

ROBERTSON Richard James

Name: Richard James Robertson

Born: 27 August 1918

Rank: Private

Service Number: 5773330

Regiment: 6th Battalion, Royal
Norfolk Regiment

Died: 31 July 1997



Pre War:

Richard was born in Norwich, Norfolk on 27 August 1918 and grew up with his two sisters in a house, in a yard called River Lane - they had very loving but poor parents. He left school at the age of 14 to start work in a boot and shoe factory called Sexton and Everards.

In 1938 he joined the 4th Royal Norfolk Regiment Territorials.

Wartime experience:

In August 1939, he went on camp to Falmouth. On his return from camp a new Regiment was formed, consisting of the 4th Royal Norfolks and conscripts, becoming the 6th Battalion Royal Norfolk Regiment. At this point Richard left work and became a full-time member of the Regiment and trained as a bren gunner. The Regiment was on alert to go to Ireland to quell an uprising but nothing became of it. He was then billeted around the coast and airfields of Norfolk to act in a defence force against possible invasion from Hitler's forces. The Regiment trained in Wales and Scotland, before fire watching at the Liverpool docks. Richard was posted to Singapore, arriving there via Scotland, Nova Scotia and Cape Town, then on to Yong Peng, Malaya. The Battalion patrolled jungle areas and ended up around the Alexandra Hospital, Singapore, where they surrendered and were marched back to Changi Barracks.

Richard worked on the Thai/Burma railway where he received an injury from a Japanese soldier, which became ulcerated and put him in hospital and luckily the medics treated and saved his leg. Later he suffered with malaria. He went back on the railway and worked on the section to the Three Pagodas Pass up to Infal Plains, where Burma joins India.



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Richard ended up in camp 211, where the prisoners were made to dig a trench around the perimeter, which they all thought was for their burial, after they had been massacred, as the guards knew that the POW rescue was imminent.

Returning from a work party on 9 August 1945, the prisoners were told that the war was all over and the Japanese and Korean guards were fleeing. Two weeks later Lady Mountbatten arrived and gave a talk to the men and said it was all a terrible mistake, them being there.

Richard returned home on a hospital ship, to Liverpool, weeks after the main body of men were returned. No band playing, no banners but a new uniform and medals. When he arrived back in Norwich, just a quiet return – as though nothing had happened, until he got to his home and family, where tears flowed. Sadly, his mother, Amelia, had died while he was a POW.

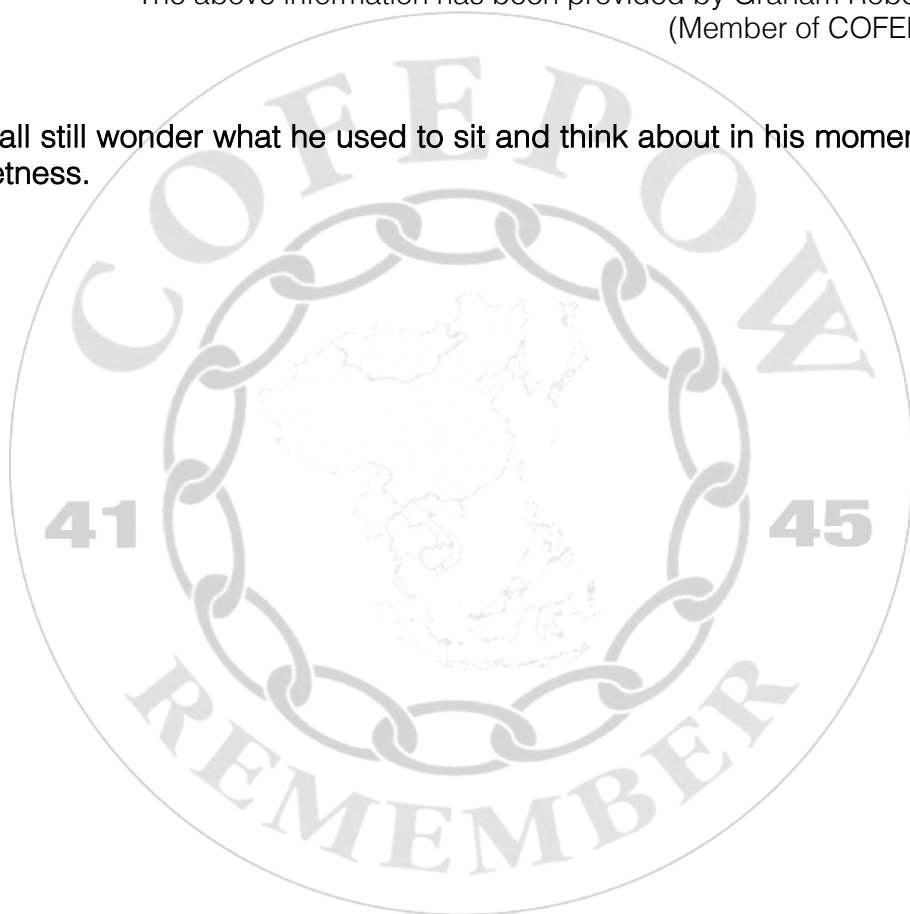
Civilian life after return:

After a while, he met Margaret Folkard, they married and went on to have four children – Keith, Christopher, Graham and Karen.

Sadly, Richard died on 31 July 1997. He was a wonderful husband, father and grandfather.

The above information has been provided by Graham Robertson
(Member of COFEPOW)

Graham – **We all still wonder what he used to sit and think about in his moments of quietness.**



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