

## ***'HMS Dragonfly'***

Sunk on 14 February 1942 by Japanese bombers near Pulau Posik and Pulau Rusuk Buaja

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***'HMS Dragonfly' in Hong Kong 1939***

The invasion of Malaya and Singapore, from the time of the first landings in Northern Malaya on 8 December 1941, was swift and brutal. Within eight weeks the Japanese had taken Malaya and landed on the island of Singapore which had become intensely overcrowded by tens of thousands of fleeing civilians of all races from Malaya plus almost 100,000 servicemen.

By the second week of February 1942 the Japanese army was advancing across Singapore Island and a chaotic evacuation of civilians - mainly Europeans, Eurasians and a small number of influential Chinese – and selected skilled servicemen, was underway from the port in front of what is today's CBD.

Literally any ocean-going vessel of any size remaining in Singapore harbour was ultimately enlisted by the authorities to evacuate people, under what had become almost constant bombing and machine gunning by Japanese planes. Singapore itself was ablaze, columns of black smoke rose thousands of feet in the air and the streets were littered with the dead and dying.

People desperately clamoured for departure passes from the Colonial government authorities (men under 40 years of age had been banned from leaving the Island for months and women had not been publicly encouraged to leave because it would '... adversely affect morale ...'!) to board any ship leaving the Island. By 11 January 1942 even the rather hidebound men in authority saw the absurdity of their bureaucratic incompetence and more passes were issued for civilian men and women to leave, so finally some real urgency entered the situation.

About 46 ships of all sizes - from the quite large refrigerated cargo ship "SS. Empire Star" (525 feet and 12,656 tons) through a range of mid-sized merchant vessels down to some small craft like the "SS. Tandjong Pinang" (which at 97 feet only just qualified in the definition for a 'ship') – were assembled to leave as a convoy during the 48-hour period of 11 – 13 February 1942. There were also several Naval ships of varying sizes identified as evacuation vessels.

The naval ships, apart from a couple of destroyers, which briefly escorted the bigger merchant ships like the 'SS Empire Star' and 'SS Gorgon' after leaving Singapore, included auxiliary (i.e. merchant ships which had been requisitioned) patrol ships, auxiliary minesweepers, flat bottomed ex-Yangste River gunboats and ex Yangste river passenger ships, RAF fast launches and even a large tug like the 'HMS Yin Ping'. Some of these Naval ships had almost exclusively a complement of service personnel on board – but also a few civilians. This was the situation for the 'HMS Ying Ping' which had on board the Commanding Officer's wife and a civil engineer from the Singapore Naval Base.

Of the 46 or so ships leaving in the last window of opportunity (as many thought) only 6 would make it to safety. The other 40 ships would be sunk, run aground, or captured at sea by the Japanese navy with many hundreds of their passengers and crew killed, or taken prisoner to face three and a half years of extremely harsh, malnourished and medically deprived treatment in Internment or POW camps in Sumatra and elsewhere. Many of these women, children and men would die during the remainder of the War in these cruel camps.

To put the research purpose of this document into historical context, the fate of only a small number of the forty or so ships sunk carrying evacuees from Singapore during these last few days before the Surrender to the Japanese on 15 February 1942 have been properly researched and documented. This is one of the attempts to prevent the lives of those several thousand men, women, and children who did die as a result of their escape attempt being simply consigned, without proper tangible memory, into the dustbin of history.

#### **'HMS Dragonfly':**

'HMS Dragonfly' was a Royal Navy 'Locust' class gunboat built by Thornycroft & Co. Ltd and launched in December 1938 ([www.naval-history.com](http://www.naval-history.com)). It was a 60-metre-long, shallow draft (1.5 metre) steam turbine vessel powered by 2 parsons geared turbines and with a top speed of 17 knots.

Built specifically as a river gunboat that could also operate at sea, it was sailed from the UK to China to join the Yangste River Flotilla in September 1939 and deployed on the 'China Station' at Shanghai - where it remained on patrol during 1940-41. At the outbreak of war with Japan the ship was relocated to Singapore for support of the military defence of Malaya.

#### **'HMS Dragonfly' and its evacuation passengers:**

In one of those twists of fate which seem to permeate the chaos and complexity of War it is interesting to note that the 'HMS Dragonfly' and its passengers on the later, last evacuation voyage from Singapore, had already met up in the course of battle. The passengers in the later evacuation

from Singapore comprised mainly officers and soldiers from three British regiments – the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Manchester Regiment; the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, The East Surrey Regiment, the 1<sup>st</sup> Leicestershire Regiment and a few specialists from 15<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Brigade.

The latter three Army units had by then both endured almost the same savage experiences of war simultaneously during the battle for Malaya and some of these men would have known each other on the later fateful voyage.

Winding the chronology of this story back to the early days of the Japanese invasion of Malaya it is noted that it was as early as the battles for Alor Star and Jitra in northern Malaya during 11 – 12<sup>th</sup> December when the 11 Indian Division was overrun and suffered heavy losses, leaving the brunt of the fighting to the 1<sup>st</sup> Leicestershire Regiment covering Jitra to the right of the East Surrey Regiment. Late on the 12th December the Divisional Commander decided to withdraw from Jitra to Gurun and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Surreys were sent back to hold the river bridges on the line of retreat – that night was the first mention of one of the later passengers of the 'HMS Dragonfly' "*... During the evening of 12 December, Captain W.G. Gingell, the redoubtable Quartermaster of 2<sup>nd</sup> Surreys, encountered an enemy patrol at Kepala Batas. Taking them on with his ration parties, drivers and storemen, 'Jungle' Gingell succeeded in killing All the members of the Japanese patrol ...*". New defensive positions were set up just north of Gurun but on the night of the 13<sup>th</sup> the Japanese attacked again and overran and killed the personnel of the Brigade Headquarters. Facing total disorganisation, the Surreys split up (COFEPOW) and began a retreat through the jungle. Many officers and men were killed during this phase resulting in the East Surreys being reduced to 10 officers and 260 other ranks.

On 20<sup>th</sup> December the 2<sup>nd</sup> East Surreys and the 1<sup>st</sup> Leicestershires were merged to form the 'British Battalion' with a complement of 760 other ranks. The British battalion then became part of the 6/15<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Brigade and was reequipped with weapons and clothing so that on 23 December it took up positions at Kampar some forty miles to the south. During this time Captain Gingell again featured in a memorable but less warlike manner "*... Quartermaster Captain Gingell lived up to his reputation by producing a traditional Christmas dinner of turkey along with a free issue of beer, and the memory of that special dinner had to last the battalion throughout the bitter years of captivity that was to follow ...*" (COFEPOW).

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> January the Japanese duly attacked in great numbers and the British Battalion once again bore the brunt of the onslaught with the result that they suffered a further 100 casualties – then followed several weeks of confused retreats southwards and by 27<sup>th</sup> January the situation in Malaya had deteriorated and the Battalion withdrew again – this time from Batu Pahat to Ponggor on the coast. It is recorded on the COFEPOW website history of the East Surreys that "*... this march was a nightmare for the exhausted troops as they struggled through streams and ditches. Crossings were quagmires where men floundered up to their knees in mud...Colonel Morrison of the British Battalion.... realized that the Japanese had cut them off and they would never get south in a formed body...*" He sent two officers in separate sampans [in case one was intercepted) sailed the 15 miles to Divisional headquarters and the navy responded by sending their Yangste River gun-boats 'Scorpion' and Dragonfly'. The gun-boats shallow draft was ideal for the work at hand, though they still needed to tow lines of little boats, sampans and dinghies, to get among the mangroves and take the troops off..." ('Singapore Burning', pp. 410-411).

*For the next three nights 'HMS Dragonfly' and 'HMS Scorpion' took off 2,700 men of the 15<sup>th</sup> Indian Brigade and 53<sup>rd</sup> Brigade who had been cut off along the swampy coastline of Batu Pahat... and more than 3,000 men of the same brigades were cut off west of Rengit. The Navy brought them out ...*" ('Out in the Midday Sun', p.134).

It was there, along the south west coast of the State of Johore, that the Royal Navy arrived to rescue the men of the 'British Battalion' and other units - most of the Battalion boarded the 'HMS Dragonfly' and its sister ship 'HMS Scorpion', landing them at Singapore docks on 29 January 1942.

The British Battalion reformed on Singapore Island and once again, on 9<sup>th</sup> February faced the Japanese on the Jurong Road on Singapore island. In the next few days suffered further heavy losses amongst officers and soldiers, so that by 13 February the Battalion was too weakened in numbers to be an effective fighting unit (COFEPOW history of East Surrey Regiment).

**On the evening of 13<sup>th</sup> February 1942 as the Japanese Army tightened its encirclement of the central area of the city of Singapore the Allied troops and civilians endured constant bombing and artillery shelling - the city was in flames; thousands of dead bodies littered the streets and much of the city lay in ruins. In the suburbs hand to hand fighting was taking place in last ditch attempts to stop the Japanese overrunning the city.**

#### **Evacuation voyage on 'HMS Dragonfly':**

The governmental authorities had been very tardy and inefficient in the evacuation of civilians until only a few days before and now, as the last vessels that could be remotely called 'ships' prepared to leave, chaotic scenes were taking place at the Singapore wharves as dozens of European and Eurasian civilian men, together with hundreds of servicemen from the UK, Australia, India and New Zealand scrambled onto any vessel departing that would take them. By 13 February most women and children who wanted to escape by ship had already gone – albeit that most of the ships which had left in the previous couple of days were doomed to be sunk.

The military had intensified their efforts to evacuate skilled servicemen to Batavia in Java, to prepare for another stand against the Japanese in the Dutch East Indies, and amongst this group were a large group of men from 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Manchester Regiment, together with men from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion East Surrey Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Leicestershire Regiment, and 100 highly skilled men of the RAOC (Royal Army Ordnance Corps). and REME (Royal Corps. Of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers).

A general history of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Manchester Regiment states "... on the night of 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> a specialist party of 26 members of the battalion with 3 Ordnance Corps personnel, together with a similar party from the 2<sup>nd</sup> East Surrey regiment embarked at Singapore on 'HMS Dragonfly' for an unknown destination.... The [remaining] battalion came into action properly on 13<sup>th</sup> February in the Geylang area. Casualties were sustained on the following two days and on the 15<sup>th</sup> two machine gun positions of 'B' company were completely wiped out. Their guns were kept firing until completely over-run by the enemy on all sides.... [after capitulation] the battalion marched from Singapore town to the Prisoner of war concentration area at Changi on 17<sup>th</sup> February, led by Lieutenant – Colonel Holmes carrying a large framed photograph of King George V strapped on his back...".

[www.tameside.gov.uk](http://www.tameside.gov.uk)).

A more accurate preface to the departure is provided by Lieut. Arthur Hesford, Manchester Regiment who apparently wrote after the War "... On 13<sup>th</sup> February 1942 the Japanese had been on the island of Singapore in strength for six or seven days. The Manchesters had been pulled back into the edge of the city and ironically our Battalion HQ, where I, as Assistant Adjutant and Intelligence Officer, was stationed, was in the notorious Lavender Street, the centre of houses of ill-repute. We occupied one of the larger houses in the neighbourhood. The outer room was used as the battalion

*office and the inner room as a temporary mess. Later that day, at about 6.00pm, Lieutenant – Colonel E.B. Holmes the commanding officer received a secret and confidential message from the GOC Malaya. As a result, he called a conference of all company commanders and HQ officers. It took them about two hours to assemble at the lavender Street HQ. the gist of the message was that, in view of the situation he was ordered to select two officers and 24 Warrant officers and NCOs, issue them with official passes which arrived from GOC authorising them to leave Singapore and proceed to Australia by any means they could find. The group had to be specially selected so that when they reached Australia, their qualifications would fit them to be the nucleus of a new 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion to be formed around them. The CO said the conference had been called to decide on the 24 NCOs to be chosen and to make arrangements for them to be relieved of their duties and sent to HQ immediately. There was considerable discussion but eventually the 24 NCOs were chosen: all regulars of long experience and special training such as weapons, signals, transport, etc. They were an exceptional group. The selection was carried out with a great air of secrecy because of the effect on morale if it were known that an escape party was being sent off. The CO announced that he had personally chosen the two officers and they were to be Lieutenant Quinn, Quartermaster and former Regimental Sergeant- Major in command and Lieutenant A. Hesford as second-in-command. Tommy Quinn protested, to no avail, that he did not want to leave the Regiment ...". (Robert Bonner, Administrator. Website the Manchesters.org/forum. 15 April 2018.)*

At Collier Quay at the Singapore wharves (now part of the 'The Fullerton Bay Hotel', Singapore) a small flotilla of modest sized vessels had been gathered to transport these key army personnel and another group of very senior Navy and Airforce Officers to Java.

[Researcher Note: the official line and something repeated by many historians was that this was an effort to redeploy 'skilled servicemen'. The actual composition of the resulting evacuees seems to have been as confused and disorganised as much of the evacuation efforts by the authorities across the board. Closer analysis of exactly who comprised the Manchester Regiment personnel on 'HMS Dragonfly' reveals that many seem to be lesser skilled Cooks, Orderly Room clerks and Quartermaster's clerks – perhaps men who happened to simply be at regimental HQ when the departure time arrived, and took the place of men still occupied in frontline battle – they do not seem to be in the category of the skilled technicians as in the case of the RAOC and REME.]

Commander Alfred Spratt, Royal Navy, was in command of 'HMS Dragonfly' and Lieutenant Patrick Shellard, RNVR the First Officer.

In the UK Archives are several detailed accounts of the last voyage by survivors of the sinking of the 'HMS Dragonfly' in February 1942;

- Captain Robert L. Lyle, a Staff Officer who had been temporarily with the 15<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Brigade.
- Sergeant Major W.F. Evans, Manchester Regiment (unclear whether he was on board or later recorded the events)
- ERA Leonard Walter Williams, Royal Navy (oral history at IWM).
- Captain (Q.M.) W. G. F. Gingell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, East Surrey Regiment.

- Then from the book 'Singapore's Dunkirk' are two other accounts,

- Able Seaman W.J. 'Taff' Long, Royal Navy – one of the 'Dragonfly's' Asdic ratings.
- Lt. Victor B. Ash, RNVR

- extracts of these reports will be used to describe the last fateful voyage with first-hand accounts.

Firstly, we have from 'Taff' Long (SD p.188 – 189) "... *Singapore was now a very unhealthy place. Smoke and flames were to be seen from all directions. Fighting was taking place in the city. Shells were falling in and around the harbour and small arms fire was to be heard in all directions. Oil from the massive installations on the island of Pulau Samboe had been released into the sea and was now on fire; from it rose great columns of thick, dense, acrid smoke which billowed hundreds of feet into the sky to cast an oily, sooty residue wherever it settled.*

*Dragonfly's ships company, weary from days and nights at sea, constantly at action stations, had arrived at a point where sleep was taken where possible; food and drink at one's post. It was dark when the gunboat made fast at one of the jetties ... no organised party of men appeared. Stragglers there were in twos and threes, but these were denied access because they were men seeking to leave unofficially. At approximately 2200 I was detailed with four other seamen under the command of a Petty Officer to contact men who were to be evacuated. We were issued with rifles and bayonets and climbed onto the jetty. Bullets were striking the galvanised side of the warehouses, whether fired by friend or foe we had no idea.... Confusion reigned supreme ... Suddenly a group of men appeared and 'Do you know where the Dragonfly is?' was audible above the general racket. These were our men led by an army captain called Brown, I think. Apparently, the remainder had been split up into sections to lessen the risk of casualties if they were fired upon.... About another fifteen men appeared and while the PO remained in my position my 'oppo' and I took these – running – taking cover- hell bent for the ship. About this time mortar shells began exploding in and around the godowns, smacking down on the jetty surface and scattering shrapnel in all directions... On arriving alongside everyone in the party threw their weapons over the guard rail and clambered aboard with a few chosen words of relief. In our absence others had come aboard. The gangplank had been stowed away, when yet another party, led by the Petty Officer, dashed up and threw themselves any way they could on to the ship's deck ... The Captain on the bridge shouted 'We can't wait any longer, cast off forrad. Cast off aft' and the bow swung away from the jetty. For some reason we did not cast off aft but proceeded out to sea snapping the spring with a loud 'twang'. It was now approximately two am ... by four am we were well out to sea – running at full speed, the engines throbbing with power ... I took over the Asdic and my 'oppo' said that the 'Grasshopper' somewhere off our port beam, was to accompany us wherever we were going ...".*

Then from S/Major Evans of the Manchester Regiment a more précised and clinical description "... *On Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> February 'HMS Dragonfly', Commander Lieut. P. B [sic] Shellard, RNVR, was lying near 'HMS Laburnam' near Clifford Pier, Singapore. Towards midnight they came under shellfire and for that reason put off from the 'Laburnam'. At about 0100 hours on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1942 a party of officers and men – 63 in all a- arrived at the quayside. The gunboat put back and embarked the troops under shellfire. The original number to be embarked was 250. The course was set for Batavia Strait...".*

Even more formally, Captain Lyle records "... *At about 0200 hours on the 14 Feb 1942 'HMS Dragonfly' in company with 'HMS Gunboat 'Grasshopper' removed detailed evacuation parties of the various Brigades and Divisions which then remained on Singapore island. At this period both ships were very badly shelled but appeared to sustain little damage and no casualties ...".*

Captain Gingell, East Surrey Regiment, gives another insight “... *The embarkation, however, was not carried out in the orthodox manner as the enemy was shelling the area very heavily. It was a case of individuals climbing on to the boat and being pulled on board by those already on the ship...*”.

