
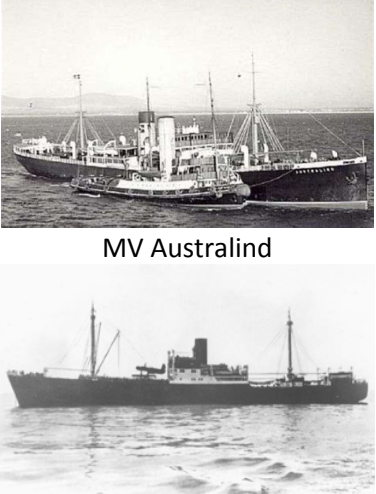
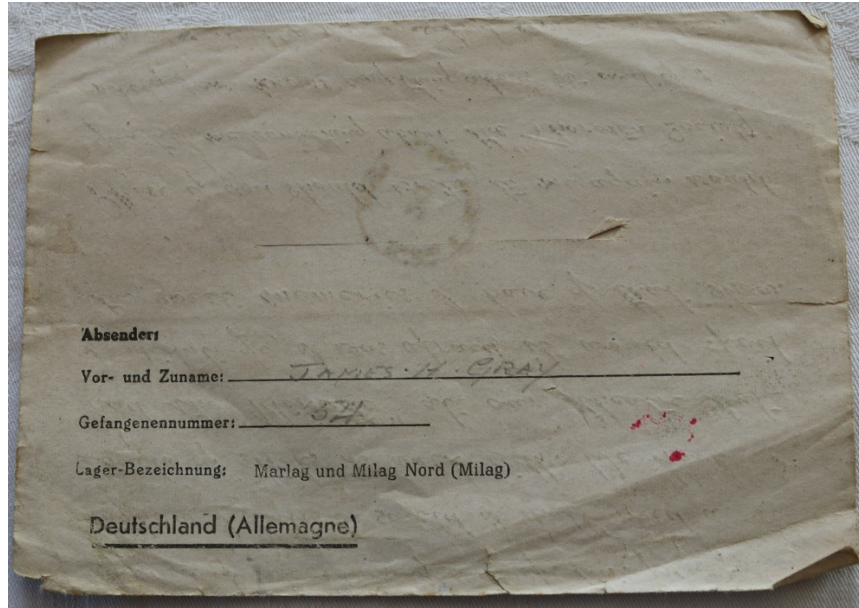


<p>Chief Steward Merchant Navy</p>	<p>James Henry Gray (Harry)</p> 	<p>5 Moor Lane</p> <p>Photos courtesy of Chris Bingham</p>	<p>Source: Returning Forces Fund/additional information supplied by Christine Bingham and Peter Slater</p>
<p>Born</p>	<p>14th October 1911, Bingham</p>		
<p>War service</p> <p>Information kindly supplied by Christine Bingham and Peter Slater</p>	<p>Harry Gray was a merchant seaman, having enlisted in the 1930s (precise date not known). In 1941 he was a Chief Steward with six years' service on the <i>MV Australind</i>.</p> <p>On the 14th August, 1941, the ship was sunk by the German auxiliary cruiser, <i>Komet</i>, off the Galapagos Islands with the loss of three lives (including the captain). All the rest of the crew, including Harry, were saved by the German sailors and became prisoners of war. They were kept confined below decks whilst the <i>Komet</i> conducted further raids. They were never sure whether the gunfire they could hear was incoming or outgoing. They remained so confined until disembarked in Cuxhaven on November 30th, 1941; that is, after three and a half months of confinement.</p> <p>(More information about the <i>Komet</i> can be found here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_auxiliary_cruiser_Komet)</p>		 <p>MV Australind</p> <p>Hilfskreuzer Komet</p>

Harry was eventually interned at Camp Marlag und Milag (Nord) in Poland.
Prisoner number: 54.



(Letter home – courtesy of Christine Bingham)

One of Harry's fellow prisoners was Arthur H Bird MBE, third mate and gunnery officer. He was the only Merchant Navy officer in WW2 successfully to escape and reach home. He recounted his story in a book, *Farewell Milag* (ISBN 10: 0951347519), and Harry is mentioned several times as having assisted with the preparations for the escape. Harry had wanted to join the escape attempt but was prevented from doing so by a heart defect.



Harry's POW uniform (photo courtesy of Christine Bingham)

1939 Register

Not living in Bingham – Already enlisted in Merchant Navy

Harry's Family

5 Moor Lane

1939 Register	(Father) James Gray, widower. b 15 th Oct 1880, Bingham (Brother-in-law) Arthur Bingham b 21 st June 1902 (Sister) Ruth Ellen Bingham (<i>née Gray</i>) b 19 th May 1903, Bingham (Nephew) James Arthur Bingham b 9 th May 1924 <i>One closed record</i>	Builders' labourer Sugar Factory Charge Hand Unpaid domestic duties Plumbers Apprentice.	
Marriage	Harry Gray married Olive Bowley in Bingham, April 1953 No children.	Olive was Headmistress of Whatton School when she married Harry.	
Harry's Family Census 1911	Long Acre Row Bingham James Gray b. 1880, Bingham (Father) Lizzie Gray (<i>née Birkby</i>) b 1885 Beeston (Mother) Annie Gray b 1907 (Sister) Jane Wilson Gray b 1909 (Sister)	Bricklayers labourer	James Gray served in WW1
Father's marriage	James Gray married Lizzie Birkby, Bingham, 1903		
Mother Census 1901	596 Mansfield Road, Nottingham William Simon Ellis m Helen Ellis m Elizabeth Birkby s	Lace gasser Domestic Servant	
Wife 1939 Register	The Woodlands, Orston, Notts Olive Bowley b 1 April 1915, Newark	Elementary Teacher	Living in lodgings or with relatives
Wife's family Census 1911	No record found. Frank W Bowley married Emily B Kirkby in Newark in 1914. Olive was born in Newark in 1915		
Post War	On liberation, Harry became a smallholder on Chapel Lane before moving to land on the Fosse Way at East Bridgford.		
Death	Harry died in April 1979 aged 67 in Nottingham Olive died 5 th March 2003 in Rushcliffe		