



Leading Aircraftman
Ashford Stanley Vaisey
Known as Stan
RAF Service Number: 1169487
Research undertaken by Shelley Vaisey
15th June 2022

The Story Behind his WW2 RAF Record

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Where it all began:



The administrative building, RAF Cardington

The picture below shows the WAAF Barrage Balloon crews at RAF Cardington which Stan spoke about in his interview with Matthew Smaldon from the Soldiers of Oxfordshire museum (<https://www.sofo.org.uk/>).



He chose to head into the Telecommunication trade and would have been an Airchargehand or Radar Operator on entry (this was in Trade Group V – which would have been the least pay, and least skilled but intended to be trained in Radar Operator Skills). This was the only trade with a trade badge. The original reason for this is that in the early day of the RAF only NCO's were allowed to address an officer. A member of the telecommunication trade might have an important message and the badge enable him to address an officer directly.

Growing up from the age of 10 in Alton, Hampshire Stan Vaisey went to RAF recruitment centre No.2 Recruit Centre, at Cardington on 6th July 1940 then sent back to civilian life with lapel badge until space on training opened up.

He returned to No.2 Recruitment Centre on 17th August 1940 where he would have signed the attestation, his service number was assigned, he received his kit, underwent medicals, confirmation of suitability for trade selection, and received basic training (commonly referred to as “square bashing”).



Stan with family all looking incredibly proud of him.



**Stans trade badge
(kept with his medals)**

Next Posting – Radio School

On 5th November 1940 Stan was posted to Radio School to probably what was to be shortly renamed No.2 Radio School RAF Yatesbury near the village of [Yatesbury](#), Wiltshire, England, about 4 miles (6 km) east of the town of Calne. It was an important training establishment in the First and Second World Wars, and until its closure in 1965.

[9 Radio School formerly 2 Radio School, Yatesbury \(UK\) | The National Archives](#)

At this unit he is now officially transferred to the RAF Home establishment strength - Reason H

He passed out qualified from Yatesbury on 21st or 23rd November 1940.

Stan remembers:

“We all ended up. Um, there's sort of derelict camp right out in the middle of nowhere. I was, um, just barracks there and nothing else. And we sat there for about a fortnight. Nothing happened. And then one day, we got called in and we went down this lane was about two miles down into the woods and in the middle of the woods was a secret camp where they had mock up radar stations. And that's where we did our training.



“myself -in process of becoming a proficient radio op!” Stan is on the left in this picture.

Towers Flash Radio Beams to Detect Warplanes



Around the coast of Britain stands a chain of radio sentinels probing the skies with short-wave beams to locate approaching enemy warplanes by night or day, in cloud, smoke or fog. Technical details of the radio detector are a major war secret, but its existence was made known when the British air chief marshal called for radio technicians to man the listening posts. Dr. Lee de Forest, American radio inventor, believes the beams are projected in a conical path toward the sea and sky from the top of 240-foot towers dotting the coastline. When a plane comes within that cone, the radio signals are reflected back to the tower and received by instruments installed on the tower at various altitudes and pointing in all directions. Within these

receivers, with paraboloid reflectors and dipole antennas, the rebounding beams—radio echoes—register their intensity according to distance, direction and altitude. This information is relayed by wires to the instrument table at the base of the tower where a technician, wearing earphones, translates the data and sends it instantly to the anti-aircraft command posts. Such a radio-echo alarm system would be a further development of the terrain clearance indicator announced in 1938 by the Bell Laboratories and United Air Lines. In that instrument the time elapsed in projecting a signal from plane to earth and receiving its echo was measured, and from that time the actual altitude of the plane above ground was computed instantly.

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POPULAR MECHANICS

“It really was the back of beyond. I wanted it from and about. Yeah, and first of you laugh as a radar unit. But of course, mains electricity all over the country hadn't arrived in those days, so we had to have our own little power stations. So we had Lister generators, which is what the fairground people have. You know, you've probably seen them. They want him out and it lights up everything we had then, um, frightening things they were, they really were. It took four of you to turn them over.”

Off to the Isle of Man!



