

TED WESTWOOD

Ted Westwood, my dad, (1920 -1980) the youngest of six children and the only one to marry and have children. Dad was a keen gardener and started his working life as a gardener on a big estate over in Watford in the late 1930s. Gardening continued to be his passion and he often helped my Grandad Harry on his Marford Road Allotment when Harry finally retired from blacksmithing in the mid-1950s aged 80, Happily married to our my mum Joyce for 31 years (in WW2 Uniform below), much of his life was formed by his experience in WW2 from 1942 to 1945 with the 5th Battalion MT Corp Beds and Herts as a Japanese POW.



Dad was captured in Singapore in February 1942. He had only just got there when our forces surrendered; at least 100,000 Soldiers and many civilians were captured.

My dad had to stand by the side of the road as the Japanese paraded past in triumph and he was then incarcerated in the infamous Changi jail for many months before being pushed up into the jungle to build what became known as Burma Death Railway.

He worked on the River Kwai amongst many other bridges making track and bridge fittings and fish hooks and other metal fittings for many and various other railway projects, which kept him alive as he was very useful to the Japanese, until he made his way to Rangoon where he was finally liberated by allied forces in late 1945.

Dad weighed around 9 stone when he went into the army in 1940 with the Beds and Herts 5th Battalion and 5 ½ stone when he came home in late 1945. His own brother didn't recognise him when he passed him along the Marford Road in Wheathampstead on his way to his Necton Road home .

As far as my Grandad and the rest of the family were concerned Dad was captured presumed dead from early 1942 to mid-1945 as they heard nothing at all in that period. Dad's long-term girlfriend married someone else and it was all doom and gloom the lack of any news at all nearly killed my Grandfather on its own. They finally received a telegram saying he was alive and in Rangoon, no real idea as to his health, which was probably just as well. He was very, very poorly when he came back having survived dengue fever, beriberi and malaria. He was so weak it took him two-and-a-half years to recover and he never did get back up to 9 stone again.

He could not sleep in a bed for 3 years and never really got over his wartime experiences, from a health or an emotional perspective. He died suddenly from acute peritonitis in January 1980. Practically everyone knew him in the village and remembered him as a very kind man "good old Ted". He would "mend kids' bike frames for a penny and sharpen shears for a farthing", my Aunt Fizzy used to say.

Dad went back full time into the forge in 1948 right up to his death in 1980. He still always wanted to be a gardener but a family/kids always meant he needed to mend and make do. We never went hungry and never felt unloved and we all miss him still.

[written by his son, Rod Westwood and forwarded to a research group member]

See below for important documents.

50, Marshal's Drive,
ST. ALBANS.

13th September, 1945.

Dear Mr. Westwood,

I have this morning received a
letter from Sgt. Butterfield, who tells me that your
Son is quite safe. He gives no other information,
but in case you have not heard from other sources, I
am writing to you at once as I am sure it will be a
great relief to your mind.

Yours sincerely,

O. H. Wint

Mr. H. Westwood,
East Street,
Wheathampstead, Herts.

charges to pay s. d. RECEIVED

POST OFFICE
TELIRAM

No. 558
OFFICE STAMP

Prefix. Time handed In. Office of Card Service Instructions. Words.

From 5.5 m 3.15. Enid To 13

Weekwood, 16 Winton Rd, Waltham
Received news of safe &
will continue writing
Ming

For free repetition of doubtful words telephone "AMS ENQUIRY" or call, with this form at office of delivery. Other enquiries should be accompanied by this form and if possible, the envelope

Ar 2511 9/49 Onth. St. Bar C



IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY

I am interned in No. 2 POW. CAMP, THAILAND.

My health is excellent.

I am ill in hospital.

I am working for pay.

I am not working.

Please see that YOU AND ALL AT HOME is taken care of.

My love to you Edward Weekwood