

BENNETT Gordon Matthew Reid

Name: Gordon Matthew Reid
Bennett

Born: 5 February 1911

Rank: Captain, Chaplain

Service Number: 90113

Regiment: Royal Army Chaplains
Department

Died: 16 December 1989



Pre-War:

Gordon was born on the Isle of Whithorn, Scotland and educated at Stirling High School, and St. Andrews University where he gained an MA and BD. He was Assistant Minister in St. Mungo's Parish Church, Alloa. He was living in Edinburgh when he enlisted in May 1939.

Wartime experience:

Gordon enlisted in the Royal Army Chaplains Department, he served in Catterick before setting sail to Penang, Malaya on 2 August 1940. It is thought that he was attached to the Seaforth Highlanders. On board the ship to Malaya, he was asked to conduct the marriage of an officer whilst still at sea and when the ship docked in Cape Town, Gordon was first ashore to register the marriage. The ships' Captain loaned his cabin to the newlyweds for their honeymoon. Gordon later read that this was the only marriage conducted at sea, during the war! He was posted to Hong Kong with Royal Scots Fusiliers, now known as the Royal Scots, 1st Regiment of Scotland. Gordon was stationed at the Victoria Barracks and during the battle for Hong Kong, he assisted in advanced dressing stations and Hospitals, buried the dead, and when he asked a Matron how best he could help, she told him, 'learn to make beds'. Then Hong Kong fell on 25 December 1941 (Christmas Day) he was interned in Shamshuipo POW Camp, transferring to Argyll Street POW Camp on 18 April 1942, where he was the only Chaplain conducting services. Gordon returned to Shamshuipo camp on 22 June 1944 where he remained until liberation on 9 September 1945. He returned to Liverpool on board Empress of Australia, sadly conducting burials of POWs on the way, for those not as lucky as he to make it home. He was twice mentioned in despatches.

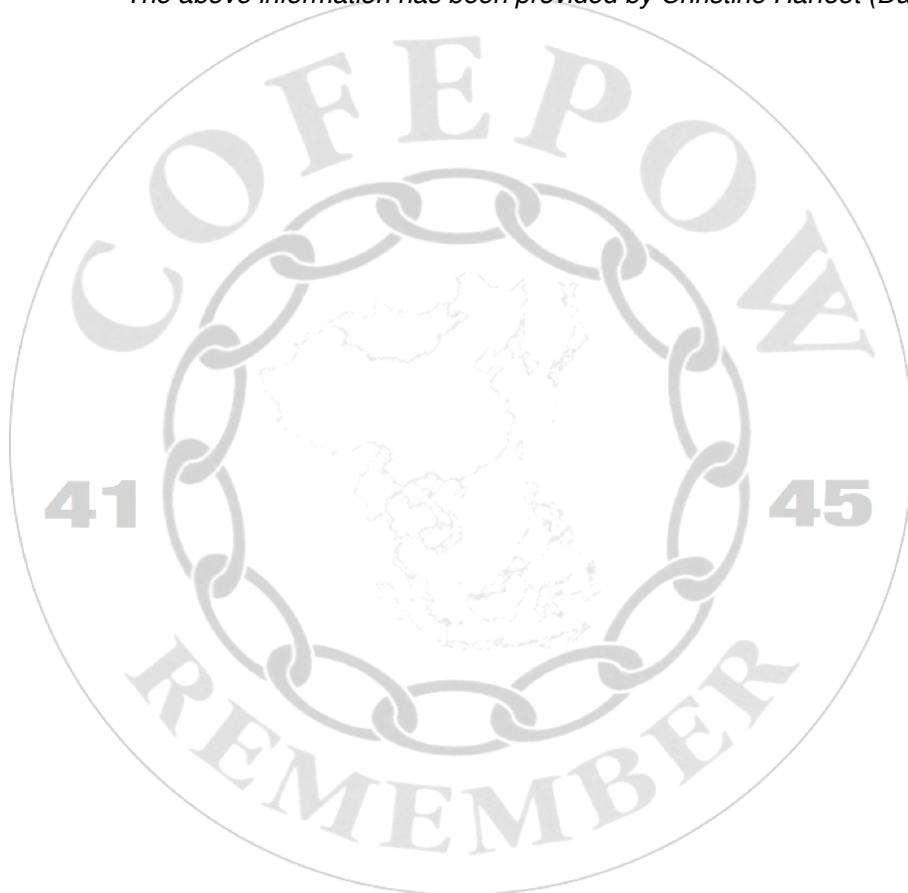


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Post War:

While he was being repatriated, Gordon met his future bride, Lydia McLellan McLean on Corby Railway Station and they married on 9 October 1946 at Clackmannan Parish Church. Following his return to the UK, Gordon continued to serve in the army and was posted to Ayr in Scotland before being sent to Palestine. There he drove a mobile church to Moascar, Ismailia, Egypt where Lydia joined him. They travelled together to Catterick, Singapore, Fort George, Inverness-shire, Germany, Dundonald Ayrshire, Edinburgh. He became a QHC (Queens Honorary Chaplain). Whilst in Singapore he travelled to Hong Kong to attend the opening of Sai Wan cemetery. He returned to Hong Kong in 1965 with fellow POWs and General Maltby, where he took services at Sai Wan cemetery. Gordon also took part in the service at the Hong Kong Cenotaph. He then became a Parish Minister in Alness, Ross-shire, serving in the Army Cadet Force. On retiring to Edinburgh, he attended Royal Scots POW reunions, and Argyll Street POW reunions. Gordon also took a Thanksgiving Service in the Chapel of The Royal Hospital, Chelsea - 30 years after their release. Sadly, Gordon passed away on 16 December 1989 at the age of 78.

The above information has been provided by Christine Harfoot (Daughter)



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