### Passengers on the ‘HMS Dragonfly’:

There was no passenger list compiled for those on board the ‘HMS Dragonfly’ so we are reliant upon the individual memory and later records made by survivors for our knowledge of who was on board.

Captain Lyle of the Headquarters Company/ 15<sup>th</sup> Indian infantry Brigade recorded “ ... *There had not been a great deal of time to check up on the exact numbers on board the ship or get their names and Regiments, particularly as in getting to the ship on Singapore island our parties had been very badly shelled and cut up, and many of the other ranks had lost their Officers in charge. It was however estimated that the naval crew amounted to 73 and that the total number of persons on board was 225 i.e. 152 Army personnel of various Regiments that were made up chiefly of men from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, The East Surrey Regiment, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Manchester Regiment, my party of Headquarters, 6/15 Indian Inf. Brigade, a few RAF and a few miscellaneous people such as Intelligence Corps. The majority of the other ranks were quartered in, what I believe, was the ratings mess deck, aft...*”

Captain Gingell from the East Surrey Regiment states in his report “ ... *It is impossible for me to say who actually embarked, although I started off with one other officer and 24 other ranks of the East Surrey and Leicester Regiment and attached RAOC, only a few of this party actually got on board the ‘Dragonfly’... There were other personnel on the ‘Dragonfly’ but I regret to say I have forgotten who they were...*”.

L/Cpl Hollard, Reconnaissance Corp, who was apparently also on the ship (UK National Archives Statement 3855191, ADM267/122 Admiralty series) states, “ ... *There were about 45 Officers and other ranks of the Manchester regiment on board, also 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Strolly, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Elton, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Elkins, myself and two Privates both named Jones of the 18 Div. reconnaissance Unit. The crew was about 20 men....one lifeboat and two Carley Floats were launched, and I managed to get on one of the latter with about 10 other men including a chief officer named Morris ...”.*

Captain David Nelson of the Bureau of Record and Enquiry in Changi POW camp recorded “... *Passengers approximately 77 Army; approximately 45 survivors reached Padang ...”.*

Geoffrey Brooke in his book ‘Singapore’s Dunkirk’ gives the army contingent as 63 officers and men and makes the comment that whilst the original total of number of troops to be embarked was 250 “... *it was just as well for those left behind that they were ...”.*

From the various reports by the officers, NCOs (particularly Sgt Major Evans, Manchester Regiment) and men mentioned above we have the following specific names as having boarded;

- Captain Gingell, QM, 2<sup>nd</sup> Btn, **East Surrey Regiment**, plus from **The East Surrey Regiment**,
  - Sgts. Cahill and Vaughan.
  - L/Cpls. Clothier and Bray.
  - Privates Jenkins, Noad and Stallwood.
- Captain R.L Lyle, **15<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Brigade**.
- Sub-Conductor Godfrey, IAOC. BOWO to 15<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Brigade.
- Sgt Ball, Royal Signals, 11 Div. Signals att. To 15<sup>th</sup> Indian infantry Brigade.

- Sgt Smith, Cipher, 15th Indian Infantry Brigade.
- Cpl. Craft, Signals, 11 Div. signals att. to 15th Indian Infantry Brigade.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Elkins, **18 Div. Reconnaissance Unit**, plus,
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Elton and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Strolly
  - L/Cpl. Hollard
  - Privates Jones and Jones
- Arms Sgt. Cole, **REME**.
- Tpy. Sgt. White, **RASC**.
- RQMS. Murdy, **Leicestershire Regiment**, plus from that Regiment
  - Sgt Farrands
  - Pte. Daniels, Ford and Pegg.
- Sgt. Cole, **RAOC** att. to The Manchester Regiment.
- Sgt. Noyce, **RAOC**. Att. to The Manchester Regiment
- Sgt Walker, **RAOC** att. to The Manchester Regiment.
  - Plus, the following all from **The Manchester Regiment**,
  - Lieut. Quinn, MM.
  - Lieut. Hesford.
  - RSM. Sturch (Sturdy?)
  - RQMS. Le Page.
  - Sergeants Dooley, Meredith, Noble, Openshaw, Robinson, Stilwell, and Spencer.
  - CSM Lucy
  - CSM Windsor
  - C/Sgt. Fellows/Fellowes
  - Cpls. Bray, Bostock, Hake, Olsson, Maskery.
  - L/Cpls. Daniels/Danials, Farnell, Hepworth, R. Taylor 34, J. Taylor 43, and Mitchell.
  - Private Bennett 99.

This comprises the names of only 53 men – somewhat less than the number of 63 servicemen boarding the ‘HMS Dragonfly’ that night as reported by Sgt Major Evans, or Captain David Nelson’s 77 Army personnel, and drastically fewer than the [ seemingly incorrect] 152 army servicemen stated by Captain Lyle.

However, research into individuals (see personal entries of passengers below) evidences 57 men, including the 18 Division Reconnaissance unit men. [ Researcher Note: the ‘18 Division reconnaissance Unit’ mentioned above was in fact the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of ‘The Loyals’ - the Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire) - and became the ‘Recon Unit’ for the 18<sup>th</sup> (East Anglian) Infantry Division. It arrived on the ‘Empress of Asia’ on 5 February as the ‘18<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Btn’], for whom we have only the surnames.

Given the Evans and Lyle statements and the chaos stated to have occurred during embarkation on the night, plus the reported incidence of men ‘smuggling’ themselves aboard most evacuation ships during the week before the Surrender on 15 February, **we can assume that there are somewhere between 5 and 20 servicemen who were lost, who we still cannot trace, when the ship was sunk later that day.**

[In addition, a civilian Frank Brewer, recorded that to his knowledge one George Piercy of Sime Derby was also on board – this remains unconfirmed].



### Crew on the 'HMS Dragonfly':

Captain Lyle tells us that there were 73 naval crew on the ship, which does almost exactly match the number given on the website [www.wrecksite.eu](http://www.wrecksite.eu) for 'Locust' class vessels such as the 'HMS Dragonfly'.

The number of crew identified by research totals 61 men.

The officers on the ship were;

- Lt. Cmdr. A.W. Sprott, Royal Navy.
- Lt. P. P. Shellard, RNVR.
- Lt. S. L. Iley, Royal Navy.
- Ty. Sub Lt C.W. Tombs, RNVR.
- Lt. A. R. Clarke, RNZNVR\*

[ The names of the above officers have come from reports listing them as such – the exception is that of **Lieutenant Anthony Ruthven Clarke, RNZNVR** whose name is derived from the account left by Captain Lyle where, on p.3, he recorded after the sinking [and his reaching what the researcher believes to have been Pulau Rusuk Buaja]“ ...*The following morning a Sub.-Lieut. , whose name I believe was Clarke, a New Zealander, arrived walking along the beach with 8 others. They had been on the second [Carley] float and had got ashore a little further up the coast...having remained on this small island for 48 hours ...we were told to go to another small island ... the name of this island to which we eventually got was called I believe Pissec (spelling doubtful)... [ researcher note : this would have been Pulau Posik]...*”. Official records link Lt Clarke’s death with the “HMS Hung Jao” on which he had served as 2<sup>nd</sup> Officer prior to the invasion but which had been scuttled in the Indragiri River on the eastern coast of Sumatra after evacuating people to there. Royal New Zealand Navy records are unclear stating that he died on 28 February 1942, but with the suggestion that there were reports that he was” ... *missing after escape from Muntok camp ...*” on Banka Island.]

### The sinking of the 'HMS Dragonfly':

For the events leading up to the sinking of the ship on 14 February 1942 we return to 'Taff Long' and his eloquent descriptions;

*“... Dawn broke (it was St Valentine’s Day); behind us lay Malaya, and ahead we thought, Java and possibly Australia. It was a bright, clear dawn, the tropical sky cloudless and the sea like a huge burnished lake with hardly a ripple to break the surface. Off our beam was the ‘Grasshopper’ and both of us throwing up bow waves as we steamed ahead at full power. The ‘Dragonfly was grossly overloaded, our small galley quite inadequate but tea and cocoa were handed round. Most however preferred to sleep; exhausted, dirty and unshaven they lay in all manner of places, wardroom flat, alongside the wheelhouse, on top of the ‘spud’ locker – anywhere they could lay their heads...”*

Then Captain Lyle's statement;

*"... After steaming at probably maximum speed the remainder of the night, at 0930 hrs the same morning (i.e. 14 Feb) a Japanese Flying Boat was sighted which was very obviously on reconnaissance. At this time HMS 'Dragonfly' was leading and HMS 'Grasshopper' was following about a mile astern.*

*The Flying Boat flew over the 'Dragonfly' and dropped two bombs of small calibre. Both however were near misses and no damage was done. The ships guns went into action. The Flying Boat paid no attention to HMS 'Grasshopper'. As this plane was so obviously a reconnaissance aircraft, the Commander of our Gunboat decided to get under the lee of one of the small islands in the vicinity, in an endeavour to evade any aircraft which might be sent after us. To put this into effect our course was changed slightly. The Commander of HMS 'Dragonfly' was to the best of my knowledge by name of Commander Sprott. The Commander of the 'Grasshopper' being Commander Hoffman. However, before reaching cover of the islands, large numbers of Japanese bombers were seen to be approaching from a northerly direction and I was informed by the first officer, Lieut. P. P. Shellard, RNVR., that he had counted some 123. On sighting of the aircraft, the alarm was sounded and all non-naval personnel were ordered below. I myself was put into the corridor between the Officer's quarters forward [sic] along with a number of other army officers, and spare gun crews of the ship's forward guns..."*

Sgt. Major Evans gives his perspective on these events *"... At about 1100 hours, 14<sup>th</sup> February 1942, 'HMS Dragonfly' was off Posik Island [this is now called Pulau Posik], one of the eighty islands of the Lingga group, on the east coast of Sumatra. Posik Island itself consisting of several small islands [researcher note – Pulau Posik has another similar sized island to its north by the name of Rusuk Buaja which is mentioned as the location of the sinking by another survivor]. All those not on anti-aircraft lookout were below in the messdecks aft, the officers being in the cabin flat..."*

The very large formation of bombers ignored the 'Dragonfly' which had now reached Posik island (Pulau Posik). All the passengers had been issued with lifejackets and those not on aircraft look-out duty were sent below to the aft mess decks, the officers being in the 'cabin flat'. However, this was a false calm as Sgt Major Evans now tells us;

*"... Sixty-three Japanese bomber appeared flying in seven flights of nine and attacked the two gunboats. The first attack was successful, a whole stick appeared to land on the mess decks which were so damaged that Lt Shellard was unable to get down to them. No casualties occurred amongst the officers, who were about six in number, as a result of the bombing ..."*

The ship had shuddered and stopped from its previous full speed ahead.

Captain Lyle commented in his report that *"... On looking round I was able to see that the very worst had happened and that the entire ship, aft of the smoke stack, was just a mass of twisted metal, and that the stern of the ship had completely disappeared. It is my belief that the depth charges which were in position for us to use had exploded, causing the chaos. On going closer to the gap, it appeared that it would have been impossible for any man to be alive who had been in the after-Mess*

deck. However, we managed to get two very badly wounded men through a bomb hole. It was not possible to do very much as the ship was by this time a good deal more than half submerged...”.

Able Seaman ‘Taff’ Long reinforces the horror of this terrible scene “... *The ‘Dragonfly’ was already down by the stern as the captain shouted, ‘Abandon Ship’. I ran down the ladder to the upper deck and looked into the boiler room to see more flames and smoke. There was a hiss of escaping steam and two or three stokers there with skin hanging off them in bits and pieces... (engine room personnel in the tropics wore nothing but shorts and slippers and therefore had no protection whatsoever from the scalding, boiling steam). The whaler was being lowered and was level with the upper deck. I helped some of them into the whaler when there was a shout ‘What about the engine room?’. Two or three of us ran to the engine room casing. What a sight – flames, smoke but no sound of wounded men; just the hissing of escaping steam – great clouds of it being forced out at high pressure. It was impossible to get down there. The mess deck must have also been a shambles. All those men crammed into a restricted area had received a direct hit as also had the engine room. The force of the explosions had blown the bulkheads between the boiler room, the engine room and the mess decks. We were now well down by the stern, the upper deck being level with the sea.*

*I made my way towards the whaler. On my way I saw a stoker standing in the gangway. He had been hit in the throat and blood was coming from his mouth. He couldn’t talk, and he couldn’t see as his eyes had been caught by the steam. I led him to the whaler which by now was loaded beyond capacity with wounded and unconscious men. The stoker was helped aboard but when I was about to get in a PO named Brennan shouted ‘Sorry Taff, we’ve too many now’.... I blew up my lifejacket, kicked off my sandals, ran to the other side to be out of reach of the suction when she sank and jumped in... After a few minutes I turned and looked at the ‘Dragonfly’. She was down by the stern with about 15 feet of bow sticking out of the water. Hanging on to the bullring was a seaman called Finch who came from Canvey Island, and who I knew couldn’t swim. As I looked the ship sank gradually lower and with a final shudder and hissing of steam – a maelstrom of bubbles on turbulent water – she slid below the sea, carrying with her the bulk of the ship’s company and nearly all the odds and bods we had picked up in Singapore. This all happened in about ten minutes ...”*

The first bomb had destroyed the rear of the ship and it appears that the stern had totally disappeared. Then two more bombs hit near the front of the ship with shrapnel and other debris scything across the bridge whether Commander Sprott and Lieutenant Iley were killed at this point is unclear but there were no confirmed sightings of them after this point.

Sgt Major Evans and Captain Lyle estimate that the ship sank only five minutes after the bombs hit the ship; Captain Gingell estimates seven minutes and Evans states that the ship’ turned turtle’.

Evans explains that there was only one ‘whaler’ on board, and this had been badly damaged by shrapnel while in Singapore and during the attack off Pulau Posik. In addition, the ship carried several ‘Carley’ floats.

The whaler was soon overloaded with men – with the twelve or so badly wounded men who had been in the mess deck plus some naval ratings. Sub Lt Victor Ash had also been pulled into the whaler from the sea According to Sgt Major Evans the ‘whaler’ had 25 persons on board instead of the normal complement of 14; Captain Lyle recorded that by the time it reached shore there were 22 men on board plus 5 who had swum with him. Lt Shellard was hanging onto the side of the whaler and Captain Lyle was also picked up from the sea.

The horror of the attack was still not over because about 45 minutes after the ship sank nine bombers returned and, flying line astern (recorded by 'Taff' Long) at a very low level ( Victor Ash describes it as “ ... *point blank range, only a few feet above us ...*” p. 195 SD), they made three sorties from different directions, each of three planes, machine gunning the men in the whaler and the men near it in the sea.

Victor Ash says “... *many in the boat were killed outright and several others badly wounded. The whaler was beginning to fill up with water due to holes made by the bullets ... I saw one poor fellow sitting on the middle thwart, with a gaping hole in his thigh, huddled over, and, pointing to him, I shouted 'Is he dead?'. The man opened his eyes immediately and called out 'No. I'm not dead'. He died very soon afterwards and was put over the side ...*”.

'Taff' Long, one of those men swimming in the sea, described the scene “...*I could distinctly see the canopies of the rear turrets slid back, the twin barrels of the machine guns poking over the side and the figures of the enemy gunners. I also saw a fusillade of bullets lashing the water all around and heard the awful cries of men being hit – some of whom were already wounded.... I let go of my lifebelt and dived as deep as possible ... Seconds, I suppose, but it seemed to be the longest time of my life. I shot up to the surface and looked around – the planes were climbing to vanish into the distance... looked for signs of life, but tragically all I could see were the bodies of six or seven men lying lifeless in the water. Of the two or three others there was no sign....*”.