Posted to No.5 Bombing and Gunnery School on Isle of Man - Headquarters Holding - Reason HH - so not on establishment strength of unit.

[5 Bombing and Gunnery School, Jurby, Isle of Man; later became 5 Air Observer School... | The National Archives](#)



This was an accommodation unit providing pay, messing etc for the local AMES - Air Ministry Experimental Station - Radar Unit. So he would have been doing this trade at the AMES station but living at Jurby. Stan was at Cregneash and Lima during his time on the Isle of man. (Picture to the left is the view from Cregneash).

“When I think about it now, it makes my blood run cold. These masts that we had were 80 ft tall, and wooden, and held together with sort of bits of bent metal and bolts because they had to be able to take them down and move them on a lorry, you see. So it was like a Meccano set. And if anything happened to the that the actual aerial by the way was a lump of copper tubing, just like you see a plumber have. They were the best receptors for it, but if anything went wrong with them in the night, you had to go up there.”



A video of Bride RADAR station -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SflzYaydNV4>

A video of RAF Jurby -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gL3IUMsnro8>

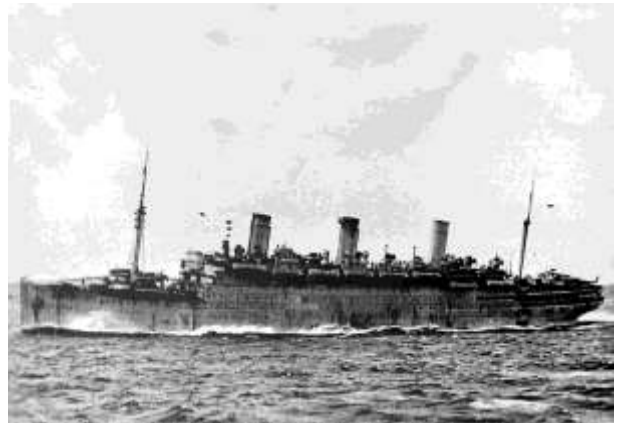
“We didn't see any action. See, there was no gunfire, and I think like that. And I got fed up All the action was abroad see, and I was keen, mad, like you are at that age. So I put in for a transfer.

“What had happened was a bloke was being transferred without his wish. And he was married. He hadn't been married long, so I went to the CO and I said, look, He don't want to go. I'll go, He said. You sure? Yeah. I've got no family. I've got nobody really in the world. Uh huh. I'll go and he can stop here.”

But adventure was calling Stan....

**“I took this bloke place.
They go abroad, and I
ended up on a the
Empress of Australia.
She had taken over as a
troop ship and we went
out in a convoy”**

On 10th January 1941 “paper transfer” was completed from RAF Home Establishment to RAF Field Establishment - specifically Far East Command. This was the day his paperwork moved not specifically him, it seems that he went to RAF Cardington where he would then have done medical/embarkation leave/rekitting/jabs/ move to typically Liverpool and embarked on troop transport ship to Far East (Singapore).



