

“HMS Vyner Brooke”

Sunk by Japanese bombers in the Banka Straits,
Sumatra, on 14 February 1942.

[Version 3.6.6; July 2024]

Introduction:

The purpose of researching this tragic event and compiling a memorial document on the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” is to attempt to expand the knowledge of and facilitate a wider historical awareness of the sinking. Also, in the interests of creating a memorial to those currently unidentified victims, an effort has been made to identify as many as possible of the passengers and crew on the ship at the time of its sinking and decipher the fate of these individuals.

In carrying out this research it has also brought to light that the events on Radji Beach were more awful than the general story portrayed in the mainstream media over the past 70 years. **Therefore, this document has a blunt outcome in that it presents something closer to the truth insofar as the crimes of the Japanese troops involved at Radji Beach.**

The reader is to be aware that some of the realities presented in the latter part of this Introduction may be upsetting.

To put the document into historical context, the fate of only a small number of the fifty or more vessels of varying descriptions sunk carrying evacuees from Singapore during the last few days before the Surrender to the Japanese on 15 February 1942 have been thoroughly researched and documented. This is one of the attempts to prevent the lives of those several thousand women, children and men who did die in their escape attempt being simply consigned without proper memory, into the dustbin of history.

The general story of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” and in particular the fate of the twenty-one nurses of the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) so horrendously massacred on Radji Beach, has become relatively well known in Australia and is well told in the following books in the possession of the researcher;

- Firstly, the book “**On Radji Beach**” by Ian W. Shaw (published in 2010) is a very well written and most comprehensive account which rightly focuses almost exclusively on the lives and the deaths of the Nursing Sisters from the Australian Army Nursing Service who boarded the “SS. Vyner Brooke”. The book is highly recommended for anyone wishing to understand the living hell encountered by the nurses from the time of the ship being attacked by Japanese bombers.
- “**White Coolies**” by Betty Jeffrey (first published in 1954 and then reprinted many times since) is the story through the eyes of Sister Betty Jeffrey, AANS, who survived the sinking of the ship and subsequent inhumane internment by the Japanese. It was first written during the three and a half years she was a prisoner of the Japanese in Sumatra.
- “**Short Cruise on the Vyner Brooke**” by Ralph E. H. Armstrong (published in 2003) who as a boy in his pre-teens also survived the sinking and then the years of internment in Sumatra.

- **“By Eastern Windows”** written by William H. McDougall Jr. (originally published in 1948) gives a valuable insight into the events in his chapter on survivor Eric Germann - he also notes his later discussions with child survivor Isidore ‘Mischa’ Warman.
- **“Women Beyond the wire”** written by Lavinia Warner and John Sandilands which covers the story of the survivors from the “SS. Vyner Brooke” as part of the overall tapestry of the experiences of women internees of the Japanese 1942-54.

As a result, this document does not attempt to purport to be anything like the full story of the events and experiences of the passengers, because they have already been admirably recorded in the books mentioned above and the biographies of Sister Vivian Bullwinkel.

It focuses on identifying as many people involved and perhaps revealing some previously unanalysed and publicly unrecorded aspects of the sinking and its aftermath.

One of the noticeable gaps in general knowledge of the last voyage of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” is the identity of most of the approximately 105 civilian women, men, and children - together with the few service personnel on board and the 52 crew – who, in addition to the 65 Australian Army Nurses were aboard the ship on its last voyage. This memorial document will attempt to identify the passengers and crew, then record their lives and passing in a respectful manner with the objective of showing them as people living full and positive lives, many of whom were cut short in a totally unnecessary fashion by a brutal enemy.

As already stated, the identities of the 65 AANS personnel are clearly recorded and the noble lives of many of those who were murdered on Banka Island are memorialised in literature and records in Australia, Singapore, and the UK and on the memorial that was placed on Radji beach in Sumatra on 16 February 2017.

Of the probably more than 100 people killed during and after the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” only 15 of the deaths are memorialised by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website, which is partly the motivation for creating a memorial document such as this one.

One of the more chilling aspects of the historical events surrounding the last voyage of the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’ was the fatal consequence of the Australian Army nurses - along with their nursing counterparts from the QAINMS and the General Hospitals in Singapore - being sternly ordered out of Singapore at the last minute before the impending defeat and Surrender. This was primarily because news was starting to filter through from China of the terrible atrocities and rapes committed against British and Chinese nurses by the soldiers of the 229th Regiment (the ‘Tanaka Butai’) of the 38th Division of the Japanese Imperial Army on Christmas Day 1941, at St Stephens College Hospital, when they attacked and took Hong Kong. One of the first insights into the events on Radji Beach and Banks Island is that, in some sort of cruel synchronicity of history, it was two Companies of these very same bestial men from the very same 229th Regiment from Hong Kong were landing as the invasion army on Banka Island just as the survivors of the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’ were struggling through the sea to reach land. Unbelievably, the specific Japanese troops that had been the cause of the urgent evacuation of all Nurses from Singapore had been transported hundreds of miles in the intervening few weeks from Hong Kong and were now waiting for them on Banka Island with a homicidal Officer in Charge in the form of one Major Orita Masaru. How cruel can be the twists of fate in times of war!

