RADFORD, Stephen Henry



Private, 5833097,
2nd Batt., Cambridgeshire Regiment
Place of Birth: St Ives
Lost at Sea as a POW: 21st September 1944
Commemorated: Singapore Memorial
Aged: 27 years

Stephen Henry Radford was born on 1st July 1917 in St Ives, the elder son of Richard Radford and his wife Minnie formerly Aldridge. He had three sisters, Gladys born in 1910, Doreen born in 1920 and Olive born in 1921 and a brother Eric born in 1918.



Stephen's mother, Minnie, (photo right) was born in Rotherhithe, London in 1887 the daughter of a grocer but according to census returns she was brought up in Great Yarmouth living with her grandparents who also ran a grocer's store.

Stephen's father Richard, born in 1881 in St Ives, was also a grocer, who brought his family to 13 Queen Street, Haverhill in the 1920s. Sadly, Richard was to die in 1928 at the age of 47. The family continued to live at 13 Queen Street for at least six years before Minnie moved to Boyton Hall Cottages.

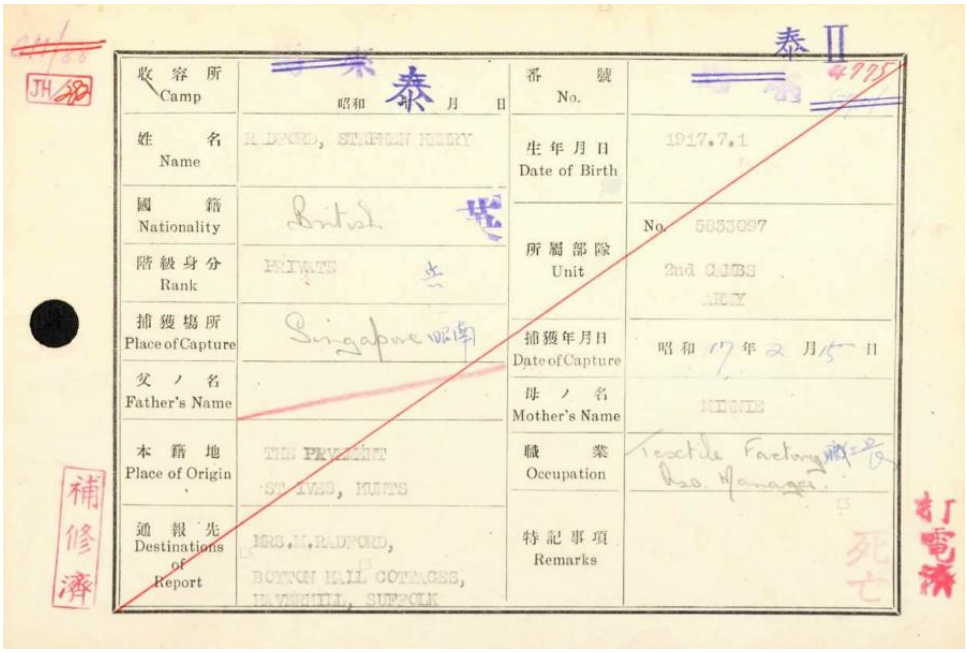
Like so many boys of his age, Stephen was a member of the 1st Haverhill Scout Troop. On leaving school, he found employment as an assistant manager in the Textile Department at Chauntry Mills.

Stephen enlisted at the start of the war, joining the 2nd Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment. Following the Fall of Singapore in February 1942 he found himself a prisoner of war of the Imperial Japanese Army.

Back home his mother waited anxiously for news of her son and seventeen months later, on 1st July 1943, The Echo reported that she had received a postcard stating that he was a prisoner of war. She had previously had no news other than official intimation that he was missing following the Battle for Singapore. It was apparently obvious from the card, although no address was given, that Pte Radford was in Japanese hands.

