

LEWIS Albert George

Name: Albert George Lewis

Born: 27 June 1915

Rank: Chief Petty Officer

Service Number: D3KX 83383

Regiment/Unit: Royal Navy

Died: 12 September 1997



Pre War:

Bert (Dad) was born in Plymouth and, after school, had a variety of jobs before joining the Royal Navy aged 18 in 1933 as a second-class stoker. He served on a number of ships, HMS Leander, HMS Eagle, HMS Hunter (which struck a mine in 1937 during the Spanish Civil War and many of the crew were wounded, some fatally), HMS Walker, HMS Albatross and HMS Thracian.

Wartime experience:

At the start of the war, Dad was serving aboard HMS Thracian defending Hong Kong and the South China Seas. In December 1941, Dad survived the initial Japanese air raids, helping to rescue colleagues who were sadly not so fortunate. The survivors of the ship's company were sent to join Canadian soldiers fighting inland, they got ambushed on the way by Japanese soldiers and Dad was one of three to escape. He was captured by the Japanese on Christmas Day 1941. His POW camps in Hong Kong were North Point and then Sham Shui Po. He was transported to Japan to camps at Yokohama; Shinagawa and then Omori. During captivity, Dad suffered all the well documented conditions of torture, malnutrition, disease and forced labour.

After nearly 4 years of captivity and weighing 6 1/2 stone, there came freedom and repatriation via Manila to Victoria BC, across Canada, to New York and a sailing back to the UK on RMS Queen Elizabeth.



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Civilian life after return:

Dad returned to Plymouth and left the Royal Navy. He lived in turn with 3 of his brothers and their families, helping in their businesses until becoming a postman in Truro, when he moved into lodgings.

A new job with an engineering firm brought Dad back to Plymouth. In 1951, following an industrial accident, Dad lost his right hand.

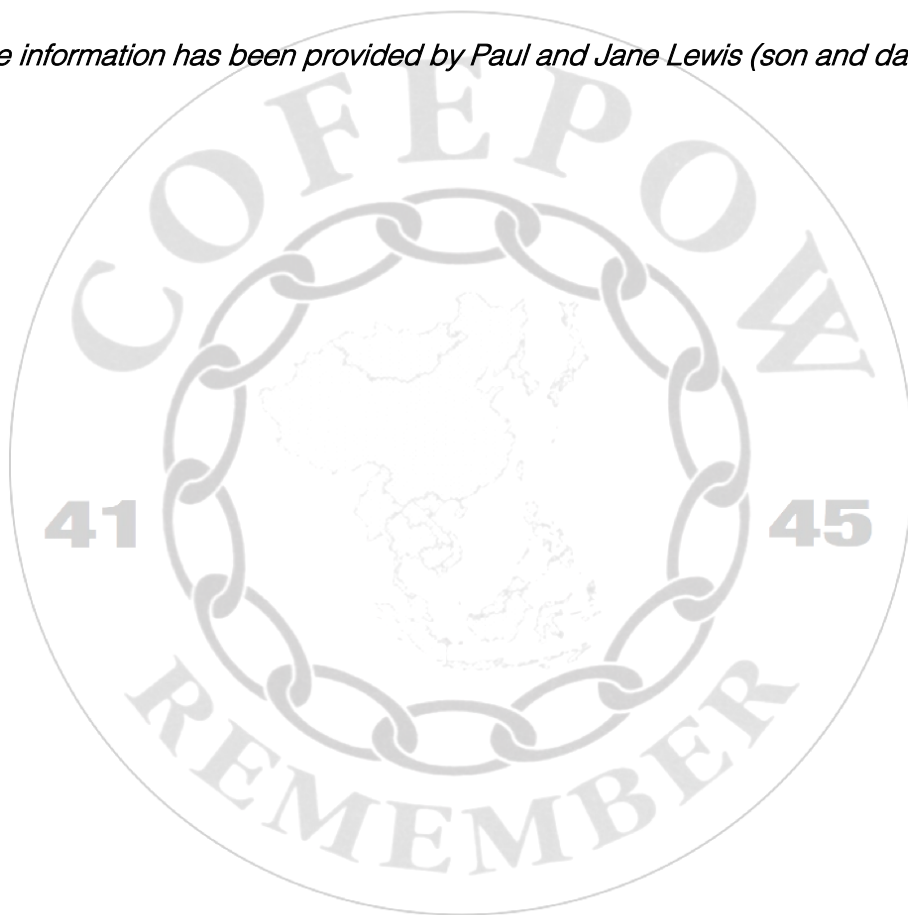
A romance continued from before the accident and Mum and Dad married in 1952. They moved to a new and final home in 1958, had 2 children, a daughter Jane born in 1959 and a son Paul born in 1961. Dad continued to work and made a career in the Civil Service.

Dad was a keen supporter of FEPOW and enjoyed their company. In 1995 he was a guest of the Not Forgotten Society at Buckingham Palace. Also, in the 1990s, with a fellow FEPOW, he re-visited Hong Kong and they were interviewed on Hong Kong radio about their wartime experiences (the recording is held as part of the Sound Archive by The Imperial War Museum).

He sadly passed away on 12 September 1997, aged 82.

His motto was "It's a sad heart that never rejoices" and despite all the hardships, Dad was a life-loving person.

The above information has been provided by Paul and Jane Lewis (son and daughter)



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