

GUY Robert

Name: Robert Guy

Born: 18 July 1921

Rank: Aircraftsman 1st Class

Service Number: 992989

Unit/Regiment: AAF 153 MU Far
East Command, RAF

Died: 12 October 2001



Pre-War:

Robert was the eldest of 6 children born to Andrew and Mary Guy in Cambuslang, Scotland. He left school at 13 years old and worked in an iron foundry despite his school making a case to his parents for him, as an academically able child to stay on at school. His parents could not support this, so there was no choice in the matter. He left the family home and went to live with an aunt and uncle in Dennyloanhead whose contact details appear on his war documentation. At the age of 18 he enlisted for the war. After the war he often recalled someone coming into his UK training camp and asking for volunteers to go to the Far East-he didn't really know what he was signing up for. He volunteered. He often said that 'he rued that day.' The biggest mistake of his life.

Wartime experience:

15-Apr-40 Date of enlistment (age 18)

Initial Training and Deployment

3 RC (No. 3 Reception Centre), Padgate, Lancashire

6 RC (No. 6 Reception Centre), School of Technical Training, RAF Hednesford

10-Oct-40 103 Squadron (arrival)

29-Aug-41 Far East

04-Nov-41 Training Camp, RAF Seletar, Singapore (arrival date 1)

31-Dec-41 Training Camp, RAF Seletar, Singapore (arrival date 2)

Arrival at 53 MU at Tasikmalaya on or before 8 March 1942

The 153 Maintenance Unit (153 MU), RAF Far East Command was formed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaya in June 1941.



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FEPOW Date of capture 8 March 1942

Location	From	To	Leader
Tasikmalaya, Java	08-Mar-42	01-Apr-42	Group Captain Ridgeway
Jogyakarta, Java	01-Apr-42	23-May-42	Group Captain Ridgeway
Sourabaya, Java	23-May-42	18-Apr-43	W/Cmd (Wing Commander) Groom
Haroeuku/Haruku, Ambon	04-May-43	20-Aug-44	Squadron Leader Pitts, [?] Gibson
Makassar, Batavia	05-Sep-44	04-Jan-45	W/Cmd Ra[?], FO Holland/Holroyd
Singapore [?]	11-Jan-45	15-Sep-45	Flying Officer Murray, FO Holland/Holroyd

- Prior to his capture he was involved with building 'pretend' Halifax bombers so that the Japanese aerial reconnaissance might be fooled into thinking there were more RAF aircraft than was actually the case.
- As a POW Robert was transported between islands on the infamous 'hell ships': on one of these journeys a Japanese soldier pointed out that the boats they were in had been built on the Clyde.
- Robert had a talent for languages and during his time as a POW learnt some Japanese and Dutch to a reasonable standard.

Post War:

Following the end of the war and returning home

17-Sep-45	106 PRC (Personal Reception Centre), RAF Cosford
05-Nov-45	Admitted hospital Edinburgh [Castle].
17-Nov-45	Discharged hospital Edinburgh [Castle].
11-Mar-46	113 PRC (Personal Reception Centre)
15-May-46	115 PRC (Personal Reception Centre)
24-Oct-46	Release, 101 PDC (Personal Despatch Centre), Kirkham
06-Feb-47	Effective date of release.
11-Jun-59	Discharged from Class 'G' reserves



Left: Release photo, September 1945.
Robert is bottom right



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GUY Robert (cont . . .)

Robert trained as a teacher in the post-war emergency training scheme.

At one of the first London schools he worked at, he met Mary Pain who he married in 1954. Robert and Mary were very happy to move as pioneers to the brand-new Harlow New Town - where they had the choice of three 3 bedroomed houses to rent! They liked the New Town vision of high-quality housing for all and the green spaces-away from the poor housing, slums and bombed out cities. They both took up teaching posts in the town and subsequently had 3 children.

Robert was very involved with, and committed to the town and local community, and as a committed socialist served as a Labour councillor on both Harlow Town Council and Essex County Council. Whilst he agonised about the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atom bombs ending the war in the far east and therefore saving his life, he felt that looking to the future of mankind and the planet, that nuclear weapons were not the way forward. He became involved in CND - the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. He had a strong Christian faith and with Mary was also very involved in St Andrew's Methodist Church, Harlow. He served as a Methodist local preacher for over 40 years. He was very involved each year in raising money for Christian Aid. He enjoyed studying and went on to gain two diplomas in theology.

Robert began his career as a primary school teacher, then became a secondary school Religious Education teacher. He had developed his Christian faith whilst a POW and as such was able to forgive the Japanese - though he never forgot the horrors of war. He could see that the Japanese captors were following orders. Like most Japanese POWs, he rarely discussed his wartime experience with his family or others, but, on a number of occasions, he recalled when, as a POW he was ill with malaria during an inspection by Japanese officials. An officer spotted him being unwell and took him in his car to get help and medication. He saw this as a moment of humanity in the midst of his most appalling experience. Other war experiences he recalled were eating snake to add to the minimal rice they were fed each day and climbing trees for fruit. He also recalled some of the POWs making bamboo radios - which were kept hidden from their captors. Robert featured in the BBC Songs of Praise with Cliff Mitchelmore on 10 November 1985 at St. Nicholas' Cathedral in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Robert talked about his wartime experience and ability to forgive. Robert and Mary joined with local and national FEPOW activities. In later life Robert swam every day to keep fit - gaining an award for swimming 1,000 miles...over several years! Robert and Mary remained in Harlow for the rest of their lives, and both died in the town.



Sadly, Robert died on 12 October 2001 at the age of 80.

The above information and wording has been provided by Mary Evans (daughter)



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