

Codford

Roll of Honour



Lest we Forget

World War II



556479 SIGNALMAN

PERCIVAL FRANK CONDUIT

ROYAL SIGNALS

11th SEPTEMBER, 1943 Age 23

After Conflict - Peace.

Called to Higher Service

Percival Frank CONDUIT

Percival Frank Conduit was born on 8th May, 1920 to parents William James & Ethel Jane Conduit (nee Axford). His birth was registered in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire in the June quarter of 1920.

(In the 1911 Census, William James Conduit was listed as a 30 year old Rural Postman, born at Codford St. Mary & Ethel Jane Axford was a 23 year old, single General Servant, born Sherrington, Wiltshire. William & Ethel had married in the June quarter of 1919 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire. Ethel Jane Conduit died on 3rd February, 1956 in Mere, Wiltshire. William James Conduit died on 22nd November, 1963 in Mere, Wiltshire. William & Ethel Conduit are buried together in Codford St Mary's New Churchyard.)

Percy worked for Mr Norris, the Codford baker and was a member of the Territorial Army before war began.

Percy Conduit enlisted in the Royal Signals Corps & was given the rank of Signaller & a service number of 5569479. He was part of the British Expeditionary Force who were evacuated from Dunkirk between 29th May & 2nd June, 1940. Signals units are among the first into action, providing the battlefield communications and information systems essential to all operations. Royal Signals units provide the full telecommunications infrastructure for the Army wherever they operate in the world. The Corps has its own engineers, logistics experts and systems operators to run radio and area networks in the field. It is responsible for installing, maintaining and operating all types of telecommunications equipment and providing command support to commanders and their headquarters. Throughout World War 2, members of the Royal Signals served in every theatre of war. By the end of the war the strength of the Corps was 8,518 officers and 142,472 men. During the war 4,362 members of Royal Signals gave their lives.

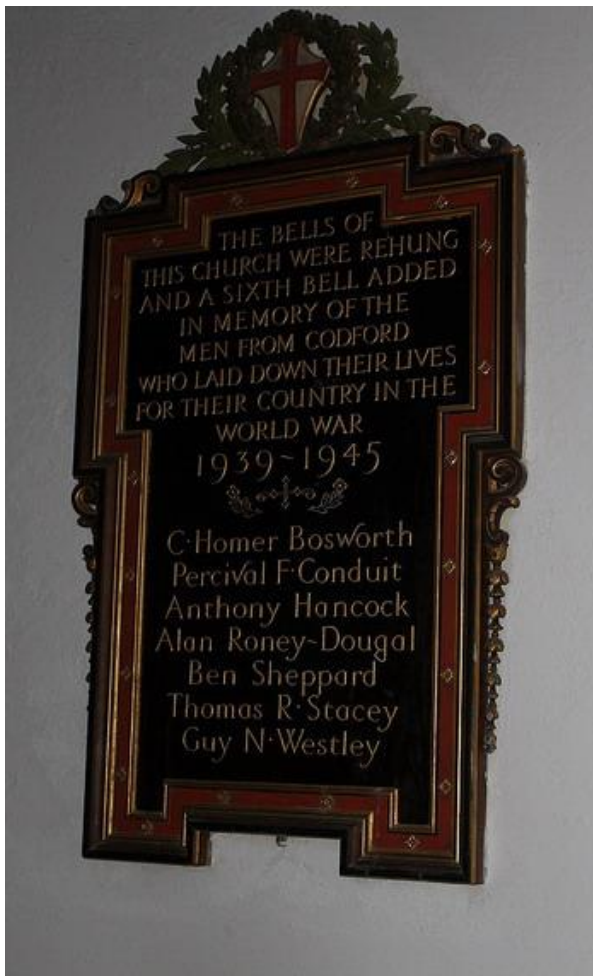
After a period of leave, Percy was posted to the Far East where he was one of the 16,000 British soldiers captured by the Japanese at the fall of Singapore in February 1942. Percy was sent to work on the Thailand-Burma railway as a Prisoner of War. Early in July, 1943 he was taken to Chungkai Base Hospital suffering from a general debility resulting in chronic diarrhoea and dysentery. A 'tent' ward at Chungkai base hospital was used to treat prisoners of war in from Thailand-Burma Railway. Chungkai hospital, located where the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery now stands, on the southern outskirts of Kanchanaburi, was one of the early base hospitals, established in November 1942. The first influx of ill prisoners arrived in March 1943. At its peak Chungkai would hold two thousand patients. Between 60 and 100 men died a month at Chungkai in late 1943.

Signaller Percival Frank Conduit died of malnutrition and vitamin deficiency in the early morning of 11th September 1943 in Thailand, aged 23.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Signaller Percival Frank Conduit, service number 5569479 of Royal Corps of Signals – 122 Field Regt., R.A. Sig. Sec. He was the son of William James and Ethel Jane Conduit of Warminster, Wiltshire.