But first let us recap before we try and clear up any questions on the sinking and atrocities.

The 'SS Vyner Brooke' in Singapore:

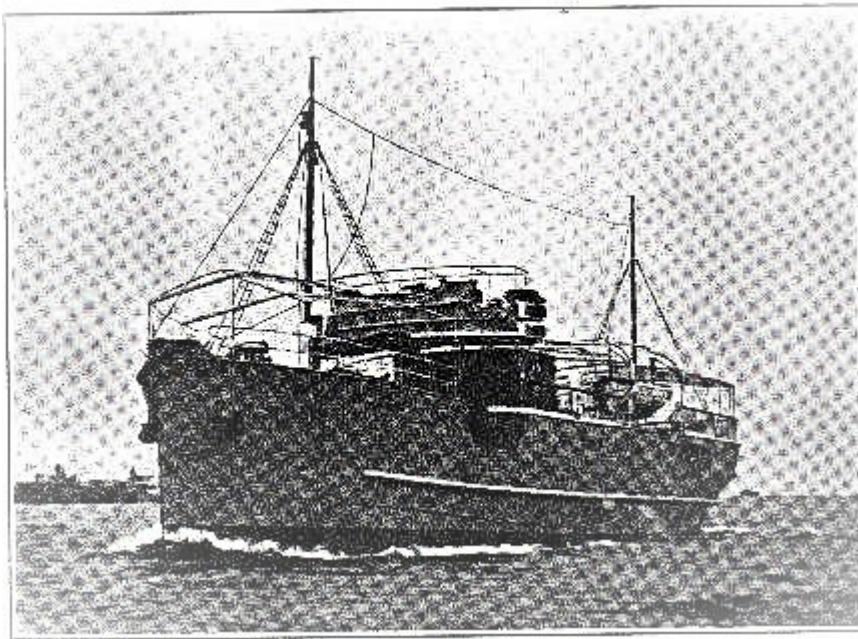
The 'SS Vyner Brooke' was designed by Singapore naval architect, F.R. Ritchie, OBE, for the 3rd Rajah of Sarawak (Sir Charles Vyner Brooke) and built in 1927 in Leith, Scotland by one of the finest shipyards in the Leith estuary, Ramage & Ferguson, specialising in luxury steam yachts.

She was 251 feet long, 41 feet wide and had 44 First Class cabins, a 40 foot by 24-foot Saloon forward of the cabins, and all furniture was teak covered with leather.

Accommodation for the 47 peacetime crew and cabin staff was located fore and aft.

The ship was 1650 GRT and powered by a 3-cylinder triple expansion steam engine. It was equipped with lifeboats, rafts, and lifebelts for 650 passengers and could carry 200 deck passengers.

Launched in 1927 it arrived in Singapore in March 1928.



When requisitioned by the Royal Navy from the Sarawak Steamship Company at the time of the Japanese invasion of northern Malaya in December 1941 it was quickly painted grey and armed with a four-inch gun forward, two Lewis guns aft and depth charges.

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

During these few weeks, the 'SS Vyner Brooke' was despatched on patrol up the east coast of Malaya, as described in a letter home (below) dated 28 January 1942 by **2nd Engineer, Sub. Lt. Jimmy Miller**. Some relevant points from the letter include the fact that most of the local Malay and Chinese crew members had (understandably) deserted and would have to be replaced by Royal Navy ratings prior to the evacuation departure.



Sub. Lt James 'Jimmy' Miller, RNR.

1942

28th Jan.

Dear Mum,

We are on our way back to S. have been on patrol up the East Coast Cew. we have had a helluva time up there of it - been bombed 4 times but not hit but never want to see them any closer some have landed as close as 10 ft away & it is a rotten experience. Then we went into port & most of crew refused to sail & were taken to jail - only firemen stuck it out when we left were bombed at an oil wharf & one bomb smashed through the oil pipes & set wharf on fire & it was a devil of a blaze & we just managed to get away Japs were after the ship as they didn't want to hit tanks I suppose they think that they will get them whole. Old man & mate are only ones on bridge. have had to razzle around last three days & knock up what grub we could manage to find on ship. The night time is all we look forward to & hope that they won't spot us. I think that they are bound to get us sooner or later & the worst of it is you can do nothing about it. Down in Engine Room just hanging on waiting like hell for the next bomb. This day has lost 5 ships so far. When we were first bombed were on deck & I heard a bomb whistling down very close & at about the same time it exploded about 20 yards off not very nice I can assure you. Things don't look too bright up this way & God alone knows how it will finish. Haven't felt like writing any other letters & besides haven't been able to post any managed to send off a note by a ship we met one day so maybe you will get it - Haven't received any mail since beginning of Dec as they haven't forwarded any on or if they have it has been lost. Hope to get some on arrival. I will write when I can. Hope it was the trouble never gets as far as N. H. Give my love to everybody. Cherish
Love to all
Jimmy