**The Empress of Australia
(pictured above) went out in a
convoy to Singapore:**

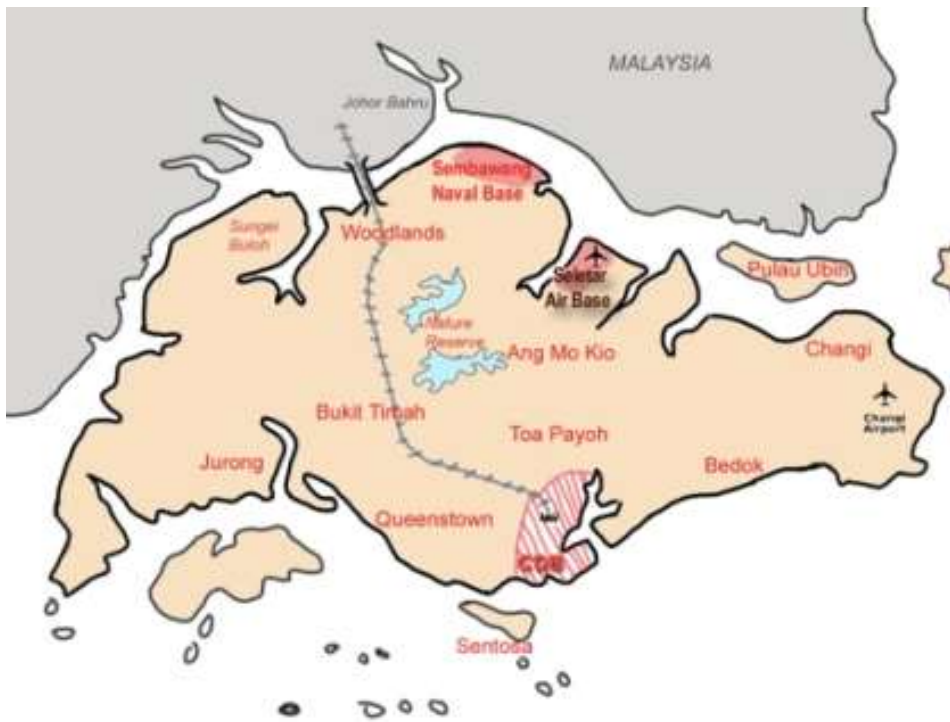
Key/Route:

- Liverpool, England
- Down the West of Africa
- Cape Town, South Africa
- Durban, South Africa
- Mombassa, Kenya
- Across the Indian Ocean
- Colombo, Sri Lanka
- Singapore



An interactive version of the map is available here:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1KQVqtk2hxSvt90PtHp8kZzpok-1ZAweR&usp=sharing>



Arrived at RAF Butterworth (Singapore)

A little bit of history : The **Singapore strategy** was a naval defence policy of the [British Empire](#) that evolved in a series of [war plans](#) from 1919 to 1941. It aimed to deter aggression by the [Empire of Japan](#) by providing for a base for a fleet of the [Royal Navy](#) in the [Far East](#), able to intercept and defeat a Japanese force heading south towards India or Australia. To be effective it required a well-equipped base; [Singapore](#), at the eastern end of the [Strait of Malacca](#), was chosen in 1919 as the location of this base; work continued on this naval base and its defences over the next two decades.

The important thing to know about RAF Butterworth in Oct/Nov/Dec 1941 when Stan would have arrived in Singapore is that it had just been newly constructed and like most of the RAF assets in Malaya was being stocked ready to accept it's flying compliment.

The pre Japanese invasion plan was to address the limitations of Singapore air defence by placing a strong dispersed air asset in distributed aerodromes in Malaya.

RAF needs for the Battle of Britain then the Desert war had delayed to despatch of more modern types to replace the early Mk Blenheim/Vildebeest and Buffalo in use.

To prevent congestion on Singapore Island the construction and war equipment stocking of the new aerodromes was to take place before arrival of the new fighters.

The Japanese invasion struck when these aerodromes were stocked but lacking the air defences giving a materials bonus to the attacking forces if not destroyed/disabled.



RAF Seletar (Singapore)

Stan remembers:

“You know, in fact, posted to Malaya was an absolute marvellous, you know, because the life but and the whole standard of living you had servants to do this. You never cleaned your shoes. They were done. there was a bloke that used to come in. And sweep up. If you laid in bed, a bloke would come around with a bowl and shave you. You know, it was bloody marvellous. But this soon changed. Yeah”



“Interior of a hut at Seletar
Transit Camp”



**Some of the Indian
Tamil boys (2nd
from right Lanana
– Stan’s boy)**



Photos from Stan's Album.

“Presumably the
Dragonfly”



“13.2.42 Keppel
Harbour and Docks
4.20pm. The effect of
Japanese pattern
bombing - the oil wells
on fire.”

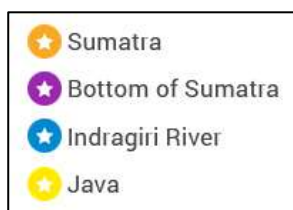
The Harbour Burns at Singapore:



“We got out very smartly”

Stan was in Singapore when the Japanese invaded in February 1942 and was evacuated to Sumatra he tried to evade Japanese soldiers but was eventually captured.

