**WATSON Frank Arthur**

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| **Name: Arthur Frank Watson**  **Born: 16 July 1911**  **Rank: Leading Aircraftsman**  **Service Number: 1223349**  **Regiment/Unit/Station: RAF**  **Died: 30 May 1997** |  |

**Wartime experience:**

Initially Frank carried on working at the Bank of New South Wales in London (joined 7 May 1928); called up to RAF on 28 December 1940; enlisted at Bridgenorth; after training, he worked on barrage balloons, stationed at RAF Hampstead; posted to Singapore June 1941. Frank said farewell to wife at West Kirby railway station in July; left UK on Stirling Castle from the Clyde; Singapore fell 5 months later but escaped to Java on tramp steamer ‘Ipoh’; taken prisoner 10 days later near Bandoeng (Java) on 8 March 1942; transported in appalling conditions to Japan (1st prison was Boei Glodok); subsequently transferred to Fukuoka 8 where Frank worked as a coal miner. Although not an ordained minister became acting chaplain and carried out several burial services; Fukuoka was one of the last camps to be liberated (by Americans). Frank returned home via Canada (HMS Glory) and became seriously ill in Victoria; he arrived back in Orpington Kent on 30 November, having landed in Southampton;

**Civilian life after return:**

He returned to work at the Bank of New South Wales on 15August 1946 but never fully recovered his physical and mental health. Frank took early retirement on 31 August 1966 and, unfortunately, in September 1976 his health deteriorated with Guillain–Barré syndrome. He lived another 20 years, cared for by his loving wife, May.