# TAYLOR, Ronald,




**Private, 5828403,**
**5th Battalion, Suffolk Regiment**
**Place of Birth: Little Wratting**
**Died in Captivity: 7th May 1943**
**Cemetery: Kanchanaburi War Cemetery**
**Aged: 23 years**

**Ronald Taylor**'s father, David Taylor, was born in Barnardiston. In 1911, aged 17, he was employed as a farm labourer, like his father and elder brother. By the time David married Kate Mayes in 1915, he was a private in the 5th Suffolk Regiment living in Bury St Edmunds while Kate, who was born in Hundon, was living in Little Wratting. Their second son, Ronald, was born on 26 February 1920.

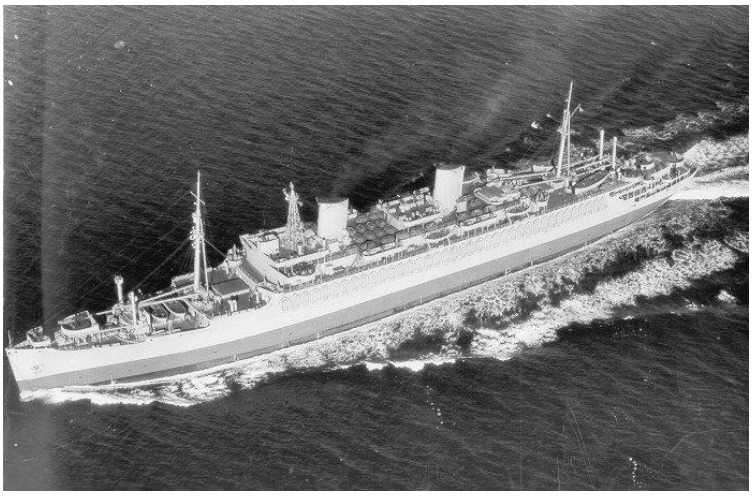
It is not known when Ronald's father left the army but by 1938 the family were living at Chapel Farm Cottages, Little Wratting.

On 16 May 1939 Ronald, aged 19, followed in his father's footsteps and enlisted in 'D' Company, 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

