



PERSONAL INFORMATION SHEET



Name: Arthur William Bright

DOB: 24 September 1895

Rank: Leading Stoker

Service Identity Number: P/K20823

Service/Regiment/Corps: Royal Navy

Unit: HMS Tamar

Died: 2 October 1942

Personal history before the war:

Arthur was born in 1895 in East Worldham in Hampshire to Edith and Harry Bright. He was the 2nd of seven sons. Of the seven, 6 entered military service, 3 to the Royal Navy and 3 to the Royal Marines. The youngest boy died aged 19. Herbert Bright, a Royal Marine, was also a casualty of WW2. He died on board the Royal Oak at Scapa Flow.

Before joining the Royal Navy, grandad Arthur worked as an agricultural labourer in a village close to where he was born. He joined the Royal Navy on 15 October 1913 aged 17 and signed on to serve 12 years. He enlisted as a Stoker Class II and gradually progressed to become a Leading Stoker by the time he left the Service in 1928. He served through WW1 on various ships and shore bases and is listed as being on Torpedo Boats from 1916 to 1918.

He was married to Annie in 1920 in Weymouth at St Johns Church. When he was released from the Service in 1928, he was based at HMS Osprey so I can only presume that he decided to set up home with his wife Annie, in Weymouth where they lived with her family.

Arthur and Annie had 4 children Arthur (John) born in 1932, Harry born in 1924, Nancy born in 1926 and finally my dad Ron born in 1938. John and Harry both followed in their father's footsteps and served as Stokers in the Royal Navy.

Dad was born 6 months before Arthur was recalled to the Royal Navy aged 43 as part of the Royal Naval Reserve. He left to do his duty and never returned leaving Annie with 2 serving sons and a daughter and baby at home. She never gave up on Arthur hoping that he would return and that the letters from the War Department were incorrect. She died in 1948 leaving my 10-year-old Dad an orphan.

She never recovered from losing her husband and when she became sick, she just gave up and let nature take its course.



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Wartime experience:

I don't know a lot about Grandads wartime experience apart from him being recalled to service and that he was sent to Hong Kong on HMS Redstart and later joined HMS Tamar. I assume that he was part of the defence of Hong Kong and was captured on Christmas Day 1941. I have a letter that he sent to my grandmother from Camp S (Samshuipo) as well as a small postcard. This was the last that she heard from him. The letter had been censored by the Japanese. I think he ended it with xxx and this was cut out before it was sent probably because they thought it to be some kind of code. Grandad was loaded into hold 1 of the Lisbon Maru with other Naval personnel in September 1942 and the rest as we know is now documented.

I do not know if he escaped or if he is still in the wreck. A story did get back to my grandmother that he was seen diving from the ship, and we know that he was a strong swimmer so, I assume, that he was shot whilst trying to swim away.

Personal history post war (if survived):

As I said earlier, my grandmother never recovered from the loss of her husband and died in 1948 from cancer.

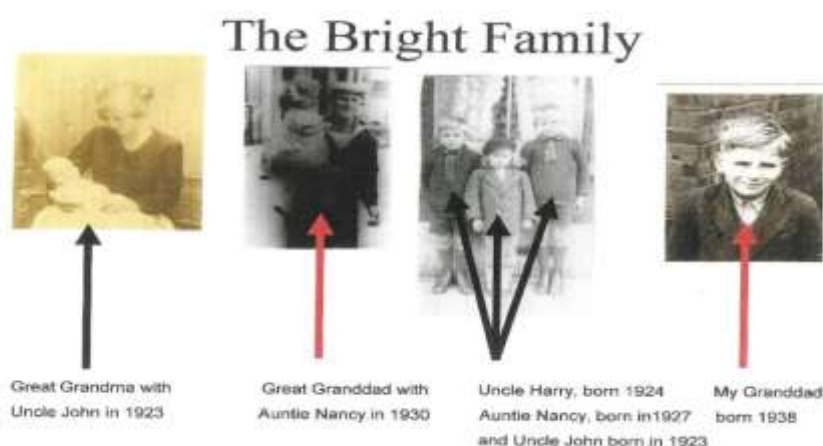
My Uncle John met an Australian girl when his ship was in Sydney and they married and Auntie Flora came to England to live with him and my grandmother. After Grandma had died, they decided to return to Sydney to live and sailed on SS Ranchi with their young daughter to start a new life in Sydney together.

The voyage took them close to the place where the Lisbon Maru was sunk, and they scattered Annie's ashes as close as they could to where my Grandad was lost.

My interest in his story has always been there but became deeper when I was expecting my 1st child. I decided that I needed to know where I came from as no one in the family seemed to have any information. My research has led me to this point and to be part of the work to make sure these brave souls are never forgotten.

Additional photos:

Pages from a school project that my son produced documenting his great grandparent's war.



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From Hong Kong, with love.



Piece of letter with kisses removed by Japanese. They thought it was a code.

Leaving Hong Kong



HUSBAND MISSING A SECOND TIME Was on Ship that Was Torpedoed

Mrs Annie Bright, of 16, Penny-street, Weymouth, waited eight months after the fall of Hong Kong for news of her sailor husband, who was reported missing at that time. Then she received the glad tidings that he was a prisoner of war. Now he is missing again.

From the Admiralty she has received this letter: "I deeply regret to inform you that your husband, Arthur W. Bright, Leading Stoker, has been reported as missing while on war service following the sinking of s.s. Lisbon Maru. There is nothing definite at present to show whether your husband may be alive or not but I will write you again as soon as possible. In the meantime please accept my deep sympathy in your time of anxiety."

It will be recalled that the Japanese announced that the Lisbon Maru had been torpedoed with a number of prisoners aboard.

Mrs. Bright told an "Echo" reporter: "I heard about the sinking of the Lisbon Maru on the wireless and that there were prisoners on board being transferred to another camp. I never dreamt that my husband was among them."

She added "When my husband was first reported missing a year ago I never gave up hope, although I had to wait eight months. I shall go on believing that he is safe."

There are four children and the family have not seen Leading Stoker Bright since the summer of 1939. He was a naval reservist and was called up for the King's Review in Weymouth Bay. After the Review the Fleet sailed away and with it sailed Leading Stoker Bright.

Since that memorable occasion two of his three sons, Harry and John, have joined the Royal Navy and the third son, who was only crawling, is now four years old. The fourth child is a daughter, now aged 15. Both sailor sons were home on leave for Christmas, but Harry had returned when the news came and Mrs. Bright is endeavouring to communicate with him.

The above information was provided by Mandy Stubbs who is the Granddaughter of Arthur Bright.

Completed forms should be emailed back to limmauk@gmail.com with any photos being attached to the email. Please ensure that all pictures are identified with the name, rank and service number (if known).



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