

MARSH William Wallace

Name: William Wallace Marsh

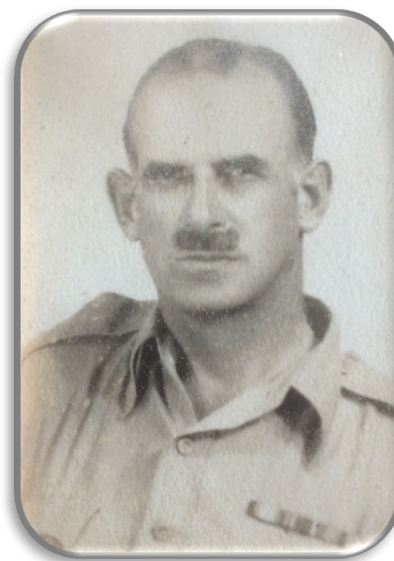
Born: 22 September 1894

Rank: Lieutenant

Service Number: 6197

Unit/Regiment: 14 Section, Royal
Army Ordnance Corps

Died: 12 February 1984



Pre-War:

Wallace served in World War I, arriving on the Western Front on 28 July 1915 as a Gunner in the Royal Field Artillery. He was commissioned on 20 July 1918 and joined the Royal Garrison Artillery. He was then attached to the 3rd Btn Worcestershire Regiment in India before joining the Army Educational Corps. He remained in India until he retired from the army in 1923. After returning to England, Wallace became the Managing Director of an Engineering company in Shropshire. He then married Freda Alice Barnett in 1924 and in 1928, became the Branch Manager of the Cycle and Carriage Company in Singapore and Penang. In 1929 became a Civic Engineer to a company of Planters. The couple remained in Singapore until 1932. Wallace, Freda and daughter, Jacqueline, returned to Singapore in 1938. In the same year he was elected as a Member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers (MIME).

Wartime experience:

During World War II, Wallace served as Lieutenant 6197, in the 14 Section, Royal Army Ordnance Corps and was captured at the Fall of Singapore on the 15 February 1942. Fortunately, on 6 January 1942, Freda, together with Jacqueline, his little daughter, were evacuated on the Orion to Freemantle, WA. He would have been marched to Changi POW Camp, Singapore after the surrender and held in the Southern Area. This would normally indicate he was out in Malaya before the war started. He left Changi as part of the First Mainland Party (Southern Area) on 22 June 1942 under the command of Lt Colonel H C Pargeter RCOS. There were five of these early parties, where the men were sent to set up some of the early base camps and start to clear the track ready for the Railway. Wallace would have arrived at the first transit camp, Ban Pong, Thailand, where every party stopped and where the Railway started.



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At this point, he would have been transferred to the Thai POW Command, where he became part of Work Group 2 – the second largest Work Group on the Railway. Work Group 2 consisted of 9,600 POWs in 19 Work Battalions, reporting to the 2nd Battalion, 9th Japanese Railway Regiment under the command of Colonel Imai. The Japanese Commander of 2nd Branch (as the Japanese called Work Group 2) was Lt. Colonel Yanagida, of the Thai POW Command.

Post War:

Wallace was liberated on 2 September 1945 and returned to England. His wife, Freda, and daughter, Jacqueline, returned home to England from Australia in August 1945. In March 1946 Wallace returned to Singapore. He was then later joined by his wife and daughter. After retiring the family settled in Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire.

Sadly, Wallace passed away on 12 February 1984 at the age of 89.



Left: The photograph shown left, and shown above, was taken in January 1942, just before the fall of Singapore.

The above information and wording has been provided by Jacqueline (daughter) via Paul Hughes (National Memorial Arboretum) with additional information provided by Keith Andrews (COFEPOW Researcher)



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