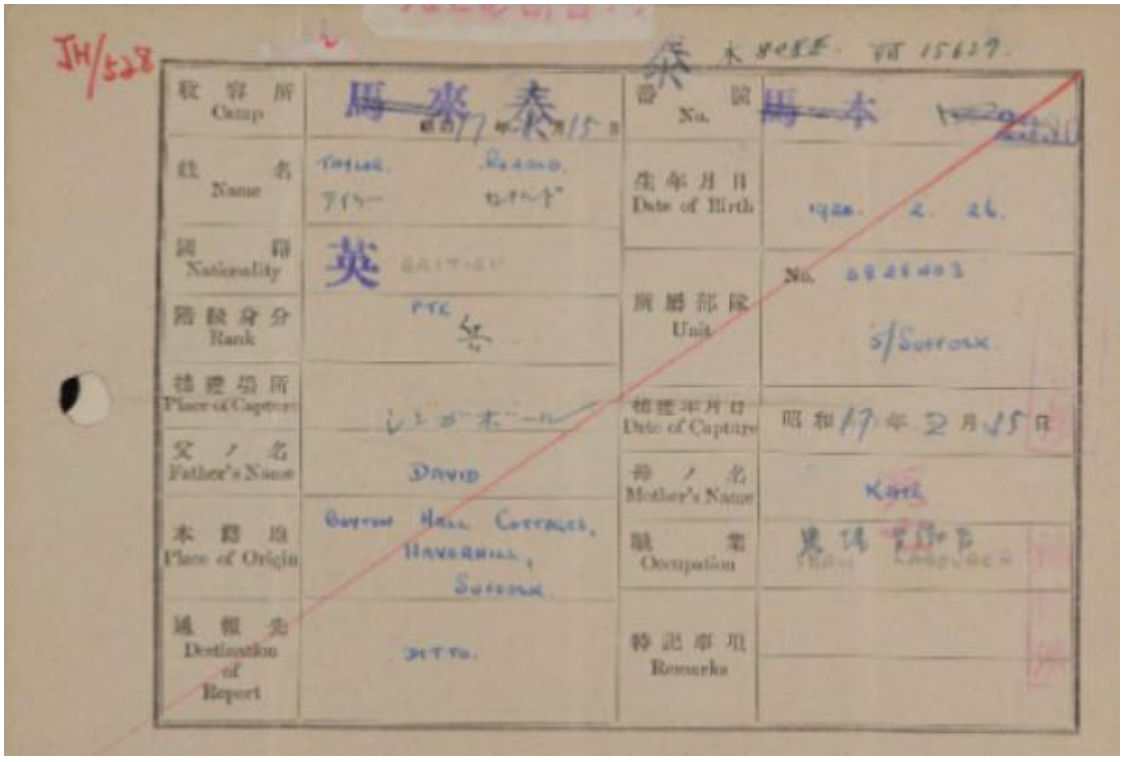


troops disembarked from the 'Reina del Pacifico' to board an American troopship named the 'Wakefield', which was once an ocean-going cruise liner. Compared to the previous ship this one was magnificent, everything about it being first class, the accommodation and food was excellent. On the 9th December, the convoy docked at Cape Town still under the impression that they were due for action in the Middle East, but after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour they found themselves diverted to Singapore instead.

The South West Echo of 10th April 1943 reported:

> *'Prisoner of War – Mr. and Mrs. David Taylor of Boyton Hall Cottages have received intimation from the Catholic Times, who received the news from the Vatican radio station, that their second son, Pte Ronald Taylor is a Prisoner of War in Malaya. He was reported missing in February 1942*.'

By the time that they received this notification, Ronald had been a prisoner for fourteen months.

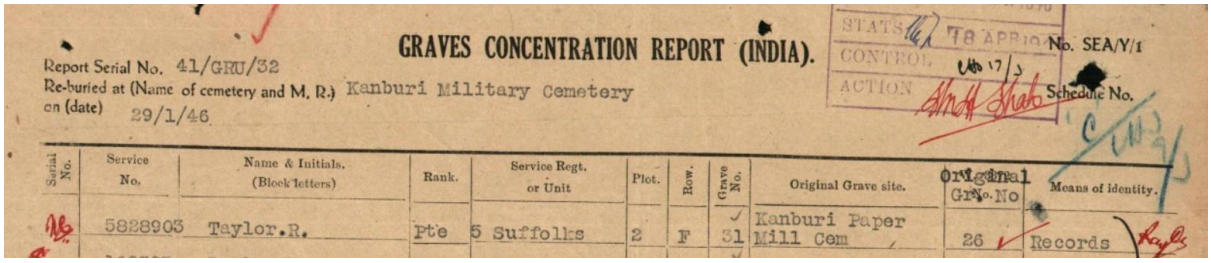



Ronald who was in Kanburi Camp, the prisoner of war base camp through which most of the prisoners passed on their way to other camps while working on the Thailand Burma Railway, succumbed to Amoebic Dysentery and died on 7th May 1943, barely two months after his parents had received the news that he was a POW.

On 3 November 1945 the South West Suffolk Echo posted

**Died in Far East.**—Mr. and Mrs. D. Taylor, of Boyton Hall Cottages, who learned a few weeks ago through a letter from a Haverhill man in the Far East that their son, Pte. R. Taylor, who had been in Japanese hands from the fall of Singapore, had died, have now received a letter from the Chaplain, now in England telling them that their son died at the base Hospital in the P.O.W. camp Kam Burie, Thailand, on May 8th, 1943. The letter gave the assurance that all that it was possible to do was done for him before he died, and that he was buried with military honours.

Ronald was originally buried in grave 26 at Kanburi Paper Mill Cemetery and re-interred in Kanchanaburi in Thailand on 29th January 1946.



GRAVES CONCENTRATION REPORT (INDIA). No. SEA/Y/1

Report Serial No. 41/GRU/32
Re-buried at (Name of cemetery and M. R.) Kanburi Military Cemetery
on (date) 29/1/46

STATS CONTROL ACTION Schedule No.

| Serial No. | Service No. | Name & Initials. (Block letters) | Rank. | Service Regt. or Unit | Plot. | Row. | Grave No. | Original Grave site. | Original Grave No. | Means of identity. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 5828903 | Taylor.R. | Pte | 5 Suffolks | 2 | F | 31 | Kanburi Paper Mill Cem | 26 | Records |

Mr. Jack Taylor of Boyton Hall Farm, Haverhill was appointed as executor of Ronald's last will and testament which was signed by Ronald on 10 January 1941. His mother Kate, also of Boyton Hall Farm, was the sole beneficiary.

This document was witnessed by Cpl A Pannell of 26 Duddery Road, Haverhill and L/Cpl Postle from Sheringham, Norfolk.



