Geoffrey Keith Beaumont





Photos courtesy of Bill Berry

Rank: - Leading Aircraftsman

Number: - 1177935

Regiment: - Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Died: - Died from dysentery in Haroekoe POW Camp**,** 10 June 1943 aged 23

Cemetery: - Ambon War Cemetery, Indonesia Plot 6 Row A Grave 11

Batley News, 5 Jun 1943 (photo); 4 Dec 1943 (photo)

Geoffrey Keith was born in Batley on 2 May 1920 the son of Herbert and Edith Alice Beaumont nee Jubb who had married on 18 Mar 1911 at St. Pauls, Hanging Heaton. Dorothy was born in October 1916 but only survived 6 days. Before 1939 the family lived at Ingledene, 144a, Soothill Lane, Batley.

Geoffrey attended Batley Grammar School and was a Prefect for three years and football and cricket captain. On leaving there in July 1938 went to Birmingham University to do oil research. Whilst at university he met Miss Peggy Jackson of Stoke and they became engaged in August 1942.He joined the RAF in September 1940 and went to Singapore 12 months later. Before being posted overseas he was one of those who tracked the flight of Rudoph Hess, Hitler's deputy, to Britain in 1941.



ONLY SON DIES IN JAP PRISON CAMP

Blow For Soothill Home

The Air Ministry has informed Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Beaumont, "Ingle Dene," Soothill Lane, Batley, that their only son, L.A.C. Geoffrey Keith Beaumont (23), has died in a Japanese prison camp. The news was transmitted by the International Red Cross.

After the fall of Singapore L.A.C. Beaumont was captured in Java, and when his parents received the news last June that he was a prisoner they had not heard from him for over 12 months.

L.A.C. Beaumont joined the R.A.F. in September, 1940, leaving his studies in oil engineering at Birmingham University, where he met his fiancee, Miss Peggy Jackson, B.Com., of Stoke, who now holds a responsible position under Western Command. L.A.C. Beaumont was a prefect for three years and football and cricket captain at Batley Grammar School. His father is head A.R.P. warden for Hanging Heaton and Soothill areas.

G. K. Beaumont.

After the fall of Singapore his parents heard that he was safe and well in Java. Then they did not hear, until early June 1943, from the Air Ministry, that he had been taken prisoner on Java after the surrender to the Japanese on 8 March 1942. The International Red Cross transmitted the news that he had died in a Japanese prisoner of war camp in June 1943 but this took until December 1943 for them to receive the news.

In December 1994 Ray Healey of 9, Mary Road, Eastwood, Notts. replied to an appeal for anyone who had known Geoffrey Beaumont in captivity. He said he remembered him as one of a group of prisoners with him in Tasikmalaya, Java. All were radio-location men and he thought it likely that Geoffrey Beaumont had been at the Radio Installation and Maintenance Unit at Seletar, Singapore before being evacuated, like him, a week before Singapore fell. Like him he thought Geoffrey would have been put on a draft to the Moluccan Island of Haruku, adjoining Ambon, where the Japanese forced the prisoners to build the air strip. The conditions on Haruku were very bad and many of the prisoners died of dysentery in the summer of 1943, quite probably Geoffrey among them.

Geoffrey Beaumont is one of three Batley men buried at Ambon, the others being Harold Gillbanks, formerly of Carlinghow and also a former pupil at Batley Grammar School, who was taken prisoner with the crew of HMS Exeter and Able

Seaman Frances Gess (HMS Encounter) of Leyland Road, Birstall. Ambon is 2,000 miles east of Singapore and 600 miles north of Darwin, Australia.

Thanks to Bill Berry.

Geoffrey was awarded the 1939-45 Star; 1939-1945 War Medal

He is remembered with Honour at Hanging Heaton War Memorial (St Paul's); Batley Grammar School; Royal Air Forces Association Club, Batley and Batley War Memorial.