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

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

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

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

The naval ships, apart from a couple of destroyers, which briefly escorted the bigger merchant ships like the ‘SS Empire Star’ and ‘SS Gorgon’ after leaving Singapore, included auxiliary (i.e., merchant ships which had been requisitioned) patrol ships, auxiliary minesweepers, flat bottomed ex-Yangste River gunboats and ex Yangste river passenger ships, HMMLs (fast Royal Navy launches of 112 feet), RAF fast launches and even a large tug like the ‘HMS Yin Ping’. Some of these Naval ships had almost exclusively a complement of service personnel on board – but also a few civilians.

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

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

The officers of the ‘Ss Vyner Brooke’ were all peace time sailors – very experienced merchant marine officers and engineers and represented a group of mature, very decent men. The ship was under the command of the same captain who had steered it back and forth between Singapore and Sarawak carrying high class passengers and cargo and who had also taken it up the coast of Malaya for wartime missions during December 1941/January 1942. It had increased its complement of experienced engineers in December with 3rd Engineer Dennis O’Brien returning from the tin mines of Thailand in December 1941 and then the last-minute boarding of Extra 2nd Engineer Robert Trewhitt

from his job as an engineer on a rubber plantation in Malacca just prior to departure. The officers at time of departure were;

- Captain – **Lt Richard Borton, RNR.**, 53 years of age from Yorkshire.
- Chief/First Officer **Tpy. Lt William Sedgman, RNR.**, a 31-year-old Welshman.
- Second Officer – **Tpy. Lt Arthur Mann, RNVR** a 38-year-old Londoner.
- Chief Engineer – **Lt.(E) David Reith, RNVR/RNR**, aged 67 years from Aberdeen, Scotland.
- Second engineer – **Tpy. Lt 'Jimmy' Miller, RNR/Naval Auxiliary Personnel (T.124 Agreement)**., aged 28 years from Gisborne, New Zealand.
- Extra 2nd Engineer- **Robert Trehwitt, RNVR**, aged 45 years from North Shields in England.
- Third Engineer – **Dennis O'Brien, Naval Auxiliary Personnel (T.124 Agreement)**, aged 54 years (possibly only 46 years) from NSW, Australia.

- of whom William Sedgman, David Reith, Jimmy Miller, and Robert Trehwitt would die in the massacre on Radji Beach on 16 February and Denis O'Brien would somehow lose his life after clinging to a lifeboat for hours after the sinking. Captain Borton would reach shore and become a POW and survive the War and Lt Arthur Mann would make an incredible voyage by raft and small craft all the way to Java and escape from there to Australia to go on and serve again during the War.

How many people were on board?

The significant variance in the records and memories of number of passengers on board reflects the chaos on the Singapore docks on those last few days before the surrender to the Japanese. The reality was that by the 12-13 February 1942 thousands of women and children, babies, civilian men and servicemen were pushing, shoving, coercing and threatening their way onto any of the last ships leaving the city before the terror of the Japanese Army arrived from their frontline - which was by then on Bukit Timah Road and in Pasir Panjang.

On consequence of this chaotic situation is that there were no passenger lists for any of the 40 plus ships sunk during the week following their departure from Singapore harbour.

Numbers given for those on board the 'SS Vyner Brooke' range between 227 and 330 people, including the crew.

Captain 'Tubby' Borton in command of the 'SS Vyner Brooke' states in his report that the people on board comprised.

- Crew: 7 Officers and 45 ratings
 - Passengers: 1 R.N.; 1 Army; approx. 180 civilians, mainly women and children.
 - Survivors: RN 7; Army 1; Prisoners of War or civilians about 100; internees at Palembang.
- Indicating **227 people** on board, but also that perhaps there had not been an accurate headcount whilst at sea.

A Malay Navy website (webmaster@navy.mil.my) states that there were 20 men from the Malay Section of the Royal Navy/ MRNVR on board.

The website Naval-History.net says of 47 crew and 181 passengers, 125 were missing – this indicates 228 people.

The records compiled in the Changi POW camp 'Bureau of Record and Enquiry' under Captain David Nelson, SSVF, show – '*Passengers, RN 1, Army 1, Civilians (mainly women) 180 plus or minus.*' Then he records '*Survivors RN1, Army 1 Civilians 100 plus or minus.*' This record seems to reflect the view of Captain Borton which may well have been the case since Captain Borton became a POW and his views would have passed through the POW network to Changi POW camp in Singapore with its information collecting Bureau of Record and Enquiry.

