

# ALDRIDGE William Edgar

---

**Name:** William Edgar Aldridge

**Born:** 30 May 1918

**Rank:** Private

**Service Number:** 5951333

**Regiment/Unit:** Motor Transport  
Section and Mortar Platoon

**Died:** 2 April 2005



---

## Pre-War:

William was born in London Colney, St Albans, Hertfordshire to William and Charlotte Aldridge. He was employed as a Carpenters Improver in the family business, before he enlisted.

## Wartime experience:

William enlisted at Bedford and was put into the Motor Transport Section where he learnt to drive. Prior to enlistment he had only ridden motorcycles. Initially they were sent to guard RAF bases in East Anglia before moving to Merevale Park in Atherstone, where he met his future wife, from a nearby village, Baddesley Ensor. The Battalion was moved a short distance away to Whittington Barracks on the outskirts of Lichfield. One day, William was sent to collect equipment with his lorry and, on return, found most of his unit had been deployed to the initial invasion of Europe. He enquired where they were and was told to go to the stores and draw tropical kit, he and, what was left of his unit, were sent to Liverpool for embarkation to Singapore.

Just prior to the surrender of Singapore, William, together with some of his colleagues, acquired a boat to use to avoid capture and escape to Australia but some Officers prevented them and then apparently used it themselves. William was then captured at the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942 and imprisoned in the Bukit Timah camp until he was moved to Ban Pong, Thailand, to start work on the Thai/Burma Railway. He was moved on to other camps including Tarsao and Tamuan.



---

COFEPOW is a registered charity, number 1074474. Reproduction of the COFEPOW Album Pages without the express consent of COFEPOW, or reproduction of all or any of the information contained herein without the express consent of the family of the FEPOW concerned, is prohibited. For further information, contact [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk)

Whilst he was in captivity, the Japanese authorised him to drive vehicles and he was given a driving licence, during this time he sabotaged the vehicles by destroying spare parts, putting sand in the fuel and oil and, in Bang Pong, hiding and getting rid of tools to repair the vehicles.

### **Civilian life after return:**

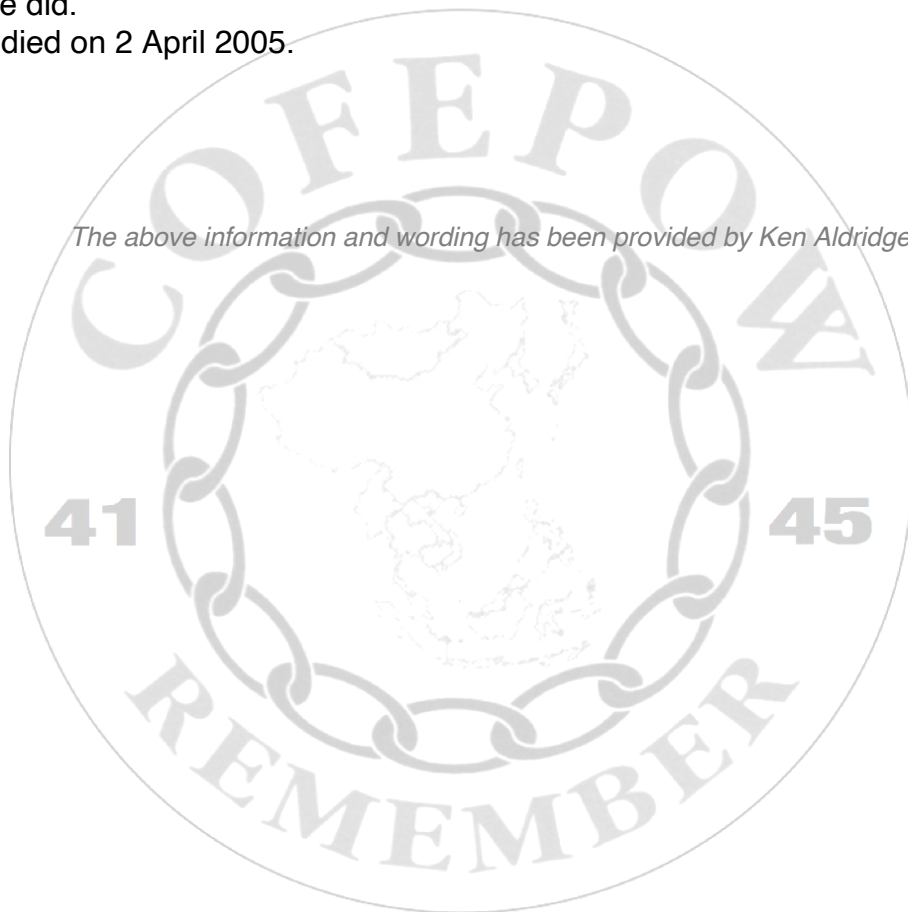
On being freed, William was so feeble and weak that it took months for him to return to the UK and they apparently fed him and others on raw liver to try to build them up before docking in the UK, where they were ordered not to say anything about their ordeal whilst in captivity.

