



Phoebe Mercer W V S

1903-1945

BIRTH 24 JUL 1903 • Blackburn, Lancashire, England

DEATH 21 NOV 1945 • in accidental drowning in BKK

Facts

Age 0 – Birth

24 Jul 1903 • Blackburn, Lancashire, England

Age 36 – Occupation

1939 • joined Women's Voluntary Service at Blackburn England

Age 36 – Residence

1939 • Lancashire, England

Age 41 – Occupation

Feb 1945 • transferred to Assam India near border with Burma

Age 42 – Occupation

Sep 1945 • Transferred to Bangkok assisted in repatriating POWs

Age 42 – Death

21 Nov 1945 • in accidental drowning in BKK

Probate

21 May 1946 • Lancaster, England

Burial

Abt. 1947 • CWGC cemetery; Kanchanaburi, Thailand 11841804 * buried in Don Rak CWGC cemetery in Kanchanaburi = ONLY female interred there

Sources

Ancestry sources



1939 England and Wales Register

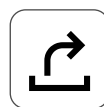


England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995



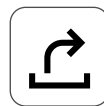
Global, Find A Grave Index for Burials at Sea and other Select Burial Locations, 1300s-Current

Web links



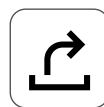
death concerns

<https://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/9304350.school-investigate-blackburn-womans-mysterious-death/?fbclid=IwAR3zMgnw4nff7njTUDceo7G40IcnxAE25Fbiz86mSj08ZrXlk0qycBpAX-Q>



BIO

<https://www.immanuelchurchfenisowles.org/phoebe-mercer?fbclid=IwAR1I7-x1oDvFtk52Xmd9hSeMXa2qFtHVXbszjCqWuEZr808JUt95cuGNiIM>



grave marker

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11841804/phoebe-mercer>

Notes

Phoebe Mercer was not a POW but she died in service to them. In 1938 with the threat of a second world war looming Phoebe joined the newly formed Women's Voluntary Service. In February 1945 she was asked to serve abroad and she agreed to do. After some further training and with £25 of a clothing

grant and extra clothing coupons she was embarked for Assam in India close to the Burmese border. Amongst this never stopping hive of activity Phoebe and her group of ladies, Misses Cotton, Palmer and Barton, with four British soldiers and thirty-one Indian staff set about making improvements to the canteen, which had been a match factory before the war. The canteen supplied hot and cold drinks, cakes, sandwiches, bacon, eggs, chips, and so on. After VJ Day in September 1945 they set about closing up the canteens and Phoebe was moved down to Bangkok where she was helping repatriate British service personnel and former prisoners of war. On the 21 November Phoebe was drowned in an accident. Reports are vague some saying two military vehicles were involved and others saying little. We have been unable to find her death certificate or her grave and it is possible that her body was never found. While we don't know her resting place, her name is on the WVS Roll of Honour in Westminster Abbey, on the Roll of Honour at St Anne's School and of course on our own War Memorial, so between these three places we will remember her. [per correspondence with the Thai Chapter of the Royal British Legion, I am led to believe that there is credible evidence that the Kanchanaburi CWGC grave does indeed contain her mortal remains.] <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11841804/phoebe-mercer> ===== On 16th December 2012, the Vicar, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA; Dear Revd. Roscoe While I was moving from India back to America I decided to stop in Thailand to break up my very long journey. One of the places I visited was Kanchanaburi, probably most famous for its bridge over the River Kwai as well as The Death Railway Museum. The Death Railway Museum was especially poignant and emotional for me so I decided to go to The Kanchanaburi Was Cemetery which is directly across the street from the museum. For almost an hour I walked among the 7,000 graves of the young men who died while constructing the Thailand to Burma Railway during World War II and tried to honor them in my own small way. Just as I was walking toward the main entrance to leave one grave marker caught my eye: Phoebe Mercer's. I couldn't believe that there was a woman buried among all of these men! Who could she be? What journey brought her here to this place? Without thinking I snapped a photo (see attachment) and vowed to find out anything I could about this extraordinary woman when I returned home to Philadelphia. I couldn't keep this information to myself when I knew that the people who cared about her did not know where her grave is located. Well, on 13 December I went on the Internet and found your website. Can you imagine my excitement when I saw Phoebe's name, her photograph and her biographical information? When I read that her final resting place was unknown I literally jumped up out of my seat and yelled, " I know, I know where she is!" I can't help but believe that Phoebe and the Divine were reaching out to me. I do hope you will pass this information on to everyone concerned. Also, The Kanchanaburi Was Cemetery is very beautiful and obviously lovingly maintained. I hope this is some consolation Dawn Taylor Philadelphia, PA