

BARRETT Charles William

Name: Charles William Barrett

Born: 2 November 1902

Rank: Captain

Service Number: 70330

Unit: Intelligence Corps

Died: 24 February 1973



Pre-War:

Bill, as he was known, was from Ramsgate, Kent. He enlisted in the Royal Artillery on 22 August 1922 and transferred to the Army Education Corps in 1926.

Wartime experience:

Bill served in India, Belfast and Dover before being sent to Singapore in 1937, as a Warrant Officer in the Changi Garrison. In 1940, Bill was commissioned, transferred to the Intelligence Corps and posted to Fort Canning. Bill was taken prisoner at the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942 and sent to Changi Camp. Fortunately, only two weeks before on 31 January 1942, his wife and son were evacuated. He was sent to the Thai/Burma railway on 27 October 1942 working out of several camps - Kinsao, Kanburi, Kanu and Upper Kanu including the now infamous 'Hellfire Pass'. He was moved to Tamuang in June 1944 and then on to River Valley camp in Singapore, where he was in charge of '77 Party'. On 4 September 1944 he embarked on the hell ship, Kachidoki Maru, which was torpedoed and sunk 8 days later, on 12 September, by the USS Pampanito. He was picked up by an oil tanker and was transported to Keelung, Formosa. From there he went on to Moji, Tokyo and Sakata, Japan, where, as the POW Administrative Officer, he created and maintained a register of POWs and their next of kin, and, at the same time he also recorded details of the clothing and rations supplied to the Camp.

During his time in captivity he contracted various ailments - scabies, malaria, large tropical leg ulcers and septic feet.

Following the surrender of the Japanese, Bill was sent to recuperate in Vancouver by sea on HMCS Prince Robert, before sailing home to Southampton, in November 1945, on the RMS Queen Mary. In July 1946 he was awarded a Mention in Despatches for services during the Malayan Campaign.

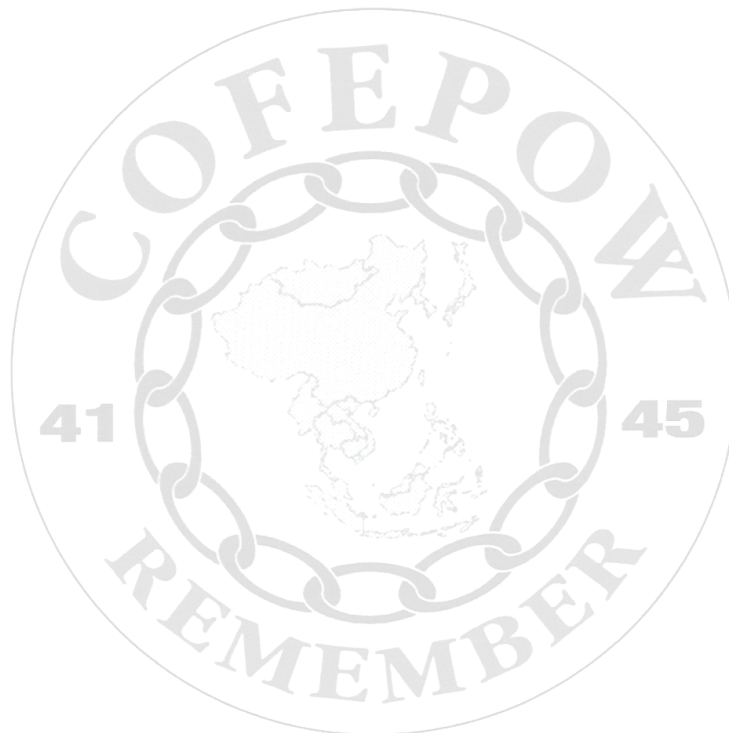


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Civilian life after return:

Bill left the army and became a schoolteacher, before re-joining the Royal Army Education Corps, in the rank of Captain. Finally retiring from the army in 1957 he returned to teaching until retirement in 1968.

Sadly, Bill passed away on 24 February 1973, aged 71.



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