The whaler, which had been machine gunned twice by the Japanese bombers and had suffered very heavy casualties, reached the shore of an unnamed island [perhaps Pulau Rusuk Buaja] at about 5 pm (Evans report), after picking up Captain Gingell and men swimming in a group with him towards the same island - about 8 of those in the whaler were in a very serious condition.

One of the Carley floats seems to have been “... *making its way in a direction that I presumed to be Sumatra where a vague outline of coast could be seen ...*” (Captain Lyle).

A second Carley float was seen by Captain Lyle to also head in the direction of the island he could see, but it looks like that float actually went to Pulau Posik. It may have been this float which carried CQMS Cahill to safety and on which L/Cpl Bray (they were both of The East Surrey Regiment) died.

The whaler had landed on what Ash describes as “... *what turned out to be an uninhabited island... had great difficulty in pulling the boat up in one foot of water. At high tide there was only about three yards of dry sand, and then just dense jungle which we found too thick to penetrate...*”. Captain Lyle describes the situation they found as “... *unfortunately we found the island to which we had got possessed no food or water and nothing much could be done for the wounded, numbering considerably more than half of those remaining ...*”.

For the record there are three islands closely adjacent to the sinking of the 'HMS Dragonfly' and the shores reached by survivors – they are Pulau Posik, Pulau Rusuk Buaja and Blakan Outan – all north west of the larger island of Singkep.

### **Casualties and Survivors:**

It appears that there were up to 150 men in all on the 'HMS Dragonfly' – total estimated numbers appear to have been close to 73 crew and 55 - 77 servicemen as passengers.

We know from Sgt. Major Evans that there were no casualties amongst the six officers on board as a result of bombs hitting the ship, but Captain Lyle does record that **Commander Sprott** died “believed

drowned' and it appears that he might have "... *gone down with his ship ...*" – with no eye-witness recording specific circumstances of his death are essentially unknown but he seems to have drowned in the sinking of his ship.

Lt Shellard was hit in the shoulder by a machine gun bullet whilst holding onto the side of the whaler and he was then hauled into that shell damaged little craft once they occupants had disposed of dead bodies after the machine gun attack – apparently keeping his hand over the bullet hole to minimise leakage.

The earliest casualties had been most of the Army Other Ranks who had been sent below decks prior to the bombing and as Captain Lyle surmised "... *it appeared that it would have been impossible for any men to be alive who had been in the after-mess deck...*". Despite this we have numbers of wounded who managed to get out of the Mess decks that range from the 'one or two' stated by Captain Lyle to 'ten or twelve' by Evans.

Clearly there were immediate and significant numbers of casualties in the boiler room, as Taff Long recorded with his awful description of the steam burned stokers and a stoker hit in the throat. Other men would have drowned as the ship sank – either caught in the suction of the hull going down in the sea - or perhaps tragically because they could not swim as **Ordinary Seaman Finch** from Canvey island was unable to do, and who Taff Long saw holding onto the 'bullring' at the bow of the ship as it slid down into the sea.

Many men were then killed either in the whaler (about eight by estimation) when it was machine gunned and, in the sea, around as the Japanese bombers continued to strafe the men swimming in the water – Taff Long estimated ten deaths of men swimming around him on that occasion.

Evans tells us that "... *On landing, of the army personnel there were only the two officers and six other ranks surviving and of the latter four died before the next evening... Of the two other ranks who survived one was a Sgt. Of the East Surreys [researcher: this was probably Sgt Cahill] and the other may possibly have been Cpl. Hake...*".

Victor Ash recorded the casualties from the crew "... *Two poor stokers died in two days. Both had been blinded by one of the bombs and their hands and arms were red raw. They must have suffered agony and were continually crying out for water of which we had none. We scooped a hole for them in the sand with our hands some distance away and buried them. Two of our survivors were Malay ratings who were able to climb a palm tree and throw down some coconuts ...*".

Taff Long had made his own way to an island [ probably Pulau Posik] after a long and exhausting swim before collapsing on the shore of a mangrove. The following day, delirious, he made his way around the coast to a beach where he found survivors from both the 'Dragonfly' and also 'HMS Grasshopper' with quite a few serious casualties amongst them – he was told that the skipper [Commander Sprott] had gone down with his ship and "... *our Sub -Lieutenants had also perished [researcher: perhaps referring to Lt Iley and Tpy Lt Tombs] and nearly all our engine room branch gone. Very few of the seamen had survived – some were badly burned, and some had machine gun bullets in them. There were half a dozen dead who had been laid out some distance away as there were no tools with which to bury them. It had been decided to throw them in the sea and hope that the tide would take them out...*".

Captain Lyle states that insofar as survivors on what was probably Pulau Rusuk Buaja, after meeting the nine survivors including Lt Clarke "... *This made the total count 36. Others may have possibly got ashore by swimming to other islands in the vicinity, but in my own opinion, I am afraid that they must*

have been very few, as the majority of the ships total complement, particularly those of the Army, must have been killed outright in the first explosion or were killed during machine-gunning of the lifeboat...". He provided the following list of those he knew to have died;

- **Lieut. T. Quinn**, QM, 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. Manchester Regiment (believed drowned)
- **Sub -Cond. Godfrey**, IAOC., BOWO, 15 Ind Inf Bde (by machine gun fire in the sea)
- **Sgt Ball, Royal Signals**, 11 Div. Sigs., att. 15 Ind Inf Bde. Sigs. (died 19.2.42 possibly Dabo)
- **Cpl. Craft**, 11 Div. Sigs, att., 15 Ind Inf Bde Sigs (died 19.2.42 possibly Dabo).
- **Sgt Smith**, Cipher, 15 Ind Inf Bde. HQ.

The "Official Evacuation party Ex Singapore' list for the Manchester Regiment (held in the UK National Archives) states" ... *This party of 29 officers, NCOs and men, under Lt. T. Quinn .... According to Comdr Shellard only 2 survivors of 1/Manch – Lt Hesford and one O.R. In actual fact 4 survivors (as noted) Lt Hesford, Cpl Bostock, L/C Taylor 43, and L/C Taylor 34.... No further news of the remaining 25...".*

[Note: One intriguing story of a survivor mentioned here by Captain Lyle was "... the following morning a Sub-Lieut., whose name I believe was Clarke, New Zealander, arrived walking along the beach with 8 others. They had been on the second float and had got ashore a little further up the coast..." He later records him as "... Sub-Lieut. Clarke, RNR (Last seen Dabok) ...". This appears to be **Lieut Anthony Ruthven Clarke, RNZNVR**, who official sources record as being on the 'SS Hung Jao' [ which he had been prior to the evacuation] but it now looks like he was in fact escaping Singapore on 'HMS Dragonfly'. Clarke was later recorded as going 'Missing' after escaping from Muntok POW camp on Banka Island on 28 February - this is a long way south from Pulau Posik and he must have made his way with others, firstly to Dabo on Singkep island and then somehow to Banka island where he would have been captured by the Japanese.]

Captain Gingell recorded "... I also saw **Lieut. Quinn** in the water, but I did not see him again after the machine-gun attack. **L/Cpl. Bray** and **Ptes. Noad and Stallwood**, I did not see after the ship was bombed and sunk. **WO. Godfrey**, I regret to say, was very badly burnt and was later killed by machine-gun fire from the enemy aircraft. He was buried at sea. **C/Sjt. Cahill** and **L/Cpl. Clothier** were with me in the water and I later left them in India..."

One unresolved piece of research is the identity and fate of the six '18 Division Reconnaissance Unit' men noted as being on board – none appear as deaths in the records of the CWGC and only one so far has appeared as a surviving POW – 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Guy Bruce Elton – in the M19 Liberation Questionnaires scanned to date from the COFEPOW website. L/Cpl Hollard also appears to have also survived.

**The terrible result appears to be that, apart from four Army officers – who all reached Sumatra and boarded evacuation ships to India - all but three of the other (total) complement of 77 Army personnel were killed during the two phases of the attacks by the Japanese bombers, drowned attempting to reach land, died of wounds on shore once they reached Dabo on Singkep Island (Sgt Ball, Cpl. Craft and L/Cpl Bray), or later died in POW camps ( Cpl Bostock). Of the naval officers and crew Lt Ash also reached Padang in Sumatra and subsequently India, but of the total of 73 officers and crew only 19 reached Padang alive and they were too late to board the evacuation ships for India – all becoming POWs and five dying of disease and malnutrition in POW camps in Sumatra ( Stoker P.O. Edmunds, Leading Seaman Brennan, and Able Seamen Bowie, Tivey and Williamson), with another (CRA Morris)losing his life in the sinking of the POW 'hell ship' 'Harugiku Maru' in 1944 whilst being transported .**

### Rescue by Small boats:

Taff Long continues with his account of the first island on which the survivors had landed “...The wounded were pitiful to see and suffered greatly. We spent four more days on the beach sustained mainly by coconuts and then a large motor launch in charge of a Dutch civilian and manned by natives came searching for us...They made several trips that night and transported us all to the island of Singkep, where we were directed to the Dutch clubhouse. The majority of the wounded were taken to the native hospital... One of our wounded was a stoker from the ‘Dragonfly’ called Farley. He pleaded with us not to let him go with the other wounded but to keep him with us and he would take the consequences. The sailors amongst us decided that we would look after him by ourselves. He was a mass of raw flesh after being scalded in the ‘Fly’ and he had been shot twice when he was in the whaler – but his resolve and courage were magnificent ...”.

Captain Lyle seems to have taken a slightly different route with the party of survivors from the ‘whaler’, “... having remained on this small island for 48 hours and having endeavoured to make the whaler more or less seaworthy we eventually were able to contact the crew of HMS ‘Grasshopper’ by means of a native in a small sampan. We were told to go to another small island where they would endeavour to get a few medical supplies to us. The name of this island to which we eventually got was called I believe Pissec (spelling doubtful). Unfortunately, we were not met here by anyone and it is believed that there must have been a number of places of a similar name and we had arrived at the wrong one. Between the time of landing and arriving at this island we had lost a number of the wounded, they having died. We had been at the second island for about 24 hours when a number of large sampans arrived which were sent by a Dutch Controller of another island some 40 or 50 miles away, he having heard of the various disasters. The town from which they had come was a small Dutch settlement by the name of Dabok [ researcher: this is Dabo on Singkep island] .... Shortly after joining up with the personnel of HMS ‘Grasshopper’ a motor launch arrived to take us off to Dabok which had also been arranged by the Controller of that particular island...”.

### **Prisoners of War:**

Most survivors made it to Sumatra and then Padang, the port on the west coast – the officers generally getting there quickly and being evacuated on naval and merchant ships to Ceylon. Most of the naval ratings and ‘ordinary ranks’ soldiers became POWs at Padang because they were too late to be evacuated – these were a mix of those who had been on the ‘float that headed for Sumatra’ and those who travelled the circuitous route via Dabo on Singkep island.

This large group of ‘HMS Dragonfly’ survivors captured at Padang on 17.3.42 were soon sent to Medan in northern Sumatra. But three Lance Corporals - Harry Bostock, James Taylor and Richard Taylor - of the Manchester Regiment had joined the composite armed forces group of POWs known as ‘The British Sumatra Battalion’ and were sent from Medan to the ‘Burma Railway’ camps, whilst the remainder of Royal Navy and Army survivors became part of a large pool of POWs who ended up in the Pekanbaru ‘Sumatra Railway’ camps.

Both were horrendous outcomes with severe starvation, disease and violence and appalling death rates.

Whilst the naval ratings making up the crew of the ‘HMS Dragonfly’ had a higher rate of survival in the bombing and sinking of the ship they suffered terribly on the ‘Burma Railway’ and the ‘Sumatra Railway’ camps and eight men died as POWs. There were very few Army ‘other ranks’ who survived the bombing and sinking so there were only a few men who became POWs - of this small group of Army survivors two men died on the Burma Railway.

Whilst many men still lie in the wreck of the ship off Pulau Posik, three men who survived the sinking also from HMS Dragonfly “still lie in a forgotten cemetery (Camp 14A) on the Pekanbaru Death railway – Able Seaman William Lovesey, Stoker Ivan Pardoe and Stoker Martin Edmunds – they were overlooked in the post war relocation of remains from graves on the Sumatra Railway to Jakarta and today lie in rest amongst the jungles of Sumatra near the kampung of Petai. Other survivors of the initial sinking and attacks in the sea lie on either Pula Posik or Rusuk Buaja, or perhaps at Dabo on Singkep.

.....

Anyone who has corrections, amendments, clarifications or additional material on the events, the crew or passengers of ‘HMS Dragonfly’ is most welcome to contact the researcher and compiler of this document: Michael Pether, 2/23 Sanders Avenue, Takapuna, Auckland, 0622, New Zealand. Email is [mncpether@gmail.com](mailto:mncpether@gmail.com). Telephone number is New Zealand 09-4865754 or mobile New Zealand 0274543695.

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**Crew:**



- **AHMAD – Telegraphist Ahmad Bin Sayidi**, #MN 871 (Royal Navy Malay Section), died 14.2.42, 'HMS Dragonfly', also memorialised on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, panel 97, Col. 3. (CWGC).
- **BATJAN – Signalman Batjan Bin Muhammad Ali**, # MN 1126 (Royal Navy Malay Section), died 14.2.42, 'HMS Dragonfly' also memorialised on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 97, Col. 3. (CWGC).
- **BAXTER – Artificer Arthur Leonard Baxter**, P/MX 53077. Royal Navy, 'HMS Dragonfly'. He was captured on 17.3.42 (presumably in Padang, Sumatra, when the Japanese entered what had become an 'open town' by the Dutch) and became a POW in Padang, Medan and on the Sumatra railway (COFEPOW). [Researcher Note: COFEPOW have his name recorded incorrectly as 'Bastard'. His story is also recorded in an Oral History at the UK Archives – wherein he talks of swimming to shore at 'Pabou Pasik' [ means 'Pulau Posik'] according to the UK Archives summary of the interview. Arthur Baxter came from Portsmouth and trained at 'HMS Fishguard'.
- **BOWIE – Able Seaman Robert Bowie**, D/SSX 23725, Royal Navy, was on the 'HMS Dragonfly' according to the CWGC death records – we therefore assume, for the purposes of this document, he was on the ship on its last voyage. Must have survived the sinking and reached safety because it is recorded that he is buried in the Salford (Agecroft) Cemetery, Sec. 25, Grave 725. (COFEPOW). Also, on the Agecroft Cemetery website a newspaper clipping "... Able Seaman Robert Bowie, formerly of David Street, Lower Broughton, aged 25. When parents died in 1937 joined Navy and had served seven years. Grandmother lives at Arm Street, Bradford ...".
- **BRENNAN – Leading Seaman Christopher Brennan**, D/J 100502, MID ("... For Gallantry and devotion to Duty in Singapore"), Royal Navy. 'HMS Dragonfly'. Survived the sinking but he died as a POW, aged 38 years, on 29.6.42, son of Mr. & Mrs. John William Brennan and husband of Germaine Brennan of Peverell, Plymouth (COFEPOW). He is also memorialised on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 101, Col. 1(CWGC). Christopher Brennan does not appear on the POW deaths in the records of either Palembang camp or on the 'Sumatra Railway' - nor was he part of the 'Sumatra Battalion'. His POW history is unknown.
- **BROWN – Leading Stoker George Brown**, D/JX 95520, Royal Navy, 'HMS Dragonfly', aged 37 years, died 14.2.42, son of Edwin and Mary Ann Brown, husband of Genevieve Doris Brown of Tavistock, Devon. Also memorialised on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 69, Col.2. George Brown left a daughter Mary aged 3 years and his wife Doris never remarried, dying in 1996 ( [www.forcez](http://www.forcez) website).
- **CANTLE - Able Seaman George Arthur Cantle**, D/JX 255471, MPK, Royal Navy. Died 14.2.42, 'HMS Dragonfly'. Son of Arthur and Elsie Cantle of Bloomsbury, London and husband of Violet Cantle. He is also memorialised on the Plymouth Naval Memorial Panel 64, Col. 2 (CWGC).

