

William Cope
Rank Rifleman
Service No. 3247253
Date of Death 19/5/1942
Age 30
Regiment/Service Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)
2nd Battalion
Grave Reference 2. K. 4.
Cemetery Diego Suarez War Cemetery

Additional Information

Nephew of Mary Holt, of Bury.

Obituaries in Bury Times, Roll of Honour, from Aunts, Uncles and Cousins.

The town of Antsiranana lies on the western shore of Diego Suarez Bay on the north-east coast of Madagascar. The War Cemetery is off the Oranjia Road.

Historical Information

After the fall of France in 1940, the French possession of Madagascar, which lay across the Allied lines of communication in the Indian ocean, became of strategic importance to the Axis powers and, later, Japan.

In May 1942 the large naval base and harbour of Diego Suarez was seized in operation 'Ironclad', the first amphibious assault undertaken by Commonwealth forces in the Second World War. Subsequent negotiations with the French Governor-General for a peaceful occupation of the rest of the island failed and in September 1942 the triple operation, 'Stream Line Jane' led to the eventual capitulation of Vichy forces at the end of October.

After the occupation, about two thirds of the Allied war graves in Madagascar were brought into the above War Cemetery. The Cemetery contains 314 Commonwealth burials.