



PERSONAL INFORMATION SHEET



Name: Stanley Elijah BURTON (Burt)

DOB: 31 March 1921

Rank: Lance Corporal

Service Identity Number: 1874266

Service/Regiment/Corps: Royal Engineers

Unit: 22 Field Company

Personal history before the war:

Burt was born in Downham Market, Norfolk and went to school in Salters Lode, Norfolk leaving school at the age of 14 in 1935. He worked for a local squire as a Hall Boy initially before joining the adult army on 10 April 1937 aged 16 (underage).

Burt was allocated to the Royal Engineers as a Sapper conducting his training at Brompton Barracks in Chatham, Kent. Upon completion of his training he was posted to 4 Fortress Company RE for searchlight training where after he joined 22 Field Company as searchlight operator following a course in Portsmouth in 1938; he also volunteered to travel to Hong Kong to support those of the company who were already there.

Wartime experience:

In October 1938, Burt sailed to Hong Kong on the HMT (Hired Military Transport) Dunera where he was stationed at Wellington Barracks on Hong Kong Island.

During the Battle of Hong Kong on 25 December 1941 was promoted to a Lance Corporal on the field. He was shot in his open mouth at close range as British troops surrendered to the Japanese; at the end of the battle only four members of his Company were left!

Burt received treatment for his injuries at Shamshuipo Camp. He was initially unable to speak owing to his injuries and survived by drinking the scum on top of cooking rice.

He was selected by the Japanese to be sent to Japan despite his injuries, on the Lisbon Maru September 1942.

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The Lisbon Maru was sunk by a torpedo in October 1942. Despite being sealed inside the hold for the journey, he managed, with others to escape from the hold, he entered the water and swam towards islands on the horizon. Luckily he was a very strong swimmer.

Picked up from the sea by Chinese fishermen and was taken to Sing Pan Islands, given food and clothing, and treated with great kindness. 24 hours later POW's were stripped of their clothes and taken away on boats by the Japanese and then despite suffering from exposure, transported on the Shensai Maru to Japan.

Burt was treated in a Military Hospital after arrival October 1942 and subsequently taken to Itchioka stadium, Osaka for further treatment arriving at Osaka No 1 camp in November 1942, and being sent to work at the Osaka Ironworks, cement works and docks. He was moved to Osaka No 9 camp at Notogawa in May 1945 and made to move earth for land reclamation until August 1945.

Personal history post war (if survived):

Burt was liberated on 11th September 1945 by the Americans, then aged 24 and was subsequently interviewed by the war correspondent Kenneth Coulter. He returned to the UK travelling via Manila on the Queen Mary.

Upon demob he joined the LNER (Railway) Police Service but continued with the Army Reserves until 1959. Unhappy with the work, he joined the Metropolitan Police Service, training at Peel House in Pimlico before being stationed at Islington, then Brixton.

In 1957, Burt was promoted to Police Sergeant and stationed in Bow Street before moving to Kent being stationed at Bromley then finally Station Sergeant at Farnborough. He was retired on ill health grounds in 1974 aged 53. He was declared as exemplary in his service. Despite his declining health, Burt joined a security firm as a vetting officer until state retirement age.

In 1980 Burt visited Hong Kong to reunite with other POW's, and found war graves of fallen friends. He became a keen bowls player and played for Metropolitan Police No 4 District Bowls Team at the Warren Police Sport Ground, Coney Hall, Kent.



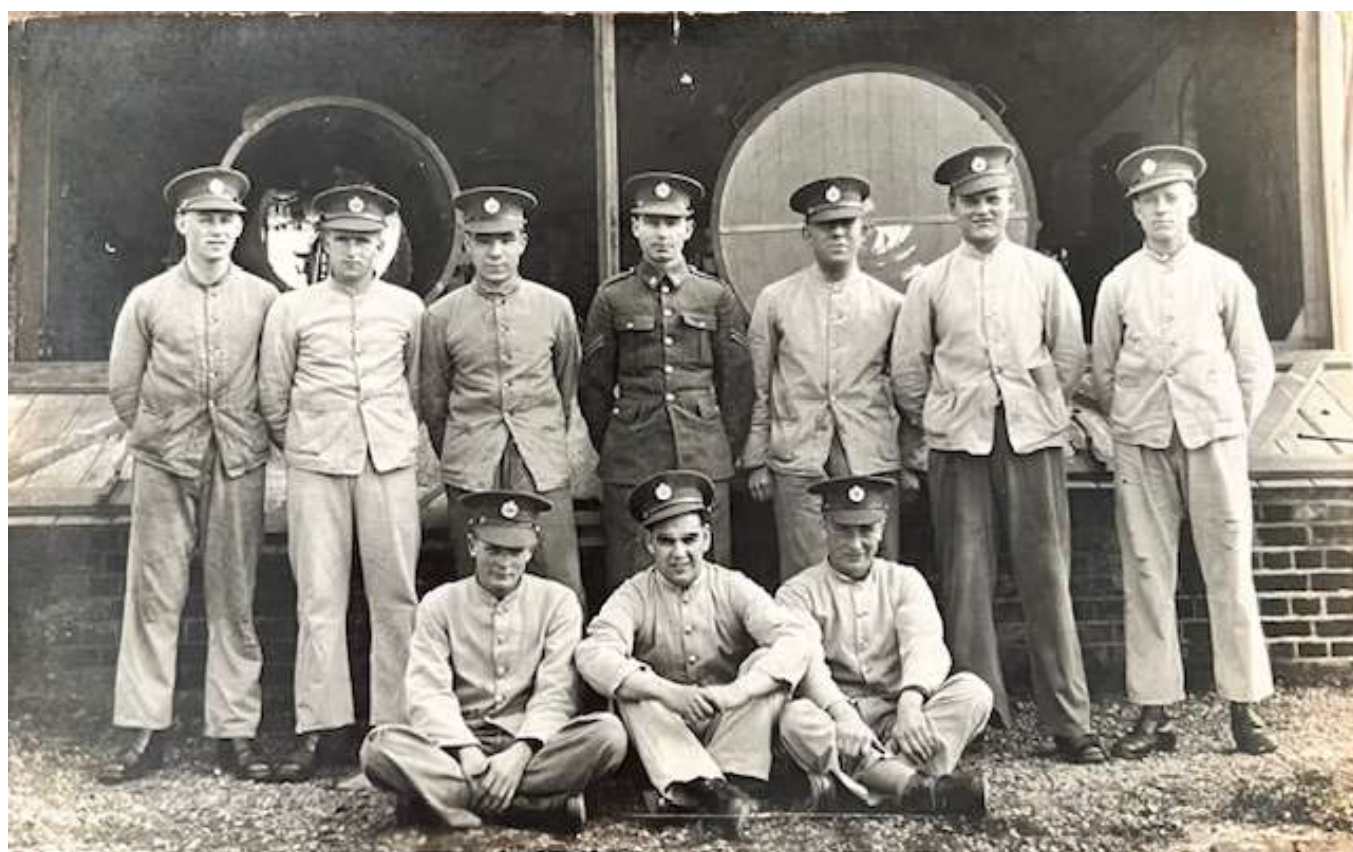
Additional photos:



