

SMITH Arthur Walter Victor

Name: Arthur Walter Victor Smith

Born: 5 April 1918

Rank: Lance Corporal

Service Number: 5570014

Unit/Regiment: 35th LAA Regiment
Royal Army Ordnance Corps

Died: 6 September 2008



Pre-War:

Arthur was born on 5 April 1918. Before the war Arthur was a lorry driver.

Wartime experience:

Arthur enlisted for World War Two on 17 January 1940 at the age of twenty-two. He served as a Lance Corporal as part of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. The Royal Army Ordnance Corps were responsible for the maintenance and repair of guns, transport and other equipment.

Arthur was attached to the 35th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. The 35th's war diary states they embarked at Gourock (Scotland) on 9 November 1941 on the SS Empress of Japan, which sailed at 23:45 on 12 November 1941 to avoid sailing on the 13th. At Durban (South Africa) the 35th were diverted from the original destination of Beira (Mozambique) and changed ships to the SS Narkunda bound for Singapore. On arrival in Singapore, the 35th provided air defence of Kallang Airfield and the Naval Base. Arthur left Singapore for Sumatra on 28 January 1942 along with part of the 6th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery. They provided defence of oil refineries at Palembang and the two airfields Pangkalan Benteng (P1) and a secret air base at Prabumulih (P2).

Palembang Airfield (P1) and the oil refineries were attacked by Japanese Paratroopers and the troops were forced to retreat to Oosthaven (Sumatra, Netherlands East Indies Port Facilities). Whilst in Java, he was employed in ground defence of the 21st Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. Arthur was captured in Java on 9 March 1942, when the Japanese invaded. The majority of the men were captured at Garoet (West Java, Indonesia) and were then moved to a camp at Tandjong Priok (North Jakarta, Indonesia).



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He left Batavia (Java) on 21 October 1942 on board the Yoshida Maru bound for Singapore arriving on 26 October 1942.

Arthur was transported from Singapore to Moji (Japan) on 29 October 1942 on one of the Japanese Hell Ships – Singapore Maru. There were around 3,000 British prisoners.

He arrived in Moji (Japan) on 26th November 1942 and was held prisoner at Fukuoka 5D Ube Camp. The camp was later renamed to Fukuoka 10B on 1 March 1943.

Control of the camp was transferred to Hiroshima 8D

On the 15 July 1945 Arthur was transferred to Hiroshima 6D as Ube was destroyed by an air raid. On the 10 August 1945 the camp was renamed Hiroshima 8B, Motoyama. Arthur was handed over to the Allied Powers on 2 September 1945 – James Robert Earle – Major J R S Earle 48th Light Anti-Aircraft Senior Officer at Motoyama. When Arthur was finally freed, he weighed just six and a half stone. He survived on half a cup of rice a day and shovelled coal in a mine 300ft below the ground.

After liberation Arthur began his return home on the USS Sanctuary (a Haven-class Hospital ship serving the US Navy) from Japan to Okinawa. He was then transported by USS Bingham (a Haskell-class attack transport serving the US Navy) from Okinawa to Manila where he then boarded USS Marine Shark which departed Manila on 10 October 1945 - destination San Francisco California

Arthur arrived in San Francisco on 1st November 1945.

British Prisoners of War were then entrained to the East Coast, arriving in New York on 13 November 1945 and transported in the RMS Queen Mary, arriving in Southampton 19 November 1945.

Post War:

Arthur met Alice Martha Willis and got married.

They had five children - Edna, Tony, Yvonne, Michelle and Leon.

3 son in laws - Roger, Martin and Joe

2 daughter in laws - Elizabeth and Tatiana

9 grandchildren - Darren, Janine, Carl, Karl, Skender, Michael, Sarah, Daniella and Samantha.

He continued working as a lorry driver

Arthur sadly passed away 6 September 2008 at the age of 90

All war information compiled has been taken from research carried out by Arthur's family.

*Some information was obtained from Ron Taylor's website 'Roll of Honour'
The wording above has been provided by Sarah Robertson – Granddaughter.*



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