- **CHALCRAFT – Engine Room Artificer George Louis Chalcraft, P/MX 53758, Royal Navy, ‘HMS Dragonfly’.** Captured 18.3.42 And became a POW in Sumatra – Padang, Medan and the Sumatra railway (COFEPOW).
- **CLARKE – “... Lieutenant Anthony Ruthven Clarke, RNZNVR, died 28.2.42, aged 35 years, the son of Berkeley and K. Clarke of Southampton, England; husband of Rita Clarke of Napier, New Zealand. Also remembered on the Devonport (NZ) Naval memorial, Panel 7...”** (CWGC). Lt Anthony ‘Tony’ Ruthven Clarke was from Wellington, New Zealand and was raised by a father, Berkeley Clarke, who was an experienced, serious blue water sailor and Commodore of the premier yacht club in that city, The Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club. Tony must have gained a lot of deep water experience himself with boats because in 1937, aged 30 years, ‘Tony’ Clarke made several delivery voyages along the challenging east coast of the North Island of New Zealand with yachts (‘Argo’ 31 feet and ‘Marangi’ 40 feet) for new owners in Auckland and Wellington and the following year he delivered the 45 foot motor cruiser ‘Strathmore’ from Auckland To Wellington. He also participated in a ‘trans – Tasman’ ocean race between Australia and New Zealand. In 1937 Tony married Rita Herbert from Woodville (Rita died in 1989 aged 80 years of age) – clearly Tony, by that time, was interested in some future involvement with the navy because there is a newspaper report of “...Mrs Tony Clarke winning the Mahjong competition prize at a Navy League function in Auckland...” (‘New Zealand Herald’ – NZH - 1.4.38). That year Tony was also establishing himself in the boating business in Auckland, because there is an advertisement in the NZH (28.10.38) by a company named ‘Stacey & Wass, 305 Dilworth Buildings, Auckland’ announcing the opening of a Marine Department under the charge of “... A.R. ‘Tony’ Clarke, well known as a deep water yachtsman... he sailed the ‘Rangi’ to Sydney and back and skippered ‘Lady Edna’, ‘Argo’ and ‘Marangi’ to Wellington ...”. Then in 1939 there is a newspaper report of the birth of a daughter to Mr & Mrs A.R. Clarke, at St Ann’s Maternity Hospital, Khyber Pass, Auckland (New Zealand Herald’ 1.8.39). In the last years before the War he was” ... a member of the crew of the keeler yacht ‘Astral’ owned by Temporary Lieutenant T.E. ‘Bill’ Mellor ... “(Evening Post 18.4.42) – Bill Mellor was later also reported missing (but Bill survived the War) in 1942 at the same time as Tony Clarke. Tony Clarke had signed up as part of the ‘Yachtsmen Scheme” with the RNZNVR and went to serve in Malayan waters (‘Evening Post’ 18.4.42) and as a result, in the months leading up to and after the Japanese invasion of Malaya, was serving as ‘Bill’ Mellors ‘No.2’ on the auxiliary vessel ‘HMS Hung Jao’. The newspaper ‘The Evening Post’ in Wellington, New Zealand on 18.4.42 recorded that ‘Tony Clarke’ was ‘Missing’ and had been Number 2 on a vessel commanded by a fellow RNZNVR officer, Lt T.E. Mellor – this was the ‘Hung Jao’. Official records on the death of Tony Clarke tend to link him with the ‘Hung Jao’, but that vessel when it did escape Singapore under Bill Mellor’s command headed for the Indragiri river on the west coast of Sumatra, reached there safely after what is said to have been several weeks of being employed collecting survivors of shipwrecks amongst the Rhio Archipelago islands ( including Singkep) - it was then “ ... scuttled by its own crew on 9.3.42 owing to engine failure...” in the face of advancing Japanese and without loss of life; since its 17 Army Officer passengers reached Padang (‘The Story of Changi” Captain David Nelson). Lt Clarke then appears as almost certainly the person mentioned in an intriguing story as a survivor from the ‘HMS Dragonfly’, being mentioned by Captain Robert Lyle, 15<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry (also a passenger on ‘HMS Dragonfly’) who recorded in an official statement that after being shipwrecked and reaching uninhabited Pulau Posik, “... the following morning a Sub-Lieut., whose name I believe was Clarke, New Zealander, arrived walking along the beach with 8 others. They had been on the

*second float and had got ashore a little further up the coast...”* He later records him as “... *Sub-Lieut. Clarke, RNR (Last seen Dabok) ...*”. By virtue of his surname, since there was only one man with the surname Clarke in the RNZNVR who went missing, this must have been Lieut **Anthony Ruthven Clarke, RNZNVR**, who as previously stated, official sources record as being on the ‘SS Hung Jao’ [ which he had been prior to the evacuation]. So, from the report of Captain Robert Lyle, ‘Tony’ Clarke was not serving on the ‘Hung Jao’ under his friend Bill Mellor (the newspaper in NZ ‘The Evening Post’ recorded on 18.4.42 that Tony Clarke was No. 2 on the vessel ‘Hung Jao’ commanded by Lt. T.E. Mellor; some other sources say Lt. O.R.T. Henman, MRNVR was in command of ‘Hung Jao’ at that stage) at the time of his escape from Singapore – it appears he had, for whatever reason, switched to the ‘HMS Dragonfly. Perhaps he thought it a better option going to Batavia and hopefully Australia on a vessel that was more of a warship, than to Sumatra on the ‘Hun Jao’? They were chaotic and unrecorded days and men were changing plans all the time to survive and serve most effectively. Later there are notes on Navy records to the effect that Tony Clarke died (presumably the date he was last seen) on 28.2.42, after becoming “... *missing after escaping from Muntok POW camp...*”. So, it seems that Tony Clarke was recorded as ‘Missing’ after escaping from the Muntok POW camp on Banka Island on 28 February - the source and interpretation of the date of ‘28 February’ has yet to be clarified by this researcher. Muntok on Banka Island is a very long way south from Pulau Posik and Tony must have made his way, possibly with others, firstly to Dabo on Singkep island and then somehow to Banka island. On Banka Island there is the reference to Tony Clarke – as Lt. A.R. Clarke, RNZNVR, escaping from the ‘Gymnasium camp’ in Muntok on the night of 21 February 1942 in company with Acting Commander Robert George Fenton – Livingstone, RN (Fenton-Livingstone had been head of Drafting and Supplies at Singapore shore base ‘HMS Sultan’) at approximately midnight. The source of this information is the M19 Liberation questionnaire of Lt David Fiennes – Wykenham, MRNVR who had escaped Singapore on the launch ‘Rosemary’ and been captured at Banka island – Fiennes made his own escape (with Commander H.B.F. Moorhead, RN) from the same POW camp six hours before Tony Clarke but was recaptured with Moorhead on Banka Island on 28 February. The date of death as 28 February 1942 is therefore unexplained. [ Researcher Note: Perhaps the full details on Lt Clarke’s escape and death are contained in the file in the UK National Archives “...ADM 358/580, Actg. Cdr. R.G. Fenton-Livingstone, RN., and Tpy. Lt. A.R. Clarke, RNZNVR, missing after escaping from a prisoner of war camp”, 1946 Jan-Dec, Former ref. CW(C) 164/42, opened 17.8.12...”.] Final note to this sad story – in 1943 the New Zealand papers published the winners of the ‘Art Union’ national lottery/raffle – winner of the Second Prize and Pounds 500 was Mrs. A.R. Clarke, Waihi.

- **COLBURN – Stoker 1<sup>st</sup> Class Horace Edwin Colburn**, P/KX 100709, Royal Nav, died 14.2.42 on ‘HMS Dragonfly’ aged 23 years. Son of Walter George and Mary Elizabeth Colburn. Horace Colburn is also remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial Panel 68. Col 2. (CWGC)
- **CONSTABLE – Acting Leading Stoker Reginald Albert Constable**, P/SS 117724, Royal Navy died 14.2.42 on ‘HMS Dragonfly’. Also remembered on the Portsmouth Naval memorial Panel 68, Col. 1. (CWGC). Reginald Constable is memorialised on the Nutley, Wealden, East Sussex village ‘Roll of Honour’ and the website has the following additional information “... *Reginald and his wife Rosetta lived at Dunromyn, (now Ridgefield), Nither Lane, Nutley. His grandparents, John and Barbara lived there until their deaths in 1935 and 1936. They are both buried in Nutley churchyard. It is believed that Reginald and his wife came to Nutley*

after their deaths[ presumably meaning the deaths of Reginald's grandparents]. No more information has been discovered, and his widow left Nutley after his death ...".  
([www.nutleyhistorical.org.uk](http://www.nutleyhistorical.org.uk)).

- **COVENY – Ordinary Seaman Edward Coveny**, D/JX 167587, MPK, and died 14.2.42 'HMS Dragonfly', son of John R. and Louisa Coveny of Barton Hill, Bristol. Commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, panel 67, Col.1. (CWGC).
- **CONWAY – Naval Rating Conway** – this name is raised by Captain R.L. Lyle who stated "*...Naval Rating CONWAY ... badly wounded. Blast. Last seen in hospital Dabok recovering...*". Whether this is a confusion with Ordinary Seaman Coveny (above) has yet to be clarified – of course, if it is a confusion with Coveny then it means Ordinary Seaman Coveny survived the sinking and died sometime later during the war – but he does not appear in CWGC records.
- **CRAIG – ... Naval Rating Craig, last seen Dabok...**" (Captain R.L. Lyle). There is no listing of a relevant Naval rating by this name on the CWGC records, so it may have been that this person survived to become a POW – but the MI9 Liberation questionnaire records of COFEPOW do not extend to such a person at present.
- **DEVANEY – Seaman Robert Devaney**, C/JX 262385, Royal Navy, 'HMS Dragonfly /'Ship Not Known?', captured 17.3.42. POW in Sumatra – Padang, Medan and Sumatra railway (COFEPOW).
- **EDGCOMBE – Stoker Petty Officer Cecil Lawrence Edgcombe**, D/K 65869, Royal Navy. 'HMS Dragonfly' (UK Archives -MPK). Died 14.2.42 aged 37 years, son of Charles Edwin Edgcombe and of Sarah Edgcombe of Devon. Cecil Edgcombe was born in Thurlstone, a beautiful coastal village in South Devon, in 1904 and is remembered on the Thurlstone War Memorial.
- **EDMUNDS – Stoker P.O. Martin Edmunds**, P/KX 82325, Royal Navy, 'HMS Dragonfly' captured 17.3.42 then POW Padang, Medan, Sumatra Railway. Died on the Sumatra railway on 17.4.45 (MI9 at COFEPOW); the formal record is Petty Officer Martin Edmunds, P/KX82325, Royal navy, died on 17.4.45, 'HMS Dragonfly', son of Albert and Martha Edmunds of West Hartlepool, County Durham. Also memorialised on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. (CWGC). In fact, Martin Edmunds died at Camp 14A on the infamous death railway of Pekanbaru, northern Sumatra and is still to this day buried in Grave No. 11 in the jungle covered cemetery at that spot – with 'HMS Dragonfly" shipmates Stoker Pardoe and AB Lovesey. Camp 14A was built along the railway line at a village ('kampung') named PETAI and to service the branch line up to a coal mine in the hills outside PETAI. For some reason the removal of these graves at Camp 14A was overlooked by post war graves parties and the remains of the 17 men in that cemetery were not relocated with others to Jakarta. (see the excellent website of [www.pekanbarudeathrailway.com](http://www.pekanbarudeathrailway.com))

- **FARLEY – Stoker William John Farley**, C/KX 97618, Royal Navy, ‘HMS Dragonfly’, captured 23.3.42. POW in Sumatra – Padang, Medan, and Sumatra Railway (COFEPOW). (MI9 on COFEPOW website and - ref book ‘Singapore’s Dunkirk’). This is Stoker Farley mentioned by Able Seaman ‘Taff’ Long, RN, in the book as having been severely wounded and taken to the town of Dabo on Singkep, where showing great courage, he begged his mates to look after him rather than being placed in the native hospital - Stoker Farley despite all odds survived POW camps in Sumatra and in fact is recorded as signing a ‘first day cover’ in 1990 commemorating the evacuation of Singapore by ‘HMS Dragonfly’ ( [www.uk.auctioneers.com](http://www.uk.auctioneers.com)).
- **FERRY – Able Seaman Daniel Ferry**, P/CD/X 1886, RNVR, (UK Archives show – MPK). Died 14.2.42 aged 26 years, son of Daniel and Annie Ferry of Glasgow. Also remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Panel 71, Col 2.
- **FINCH – Ordinary Seaman James Finch**, C/JX 247332, Royal Navy. (UK archives show – MPK). Died 14.2.42 ‘HMS Dragonfly’, aged 24 years, son of William Samuel and Mary Jane (nee Shovlar) Finch of Canvey Island, Sussex. He is also remembered on his parents’ grave in the churchyard of St Catherine, Canvey island, Castleborough, Essex. In the introduction to this memorial document it is sadly recorded that Ordinary Seaman Finch, who was known to be unable to swim, was last seen by ‘Taff’ Long clinging to the ‘bullring’ (the large fairlead or steel eyelet fitting through which the anchor rope passes on the deck) on the bow of the ship as it sank, and he presumably drowned.
- **FRIPP – “... Naval Rating Fripp, arrived Colombo...”** (Captain R.L. Lyle.). there is no MI9 liberation questionnaire for such a person, so it must be assumed he reached freedom.
- **GIBSON – Ty. Act. Petty Officer Frank Edward Gibson**, D/JX 137467, Royal Navy, ‘HMS Dragonfly’ died 14.2.42, son of Francis William and Mary Elizabeth Gibson. Also remembered on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 63, Co.2. (UK National Archives file shows ‘MPK’).
- **HILL – Petty Officer Stoker William Thomas Hill**, D/KX 83585, Royal Navy, died 14.2.42, ‘HMS Dragonfly’. Also, on Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 69, Col.1. UK National Archives file shows ‘MPK’. William Hill presumably came from the small village of Brithdir (in the northern part of the Rhymney Valley in the County of Caerphilly) in Wales because his name is inscribed on the Brithdir War memorial for 1939-45 and he is listed on the website of the Gelligaer Historical Society.

- ILEY – Lt Sidney Leonard Iley**, Royal Navy, “... was born in 1911 in Great Broughton, the son of John Graham Iley and Sarah Jane Storey who had married in 1905. In the census of 1911 Sidney is recorded as being 2 months old and living at ‘The Bay Horse’, Broughton, with his mother and grandmother, who was described as a local innkeeper. There was a John Graham Iley in Stockton as a boarder at this time. He is described as a marine engineer, married, born in Stockton on Tees and aged 40 years. The UK Navy lists show that Sidney became a Lieutenant in 1935, but .... Sidney’s first voyage was as an apprentice to Seattle on ‘SS Kirnwood’. In 1936 he is said to have travelled as a member of crew to New York from Newcastle – on Tyne on board ‘SS Hazelwood’. Sidney married Betty Hannah Foulk in 1938, in the Cleveland registration district...”. Insofar as his rank, ‘The London Gazette’ recorded that “... Probationary Lt. S.L. Iley to be Lt. from 4.2.35...”. The following newspaper article appeared following the sinking of ‘HMS Dragonfly’ “... ILEY Missing since fall of Singapore now officially presumed killed in Feb. 1942. Sidney L Iley, Lieut., Royal Navy, HMS Dragonfly, beloved husband of Betty (nee Foulk), Stokesley, Middlesbrough, Yorks “... it was another four years before probate was granted – “... Iley Sidney Leonard of the Avenue Stokesley Middlesbrough died 14 February 1942 on war service. Administration LONDON 16 April (1946) to Mrs Betty Hannah (wife of Malcolm Robert Hannah). Effects STG 869 12s ...”. (stokesleyheritage.wikidot.com/world-war-ii-stokesleys-fallen). UK Archives files also record that he was ‘Missing / Died’. The CWGC have LT. S.E. [sic] Iley, Royal Navy, died 14.2.42 age 31 years, son of John Graham Iley and Sarah Jane Iley, husband of Betty Hannah Iley. Also, on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, panel 62, Col.3.
- JACKSON – Act. Engine Room Artificer 4<sup>th</sup> Class Harry Jackson**, P/MX 65248, Royal Navy died 14.2.42, ‘HMS Dragonfly’ aged 22 years, son of Walter Jackson and Clara Jackson of Lower Walton, Cheshire. In the UK Archives file, he is classified as ‘MPK’. Also remembered on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 67, Col.2.
- JAMAL – UD – DIN BIN – Telegraphist Jamal Ud Din Bin Yusuf**, MN 1221/ MN1042? Royal Navy Malay Section, died 14.2.42, ‘HMS Dragonfly’. UK National Archives file shows him classified as ‘MPK’. Also remembered on the Plymouth Naval Memorial Panel 97, Col.3.
- JOHAR – Able Seaman Johar Bin Uda Yahaya**, Royal Navy Malay Section, died 14.2.42 ‘HMS Dragonfly’. UK National Archives file classifies him as ‘MPK’.
- JOHNSON – Stoker 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Walter Johnson**, D/KX 121891, Royal Navy, died 14.2.42 aged 19 years, ‘HMS Dragonfly’, son of Joseph Sands Johnson and Barbara Johnson of Byker, Northumberland. Also remembered on the Plymouth Naval memorial, panel 71, Col.1. MPK
- LONG – Able Seaman William ‘Taff’ Long**, D/TX 167693, Royal Navy, ‘HMS Dragonfly’. This is the eloquent ‘Taff’ Long who has been quoted in many parts of the introduction to this story

and on the website [www.forcez-survivors.org.uk/biographies/dragonflycrew](http://www.forcez-survivors.org.uk/biographies/dragonflycrew) is mentioned by his son, Alun Long in *"...My father was an Able Seaman and crew member of 'HMS Dragonfly' when it sank on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1942. He survived three and a half years of hell in prisoner of war camps and returned to the UK at Christmas 1945. Though deeply affected by his experiences he returned to his home in the Rhondda Valley, South Wales where he married, had two sons (I'm the eldest) and lived a fairly full life until his death in January 1997..."*. Taff Long according to his MI9 Liberation Questionnaire was captured on 17.3.42 and became a POW in Sumatra in Padang, Medan and the Sumatra railway (COFEPOW).

- **LOVATT – Ordinary Seaman Horace Lovatt**, P/JX 272 870, Royal Navy, died 14.2.42, aged 38 years, 'HMS Dragonfly', son of William and Emma Lovatt, husband of Winifred Lovatt of Leek, Staffordshire. Also *"... Two Leek [ Staffordshire] men died ... Ordinary seaman Horace Lovatt of 37 Abbott Road was killed when HMS Dragonfly was bombed ..."* (Bill Cawley on [moorlandsoldtimes.blogspot.com](http://moorlandsoldtimes.blogspot.com)). In the file in the UK National Archives he is classified as 'MPK'.
- **LOVESEY/'LOVSIE'** – **Leading Seaman William Lovesey**, D/JX 140918, Royal Navy, 'HMS Jupiter'/'HMS Dragonfly', survived the sinking and became a POW in Sumatra ending up on the Sumatra railway where he died on 10.1.45 (COFEPOW). Earlier had been the report *"... Naval Rating Lovsie, last seen Dabok ..."* (Captain R. L. Lyle). In fact, on the CWGC website he is recorded as 'Petty Officer' William Lovesey, D/JX 140918, who died aged 45 years on 11.1.45, 'HMS Jupiter'. Also remembered on the Plymouth Naval Memorial Panel 101, Col.1..." (CWGC). On the excellent website [www.pekanbarudeathrailway.com](http://www.pekanbarudeathrailway.com) it is recorded that William is buried in grave #6 in the 'Camp 14A' cemetery where he died on 11.1.45 and that he was never reinterred from this jungle covered cemetery which is near the village of PETAI. His 'HMS Dragonfly' shipmates Stoker Ivan Pardoe and AB Martin Edmunds lie in that cemetery to this day as well. Camp 14A was located to service the 'Sumatra Railway' and the coal mine in the hills just outside of PETAI. William Lovesey today still lies in that jungle location because for some reason the reinternment of the men in that cemetery was overlooked in the mass movement of remains to Jakarta after the War,
- **MADDOCKS – Acting Engine Room Artificer 4<sup>th</sup> Class Thomas Godfrey Maddocks**, D/MX 70099, Royal Navy, died 14.2.42, 'HMS Dragonfly', son of Doris Maddocks of Weasle, Lanarkshire. The file in the UK National Archives classified him as 'MPK'.
- **MORRIS – Chief Engine Room Artificer Walter Morris**, D/MX 48513, Royal Navy, 'HMS Dragonfly', survived the sinking but became a POW and later died 26.6.44 in the sinking of the 'Harugiku Maru' which was torpedoed by 'HMS Truculent'. He was the son of Henry and Fanny Morris and the husband of Marie W. Morris of Sparkhill, Birmingham. Walter Morris is also memorialised on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 89, Col. 1.

- **MORTON – Seaman Robert Henderson Morton, C/JX 262360, Royal Navy, ‘HMS Dragonfly/ Ship Not known’, was captured on 17.3.42 and became a POW in Sumatra at Padang, Medan and the Sumatra Railway (COFEPOW).**
- **MUHAMMAD – Leading Seaman Hanis Bin Yeob Abdul Aziz Muhammad, MN 376, Royal Navy Malay Section, died 14.2.42, ‘HMS Dragonfly’. File in UK National Archives classifies him as ‘MPK’. Also remembered on the Plymouth naval Memorial, Panel 97, Col.2.**
- **MUHAMMAD – Leading Seaman Muhammad Qamr Ud Din Bin Muhammad, Malay Section Royal Navy, died 14 2 42,” HMS Dragonfly’. UK National Archives file have him listed as ‘MPK’. Also commemorated on the Plymouth naval Memorial, Panel 97, Col. 1.**
- **MUHAMMAD – Telegraphist Sam Bin Babi Muhammad, MN1140, Royal Navy Malay Section, died 14.2.42, ‘HMS Dragonfly’. File in UK National Archives classifies him as ‘MPK’.**
- **MUHAMMAD – Able Seaman Sani Bin Aboul Ghani Muhammad, MN724, Royal Navy Malay Section, died 14.2.42, ‘HMS Dragonfly’. File in UK National Archives classifies him as ‘MPK’.**
- **MUHAMMAD – Able Seaman Muhammad Nur Bin Nasir, MN 656, Royal Navy Malay Section, died 14.2.42, ‘HMS Dragonfly’. Also remembered on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 97, Col.2.**
- ***O’BRIEN – Able Seaman Albert George O’Brien, D/JX 167418, Royal Navy, ‘Ship Not Known/ ‘HMS Dragonfly’, was captured on 17.3.42 and became a POW in Sumatra – camps were Padang, Medan (COFEPOW)***
- ***PARDOE – “... Naval Rating Pardoe last seen Dabok ...” (Captain R.L. Lyle); - Stoker/Ordinary Seaman/ Able Seaman Ivan Pardoe, RNZN, is recorded by pekanbarudeathrailway.com as having been on ‘HMS Dragonfly’. So, we have two separate sources mentioning Ivan as being on the ‘HMS Dragonfly’. Ivan was born in 1919 into a farming family and attended Manuteke School (a primary and intermediate level school) in the small rural settlement (akin to a ‘village’ in the United Kingdom) of Manuteke, west of the city of Gisborne on the east coast of the North island on New Zealand. He spent some years working in mines in the North island and enlisted in the Royal New Zealand Navy in September 1941. After the sinking of the ‘HMS Dragonfly” Ivan and other survivors reached Padang on the west coast of Sumatra and on 17 March surrendered to the Japanese after Padang was declared an ‘open city’ by the Dutch wishing to avoid unnecessary bloodshed. The excellent website [www.pekanbarudeathrailway.com](http://www.pekanbarudeathrailway.com) tells us “ ... Ivan and his companions were sent from Padang to Medan and Belawan- Gloeoger POW camp in North Sumatra. It was here he met***



*his friends that he had trained with in New Zealand, Laurence Hurndell and Noel Betley. Both had survived the sinking of the 'HMS Grasshopper'. Ivan spent almost two years in this camp, loading ships at the port of Medan and working on the local aerodrome. Then in March 1944 some of the POWs were selected to help with the construction of a road 58 km long, through the jungle from Blangkedjeren to Takengon in the province of Aceh. This group of POWs consisting of 306 Dutch as well as 194 British, Australian and New Zealanders including Ivan became known as the Aceh (Atjeh) Party. Ivan and the others were first housed in existing military barracks, but later they built their own camps along the road. In total, eleven of these camps were set up. The working conditions were extremely difficult, with insufficient food and medical care. The road was completed in July 1944. The Aceh Party was then moved to Soengeisenkol near Medan. Ivan and the others did not stay here long. At the end of October, the POWs along with Ivan began an overland trip of around 1,000 km., They stopped at Bukittingi on 29 October and then on 3 November 1944 Ivan finally made it to his final destination. He along with members of the Aceh party arrived around midnight at a small village named Petai. Here he would help with track maintenance and bridge building on the Pekanbaru Death railway. Ivan was based at camp 14a. This camp serviced the branch line that connected the coal mine deeper in the hills. Ivan continued this back breaking work under atrocious conditions until April 1945. It was at this point that he fell ill like so many of the other POWs working along the 220 km railway. On the night of the 20th he sadly passed away having contracted Typhoid Fever. Ivan was buried in grave 12 at camp 14a. He along with 16 others were buried at this camp – along with 'HMS Dragonfly' shipmates Stoker Martin Edmunds and AB William Lovesey. The war ended on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945 only 4 months after his death. As the POWs left for home, the war graves organisations moved in to move all of the POWs who sadly hadn't been able to get home themselves. Somehow though the graves at the camp 14a were missed and so to this day these 17 men, including Ivan are still buried in the jungles of Sumatra...". (www.pekanbarudeathrailway.com/ivan-pardoe).*

Ivan's war experience can also be followed by articles in the local newspaper "The Gisborne Herald" which tells us that he is first mentioned as missing GH. (16.4.42); then in 1943 "... Mr. and Mrs E. Pardoe of Manuteke who have just received a brief message from their son, Stoker Ivan Pardoe, written on the back of a prisoner of war postcard to say that he is a prisoner and is well. This is the first advice from their son for nearly two years..." (GH 4.10.43); in 1944 the newspaper noted that Ivan's father Mr Edward Pardoe had died (GH. 29.3.44); and then finally in 1945 "... Mrs Elizabeth Pardoe has received official advice of the death of her son Able Seaman Ivan Pardoe while a POW in the hands of the Japanese... investigations by an RNZAF search unit have established that AS Pardoe was buried in 1G [sic camp 14a] prison compound at PETI [sic – Petai], about 20 miles from Khota Gharu, Sumatra. The report indicates that the date of death is unknown..." (GH. 6.10.45). The official record is Able Seaman Ivan Pardoe, 3042, Royal New Zealand Navy died 29 April 1945 aged 26 years son of Edward and Elizabeth Mary Pardoe of Manuteke, Gisborne, He is also remembered on the New Zealand Naval Memorial at Devonport Naval Base, Auckland, Panel 2. (CWGC). [

Researcher note: either the CWGC or the Auckland War memorial website have Ivan's date of death – incorrectly and presumably a typo – the Pekanbaru website has 20 April as does the other New Zealand website.]

- **PICKETT – Stoker 2<sup>nd</sup> Class William Thomas Joseph Pickett**, C/KX 126510, Royal Navy, died 14.2.42, 'HMS Dragonfly', aged 26 years, son of William Thomas Joseph and Agnes Nida Pickett of Rainham, Essex. Also remembered on the Chatham Naval Memorial, 63.1.MPK
- **PLATTEN – Able Seaman Richard Albert Platten**, D/JX 169749, Royal Navy, 'HMS Dragonfly'. Captured 17.3.42 and became a POW in Sumatra – Padang, Medan and the Sumatra Railway (COFEPOW). Richard Platten was born on 22.8.18 and lived out his life in Hull. Returning to Hull after the War he married in September 1948 and he died in February 1993.
- **PRICE – Stoker 2<sup>nd</sup> Class James William Price**, D/KX 120441, Royal Navy, died 14.2.42 aged 33 years, 'HMS Dragonfly', son of Samuel Alfred and Florence Ada Price of Eastville, Essex. Also remembered on the Plymouth naval Memorial, panel 70, Col.2. MPK.
- **PRINCE – Petty Officer Ernest Prince**, D/J 106839, Royal Navy, died 14.2.42, 'HMS Dragonfly', son of Mr & Mrs J. Prince; husband of Elsie May Prince of Swilly, Plymouth. Also remembered on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 63, Col. 3. The file in the UK National Archives classified Ernest Prince as "MPK.
- **RAFI – Leading telegraphist Bin Mariah Rafi**, MN 420, Royal Navy Malay Section, died 14.2.42, 'HMS Dragonfly'. UK National Archives file has him listed as 'MPK'.
- **RAMLI – Able Seaman Ramli Bin Haji Abdul Karim**, MN1220, Royal Malay Section, died 14.2.42 'HMS Dragonfly'. UK National Archives file has him classified as 'MPK'. Also remembered on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 97, Col.2.
- **REDDINGTON – Able Seaman John Joseph Reddington**, D/SSX 19478, Royal Navy, died 14.2.42 'HMS Dragonfly' aged 24 years. Son of James and Catherine Reddington of Salem, Oldham, Lanarkshire. Also commemorated on the Plymouth naval Memorial, panel 66, Col.2.MPK
- **REES – Able Seaman Hopkin S Rees**, D/JX 167703, Royal Navy, died 14.2.42, aged 23 years, 'HMS Dragonfly'. Son of Thomas Joseph and Alice Rees of Ogmere Vale, Glamorgan. Also commemorated on the Plymouth Naval memorial, panel 66, Co. 2. MPK

- **ROTHWELL – Petty Office Stoker Edward Rothwell**, D/KX 80573, Royal Navy, died 14.2.42, aged 40 years, ‘HMS Dragonfly’, son of Noah and Emma Rothwell, husband of Elsie May Rothwell (nee Hart), of Stonehurst, Plymouth. Also commemorated on the Plymouth Naval memorial, Panel 69, Col.2. MPK.
- **SADA – Able Sada Hari Bin Haji Saleh**, MN782, Royal Navy Malay Section, died 14.2.42, ‘HMS Dragonfly’. UK National Archives file has him classified as ‘MPK’. Also commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 97, col. 2.
- **SEARLE – Stoker Leslie Bertram Searle**, P/KX 99209, Royal Navy, ‘HMS Dragonfly/ Ship not Known’, captured 17.3.42 and became a POW in Sumatra - Padang, Medan and the Sumatra railway (COFEPOW). He was born on 8.6.18 at 48 Hilsea Crescent, Hilsea, Portsmouth.
- **SHELLARD - Lt. Cmdr. Patrick Philip Shellard**, “*Known to have survived...*” (Captain R.L. Lyle). Patrick Philip Shellard was born on 21.1.11 at Weston – Super – Mare, the son of Edward Joseph Shellard and Alice Shellard. He joined the London Division of the RNVR as a Probationary mid Shipman in 1930, appointed A/S Lt in 1932, S/Lt in 1933, Lt. in 1934 and by 1939-40 was in command of the Hunt Class Minesweeper ‘HMS Fareham’. In 1940-41 he was in command of the river gunboat ‘HMS Scarab’ and then on 16.7.41 he moved to 6t ‘HMS Dragonfly’. In accounts covering the sinking of the ship he is mentioned as being in command by S/Major Evans, Manchester Regiment – but he was First Officer, not Captain who was Commander Sprott. Shellard was hit in the shoulder by machine gun bullets from the Japanese bombers whilst swimming in the sea but was pulled into the whaler once several dead bodies had been disposed of to make room – he kept his hand over the wound to minimise leakage. He landed with others on Pulau Posik (‘SD’ p.195).” ... *After resting there the group set off for Sumatra , making the Djambi River, where they were put on a bus to Padang., whence the Australian cruiser ‘Hobart’ took them ( except Shellard who joined Dillon’s prau) to Colombo...*” ( ‘SD’ p.196). Apparently Shellard was in hospital in Djambi. His MI9 Liberation questionnaire on the COFEPOW website is very faint and hard to read but states that he was captured on 4.4.42 in the Indian Ocean – “... *Indian Ocean approximately 700 miles S.E. of Ceylon...*” The account of the brave attempt by a crew of nine , including Shellard, to reach Ceylon from Padang in a decrepit native sailing ‘prauw’ with a wheelhouse aft - it was named ‘Setia’ Berganti’ is recorded in ‘Singapore’s Dunkirk’ PP 90-99) and is a tribute to determination. The prau was captured by a Japanese oil tanker. Shellard was described by Colonel Dillon, the officer in charge of the escape attempt as “... *First Lieutenant of ‘Dragonfly’ he had been in hospital in Djambi. Hooper and Warren both asked that he be included. Earned his place...*” (SD. p91). All that can be read on his MI9 form is that his first POW camp was Changi in Singapore. He survived the War and on 21.1.47 married Angela M. Bailey at St Andrews Cathedral in Singapore where he was stationed. Patrick and Angela are recorded as mixing at a high level of Singapore society during 1947. They appear to have moved from Singapore to Penang by 1949 because the ‘Straits Times’ of 12.1.49

records the birth of their daughter in Penang on 10.1.49. Patrick died on 17.4.81 at Worthing, West Sussex.

- **SMITH – Signalman Edward Allan Smith**, D/JX 161069, Royal Navy, died 14.2.42, 'HMS Dragonfly', aged 19 years. Son of Frederick and Gertrude M. Smith of Diglis, Worcester. Also commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, panel 68, Col.1. MPK.
- **SPARKS – Petty Officer William John Sparks**, D/JX 125134, Royal Navy, 'HMS Prince of Wales/ HMS Dragonfly'. Captured on 17.3.42 and became a POW in Sumatra – Padang, Medan and the Sumatra railway (COFEPOW). In the London Gazette of 4.6.46 William Sparks was awarded 'Mentioned in Despatches'.
- **SPILLER – "... Naval Rating Spiller last seen Dabok..."** (Captain R. L. Lyle); what then happened to AB Spiller is difficult to ascertain. He is not listed amongst the casualties on the Pekanbaru Railway nor amongst the records for the POW camp at Palembang – yet he is recorded by the CWGC as "Able Seaman William Ronald Spiller, C/JX 178739, Royal Navy, 'HMS Dragonfly' died 6.6.45 aged 27 years and is buried in the Jakarta War cemetery, 1.B.11. He was the son of William Henry and Jennie Spiller, Treorchy, Glamorgan....". (CWGC). William Spiller must have been a POW in another camp in either Java or Sumatra.
- **SPROTT – Commander Alfred William Sprott**, born 1893, oldest son of William and Louisa Sprott. He began his naval career on 15 May 1906, working his way up through the ranks, becoming a midshipman in 1911, a Lieutenant in 1915 and a Lieutenant Commander in 1923. He was highly regarded and retired with the rank of Commander in 1936. During World War II Alfred's command was reactivated and he was Captain of 'HMS Aberdare', a Hunt Class minesweeper from September to October 1939 in Singapore. He later captained 'HMS Dragonfly' ...". Commander Sprott's wife was Winifred Denison (nee Hall) Sprott [b.1889- d. 1960] and he is remembered on a War Memorial in Ugborough, Devon, England where they made their home. (cathysfamilystories.blogspot.co.nz). Died 14.2.42. Also commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 101, Col.1.
- **STEADMAN – Able Seaman Ernest Clement Steadman**, C/JX 174157, Royal Navy, died 14.2.42, 'HMS Dragonfly'. In the file in the UK National Archives he is classified as 'MPK'. He is also commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial, 56.2.(CWGC). Ernest Steadman was born between 1.10.19 and 31.12 19 at Greenwich Road in Kent and so was 22 years of age

when he died. He was one of five children of Ernest | Clement law Steadman and Helen Daisy Steadman ( Nee Haydon).

- **SWINNEY – Engine Room Artificer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class John Thomas Swinney**, P/MX 51482, Royal Navy, died 14.2.42, 'HMS Dragonfly', son of John Thomas Swinney and Mary Swinney of Jarrow, Co. Durham. The file in the UK National Archives has him classified as 'MPK'. The 'Newcastle Evening Chronicle' of 13.12.45 contained "... following North Country servicemen have been presumed KIA – Engine Room Artificer John Thomas Swinney, Royal Navy, 18 Humber Street, Jarrow (missing since February 1942). He served on 'HMS Dragonfly'....". He is also commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval memorial, panel 67, col.2.
- THOMPSON – Leading Stoker Wilfred Thompson, P/KX 87981, Royal Navy, died 14.2.42, age 31 years, 'HMS Dragonfly' son of James Alfred and Alice Thompson of Manchester. The file in the UK National Archives has him classified as 'MPK'. Also recorded on the [www.forcez](http://www.forcez) website. Commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval memorial, panel 68, Col.1.
- **TIVEY – Able Seaman Joseph Tivey**, D/JX 161959, Royal Navy. 'HMS Dragonfly'. Captured on 17.3.42 and became a POW in Sumatra - Padang, Medan and the Sumatra Railway. Joseph Tivey died as POW on the Sumatra railway on 26.3.45 and is buried in the Jakarta Cemetery. (COFEPOW). He was the husband of Blanche Tivey of Crownhill, Plymouth and the son of Joseph and Mary Tivey. He died aged 46 years of age at Camp 2 on the Pekanbaru Railway (Pakan – Baroe) at a place called Tangkerang Tengah. Initially buried in grave 27 at Camp 2 he was reinterred after the War to grave 1.D.3 in the Jakarta War cemetery. It is estimated that the forced slave labour camps used by the Japanese to build the 'Sumatra Railway' at Pekanbaru – which was never used again after the war – cost the lives of 703 POWs and some 100,000 local people. ([www.pekanbarudeathrailway.com](http://www.pekanbarudeathrailway.com)).
- **TOMBS – Sub Lieutenant Charles William Tombs**, RNVR, died 14.2.42, aged 33 years, 'HMS Dragonfly', son of Ernest and Edith Tombs, husband of Fatima Tombs of West Perth, Western Australia. Also commemorated on the Plymouth Naval memorial Panel 76, Col.3(CWGC). Charles Tombs was born on 28.8.08 in Bridgetown, Western Australia, in a very productive agricultural area about 270 miles south of Perth. He was the son of the local Postmaster, Henry Ernest Tombs and Edith ( nee Stockton).He moved to Shanghai, China in the 1930s and is mentioned as being there when incompetent Chinese Airforce pilots mistakenly dropped their bombs on the Sincere department store in Shanghai in 1937 : ...Mr Charles Tombs , an employee of Sincere's , formerly of Perth(W.A.) said he was two blocks away when he was suddenly hurled against a wall and was half dazed..." (Weekly Times' ,Melbourne. 28.8.37) – the Chinese pilots were trying to bomb Japanese troops around Shanghai but had such poor aim that they dropped their bombs on the Sincere building killing 300 people and injuring 500 others. The newspaper "The West Australian' (21.4.45) explained that whilst in Shanghai he married Fatima (who had been born in Shanghai) and they had a son named Adam Richard Stockton Tombs. Charles apparently left his appointment on the staff of the 'North China Daily News' to join the RNVR and in that post

war newspaper article it is stated that he has been reported missing since the fall of Singapore. Fatima and their small son must have evacuated Shanghai just prior to the Japanese invading Malaya and the Philippines because she and Adam were captured and interned in Manila during the war. They were repatriated to Perth, Australia in March 1945 after the Americans captured Manila, but nothing has been found on the family after that date. There is a file in the UK National Archives in Kew (ADM 358/650) "Temporary Lt. C.W. Tombs, Missing Presumed Died".

- **UNGKU – Signalman Ungku Onn Bin Abdul Majid**, MN1116, Royal Navy Malay Section, died 14. 2.42, 'HMS Dragonfly'. Also commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial Panel 97, Col. 3.MPK.
- **WILLIAMS – Chief Petty Officer (???) or ERA Leonard Walter Williams**, (no record of service number), 'HMS Dragonfly', was captured on 17.3.42 and became a POW in Sumatra – Padang, Medan and the Sumatra Railway (COFEPOW). Leonard Williams also was interviewed, and his Oral History is held by the IWM in London (Item/Object 80011290). In his oral recount Leonard Williams states that it took him about seven hours to reach land after the sinking because of strong tides and he then spent a couple of days on that island. Water was short and it was the dog 'Judy' from 'HMS Grasshopper' which dug a hole to find a water source. He and others then commandeered an old junk to take them to Sumatra and he walked 250 miles up the Indragiri River and to Padang to be billeted in a Chinese school, but his arrival was too late for evacuation and he became a prisoner of the Japanese on 17 March 1942. After Padang he was taken to Medan and made to work on the docks later being transferred to Singapore (he was in River Valley camp for a month) and then back to Pekanbaru
- **WOOD – "... Naval Rating Wood last seen in Dabok..."** (Captain R.L. Lyle).
- **WILLIAMSON – Able Seaman John Williamson**, P/JX 190366, Royal Navy, 'HMS Dragonfly'. Captured 17.3.42 and became a POW in Sumatra – Padang, Medan and the Sumatra railway. John Williamson died as a POW on the Sumatra Railway on 16.9.45 after the war had ended and is buried in Jakarta Cemetery. (COFEPOW).

## Passengers:

- **ASH** – Lt. V.B. Ash. W/T Signal rating in the Royal Navy during the First world War and until 1928. He then became a wireless operator in the merchant navy during 1929-39 before joining the RNVR, source - IWM catalogue #834, which says that during the Second World War he was a junior wireless officer on 'Dragonfly' and reached Padang, then on 'HMAS Hobart' to Ceylon; the book 'Singapore's Dunkirk' recounts, pp.194-195, that "... *Sub-Lt Victor Ash was a Dragonfly passenger who had been in hospital with pneumonia until the last moment. He got away in the whaler – eventually to India ...*". This is **Lieutenant Victor Barritt Ash**, born 4.2.1899 in Aldeburgh, Suffolk to Barritt Ash and Jane Ash and his service number was J 31739 (ADM 363/100/133).
- **BALL** – Sgt Ball, Royal Signals, 11 Division, Signals, att. to 15<sup>th</sup> Indian infantry Brigade. "... *I can definitely state that Sgt. Ball and Cpl. Craft, Royal Signals, were with me on HMS 'Dragonfly' as I buried Cpl Craft and assisted Sgt Ball on board 'Dragonfly' when he was very badly wounded...*" (Statement by Major R.L. Lyle in UK National Archives file.). Almost certainly this is lance **Serjeant William Lionel Ball**, # 2342877, 11<sup>th</sup> Indian Division Signals, Royal Corps of Signals, son of William and Violet Ball; husband of Phyllis Ball of Bislington, Bristol who died 19 February 1942 - note that this is several days after the sinking of the 'HMS Dragonfly' (CWGC). It appears that William Ball was/is buried, possibly in the same location as Cpl. Craft, near the town of Dabo on Singkep island – if not there it would be possibly on Pulau Posik.
- **BENNETT** – "... *Private S.A. Bennett '99', The Manchester Regiment, #2034499, joined army 1936, went to Egypt, A37, single...*" (UK National Archives file). **Private Samuel Alexander Bennett**, # 2034499, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Manchester regiment, died 14.2.42 aged 24 years, son of Samuel and Elizabeth Ann Bennett of Moss Side, Manchester (CWGC). Also remembered on the Singapore memorial Col. 76.
- **BOSTOCK** – Cpl. Harry Bostock survived the sinking of the 'HMS Dragonfly' and became a POW. After the sinking he managed to get across to Sumatra and then to Padang, where he was captured by the Japanese and became part of 'The British Sumatra Battalion'. That 'Battalion' of POWs left Padang on 9 May 1942 going by train and Road to Medan, North Sumatra where – at the Port of Belawin Deli - they boarded the 'England Maru' which was already crowded with a large number of Australian troops from Singapore. On 25 May they reached Mergui in Thailand. Conditions there were appalling, the death rate was high, and the men were employed in the building of an airfield. In August 1942 they were moved again – this time on the 'Tatu Maru' and were offloaded onto lighters at the Tavoy River – thus began the odyssey of horror that was the Death Railway. Harry Bostock must have fallen sick enough to be placed in the 'hospital' at 55 kilometre camp which became a hospital by

November 1943 and on 8 November 1943 the British Battalion had moved on to a camp at the 114 kilometre mark so he was separated from many of the men he had come to know – but not all because 17 men from the British Battalion died at 55 km camp during the last quarter of 1943.. “... Cpl Bostock, *The Manchester Regiment, survivor with III Group POW to Burma. died Dysentery 13.11.43 at 55k. camp...*” (list of “Manchester Official Evacuation Party from Singapore” held in UK National Archives). Also, **Corporal Harry Bostock**, # 3529632, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Manchester regiment, died 13.11.43 aged 26 years, son of Richard and Kezia Bostock of Norbury Moor, Hazel Grove, Cheshire [Hazel Grove is a suburb of Stockport in greater Manchester]. Harry Bostock’s grave in Thanbyuzayat War Cemetery (B4. Z.7) has the inscription “... *This corner in a foreign filed will be forever England...*”

- **BRAY –Corporal Arthur Frederick Bray**, # 3534741, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Manchester Regiment, died 14.2.42 aged 25 years, son of Arthur K. and Edith Ann Bray of Tutbury, Staffordshire (CWGC). He is also remembered on the Singapore Memorial Col.75. **But there seems to have been either two men by the name of BRAY on the ship (see below) – or else there is confusion insofar as whether Corporal Arthur Frederick Bray, Manchester regiment was on board?**
- **BRAY – Lance Corporal James Henry Bray**, #6141914, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, East Surrey Regiment died 14.2.42 – 15.2.42, aged 23 years. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial Col.68 (CWGC). On files in the UK Archives are these notations, “... Cpl. A. F. Bray, *The East Surreys Regiment, #3634741, HQ Coy., Clerk in Bn. Orderly room, joined with militia ...*” (UK National Archives file). “... L/Cpl J.H. Bray, *E. Surreys “ ... said to have been buried at sea on Dragonfly, but is a P/W...*” ( UK Archives file) - this was incorrect, he died on a raft after the sinking - see “... *as regards 6141914 L/Cpl J.H. Bray, he was on the ‘Dragonfly’ but got away on the same raft as myself. He was badly knocked about and drunk a considerable amount of water. I was unable to stop him, because as you know a Karney [researcher note: sic – this means Carley] float, anyway, one is in the water up to the chest. The result of this was Bray died and I personally searched him for identity discs – he had none. I then buried him at sea. There is no doubt about it, he was dead. I gave this report in India, but I think they doubted my word, and nothing happened....*” (letter from CQMS Cahill to Captain W.C. Gingell in 1943, included in Captain W.C. Gingell’s report to War Office Casualty Branch, Liverpool on 2.11.43). Also, another comment from C/Sjt. T. Cahill – “... *I cannot understand how 6141914, L/Cpl J.H. Bray, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. The East Surrey Regt. can be a prisoner of war. I knew this NCO. Very well and can only assume that I took L/C Bray for someone else. If I was mistaken, I have no idea who the person was. He was about 5’8”, weight approx. 10 stone, black hair, age approx. 25...*” (letter from C/Sjt. T. Cahill, The East Surrey Regt. Dated 15.1.243 to War Office, Casualty Branch, Liverpool). Perhaps the confusion may have been partially caused by the fact that it looks like L/Cpl James Bray survived to reach shore for a few hours or a day, and someone assumed he had become a POW.
- **CAHILL – Sgt Cahill, The East Surrey Regiment. Survived – Is this Pte Joseph T Cahill on the Sumatra railway? But there are records made by Sgt Cahill from the Ward 7, Royal infirmary on 15.12.43 – so must have escaped entirely!!**



- CLOTHIER – L/Cpl Clothier, The East Surrey Regiment. “... After the ship was struck ... Captain Gingell was in a lifeboat with myself and S/Condr. Godfrey...” (Statement by L/C V. Clothier, # 6140656, The East Surrey Regiment). Other file notes say, “Known to have survived sinking - believed in India...” (Captain R.L. Lyle) and handwritten notation “...Located India ...”.
- **COLE – Arm/Sgt. V.G.A. Cole, REME, # 7584492**, known to have been on ‘HMS Dragonfly...’ (UK National Archives file) – **SEE BELOW**,
- COLE – “... RAOC att. The Manchester Regiment...” (UK National archives file) – this person and the one above noted as being in REME are almost certainly **Sergeant (Armourer) Victor George Alexander Cole**, # 7584492, aged 27 years, RAOC, died 14.2.42, son of Thomas Watson Cole and Kate Lavinia Cole of Milton, Portsmouth (CWGC). Also commemorated on the Singapore memorial Column 50. Other records reveal, “... I embarked on the ‘HMS Dragonfly’ during darkness on the evening of 13.2.42. I know that the following were aboard on the morning of the 14.2.42 ... Arm/L/Sgt. V. Cole, RAOC [ researcher note: there is a hand notation of 7584492 mssg.] ...” (statement by L/C V. Clothier, # 614 0656, The East Surrey Regiment.). Again, another person who saw him on board “... Arms. Sgt. V.G.A. Cole ‘Whilst checking up E/Surreys on board I spoke with this NCO who was originally with the east surreys and was then armourer of the 1<sup>st</sup>. /Manchesters’ ...” (C/Sjt. T. Cahill, The East Surrey Regt., in a letter compiled in ward 7, royal infirmary, Liverpool 15.12.43).
- **CRAFT – Cpl. Craft**, Signals, 11 Division Signals, att. to 15<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Brigade. “... I can definitely state that Sgt. Ball and Cpl. Craft, Royal Signals, were with me on HMS ‘Dragonfly’ as I buried Cpl Craft and assisted Sgt Ball on board ‘Dragonfly’ when he was very badly wounded...” (Statement by Major Lyle – UK Archives). Given the official date of death in the CWGC record below and Major Lyle’s statement that he “... buried Cpl. Craft ...” it would appear that George Craft is buried either at Dabo on Singkep Island or , if the date of 19.2.42 is not exactly correct – perhaps a day or so earlier on Pulau Posik. The official record is **Corporal George Thomas Craft**, #2333954, 11<sup>th</sup> Indian Division Signals, Royal Corps of Signals, died on 19.2.42 aged 24 years, son of Thomas and Ada Craft; husband of Millicent Craft of Hull. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial, Col. 42. (CWGC).
- **DANIELS - Private A.W. Daniels**, # 4858200, Leicester Regiment.” ... Known to have been on HMS Dragonfly ... recorded as Missing” (UK National Archives file); “... As regards Sgt. Farrands, Ptes. Daniels and Pegg. The first two were definitely on the ship, and I believe the third was. We were around the spot that the ship went down for some time. If anyone was alive, we would have picked them up. I can only assume that they were killed outright whilst down in the Lower Deck...” (letter from CQMS Cahill to Captain W.C. Gingell and included in Gingell’s report to the War Office casualty Branch in November 1943 – UK Archives). The official record is **Private Alfred Daniel Daniels**, # 4858200, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment died 14.2.42 aged 23 years, son of John and Beatrice Daniels. Also remembered on the Singapore memorial, Col. 65 (CWGC).

- **DANIELS / 'DANIALS'** – "... *Private R.L. Daniels, # 3534710, HQ Coy, The Manchester Regiment, QM's Clerk, blonde, Home Oldham, married, militia man...*" (UK National Archives file). The official record is **Private Ronald Leonard Daniels, # 35634710**, The Manchester regiment, died 14.2.42 aged 22 years, son of Alfred and Alice Daniels, nephew of William Easton of Middleton Junction, Lanarkshire. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial, Col. 76 (CWGC). Note despite Private Daniels being described as 'married' there is no CWGC mention of his wife?
- **DOOLEY** – "... *Sergeant J. Dooley, # 3525853, The Manchester Regiment, joined army 1936, xian name James, home Withington, Manchester ...*" (UK National Archives file). The official record is **Serjeant James William Dooley, #3525853**, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Manchester Regiment died 14.2.42 aged 24 years. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial Col. 75.  
[Researcher note: there is an even more tragic not to the story of Sgt James Dooley because only a week or two previously in Singapore he had married a young woman by the name of Miss Dorothy Schooling and he possibly knew she had boarded an evacuation ship on the night of 12 February 1942 and he would have believed she was on her way to safety in Batavia. In fact, the night before James Dooley lost his life in the attack on 'HMS Dragonfly' on 14 February his new wife also died on another ship sunk by the Japanese during the evacuation of Singapore. Dorothy Schooling was escaping with her wider family on the 'HMS Giang Bee' sunk by Japanese destroyers on the evening of 13 February 1942, 170 miles south of Singapore.]
- **ELKINS** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Elkins, 18 Division Reconnaissance Unit.
- **ELTON** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Elton, 18 Division Reconnaissance Unit. This is 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Guy Bruce Elton, #186300, 18<sup>th</sup> Recce, born 12.9.18 of 'The Hawthorns', Belmont Road, Hereford, England who enlisted on 16.9.39 and was captured in Padang, Sumatra on 17.3.42 (the same date as a sizeable group of survivors from the 'HMS Dragonfly'). He was a POW firstly in Padang until 20.9.42, then Medan, Singapore and finally at Pakan Baroe from July 1944 until release. (MI9 Questionnaire on COFEPOW website). After the war Guy Elton received a backdated promotion from '2<sup>nd</sup> Lt (War Subs Lt), Emergency Comm. Recce Corps to full Lt from 9.9.46 backdated to 1.10.42. On 12.1.2 53 he married Margaret James in Wellington, New Zealand and they had three children. Guy died on 28.4.91 in Auckland, New Zealand and is buried at Stoke, Nelson, NZ. Margaret died in 2001.
- **EVANS** – *Sergeant Major W.F. Evans, The Manchester Regiment, "AN Account of the Last Voyage of 'HMS Dragonfly' "which appears in three forms in the UK national Archives Files – only one copy of which is directly attributed to Evans in CO 980/234. One typed copy appears with no name attached and is titled "An Account of the Sinking of 'HMS Dragonfly' "and a handwritten notation 'SS / 330/141/626 Cas PW'. But has the same wording as the other copies. The interesting aspect to this document is that it is written entirely in the third person and never once does Evans make a 'we' or 'I' statement so it maybe he was simply a chronicler of the events and never on board the 'HMS Dragonfly'.*

- **FARNELL** – “... *L/Cpl. W (crossed out) N. Norman Farnell, # 3524258, HQ Comp. The Manchester Regiment, regular soldier, had served Palestine and Egypt ...*” (UK National archives file). The official record is **Lance Corporal Norman Farnell, # 3524258, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Manchester Regiment, died 14.2.42 aged 29 years. He is also remembered on the Singapore Memorial, Col. 75 (CWGC).**
- **FARRANDS** – Sgt R. Farrands, # 4857841, Leicester Regiment (UK National Archives file); “... *as regards Sgt Farrands, Ptes. Daniels and Pegg. The first two were definitely on the ship, and I believe the third was. We were around the spot that the ship went down for some time. If anyone was alive, we would have picked them up. I can only assume that they were killed outright whilst down in the Lower Deck...*” (letter from CQMS Cahill to Captain W.C. Gingell and included in Gingell’s report to the War Office casualty Branch in November 1943 – UK National Archives file). The official record is **Serjeant Richard Farrands, #4857841, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment died 14.2.42. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial Col. 63. (CWGC).**
- **FELLOWES / ‘FELLOWS’** – “... *C/Sgt Fellows, # 724269, The Manchester Regiment, regular soldier, married, employed as a Clerk in Bn. Orderly Room ...*” (UK National Archives file). The official record is **Colour Serjeant Herbert Frank Fellowes, # 724269, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Manchester Regiment died 14.2.42 aged 38 years. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial Col. 75 (CWGC).** Further information is recorded (by grandson ‘Robbie’ on 1.9.10 on the website themanchesters.org) to the effect that Herbert Fellowes was married to Kathleen Fellowes aged 31 years and had a baby daughter Shirley Ann aged one year at the time of his death. They had been evacuated on the ‘Duchess of Bedford’ which arrived in the UK on 4.4.42, via Capetown.
- **FORD** – Private Ford, Leicester Regiment (in the UK National Archives file this entry has been crossed out and ‘RSM Sturch of Leicesters ‘overwritten?’). However, the official record is **Private Alfred Ford, #4862064, Leicestershire regiment, died 14.2.42 aged 22 years, son of Charles and Polly Ford. Also remembered on the Singapore memorial, Col. 65. (CWGC).**
- **GINGELL** – **Captain William George Frank Gingell, MM., MBE., #62146, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, The East Surrey Regiment.** William Gingell was born at Landsdown Road, Devizes, Wiltshire on 21 June 1895 to Albert and Emma Gingell. He had five brothers but three were killed in the First World War and one sister. He joined the Coldstream Guards in 1914 (aged 17 years) and fought in France being wounded twice and being awarded the Military Medal. He finished the war as a Sergeant and remained in the regular army after the Armistice, becoming an RSM of the East Surrey Regiment in India. In 1923 he married Elsie Grace Bird at St Michael the Archangel, Aldershot, Hampshire and had two children, Laurie and Jill. In 1931 he was awarded the MBE - at that point he was a Warrant officer Class 1 and Regimental Sergeant

Major in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, East Surrey Regiment (London Gazette). Captain Gingell was a remarkable man – for his pragmatism, his resourcefulness and his courage – firstly on 12 December 1941 during the Battle for Jitra when “... *Captain W. G. Gingell, the redoubtable Quartermaster of 2 Surreys, encountered an enemy patrol at Kepala Batas. Taking them on with his ration parties, driver and storemen, Jungle’ succeeded in killing all members of the Japanese patrol...*” ( queensownsurreys.org), and then later on 24 December 1941 when the East Surreys were holding the position at Kampar and “... *Quartermaster Captain Gingell lived up to his reputation by producing a traditional Christmas dinner of turkey along with a free issue of beer , and the memory of that special dinner had to last the Battalion throughout the bitter years of captivity that was to follow...*” ( history of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion East Surrey regiment – COFEPOW website) and another instance being recorded during the confusion and bloodshed of the retreat across Singapore island ( in fact near Bukit Timah) on 11 February) during the week before the Surrender – when “... *Captain Gingell , the Quartermaster , ran the Battalion to earth and produced a hot meal. In spite of all the vicissitudes experienced by the British Battalion throughout the campaign, it very seldom, thanks to Captain Gingell, went without a hot meal...*” (Regimental History of the Leicesters). After surviving the sinking of ‘HMS Dragonfly’ and being wounded by the Japanese bombers machine gun attack on the survivors in the sea, he firstly made it to a deserted island from where he moved with his party on the night of 15 February by motor boat to Singkep island and there he received treatment for his wounds. On 23 February his party moved to Tembilihan, arriving at Rengat the next day. Then he made it to Padang in western Sumatra, boarding the Dutch ship ‘SS de Weert’ on the night of 2 March 1942 and later disembarked at Colombo – arriving back in England on 9 May 1942. His final army post was at The Royal Hospital, Chelsea from 1944 to 1955 and he retired with the rank of Major (Christine Waite “Gingell Family Tree”). William passed away on 2 January 1960 aged 64 years of age at Thames Ditton and at that time his residence was Old Manor Cottage, Palace Road, East Mosely, Surrey. See also National Archives WO 208/3309/744. William Gingell was clearly a man of indomitable spirit and unquestioned bravery during wartime.

- **GODFREY – Sub. Conductor Godfrey/Godfry**, IAOC, B.O.W.O., attd to 15<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Brigade (UK National Archives files). “... *I embarked on the ‘HMS Dragonfly’ during darkness on the evening of 13.2.42. I know that the following were aboard on the morning of 14.2.42 ... S/Condr. Godfrey, IAOC [researcher note: there is a handwritten notation against this “... Identified by India Office as T/S/ Condr. W.H. Godfrey...”] ...Capt. Gingell was in a lifeboat with myself and S/Condr. Godfrey and several other people. S/Condr. Godfrey was burnt and wounded in the head and died within a few minutes...*”. (Statement by L/C V. Clothier, # 6140656, The East Surrey Regiment). So, William Godfrey lost his life when killed by Japanese planes ruthlessly machine gunning the survivors of the ‘HMS Dragonfly’ whilst they were struggling for their lives in the sea. The official record is Serjeant William Henry Godfrey, #310580, 17<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> Lancers, Royal Armoured Corps., (also served as a Sub-Condr. Indian Army Ordnance Corps of Clerks) died 14.2.42 aged 38 years. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial, Col. 351(CWGC).
- **HAKE – “... L/Cpl. S. A. Hake, # 3523133, The Manchester Regiment, xian name Stanley. In HQ Company band, regular, had served in Egypt and Palestine... It was read out (by CSM**

*Hoyle) on parade about a month after capitulation that ... all were [presumed drowned ... except L/Cpl Hake and L/Cpl Hake was stated to have swum ashore and eventually to have reached Sumatra ... information by official letter from the Japs ...* (File in UK National Archives). The official record is **Lance Corporal Stanley Arthur Hake**, #3523133, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Manchester regiment died 14.2.42 aged 29 years, son of Arthur Robert and Ada Lucy Hake of Swinton, Lanarkshire. He is also remembered on the Singapore Memorial co. 75 (CWGC).

- **HEPWORTH – L/Cpl Hepworth**, The Manchester Regiment, “... *L/Cpl Mahoney heard that Hepworth drove party down [researcher note: presumably to the Singapore docks] and went on board ...*” (File in UK National Archives). The official record is **Lance Corporal Sidney Hepworth**, #3526054, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Manchester Regiment died 14.2.42 aged 27 years, son of John Hepworth and of Mary Elizabeth Hepworth of Cheetham, Manchester. He is also remembered on the Singapore memorial, Col. 76. (CWGC).
- **HESFORD – Lieut. Arthur Hesford**, # 129557, The Manchester Regiment, captured 17.3.42 (COFEPOW). Lt Hesford survived the sinking of ‘HMS Dragonfly’ and presumably became a POW in Padang, Sumatra. After the war he recorded his experiences – under the title “*Personal Account of Official Escape party of two officers and twenty four Warrant officers and NCOs of First Battalion, The Manchester Regiment from Singapore, February 14, 1942 to Padang, Sumatra, March 17 1942*” – apparently held in a private collection (Lizzie Oliver “Prisoners of the Sumatra railway”). An extract of his writing is on the website [themanchesters.org/forum](http://themanchesters.org/forum) and explains that, as Assistant Adjutant and Intelligence Officer at Battalion HQ of The Manchesters, he was chosen by their Commanding Officer, Lieut. Col. E.B. Holmes to be one of two officers to lead the chosen group of 24 NCOs in their escape from Singapore to Australia and form the nucleus of a new Battalion.
- **HOLLARD – L/Cpl Hollard**, 18 Division Reconnaissance Unit. L/Cpl Hollard, Reconnaissance Corp, states (UK National Archives Statement 3855191, ADM267/122 Admiralty series) states, “... *There were about 45 Officers and other ranks of the Manchester regiment on board, also 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Strolly, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Elton, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Elkins, myself and two Privates both named Jones of the 18 Div. reconnaissance Unit. The crew was about 20 men....one lifeboat and two Carley Floats were launched, and I managed to get on one of the latter with about 10 other men including a chief officer named Morris ...*”. It is not known what happened to L/Cpl Hollard after he reached shore but another reference is in the book ‘No Better Friend’ by Robert Weintraub “... *Many men clung to the floats, including a reconnaissance unit soldier named Lance Corporal Hollard who lived to report the sinking...*” .
- **JENKINS – Private D. Jenkins**, # 6141300, The East Surrey Regiment; “... Known to have been on ‘HMS Dragonfly’ ... recorded as Missing ...’ (file in UK National Archives); “... *These two Ptes. [ researcher note: refers to Pte F.H Stallwood and Pte. D Jenkins] I saw on the lower deck whilst*

*checking E/Surreys on board...”* (letter from C/Sjt. T. Cahill, The East Surrey Regt. In Ward & Liverpool infirmary, dated 15.12.43 to War Office Casualty Branch, Liverpool.); *“... I regret that I am not certain of the Christian name of the Pte. Jenkins mentioned, but I think it may have been IEUAN Gwyn. His height would be about [indecipherable] fresh complexion, fait hair, age approximately 24 – 25...”*. (Letter 25.1.43 by Captain Gingell, the East Surrey regiment to War Office, Casualty Branch, Liverpool). The official record is **Private Donald Jenkins**, # 6141300, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, East Surrey Regiment died 14.2.42 aged 30 years, son of Arthur and Mary Ann Jenkins of Sunbury – On – Thames, Middlesex. He is also remembered on the Singapore Memorial, Col. 69 (CWGC).

- **JONES – Private Jones, 18 Division Reconnaissance Unit.**
  
- **JONES – Private Jones, 18 Division Reconnaissance Unit.**
  
- **LE PAGE – Warrant officer Class II (RQMS), Edward Le Page**, # 3514357, Manchester regiment died 14.2.42 aged 43 years, son of Mr and Mrs Edward le page; husband of J. Le Page of Guernsey, Channel Islands (CWGC). Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial, Col. 75. Also, RQMS Le Page, The Manchester Regiment; Company Quarter Master Sergeant E. Le Page, #3514357 The Manchester Regiment, later regimental Quarter Master sergeant with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (Manchester-regiment.org.uk); *“... regular, married ...”* (File in UK national Archives).
  
- **LUCY – Warrant Officer Class II Joseph Lucy**, #3521762, Manchester Regiment, died 14.2.42 aged 29 years, son of Joseph and Elizabeth Lucy of Cheetham Hill, Manchester. Also remembered on the Singapore memorial, Col. 75. (CWGC). Also, *“... CSM Lucy, # 3521762, The Manchester Regiment, ... ex boy, served Bermuda, Egypt, Palestine, Christian name Joseph ...”* (file in UK National Archives).
  
- **LYLE – Captain (later Major) Robert Ludovic Lyle**, 15<sup>th</sup> Indian infantry Brigade. Robert Lyle was born on 16.6.12 in Lymington, Hants., and enlisted in 1940 when he was given an Emergency Commission as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the Indian Army. It appears that this might have been his correct rank when he boarded the ‘HMS Dragonfly’ – the very detailed and historically valuable report he wrote on the loss of the ship was undated and may have been completed in 1943 when he was a WS. Captain (6/42) – or even later at the time he became a T/Major (1943). He survived the sinking of the ship, reached Dabo on Singkep Island and from there he reached Sumatra (he notes that after being hospitalised in Dabo he never saw any of the ships company again). He reached Tembilihan, then travelled up the Indragiri river on the east coast of Sumatra, then via Rengat along the official ‘escape line’ to Padang. He left Padang in the early morning of 3 March 1942 on the KLM ship ‘SS De Weert’ which took

him to safety. He married Monica Frances Gurney in 1945 and they had three children, Anthony Welsh Lyle and two others. In 1946 he received another promotion, this time to Captain and a permanent commission in The East Surrey Regiment. The remainder of his career saw further promotions to T/Lt. Col (1954), Lt Col. (1956) and in 1959 he retired, being that year also awarded the OBE. Robert Lyle died, aged 95 years, on 15.2.07 (remarkably exactly 65 years to the day that he was on Pulau Posik after being shipwrecked).

- **MASKERY – Lance Corporal George Joseph Maskery (registered and known as Joseph), #3525898, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Manchester Regiment died 14.2.42 aged 27 years. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial Col. 76 and the ‘Barnsley War memorial’ website (CWGC).**
- **MEREDITH – Sergeant Ernest Meredith, # 3511718, The Manchester Regiment, “... P/Sgt. Meredith, Ernest, Provost Sgt. HQ company, regular soldier, served Egypt and Palestine ...” (file in UK National Archives). The CWGC adds “... died 14.2.42, son of J. Meredith and Jessie Meredith (nee Manning) ... “, and that Ernest is remembered on the Singapore Memorial, Col.76.**
- **MITCHELL – Lance Corporal Donald Mitchell, # 3528870, The Manchester Regiment, died 14.2.42 aged 24 years. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial, Col.76(CWGC).**
- **MURDY – RQMS Murdy, Leicester Regiment.; “... After the ship was struck, I saw Lt Quinn, RQMS Murdy, & CQMS Vaughan swimming towards an island some distance away...” (Statement by L/Cpl Clothier, # 6140656, The East Surrey Regiment - UK Archives);” ... “RQMS Murdy, Leicesters, doubtful P/W ...” (UK Archives file); “...The only other people who got off alive that I know was RQMS Murdy, Leicesters, and C/Sgt. Vaughan. These two decided to swim and I watched them until out of sight. I don’t think they made land, as a matter of fact, in my own mind I assume they made good Sharks meat. Rather crude I know. I hope that this has been of some help to the casualty Office ...” (letter from CQMS Cahill to Captain W. C. Gingell and included in his report to the War Office casualty Branch 2.11.43 – UK Archives). Finally, the official record is **Warrant Officer Class II Sidney James Murdy, #4850864, 1st Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment, died 14.2.42 aged 41 years. Also remembered on the Singapore memorial, Col.63 (CWGC).****
- **NOAD – Private P. Noad, # 6141344, The East Surrey Regiment; “...I assisted to drag this Pte. on board on embarking and did not see him afterwards ...” (letter from C/Sjt. T. Cahill, The East Surrey Regt. From Ward 7, Liverpool Infirmary dated 15.1.243 to war office Casualty Branch, Liverpool.); Captain W.C. Gingell, The East Surrey Regiment also confirmed the death of Pte Noad in a letter dated 13.6.42 to the War Office, Casualty Branch, Liverpool).The official record is **Private Percy Noad, #6141344, East Surrey Regiment, died 14.2.42 aged 25****

years, son of Henry George and Johanna Noad of West Kensington, London. Also remembered on the Singapore memorial, Col. 70 (CWGC).

- **NOBLE – Sergeant Leslie Noble**, # 3526838, The Manchester Regiment, died 14.2.42 aged 30 years, son of Mr and Mrs J.L. Noble of Hulme, Manchester. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial, Col. 75. (CWGC). The Manchester Regiment
- **NOYCE – Serjeant Henry Charles Noyce**, # 7591472, RAOC att. The Manchester Regiment died 14.2.42 aged 38 years, son of Henry and Alice Noyce; husband of V.H. Noyce of Ensburry Park, Bournemouth, Hampshire. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial Col. 108. (CWGC).
- **OLSSON – Cpl Olsson**, # 3523990, The Manchester Regiment, “... *L/Cpl. Olsson Richard, HQ Coy, band, regular soldier ...*” (file in UK national Archives) “... *my great uncle L/Cpl Richard Olsson. He died on HMS Dragonfly on the 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 1942., his name is also on the Kranji war memorial. He joined the Manchester Regiment in 1932 and was a bandsman and from the little information we have a keen sportsman. I also believe he may have been in Bermuda in 1935 and Egypt in 1938...*” (Peter F., 7.1.10 on website themanchesters.org/forum). The official record is **Lance Corporal Richard Olsson**, #3523990, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Manchester Regiment, died 14.2.42 aged 28 years. (CWGC).
- **OPENSHAW - Sergeant Openshaw**, # 3524069, The Manchester Regiment- “... *L/Sgt. Openshaw A.S., HQ Company Sigs. Xian name Arthur. Served in Palestine, went to the UK from there on a Signals course ...*” (file in the UK National Archives). The official record is **Lance Serjeant Arthur Standard Openshaw**, # 3524069, Manchester Regiment died 14.2.42 aged 30 years, son of Arthur and Harriet Openshaw of Openshaw, Manchester [ Openshaw is an area about two miles from the center of Manchester]. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial, Col. 75 (CWGC).
- **PEGG – Private PEGG**, Leicester Regiment; “... *Known to have been on ‘HMS Dragonfly’ ...*



who are recorded as Missing ..." (file in the UK National Archives). Also "... as regards Sgt Farrands, Ptes. Daniels and Pegg. The first two were definitely on the ship, and I believe the third was. We were around the spot that the ship went down for some time. If anyone was alive, we would have picked them up. I can only assume that they were killed outright whilst down in the Lower Deck..." (letter from CQMS Cahill to Captain W.C. Gingell and included in Gingell's report to the War Office casualty Branch in November 1943 – UK Archives). The official record is **Private George Arnold Pegg**, # 4857585, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment, died 14.2.42 aged 25 years, son of George and Amelia Pegg of Manfield, Leicester. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial, Col. 66 (CWGC).

- **QUINN** – Lieut, Quinn, MM, # P 89481, The Manchester Regiment; "... After the ship was struck, I saw Lt Quinn, RQMS Murdy, & CQMS Vaughan swimming towards an island some distance away..." (Statement by L/Cpl Clothier, # 6140656, The East Surrey Regiment - UK Archives). The official record is **Lieutenant Thomas Quinn**, MM., #89781, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Manchester Regiment died 14.2.42 aged 44 years, son of James and Susan Quinn of Heaton Park, Lancashire; husband of Catherine Quinn of Haxby, Yorkshire. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial, col. 75 (CWGC). Lt Quinn had been selected to be the officer in charge of the official escape party of Manchester Regiment soldiers from Singapore and was last seen swimming to shore from the sunken ship.
- **ROBINSON** – "... Sergeant A. Robinson, # 3442837, The Manchester Regiment, transferred from C Company to HQ Company as [Cook?] Sgt., blonde, married, regular soldier, Home (Hulme?) Manchester ..." (file in UK National Archives). The official record is **Serjeant Albert Robinson**, #3442837, The Manchester Regiment, died 14.2.42 aged 32 years, husband of Mary Robinson of Salford, Lancashire. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial, col. 75 (CWGC).
- **SMITH** – **Sgt Smith, Cipher, 15<sup>th</sup> Indian infantry Brigade.** "... I am afraid that I do not know the regiment or Christian name of Sgt Smith. He was to the best of my belief the cipher Sergeant to 15 Ind Inf Brigade with which I was for only a short time, my original Bde being the 6<sup>th</sup> Ind Inf Bde. Sub Conductor JENKINS should know. It may be possible that after a year I have the name mixed, and on second thought it may have been Sgt White [researcher note: there is a pencilled notation against this statement, 'S/1817515, RASC missing 15/2/42 Malaya'] who I meant...". Also, "... If I did get mixed between the names of St Smith and White, Sgt. White was also definitely on HMS 'Dragonfly' ...". Also, "... Sgt. Smith (? White) was spoken to by me on board HMS 'Dragonfly' the night he embarked. He was on the after-mess deck with all the others. I did not see him again after the bombs had removed the after portion of the ship. He was without doubt either drowned below decks or killed by the explosion caused by the bombs ..." (Statement of Major Lyle – UK Archives). [Researcher Note: If this is a confusion then it is

with Pte Kenneth Douglas White, S/1817515, - see below.]

- **SPENCER** – “... *Sergeant A. Spencer, # 3525760, the Manchester Regiment, regular soldier, MT Sgt C. Coy. att. HQ. Coy, single ...*” (file in UK National Archives). The official record is **Serjeant Arthur Spencer, #3525760, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Manchester Regiment** died 14.2.42 aged 29 years, son of Mr and Mrs G.R. Spencer of Farnworth, Lancashire. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial, Col. 75 (CWGC). Arthur Spencer was born in 1912 in Farnworth, Lancashire and after enlisting in the Manchester Regiment he served in Palestine (1937) earning the GSM, before being transferred to Singapore (themanchester.org/forum).
- **STALLWOOD** – Private F.H. Stallwood, # 6142233, The East Surrey Regiment; “... *These two Ptes. [researcher note: refers to Pte F.H Stallwood and Pte. D Jenkins] I saw on the lower deck whilst checking E/Surreys on board...*” (letter from C/Sjt. T. Cahill, The East Surrey Regt. In Ward & Liverpool infirmary, dated 15.12.43 to War office casualty Branch, Liverpool.). Captain W.C. Gingell, The East Surrey Regiment confirmed the death of Pte. F. H. Stallwood in a letter dated 13.6.42 to the War Office Casualty Branch, Liverpool. The official record is **Private Frank Henry Stallwood, # 6142233, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, East Surrey Regiment** died 14.2.42 aged 22 years. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial, Col 70 (CWGC). Frank appears to have been born in 1919 in Middlesex.
- **STILLWELL** – The official record is **Lance Serjeant Sidney William George Stillwell, #3526908, Manchester Regiment** died 14.2.42 aged 26 years, son of Mr and Mrs Edward C. Stillwell of Dagenham. Essex. Also remembered on the Singapore memorial, Col. 75. (CWGC).
- **STROLLY** – **2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Strollly, 18 Division Reconnaissance Unit.** There is no MI9 or CWGC record of this person.
- **STURCH / ‘STURDY’** – “... *RSM A. Sturch, # 3514765, The Manchester Regiment, regular soldier, married. Served Egypt & Palestine...*”. Also “... *known to have been on ‘HMS Dragonfly ...*” (file in UK National Archives); “... *I spoke to this W.O. [researcher note: refers to RSM A. Sturch] on board approx. 8 hours before the sinking ...*”. (C/Sjt T. Cahill, The East Surrey Regt. His letter from Ward 7, Liverpool Infirmary, 15.12.43 to War Office Casualty Branch, Liverpool). The official record is **Warrant Officer Class ii (RSM) Albert Sturch, # 3514765, Manchester Regiment, died 14.2.42 aged 38 years; husband of Kathleen Sturch of Ross – On – Tye, Herefordshire.** Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial, Col 75 (CWGC).

- **TAYLOR – L/Cpl. J Taylor '43'**, The Manchester Regiment. "... L/Cpl. J. Taylor, #35275423, *Survivor with III Group to Burma, thence to Thailand. Died Tamakan, Thailand, 27.12.43, grave No AX/15 ...* ". (list of Official Evacuation party ex Singapore - Manchester Regt. After the sinking James Taylor managed to get across to Sumatra and then to Padang, where he was captured by the Japanese on 17 March 1942 and became part of 'The British Sumatra Battalion' along with only two other men from the 'HMS Dragonfly', Harry Bostock and Richard Taylor both also Lance Corporals of The Manchester Regiment.. That 'Battalion' of POWs left Padang on 9 May 1942 going by train and Road to Medan, North Sumatra where – at the Port of Belawin Deli - they boarded the 'England Maru' which was already crowded with many Australian troops from Singapore. On 25 May they reached Mergui in Thailand. Conditions there were appalling, the death rate was high, and the men were employed in the building of an airfield. In August 1942 they were moved again – this time on the 'Tatu Maru' and were offloaded onto lighters at the Tavoy River – thus began the odyssey of horror that was the Death Railway. The official record is that **Lance Corporal James Taylor, # 3527543**, The Manchester Regiment, died on 28.12.43 aged 29 years, son of Fred and Elizabeth Ann Taylor of Standish, Lancashire and is buried in Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, 2.H.36 (CWGC). It is not clear how he happened to die in Tamarkan in December 1943 because the account of the Battalion "The British Sumatra Battalion" by Apthorp suggests that they did not arrive at Tamarkan until March 1944.
- **TAYLOR – L/Cpl R. Taylor '34'**, The Manchester Regiment. "... L/Cpl. R. Taylor, #3527434, *Survivor with III Group to Burma, thence to Thailand. Now at Tamakan, Thailand..*" (List of Official Evacuation party ex Singapore – Manchester Regt.). The MI9 Liberation of **Corporal Richard Taylor, #3527543**, The Manchester Regiment, discloses that he was born on 26.6.09 and enlisted on 22.11.29, so had been a regular soldier with long service. He was captured on 17.3.42 – presumably at Padang – and became part of the 'British Sumatra Battalion' (along with two other Manchester Regiment men James Taylor and Harry Bostock both of whom would die on the Burma railway)so was also a POW at Medan in May 1942 before being transported to Burma POW camps including Tavoy and '18 Kilo'. His home address was 14 Moss Avenue, Rochdale, Lancashire (COFEPOW). That 'Battalion' of POWs left Padang on 9 May 1942 going by train and Road to Medan, North Sumatra where – at the Port of Belawin Deli - they boarded the 'England Maru' which was already crowded with many Australian troops from Singapore. On 25 May they reached Mergui in Thailand. Conditions there were appalling, the death rate was high, and the men were employed in the building of an airfield. In August 1942 they were moved again – this time on the 'Tatu Maru' and were offloaded onto lighters at the Tavoy River – thus began the odyssey of horror that was the Death Railway. Richard Taylor survived all these horrors to return to England.
- **VAUGHAN – "... C/Sgt. J.F. Vaughan, #6136676, The East Surrey Regiment, known to have been on 'HMS Dragonfly' ... recorded as Missing ..."** (file in UK National Archives). Died; "... After the ship was struck I saw Lt Quinn, RQMS Murdy, & CQMS Vaughan swimming towards an island some distance away..." (Statement by L/Cpl Clothier, # 6140656, The East Surrey Regiment - UK

Archives); Captain W. C. Gingell, The East Surrey Regiment also confirmed the death of Col/Sgt (CQMS) J.F. Vaughan in a letter dated 13.6.42 to the War Office, Casualty Branch, Liverpool). The official record is **Colour Serjeant John Francis Vaughan**, # 6136676, East Surrey Regiment died 14.2.42 aged 36 years, son of Frederick James Vaughan and Emily Vaughan; husband of Marian Vaughan of Leeds, Yorkshire. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial, Col. 67 (CWGC).

- **WALKER** – **Serjeant Percival Francis Joseph Wass Walker**, # 7583235, RAO, att. The Manchester Regiment died 14.2.42 aged 30 years. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial Col. 107. (CWGC).
- **WHITE** – “... T/Sgt. K. D. White, RASC, #181715, known to have been on ‘HMS Dragonfly’ ...” (file in UK National Archives); C/Sjt. T. Cahill of The East Surrey Regt. listed him as “...T/Sgt. K.D. White...” but notes also “...I did not see or speak to these people ...” (Cahill report written from Ward 7, Royal Infirmary, Liverpool 15.12.43). Almost certainly **Private Kenneth Douglas White**, # S/181715, RASC, aged 21 years, died 14.2.42, son of Charles James and Eleanor White of Carshalton, Surrey. [Researcher Note; Rank inconsistencies probably explained by the fact it is noted that he also served as Sjt. Indian Army Corps of Clerks} (CWGC). Also remembered on Singapore Memorial Col. 357.
- **WINDSOR** – CSM Windsor, The Manchester Regiment. Also “... Sgt. Windsor, #3517970, had been promoted CSM 9 Dec. 41, xian name Stanley, married, regular soldier...” (file in UK National Archives). The official record is **Serjeant Stanley Windsor**, # 3517970, The Manchester Regiment, died 14.2.42 aged 36 years, son of Albert Edward and Sheba Eva Windsor; husband of Doris Emily Windsor of Gosport, Hampshire. Also remembered on the Singapore Memorial Col.75 (CWGC). This is Frederick Stanley Windsor born in 1906 in Abercynon, Glamorgan, Wales. He married Doris Emily Urry in 1933; Doris remarried in 1947 and she died in 1980 aged 69 years.
- **PIERCY** – *George Piercy of Sime Darby (recorded by Frank Brewer)*