Major William Alston Tebbutt (NAA B3856, 144/1/346) states that on board were "... *Lt. R. E. Borton plus 50 crew, including gun crew ...*" he also estimated a total of 200 passengers including a number of Eurasian men, women and children - this indicates a complement of 250 people.

In "By Eastern Windows" (p.140) the author quotes passenger Eric Germann as there being "250 passengers", but this presumably includes the nurses and the crew; this is also the number on board quoted in the book "Women beyond the Wire". This is the same number quoted by 2nd Officer, Lt Mann, in his memoirs as the number of passengers.

Author Ian W. Shaw in his book "On Radji Beach" (p.126) states there were 65 Australian Army nurses (certain), about 150 civilian and military personnel and a crew of 40 – giving a total of around 255 persons.

An interesting statement in this context is that by Lt. Russell F. Wright (who had been the Assistant Embarkation Officer when the 'Vyner Brooke' left Singapore) – he said in his post war signed affidavit in the War Crimes files that he and the other men in his group were refused permission to board the ship because the captain advised "... *that their complement was 250 above lifebelt strength ...*". He later sailed on another evacuation ship; the 'Mata Hari' and fate brought him back into captivity – and the surviving AANS nurses including Vivian Bullwinkel – at Muntok internment camp.

AANS Ada 'Mickey' Syer believed there to have been **300 people** on board "... *assorted races and creeds and conditions. Some well dressed and some in rags ...*" (Syer).

Other authors and survivors have stated;

- Joseph Kennedy's book "When Singapore Fell" (p.41) – 200 or more passengers; the same figure as used by Geoffrey Brook in "Singapore's Dunkirk"; but less than stated in "The Battle for Singapore" (p.323) which suggests **300 passengers**.
- Dr. Goldberg – Curth in her report states there were 280-290 passengers, but it is unclear whether she means to include crew, which would take the total up to **330 people** on board.
- On the Angelpro.com website, Vivian Bullwinkel is quoted as stating there were "... 265 frightened men, women, and children, plus the 65 AANS nurses ...", suggesting about **330 people** on board.
- Sister Jessie Simons, who survived the sinking and interment states (in her book 'While History Passes' p. 8) upon boarding the 'SS Vyner Brooke' "... I felt sorry for the **many children...**" already on board.

Hal Richardson in 'Into the Fire' states there were close to 300 people.

Note: The American passenger, Eric German, is recorded in the book “By Eastern Windows” as observing that (p.140) whilst the Europeans were packed into the dining saloon, the Eurasians were jammed in the after hatch, and the forward hatch held the Chinese crew which had been replaced by some Malays with British naval ratings and a few British army lads. This memorial document is notably deficient in that it has no record of the Chinese or Malay crew or their fate.

Who were the passengers?

From the memoirs of 2nd Officer, Lt A.R. Mann, RNVR, we learn that on Thursday 12th February “... During the afternoon a large power-driven water-lighter came alongside crowded with women, children and a few elderly men. These embarked and spread out all over the ship, the cabin accommodation was very limited so that had to be accommodated in the ‘tween’ decks. Among them were about ninety Australian Army Nursing Sisters...”. He continues later in his record that the ship weighed anchor during the afternoon and began to leave but “... a ‘Eureka’ launch came tearing up and by megaphone told us to return to anchor until further orders, we turned back and anchored near the breakwater in the outer harbour. Darkness came about 1800. At 1900 another water-lighter came alongside and this too, was crowded with people, men, women and children...”.

This is confirmed by passenger Major Tebbutt in a post war conversation with Miss Ivy Allen, a friend of 2nd Engineer Jimmy Miller, RNR who had his life after reaching Banka Island in the massacre on Radji Beach, when Tebbutt told Ivy Allen “...the ship was dreadfully crowded with women, children, nurses etc....”.

The women were a mix of ‘Establishment Singapore’ British wives, British evacuees from Malaya, Eurasians, White Russians, British servicemen’s wives and two Siamese women – a mix of people who only a few days before would have probably not even acknowledged each other if they passed in the street in the stratified and racially separated Singapore society.

However, some of the ‘establishment wives’ such as Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Waddle, and Mrs. Macleod would have known each other very well from years of church going, socialising and perhaps sports such as golf in their younger years.

In considering what other group dynamics took people aboard we can surmise that the schoolteachers/school principals on board who included Kathleen Waddle, Dorothy Moreton, and Dorothy Macleod etc. were probably motivated to leave on this ship because of the networking of their jobs and their husbands. There were also at least three Anglican Missionaries on board – schoolteacher Miss Olga Sprenger and nursing Sister Miss Dorothy Simmonds who both lost their lives, either during or after the sinking, and Miss Louise Beeston who ended up in internment but survived the War to return to work in Singapore in 1946.

