

BAKER Roland Frederick

Name: Roland Frederick Baker

Born: 17 January 1921

Rank: Private

Service Number: 5828330

Regiment: Suffolk Regiment

Died: 30 September 2017



Early years:

Roly, as he was called, was born in the small Suffolk village of Stowupland in 1922 and in 1930, the family moved a few miles down the road to another village Wickham Skeith. At the age of 18 he joined the Territorial Army which entailed an 18 mile round trip on his bicycle twice a week for training.

Wartime experience:

In September 1939 Roly was called up for active service and became the Company Commander's driver. In 1942 his regiment was posted to Singapore, where the 4th and 5th battalions fought in the Battle of Singapore, before being ordered to surrender to the Japanese Imperial Army. The long 31/2 years of brutal captivity finally ended when they were liberated by British forces in 1945. When he joined up he was 11 stone and when he was finally released he was 5 stone.

Civilian life after return:

Roly returned home and took up employment as a lorry driver, which he continued to do for the rest of his working life. However, he did work his way up and became manager of the transport office in Stowmarket which handled the paint distribution for ICI. 1953 he married Kathleen Birch and they had a very happy life together in Bacton. After retirement he became a jobbing gardener, which he continued to do for many years.

Sadly, Kathleen died at the age of 102 in 2014 and for the last 2 or 3 years of her life Roly was her carer – and a very good job of it he did too!



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He spent the rest of his life living alone but organised his regular weekly outings to local pubs for his lunch and became quite a local celebrity.

In April 2017, Roly was diagnosed with cancer of the colon and after a 5 week stay in hospital he returned home for the rest of his days. Sadly, he passed away on 30 September 2017.



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