

“SS. BAN HO GUAN”

(Sunk, possibly by Japanese Submarine I – 4, between 28 February to 2 March 1942)

This is a Memorial Record to those who lost their lives.

[Version 4.1.0 – November 2016 – with photos]

Preface:

Following the Battle for Malaya during December 1941 - January 1942 and as the fall of Singapore became imminent during the first weeks of February 1942, several thousand men, women and children made frantic, last minute efforts to escape the burning city - which was by then under constant bombing and shellfire from the Japanese.

Evacuation ships had been leaving since soon after the first bombs fell on Singapore on 8 December 1941, but as the Japanese army moved quickly and inexorably closer down the Malayan Peninsula the flow of people (initially mainly women and children) became a desperate torrent of people trying to gain passage on the next ship leaving Singapore.

By the 13 February 1942 – and only two days before the final Surrender to the Japanese – all but a few hundred of the women who were going to make this increasingly dangerous passage by sea had left and the composition of the escapees quickly changed to men – civilians, government officials, and servicemen who had permission to leave for a variety of reasons. Most were Europeans together with some Eurasian soldiers, but there were also a significant number of Indian Officers and 'Other ranks' (ORs).

They were by then using an amazing variety of craft to cross the seas to what appeared to be the safety of Sumatra and Java. Everything from old Yangste River gunboats, fast Naval and Air force patrol craft, Harbour Board oil and water tenders (that had a top speed of 4 knots) - through to lifeboats, "praus" (tiny Malay canoes) and small sailing dinghies from the Changi Sailing Club.

When the Surrender was confirmed in the early evening of Sunday, 15 February 1942 the escape efforts became even more desperate and opportunistic. Many hundreds of servicemen from all branches of the armed forces, including hundreds of men from the Malayan Volunteer forces (FMSVF, SSVF, MRNVR and other units) joined in the search for anything that floated to get away from the small British occupied area bounding Singapore city, Changi and Blakan Mati (now Sentosa) and some small surrounding islands.

After exhausting, arduous and extremely dangerous voyages in every imaginable type of boat and ship the majority reached Sumatra – however many were captured or killed in ambushes by the Japanese Navy and aerial bombing attacks.

On reaching Sumatra there began another tiring journey by truck, car, bus, and train across the pre-prepared escape route – this ran from the little port towns and villages of the Indragiri River on the east coast across the mountainous center of Sumatra to the primary evacuation point at the town of Padang on the west coast.

By late February 1942 thousands of men and women had been crowding into the town of Padang for weeks and were being organised into prioritized batches for evacuation

on the occasional arrival of passenger ships, merchant ships, and warships to make the next voyage to Colombo, Bombay, Java and Freemantle. This sea evacuation had also become extremely dangerous as Japanese submarines and some Japanese warships had by then started circling the Indian Ocean and patrolling the west coast of Sumatra.

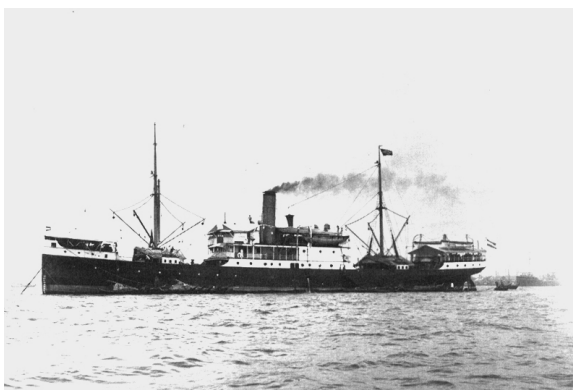
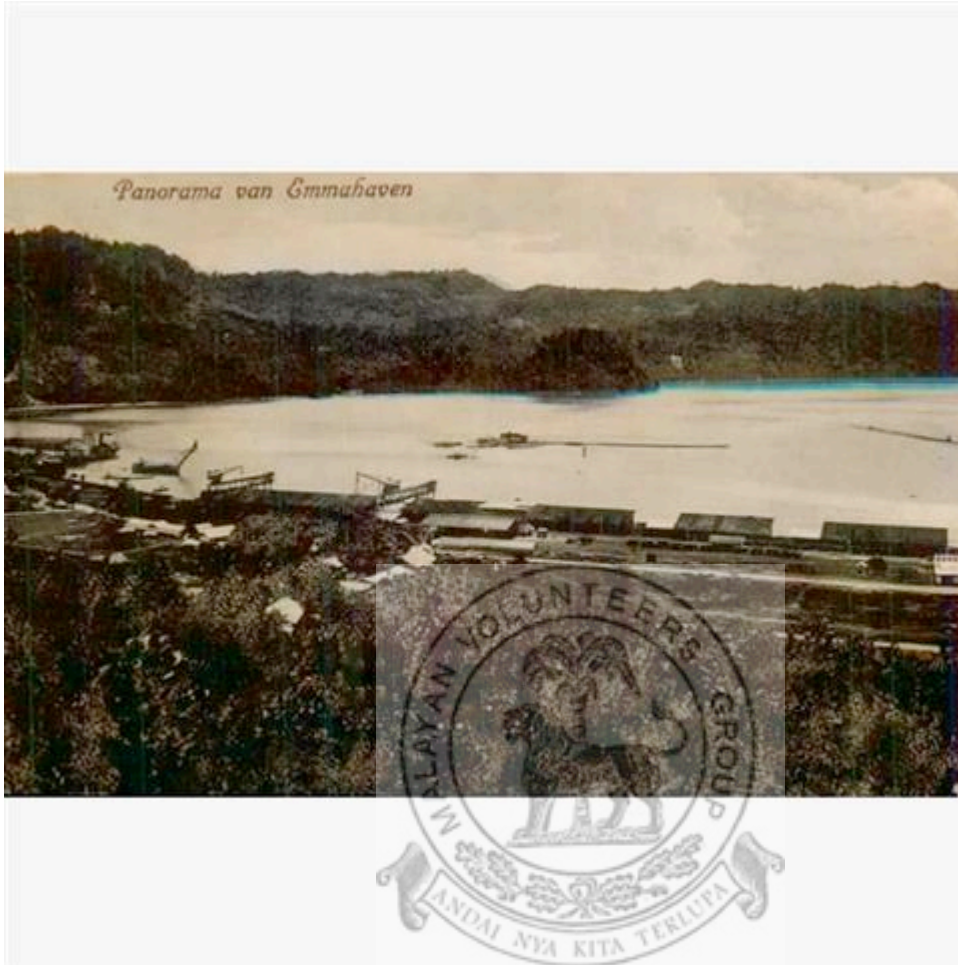


This record is an effort to unravel the mystery of the identity of the over 200 men who, at the end of February 1942, were on the “SS. Ban Ho Guan” when it left the port at Padang enroute for Tjilatjap and possibly with the objective of reaching Freemantle in Australia but disappeared without trace or survivors.

It also examines the likely position where it was sunk and possibilities insofar as the fate of any survivors from the initial sinking.

The “SS. Ban Ho Guan”:

The port of Padang is located some five kilometers away from the town and in 1942 was known as Emmahaven.



Most of the evacuation ships from Padang did make it to safety in Ceylon or Australia, but there were several terrible sea tragedies including the sinkings of the "SS. Rooseboom", and the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" by the Japanese submarines as they closed the net around the Netherlands East Indies.

The "Ban Ho Guan" (hereafter sometimes referred to as the "BHG") was at 270 feet a modest sized merchant ship (1,693 tons and built in 1908 in Feijnoord, Rotterdam). It had visited the port of Emmahaven in the 1930s at on at least one occasion (see photo).



Originally named the “De Haan” and it was described at the time as being “ ...a little older ...” and owned by the Dutch KPM line, it took the name in 1935 (SG “Straits Times “ 31.10.35) of an earlier vessel named the “Ban Ho Guan” which had been plying the waters between Singapore and the Dutch East Indies since at least the early 1920's and was sold to KPM (who later this first BHG to the Japanese for scrap) in part payment for the “De Haan”.

The owner of the new “BHG” was Chop Ek Liong Hin of Circular Road and Boat Quay (SG the ST 4.9.35 and 31.12 35). Other references say it was owned by the richest and most powerful trader in South East Asia at the time, Oei Tiong Ham, through his company Heap Eng Moh SS and was sailing under the British flag. It was a single screw ship, with two masts and the Bridge and accommodation amidships.



The ship was referred to by a number of names by evacuees in Padang including “Ban Mow” and “Han Moh”.

This ship was one of the later ships to evacuate people from Padang and followed the earlier ill-fated “SS. Rooseboom” (which had been sunk in the Indian Ocean on its way to Ceylon with only six survivors out of over 250 – 500 people on board) by a day or two.

What happened to the BHG is dealt with later in this document but one published source(“Axis submarines Successes of World War Two” by Jurgen Rohwer) together with analysis of Japanese and American source materials by Bob Hackett and Sanders Kinsepp revealed that the log of the Imperial Japanese submarine I-4 (sometimes referred to as IJ-4) shows that it torpedoed and sunk the “SS. Ban Ho Guan” somewhere towards Tjilatjap or ‘south of Bali’ at 1745 hours on 28 February 1942 – essentially only ten hours after it set out from Padang (another source records a slightly later time that day). Hackett and Kingsepp now doubt this record but it needs more analysis of locations and dates to finalise where the ship may have been sunk and by whom.

I-4 was under the command of a Cdr. Nakagawa Hajime.

Later that year, on 21 December 1942, this same submarine was itself sunk with no survivors by the "USS. Seadragon" in St. Georges Channel, between New Britain and New Ireland just north of Papua New Guinea. (www.combinedfleet.com/I-4htm)

Passengers:

Who was actually on the BHG when it left Emmahaven has been, and still is, largely a mystery because there were no known survivors and the actual records of who was leaving on the later evacuation ships appear to have disappeared – the writer concludes that the 'prioritized batches of evacuees' records that were compiled by the last two of the three successive British Commanding Officers in the town were taken by that officer on the "SS. Rooseboom", or destroyed by senior British officers as the Japanese arrived several weeks later in Padang.

The **key document** in at least partly unraveling the mystery of the "BHG" and the people who were on board that short, fateful voyage, is a tattered two page casually handwritten 'report' on what looks like school writing paper by Major G. Bristow, RAOC / R.E.M.E., to GHQ., Ceylon Command during 1942. (PRO WO 361/187). It states;

"Subject: Steamer BAN HO Guan – British casualties.

The following report may assist in reporting casualties on this steamer.

I was on duty at EMMAHAVEN, PADANG as an embarkation officer. I saw all personnel on board & left shortly before the steamer sailed at about 0500hrs 28 Feb 42.

Rations for 3 – 4 days were provided by the Dutch Military Authorities, & the O. C. ship (Lt. Col. MACFARLANE) made arrangements for cooking by British Personnel. In my opinion, the rations were not sufficient to last more than four days, but the ship may have had ample stocks of rice. Coal was carried as cargo.

I was told by the Captain & by the agent that the ship would make for TJILATJAP, JAVA. On 2 March 42 when I was a passenger on KPM steamer PALIMA the Captain told me that he had intercepted a radio broadcast from the Dutch Naval Authorities instructing BAN HO GUAN not to make for TJILATJAP but to make for nearest land & await further orders. At that time BAN HO GUAN should have crossed the SUNDA STRAIT & have been off the South Coast of JAVA. Since then, I have not heard any news of this steamer.

I believe that the classes of passengers are as follows:-

	<i>Officers</i>	<i>O.R.s</i>
<i>Royal Navy & Royal Marines</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>A.I.F</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>British Army, Indian Army & Malayan Volunteers</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>18</i>
	<i>20(deleted)</i>	<i>35(deleted)</i>
<i>Civilians (Malayan Survey Dept 8)</i>		
<i>Australian</i>		

I remember the following names,

(he then lists 21 names, ranks and units – two of whom were incorrect because they turned up in India and the remainder, who were classified as to whether he was 'certain' or 'uncertain', are included in the main list below with notation as to how they were recorded on this list insofar as certainty of being aboard)

*G. Bristow, Major
RAOC"*

This confirms that there were 223 passengers on board the "BHG" plus an unknown number of crew – but there must have been at least 8 -10 officers and crew on board. So the complement - of what appears to have been exclusively men – totaled around 230 persons.

He later (date stamped 16.7.43) wrote another report on a broader basis covering his Embarkation Officer duties for a number of ships whilst in Padang. In that he states insofar as the 'Ban Ho Guan' that it sailed at "... approx. 0930 hours [note later time] for Tjilatjap ..." and records in an 'Appendix B' to this report **a slightly greater number of personnel** on board (229 men plus the number of crew) and comments that it may have landed in Java about 3 March 1942 (this indicates that he expected a four day journey).

In this later report the number of Royal Navy and Royal Marines remains the same, as does the number and composition of AIF. However, this time he includes four new Australian civilians and states the complement of 'British & Indian (incl. Malayan VF)' to be 35 Officers, 38 Ors and 10 civilians.

Research has so far **identified** the names of;

- 20 Australian, New Zealand and /or 'Malayan' civilians, Officers in the Malayan Volunteer Forces and ORs in the MVF - there were at least 3 New Zealanders on board but it is doubtful Bristow was differentiating between the two Colonies of the time.
- 4 out of a possible 40 Royal Navy & Royal Marines - the bulk of these as yet unidentified RN & RM were the party of 20 men under the command of Lt. Cmdr. Terry (all ex "HMS Prince of Wales " and "HMS Repulse" survivors who had been attached to Singapore shore base "HMS Sultan" and then in a group on the "SS. Kung Wo" sunk near Pom Pong Island) (SDGB: see appendix on 'unidentified passengers' at end of this document for page numbers from Brook's book). [Researchers Note: It would be appreciated if anyone with knowledge of who was on the "Kung Wo" would contact Michael Pether as detailed at the end of this narrative.]
- Only 14 out of an almost certain 102 Australian (AIF) Forces servicemen on board have been identified – it is estimated that the AIF men on board the "Ban Ho Guan" is the largest single group of all those Australian servicemen listed as "Missing" after the Fall of Singapore.
- Insofar as British and Indian Army the precise numbers on board the numbers are blurred by the inclusion of Malayan Volunteer – suffice to say only 7 out of a possible 20 -30 British and Indian Army Officers have so far been identified and only some 4 out of a possible 15 -30 British and Indian Army ORs have been identified.

NOTE: Sixteen Australians are commemorated on the Singapore Memorial as having died on 28.2.42 (Dept. of Veteran Affairs, Canberra) – one of the real mysteries of the research on this memorial document is that there were clearly a very large number (Bristow recorded 102 and this should be taken as an accurate number) of Australian soldiers on this ship (which makes absolute sense because it was one of the few at this late stage which would have been bound for Australia) but there is no record as to who many of them might have been. It is surmised by the researcher that some 70 Australian soldiers on this ship yet to be accounted for will have official dates of death recorded as much earlier (say 15 February 1942) because that would have been, as was normal practice of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, the last time anyone took note of a sighting of these men.

There is another letter written by Major G. Bristow (this time shown as R.E.M.E.) on 4th Dec 1942 to;

“...The Secretary, The R.A. Institution, Woolwich. London. S.E.18
Subject:- Lieut. Colonel W. A. MacFarlane, R.A. Believed missing since Singapore...”

