

COOK Henry Robins

Name: Henry Robins Cook

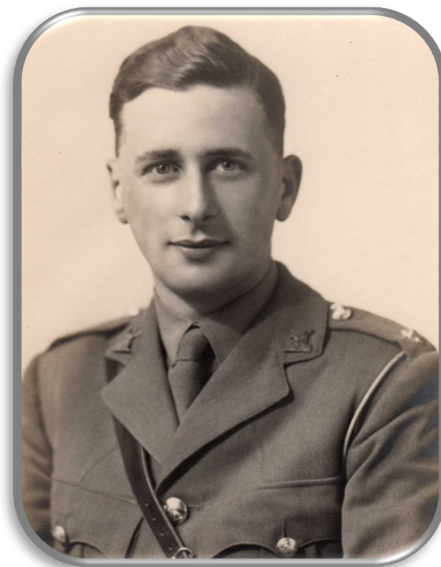
Born: 28 March 1917

Rank: Lieutenant

Service Number: 180082

Unit/Regiment: 5th Battalion, 18th
Division, Royal Norfolk Regiment

Died: October 1980



Pre-War:

Henry was known as Robins to all his family and friends - except Army friends, who called him Harry. He was born, the son of a farmer, in March 1917, in Little Snoring, Norfolk. He was educated at Paston Grammar School, North Walsham and, on leaving, joined the Norwich Union, in Norwich. He enjoyed playing hockey, tennis & shooting and was a member of the territorial army.

Wartime experience:

Robins enlisted as a member of the 6th Battalion Royal Norfolk Regiment on 27 April 1939 was part of 'F' Force at the Britannia Barracks in Norwich and was later transferred to the 5th Battalion as a lieutenant at Kings Lynn, in 1941. He was sent for training in Castle Douglas, Scotland and then moved to Marbury Hall, Northwich. Robins and the 5th Battalion left the UK in October 1941 arriving in Singapore on 14 January 1942. He was immediately sent to Malaya with the 5th, to just north of Johor, but they were quickly cut off by the Japanese and were returned to Singapore by the navy. They then spent 3 days of heavy fighting in the Chinese cemetery, before they were ordered to surrender when Singapore fell on 15 February 1942. Robins, together with his men, were transferred to Changi but, after 2 weeks, were moved to a tented camp in Farrer Park, working for the Japanese. They moved on to Serangoon Road and back to Changi in December 1942 until May 1943. Robins went with 'F' Force up country, by train, in May 1943 and then on to Kanburi (now Kanchanaburi), Banpong and others, before their first settled camp just north of Ta So, where they were involved with the building of the ¾ mile long Whang Pho viaduct. Their next stop was Hintok (Kinsaiyok) to make a cutting through rocks and then to Tha-Khanun.



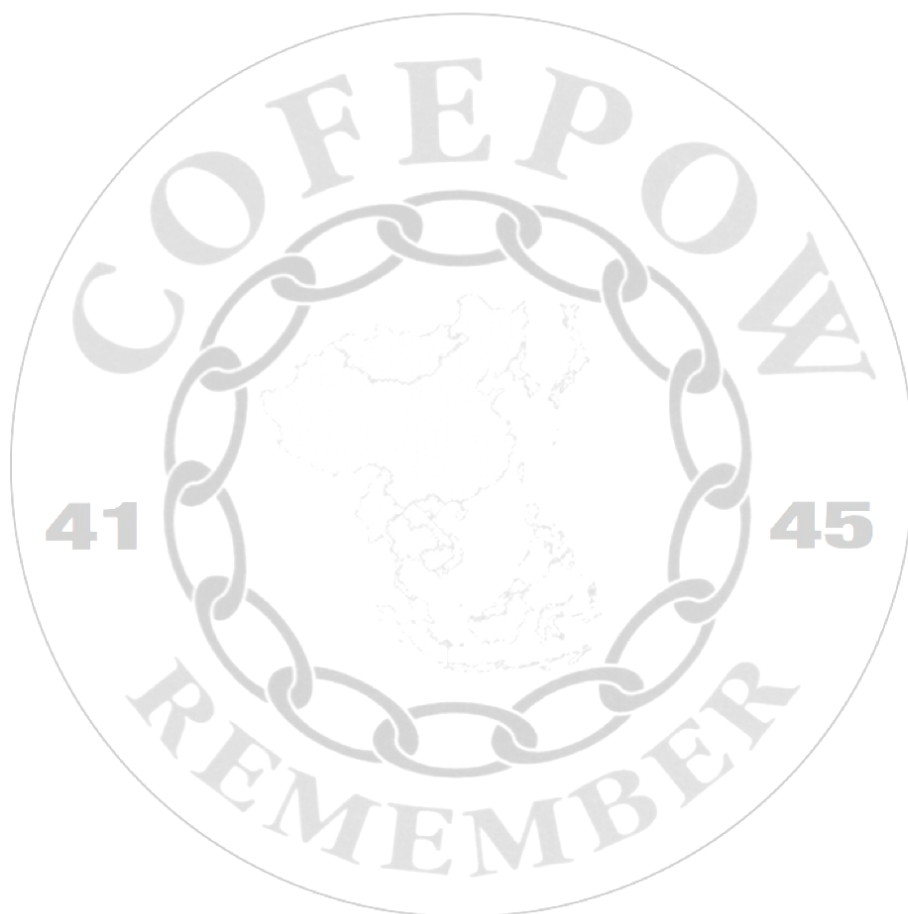
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In January 1944, they passed through Kanburi on their way back to Singapore, where they were held in Sime Road until May 1944. They were returned to Changi to spend the rest of their captivity camped outside the jail until the Japanese surrendered. Although Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945, it was another 3 weeks before the men were released and they finally made their way home to Liverpool on the Polish ship Sobinski arriving in October 1945.

Civilian life after return:

Robins returned to the Norwich Union and opened their Fakenham branch in 1950 where he stayed until he retired and then he helped DW Moore Insurance open their branch in Fakenham. Robins married his childhood friend Doe and they had 2 daughters and 4 grandchildren. Living in Fakenham he could no longer play hockey but continued to shoot and took up bowls. He played both indoor and outdoor games to a high standard and, on one occasion, reached the English triples EBA finals, as well as being Chairman of Norfolk indoor bowls and President of the Norfolk EBA. He was an early member of the Rotary club and was very involved with the Fakenham branch of FEPOW.

Sadly, Robins died in October 1980 at the age of 63.



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