

Private CECIL RYLAND

6028743, 4th Bn., Suffolk Regiment,
who died age 39 on 3 July 1943

Remembered with honour at the KANCHANABURI WAR CEMETERY, Thailand



ANOTHER TEWKESBURY SOLDIER MISSING.

Mr and Mrs C Ryland, of 12 Jeynes Row, Tewkesbury, have received official information, that their son, Private Cecil Ryland, of the Suffolk Regiment, has been missing in Singapore since February 15th. Private Ryland, is 32 years of age. Before joining the H M Forces, was employed by the L.M. & S. Railway Company at Hinton. This man's nephew lives at 33 Twixtbears¹; he also has a sister.

Pte. Ryland was another of the woeful list of POWs who died as a result of captivity in Japanese hands. Little information is available about his nominated battalion but the experience of the 5th Suffolks is well documented - and the two brother battalions were part of the same brigade at Singapore and so I am assuming their experience was similar.²



An old family portrait from Tom Ryland:
Cecil is middle second row;
Aunt Florence is second left back row.

They embarked at Liverpool on 27 October 1941, thinking they were bound for the Middle East. They travelled via Nova Scotia and Trinidad before arriving in Cape Town after *Pearl Harbour* on 7 December 1941. They were then re-designated via Bombay (where they trained in difficult conditions) to Singapore where they disembarked on 29 January 1942. The RAF being in the process of evacuation, the 5ths suffered the first casualties from Japanese mortars as they tried to defend the hopeless: "Now came the realisation that the 5th Battalion of The Suffolk Regiment, part of a Brigade considered to be a most efficient and well-trained fighting force, had travelled 20,000 miles simply to surrender". The job of some Suffolk POWs was

"to build a shrine on a hill on the far side of the reservoir, apparently in honour of the Japanese troops who had perished on the island". One party was sent overland to Thailand and the Burma Railway. We can only assume that **Pte. Ryland** shared this experience but was one of 13,000 POWs who died of disease, starvation and/or cruelty before its completion before Christmas, 1944.

Kanchanaburi was used as a transit camp.³

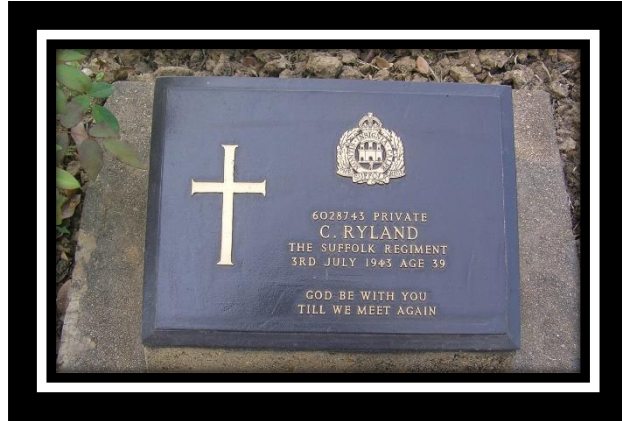
The sister mentioned in the article was **Florence (Flossie) Ryland** who lost her life as Mrs. Davis in a V2 raid on London and her death is commemorated in her then hometown of Ilford.

¹ The late Thomas Ryland

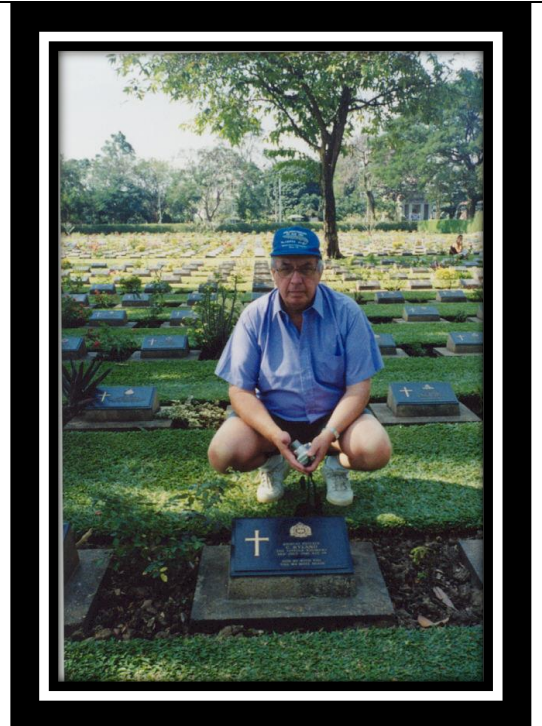
² Website: <http://www.suffolccc.gov.uk/sro/suffolkr.html#Prisoners> reveals literature about the fate of POWs in this battalion.

³ CWGC website: cemeteries.

Subsequent Research
After a Visit by the Author to Thailand in 2006



His Official CWGC Plaque



The President paying Tribute in Person