

Veterans get go ahead for memorial to PoWs

The Nation

A MEMORIAL monument to the American prisoners-of-war (PoWs) who died during the construction of the "Death Railway" in Kanchanaburi province will be dedicated this Sunday.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW-USA), after a lengthy negotiations with Thai authorities, have finally been given the green light to set up the special monument in memory of the more than 700 American soldiers that were forced by the Japanese to carry out intensive labour on the railway tracks connecting Thailand and Burma.

American Ambassador to Thailand William H Itoh, VFW Department Commander Michael Jugan from South Korea

and local District Commander Leon R Vileo will lead the ceremony scheduled to take place at 11 am.

Other dignitaries joining the ceremony will be the Kanchanaburi governor, representatives of the War Veterans of Thailand and an Australian delegation, as well as American veterans from Bangkok, Udon, Korat and Pattaya.

"Most of the American PoWs were from the *USS Houston* who were captured by the Japanese while in Indonesia. Although the United States took back the bodies of those who died in Kanchanaburi, we are very happy that we have been able to dedicate this monument to them," said Burt Nestle, FV post commander Bangkok.

The monument is close to the railway tracks and on the bank of the River Kwai.