



In Memory of  
**Gunner**  
**MERVYN HOWARD WOCKNER**  
**QX18357**, 2<sup>nd</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery  
who died age 28  
on 30 October 1943

Son of Walter Wockner and Clara Elizabeth Wockner,  
of Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia

Remembered with honour  
KANCHANABURI WAR CEMETERY, THAILAND



GUNNER  
**MERVYN HOWARD WOCKNER**  
2<sup>ND</sup>/15<sup>TH</sup> FIELD REGIMENT  
REGIMENTAL NUMBER: QX18357



Photograph of Gunner Mervyn Wockner, courtesy of Graeme Wockner, nephew, Toowoomba.

Gunner Mervyn Howard Wockner was born at Toowoomba in Queensland on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1914 to Walter Wockner and Emily Clara Elizabeth Wockner (nee Lange). His early primary education was at the Meringandan Primary School and after the family moved to Toowoomba he attended the East State School. He then attended the Toowoomba Grammar School for his secondary education. He voluntarily enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force at Toowoomba on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1941 after swearing the statutory oath that he would serve for the duration of the war and an additional 12 months. He was allotted the regimental number of QX18357. At the time of his enlistment he was 26 years and 6 months of age, unmarried, and employed as a Shop Assistant at Chinchilla. He stated that he was of the Church of England religion. He gave his next-of-kin as his

father, Mr Walter Wockner residing at 134 McKenzie Street in Toowoomba. His physical description on enlistment was that he had brown hair and grey eyes.

Gunner Mervyn Wockner joined the Recruit Camp at the Exhibition Grounds in Brisbane on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1941. He joined the 11<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion at Redbank on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1941. He was transferred to the 41<sup>st</sup> Field Training Battery at Redbank on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1941 and in November 1941, he was based at the Grovely Camp in Brisbane. On 7<sup>th</sup> January 1942 he was transferred to New South Wales to join the 2<sup>nd</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment Reinforcements.

On 10<sup>th</sup> January 1942 he embarked by ship from Sydney, New South Wales and travelled via Batavia to Singapore where he disembarked on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1942. He joined the 2<sup>nd</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment in Malaya on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1942. He would have been involved in action against the Imperial Japanese forces during the defence and down the Malayan Peninsula to Singapore Island. He became a prisoner-of-war after the capitulation of the allied forces on Singapore Island on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1942. Whilst a prisoner-of-war at Changi, he was transferred to the 2/10<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment on 28<sup>th</sup> January 1943. On 16<sup>th</sup> March 1943, he was sent as a member of "D" Force to work on the Thailand/Burma Death Railway. "D" Force consisted of some 5000 British and

Australian prisoners sent to Ban Pong in Thailand to work on the construction and maintenance of the Thailand/Burma railway. They were transported by trucks to Konyu and later to Hintok where they remained for the duration of the construction, working on a particular difficult section involving cuttings and embankments.

Gunner Mervyn Wockner died from avitaminosis at a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp in Thailand on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1943. At the time of his death Mervyn Wockner was 28 years of age. He was interred in the Chungkai Cemetery and his body was subsequently exhumed and reburied in the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery in Thailand. The distance between the Chungkai and Kanchanaburi War Cemeteries is only a short distance.



*Australian War Memorial photograph P02310.012*

*Chungkai Cemetery in September 1945. Temporary wooden crosses on the graves of Allied soldiers. There were two cemeteries, one with 1,500 graves and one with 168 graves. Those Australians who had been buried in these two cemeteries, were exhumed and reburied in the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery towards the end of 1945.*

Gunner Mervyn Wockner's name is commemorated on Panel No. 18 at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and locally on the Toowoomba Mothers' Memorial, the Toowoomba Soldiers Memorial Hall World War 2 Honour Board and the Toowoomba Grammar School World War 2 Honour Board.

Notes:

Mervyn Wockner had three siblings, Wallace, Douglas and Clare. Douglas Wockner (QX21700) also enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1941 and served with No. 135 Royal Australian Engineers Workshops. He served until 13<sup>th</sup> May 1946 with the rank of Private. After

enlisting, he asked Mervyn “to claim” him so that he could serve in the same unit. Mervyn refused saying that he did not want the responsibility in case anything happened to him. Mervyn’s decision saved his brother Douglas from becoming a prisoner of war and the possibility that he also would have died. Wallace Spencer Wockner (Q147191) was mobilized into the Australian Military Forces on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1942 and he served with the rank of Corporal until 14<sup>th</sup> June 1946.

As a former Toowoomba Grammar School Student who brought honour to his school and country, Mervyn Wockner’s name is recorded in the Roll of Honour in John K. Winn’s publication, “Toowoomba Grammar School - *Steadfast, Brave and True*”, published by the Toowoomba Grammar School in 2010.

A history of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment during World War 2 can be found in Dr. Bob Goodwin’s book, “Mates and Memories”, printed by Merino Lithographics Pty Ltd, Brisbane. Gunner Mervyn Wockner’s name appears in the Roll of Honour in the book.



Map of the Thai-Burma railway – courtesy of The Anzac Portal





*Australian War Memorial photograph 122309  
The curved trestle bridge between Hintok and Konyu.*

**External Links:**

[Australian War Memorial Honour Roll](#)

[CWGC](#)

[Military Record](#)