Pre-war



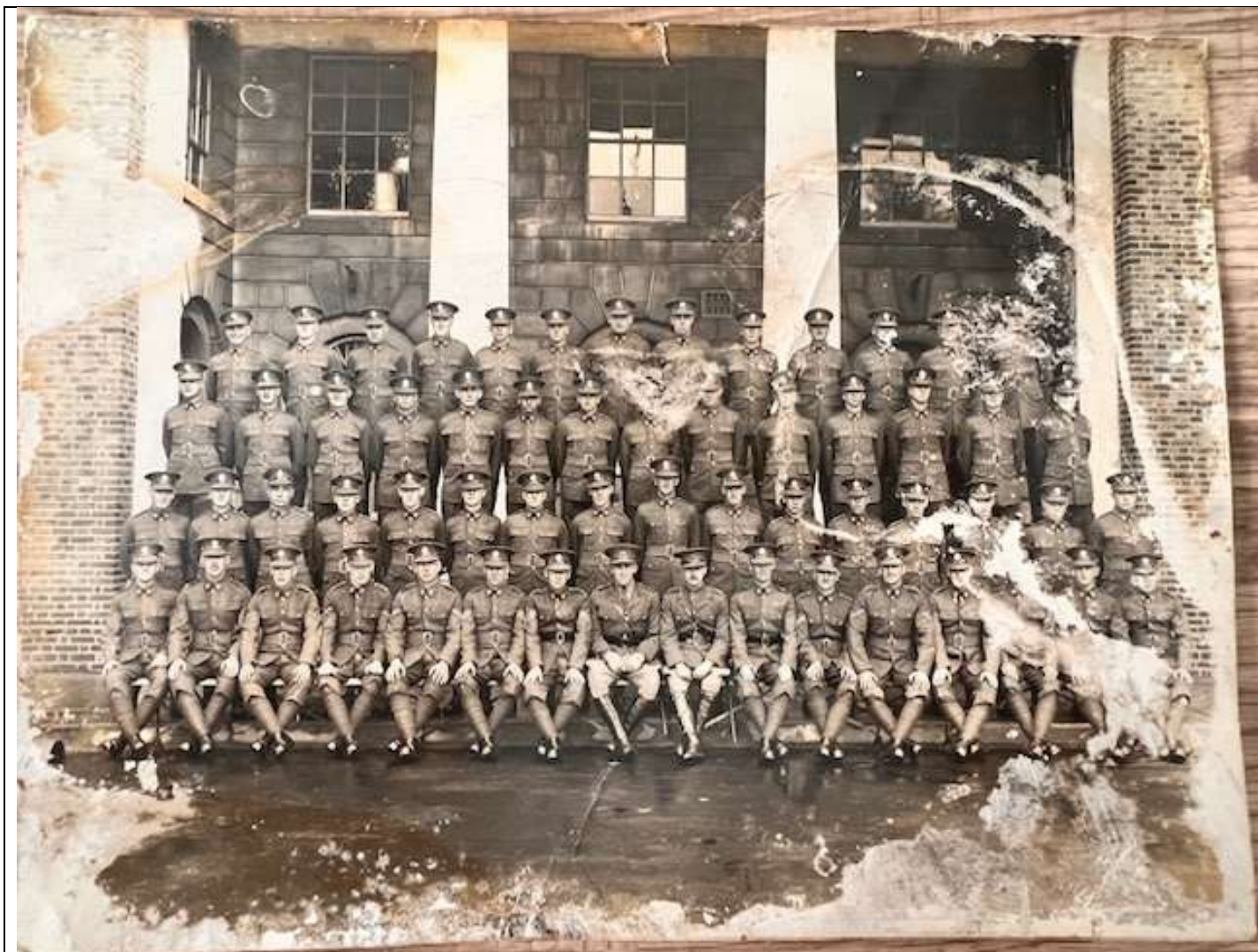
Chatham 1937 (3rd from right)



Searchlight Course, Portsmouth 1938 (rear row, second from right)



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Royal Engineers (2nd row down, 1st on left)



Repatriation – Manila 1945



HMT Dunera

The above information was provided by Brenda Chamberlain who is the daughter of Stanley Burton.



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