“we got on boats and went down the coast? I don't know if you know the geography at all, but if you imagine Singapore there and the layer up there, Sumatra is down here, and it's like a long sausage, the Sumatra, then a gap. And then java we went, we got onto boats and got across to, uh, Sumatra and went all the way down to the bottom of Sumatra. We then had to get on a boat to get to Java. That was our next move, because we were aiming for Australia. And unfortunately, um, the boat we got on got sunk. Wish we found ourselves in the middle of a Jap convoy Believe it or not we were sailing along in the dark”



“Straits of Johore,
Chinese junk boat”

They say a picture speaks a thousand words...
(Stans photos also described in his own words)



"Ointhe Island Puluu Pon Pon - a party go out to search for food"



"Puline Pon-Pon The Hospital - wounded waiting for a boat"



"Puloo Pon-Pon Queuing for the latrine. There was little privacy but the men were unremarkably intimate to the woman"



"The hold of the junk in which we left P.P (Puloo Pon Pon where we were for 9 days)"



"Kuala Raja. Sinkep Island [A beautiful isle but an unholy odour]"



"Priji Raja northern bank of Indragiri river"

收容所 Camp	泰 昭和 17 年 10 月 22 日	番号 No.	泰Ⅱ 16180 3594
姓 名 Name	VAISEY, Ashford Stanley ウァイセイ・アッシュフォード・スタンレー	生 年 月 日 Date of Birth	1922. 6. 15.
国 籍 Nationality	英	No.	1169437
階級身分 Rank	Aircraftsman I (air) 空軍 兵	所属部隊 Unit	Royal Air Force
捕獲場所 Place of Capture	スマトラ バグン	捕獲年月日 Date of Capture	昭和 17 年 3 月 17 日
父ノ名 Father's Name	VAISEY, Edwin Alfred	母ノ名 Mother's Name	VAISEY (STEVENS) Olive
本 籍 地 Place of Origin	4 Robin Hood Butts Rd Alton, Hampshire, England.	職 業 Occupation	運送兵事務員
送 報 先 Destination of Report	Mr. F. Badnell (uncle), 4 Robin Hood Butts Rd, Alton, Hampshire, England.	備 考 事 項 Remarks	

補修欄 Other Informations

昭和20年8月50日、バンコックに於て聯合國軍に引渡す



THAILAND-BURMA RAILWAY CENTRE

Kanchanaburi, Thailand.

P.O.W. RECORD



Service No	1169487
Rank	Aircraftman, 1st Class
Surname	VAISEY
Other Names	Ashford Stanley
Nationality	British
Served With	British
Service	Air Force
Unit	Royal Air Force, Radio Installations Maintenance Unit.
Date of Birth	15/06/1922
Place of Birth	Wood Green, London
Next of Kin	Mr. F. Badnell, of Alton, Hampshire
Occupation	...
Force/Work Grp	British Sumatra Battalion. Group 3 and 2
Train/Sub Grp	Sumatra
Work Areas	Mergui, Tavoy, Burma end of Railway, Chungkai, Linson, Chungkai, Tha Muang, Taku Butai, Pratchai.
Fate	Captured 17/03/1942. Overseas 25/05/1942.
Date of Death	...
Place of Death	...
First Buried	...
Cause of Death	...
Age at Death	...
Cemetery	...
Grave No	...
Recovered	...
Discharged	...
References	Index Card.

For more information please contact TBRC Research Department staff
(in the Research Centre on the second floor of the Museum or by email)

website: www.tbrconline.com

email: admin@tbrconline.com

Based on information gathered during extensive research by Thailand-Burma Railway Centre, relying on both official & unofficial sources.
All information is offered in good faith & while great care is taken in recording facts, absolute accuracy cannot be guaranteed in every instance.



LEST WE FORGET

Information from Thailand Burma Railway Museum:

I have attached our PoW Record showing him captured in Sumatra 17/03/1942 and sent to the Burma End of the Railway 25/05/1942 with what was known as the "British Sumatra Battalion" under Captain Desmond Apthorp 6th Bn. The Royal Norfolk Regiment.

