

Victor Ernest ANDREWS

1528718, Gunner, Royal Artillery,
died Saturday 14th November 1942, aged 23.

Memorial Book text:

*Home address was 2 The Leys,
Olney.*

*Worked as a carpenter with W
T Revitt Ltd. Information and
photo supplied by Mr R
Andrews. One of 5 brothers
serving in HM Forces.*

*1939 – A Bty. 2 Squad., 203 AA
Training Regt., RA., Bailleul
Barracks, Arborfield, nr.
Reading.*

*1940 – 197 Bty. RA., 61 Lt. AA
Regt., RA., Dorking, Surrey.*

*1941 – BHQ., 197/61 Lt. AA
Regt., RA., APO 1515.*

*1942 – Prisoner of War, Camp
address unknown.*

1943 – “Missing”.

*1944 – Please see the attached
letter from the Red Cross. It is
believed that the ship taking
Vic and other POW's from
North Africa was sunk in
passage by what is now termed
“friendly fire”.*



CWWG information:

Son of Reginald and Ada Mary Andrews,
of Olney.

Named on Column 33 of the Alamein
Memorial, Egypt.

Transcript of letter within the original book:

WAR ORGANISATION OF THE BRITISH RED CROSS SOCIETY AND ORDER
OF ST JOHN OF JERUSALEM.

President: Her Majesty The QUEEN

Grand Prior: HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG.

WOUNDED, MISSING AND RELATIVES DEPARTMENT

Chairman: The Dowager Lady Amptill, C.I., G.B.E.

7 Belgrave Square, London, SW1

Telephone No. Sloane 9696

February 15th, 1944.

MA/MC

Dear Mrs Andrews,

The correspondence concerning your son, Gnr Victor Ernest Andrews, 1528718, the Royal Artillery, was sent to us by the Prisoners of War Department when the distressing news was received that he must again be considered missing, following the sinking of the ship in which he was travelling as a prisoner of war.

All possible enquiries have been made, but no information has been forthcoming, and we have now received the sad news that he must be considered to have lost his life at sea while in enemy hands.

We are returning the correspondence to the Prisoners of War Department, from which you will hear should any information about your son be received.

Please accept the very deep sympathy of all in this Department in your great sorrow.

Yours sincerely,

(sd) Margaret Amptill,

Chairman.

Mrs R Andrews,

2 The Leys,

Olney,

Bucks.

Additional information:

It appears Gunner Victor Andrews was one of the 787 Prisoners of War who died when the Italian ship SS Scillin was sunk by a British submarine on this date.

In the two years between June 1940 and June 1942 the war in North Africa had swung at first in favour of the Allies but then, following the arrival of German Commander Erwin Rommel, in favour of the Axis forces. On the 17th June 1942 Rommel took the besieged city of Tobruk and with it 30,000 prisoners. However by the end of August 1942, with Montgomery in Command of the British Army, the balance began to swing back again and on 12th November Tobruk was recaptured.

The Tragedy of the Sinking of SS Scillin.

On the night of 14th November 1942 the Italian transport ship SS Scillin (a coal-burning steamer of just 1,600 tons) was on a return trip from Tripoli to Italy with 810 British prisoners and 200 Italian soldiers on board when it was sighted by the British submarine P212 'HMS Sahib'. Its captain, Lieutenant Bromage, was unaware of its cargo and after a number of shells from the submarine's deck mounted gun a torpedo was fired at 1950hrs. The prisoners, packed into the main hold of the ship under battened down hatches, had little chance of escape when this struck the small ship. It was reported that Lieutenant Bromage, and his men were astonished and deeply shocked to find so many men in the water. They managed to rescue just 24 Prisoners of War and 35 Italians, including the Captain of the Scillin, before having to leave the area as an enemy vessel approached. The Log of P212 subsequently recorded "It is known that the torpedo blew the bottom out of the hold in which the British were herded and that they died instantly." Its Commander was later officially absolved of any blame.

HMS Sahib itself was depth charged, damaged, abandoned and sunk on 3rd May 1943, - nine days before the Italian and German forces in North Africa finally surrendered.

Further details of the SS Scillin and HMS Sahib can be found at:

www.chessmail.com/copperwire/extract2.html

www.uboot.net/allies/warships/ship/3431.html

www.sportesport.it/wrecksAE016.htm

