

# RILEY Walter Geoffrey

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**Name:** Walter Geoffrey Riley

**Born:** 8th August 1918

**Rank:** Signaller

**Service Number:** 2360440

**Regiment/Unit/Station:** Royal Corps of Signals

**Died:** 3rd July 1998

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## Wartime experience:

Walt Riley, or Geoff to his family, joined the army at the age of 21, before the war; after training he was shipped to Singapore from Glasgow on board the 'Empress of Japan' on 7th January 1941; captured on 15th February 1942 in Singapore and held in Changi and Bukit Timah (Kranji); after a five day, 1200 mile ride in railroad cattle wagons, arrived at Bam Pong and on to Chungkai; moved to Kanchanaburi to work on Thai/Burma railway, in a unit of two men, one with chisel, one with hammer, hacking out holes in rock for explosives to be inserted to clear obstructions; moved to Takanum and back to Chungkai until completion of the railway; May 1944 boarded hell-ship 'Hofuku Maru', for Japan; the ship was attacked and sunk by US carrier aircraft; escaped from hold of ship on to raft with three others and washed ashore on the Philippines days later; re-captured and installed in Cabanatuan POW camp, with inmates US survivors of Bataan Death March; February 1945, sprung from the camp in "Great Raid", where unit of US Rangers on MacArthur's orders attacked the camp, killed the guards and released 500 prisoners, helping them back to behind Allied lines in caribou carts, 25 miles away; shipped back to San Francisco, and across America by train to the Queen Elizabeth I in New York, and home to England by April 1945.

## Civilian life after return.

Joined the Nottingham City Police after demob, and retired with the rank of Sergeant, 25 years later. A keen sportsman, he was an active member of FEPOW, and suffered recurrent health issues as a consequence of captivity. He married his pre-war girl, Eva, when he returned and they enjoyed 53 years of marriage together.