After the railway was completed October 43 and then capable of moving men and equipment late 1943 he was moved down the Railway to Kanchanaburi Thailand where he was stationed at Chungkai PoW Camp until September 44 when he was sent back up the railway to work cutting wood that was used to run the Steam Locomotives used by the Japanese at Linson Camp.

In December 1944 he was sent back to Chungkai Hospital sick with Diarrhoea and Malaria then to Tha Muang, Taku Butai and finally Pratchai

Stans Recollection:

Then would go up the line to other camps to work, they ate "blue rice" ("what they use for cow feed"). The rice was full of "livestock" (like weevils / bugs).

Camps "up the line" approx. 35km apart (Grandad went to them all)

Tamberziet

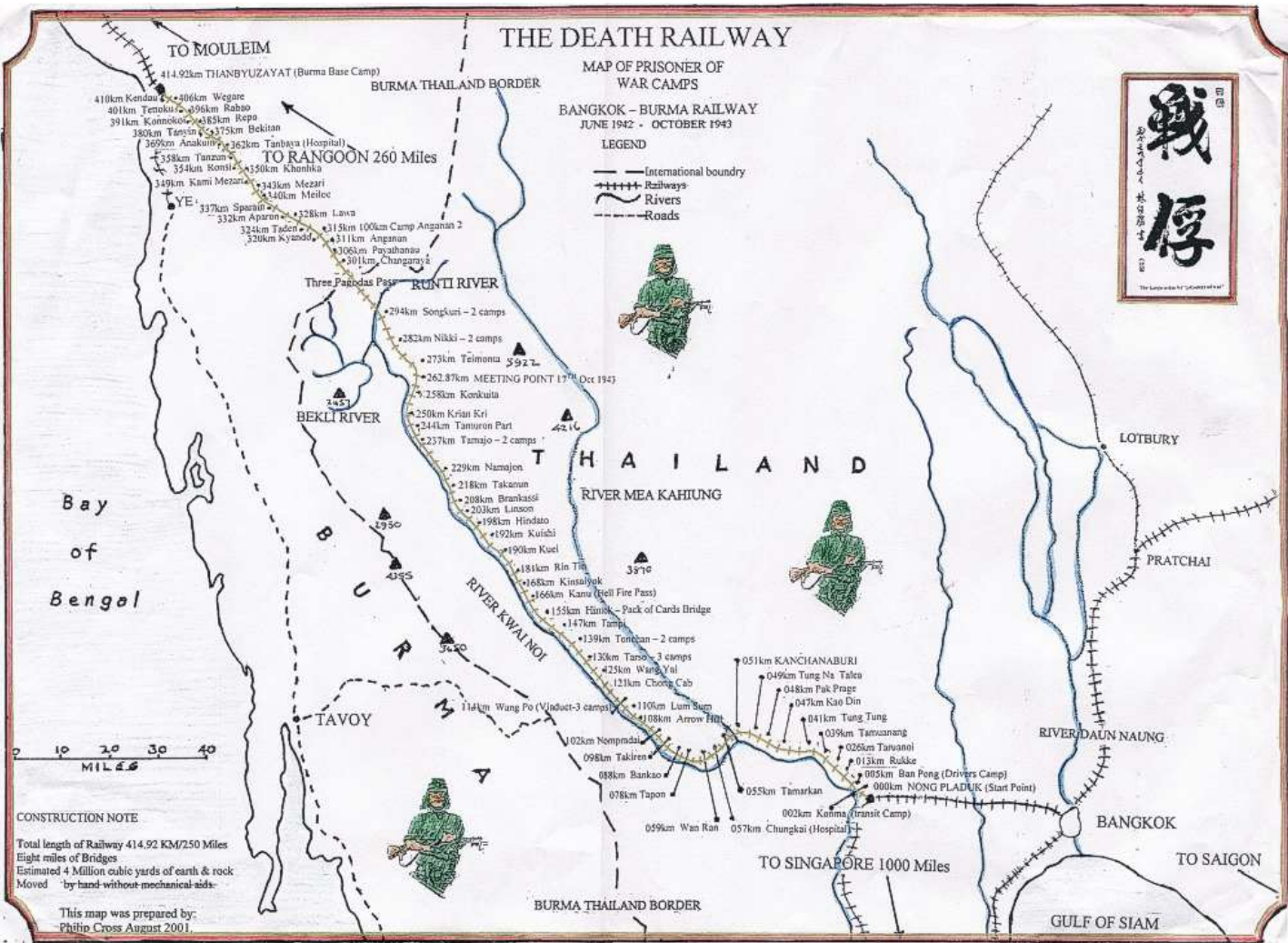
Thetkor

Mungin

Wompo – cliff face railway ran around the cliff face past a waterfall

Banchai

The further up you got the worse it was as the food/medical supplies didn't get up the line easily.



“We got taken up and we went into the jungle, which stopped in it for 3.5 years.”

Stan Vaisey



Flown from the POW camp directly to
Calcutta, India

“We got picked up by a plane.
We've got a lift which saved us
about 200 miles walking. And they
were Dakotas. Um, that was that
was the lorry of the air in those
days. Um, and we all got out. We'd
been packed in like sardines. “



The long trip home via.....

106 Personnel Reception Centre at RAF Cosford - special unit set up in vicinity of RAF Hospital to care for the returning far east pow to deal with medical and mental problems, malnutrition etc before being released from service

[106 Personnel Reception Centre, formed at Cosford March 1945 and disbanded August 1945... | The National Archives](#)



And.....

finally 104 Personnel despatch centre at RAF Hednesford for release

[104 Personnel Despatch Centre, Hednesford \(PDC UK\) | The National Archives](#)

The last leg of the journey.....

“So I went to the RTO. Where are you from, son? Alton in Hampshire. I've been there. He says nice beer there, you know, we had a nice long chat. Um, he said there you are then there's your ticket. And if you get stuck, whatever the red cats, show them that you're okay, you can go anywhere. And it was, you know, because red cats are everywhere. And if you got something Where you off to? Oh, yeah, On your way. And that was it. Yeah. Anyhow, I