

## Royal British Legion Silver Jubilee

On 12<sup>th</sup> November 1960, the Willaston Branch of the Royal British Legion celebrated its Silver Jubilee with a presentation of branch history by Mr H. Pugh, then club Chairman to Brigadier Philip Toosey, then Branch President. Brigadier Toosey was the Commanding Officer of the British POWs at a certain bridge over the River Kwai. The book and film outraged former prisoners because Toosey did not collaborate with the enemy, unlike the fictional Lt Col. Nicholson.



Toosey was born in Birkenhead and educated from the age of nine to thirteen at Birkenhead School. He had a distinguished war service and remained with his men when Singapore was captured. The captured men were required to build railway bridges over the Khwae Yai to link Thai and Burmese railway lines to support the Japanese occupation of Burma. Behind the backs of the Japanese, he did everything possible to delay and sabotage the construction without endangering his men. Termites were collected to eat the wooden structures and concrete was badly mixed.

When the Japanese surrendered in August 1945, he weighed 47kg (before the war he weighed 79 jg).

After the war, he continued in the Territorial Army and also worked for veterans, becoming Presidents of the National Federation of Far East Prisoners of War. He also worked with Barings in Liverpool.