William married his girlfriend on the 10 January 1946 at Atherstone Registry Office and then moved to London Colney for a short time before returning to live in Baddesley Ensor. They were eventually offered a council house in Dordon which they exchanged with another couple for a house in Mancetter and that's where they set up home and lived for the rest of their lives. Ken was born in November 1951 and they spent many happy years in the family home.

William worked as a Lorry Driver for many years before being made redundant when Tiproll Ltd closed. He then started working for himself in Civil Engineering before retiring, this lasted for some time before he was asked to go and work at the local quarry which he did.

Sadly, William died on 2 April 2005.

*The above information and wording has been provided by Ken Aldridge (Son)*



COFEPOW is a registered charity, number 1074474. Reproduction of the COFEPOW Album Pages without the express consent of COFEPOW, or reproduction of all or any of the information contained herein without the express consent of the family of the FEPOW concerned, is prohibited. For further information, contact [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk)

# ALDRIDGE William Edgar (Cont...)

---

## The following are some memories from Ken Aldridge (son)

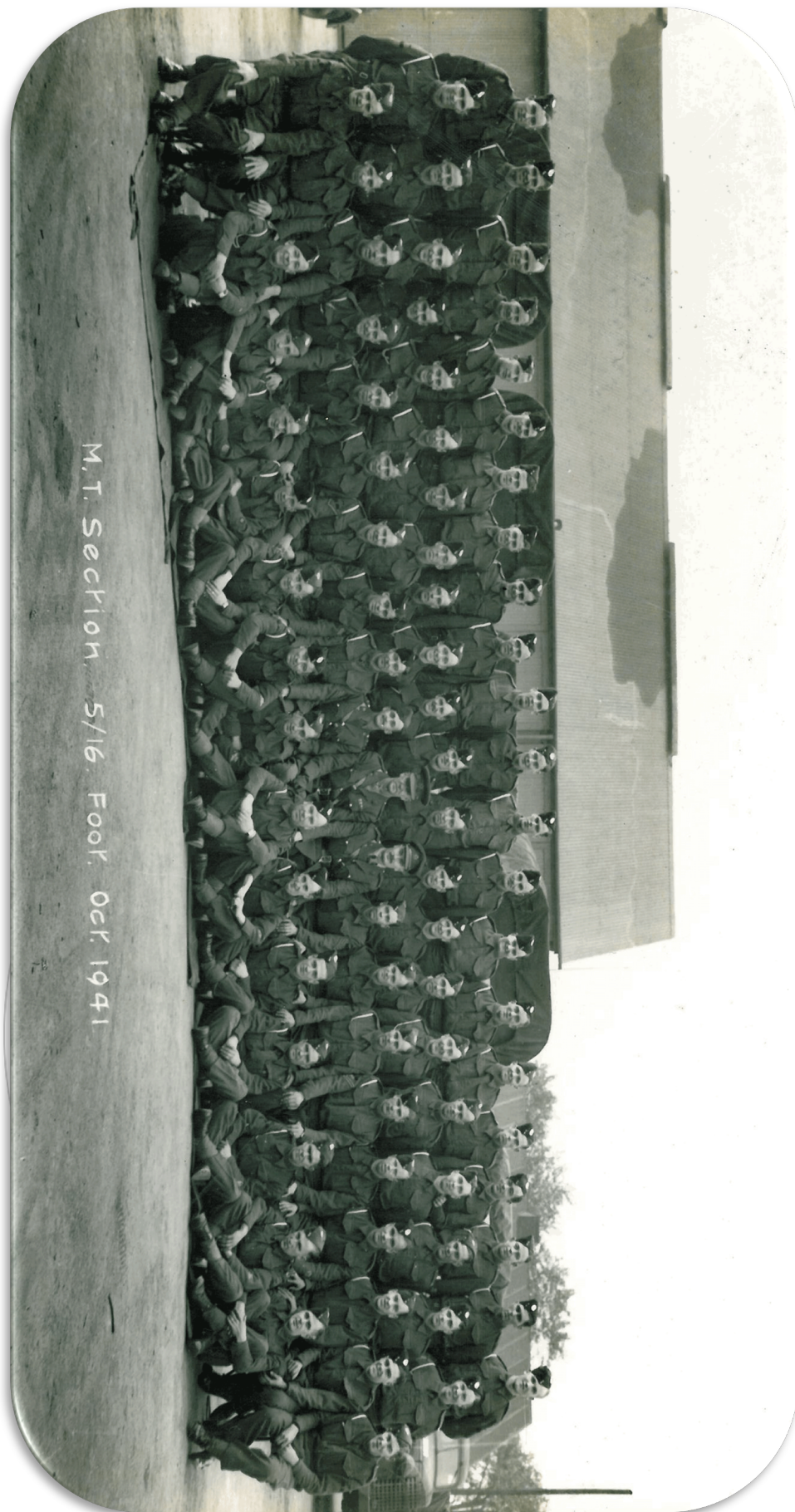
During our trip to Thailand in 1986, we were met at the cemetery in Kanchanaburi and treated extremely well, with a wreath of fresh flowers given to us to lay at the cenotaph and asked to sign the visitors book in the anti-room at the entrance. It was sitting with my father by the river next to the Kwai bridge that I learned most about his time in captivity and whilst visiting the caves along the river. We laughed about the fact that during the construction, they most likely threw away millions of pounds worth of precious stones, without knowing. Also, they did not know about the caves, which possibly they could have used to escape and evade capture.

