

RUTHERFORD TOM

Name: Tom Rutherford

Born: 10 December 1917

Rank: Fusilier

Service Number: 4274033

Unit/Regiment: 9th Battalion
Royal Northumberland Fusiliers

Died: 4 November 1986



Pre-War:

Tom was born and brought up with his younger brother, in the tiny village of Mindrum in North Northumberland. Their parents worked on the local farm. In 1936, they joined the Territorial Army then, following the outbreak of war, they were called up to serve in Z Company of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers (RNF).

Wartime experience:

In April 1940, both Tom and Bert, as part of the 9th Battalion RNF, joined the British Expeditionary Force in Northern France. They were involved in action against German troops before being evacuated from Dunkirk at the end of May.

On 30 October 1941, after a period of training for desert warfare, the brothers set sail for the Middle East on the MV Warwick Castle. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, on 7 December 1941, the destination changed and, on the 5 February 1942, they arrived in Singapore on the SS Felix Roussel. Tom and Bert were captured by the Japanese 10 days later on the 15 February when Singapore fell. Tom was taken to a prison camp near Keppel Harbour and made to work for the Japanese on the docks. During this time, he was very ill with dysentery and vitamin deficiency. Regardless of this, in May 1943, he and Bert were put on the 'Hell Ship', the Wales Maru, which took them to Japan where they were imprisoned in Fukuoka Camp 15B (later renamed as 9D, then 6D). This camp was located near Mizumaki on the southern island of Kyushu. Until liberation in August 1945, the brothers were made to work in deep, dangerous mines for the Takamatsu Coal Mining Company. They both survived their captivity and returned home safely at the end of the war, although their mother barely recognised them when they arrived in Mindrum.



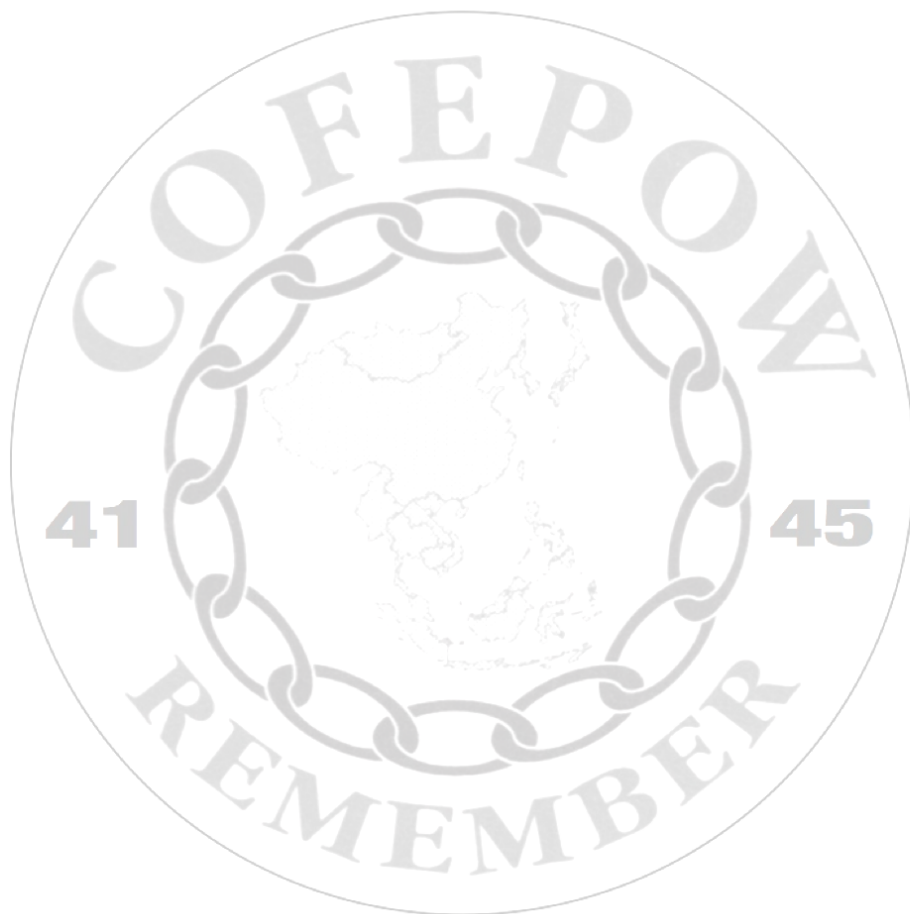
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Post War:

Tom married Ann in 1950 and they settled in Kelso, Roxburghshire, for the rest of their lives. Tom was a signalman at the local railway station and, when it closed, he worked in a bakery alongside Ann. They didn't have any children, but Tom enjoyed spending time with his nephew, John, introducing him to the world of rugby at the many 'sevens' competitions in the Border towns.

Sadly, Tom died on the 4 November 1986, at the age of 68.

The above wording and information has been provided by John Rutherford (Nephew)



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