

WATSON Frank Arthur

Name: Arthur Frank Watson

Born: 16 July 1911

Rank: Leading Aircraftsman

Service Number: 1223349

Regiment/Unit/Station: RAF

Died: 30 May 1997



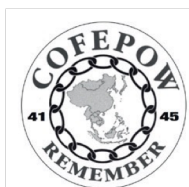
Wartime experience:

Initially Frank carried on working at the Bank of New South Wales in London (joined 7 May 1928); called up to RAF on 28 December 1940; enlisted at Bridgenorth; after training, he worked on barrage balloons, stationed at RAF Hampstead; posted to Singapore June 1941. Frank said farewell to wife at West Kirby railway station in July; left UK on Stirling Castle from the Clyde; Singapore fell 5 months later but escaped to Java on tramp steamer 'Ipoh'; taken prisoner 10 days later near Bandoeng (Java) on 8 March 1942; transported in appalling conditions to Japan (1st prison was Boei Glodok); subsequently transferred to Fukuoka 8 where Frank worked as a coal miner. Although not an ordained minister became acting chaplain and carried out several burial services; Fukuoka was one of the last camps to be liberated (by Americans). Frank returned home via Canada (HMS Glory) and became seriously ill in Victoria; he arrived back in Orpington Kent on 30 November, having landed in Southampton.

Civilian life after return:

He returned to work at the Bank of New South Wales on 15 August 1946 but never fully recovered his physical and mental health. Frank took early retirement on 31 August 1966 and, unfortunately, in September 1976 his health deteriorated with *Guillain-Barré* syndrome. He lived another 20 years, cared for by his loving wife, May.

The above information and wording has been provided by Andrew Watson (son)



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