A funny story that happened whilst I was out with my Father and Father in Law; I went to the bar to get them both drinks and overheard my father say to my Father in Law that he always enjoyed going out with me when we travelled overseas and that as we were in the far east, he knew we were always going to have a good time. One incident, whilst walking in Bangkok I noticed we were being followed, I said to my father to continue walking whilst I made out I was looking in a shop window, the individual hesitated before walking past me, I apprehended him and he started saying "Police", I said to him he was going to need the Police, when he produced a supposed Warrant Card indicating he was a Police Officer, he stated he was following us to make sure we were safe. During our conversation he offered to take us to the 'Government Shop' where he spoke to the staff and secured substantial discounts on jewellery. We purchased an engagement ring for my girlfriend at the time, who subsequently became my wife, and a necklace and pendant with birthstone for my Mother.

Whilst we did manage to lay a 'few ghosts to rest' during our visit to Thailand he never forgave those of his age and whilst on the metal bridge, he went to take a photograph of me on the bridge when an elderly Japanese male walked in front of me, my father yelled at him in Japanese, the elderly male leapt into the air totally startled and left rapidly, I asked my father what he had said and he replied "you do not need to know".



COFEPOW is a registered charity, number 1074474. Reproduction of the COFEPOW Album Pages without the express consent of COFEPOW, or reproduction of all or any of the information contained herein without the express consent of the family of the FEPOW concerned, is prohibited. For further information, contact [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk)



COFEPOW is a registered charity, number 1074474. Reproduction of the COFEPOW Album Pages without the express consent of COFEPOW, or reproduction of all or any of the information contained herein without the express consent of the family of the FEPOW concerned, is prohibited. For further information, contact [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk)