

Private William Hands

Royal Army Ordinance Corps

Service Number: 13040297

Date Died: 28 June 1992

Age: 75

How Died: Heart Attack

Country of burial: Birmingham Crematorium

Cemetery or Memorial: None

Town Memorial: None

Extra Information



William was born the 4th of 6 children to Frank and May Hands on 24 November 1916 in Birmingham. He was educated at King Edward VI Grammar School. He joined the army after his marriage in 1940. His regiment was posted to Devon before setting sail for India. On route, news came of the fall of Singapore and they were diverted to Java in order to evacuate the inhabitants. Shortly after the Japanese arrived in Indonesia.

They were taken prisoners of war and interned on Java. The prisoners called the camp commandant 'Sunny Boy' by he was so vicious that at the end of the war the allies executed him for atrocities. Conditions in the camps were notoriously harsh. From Java he was sent on a 'hell ship' to Singapore where he was held in Changi. Later as the tide of war turned the prisoners were moved by 'hell ship' to another prison camp in Japan.

After VJ day the camps were relieved and he was flown to Canada where he was required to sign an official document that forbade any mention of what went on in the camps. This secrecy was never breached. When he returned to Birmingham he was no more than skin and bones.

He gradually resumed his life as a stock and share broker and lay preacher but he never escaped the horror of the nightmares.

(Information provided by Jenni Stainton)

Memorials found on:

Not applicable