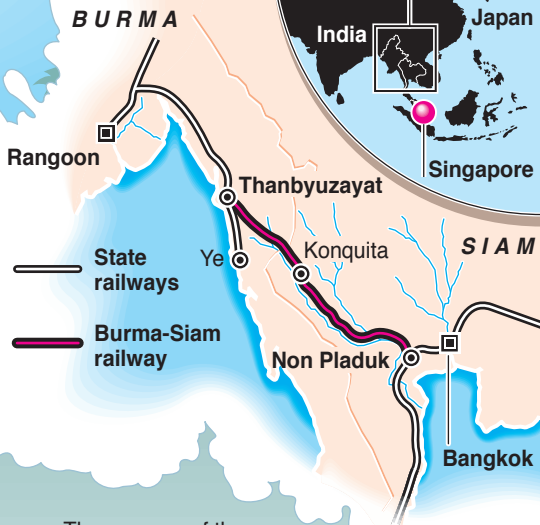


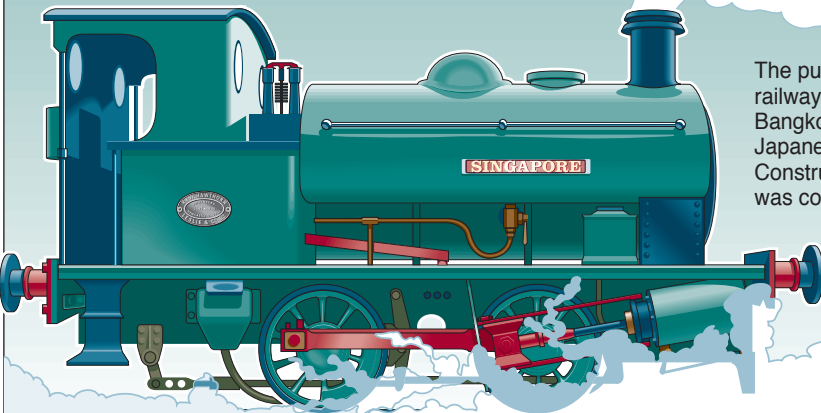
Prisoners of War in the Far East



After the fall of Singapore to the Japanese in February 1942, some 60,000 Allied troops, including British, Australian, South African and Dutch servicemen, were forced in brutal conditions to construct a 265 mile railway linking Burma and Siam, immortalised on film in *'The Bridge on the River Kwai'*



The purpose of the railway was to connect Bangkok with Rangoon in support of the Japanese advance towards British-held India. Construction started from both ends at once, and was completed at Konquita in October 1943



Death Railway

Appalling conditions, disease and summary executions by Japanese guards led to the deaths of 16,000 Allied and 100,000 native prisoners. It has been said that every railway sleeper laid represents a life lost

The locomotive *Singapore*

Captured in the Royal Naval Dockyard when Singapore fell, the train sustained bullet and shrapnel damage but continued in work under the Japanese. The train was returned to Britain in 1953 and became an honorary member of the Federation of Far Eastern Prisoners of War in 1986



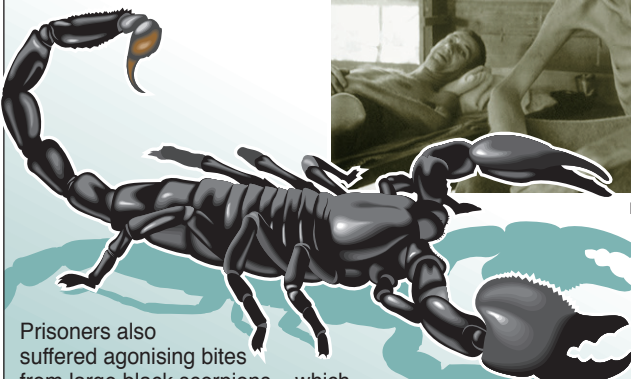
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Perils of jungle hell

POWs were held in disease-infested jungle work camps on a starvation diet with no sanitation or clean water. Each day malaria and dengue fever claimed fresh victims

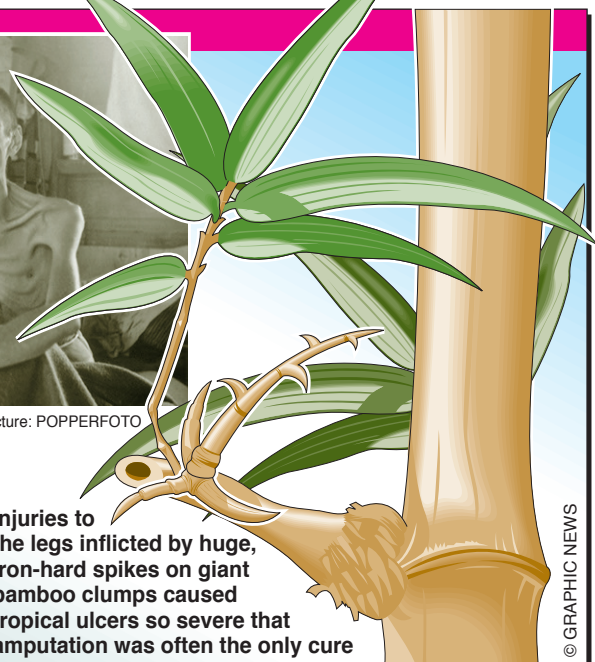


Picture: POPPERFOTO



Prisoners also suffered agonising bites from large black scorpions – which could draw blood – as well as red armour-plated centipedes and huge biting red ants

Injuries to the legs inflicted by huge, iron-hard spikes on giant bamboo clumps caused tropical ulcers so severe that amputation was often the only cure



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