To date, only one family of Chinese passengers (the Chans) and one woman with a Chinese surname (Mrs Nellie Ellen Thay who was an Englishwoman married to a Chinese) have been identified and recorded as specifically on this ship – but one statement referred to ‘Asiatics’ plural so it seems that there may have been a several other Chinese couples or families on board who are as yet unidentified.

Insofar as the considering the actual composition of passengers - as part of the process of determining who has not yet been identified in this researched memorial document - one paragraph from the book ‘ORB’ is key.

“... About 20 of the passengers were adult males, mostly in their late middle age plus some who were elderly. The majority of this group were retired colonial officials and rubber planters.... All of them were accompanied by their wife or, more rarely, by a daughter. There were a similar number of older women, some were married to the men, but others were widowed or the spouses of senior managers from commercial enterprises or the Colonial service. The majority, however, were younger women and children, with around 40 of the passengers being children. Overwhelmingly, they were the wives and children of servicemen who had stayed behind in Singapore with their units. Some of the nurses were concerned about the number of children aboard the ‘Vyner Brooke’ ...” (ORB.p.133)

This is a very important paragraph and indicates that the composition of the people on board the ship may have looked like (figures in brackets are the number of people in this category who have actually been identified in this document);

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| ➤ Males in late middle age and elderly (includes some younger men) | 20 (18) |
| ➤ Females - older women (classified as over 40 years) | 20 (21) |
| ➤ Younger women (estimated at say 30) | 30 (33) |
| ➤ Children | 40 (14) |
| ➤ Australian Army nurses | 65 (65) |
| ➤ Crew as recorded by Captain Borton | <u>52 (23)</u> |
| | TOTAL 222 (174) |

- Which is remarkably close to Captain Borton’s report and the figure given by Major Tebbutt (figures in brackets are the numbers of people fitting into these categories identified from the research for this memorial document). This guides us to the conclusion that the main gaps in identifying those on board – meaning those people who went missing without trace - are probably some 6 -8 elderly men, another 10 - 15 younger women, about 35 children and a similar number (31) of crew.

There are a lot of references to children having been on board, but as with so many first-hand accounts of the sinkings during the evacuation of Singapore, children prove to be only an afterthought when survivors actually set about recording (generally in internment camps well after the ‘dust had settled’) who was on board and there is no definitive record of their numbers – except for “ORB’ (p.133) which states “... with around 40 of the passengers being children...”. If that figure is correct (it presumably is contained in one of the Australian Nurses records) then the death toll amongst children was around a horrendous 75 percent! Sister Ada ‘Mickey’ Syer in her post war oral archive held in the Singapore Archives states that soon after departing “... a lot of infants required feeding ...”. Research for this memorial document has identified only about a dozen or so children, but there were clearly many more. This is one of the worst – and yet unrecorded parts of this terrible event – since it indicates some thirty to thirty five children and babies died during and after the attack on the ship, or in the sea, and will hopefully be clarified by further research in coming years.

It seems clear from analysing the various reports and memoirs that the gap between those identified in this document and those actually on board the “SS. Vyner Brooke” - a group of about 30 – 40 people - comprises to a large extent those (often elderly men and women, including a few couples) killed during the bombing on the ship in cabins and staterooms - as well as those who climbed down to, slipped, fell into, or were tipped from lifeboats into the sea but who did not manage to reach other groups and floated away or drowned quite quickly. The infants and children would have been

most vulnerable at this latter point of the 'abandon ship' and mothers with more than one child would have had little chance of protecting more than one child at a time.

These people may never be identified unless new letters or diaries come forward.

What Happened after leaving Singapore?

According to the very brief official typed report by the Captain of the "SS. Vyner Brooke", the chronology of the last voyage of the ship was;

- Thursday 12 February 1942:
 - 2000 – Left Singapore
 - 2400 – Entered DURIAN STRAIT and carried on till daylight.

- Friday 13 February 1942:
 - 0800 – Anchored in small bay at island off LANKA ISLAND
 - 0900 – Enemy plane circled ship, no attack
 - 1110 – Enemy plane circled ship, no attack
 - 1130 – Hove up and proceeded to LIMA CHANNEL, close to shore (LANKA ISLAND)
 - 1500 - Ship circled by three enemy planes – no attack. Planes headed north.

- Saturday 14 February 1942:
 - 0130 – Anchored off TUJING ISLANDS
 - 0600 – A plane signalled but could not understand signal; then plane used machine gun and flew away to the south.
 - 0900 – Enemy plane circled ship, but no attack.
 - 1000 – Hove, up, and proceeded towards BANKA STRAIT
 - 1300 – Attacked by nine enemy planes. Ship at full speed and endeavouring by continuous alteration of course to avoid the bombs. Low level bombing by planes.
 - 1320 – Orders to abandon ship. Engines stopped, ship listing to Starboard; Port lifeboats all badly damaged (3); and one in starboard side by splinters; two lifeboats lowered away with women and children superintended by Sub. Lieut. SEDGEMAN and Lieut Commandeer WHITE. All passengers had lifebelts on, and during all previous alerts.
 - 1340 – Ship heeled right over and to Starboard, and remained bottom up for about two minutes, and finally sank. During attack Lewis gun and 4-inch gun in action. Position of ship 8 degrees north of MUNTOK LIGHTHOUSE when sunk.