In which he confirms most of the above details as he attempts to let Mrs. MacFarlane (wife of the O. C. of the “BHG”) know what might have happened to her husband. For some reason, however, he has altered the number of and composition of the British Army, Indian Army and Malayan Volunteers to 35 officers (previously 18) and the number of ORs in these services to 38 (previously 55) and increased the number of civilians to 14 (previously 8) – whilst making no adjustment to the Royal Navy, Royal Marines or AIF complement numbers.

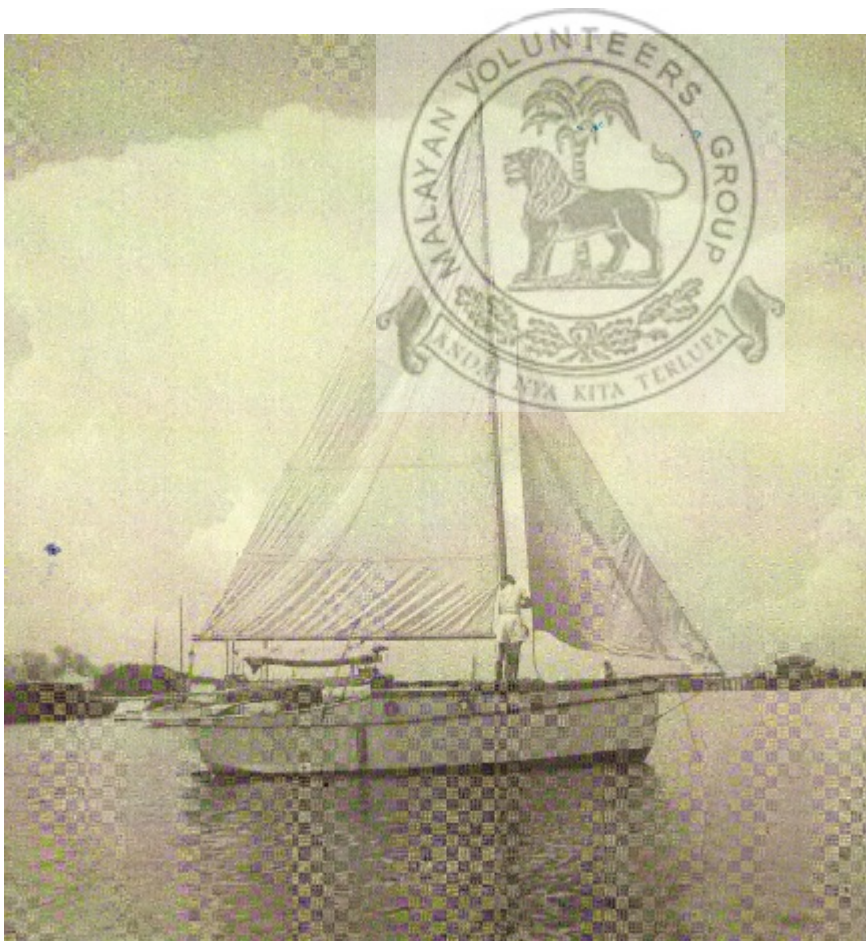
This may have resulted from him by then working off memory and it is doubtful if by then he still had a copy of his earlier handwritten report.

Captain David Nelson – who made brilliant, invaluable records of people during his time as a POW in Changi – states “... BHG sailed from Padang for Java midnight 27.2.42 and disappeared without trace. Among passengers Malayan Survey Staff: Noel Bridges, T. Husband, Phil Goss, C.C. Best, Clark – Walker...”.

The background to these five particular men of Malayan Survey being on board the “SS. Ban Ho Guan” was that on the day of Singapore’s surrender a group of senior officers of the Malayan Survey Department, including another by the name of Geoffrey Edwards, came together to board the yacht owned by David Nelson. They had planned this escape for some time whilst they were all camped in the Fullerton Building and waited for permission (from their employer) who was Mr. Husband at that time. On the morning of Sunday 15th February Mr. Husband decided that it was time to go and the seven (including David Nelson) men travelled in cars to the Royal Singapore Yacht Club .The 22 foot yacht owned by David Nelson and Geoffrey Edwards was named ‘Awan’ and on arrival at the Yacht Club they found ‘Awan’ in the possession of Australian soldiers with all their kit and food on board – Geoffrey Edwards later described them as “ ... absconding troops...” (Others mention Australian soldiers) and “... they had jam packed the yacht with themselves and their stores that she was down to her gunwales ...”. However the soldiers did not know that a few days earlier Geoffrey Edwards had taken the precaution of removing the magneto from the engine, so disabling it from working. After some argument for an hour the Australian officer in charge agreed they would give up ‘Awan’ and take another boat. At the last minute David Nelson decided that, without

orders from his superior officer in the SSVF, he was unable to go so farewelled his friends who successfully sailed his prized possession to the Indragiri River on the east coast of Sumatra over the next three days. They must have motored much of the way because Geoffrey Edwards later recalled having to regularly take the magneto apart because it was melting, scrape the sticky shellac and put it together again. 'Awan' was later abandoned at Rengat 30 or 40 miles up the Indragiri River. Tragically five of the six men, being from New Zealand and Australia, boarded the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" with the objective of reaching Fremantle – the other, Geoffrey Edwards, being an Englishman boarded a destroyer at Emmahaven, soon after was transferred at sea to the light cruiser 'HMS Dragon' and then again transferred at sea to 'HMAS Hobart' before finally arriving safely at Colombo.

There remains two poignant tangible legacies to this group of men from the Malayan Survey Department – on the 24 February at least two of them (Clark –Walker and Bridges) wrote letters to their wives and these were carried by Major General Gordon Bennett when he left Padang by Catalina flying boat at dawn on 25 February for Batavia, then by car to Bandoeng, and Tjilatjap where he boarded a QANTAS plane for Broome, Australia arriving there at 5.00pm on 27 February – even before the 'Ban Ho Guan' cast off for its fateful last voyage.



Another source, a post war Statutory Declaration by William Deakin on the death of his friend and fellow employee at Kamunting Tin dredging Ltd at Taiping, Mr. William J. Carruthers, records that he saw "...William Carruthers and Lloyd George Edwards leave...Emmahaven by a steamer on or about the 28th day of February 1942 at about 2 0'clock in the morning.



Departure from Padang:

There is another confirmation of the events and the enemy threat at the time in a letter by Mr. Roger Delbey, Chairman, Malayan Research Bureau, Sydney dated 30 May 1945 wherein he says;

"...There were three of those small ships which left on those two days (27 or 28 February 1942) bound for Java. Stokes Hughes's boat, the "Palehlah" picked up on a receiving set, which was all the ship had, a warning that there were submarines in the Sunda Straits. The captain turned this ship around and sailed for Colombo which they reached safely, however on very short rations.

The two ships which had left before Stokes-Hughes's were the "Seeberg" and the ship you called the "Ban Ho Guan" but which has variously been given to us as "Han Moh" and "Ban Moh", were both said to have been sunk.... Survivors may have quite easily have reached the string of islands on the western coast of Sumatra, but none of the passengers who were with Carruthers and Edwards have since been heard of. There were five members of the Survey in Malaya and a few others..."

As with many records compiled after the event by both civilians and servicemen during times of war, there are differences in the memory of the date of departure for the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" from Padang. The date and time of departure are in fact very important because it is a good guide to the map coordinates of where the ship might have actually been sunk - by calculating its speed in knots against the time that might elapsed before sinking.

It appears that the ship might have left as early as the morning of the 27 February, through to 0200 hrs on the 28 February (William Deakin Statutory declaration dated 14.8.46 on departure of William Carruthers and Lloyd George Edwards from Padang) and as late as 0500 hrs or 0930 hrs on the morning of the 28 February 1942 (Bristow).

By 1945 official correspondence contained the statement "An unofficial report was received that the vessel was sunk by enemy action on the 1st March 1942 and that the Dutch captain of the ship survived & was taken prisoner by the Japanese..." (Memo by P.C. Deveraux, dated 14.12. 45 Stoneycroft in WO361/187).The actual report referred to remains unidentified.

There was quite a lot of enquiry in an effort to find the Captain van der Berg of the "BHG" but this appears to have been unsuccessful.

Another record of the sinking is contained in the book "Axis Submarine Successes of World War Two" by Jurgens Rohwer. Mr. Rohwer, himself an officer in the German navy during the Second World War, used documents and contacts in the wartime Japanese navy to collate almost every Japanese submarine sinking of an Allied ship. Insofar as the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" he records that it was sunk at 1745 hrs on 28 February 1942 by I-4 under the command of Lt. Nakagawa Hajime, in the position of 'S. Bali'. It records that the ships was believed by the submarine to be Dutch (this is interesting, in the context of future analysis in this memorial document, because it had a Chinese name and would have been flying the British flag) and was sunk.

So to this point in the research it has been determined that some 230 fit men (largely servicemen) – and almost equally split between British and Australian nationals - left Padang on the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" only to be torpedoed somewhere between Padang and Tjilichap (Cilicap on current map) with not one man surviving. This is quite unrealistic in the context of other ships sunk in the waters of South East Asia and within a day or two of land.

The remainder of this memorial document focuses on;

- How far might the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" have travelled by the time it was attacked by the submarine I -4 and therefore where might its wreck rest today?
- What appears to have been the likely fate of any survivors from the initial sinking, including,
 - What is known about the commander of the submarine insofar as his treatment of survivors of ships he sank during the course of the war?
 - What was the practice of Japanese submarines by that point of the war insofar as taking prisoners from the survivors of sunk ships for the purposes of interrogation?
 - Was there any evidence of the sinking?

Last Voyage and wreck position of the "SS. Ban Ho Guan":

The key factors in determining the distance travelled by the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" and its final position are the date of departure (as compared to dates given for its sinking) ; the speed of the ship; and possible deviations in course the ship might have taken.

In those last few days of February 1942 the number of evacuation ships from Padang was dwindling fast. It is known that apart from the 'BHG' there was also the "Dumayer van Twist", the Norwegian ship the "Siberg" or "Seeberg" and the "SS. Palelah" which left around that last week.

The old coal burning KPM ship the "Dumayer van Twist" left Padang at "...daybreak on 24th February..." (Source; Sgt F. H. Landon, Forestry Dept, Federated Malay States); or alternatively at 0400hrs on 26 February 1942 (Source; Rolla Edwardes-Ker).

The "Siberg" (built in 1915 and 1871 tons) in fact was not sunk by the Japanese but was bombed and abandoned by its crew and captured by the Japanese on 7 March and renamed the "Sumerasan Maru" which was blown up in 1943 at Surabaya.

The "SS. Palelah" left Padang at?????????

Facts from Bristow's handwritten report include that the ship was provisioned for 3-4 days indicating it expected a journey of say three days and another report and that "... on 2nd March BHG should have crossed the Sunda Strait and have been off the South coast of Java ...". This is backed up by the researchers calculations on time, speed in nautical terms and nautical miles likely to have been covered.

The last record of the "BHG" being sighted may be contained in the seven volume History of KPM ships by Captain Lindeboom (source Hal Cartwright email correspondence 2008 with researcher) where it is stated that the ship" ... passed Bencoolen on the morning of 1.4.42 ... " before being sunk by Japanese submarine I-4. Bencoolen (now Bengkulu) is approximately 193 nautical miles from Padang. This places the subsequent sinking at least on the south-east coast of Sumatra and getting quite

close to the Sunda Straits and the "south of the Sunda Straits" location recorded for several sinkings of unidentified merchant ships by Japanese submarines and warships.

The Lindeboom record is one key in the analysis of where the "BHG" may have been sunk. As mentioned above Bencoolen was 193 nautical miles from Padang so at an assumed speed of 12-13 knots the ship would have taken 15-16 hours to reach Bencoolen from Padang – indicating a possible time of departure at around 1800 -1900 hrs on 28 February which is at variance to Bristow's handwritten report.. If Bristow was correct then the "BHG" would have passed Bencoolen late at night on 28 February. If so it may have used morsecode by searchlight to communicate its presence.

Major Bristow made two quite different records of the departure times in reports spaced 12 months apart so he was clearly working from memory with the best of intentions – he had been responsible for the embarkation of several ships from Padang.

If the Deakin record (0200 hours departure) is correct and the ship was travelling at some maximum of 13 knots then the ship would have passed Bencoolen at about 2100 hours on the 28 February and been close to the Sunda straits by the morning of 1 March and become entangled in the aftermath of the Battle for the Sunda Straits which had taken place on the night of the 28 February/ 1 March 1942..

At 12 knots it appears that the 'SS. Ban Ho Guan' would have comfortably reached the Sunda Straits by the afternoon of the 1st March 1942.

During enquiry on the internet as to the possible location of the wreck of the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" and Australian diver based in Thailand (vidar@octa4.net.au) stated that he has seen a 1997 report by a Dutch historian named Legemaate (possibly the author Legemaate and his book on the sinking of the Dutch warship 'De Ruyter') placing the location of the wreck at the southern entrance to the Sunda Straits at coordinates 8.2 S / 106.2 E.

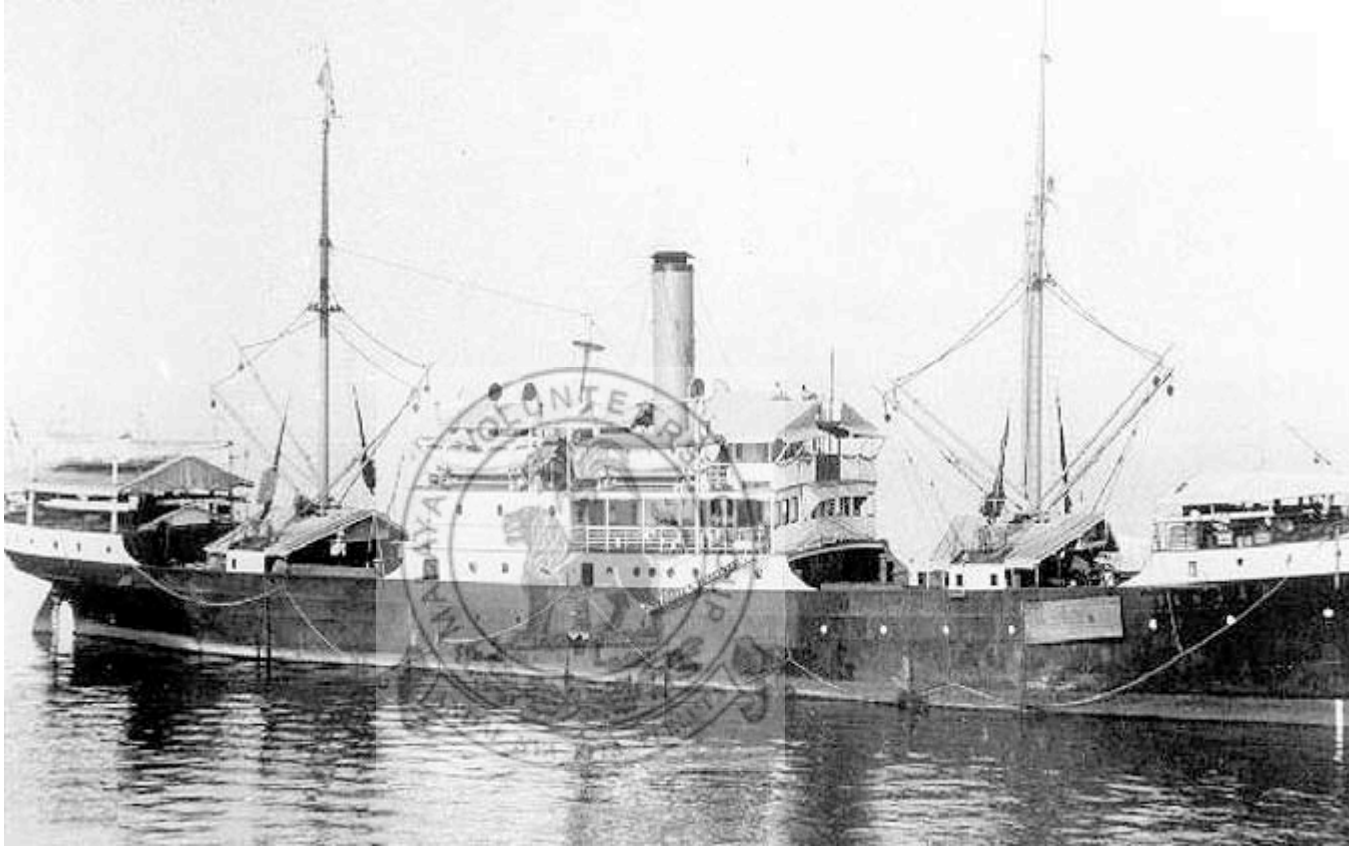
Were there any Survivors?:

From investigation by the researcher there were almost always – in fact probably always - survivors from merchant and passenger ships sunk in tropical waters (as opposed to say the freezing waters of the North Atlantic) because of the number of islands and relatively warm sea temperatures.

