

BRIDGEMAN CHRISTOPHER

Name: Christopher Bridgeman

Born: 5 October 1920

Rank: Sapper

Service Number: 5828539

Unit/Regiment: 287 Field Company
Royal Engineers

Died: 26 February 1992



Pre-War:

Chris was born in Suffolk and had 2 sisters, one older and one younger. He trained to be a carpenter and then joined the Suffolk Regiment of the Territorial Army in May 1939.

Wartime experience:

After war was declared he transferred to the Royal Engineers 287 Field Company, initially he was based in Suffolk and Norfolk and was involved in building bunkers and improving the coastal defences.

His Company was then posted to Scotland to help build a tank training range, it was at this time that he met the lady that would become his wife.

As part of the 18th Division they sailed from Liverpool in Oct 1941, not knowing where they were going, they travelled to Nova Scotia, then Trinidad, Cape Town and India before ending up in Singapore in January 1942. They then travelled overland into Malaya to try to stop the advance of the Japanese army by destroying bridges. He was reported Missing in Action on 26 January 1942, his next of kin received a letter from the War office on 11 February and it wasn't until 20 April 1943 that his family received a telegram confirming that he had been captured and was a POW

Shortly afterwards on 25 April he was on train 8, part of 'F' Force that travelled to Ban Pong before disembarking and marching for 14 days through the jungle in appalling conditions to the camp at Songkurai where they arrived in mid-May. He then worked on the railway until that section was completed in November 1943, he was then evacuated by train to the 'F' Force hospital Camp in Kanchanaburi. He didn't stay there long and returned to Singapore in December 1943 where he remained for the rest of the war.

Civilian life after return:

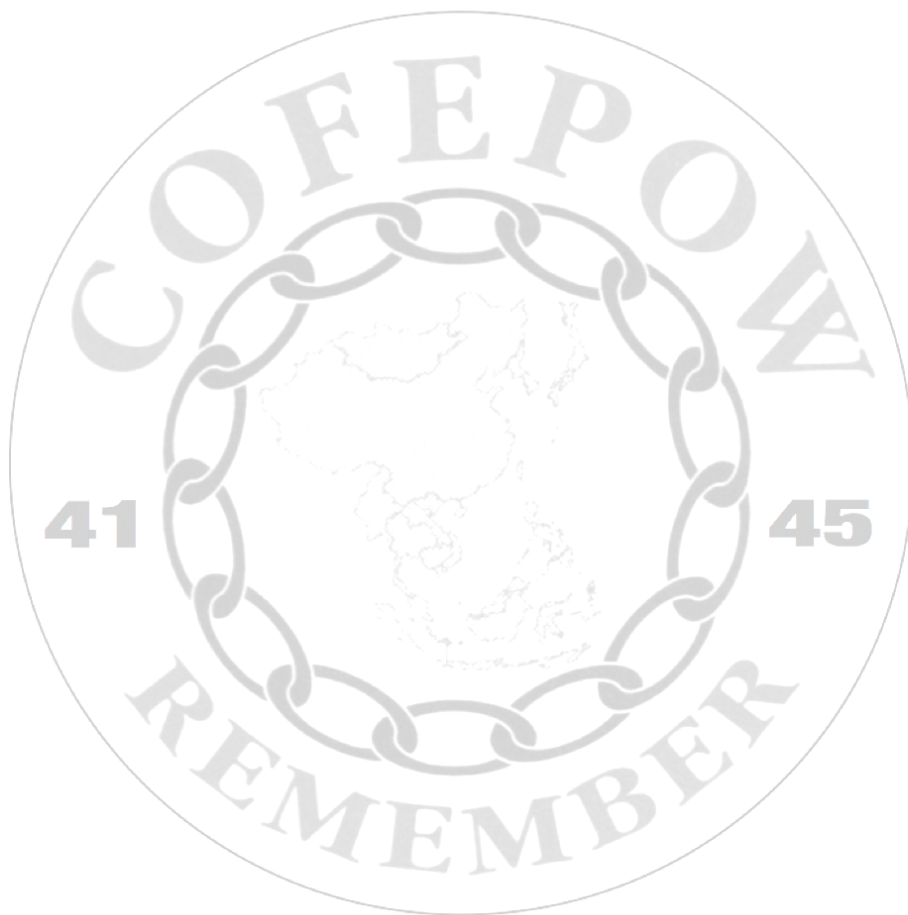
Chris returned to Liverpool onboard the M.S. Sobieski in Dec 1945; while he had been away his sisters had maintained contact with the lady he had met in Scotland and they resumed contact.



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On 23 January 1946 they were married in Scotland, they then returned to live in Suffolk a few hundred yards from the house he had lived in before the war. Chris returned to his job as a carpenter and enjoyed playing crib in the local pub. The first son arrived in 1947 followed by another in 1949 and yet another some years later in 1961. Sadly, Chris passed away on 26 February 1992 at the age of 71.

The above information and wording has been provided by Ian Bridgeman (son)



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