

**Hellfire Pass** is the name of a railway cutting on the Death Railway in Thailand, known by the Japanese as *Konyu* cutting. There is a museum co-sponsored by the Thai and Australian governments at the site to commemorate the suffering of those involved in the construction of the railway. Konyu cutting was a particularly difficult section of the line to build due to it being the largest rock cutting on the railway, coupled with its general remoteness and the lack of proper construction tools during building. A tunnel would have been possible to build instead of a cutting, but this could only be constructed at the two ends at any one time, whereas the cutting could be constructed at all points simultaneously despite the excess effort required by the POWs. The Australian, British, Dutch and other allied Prisoners of War were required by the Japanese to work 18 hours a day to complete the cutting. It was estimated that 68 men were beaten to death by the Japanese guards in the six weeks it took to build the cutting, although many more died from cholera, dysentery, starvation, and exhaustion [Wigmore p568]. However, the majority of deaths occurred amongst labourers whom the Japanese enticed to come to help build the line with promises of good jobs. These labourers, mostly Malaysians (Chinese, Malays and Tamils from Malaya), suffered mostly the same as the POWs at the hands of the Japanese. The Japanese kept no records of these deaths.

There are 4 Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemeteries along the line of the railway, 2 at Kanchanaburi in Thailand, and another at Thayzakarun in Burma.

The railway was never built to a level of lasting permanence and was frequently bombed by the Royal Air Force during the Burma Campaign. After the war, all but the present section was closed. There are currently no plans to reopen it.

There are no longer any trains running on this stretch of the line. The nearest railway station is at Nam Tok, where trains of the State Railway of Thailand can be taken for a trip over the famous Whampo Viaduct and across the bridge over the River Kwai to Kanchanaburi, which is the nearest major town and tourist base. Visitors to the museum usually base themselves in Kanchanaburi. It is possible to roll into one day a trip to the famous Erawan waterfall in the morning, followed by a visit to Hellfire Pass and its museum in the afternoon, and then catch the train back to Kanchanaburi to cross the famous bridge around sunset.

As a part of the museum experience, it is possible to walk through the cutting itself and along a section of the former railway track bed. An audio tour including recorded memories of surviving Prisoners of War is available at the Museum.

Source: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hellfire\\_Pass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hellfire_Pass)