Probate / Administration was granted at Bristol on 28th June, 1946 in regards to Percival Frank Conduit of 5 Codford, Warminster, Wiltshire to Ethel Jane Conduit (wife of William James Conduit) – Percival’s mother. Effects £239. Details from National Probate Calendar – Index of Administrations show that Percival Frank Conduit “died between 1 and 31 August, 1943 on War Service”.

Signalman Percival Frank Conduit is remembered on the Codford World War 2 Memorial plaque located in St. Peter’s Church, Codford, Wiltshire as well as a Victory Bell, cast by Mears & Stainbank of Whitechapel in 1946, which was added to commemorate the seven men with Codford connections that lost their lives in World War 2.



(Photo with permission Christopher Wright 2013)



(With thanks to Romy Wyeth for the above photo & providing information)

Thailand –Burma Railway (also known as the Death Railway)

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.

Chungkai War Cemetery

Chungkai War Cemetery is located just outside the town of Kanchanaburi, which is 129 kilometres north-west of Bangkok.

Chungkai was one of the base camps on the railway and contained a hospital and church built by Allied prisoners of war. It is the original burial ground started by the Prisoners of War themselves, and the burials are mostly of men that died at the hospital.

The War Cemetery contains 1,377 identified casualties. There are now 1,427 Commonwealth and 314 Dutch burials of the Second World War in this cemetery.

Signalman Percival Frank Conduit is buried in Chungkai War Cemetery, Kanchanaburi, Thailand in Grave number - 4. B. 3.



(Photo by GulfportBob 2012)

Chungkai War Cemetery



(Photos from CWGC)



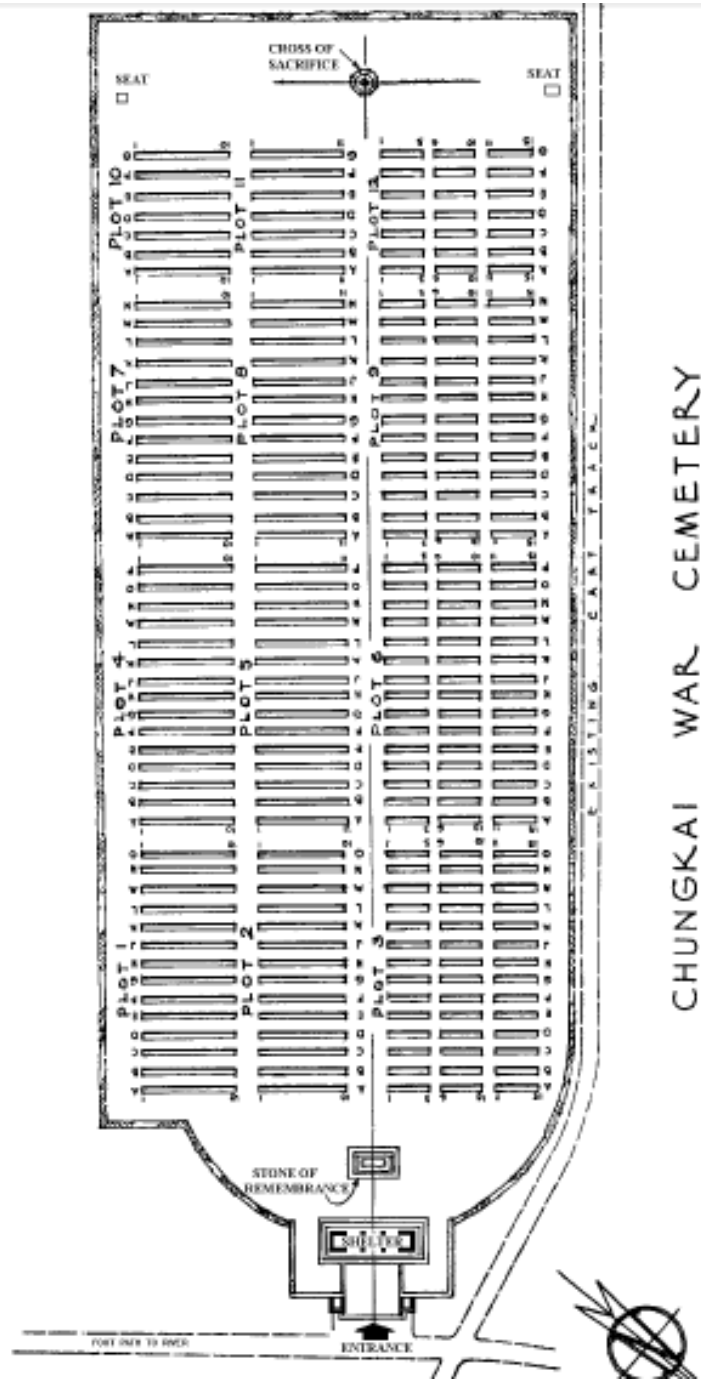


AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Chungkai War Cemetery – September, 1945

(Photo from Australian War memorial)



CHUNGKAI WAR CEMETERY