
British POWs abroad

Prisoners of War - British men taken prisoner by the enemy while fighting overseas.

In June 1945, the Galloway News stated that there had been 73 men from the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright held prison in European POW camps.

38 men were in Japanese POW camps.

We do not know how many Gatehouse men are included in these numbers but here are a few:

Major Walter McCulloch, from Ardwall, was fighting in France at the beginning of the war when he was captured by the Germans. He spent most of the war in German POW camps. He was also the first Gatehouse man to return home in May 1945.

Private Colin Bennett also spent a lengthy time (5 years) in German POW camps and he too, was released in May 1945. **Corporal Stanley McCutcheon**, who had previously lived at Goatend, Gatehouse was also imprisoned in Germany for 5 years.



Colin Bennett



John McNally

After the **Battle of Arnhem** in September 1944, which was a German victory, **Private John McNally** KOSB (Airborne Division), was reported as wounded and missing. By November 1944 he was reported as a POW in German hands.

Also captured at Arnhem was **Lieutenant Corporal W Shedden** of K.O.S.B. Airborne Division. His mother Mrs R.J. Shedden lived in Neilson Square, Gatehouse. (*Galloway News* 08/07/1944)

In August 1944 **Trooper James Carson**, Recce Regiment, (*Reconnaissance*) Royal Armoured Corps was reported missing. In November the same year, the Galloway News reported that he was now a Prisoner of War in Germany. Prior to the war Jim, as he was known, lived with his sister and brother in law, Ina and Jasper Proudlock. He worked as a gardener at Cushat Wood and was 'called up' when he was 18.

By June 1945 all the British POWs in German camps were accounted for and most had returned home. A number of Gatehouse men were captured after the Fall of Singapore to the Japanese Imperial Army on February 15th 1942.

Pte Thomas Gemmell of Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders was a POW of the Japanese. His parents were Mr & Mrs Gemmell, Railway Cottages, Gatehouse Station. Their youngest son, **Alfred Gemmell**, was in the Royal Navy and was killed in 1942.

Tommy was posted missing in 1942 and was imprisoned for over 3 years in Malaya. He was one of the men who helped with construction of the notorious Burma to China railway, known as the 'Death Railway', and which was featured in the film 'Bridge over the River Kwai'.

In September 1944 he was being transported from Thailand to Japan when his transport ship sank. It was not until March 1945 that his mother learned that he had been rescued and was in Fukuoka Camp in Japan.

The Galloway News 20th October 1945 announced that Tommy had been released from prison. He had been a prisoner for over 3 years.

In April 1942 Mr & Mrs J M Shaw, Ormokenoch, were informed that their son **Gunner Robert Shaw**, of the A.A. (*anti-aircraft*) was posted as missing in Singapore. He was originally a member of the Kirkcudbright Battery of the Royal Artillery.

In September 1945 the Shaws heard that Robert, known as Bobby, was safe. He had been taken prisoner in Malaya.

James MacKenzie (Jim) , a fitter in the RAF, was also a prisoner in the Far East. He was involved in an escape attempt. During his recapture he sustained a severe head injury which caused him problems for the rest of his life.



James MacKenzie