got to Alton and the station looked just the same. The same porter was stood on the bloody station, and when I got out, there was a car parked there. a Taxi and I walked past this, and I thought, I wonder if he knows where I live. He said, hello Stan how you doing? How you getting on? I said a bloody long sight. Better seeing you. he said you want to lift home. Yeah, I'm getting there. And not only did he take me home? He took me to the home where my family were because they've been bombed out. They were neighbours, Of course. Everybody knew where everybody was.

I knocked on the door. aunt came the door and she said, Martin, his name is. Hello, Martin. What's up? He said I brought him home and she said who? And she said, Oh, my God, she said, Is he all right? And he said No. He wants to come in for a cup of tea. So he came in with us and we had to sit down a cup of tea and everything.

Presents from abroad.....

“One thing I didn't mention when we were in India and coming back home, we were all issued with a the kit box, a tin trunk with a handle on each end, and you can fill it up with anything to bring home. And I've racked my brain, I thought, Now what won't they have had and I thought tea! So I filled mine up mostly which I've got some cloth lovely silk that women make under clothes out of you know, lovely silk. Got that in. I've got all this tea in there. And of course, when I got indoors, they said, Would you like a cup of tea? And I said, Yeah, I brought some tea with me have you they said, because he was as rare as a rocking horse show. You know, she opened it and there were these 4 pound packs of tea in it.

They nearly went berserk. You know, it's about two years rations, and all the women came from nowhere. You would not believe it, You know, all neighbours Of course

I must tell you this The vicar was the same Vicar. Reverend Stringer? Yeah, of course. He knew me cause I was the head boy and I was a server as well in the church, and there was a knock at the door and I opened it. And there he was, and they had a box of oranges. Now, nobody has seen oranges in England for years, and I had a box full and he said I got these off the Colonel. I never found out which, Colonel, but I got these off the colonel for you. They'll do you good, and one thing you could get when we were prisoner of war was oranges....”



Recognition of service.....



