Today I would like to pay our respects 2278 Spr Arthur Percy **Plowman MID.**

Spr Plowman was born in 1917 and resided at 17 Jacobs Pace Wellington before embarking with the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force, First Echelon.

*The following are just a few short memories by those of us who were lucky to listen when such memories were imparted. Memories which were often hard to recall due to the sheer emotions they conjured up when relived.*

*“On January 5, 1940, my grandfather, 20-year-old Arthur Percy Plowman, affectionately known to us all as "Pop", volunteered and left for World War II on the Strathaird out of Wellington, bound for Egypt.*

*Arthur had been married to my grandmother Joan for only three days before his departure. She would not see him again for five years.*

*Pop was known as "Doc" and "Blue" to his comrades. He was both a trained medical orderly and an engineer. Sapper Plowman of the Sixth Field Company, NZ Engineers could first blow you up and then patch you up in short order.*

*The first we heard of his heroic "patching up" was many years later when our family came across a newspaper clipping from the classified section of the Evening Post placed on September 10, 1941.*

*It read: "Relatives of Sapper A. P Plowman, write T F Clunie, Paraparaumu"*

*It transpired that this advert was placed by the Clunie family of Paraparaumu, who had news of Arthur to relay to his family.*

*The news was that Arthur had saved their son's life by carrying him across the desert for three days after Sapper Clunie had been shot through the buttocks with a .303.*

*Arthur had stuffed bandages from his own and the other soldier's Red Cross kits into the wound to stem the flow of blood and keep the wound clean while he helped in carrying Sapper Clunie to an army hospital. Sapper Clunie survived and his family, of course, were extremely grateful.*

*Being the humble man he was, Arthur never mentioned the incident when relaying his war stories to his children later in life – it was only discovered when a fern badge and a commendation letter from King George was found in a sock draw.*

*From Egypt it was on to Macedonia and then the Corinth Canal, Greece.*

*In Corinth it was Arthur's job to help with the blowing up of a bridge that was used by the Nazis to ferry ammunition. The mission was that he would assist in exploding two tonnes of gelignite to eliminate that bridge. We can only imagine that two tonnes of gelignite create’s a bit of unwanted attention, as it was here that he was captured as a POW.*

*Arthur was sent to Stalag XVIII-A in Wolfsberg, Austria. He would stay there for the next four years and one month.*

*He was far from the model prisoner at Stalag XVIII-A. Not one to be penned up, he escaped and was recaptured on several occasions, the result being solitary confinement, bread and water. On one such escape, and after several days on the run, a gun was placed to his head and he was told that death was the next outcome to any further attempt with more solitary confinement, bread and water.*

*Arthur would recount stories when home of being so hungry in the camp that he would eat potato peelings just to get by, though he was ever grateful for the Red Cross parcels he sometimes received, which would contain raisins among other things.*

*Back at home my great grandfather, Albert, continued to be a great strength and support to Joan. Throughout the war years he wrote many letters to his son to keep in touch. They were all returned stamped "Missing in Action, Presumed Dead".*

*This did not deter Albert and he kept writing, hoping a letter would reach Arthur. It was not until Albert died many years later that Arthur would discover these letters in his father's draw.*

*Nevertheless, Joan kept hope throughout the years and finally received a letter from the Red Cross saying that Arthur had been found among 6000 other POWs at Stalag XVIII-A. He returned to her in December 1945.*

*I know all of us in the Plowman family will remember my grandparents, Arthur and Joan, in our own special way.*

*Please share and remember your family’s story as you honour those fallen and since passed this Anzac Day.*

*Lest we forget.”*

An incredible story.

RIP Arthur.

Thank you for your service.

E kore e warewaretia

Will Never Forget.

In publishing this post I wish to acknowledge and thank the staff at Stuff.com.au for publishing this story.