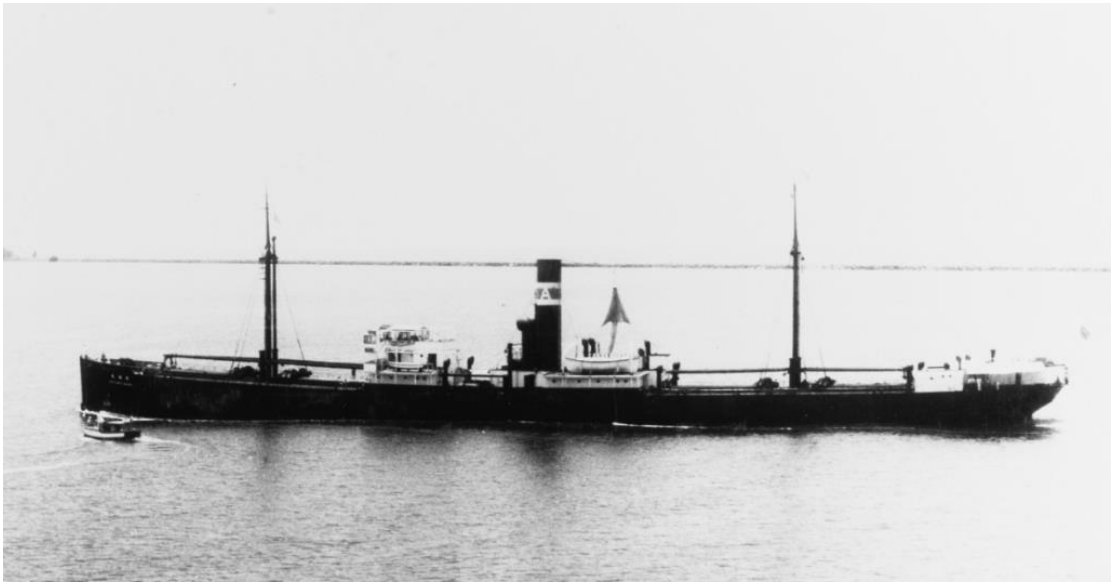
A year later, on 15 July 1944, the Echo reported that Stephen's mother, who had moved to 106 Withersfield Road, had received two undated postcards from him. As these

postcards arrived together at her new address it was presumed that at least some mail from home was getting through to the POWs.



收容所 Camp	昭和 泰 月 日
姓名 Name	R.RADFORD, STEPHEN HENRY
國籍 Nationality	British
階級身分 Rank	PRIVATE
捕獲場所 Place of Capture	Singapore 昭南
父ノ名 Father's Name	
本籍地 Place of Origin	THE PRIORY ST IVES, HUNTS
通報先 Destinations of Report	MRS.M.RADFORD, BOUNDS HALL COTTAGES, HAVERHILL, SUFFOLK
番號 No.	
生年月日 Date of Birth	1917.7.1
所屬部隊 Unit	No. 5933097 2nd GUNS ARMY
捕獲年月日 Date of Capture	昭和 17 年 2 月 15 日
母ノ名 Mother's Name	HANNAH
職業 Occupation	Textile Factory Asso. Manager.
特記事項 Remarks	

Stephen obviously survived the terrible conditions on the railway as he was one of the so called ‘fit’ POWs who were brought back to Singapore in October 1943 after its completion. He was possibly on his way to work in the Japanese coal mines when he was loaded onto the Hofuku Maru, the cargo ship that left Singapore on 4 July 1944.



It was in a convoy consisting of 10 ships - 5 of which carried POWs. There were about 5000 POWs in total, making this the largest group of POWs shipped at one time during the war.

The convoy left Singapore making for Borneo. There, the Hofuku Maru and another ship (not carrying POWs), dropped out to wait for another convoy before continuing to the Philippines arriving on July 19th.

The POWs on board suffered terribly from disease, hunger and thirst and finally a number were removed to the Bilibid Prison hospital in Manila. These men were replaced by a similar number from the Philippines making a total of 1,289 British and Dutch prisoners of war on board.

On September 20th, a convoy of 11 ships including the Hofuku Maru, which was the only one carrying POWs, sailed from Manila for Formosa. The ship carried no markings indicating that it carried prisoners of war. The following day, at 10:35 am, the planes from the USS Hornet attacked the Hofuku Maru and before the day was finished the entire convoy had been sunk by more than 100 American planes.

About 249 of the POWs either swam to shore or were picked up by the Japanese. 1,047 of them died. Stephen Henry Radford was one of those who perished on 21 September 1944, aged 27. Also on board with Stephen was another Haverhill man, Clifford Buttle, who also lost his life.

Both Stephen Henry Radford and Clifford Buttle are remembered with honour on the Singapore Memorial.



RADFORD Stephen Henry of Boyton Hall Cottages Haverhill **Suffolk** died 21 September 1944 on war service Probate **Ipswich** 23 January to Wilfrid Llenuf Funnell textile factory manager. Effects £215 12s. 2d.