BRADFORD Edward Charles,



Private, 5834551,
5th Batt., Suffolk Regiment
Date of Death: Friday, 13th February 1942
Killed in Action
Cemetery: Kranji War Cemetery
Age: 30 years

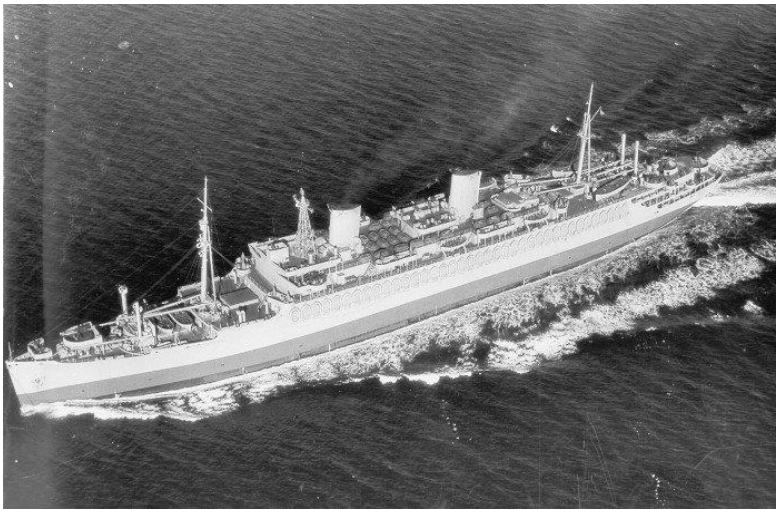
Edward Charles Bradford was born on 10th January 1913 at 4 Peas Hill, the son of Grace Bradford. In the autumn of 1939, he married Violet Nellie Ridgewell and they settled at 6 Nunn's Yard. Edward was working as a bricklayer's labourer. Violet, then 21, was the daughter of George Herbert Ridgewell, from Haverhill and his wife Katherine Bessie Eppy who was from Steeple Bumpstead. George Herbert Ridgewell was brought up in one of the Spring Cottages just beyond Motts Field and was employed as a farm labourer.

Edward Charles, like so many other local men in 1939, would have responded to the call to double the Territorial Army. He joined B Company of the 5th Battalion Suffolk Regiment.

Initial training took place at North Walsham with the first few months spent in the Norfolk area performing guard duties at river bridges; coastal defence in the sand dunes of Hemsby and also in and around stately homes.

The unit was then moved on to other locations, being stationed at Fulbourn near Cambridge, then to Hawick, Scotland; Liverpool; Isle of Anglesey; and finally Leominster in Herefordshire.

In early October 1941, whilst at Leominster, they were informed that they would be going overseas, possibly for service in the Middle East. On 27th October they made their way by train to Liverpool Docks, where they embarked on a troopship named the 'Reina del Pacifico' which, as a part of the 18th Division Convoy, sailed for what was to prove a great misadventure. On reaching Halifax, Nova Scotia, the troops disembarked from the 'Reina del Pacifico' to board an American troopship named the 'Wakefield' (photo above), which was once an ocean-going cruise liner. Compared to the previous ship this one was magnificent, everything about it being first class, the accommodation and food was excellent. On the 9th December, the convoy docked at Cape Town still under the impression that they were due for action in the Middle East, but on learning that Pearl Harbour had been attacked by the Japanese, they found themselves diverted to Singapore instead.



(photo: USS Wakefield)

Arriving in Singapore on 29th January 1942, the 5th Battalion Suffolk Regiment were immediately involved in fierce fighting defending the north-east of the Island, an extensive front of some open beach and long stretches of mangrove swamps.

On the 13th of February 1942, barely 2 weeks after arriving, Edward Charles Bradford, aged 30, was killed in action.



He was buried the following day by two members of the Australian Infantry Force, Padre Islair 2/26 battalion and Lt G A Veitch, 2/Co Field Ambulance.

His final resting place is in Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore.



It is thought that Edward and Violet had a son, Kenneth who was born at about the same time that his father died in 1942 so when Edward left the previous October he and Violet would have been looking forward to the arrival of their first child, a son he was never to see.

Violet did not remarry and lived locally, we believe in Steeple Bumpstead, until her death in 1995 aged 76.