**The War
Medal
1939–1945**

The Pacific Star

**The Defense
Medal**

**1939-1945
Star**

More information about each medal is available at:

<https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/medals/war-medal-1939-1945>

<https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/medals/pacific-star>

<https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/medals/defense-medal>

<https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/medals/1939-45-star>

To remember them is to honour them

War Pension issued:

MINISTRY OF PENSIONS AND NATIONAL INSURANCE

NORCROSS, BLACKPOOL, LANCs.

Any reply should be addressed to The Secretary and the following reference quoted.



Telephone: Thornton 2371
Telegraphic Address:—
"War Pension, Blackpool."

7 MAR 1957

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Dear Sir/Madam,

It has been decided to continue your present award from 22/5/54 to 19/5/59 without calling you for further medical examination. The award is subject to fulfilment of the conditions of payment which you will find set out in your War Pension Order Book.

The award is based on an interim assessment of the degree of disablement of 20 per cent arising from MALNUTRITION AND PRIVATION WITH ASSOCIATED HELMINTHIASIS (STRONGYLOIDS) NERVOUS SYMPTOMS AND INFECTIVE HEPATITIS.

The award will be reviewed before the last date shown above and you may then be asked to attend for medical examination.

If you are dissatisfied with the above interim assessment, you have the right under Section 5 (1) of the Pensions Appeal Tribunals Act, 1943, as amended by the Pensions Appeal Tribunals Act, 1949, to appeal against it to a Tribunal constituted under those Acts. On any such appeal the Tribunal may uphold the Minister's assessment or increase or decrease it.

If you decide to appeal you must apply to the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance, Norcross, Blackpool, Lancs, NOT LATER THAN THREE MONTHS from the date of this letter for a form of Notice of Appeal. Please write at the top of any letter of application the words "ASSESSMENT APPEAL" and the reference number given at the head of this letter.

May I remind you that the Welfare Officer will be pleased to assist you on pension or other matters, so if you have problems or difficulties of any kind on which you would like his help or advice please do not hesitate to get in touch with him. The Welfare Service operates through the local offices of the Ministry and there is probably one within calling distance of your home. If you do not know the address you can obtain it at the Post Office.

A. S. Vaisny Esq

Yours faithfully,

A. J. Lambert
for Secretary.
for Controller.

Form MPB 239 (NB) (M)

(127) 9/55 M759779 6183/A 1,000 Pads 2/56 TS&Co.Ltd. Gp.728

Sources/Interesting Links:

<http://ww2talk.com/index.php>

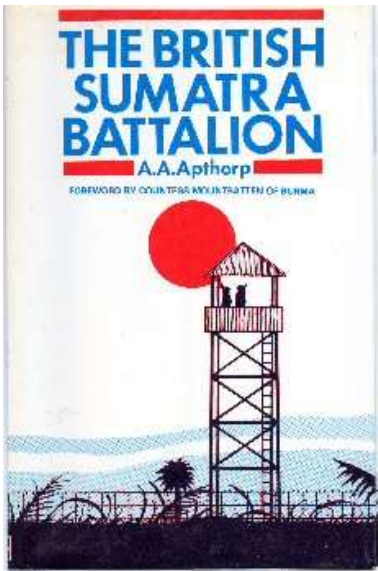
<https://www.burtonbradstock.org.uk/History/Lionel%20Bailey%20wartime/Lionel%20Bailey.htm>

<https://www.2-26bn.org/pow.html>

<http://www.tbrconline.com/>

<https://www.cofepow.org.uk/>

<https://www.cofepow.org.uk/books/the-british-sumatra-battalion>



Stan was in the British Sumatra Battalion, the story detailed in this book:

Brand new copies of the book available from:

A A Apthorp

51 Fairview Road

Headley Down

Hampshire

GU35 8HQ

Tel: 01428 712885

Price: £9.50 + £2.30 p&p

<https://www.roll-of->

http://honour.org.uk/regiments/British_Sumatra_Battalion/html/v_survived_0.htm

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum -

<https://www.sofo.org.uk/> (who interviewed Stan in 2013).