

CONNOLLY Henry

Name: Henry Connolly

Born: 20 September 1917

Rank: Gunner

Service Number: 950931

Unit/Regiment: 137th Field
Regiment, Royal Artillery

Died: 25 May 1971



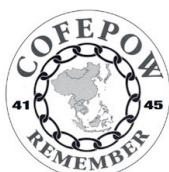
Wartime experience:

Harry, as he was known, enlisted on 5 March 1940 and after training at Oulton Park (May 1940), Liverpool (June 1940) and Larkhill (November 1940), the Regiment journeyed to the 'Port of Embarkation', Liverpool. On 30 September 1941 they sailed by convoy on the Dominion Monarch, reaching Singapore on 28 November 1941 and entrained for Kajang, South-East of Kuala Lumpur.

Harry was captured on 28 March 1942 at Ulu Klang, Kuala Lumpur following the fall of Singapore. He was in Pudu Gaol from April to September 1942 under Colonel Hartigan. From October 1942 to February 1945, he was in Nong Pladuk, Thailand under Colonel Toosey and from February to August 1945, he was in Ubon, Thailand under Major Smyth.

Harry was a professional musician before the war, so he took on the role of musical director of the Harbour Lights Concert parties, which helped to keep up the morale in the camps. He was widely known as "Ace" Connolly and he had a band called The Kings of Swing. He was also known for his playing of "The Last Post", which happened often when burying comrades and also as a warning when air raids started. On one occasion, Harry got a split lip when a guard hit him with a rifle butt. He was unable to sound the air raid warning which resulted in the guard being beaten by his own Sergeant Major for putting the camp in danger.

After the Japanese surrender, Harry left Ubon on 24 August 1945 on a train bound for Bangkok. On 26 August he was flown to Rangoon and on 11 October he boarded the SS Orbita, landing in Liverpool on 9 November. He weighed under six stone on his return to the UK.



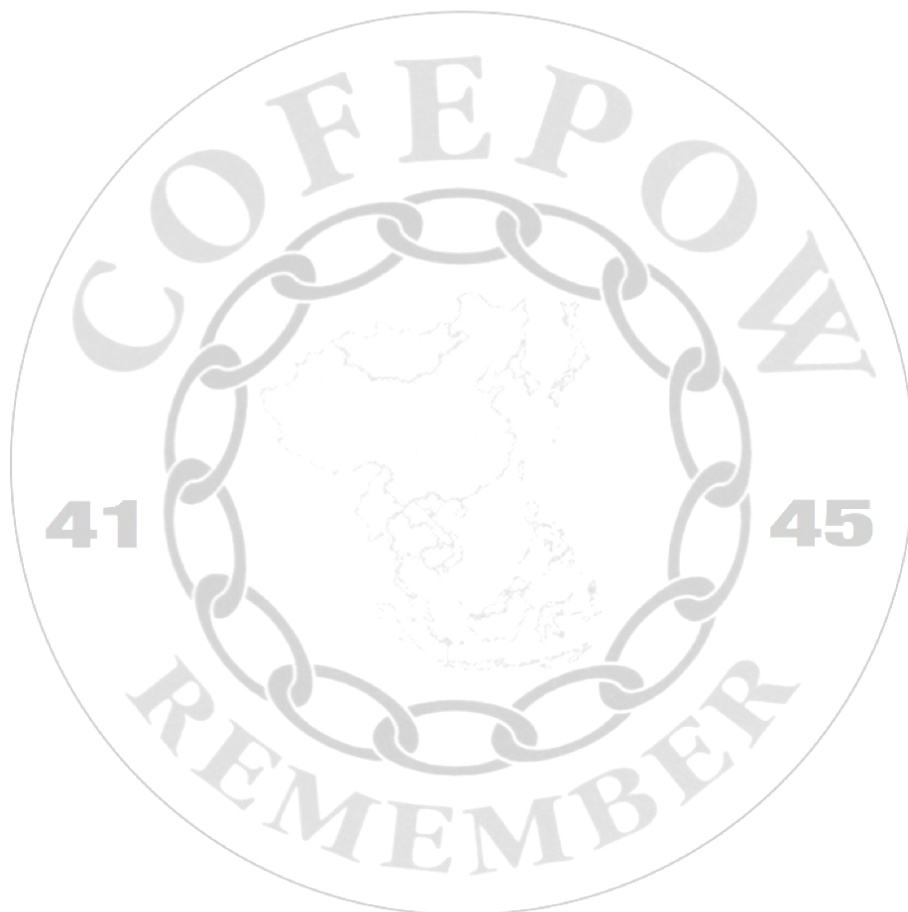
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Civilian life after return:

He married in 1946 and went back to being a professional musician. Later he became a grocer and then a publican in Manchester.

Sadly, Harry died on 25 May 1971, at the early age of 53, leaving a widow and two children. His early death was no doubt accelerated by his time in the camps as a POW.

The above wording and text has been provided by Chris Connolly (Son)



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