Even in the numerous instances where Japanese submarine commanders set out to methodically kill all the survivors of ships they had sunk, there are still many examples of men surviving these attempts at wholesale murder and then surviving long sea voyages to safety in lifeboats or safety rafts.

Another example is in the case of the "SS. Nam Young", an Heap Eng Moh Steam Ship Company ship of comparable size to the "BHG", which was set ablaze by gunfire from a Japanese submarine (and finished off by a torpedo from the same submarine) on 28 February 1942 some 350 miles south of Christmas Island and 550 miles South of Java ; the Captain and crew managed to successfully sail by lifeboat all the way to Christmas Island, arriving by 5 March 1942 (where later that month they became POW when the Japanese took the Island).

So this then begs the question – in what scenario did a merchant ship with at least four (probably six from the pre war photo of the vessel shown below) lifeboats and no doubt many life rafts, apparently not carrying munitions but a cargo of coal (although it is recognized that coal or coal dust can spontaneously combust when wet), with 230 fit and high initiative men on board and travelling probably somewhere between 1 mile and 20 miles from the coast of Sumatra and Java sink with no survivors after being torpedoed (or sunk in any manner) during daylight hours in what appears to be amenable sea conditions?



“SS. Ban Ho Guan” – showing three lifeboats on Starboard side (note the one above the canopy at stern) and it would have another three on Port side.

The question of whether there were in fact survivors is sparked firstly by a report by Mrs. Joyce Carter, the wife of Captain R. R. C. Carter, Malay Regiment (a passenger) in a letter dated 3.11.45 that states “...about March of 1944 I read in a monthly Circular published by the Malayan Association in Australia that the wife of the Captain of the “Ban Ho Guan” had received advice ...that Captain Van Der Berg, whose ship had been sunk by enemy action on 1st March 1942 , was safe in a POW camp in Japan...” (WO 361/187). This news was picked up in official correspondence by the War Office during 1946 who added “...understood wife in Australia was contacted through Dutch Consul in Bombay...” but it appears Dutch authorities could not help on the whereabouts of Captain Van Der/ Van Den Berg at that time soon after the War.(W) 361/187).

In fact the researcher was provided, in 2013, with original letters written by Captain van der Berg's wife, Mrs. Cecelia van der Berg, during the War whilst she was living in Rose Bay in Sydney, Australia which reveal that (in a letter written on 2.1243) she had just received a letter " ... from Melbourne ... "(this seems to be the Dutch Embassy or some other official Dutch government entity in Melbourne since she had talked about them previously) "... telling me that 'Van' is a POW in a Camp in Java ...".

Also in a letter dated 1.3.46 from 'Tinggi' Maxwell to Captain David Nelson, SSVF, and the person who had led the investigations of the POWs forming the Bureau of Record and Enquiry in Changi POW camp she asks his views on "... Mrs. Husband (rumour) two men came into Changi who had been on the Ban Ho Guan which was sunk off Sumatra ...".

The only other memory known to the researcher of possible survivors is via the family of Sub. Lt Charles Fittock, MRNVR, whose wife and daughter were told after the War that he had been seen in a POW Camp in Java (source grandson Charlie Hallinan). There is however no surviving record of Charles Fittock as a POW.

As a first step in answering this quite puzzling case of the disappearance of the ship with no survivors, we must firstly unflinchingly reveal and understand the attitudes and recorded actions of specific Japanese submarine commanders in their treatment of merchant ship survivors.

There was a very frequent, almost routine, practice by Japanese submarines operating in the Indian Ocean and around the Dutch East Indies, of taking prisoner the Captain and / or First Officer and/ or the Radio Officer of Allied merchant ships to interrogate them for information on radio codes etc.

There were in fact a few other ships actually sunk by Japanese submarines in the area of Sumatra and Java in the days around the sinking of the 'BHG" and it is recorded that in those instances some of their crew became POWs on the submarines. On 28.2.42 the submarine I – 153 sank the "SS. City of Manchester" and six of the crew were assumed by other survivors to have been taken prisoner. This practice continued during the next few years with Captains and Officers being taken back to the main submarine base of the Japanese that had been established at Penang, Malaya.

There were also situations where the Japanese navy took prisoners from the survivors of Allied warships and merchant vessels and delivered them to ports in Java and the Celebes where they became POWs and were later summarily executed – these incidents are by their very nature hard to prove because even the Japanese knew their actions would be later condemned and no doubt paper trails were destroyed as the tide of war turned against Japan. One of the best accounts of these situations is meticulously analyzed and largely evidenced in the book "A Blue Sea of Blood" by Donald M. Kehn Jr in which he deciphers the mysterious fate of the American destroyer "USS. Edsall". The circumstances of the sinking of the "USS. Edsall", together with the date of its sinking, as well as the 'disappearance' of the crew of the "USS. Edsall" are uncannily similar to that of the "Ban Ho Guan" and give reason to consider whether some of the survivors of the "Ban Ho Guan" might have suffered a similar fate after arriving in POW camps in Java, i.e. execution without trace.

It seems very unlikely that after sinking the "BHG" during daylight in what were apparently favorable sea conditions (this is assumed from reports on the "Dumayer Van Twist": and the "Palelah"), that Lt. Hajime Nakagawa did not seek to take some of the

ships officers or the Army or Navy Officers on board prisoner for interrogation purposes – possibly even taking them back to Penang..

In fact in his signed statement to the War Crimes trial in 1946, in which he makes no mention of having sunk the “BHG”, Lt. Nakagawa states” ... End Feb. 1942 made Penang...” (Documents held in USA Archives, Washington). In the previously reconstructed log for I- 4 on the ‘combinedfleet.com” website it revealed in more detail that the submarine I – 4 sank the “BHG” about 1415 hrs on 28 February and then on 3 March 1942 it shelled the Cocos Islands before arriving in Penang on 8 March 1942.

Lt. Hajime Nakagawa, Submarine Commander:

The thoroughly unpleasant facts of Lt. Nakagawa's wartime career as a submarine commander (in contrast to his peacetime occupation of ‘Selling Securities”) and his record of murder and atrocities is pivotal to comprehending the possibilities for the treatment of any survivors after the sinking of the “BHG”.

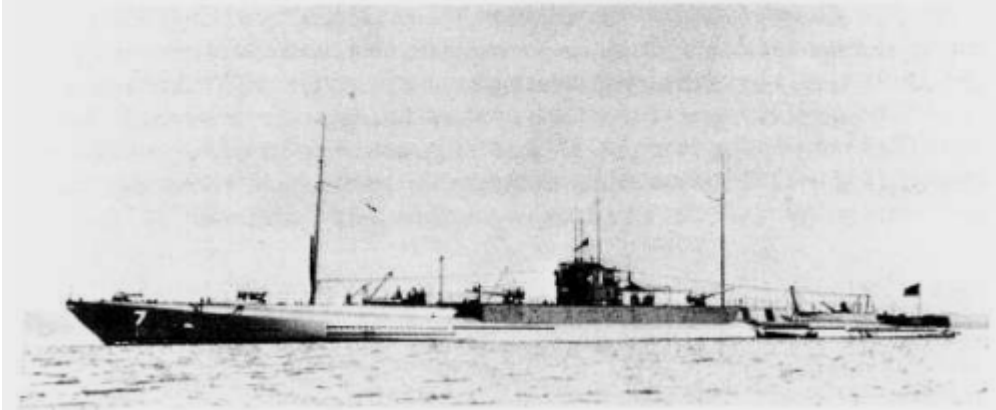
After the war he was tried for a series of atrocities against the crews of merchant ships he torpedoed in the Indian Ocean –in three instances (out of the total of eight ships he sank) it is recorded by surviving witnesses that he surfaced and set about methodically machine gunning the survivors in the water and running down any remaining lifeboats with his submarine. Three of the other instances have a high number of survivors and in two of these there are elements of Allied warships intervening. There were huge casualties in his sinking of the hospital ship “HMAS Centaur”, but only the sinking of the “SS. Ban Ho Guan” resulted in absolutely no survivors reaching safety.

It seems from reading the transcript of the war crimes trials of Lt. Nakagawa and his peers that the Allied prosecutors of the time did not know of his sinking of the “SS. Ban Ho Guan” and the Australian hospital ship “HMAS Centaur” during the two earlier commands held by Nakagawa (I – 4 and I -177). It appears that they only focused on the atrocities reported by survivors of the ships he attacked during 1944 whilst in command of I - 37. This is understandable since the facts of him sinking the “SS. Ban Ho Guan “and the “HMAS Centaur” did not emerge until well after the war.

He was tried, along with a number of other Japanese submarine commanders and their Rear Admiral, who had carried out similar, some even worse, atrocities against Allied merchant ship crews and all were found guilty.

Hajime Nakagawa was born in 1902, so was a mature man in his 40s during the war.

He took command of the submarine I – 4 in October 1941; it was the flagship of the submarine unit known as SubDiv8 in the Japanese Sixth Fleet.



Japanese submarine class J1, of which I-4 was one of four of this class of submarine

In November 1941 I-4 set course for the Hawaiian Islands and duly received the coded signal "Climb Mt. Nitaka 1208" which signified that hostilities by Japan would commence on 8 December (Japan Time). It was deployed off the north-east coast of the island of Oahu and on 14 December Nakagawa torpedoed the 4588 ton Norwegian freighter "**Hoegh Merchant**". The ship sank quickly but her crew was in this instance rescued by the minesweeper "USS Trever" which was in the vicinity. It seems unlikely that Nakagawa would have surfaced his submarine under these circumstances. Notably Nakagawa recorded this sinking in his war crimes trial statement in 1946.

During January 1942 Nakagawa joined the hunt for the "USS Lexington" but without success and by early February 1942 had returned to the base at Yokosuka.

Then during February Nakagawa and I-4 were assigned to the Dutch East Indies Invasion Force under Rear Admiral Ichioka Hisashi (the most senior of the Japanese submarine officers later convicted of atrocities against the crews of Allied merchant ships) and set course for Palau and Staring Bay in the South East Celebes (now Sulawesi) before leaving for their second war patrol in the area south of Java.

The next event was the sinking of the "**SS. Ban Ho Guan**" on 28 February – notably Nakagawa did not make any reference at all to this sinking (which is hard to believe since it was only his second ever success) in his war crimes trial signed statement, but merely said he carried out a search for the enemy during this month!

As previously mentioned the submarine then returned to the Penang base by 8 March 1942.

At the end of March 1942 I-4 departed Penang to reconnoiter the 'Eight Degree Channel' (at the northern tip of the Maldives Islands) and sea areas around Colombo on her third war patrol – during which it is known that on 6 April 1942 Nakagawa torpedoed the 6617 ton freighter "**USS Washingtonian**" in the 'Eight Degree Channel'. The 39 man crew and two passengers reached the Maldives in less than a day's rowing. In his war crimes trial statement Nakagawa records that he "... torpedoed a Freighter (eastbound) in the 8 Degree Channel in daylight...".

So a pattern starts to form in the composition of his official statement whereby he admits to those sinkings where there were no known atrocities, but makes no reference to sinkings where he committed murder or in the case of the "SS. Ban Ho Guan".

By 16 April I -4 arrived in Singapore, from where it later left for its home base at Yokusuka until leaving that port for its fourth war patrol in the Aleutian Islands during June and July 1942.

At the end of this fourth patrol, without any further sinkings to his credit, Nakagawa returned once again to Yokusuka and was reassigned to the new submarine I -177 in August 1942.

Early in 1943, now in command of I -177, Nakagawa proceeded from the Inland Sea of Japan to Truk and then to the east coast of Australia. On this occasion he again confirms in his war crimes statement that, during April and May 1943 he attacked a north bound convoy of six ships off Cape Byron on the coast of Queensland. Whilst he does not admit to it by name, he actually sank the "MV. Limerick" owned by the Union Steamship Co., on 25 April 1943, but no doubt to his disappointment he was immediately attacked by an armed escort convoy with depth charges. Again this Allied response left him no opportunity to surface after the sinking.

In contrast to the vague sentence above covering his supposed operations during April and May it is again notable that he does not make any mention that on 14 May 1943 he carried out one of Australia's most infamous naval war crimes when he sank the hospital ship "**HMAS. Centaur**" (which was at the time brightly lit with floodlights to show that it was a hospital ship) killing 296 people including 11 nurses. Many went down with the ship or were killed by exposure or sharks. For many years this atrocity was attributed to another submarine but in post war years it has been confirmed by the Japanese authorities that the torpedoing had actually been carried out by Lt. Nakagawa and the I - 177.

Following this, Nakagawa in his war crimes statement records that for the remainder of 1943 he participated in the Solomon's Operation and then carried out transport duties to Lae in New Guinea. This aligns with what is known of his movements and the fact that he sank no other ships during that year.

By early 1944 Nakagawa had been transferred to another submarine, I- 37 (this time one equipped with a sea plane which could be launched from its hull) and it was during this year that he carried out some of the worst naval atrocities by the Japanese against Allied merchant ship crews of the Second World War. These are graphically described in the book "Blood and Bushido" but, of course, they were also detailed as part of the evidence in his trial.