Hal Richardson in 'Into the Fire' records "... Dawn [13 Feb] gave them sight of a group of islands and they closed on them along the Lima Straits between the scattering of those islands of the Linga Archipelago, an impressive variety offering shade and shelter with the Singkep Island, the largest in the group, offering contact with the Dutch...".

[Researcher Note: Richardson then adds something that occurred at dawn on 13 February 1942 in the vicinity of what he has named LANKA ISLAND - after the ship travelled "... along Lima Straits between the scattering of those islands of the Linga [sic] Archipelago... which is" the channel between two very large islands, Pulau Singkep and Pulau Lingga, some 115 miles from Singapore. This next piece of information does not appear to have ever been recorded elsewhere in the story of the 'SS Vyner Brooke' – "... With daylight came the evidence of sinkings, wreckage on the beach and bumping against the ship's side, confirming that those had been Japanese searchlights at night and explaining the summer lightning that had flashed brighter, briefer, than that usually presented on the skyline by Sumatra's sudden storms. Further evidence of Japanese naval activities in these waters came with the appearance on shore of a party of about 40

people, men, women, children calling, waving and boats were lowered and brought them aboard where the Australian nurses tended the burns and other wounds. They told of surprise attacks in the darkness and sinkings – so many...”. Given that neither the captain, or the 2nd Officer or Major Tebbutt mention this group of people being picked up it will have to be considered a confusion with something that happened on another vessel and discarded from the voyage of the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’].

Lt Mann records that just after 0630 hrs on Friday 13 February “... we were now clear of the Durian Straits steaming for the Sherbro’ group of islands. The instructions had been to steam at night and hide up among the islands during the daylight hours, and the Captain’s intention was to get among this group, hoping to get close enough not to be observed by aircraft. A forlorn hope.. We reached the islands about 0800 and came to anchor as close under the shore as possible, which was not very close, and we were very much exposed. During the forenoon a flight of nine Japanese aircraft passed right over us but took no action although they must have seen... We were painted grey and flew the White Ensign so were a legitimate target[so]... the Captain decided we would stand a better chance underway, was obviously true, at least we had a slight chance if able to manoeuvre. The anchor was weighed and away to the south we steamed. To the south was another group of islands which had a strait running through them [this would have been the Lingga group] and we steamed to these and into the channel between them hoping that we were being given some measure of concealment... We came out of the southern end of the channel between the islands by which time, darkness was shutting down, and very welcome it was too. Course was set for a group of islands called the Tujo, meaning seven in Malay, islands where we hoped to lay up during the following day, and we steamed thru’ the night without incident. It was still dark when we arrived at the Tujo group, so we waited until dawn and then crept in as close as possible and came to anchor...”

Passenger Major Tebbutt, AIF, has also left us a very well written and detailed account of the events which is worth understanding and he makes some statements which clearly question Captain Barton’s judgement in not remaining anchored close to land during daylight hours. The objective of this order, which was issued to all the ships leaving Singapore during the last few days prior to the surrender, is not recorded but from a commonsense viewpoint was the correct one from the aspect that passengers and crew would have more easily reached land when attacked, as opposed to being miles offshore and relying on lifeboats and rafts. But on the other hand, made the ships sitting targets and was using up valuable time in the escape journey.

Tebbutt’s report correlates with the sparse chronological report of Captain Barton insofar as times and places, but when Barton decided to leave the ‘Tujing islands’ (Tebbutt calls them Toejou Island) at 1000 hours on Saturday 14 February - after being buzzed and machine gunned by Japanese planes - essentially to make a run for it, Tebbutt records “ ... The Captain stated to me that he considered it suicidal to remain anchored close to land , that the ship could easily be picked up from the air and would provide a sitting shot for bombers; from his experience he believed that he might be able to avoid the bombs in an open fairway. Accordingly, he did not obey his orders to anchore [sic] in the daytime....”.

Major Tebbutt also notes the serious risk faced by many on board if the ship was actually sunk because total crew and passenger numbers vastly exceeded the capacity of lifeboats – in fairness to Captain Borton this was the case with almost every ship leaving Singapore in the few days prior to the Surrender and most Captains tried their hardest to firstly prevent too many passengers boarding their ships and secondly to warn people of the under capacity of lifeboats;

“... Early in the journey an examination of the boats was made in company with a ship’s officer, who stated that of the six boats carried, two would hold 30 passengers each and the remainder 20 passengers each. Each passenger was given a lifebelt, and lifebelts were altered to fit the children. In view of the deficiency of lifeboat accommodation, all who were strong swimmers were told that if the ship was sunk, they must be ready to take to the water. Lectures were given explaining the ship’s

alarm signals, the method of use of the lifebelts, the method of loading the lifeboats and on general matters should an attack be made..."

