



## **PERSONAL** **INFORMATION** **SHEET**



**Name: James Laurence MURPHY**

**DOB: 30 April 1915**

**Rank: Lance Corporal**

**Service Identity Number: 2325101**

**Service/Regiment/Corps: Royal Corps of Signals**

**Unit: Hong Kong Signals Company**

**Died: 07 February 1992**

### **Personal history before the war:**

James was born in Carlisle to James Aiden Murphy and Mary Ellen McAllister. He initially had been apprenticed as a landscape gardener but at the age of 21, he left that employment and joined the Army (Royal Signals) enlisting on 11 March 1936.

### **Wartime experience:**

In about 1937 he was posted to Hong Kong as part of the Hong Kong Signals Company. He was captured by the Japanese after the fall of Hong Kong on 25 Dec 1941 and was held at Shamshuipo POW camp in Hong Kong until 27 Sept 1942 when he was part of a draft selected for transport to Japan on the "Lisbon Maru".

The Hong Kong Signals Company, together with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Scots and the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Middlesex Regiment were in placed in hold 2. After the sinking he managed to get onto the deck. He saw some islands in the distance and could also see that swimming prisoners were being shot as they tried to approach the circling Japanese ships so being a strong swimmer, he decided to swim for the islands.

He was picked up by Chinese fishermen and taken to their village, where he was looked after with great kindness by the locals. Japanese landing parties from the ships went around gathering up the escaped prisoners, who were then transported to Woosung, Shanghai. From there they were transported on the "Shinsei Maru" to Moji which docked four days later on the 10 October 1942.

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At Moji the POWs were separated into two groups, one group going to Osaka and the other, about 500 men including my father, were transported by train to Kobe. He worked on the docks at Kobe and was housed in the Wakimohama POW camp.

One day he was working on the docks unloading a ship. For some reason one of the guards kicked him off the side of the dock into the hold of the ship. He fell about 40ft and broke his hip. Back at the camp the British Medical Officer constructed a "Stokes" splint to pull his leg straight and hold it there. This was a makeshift affair to stop the thigh muscles pulling the leg short. His leg was straightened and stretched and fastened to a wooden framework which had been nailed to the wooden floor of the top floor of the barracks.

This rendered him completely immobile whilst the fractured bone healed. He then had the terrifying experience of being nailed to the wooden floor during the American fire-bombing air raids on the Kobe docks.

He was liberated from Osaka 2b POW camp on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1945. He was one of a group of POWs who were flown to Australia to convalesce and recover.

#### **Personal history post war (if survived):**

After repatriation, James joined the Prison Service and served as a Prison Officer at Wakefield and Leeds prisons. He married in 1947 and he and his wife had four children, a girl followed by three boys. In 1970 he was promoted to Principal Officer and moved to Liverpool where he worked at Walton Goal.

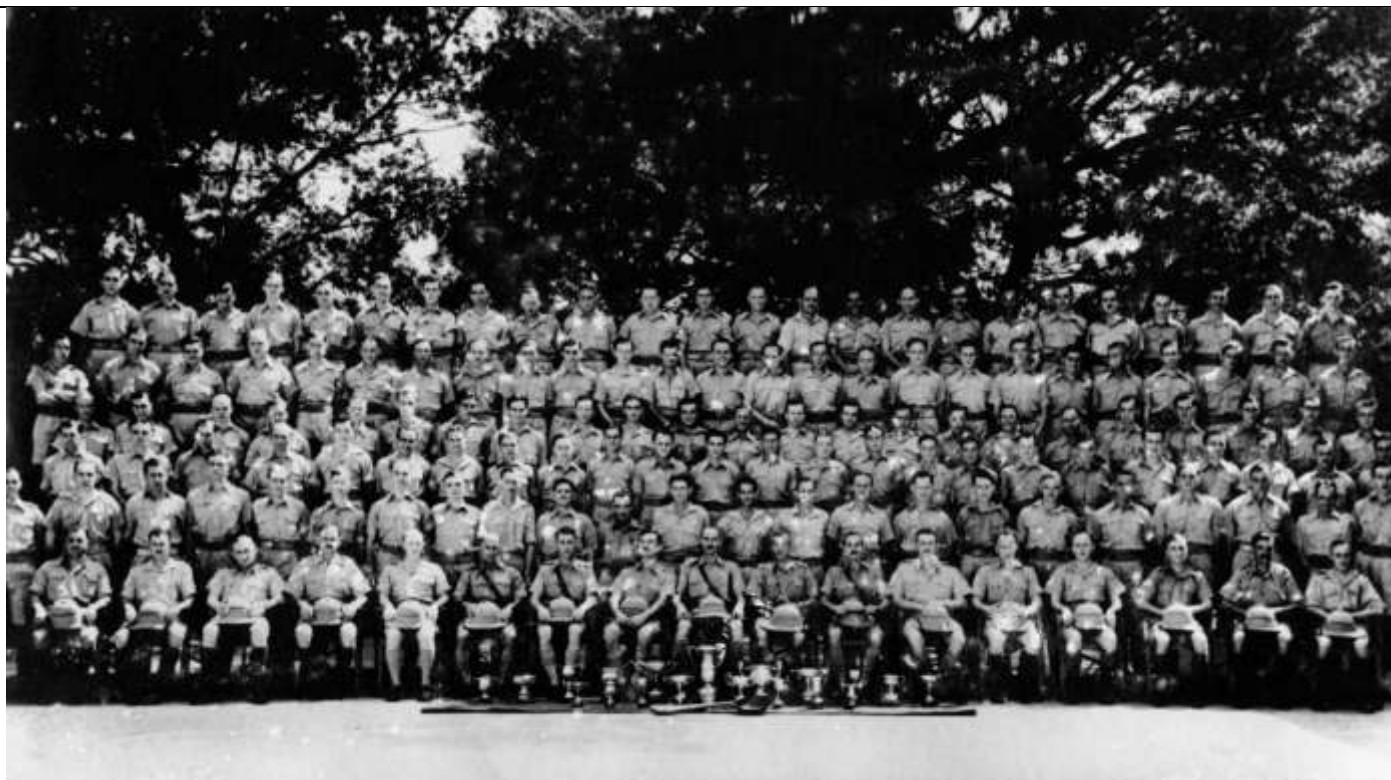
Following a further promotion in 1967 he moved to the Durham area. A health crisis caused him to retire from the Prison Service. However after a period of recovery he then worked in the Department for Work and Pensions in Durham. He suffered a series of debilitating strokes which left him wheelchair bound with severely limited speech. He passed away on 7 Feb 1992.

#### **Additional photos:**



James Murphy (right of photo) in Hong Kong  
pre-war





Hong Kong Signal Company about 1938  
James is 3<sup>rd</sup> row back and 2<sup>nd</sup> from the left hand side

The above information was provided by Jim Murphy who is the son of James Murphy.



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