During 1944 Nakagawa sank three ships (and these were the only other ships he sank during the remainder of the war) and was charged for **war crimes committed after every sinking** - what follows is a verbatim extract from the trial record held in the US Archives in Washington , D.C. ;

- "...On 22.2.44 the "**SS. British Chivalry**" was torpedoed and sunk. One of the survivors states that while in the motor-lifeboat in which there were twenty- five to thirty persons, the submarine approached at approximately half a mile away and commenced firing machine guns at this lifeboat and another in which there was the Captain. About thirty rounds were fired...The Captain 's boat then went alongside the submarine and he was taken aboard In picking up Third Mate Dahl, who was in the water, the submarine also repeated fire with three or four machine guns at the two lifeboats. Every one dived over the side away from the

submarine until it passed and it continued firing as it did so. For the next hour and a half the submarine cruised up one side of the lifeboat and then the other side and opened fire with three or four [indecipherable]... of the lifeboats sank after the submarine had fired... Some of the members of the crew were floating away from the boats, as if they were dead, and there were several bodies of members who had been shot floating on the surface. The water was covered with oil from the ship and patches of blood. This affiant believes that in all twelve to fourteen members of the crew were deliberately killed by the machine guns and five were wounded. A roll call indicated that thirty eight members of the crew had survived. The Master states that upon boarding the submarine he was immediately taken below... when he remonstrated with the interpreter about this act, he informed him that he also was to be killed as soon as they finished with his interrogation... they asked him for the call sign of the ship... on the second occasion he was asked for the secret call sign and gave a false answer. He was again beaten... later he was placed in a room close to the engine room... after forty three days, on the 5th April 1944, they eventually arrived in Penang... Protests by the British Government to the Japanese Government, through the Swiss Embassy, concerning this incident were made. The Japanese Government denied that such incident happened..."

- "Atrocities to survivors of the **"SS. Sutlej"**... The Chief Engineer states that after the 'Sutlej' had been torpedoed ... there was no time for them to get one of the lifeboats away. Several rafts floated off the ship as she sank. The Third Engineer and the affiant swam together to a small raft... they saw several survivors in the water and picked them up. Ten minutes later, the submarine surfaced. It came near the raft and a line was thrown to them. One of the members inquired as to whether or not the master was on the raft. After some questioning, the submarine personnel cut the raft adrift, circled and then returned and deliberately rammed it... there had previously been sporadic bursts of machine gun fire from the submarine directed towards the raft and the survivors in the water... the Fourth Engineer, who was sitting with a number of other survivors on two rafts tied together, had his raft deliberately rammed by the submarine... the submarine remained in the area for about an hour, intermittently firing at them with the machine gun..."
- "When the **"SS. Ascot"** was torpedoed 29 February, 1944, the survivors managed to get one raft and two lifeboats safely into the water. The submarine then steamed towards the boats and raft, and a man on the conning tower... hailed them in good English. He asked for the Captain and the Chief Officer and they replied that they were both dead. He asked for the wireless officer and they said he was also missing... the next time the Captain was seen by the survivors, he was on the submarine carrying his brief case. He evidently was being ordered to identify the Chief Officer which he did. After the Chief Officer signified that Captain Travers was the Master of the ship, he was allowed to go back to his boat. The submarine then rammed and sank the Captain's lifeboat and the Captain was thrown into the water by one of the crew. When this affiant saw them transfer a machine gun from the starboard to the port side of the conning tower, he realized their intentions and six or seven survivors jumped into the water. The submarine then began machine gunning all the men in the water from the Captain's boat, the Chief Officer's boat and the raft. All of the men who remained on the raft were killed outright or died later from their wounds. For the next two hours, the survivors remained in the water while the Japanese machine gunned them continuously. All those who were left alive, including the Captain, climbed back into one remaining boat and onto the raft... The affiant then saw the submarine again steaming towards the raft and he jumped into the water. There was more machine gunning and more men were killed and some were seriously wounded. Shortly thereafter the submarine steamed away. Two days later, they came across a lifeboat which had but one survivor, a gunner by the name of

Hughson. Hughson informed them that after the submarine had ceased firing [on] the raft, it had attacked the lifeboat with machine gun fire. All of the occupants with the exception of Hughson had jumped into the water and were never seen again. There were eight survivors of the Ascot. There was a British protest to the Japanese through the Swiss legation in Tokyo and a denial by the Japanese that such atrocities had been committed...”

In contrast to the actual events above that were revealed by his trial – Hajime Nakagawa had previously written the following vague report of his submarine activities during 1944 in his signed statement;

“... 28 Feb. 1944. Cleared Singapore.
4 Mar. 1944. About this date made Penang.
10 Mar. 1944. Proceeded on patrol, aerial reconnaissance of Chagos, Mombasa, Diego Suarez being main objective [plural has been deleted].Also [word ‘previously’ has been deleted] carried out operation for the disruption of enemy communications, but without operational results.
25Apr 1944. Returned to Penang.
26 Apr 1944. Cleared Penang to proceed to Singapore for repairs [word ‘but’ deleted] Struck mine in Penang south channel and had to put back to Penang for emergency repairs. [Words ‘to the damage’ deleted]. Proceeded to Singapore and entered dock
5 June 1944. Left Singapore to take up new appointment.

I, NAKAGAWA Hajime, swear upon oath that the foregoing statement has been written truthfully and conscientiously, concealing nothing and adding nothing whatsoever. I now voluntarily append my signature to this statement....”

In January 1947 Nakagawa was convicted of the crimes he was accused of and sentenced to eight years imprisonment. He actually served only four (some sources say six) years at Sugamo Prison before he was released on probation after the end of the Allied Occupation of Japan.

Nakagawa died , aged 84 years, in 1986 – to the end he refused to speak to journalists or writers on the subject of his atrocities and in particular the sinking of the “HMAS, Centaur”.

What really happened to the “SS. Ban Ho Guan”?

Even if the wreck of the “BHG” is eventually located with the benefit of advances in technology, it may be that we will never know for sure what actually occurred in the sinking of this ship short of Japanese archived documents surfacing in the future.

Some further amplification on the track taken by the ship was given in a letter by the Embarkation Officer Major Bristow immediately after the War in a letter dated 6.11.45 to Mrs. Ryder, widow of Major Ernie Ryder who disappeared with the ship.

In it Bristow explains that he was Embarkation officer for several ships between 24 February 1942 and 1 March 1942 and then also expresses his view "... it seems probable that she kept close to the southern shore of Sumatra and then Java, making for Tjilitatjap [sic] , and was off the Sunda Straits at about the time of the end of the Battle of the Java Sea. She was certainly running into danger, but my impression of the Captain at the time of sailing was that he would run aground rather than let trouble begin".

In a further letter to Mrs. Ryder dated 11.11.45 he continues "... I have always been of the opinion that the Ban Ho Guan was not going to get out of sight of land, except of course, when crossing the Sunda Strait between Sumatra and Java .For this reason, I feel that even if she were attacked with very little warning and could not make it to shore, there was a good chance of some survivors making shore."

Then in his final letter to Mrs. Ryder dated 20.1.46 he concludes "... based on the survivor [from ships other than the Ban Ho Guan] stories the [Admiralty] have got, it seems that the Japanese Naval forces which won the Battle of the Java Sea caught up with numerous small ships which they sank quickly by gunfire without stopping to pick up survivors ...".

There seem to be four possible causes for the disappearance of the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" with no survivors:

1. Most likely it was attacked by a Japanese submarine and either torpedoed or shelled with survivors being murdered after the ship went down
2. Also possibly sunk by a Japanese warship or bomber force with similar treatment of survivors and /or a group of survivors who may have then been picked up by a Japanese warship, but handed over to a ruthless section of the Japanese armed forces such as the 'Special Naval Landing Forces' who had a reputation for summary execution of its prisoners.
3. Based on the Japanese WW2 almost routine practice of summary execution of servicemen who were captured when in groups of up to twenty at a time in isolated locations, there remains the possibility that some or all of the men on the ship made it to the western coast of either Sumatra or Java and upon capture by Japanese patrols were almost immediately killed. There is ample precedent of this in the case of other ships sunk during this period e.g. 'SS. Vyner Brooke', 'SS. Tandjong Pinang', 'USS Edsall' and others. In addition the investigation expedition carried out by personnel on "HMAS Macquarie" immediately after the Japanese surrender , through the islands of the Sunda Straits and the Western Coast of Sumatra (NAA, MP 742/1, 336/1/1/1289 Component 1) recorded statements from a Chinese man who had worked for the Japanese that groups of Allied soldiers were killed in march 1942 at Pulau Pisang (between Bencoolen and the Sunda Straits) four men; at Painan (about 30 km south of Padang) an unknown number of men; at a place named Bukit Petoes 2 men; on the Mentawi islands (west of Padang) 30 men; and at an island named Pulau Rasimin (west of north west of Padang) six men from the vessel 'Bintang Dua' after escaping from Padang prior to the arrival of the Japanese.
4. That Captain van der Berg made some grave error of judgment with the cargo which exploded with such a force to totally destroy the ship and those on board.

Putting together everything known from research, it seems highly probable that the ship was sunk late in the afternoon of 1st March 1942 near the Sunda Straits and, conservatively, at least half the passengers and crew (in fact probably more likely 80 percent of them) made it off the ship and into the water. It was still daylight for several

hours and the men would have been able board at least two life boats and a number of rafts.

As an alternative to the ship being sunk in an attack by Nakagawa's submarine, there is the possibility that it was found by one or more of an extremely powerful Japanese fleet of warships, comprising four Heavy Cruisers, two Light Cruisers and fourteen destroyers; which had either been in the Sunda Straits (this was the Battle of the Java Sea and the Battle of the Sunda Straits) or approaching from the eastern end of Java heading to Christmas Island and Cocos Island.

There were other ships lost, also ostensibly with no survivors after engaging with this powerful Japanese strike force of warships, as in the case of the destroyer "USS. Edsall" mentioned above. It is definitely worth reading the book "A Blue Sea of Blood", again mentioned above, to understand this scenario.

If indeed Nakagawa (or in fact any other Japanese warship Commander) did not surface and murder those survivors, it then has to be accepted that they were unable to row, sail or drift the up to 20 miles to Sumatra or Java and were not noticed by either the "Siberg", or the "Dumayer Van Twist" or the "Palelah" or any other ships which passed that way in the first week of March 1942 on their way to Tjilichap. In comparing the location, the very large number of fit, resourceful, experienced servicemen on board – some of whom had already survived sinkings on the 'Kung Wo', the 'HMS Grasshopper' and others after leaving Singapore – and the number of lifeboats available; against ships sunk with only one lifeboat or a few rafts where multiple survivors made it to land the "no one interfered with survivors" option seems highly improbable.

The other alternative is that Nakagawa decided to kill all those survivors. To the researcher of this document, when balancing the dynamics the sheer number of men on board the "SS. Ban Ho Guan", the probability of normal survival from a merchant ship in tropical waters, the proximity of land, and taking into account the frequency that Nakagawa was later found to have pursued the elimination of survivors when there was no Allied warship in the vicinity (in this instance he would have known that the Allied fleet under ABDMA command had just been totally defeated in the adjacent battle of the Sunda Straits) - the conclusion is that the sinking of the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" became Lt. Hajime Nakagawa's first and his most awful atrocity at sea.

The final note in this memorial document to the men of the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" is the observations of Bombardier Rola Edwardes – Ker, of the Singapore Royal Artillery (Volunteers) aboard the "SS. Dumayer Van Twist" which passed across the South Western entrance of the Sunda Strait on the morning of the 1st March 1942;

"... We crossed the Sunda Straits shortly after dawn on 1st March.

Whilst doing so, we observed a number of half submerged and damaged lifeboats, but no survivors, although a few bodies were observed in one of them. On 2nd March at 0900hrs, we arrived at TJILATJAP on the south coast of java.

It seems that by amazing good fortune we crossed the Sunda Straits alone and unarmed..."

The researcher notes that dead men do not climb into lifeboats – someone attacked these men whilst they were in their lifeboat, whether they were from the “SS. Ban Ho Guan” or another vessel.

This research has been compiled out of sincere empathy for both the men who cruelly lost their lives in this attack and sinking, as well as the families they left behind who will have spent decades wondering what had happened to their loved ones. At a personal level it has been specifically motivated by many years research reaching the conclusion that the researcher’s uncle, Private John ‘Jack’ William Clark, a 19 year old New Zealander working for ICI Malaya Ltd and also serving as a Private in the Federated Malay States Volunteer Forces might have been on board this vessel.

The writer would be very interested in receiving any further information or corrections on the last voyage of the BHG and the men who might have been on board – please email mncpether@xtra.co.nz or write to Michael Pether, 2/23 Sanders Avenue, Takapuna, Auckland,, New Zealand – or telephone 09-4865754 - with any information or enquiry.



Sources:

BPPL – the pin point (microscopic writing) list on “Jeyes” toilet paper compiled by Jack Bennett in sector whilst an internee in Changi prison camp during 1942 with several thousand names and the last known information on these people after the Surrender of Singapore. It is now held in the National Archives UK.

GBR – report by Major G. Bristow, RAOC, to GHQ, Ceylon from his knowledge as Embarkation officer for the departure of the “BHG” from Padang

JM – Jonathan Moffatt, author and researcher.

MVJB – Malayan Volunteer database of John Brown

NAAMM – National Archives of Australia, a ‘digitalized’ file, “Memorial to Missing” which are the original Army Cards for missing servicemen listed at Kranji , Series 8234, Control Symbol 11919, Barcode 8326109 – there are three files in alphabetical order (A-G, etc).

SDGB – book “Singapore’s Dunkirk” by Lt. Geoffrey Brooke

SG – the online newspaper archives held at the national Library of Singapore and including “The Straits Times” and “The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser”.

TSOC – book “The Story of Changi; Singapore” by Captain David Nelson, SSVF published 1973

Notes on the following records:

- I. Official Wartime dates of death: it is the practice of the authorities such as the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to record the date of death of a person who was 'missing presumed dead' as the date upon which that person was last seen unless there is any information suggesting a later date.
- II. Entries shown in *Italics* indicate that there is uncertainty on whether the person was on board.

Passengers (a list recreated from research):

Civilians:



- **CLARK - WALKER – Alexander McGregor Clark- Walker**, born 1900 in Whangerei, Northland, New Zealand. To Malaya in 1928 as Surveyor-on Agreement, FMS, NS. , then Senior Surveyor, Perak Survey Dept., finally Deputy Chief Surveyor. Just prior to the fall of Singapore he left Singapore with four others on Capt. David Nelson's yacht "Awan"; must have then boarded the "Giang Bee" and reached firstly Ayer – Molek camp and then Padang. Boarded the "BHG" (Moffatt);New Zealand newspaper records show insofar as his early life in New Zealand (records in 'Papers Past' archives) as playing rugby for Whangerei v. Returned Soldiers (27.8.17), playing cricket for Whangerei (5.11.18), at a meeting to form the Old High School Pupils Association " (5.12.19) and again playing rugby for OHSPA Whangerei (16.6.25); almost as soon as he arrived in Malaya Alexander Clark-Walker became very actively involved in yacht racing initially sailing at Port Dickson on 'Wattle' (SFPMA 19.7.29), then in 1930 sailing 'Betsy' he won the Visitors Cup at the Royal Singapore yacht Club (14.3.30) , by 1933 he was sailing for the newly formed Johore Yacht Club and in a yacht named 'Punai' he came third in the teams race against the RSYC sailing in the Johore Straits. In 1936 he is still sailing and representing Johore Yacht Club in a 14 footer named "Lulu" he came second in the Dato Mentri Cup (18.8.36); as a professional Surveyor in 1932 Alexander moved to Johore as a Surveyor and in 1936 he was appointed a Settlement Officer in Johore; in 1937 he is shown as leaving Singapore on the

'Antenor' (ST 6.8.37) on leave – with his wife Jessie [nee Ireland, according to 'Trove' and an 'In memoriam" notice she lodged with "The Western Australian" on 30.1.37 which is from herself and " son- law- Alex Walker – Clark" . She was born at Leicester, England on 23.01.02 and married Alexander Clark-Walker at St. Andrews Cathedral, Singapore on 21.11.34,[she died at Perth, WA on 19.2.92]; Jessie Clark – Walker and her son Desmond [born Taiping 21.6.38] were evacuated on the 'Centaur' from Singapore on 31.12.41 – in 1943 Captain Nakagawa sank that same 'Centaur' off the coast of Australia , although his role in the sinking was not disclosed by Japanese authorities until several decades after the war; during the war Alexander joined the Observer Corps in Singapore and by the time that author S.E. Field in his book "Singapore Tragedy" pp.196-197 (1944 edition) arrived in Singapore and also joined in mid January 1942 Clark-Walker was the organizer of the Observer corps on the fourth floor of the Fullerton Building at which point he describes Alexander Clark – Walker as " ... humorous, competent, likeable . His job, hard enough now, was to become increasingly difficult..."; insofar as his escape from Singapore Alexander is recorded in the Changi 'Jeyes' toilet paper records as "...WALKER A N MCG CLARK SURVEYS LEFT 15 / 2 INT PADANG..." (BPPL) however there is no record of him as an internee in Padang or Bankinang internment camps ; Captain David Nelson, SSVF, also a Surveyor of New Zealand origin, a friend and the person responsible for the Bureau of Record and Enquiry in Changi POW camp, believed that Deputy Chief Surveyor, Clark-Walker had boarded the BHG (p.225 TSOC); also see reference to group including "Clarke-Walker' in entry for Husband above (letter from Geoffrey Edwards to Mrs. David Nelson 16.3.42); there is no CWGC record.

- **HUSBAND – Mr. Charles Thomas Main Husband**, Deputy Surveyor General, Survey Dept., FMS & SS. Left Singapore with four others on Captain David Nelson's yacht "Awan"; "...Husband C T M Surveys left 15/2 for Java..." (BPPL); David Nelson believed T. Husband had boarded the "BHG" (p.225 TSOC); also Geoffrey Edwards in a letter to Mrs. David Nelson confirmed he was on the "Awan" and that"...Pat [Crawford] and the others sailed to an unknown destination – I presume it was Java – but I have no definite information as to whether they ever reached there or not. But from the newspapers I find that about the same time there was a lot of naval action going on so anything may have happened to them. Up to the present I have not met anybody in India who knows anything about the ship in which they sailed..." (letter dated 16 March 1942 from Bombay now in archives of Mason Nelson, NZ); **Charles Thomas Main Husband** was born in 1892 and worked as a Surveyor in Victoria, Australia during 1907 – 1913 when he was employed as a Surveyor – on – Agreement , Perak; with the outbreak of World War One he firstly enlisted in the Malay States Volunteer Rifles (then tried to enlist in the Australian Forces but was refused)finally enlisting on 2.1.15 in the 28th London Regiment (Artists Rifles),he proceeded to France and there joined the 250th Tunneling Company (Royal Engineers) and in 1916 was promoted to a Lieutenant; by 1917 he had the rank of Acting Captain & Adjutant (source his war record compiled by his father Charles Edward Husband); in 1919 he returned to Malaya as Deputy Surveyor – General, Survey Department SS & FMS in 1932 he married Edith Kathleen Chenhalls and they had two children Doreen (b. 1935 and Anthony 'Tony' (b. 1938?). The children were evacuated to Australia from their home in Kuala Lumpur (via Singapore) in the care of a woman evacuee from Perth to live with their aunt Miss Ethel Husband at Forrest Hill, whilst their mother was nursing wounded in Singapore before escaping to Bombay [researcher - on the "Empire Star with other Survey Dept wives] and Charles Main

- was '... last heard of in Sumatra...' (Trove 26.3.42). Mrs. Husband and the children returned to the United Kingdom after the war (niece Judy Pedlow 2012); in 1946 the Colonial Office advised Mrs. Kathleen Husband that Charles was "... presumed to have died on or about the 28th February 1942, as a result of the sinking of the 'Ban Ho Guan'... " (Judy Pedlow document) and a death certificate was issued in December 1946 to that effect (Judy Pedlow document)
- **PEDLOW** – Mr. Justice Pedlow, Malaya, 'certain' passenger (GBR); Mr. Pedlow appears as a judge in "Straits Times" newspaper reports in 1935 and 1937; also "...Pedlow J H CLS left 14/2..." (BPPL); **Mr. Joseph Howard Pedlow**, born 1889, had arrived in Malaya in 1912 and his early service with the Malayan Colonial Service was with the Chinese Protectorate. He spoke German and was a Hokkien scholar. In 1929 he was promoted from Deputy Public Prosecutor to the position of High Court judge and he sat on the bench in all the Settlements, the four Federated States and Johore. He was married with at least one daughter – there is a 1946 report in the "Straits Times" of his daughter Miss Elizabeth B. Pedlow marrying Mr. L. P. Mackie.; at the reopening of the Singapore Supreme Court the "Straits Times" reported on 9.4.46 that in the speeches there was the statement included in the tribute to him that " ...Mr. Justice Pedlow is believed to have lost his life at sea..." ; on 8.8.47 there was an Estate Notice in the name of Justice Pedlow in the "Straits Times" his estate of 7427 pounds was left to Edith Gwendoline Pedlow (ancestry.com); **there may be a connection** with Sister Edith Doreen Pedlow, QAIMNS, 206391, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. Pedlow – she died on 20.2.42 (CWGC)

Malayan Volunteers;

- **BEST** – From information received in Changi POW camp during the War Captain David Nelson believed Chief Surveyor Mr. C. C. Best had boarded the "BHG" (p.225 TSOC); explicitly from the POW diary of Captain David Nelson, SSVF, who was in charge of the Bureau Of Record and Enquiry in Changi " 27 July 1942 – Pat and Eddie were most probably not on her [the 'Rooseboom'] (they sailed at midnight on 27th on the Heap Eng Mo 'SS. Ban Ho Guan' ... " ; also in the list created in Changi on 18 sheets of 'Jeyes' toilet paper there is "... Best C C Surveys left 15/2 NEI? ..." (BPPL); researcher Jonathan Moffatt has summarized the life of Charles Best as "... BEST C.C. [Charles Cairn] 'Pat', MC., born 1894. Educated Auckland Grammar School & Auckland University. Worked in Govt. Survey Dept NZ 1914 and 1920-1923. WW1 Service in NZ Military Forces 1915-1919. To Malaya 1923 as Surveyor-on-Agreement, Revenue Surveys, Selangor. By 1940 Chief Surveyor, Malacca. Wife Cicely [Jean?] evacuated; also see reference to "Pat' as being in the same group leaving on an unknown ship with Clarke - Walker , Husband and Goss above (letter from Geoffrey Walker to Mrs. David Nelson 16.3.42); Acting Sub-Lt SS RNVR. Pte. Malacca LDC. Left Singapore with 4 others on David Nelson's yacht Awan. Lost at sea on 28. 2.42 on the 'Ban Ho Guan'. Daughter Patricia .(JM); in more detail using newspaper archives and other sources we can learn that 2nd Lt. **Charles Cairn Best** , #12115, 3rd Reinforcements to the 3rd Battalion , G Company , NZEF was born on 26 January 1894 and his father Charles Best lived at Riversdale Road, Avondale, Auckland (Auckland Grammar School and Auckland Museum Nominal Roll); he gained an

Education Board Scholarship of 10 pounds per annum (these were given to academically able boys who lived outside the AGS zone to help with fees, transport, boarding etc) and he was in the top class in each of the three years he was at school before his father possibly died in 1911 (1908 3A and parent initials CM; 1909 4A and parent initials CMB; 1910 5A and parent initial CF); he presumably worked and towards becoming a Surveyor after leaving school; in 1918 he is in the Gazette as being a member of the Rifle Brigade in the New Zealand forces [this was presumably for his receiving the Military Cross] (London Gazette 3.6.18); in 1923 he was appointed Surveyor , Survey Dept, FMS (interestingly with the same Mr. P. H. Goss who was with him again almost twenty years later on the ill-fated "Ban Ho Guan"), and in 1928 Charles was seconded to Kedah as a Surveyor (ST. 24.7.28). By 1932 Captain Best, as Assistant Superintendent of Surveys, Sungei Patani, went on 8 months leave to Australia. He must have married his wife Jean (nee Jean Dudley Wilkie McBride, b. 1902, d. 1996, also from Auckland) at around this time for by 1931 Mrs. Best and baby daughter Patricia were on leave back in Auckland New Zealand, including holidaying on Waiheke Island, until 1933 (Auckland Star 11.12.31 and 30.10.33); Soon after he returned he was seconded to Johore where it looks like he spent most of the remainder of his career. In 1934 he was commissioned as an Actg. Sub - Lt in the SSRNVR (Penang), which was confirmed again in 1937. Mrs. Best and Patricia were back in Auckland again on leave for two years during 1934-36 spending the summer months again on the holiday island of Waiheke (Auckland Star 21.12.35 and 7.8.36); It seems that their marriage failed by 1937 because in that year Jean is visiting Auckland as Mrs. Theo Smits (Auckland Star archives in 'Papers Past'); Charles Best was clearly a good sailor, infact according to his good friend David Nelson (this is a recollection of David's son Mason Nelson) recalled him as an 'excellent' sailor and the two of them spent quite some time cruising the sea around Singapore and the islands of the Rho Archipelago in 1938/39 charting new harbours and Bays that were later used in Admiralty Charts. During the 1930's Charles Best won frequently in 'C' Class keeler yacht races in his yacht "Breeze" (SFPMA 23.12.35, 3.2.36) and in 1936 went on leave again to Australia with Mrs. Best (ST 7.11.36). Mrs. Best was clearly an avid golfer - appearing frequently in local newspapers from her return from New Zealand in late 1936 - when she competed in golf tournaments around Malacca, Johore and Singapore with social involvement at the Malacca Club plays and with other women in Malacca passing St John's First Aid courses in 1939 (SFPMA 21.3.39).; Mrs. Best and Patricia were evacuated prior to the Fall of Singapore (JM) actually it seems that after the dissolution of her marriage and the remarriage to Theo Smits in 1937 she had gone to live in Batavia where her husband was Assistant manager for KPM the shipping line. In April 1942 (Auckland Star 28.4.42) Jean was reported missing from the town of Malang, near Surabaya where she had been living. She was subsequently interned in central java and then the huge Tjideng internment camp in Batavia; 'Pat' Charles Best left Singapore on David Nelson's yacht "Awan" (it means 'cloud') with Messrs Clark-Walker, Husband, Goss and Geoffrey Edwards (the latter took a ship to Ceylon and India from Padang as opposed to the other New Zealanders and Australian heading to Australia) – at the last minute David Nelson felt he could not leave Singapore without specific orders from his superior officer and as a consequence he was a POW in Changi; after the war the estate of Charles Cairn Best was publically Notified by solicitors in Singapore with him being " ... presumed to have died on or after 28.2.42 ..." and the estate granted to Mrs. Alice Myrtle Goode (ST. 17.12.48); his daughter Patricia Mary Best was briefly engaged to Lord St Leven but married after the war

to Mr. (Peter) Andrew Rollo and she died in 1985. His grandchildren include Lt General Sir William Rollo, ex British Army.

- **BRIDGES – Lt. Col. W.F. Noel Bridges** (unclassified) FMSVF, 314012, aged 52 years, Surveyor Gen Survey Department SS FMS, was on HMS Grasshopper, "...lost at sea 14.2.42..." d. from Padang, enemy action (MVJB); David Nelson believed Noel Bridges had boarded the "BHG" (p. 225 'TSOC') and in the POW diary of Captain Nelson he explains how Noel Bridges left Singapore when he states " Colonel Bridges , Surveyor – General on 'Kuala' or 'Tien Kwang'; "...Bridges W F N Surveys left 13/2 for Java (BPPL);"...Bridges W F N " appears on a list of people on or believed to be on a ship called the "SS. Ban Mow" (list in document in IWM); however the CWGC are clearly not sure when he died because the record show **Lt. Col William Francis Noel Bridges**, DSO.# 14012, FMSVF, aged 52 years, husband of Doris Francis Bridges of Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, he was Director of Military Surveys, Malaya 1941-42 and he died between 1 January 1942 and 31 December 1942 (CWGC)); Captain William Francis Noel Bridges served in the First World War in the 25th Infantry Battalion of the Australian Army and was awarded Mentioned in Despatches (Australian War Memorial); in 1918 with the rank of Major he received the DSO (Australian War Memorial)and this is reported in the Singapore newspapers with the notation that he was already working for the Malayan Survey department prior to military service. It is interesting that Major Bristow had, by the end of the War made the acquaintance of Mrs. Doris Bridges (Yewhurst, Chorley Bridge Road, Rickmansworth, Herts.) along with the widow of Major Ernie Ryder – it is clear that the loss of the "SS. Ban Ho Guan' weighed heavily on his mind because he was very conscientious in writing to families of those on board trying to help with an explanation for the ships loss. His letters imply that he had got to know Noel Bridges at some stage either in Malaya or in Sumatra; the Bridges family have in their possession a poignant record of Noel Bridges last days being a letter he wrote to his wife whilst he was in Padang. He records that he was being billeted(with Charles Best) in a comfortable family home in Padang and he had arrived in that town on 23 February after ten days escape journey from Singapore which he had left on 13 February and travelled " ... partly by warship, partly by swimming ,by sampan, by motor boat, by tug, by bus and train ..' confirming his experience of being sunk on the "HMS Grasshopper' and then buying a sampan from its Malaya owner before transferring to a faster motor boat to reach Sumatra. He records in his letter that Messrs Best, Clark- Walker, Husband and Goss are in Padang at the time of his letter and also that other Malayan Survey Department men being Wilton, Robert Williams, Blackman and Jerram are also in Padang (the latter name is a bit of a mystery because Jerram was a POW Singapore and Thailand). Messrs Wilton and Wilton boarded another ship to Tjilichap and then the 'Zaandam' safely to Australia whilst Blackman reached Colombo.[Interestingly out of the ten known Malayan Survey Department men in Padang , seven were New Zealanders trying to make their way home. Noel Bridges was, from his letter, closely acquainted with General Gordon Bennet on the Australian Army (not surprisingly because the military relied very heavily on the Malayan Survey Department for most of the maps being used in the war against the Japanese) and makes an oblique reference to possible doing some work for " ... my very highly placed friend ...". The letter ends with a penciled note that General Gordon Bennett is about to leave Padang urgently and he will carry the letter to Australia (presumably giving it to Mrs. Bridges personally in Melbourne or posting it with at least one other letter, being the one from Alexander Clark –Walker in Padang).

- **CARTER** – there is correspondence on Captain Reginald Rudolph Childers Carter, General List, 1st Btn. The Malay Regiment, "...If you will refer to your files you will note that I informed you I had reason to believe my husband left Padang bound for Java on the night of the 27th February 1942. I have since ascertained that a ship named the "BHG" left for Java that same night and was sunk by the Japanese on 1st March 1942.....Since the Japanese surrender all my attempts to trace my husband have been in vain. Although there is no positive proof that he was on the "BHG" it seems highly probable that he was...(letter 3 November 1945 from Mrs. Joyce Carter to Casualties Branch, War Office ,London); this is somewhat verified by "... Carter R R C Kedah R C seen Sumatra 27/2... " (BPPL); also Capt. R. C. C. Carter, Volunteer/gen List/1st Btn Malay regt., #205478, Asst. The Kedah Rubber Company, Bandar Bahru, Selangor. Died of wounds (or at sea) 28/144/1/380. Missing General Area list: NEI missing no trace ..." (MVJB); importantly a direct record of 'Reggie' Carter reaching Padang and boarding the 'BHG' is from the memoirs of Donald Bruce -Smith (who had been on the "SS. Kuala") who was a friend and had known him in Malaya, "... Joyce and Reggie Carter were on a rubber estate in the Krian district where I was posted on my arrival in Malaya. Joyce was the ladies tennis champion in Malay and Reggie became a regular army officer with the Malayan Regiment shortly before the Japanese invasion of Malaya...Reggie Carter escaped from Singapore after the ceasefire. We had coffee together in Padang one morning and arranged to repeat this the following morning. However he did not keep his appointment and as a result of my enquiries, I found out that he had sailed in a small boat for Java during the night. There had been no word of him since and we concluded that he had lost his life. Joyce was always pleased to see me [this was in India in 1942]...as I was her only friend who had seen him before he set off on that fateful journey..." (the memoirs of Donald Bruce -Smith supplied by Gerald Bruce - Smith);]finally **Captain Reginald Rudolph Childers Carter**, # 205478,General List , Malay Regiment, seconded to 1st Battalion, , husband of Joyce Carter of Charing, Kent – he died on 28.2.42(CWGC); it appears that Joyce Carter (possibly nee Grenier from tennis records in Malaya)remarried on 13.7.46 to Douglas Cecil Andrew Fraser at St. Andrews Church, Kuala Lumpur (ancestry.com)
- **CARRUTHERS** – CSM Carruthers, 1st Perak Btn., 'uncertain' passenger (GBR); "...Carruthers W J AOML left 16/2 small boat..." (BPPL); a post war Statutory declaration states "...I saw William J. Carruthers...who was in the employ of the same organisation as myself at Tanjong Tualang in the State of Perak,,, leave a port ...I believe Emmahaven by steamer on or about 28th day of February 1942 at about 2 o'clock in the morning... (declaration by William Deakin on 14 8. 49); also confirmed by Major Stokes-Hughes who sailed from Emmahaven just after the "BHG" left; also CSM William "Billy" Carruthers, 1st Btn SSVF (Malacca) ,#6741, miner ,seen by another volunteer who had escaped from Singapore, Sgt. D. V. McKenzie "...seen safe Sumatra, but not heard of again..." Lost at sea 28.2.42 (MVJB); also in file CO 980/9 p. 302 as reported missing ex BHG; finally **Company Serjeant Major William James Carruthers**, #6741, 1st (Perak) Btn., FMSVF, husband of Elspeth Carruthers of Edinburgh died 28.2.42 (CWGC); these facts are confirmed in official records (CORD M1, 254.1219);)it is not known when 'Billy' Carruthers first arrived in Malaya but he is recorded as leaving London on the P. & O.s 'Rawalpindi' for Malaya in 1933 (ST 16.9.33); he was clearly active in flying , gaining his 'A' license at the Perak Flying Club in 1937 (ST. 8.4.370 and also appears on the Committee of the St Andrews Society in Ipoh in 1940 (ST. 28.7.400; as an employee of Anglo Oriental Tin he is recorded as 'withdrawing' his application for exemption from continuous military service that year (ST. 7.7.40);

- researcher Jonathan Moffatt summarises " ... Mining Engineer, CSM 1FMSVF, got to Sumatra but lost at sea on 28.2.42 on 'Ban Ho Guan'. Wife Elspeth and daughter Morag in Sydney 12/41... "; in 1945 there is a record of Elspeth and Morag Annas C Carruthers arriving in Southampton on the "Rangitata" (ancestry.com) it is possible that Morag married to a Mr. Young in 1969 (ancestry.com).
- **CRAWFORD** – 2nd Lt. Paterson Crawford, Malayan Volunteer, 'uncertain' passenger (GBR); but in file CO 980/9 p.302 as reported missing ex BHG; Donald Torrance Paterson Crawford, Assist. Planter, KMS Rubber plantations, Kedah. Malayan Volunteer, general List, 1st Mysore Infantry. Wife also on board ? (MVG); 2nd Lt. Donald Torrance Paterson Crawford, 2nd Selangor Btn. FMSVF, attached 1st Mysore, #221751, Asst. KMS. Rubber Plantations, Kedah, "...lost at sea 28.2.42 on Rosenbaum? ..." (MVJB); "...believed safe ..." (David Nelson Changi records); **2nd Lt. Donald Torrance Paterson Crawford**, attd. 1st Btn, Mysore Infantry, Indian States Forces died on 28.2.42 (CWGC); he appears to have been from Stirling, Scotland (ancestry.com).
 - **CRAWFORD** – Mrs. Crawford in list of Personnel sailing from Padang on 28 Feb. 1942 on Steamer Ban Ho Guan (Appendix "B "to report by Major, later Lt. Col. Bristow 16.7.43 to Colonial Office). Official records CWGC and UK Probate records) say she died on the "SS. Rooseboom" after leaving Padang but the embarkation officer Major Bristow lists Mr. & Mrs. Crawford as having boarded the "Ban Ho Guan".
 - **EDWARDS** – "...Edwards L L George AOML left 16/2..." (BPPL); Sgt. Lloyd George Edwards, 2nd Selangor Btn, FMSVF; Statutory declaration states"... I saw Lloyd George Edwards (another pre-war fellow employee) at Tanjong Tualang in the State of Perak) leave a port near Padang, Sumatra, named I believe Emmahaven by a steamer on or about the 28th day of February 1942 at about 2 o'clock in the morning...(declaration by William Deakin on 14.8.49 then in employ of Kamunting Tin Dredging at Taiping, Perak); Sgt. Lloyd George Edwards, 2nd Selangor Btn., FMSVF, #6782, Australian Tin Miner, Ampat Tin Dredging, Kampar, aged 33years, - lost at sea 28.2.42 (MVJB); finally **Sgt. Lloyd George Edwards**, 2nd Selangor Btn, FMSVF, husband of E. A. Edwards of Vaucluse, NSW . Australia died on 28.2.42 (CWGC)
 - **FITTOCK** – Sub. Lt Charles Fittock, MRNVR; "... Fittock Chas S Darby (Carreras) RNVR left ship sunk seen in water Ex Gransden..."[BPPL, note - there is also a listing for this person who appears to have reported Charles Fittock's sighting, i.e. "Gransden J Collier BCL RNVR POW..."] (BPPL); Sub. Lt. Charles Fittock, MRNVR, Asst. Carreras, (ADM 1991472A), died at sea, sinking of "BHG" (MVJB); David Nelson records show Charles Fittock in Palembang and Padang; finally **Sub. Lt. Charles Fittock**, MRNVR, husband of I. C. Fittock died 28.2.42 (CWGC and Plymouth Naval Memorial) – it looks like Charles Fittock was on the "HMS. Grasshopper' which was sunk near the Bank Straits, made it to Palembang and then Padang where he boarded the "SS. Ban Ho Guan".
 - **GOSS** – **Wing Commander Philip "Phi" Henry Goss**, MVAf (MVG- Moffatt); "...Goss R H Surveys RAF? Left 15/2 (BPPL); David Nelson believed that Chief Surveyor Phil Goss had boarded the BHG (p.225 TSOC); also a reference to 'Goss' being in the same group as "...Pat, Clarke-Walker and Husband ..." leaving on an unknown ship from Padang (letter from Geoffrey Edwards to Mrs. David Nelson 16.3.42 ; Wing Commander Phil. H. Goss, Chief Surveyor, Selangor. Escaped in a small launch 2/42 then believed lost on "Rosenbaum" 28.2.42 (MVDB JB); no record at CWGC; also letter dated 22.10.45 from Mrs. Joy F. Goss (wife) to Capt. David Nelson (ex BRE Changi) states " ... my information to date , given me by my

- Brother-in-law Will Lindsay (PWD) who was there at the time, is that Phil left Sumatra on the "Ban Ho" on 27th February 1942 ... " [Major W. Lindsay, # 10674, SSVF, OBE, was evacuated from Padang and arrived at Colombo via the 'Chitral'] (Letter in files of Mason Nelson); Mrs. Joy F. Goss lived at Orrel Avenue, Floreat Park, WA., according to her letter of 22.10.45., she also noted in her letter that Captain 'Bunty' William Joseph Burnet [an Australian born in 1891]SSVF and LDC Penang, of United American Plantations [also known as Malayan American Plantations Ltd], " ... had all the records of survivors and ships which left Sumatra ..."; Philip Henry Goss was from Maungatapere, Whangarei, New Zealand and passed the New Zealand Civil service examinations in 1911 and 1912; at the time of the First World War, because he was so young, he had to gain his parents' permission to join the New Zealand Army Medical Corps as Private , # 3/249, in the Field Ambulance, he served at Gallipoli and was invalided out with dysentery; Lance Corporal P.H. Goss was reported slightly wounded and admitted to hospital in 1917 (Ashburton Guardian 22.5.17) and returned to New Zealand in 1918;in 1920 he passed his surveyor's exams for Australia and NW along with Charles Best who was to die on the ship with him 22 years later (Dominion 7.10.20); in 1923 he arrived in Malaya on the 'Montoro' - again with Charles Best who also lost his life on the 'BHG' (ST. 259.23), and then later that year was appointed a Surveyor , Survey Dept., FMS – again at the same time as Charles Best(ST. 6.11.23); within a year or two he threw himself into sports such as rifle shooting , tennis and golf at the Malacca Club and with the Malacca Volunteer Forces(numerous reports in St and SFPMA); in 1927 he became engaged to Florence Joy King , second daughter of Mr. King of Taiping, Perak and Mrs. A. King of Mosman(sic), Sydney (ST. 27.4.27)he appears in reports for shooting competitions and going on leave during the 1930s and in 1933 was transferred to Kulim, Kedah as the Superintendent of Surveys; promotion followed again in 1937 when he was appointed Acting Surveyor – General for the FMS (ST.6.3.37); in 1939 Mrs. P.H. Goss is reported as visiting Auckland with her small daughter from Malaya and staying at the 'Glenalvon' Auckland Star 5.10.39).
- **LOWE – Sub. Lt. Leslie S. Lowe**, MRNVR (????); "... Lowe Leslie Perak River HTD FMSVF Bvd joined boat as Engr..." (BPPL); Perak River Hydro Electric Co. ,Ipoh died 28.2.42 (ADM 1991472A); finally **Lt. (E) L. S. Lowe**, British, MRNVR, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Lowe of Greenford, Middlesex died 28.2.42 (CWGC)
 - **PARSONS –** CSM Parsons, 2nd Selangor Bn., "uncertain' passenger (GBR); but in file CO 980/9 p.302 as reported missing ex BHG; "...Parson H A S Gumut left after capit missing..." (BPPL); CSM. Harold Arthur 'Hap' Parsons , Selangor Btn., FMSVF, # C/7529, Planter at Tanjong Malim and Manager S. Gumut estate, Selangor aged 45 years. Wounded 26.12.41. Seen safe in Sumatra between 16-28 February 1942. Died at sea sinking of "BHG" (MVDB JB); finally **CSM. Harold Arthur Parsons**, 2nd (Selangor) Btn, FMSVF, aged 45 years, husband of Jessie May Parsons of Ohope, New Zealand died 28. 2. 42 (CWGC.)
 - **PARTEGER –** Alan Bernard Joseph Parteger. B. 1911 Wandsworth, he went to Malaya in 1934 and was Assistant planter ,Rengam Estate, Johore then Mengkibol Estate, Johore (JM); L/Cpl Johore Volunteer Engineers, #716, (POW: Blank) ,(Police) BAMI XII20 (MVJB); " ... PARTEGER ABJ MALAYAN GEN CO ANC[G?] THAI POW (BPPL);whilst he was working in the plantations in Johore and Rengam, Alan Parteger was renowned as both a cricketer and a rugby player for his State during the years up to the Japanese invasion (STA and SFPMA); A.B.J. Parteger died on or since 28 February at sea, address in UK 55 Western Esplanade, Herne Bay, Kent (National Probate Register 1947); his entry here is as a result of a strong likelihood he was on either the BHG or the "Rooseboom" (researcher)

- **PATERSON** – Sgt. W. D. Paterson, 1st Perak Bn, 'uncertain' passenger (GBR); Sergeant William Dunbar Patterson, Perak Btn., FMSVF. David Nelson records "Missing/Volunteer". Died at sea sinking of "BHG" (MVDB JB); also in file Co 980/9 p.302 as "Patterson" reported missing ex BHG; **Serjeant William Dunbar Paterson**, British, 1st Perak Btn., FMSVF, aged 42 years, husband of Alice Elizabeth Paterson died 28.2.42; Bill Paterson had been born in (possibly) Dumfries, Scotland in 1900 and had made his way to Malaya in the 1920s where he had by 1930 been employed at the well regarded "Gula Estate", Gula- Kampulong Rubber Estate Ltd, Parit Buntar, Perak. Early Malayan newspaper archives record him marrying a Mary Thomson at Dumfries in November 1930, but he remarried Alice and they had one son Wallace in 1939. With the outbreak of Japanese hostilities Bill Paterson delivered his wife and infant son to Sydney, NSW, in December 1941 and returned to Singapore (it not clear whether would have been able to return to the estate given the Japanese advance). He wrote to his wife over the next two months but the family had no knowledge as to his whereabouts at the time of the fall of Singapore (son Wally Morison July 2014)
- **STIFF – Bombardier Frances George Stiff**, # 13267, SSVF Searchlight Bty., tin miner, Straits Trading Co, aged 29 years – died 26.2.42 died off Java, enemy action (MVD JB); "Stiff F G Str Trdg POW? wife Empr Star..." (BPPL); David Nelson records "Perth/Volunteer" ; **Bombardier Frances George Stiff**, SSVF husband of Anne Isabel Stiff died 28.2.42 (CWGC); The Colonial Office register of Deaths records " Bdr. Frances George Stiff on or about 26.2.42 [note discrepancy with CWGC records] off Java. Presumed to have died at sea off the coast of Java as a result of enemy action.. Date of death certificate 2.5.50. Sources; Sworn statements by survivors [researcher note - this implies that the survivors were people who survived the escape from Padang, or Stiff was on a ship other than the 'BHG' or that there were in fact survivors of the BHG] Ref. No. 50p 9/389/50; Register No. M1. Folio No. 290; serial No. 1338"; He worked as a 'smelter' for Straits trading Co. Ltd. At the Pulau Brani smelting works. An application for his exemption from continuous military training was declined (ST archives 28.6.40).
- **WITHERBY/ WEATHERBY (SIC)** – CSM Weatherby(sic), 4th Pahang Bn, 'uncertain' passenger (GBR): but in file CO 980/9 p.302 is reported missing ex 'BHG' ; "...Witherby J H Mentri Boust POW? ..." (BPPL); CSM Weatherby, 4th Pahang Btn., (CO980/9) (MVD JB); then **CSM James Herbert Witherby**, the CWGC have recently accepted his name for commemoration as dying on 28.2.42 and he will eventually be recorded on the memorial at Kranji (CWGC); James Herbert Witherby was born in Acton, Middlesex, England in 1906 (1911 UK census); the son of Bernard Oldhani Witherby , a stockbroker of Purley, Surrey; ; he attended Westminster School 1920-24; arrived in Malaya in 1927 and was Asst. Planter , Rim Malacca Rubber Estate Ltd through until at least 1931 (JM and ST 27.8.31); he was a very active and expert cricket player playing for the Malacca Club (ST 17.3.30) and the Jasin Club and a lot of interstate representative games (ST. 13.3.32), 1934 SSVF roll shows him as a Private (again in 1937 roll); he is also shown playing tennis and football for the Malacca Club(St.24.7.35 and 26.2.36) and rugby for the Jasin XV (ST. 14.10.35) before being transferred to Pahang in 1937. He was Manager Mentri Estate Rim (Malacca) Rubber estate Ltd in Pahang. After that he is reported playing tennis at the Klang Club (ST. 5.4.39) and on this occasion his wife is also reported playing tennis in the women's and mixed competitions. She was a modern women for her time since later that year she is reported as Mrs. J.D. Witherby as a Licensed Pilot taking part in an air search for a downed plane whilst she is flying with the Kuala Lumpur Flying Club. The final record for James Witherby is in 1940 when he was reported playing cricket for Johore Labis Oil palm

plantation team (SFPMA 13.4.40); Mrs. Joan Durham Witherby (nee Wilkinson) was born on 31.7.15 and appears to have married James Witherby in 1938. She joined the women's section of the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) sometime after it was formed in 1939 and according to ATA records "... had her contract terminated by ATA in August 1942 but reinstated January 1943..."; she also appears in the UK Archive records as a member of the Special Operations Executive but her file is embargoed until 1.1.16. ATA website shows Joan as becoming Mrs. Hale in 1953 and she then moved to Australia where she passed away in 2004. Joan Hale/Witherby was clearly a remarkable woman in her achievements during a period of history where women had to very confident and persevering to break into previously male dominated roles.

- **YOUNG** – CQMS Young, 1st Perak Bn., 'uncertain' passenger (GBR); "...Young J H SPYAUE (spelling?)H Barker Vols left by small boat x B Mati..." (BPPL); but in file CO 980/9 p.302 as reported missing ex 'BHG'; **CQMS John Hamilton Young**, FMSVF, Assist. Bagan Datoh Estate/H & C (Plannington Estate) CO 980/10, died at sea sinking of "BHG" (MVDB JB); BRE Capt. Nelson has "Missing/Volunteer"; also and bringing some certainty to the probability he was on the "Ban Ho Guan" , " ...CQMS John Hamilton Young, FMSVF, data of death on or since 28.2.42, presumed to have lost his life following the sinking of the SS. Ban Ho Guan , date of certificate 8.3.47, source War Office ref. 450/10000/1E (Colonial Office Register of Deaths , Folio 287 [145] # 1328).

Royal Navy and Royal Marines;

- **GRANEY/ GLANLEY (sic)** – the trail starts with a record of a Pte. Glanley (sic), R. M. (Appendix "B" of report by Lt. Col. Bristow to Colonial Office dated 16.7.43- NOTE: although this is a second version of the embarkation list of the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" it is HELD IN THE "SS. ROOSEBOOM" file in UK Archives);he (along with Stevenson and Terry below) are listed in a post war 'Presumption of Death file on the 'SS. Ban Ho Guan' held in the National Archives .ADM358/2941 (internet via National Archives, details/r/C13443840); however there is no one with this surname recorded as having died in service during the Second World War and particularly not as a Marine in 1942 and only one person with the similar name 'Ganley' having died in 1942 and that was a person in the Airforce; Bristow was working off memory in 1943 as to spelling of names and the slight difference is understandable; there is however a **Private Morris William Graney**, Marine, PLY/X 100038, Royal Marines who is listed as Missing Presumed Killed" during the evacuation of Singapore on 28.2.42 aged 21 years. Son of Mrs. E. V. Graney of Willesden, Middlesex. He is recorded on the Plymouth Naval memorial panel 74, Col. 3 (CWGC, and Force Z survivors.org.uk and www.navalhistory.net). The date of the last day of February 1942 and a suggestion that it is related to the evacuation of Singapore on 15 February means that the CWGC have not made the link through the Bristow report probably because it is now in the wrong file (some material is mixed between these two National Archive files, no doubt because of the loss of the ships occurring so close in time from the same port of departure).
- **STEVENSON** – Surgeon Commander Stevenson, RNR., 'uncertain as to name ' (GBR); **Commander Surgeon Thomas Craig Stevenson**, British, OBE, RNVR att. "HMS Sultan", aged 38 years [he was born on 22.11.04] , husband of Betty Frances Stevenson [nee McCormack] died 28.2.42 (CWGC); Stevenson was born in

Steyning, West Sussex, in 1903 and educated at Cambridge University, St Thomas' Hospital and King's College London and late (according to "The Navy List" was appointed as Surgeon Lt. Commander Thomas Craig Stevenson, MB., B.Ch., on 3.9.33 attached to the 'Sussex List 2' Division; he had originally left Singapore on 13.2.42 with Lt. Commander Terry, Lt. Cdr Geoffrey Brooke and 140 others on the 'Kung Wo' headed for Batavia but was attacked by Japanese bomber near Pom Pong island in the Rhio Archipelago and damaged so that it began to list. The passengers and crew were ferried to a small chain of islands in the only two lifeboats on the ship. On the 'Kung Wo' had also been Lt. Cdr. Terry - see below (and in fact Doris Lim who later was one of the handful of survivors of the sinking of the "SS. Rooseboom' in the Indian ocean). Stevenson and a medical attendant managed to travel by a launch to the shipwrecked and terribly injured survivors of the sinking of the 'SS. Kuala' who were stranded on Pom pong island and appears to have cared for the many wounded there and then travelled with sick and dying to Sumatra or one of the nearer islands. The two men returned later in the day to take off more wounded from Pom Pong island and, then again several days later, to collect some of those 'Kung Wo' survivors still on Benku Island They picked up some twenty men from Benku and author Geoffrey Brooke believed that this group stayed together at Padang to board the "SS. Ban Ho Guan". [p.43]. (book "Singapore's Dunkirk" by Geoffrey Brooke); Whilst it seems almost certain that Stevenson died in the sinking of the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" there is a most apt summary of the matter on p.82 of Brooke's book " ... In fact, both Terry's end and that of 'Doctor' Stevenson have remained one of the tragic mysteries of those black days. Both were awarded the DSC for their self-sacrificing labours among the islands and up and down the Indragiri ...". Later that year (apparently without knowing he was dead) he was awarded the MBE Military Division "... For outstanding devotion to duty in tending sick and wounded during and after the fall of Singapore ...". (London Gazette 11.12.42); his death notice on 12.3.46 recorded that he had been on the "SS. Ban Ho Guan", and his probate noted that he had lived at 54 Stevens Road, Singapore; His wife Betty passed away in London in October 1953 after an operation (ancestry.com).

- **SURTEES** – 2nd Lt. **Surtees**, RNR., 'uncertain' passenger (GBR);
- **TERRY** – Lt. Commander Terry, R.N. 'certain' passenger (GBR); "...Lieutenant Commander A.H. Terry, RN still missing..." (C. W. Casualties letter 1.6.43 at PRO); Lt. Commander Anthony Terry was commissioned as a Lieutenant in 1932 (The Navy List 1.8.32) and, whilst serving on the "HMS. Prince of Wales' in the European theatre earlier in the War he witnessed the sinking of 'HMS. Hood'. At the time of the Fall of Singapore he was one of only two officers left at Singapore Naval Base 'HMS. Sultan' along with 200 men from the 'HMS Prince of Wales' and 'HMS. Repulse'. He left Singapore on the 'Kung Wo' with Surgeon Commander Stevenson and 140 other passengers on 13.2.42 (pp.26-27 "Singapore's Dunkirk"; he was a "...a big broad man with a yellow beard..." (page 61 in "Singapore's Dunkirk by Geoffrey Brooke); also with the author Lt. Cdr. Geoffrey Brooke and Surgeon Commander Stevenson then been heroically transported shipwrecked women and men from Pom Pong Island and Benku island on at least four occasions to other inhabited islands and the Sumatran mainland before knowledge of his fate became lost or at least confused; he was (i.e. prior to the Bristow embarkation record above) last recorded as sighted on 15 February on

the Indragiri River by a Petty Officer Leather who had also been on the "HMS Prince of Wales " (Page 49); **Lt. Cdr. Anthony Hunter Terry**, DSC, British, Royal Navy, attached "HMS Sultan" died 28.2.42 (CWGC and Plymouth Naval Column); on 6.4.43 The London Gazette announced that Lt. Commander Terry had been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross " For bravery in The Far East"; in his death notice on 28.2.46 it was noted that he had been the only surviving son (his brother had been four years older but was also killed during the war) of Cyril Edward terry [retd. Lt. Col. RASC and Mrs. A. V. Terry, Soundings, Maenporth, Falmouth and also that he had served on The 'HMS Royal Oak' and 'HMS Havant' (ancestry.com)..

British Army and Indian Army;

- **ASHWORTH – Lieutenant Bernard Ashworth**, #154168, Singapore Depot, aged 37 years, husband of Lillian Ashworth of Colchester, Essex died 23. 2. 42 (CWGC); Bernard Ashworth was born in 1904 and was the only son of James and Catherine Ashworth of York, Yorkshire, England and by 1941 he was based in Singapore with his wife Lillian, and children Eileen and Patrick. His cousin (the mother of Derek Mitchell) spent many holidays living with Bernard's parents whilst Bernard and family were also staying at the house as well. Not a lot was known about Bernard's death except he was possibly lost at sea after the ship he was on was sunk by the Japanese (email from Derek Mitchell 4.9.15); he was a friend and neighbour in Singapore of Major Biss listed below where the Ashworth family lived in the Tanglin area (Patrick Mussett email 11.10.11) and Mrs. Biss was evacuated to Australia (Gordon Mussett email 10.10.10); after ten years in the RAOC where he was a skilled technician on gunsights (Gordon Mussett email 10.10.10) Bernard was sent ,with his wife, his son and daughter to Singapore in 1938 and worked there on the gunsights of the famous big guns ... about the end of January 1942 his wife, daughter and son were evacuated on the 'Duchess of Bedford' and reached safety in the UK. The family has evidence that Bernard was on a list of people to be got out of Singapore before the Surrender. All Mrs. Ashworth heard when she got back to the UK was that Bernard was 'Missing Presumed Killed' (son Patrick Mussett email 11.10.10); Bernard's date of death is shown (as was the case for many men who lost their lives with no known grave) as the date Bernard was last seen in Padang.
- **BISS – Major Biss**, RAOC (or IAOC deleted), Base Ord Workshop, '**certain**' passenger, missing Malaya last seen 15/2 Ayer Molek, Sumatra (GBR); Major W. C. Biss, Royal Army Ordinance Corps (GHQ India Command 1944 ltr.); **Major William Charles Biss**, # 119116, Royal Army Ordinance Corps, aged 40 , husband of Edith Lily Biss of Chatham died on 28.2.42 (CWGC)
- **BROWN – S/Sgt. Brown**, IAOC., 'uncertain' passenger (GBR); **Sgt. K. F. Brown**, No.9 IAOC Mobile Workshop Company (Secretary , Military Dept memo 3.6.43 at PRO); no CWGC record
- **BROWN – S/Condr. Brown**, IAOC, 'uncertain' passenger (GBR); Sgt. J. Brown, No.10 Mobile Workshop Company (Secretary, Military Dept. memo); **Warrant**

- Officer Class 1 (Sub. Condr.) John Brown**, # 7876499, British, Royal Norfolk Regt., Indian Army Ordinance Corps, aged 34 years, died 28.2.42 (CWGC)
- **CHARANDAS – Naik Charandas**, IAOC., 'uncertain' passenger (GBR); **Naik Charandas**, IAOC, on "BHG" (letter 25 may 1943 to India office at PRO); no CWGC record
 - **DAVENPORT – Bty S.M. Davenport**, R. A., 148 Field rect., 'uncertain' passenger (GBR, 16.7.43 report 'Appendix "B"') this is a case of mistaken memory by Major Bristow the Embarkation Officer because **WO II Davenport actually left on the 'Tinombo' on either 26 or 27 February 1942 and reached safety.(WO361/187)**
 - **DORRELL – R.S.M. Dorrell**, R.A., 148 Field Regt. , 'Certain' passenger (GBR 16.7.43 report, Appendix "B");this is a case of mistaken memory by Major Bristow the Embarkation Officer because **WO II Dorrell actually left on the 'Tinombo' on either 26 or 27 February 1942 and reached safety.(WO361/187)**
 - **GILL – Condr. Gill**, IAOC. 'Uncertain' passenger (GBR); Sub-Condr. (T/Condr) J. F. H. Gill, IAOC ,No.9 IAOC Mobile Workshop Company in Malaya; **Lt. James Frederick Horace Gill**, Indian, aged 37 years, Indian Army Ordinance Corps, husband of Millicent Vera Gill of Plymouth died 13.2.42 - so there is a real issue as to when he actually died, but it seems more likely that he was on board the 'Ban Ho Guan" since Bristow would not have recalled seeing him in Padang , let alone anywhere in Sumatra or outside Singapore if he had been killed on 13.2.42 (CWGC)
 - **MACDONALD – Lt. A. MacDonald**, 4 Norfolk, 'certain' passenger (GBR); Lt. A.D. MacDonald – The Royal Norfolk regiment (GHQ India Command ltr. 1944); **Lieutenant Alastair David MacDonald**, British, # 102402, 4th Battalion, Royal Norfolk regiment, son of William and Jean MacDonald of Aberdeen (he was an Organ Scholar at St Catherine's College, Cambridge) died on 28.2 .42 (CWGC)
 - **MACFARLANE – Lt. Col. MacFarlane**, RA., (148 Field Regt),'certain' passenger (GBR); Lieutenant-Colonel W. A. Macfarlane, MC TD – Royal Artillery (GHQ, India Command 1944 ltr PRO); Macfarlane last seen 1900 hrs 26. 2. 42 by WO II Davenport as MacFarlane"... wished him goodbye on the dockside at Padang before Davenport left on "SS. Tinombo" , MacFarlane stated that, in all probability he would be leaving later on another ship..."(Davenport statement 14.2.43 WO361/187); similar record by WO II Dorrell leaving on same ship but stating date was 27.2.42(18.1.43 statement by Dorrell at PRO); **Lt. Col. William Alston MacFarlane**, British, #22713148, (The Bedfordshire Yeomanry) Field regiment ,Royal Artillery, aged 42 years, husband of E. Mary MacFarlane of Belton ,Rudland – he is stated to have died on 2.3.42 - so there is an issue as to where and how he died(CWGC)
 - **NANDA – Capt. Nanda**, I. Arty. , 'uncertain' passenger (GBR); no CWGC record
 - **PULLIBLANK – Captain R. A. Pulliblack**, The Loyal Regiment (GHQ, India Command ltr. 1944); (North Lancashire)?; seen safe in Sumatra (Mrs. Pulliblack letter 11.6.42 quoting another source); earlier he is recorded escaping from Singapore after the Surrender by Lieutenant K. Robinson, R.A. "...we were free to escape if we wished...went down to the Yacht Club basin...saw Sam Pulleblank (sic) and another officer from the Loyals preparing a fourteen footer, which they sailed away..." (SDGB p. 130); also stated to be on "BHG" by Lt. Col. Sydenham, RE. (WO361/187); **Captain Richard Aldwyn Pulliblack**, # 50954, 2nd Btn., The Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire), aged 31 years, husband of Janet Sheila Pulliblack of Ayr he died on 28.2.42 (CWGC); from correspondence in War Office files Mrs. J. S. Pulliblack lived at 27 Fairview Street, Hawthorn, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia during the War - this probably explains why Captain Pulliblack was on a ship heading to Australia; he is recorded as having boarded the 'BHG' in the

company of Major Ryder [below] and Alan Walker from Canada but the latter name appears to be a mix-up with Alexander Clark – Walker who was on the 'BHG'; Captain Pulliblack had married Janet Sheila Milligan in Singapore in 1940 (ancestry.com).

- **RYDER** – [indecipherable] Ryder, 11 Ind. Div, 'certain' passenger (GBR); Major E.T.D. Ryder, 1st Gurkha Rifles, GSO 2 of 9th Indian Division, Singapore (Military Dept., India Office letter 21.4.44 at PRO); Major E.T.D. Ryder, 1st Gurkha Rifles & GSO II or I of one of the Indian Divisions in Singapore was seen in Sumatra on 29th February 1942 by Major Hayes, RAMC setting sail for Java with two companions... (letter from his father, Colonel C. H. D. Ryder dated 3.10.43); Lt. Col. G. T. M. Hayes IMS ; it is unclear why Lt Ryder boarded a ship bound for Australia rather than one for Ceylon since according to Major Bristow , the Embarkation Officer, he had been in the group with Brigadier Paris and Lt Ackworth who boarded the ill-fated "SS. Rooseboom" which was sunk with a handful of survivors reaching shore (letter from Major Bristow to Mrs. Ryder 1945)he was in the company of Alexander Clark-Walker, Malayan Survey Dept., and another man when he boarded the "SS. Ban Ho Guan"); **Major Ernle Terrick Dudley Ryder**, #55/1A, MID., 1st King George V's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Malayan regiment), husband of Daphne Ryder of Ascot, Berkshire died on 28.2.42 (CWGC); his wife was Daphne Joan Piliams Ryder (nee Greig) and his daughters were Elizabeth (b.1938) and Anthea (b.1940)(ancestry.com); his death notice in 1946 stated that he had died on or shortly after 28.2.42.

AIF;

- **ALLAN – Private Daniel Morton Allan**, NX 33129, 22 Infantry Brigade, Australian Reinforcement, age 39 years, son of William and Agnes Allan of Edgecliffe, New South Wales, Australia – he died on 28.2.42. Notation "...Embarked from Padang on a vessel stated to have been sunk by bombing. Unconfirmed report that party reached Tjilatjap..." (NAAMM)
- **BELFORD – Private Robert Warwick Belford**, NX43710, AIF.2/18 Bn. Australian Infantry, age 23 years, husband of Bessie Primrose Belford of Redfern, New South Wales – he died 28.2.42. Notation "...Embarked from Padang on a vessel stated to have been sunk by bombing. Unconfirmed report that party reached Tjilatjap..." (NAAMM)
- **BRAY – Private George Henry Bray**, NX71541, 2/18 infantry Btn., AIF aged 24 years husband of Mrs. Barbara Bray, 21 South Avenue, Bankstown, NSW. Died 15.2.42 (deleted), 28.2.42 (deleted), 15.2.42 .On War Graves card it is noted "... Embarked from Padang on a vessel stated to have been sunk by bombing. Unconfirmed report that party reached Tjilatjap, Java....".(NAAMM)
- **BROWN – Gunner Walter Ernest Brown**, NX 35492, VC, DCM, AIF., 2/15 Fd. Regt., Royal Australian Artillery, aged 55 years, husband of Maude Brown of Carlton, New South Wales , Australia – died 28.2.42 Notation on his Army card only states that "...became missing 28/2/42..."(NAAMM); Walter Brown had won the VC in the First World War and despite being over the permitted age to enlist for the Second World War he had not told the truth on his age and had been enlisted. The Army permitted him to remain when the truth was known. When the Surrender of Singapore occurred he is reported to have picked up a bag of grenades and walked towards enemy lines. **There was another unofficial sighting of him ten days after the Surrender and he has been included in this list at this**

stage because his date of death coincides with the other men who were on the "BHG"

- **CHESHIRE – Signalman Clifford William James Cheshire**, NX 46216, AIF. Sigs. 8 Div, Australian Army Ordinance Corps of Signals, aged 21 years, husband of Athena Cheshire - he died 28.2.42. Notation on his Army card is "... Embarked from Padang on a vessel stated to have been sunk by bombing. Unconfirmed report that party reached Tjilatjap..." (NAAMM)
- **CONNOLLY – Private Noel Kevin Connolly**, QX23803, AIF. 2/3 Ord. Store Coy., Australian Army Ordinance Corps., aged 22 years son of Kevin and Annie Connolly of Leichardt, New South Wales – died 28.2.42. Notation on his Army card states" ...Embarked from Padang on a vessel stated to have been sunk by bombing. Unconfirmed report that party reached Tjilatjap... " (NAAMM)
- **CRIBBENS – Warrant Officer Class II, Francis Albert Frederick Cribbens**, NX57773, AIF.8 Div. Prov. Coy, Australian Army Provost Corps, aged 39 years, husband of Jessica Cribbens of Narrabeen, New South Wales, died 28.2.42. Notation on his Army card states only "... became missing 28/2/42..." (NAAMM)
- **FIELD – Sergeant Edwin John Field**, NX56559, AIF. HQ. 8 Division, aged 23 years, son of Herbert and Elsie Field of Lidcombe, New South Wales – he died on 28.2.42. Notation on his Army card states "...Was on ship sunk off Pandang (sic) Sumatra on 28.2.42 .Embarked from Padang on a vessel stated to have been sunk by bombing. Unconfirmed report that party reached Tjilatjap..." (NAAMM)
- **GAHAN – Private Harold Frank Gahan**, NX32679, AIF, HQ. 8 Division, aged 35 years, husband of Florence Emily Gahan of Malfly, New South Wales – he died on 28. 2. 42. Notation on his Army card states"...was on ship sunk off Pandang (sic) Sumatra on 28.2.42. Embarked from Padang on a vessel stated to have been sunk by bombing. Unconfirmed report that party reached Tjilatjap... " (NAAMM)
- **MACKEY – Warrant Officer John Keith Mackey**, NX 52789, AIF. * Div Prov. Coy, Australian Army Provost Corps, died 28 February 1942 aged 30 years, husband of Margaret Joan Mackey of Murrumbeena, Victoria. Notation "...Embarked from Padang on a vessel stated to have been sunk by bombing. Unconfirmed report that party reached Tjilatjap..." [NAAMM]
- **MAGGS – Private David Thomas Maggs**, NX 35917, AIF, 2/19 Bn., Australian Infantry, died 28.2.442 aged 30 years, husband of Alma Jean Maggs of Griffiths, New South Wales. Notation "...Embarked from Padang on a vessel stated to have been sunk by bombing. Unconfirmed report that party reached Tjilatjap..." [NAAMM]
- **MILLER – Captain William Aubrey Miller**, VX/48816, AIF HQ 8 Australian Division, died 28.2.42 aged 56 years, husband of Evelyn Mildred Miller of Yarraville, Victoria, Australia. Note; there is nothing on his service card to connect Captain Miller specifically with being on board the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" except the date of death and the fact that other HQ 8 Division men were on board.
- **ROBY – Sergeant Clifton Salisbury Roby**, NX 54866, AIF HQ 8 Division died 28.2.42 aged 25 years , the son of Charles Frederick and Ella Roby of Matraville, New South Wales . Notation "...Embarked from Padang on a vessel stated to have been sunk by bombing. Unconfirmed report that party reached Tjilatjap..." [NAAMM].
- **WALL – Signalman Patrick Llewellyn Wall**, NX/40342, AIF Sigs 8 Div, Australian Corps of Signals, died 28.2.42 aged 27 years, husband of Mavis Mildred Wall of Armidale New South Wales. Note ; there is nothing on his service card to specifically connect Signalman Wall with being on board the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" except the date and the fact that other HQ 8 Division men were on board.

There are three Royal Australian Air force men listed as dying on 28 2.42 (Aircraftsman John Lundy Carter; Aircraftsman John Brynmer Evans; and Flight Lieutenant Andrew Creswell Lewis but with no mention by the embarkation officer for the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" of any RAAF men boarding their presence is discounted).

For completeness and at the risk that these men might have died elsewhere in the Dutch East Indies, the researcher notes that the following AIF men are noted to have lost their lives on 1st March 1942;

- **BOURNE** – Corporal William Ronald Bourne, VX 51136, AIF 2/10 Old. Workshops, Australian Army Ordnance Corps aged 21 years, the son of William and Sarah Jane Bourne of Poowong, Victoria. His War Graves Card states that he was last seen Rengat area – but his date of death is stated as 1.3.42. He is commemorated on Col 139 at Kranji.
- **O'Halloran** - Corporal George Edward O'Halloran, NX38856, AIF Admin, Malaya, Australian Headquarters, aged 20 years, the son of George Edward and Rachel Olive O'Halloran of Dee Why, New South Wales. Notation "...escaped to Java..."
- **SMITH** – Private Reginald Frederick Smith, NX/25169, AIF 8 Div. Mobile L. & F.D. Unit, Australian Army Ordnance Corps, aged 22 years, the son of Frederick Stewart Smith and Lillie Sylvia Smith of Lismore, New South Wales. However Australian Army records apparently (AAHU) state that Private Smith was last seen in Java on 1 March 1942.

Ships Crew;

- **VAN DEN BERG / VAN DER BERG** – Captain Cornelis / Cornelius A. van der Berg, was born at Soerabaya, Java on 20 July 1885. In 1895 he moved with his parents to Rotterdam and probably some of his family remained there. He returned to the Dutch East Indies for work (Annaloes van der Berg emails 2008). By 1909 he was 2nd Officer on the "SS. Perlak" as described by a newspaper article (SG SFMA 9.7.09) covering the theft of his sextant by a Dutchman; By 1924 he is referred to as the Captain of the [original] "SS. Ban Ho Guan" arriving in Singapore from Soerabaya(SG SFPMA 25.8.24) and earlier that month there are newspaper articles reporting his ship bringing in survivors from the "Sari Borneo" into Singapore . It looks like the BHG was trading between Singapore and Sourabaya (advertisement in SG SFPMA 8.7.20). In October 1925 the [original] "BHG" [owned by Teo Guan Kee & Co] was involved in a collision in Singapore harbour and during March 1925 there were several reports of the court action with the final judgment finding Captain van der Berg in the wrong in the collision – this was a most serious event for a ships master but does not appear to have damaged his employment since he lasted through the sale of the original "BHG", the purchase of the "De Haan" and its renaming as the second "BHG".. Later that year the [original] "BHG" ran aground at Bandjermassin [it is mentioned as being owned by Tio Guan Kee of Boat Quay). In 1929 there are newspaper reports of the master of the [original] "BHG" being fined for incorrect cargo loading (SG ST 30.5.29). **Given all this it is worth noting insofar as determining the final fate of the [second] "BHG" that Captain van der Berg's judgment must be questioned.** Captain van der Berg's wife, Cecelia, (nee Kay and known also as 'Babs' within her family) was born in New Zealand but must have married Captain van der Berg sometime in the 1920s or 1930s, because by 1933 they were living at 58 Meyer Road, Tanjong Katong, Singapore.

They may have moved their residence back to Java in 1937 because Cecelia advertised the sale of what looks like most of their household effects and their motor car (SG ST 29.9.37); Cecelia must have been living in Java at the time of the Japanese invasion and was on board the "Van Der Lijn/Lyn" when it sailed from Tjilatjap around 18 – 24 February 1942 with 200 Malayan evacuees (100 men and 100 women) headed for Australia. She is recorded in the Australian Archives as arriving in Fremantle on 1.3.42 and then travelling to Sydney where she appears to have resided for the rest of her life.

Unidentified Passengers:

- **Possibly** 20 men who had left Singapore on the 'Kung Wo'. **These men are almost certainly ex 'HMS Prince of Wales' and 'HMS Repulse'** ratings who had been gathered at 'HMS Sultan' the shore base in Singapore and later boarded the 'Kung Wo' – see p.39. "Singapore's Dunkirk" by Geoffrey Brooke, wherein he states that about twenty of the men who had experienced the sinking of the 'Kung Wo' remaining on Benku island and leaving with Terry and Stevenson were from this group who had been assembled at shore base 'Sultan' several weeks earlier in Singapore.. To the writers knowledge only two ships were sunk with almost total loss of life after leaving Padang - the "SS. Ban Ho Guan" and the "SS. Rooseboom") ; see "Singapore's Dunkirk" by Geoffrey Brooke page 43 where he records Lt. Commander Terry - who had also been on the "Kung Wo" , arriving back at the nearby island of Benku (where the personnel from the "Kung Wo" had been shipwrecked) on a rescue launch "...he could take about twenty and I sent these out – to their deaths as it happened (it is thought they left Padang in a ship that was sunk).....the launch turned, accelerated into the darkness, and he was gone..." . There were about 196 naval ratings who were classified as "Missing Presumed Killed" with the last official record being that they were attached to 'HMS Sultan' - some apart from the twenty or more on the 'BHG' others were killed on other small ships also escaping from Singapore and also in the confused reallocation of navy personnel onto some small ships like the 'HMS Scott Harley' ships at Batavia prior to the Battle of the Sunda Strait on 1-3 March 1942(www.naval-history.net)
- some 80 men of the AIF
- ship's crew of possibly Malay ethnicity