Tebbutt's record insofar as contingency planning is borne out by those also recorded by Australian Army nurses on board and to give the ship's officers and the leaders of the nursing staff their due credit, procedures and training delivered in the 36 hours available were very good for coping with any attack by bombers.

Lt Mann describes the sense of unreal calm that everyone must have felt at that point *"... It was a lovely day, the blue sea was calm, the sun shone in a clear blue sky, and away to port about ten miles was the green palm covered island of Banka. We could see a white, slender lighthouse ashore and all seemed so peaceful..."*.

Major Tebbutt, however, continues with his recollection of the actual attacks which finally sank the "SS. Vyner Brooke";

"... After the ship left Toejou island there were three or four alerts before about 1300 hrs when a formation of nine planes were observed flying towards the ship. These planes flew over the ship several times and were fired upon by the Lewis gun. They then went about two miles ahead of the ship, and three dived over the ship, dropping their bombs from approximately 3,000 feet. The anti submarine gun and the Lewis gun were fired, and the ship circled at full speed. The bombs all fell into the sea, exploding close enough to shake the ship. The same procedure again took place when a further three planes attacked. Finally, the nine planes attacked together, converging from the centre, half-right and left. This time two bombs hit the ship with a severe jar and rattling; the engines were almost immediately stopped..."

It seems that three bombs hit the ship (p. 151 ORB);

- One bomb which went down the funnel killing all the crew in the engine room - according to the book this included the "elderly reservist" Lt Reith and at least three of the Malay sailors, but the eyewitness account by 2nd Officer, Lt Mann, RNVR actually records Chief Engineer Reith as alive and able to enter the sea wearing a lifejacket.
- One bomb penetrated the staterooms killing most of the elderly passengers who had sought shelter there (P.165 ORB) – this would have been up to 15 people.
- A third bomb killed or wounded the gun crew on the forward deck and the "elderly couple" in the radio operator's cabin.

Major Tebbutt tells us that *"... During the attack the European passengers were assembled in the saloon and lay down on the floor...one of the bombs which hit the ship went very close to the saloon, which was filled with the red glare from the bursting bomb. A ship's officer then told the passengers to go to their boat stations and he led the way. There was no panic..."*.

[‘On Radji Beach’ explains this period of the sinking in a very well-structured manner and is recommended reading for a fuller understanding of the chronology and detail of the tragedy]

Tebbutt agrees with Captain Borton that the ship was attacked at 1310 hrs (Mann says 1330 hrs) and sank at 1340 hrs and tells us that *"... at this time the ship was at the entrance to the Banka Straits, some 10 or 12 miles from the island. The weather was calm and the visibility good..."*. He is referring to Banka Island which is a large island off the east coast of Sumatra.

Perhaps the final words of the attack on the ship should come from one of the ‘Vyner Brooke’ ships officers and in the memoirs of 2nd Officer, Lt. A.R. Mann, RNVR we are told;

“... After the fifth salvo had missed us I began to think we were going to see it through. We had dodged them on so many occasions and now we were doing it again; it seemed just a matter just carrying on with the game until they had no more bombs left. I was soon disillusioned. In they came from Forward for the sixth time, bombs on their way down, hard-a-port. The Captain and I had our heads out of the bridge windows watching the bombs come nearer and nearer, but the ship wasn't swinging fast enough it seemed. She wasn't. Down past our faces, about ten feet away in front of the bridge, through the covers on No.2 hatch, through the covers on No2 'tween deck hatch to explode in the lower hold, they passed. On going for'ard I saw clouds of smoke coming from No.2 hatch...one of the nurses came to me and asked for First Aid equipment saying there were many people badly injured down below. As we were talking, I heard the aircraft coming in again from for'ard and dragged her into a nearby cabin where we both laid on the deck to avoid flying glass. A stick of bombs fell close to the port side, so close that they blew the bottoms of the port side boats in as they hung from their davits...The ship was already taking a list to starboard.

I then went to the bridge where the Captain was still standing, he called out to the starboard boat-deck to hurry and get the boats away; they were already being lowered. I noticed that nothing was being done to the port boats, so got hold of the Naval rating who had been at the wheel, the ship now being stopped, and we started to lower the for'ard boat. He said 'But the bottom's stove in Sir?' and on looking I found that this was so. I said, 'That don't matter, the tanks may keep her afloat, at least people can hang on to her'. We lowered her into the water, and I sent him down the fall to unhook and push her off, which he did. I looked at the other two boats on the port side and their bottoms had been blown in..”.

Major Tebbutt tells us from his perspective that *“...of the boats, only two were undamaged by the bombs. These were lowered to the water and the passengers climbed down the rope ladders under the control of the ship's officers. Two other boats were lowered but became water-logged...”.* Survivor Eric German helped lower the lifeboats as well only to find one immediately filling with sea water *“... Bomb fragments had holed it, as well as three other lifeboats. Only their sealed air tanks kept them afloat ...”* (BYE p 142).

Understandably, as a passenger, Dr Goldberg – Curth says she observed that only one lifeboat was undamaged and was filled with sick passengers whilst the remainder of the passengers jumped into the sea.

In contrast Vivian Bullwinkel in her testimony to the Australian Board of Enquiry into War Crimes (29.10.45) said that three lifeboats left the ship and reached the coast around 'Radji Beach'. This is corroborated in the memoirs of Lt A. R. Mann, RNVR the 2nd Officer who states (p.7) *“... The three starboard boats had got clear of the ships side and were packed with people, they were trying to get the oars out which was difficult with so little room to move...”* and the (p.8) *“... After 'Vyner Brooke' had gone I could see, away to what had been the starboard side, the three boats pulling towards Banka Island about eight miles away. They appeared to be going well and should have been ashore in an hour or two...”*

Mann's memoirs continue *“... The list to starboard was then about 45 degrees and as I let go from the combing of the baggage port I actually slid down the side part of the way before hitting the water. I swam away from the ship to a reasonable distance, and came near to a lot of others, men, and women, I didn't see any children about, and assumed they had been taken into the three boats. The bottomless boat I had lowered was floating full of people and water, and there wasn't an inch of space on the lifelines round her rubbing strake, so she was doing some good...”*

After the 'SS Vyner Brooke' sank:

Despite the lack of panic evident en masse, the book "On Radji Beach" puts the death toll during the sinking at somewhere between 40 and 50 people, with about 6 people dying as a result of jumping into the sea with ill-fitting life jackets. It appears that apart from those killed in the engine room, in the staterooms and on the deck by bombs and machine gunning; people also lost their lives because they could not swim, because they had been injured badly during the attack on the ship, or were struck by falling rafts, debris or parts of the ship whilst it listed.

There were a few 'elderly' men and woman on board who were killed during the bombing of the ship and/or drifting in the sea afterwards – but who individually have not been able to be identified during this research. Along with the gap in identified children and the estimates of the number of children who boarded the ship, it would seem that it was the very old and the very young that made up the bulk of those victims of the attack on the ship and the subsequent struggle in the sea - who even today remain nameless.

Various reports exist on the fate of nurses killed on board the ship during the bombing, others who died escaping the ship and those who drowned or perished on rafts at sea. These are included in the entries for individual nurses who lost their lives during the period of the attack and the sinking.

Lt. Arthur J. Mann, RNVR, the ship's 2nd Officer was interviewed by the Australian press on his successful escape back to Australia ("Western Mail", Perth, WA, 26.3.42) and described the rafts as "... *Board of Trade, five feet by three feet ...*" [probably meaning five feet square and three feet deep] which makes the reality that they were tiny. Nurse 'Mickey' Syer recalled that the rafts of the ship were little square things made of canvas (Syer) they are also referred to as being made of 'gimrack' (which means something made of substandard materials) - it seems that such life rafts were made of what we would have regarded today as two wooden pallets joined together and covered with canvas, possibly with some cork material inside. They became lethal projectiles when sliding off a ship which was listing or 'turning turtle'.

Major Tebbutt describes the scene that remained after the sinking "*...In the water there was a collection of people and flotsam scattered over about half a square mile of water. The ship's boats were seen several hundred yards away but came no closer. The swimmers were individually or in groups clinging to wreckage or floating about ...*". Lt. Mann describes the situation as "*... In the water were about a hundred people as far as I can estimate, heads dotted all over the place, some calling to others, and one couple who were obviously a man and wife were floating side by side hand in hand...It was by now about 1430. As the afternoon wore on the people became scattered, some died and their bodies continued floating in their lifejacket, and I had to push them away with a stick to stop them brushing into me...*".

Many women and children would have also died when the ship listed (or turned turtle) to starboard and fell on the second lifeboat which got away full of women and children – this is where Wilma Young and Jean Ashton managed to struggle away from the ship coming down on them, but it tragically took Mona Wilton down.

Others were swept away by the powerful sea currents around Banka Island. As related by Dr Neil McGregor (son of Sister Sylvia Muir) the bodies of Sister McDonald and two other unidentified nurses were found on a raft in the Indian Ocean two or three weeks later (the raft having floated in that time down to and through the Sunda Straits to the Indian Ocean which is the direction of ocean currents around bank island and Sumatra at that time of the year) – this was also confirmed by Sister

Wilma Oram to ex – nurse Dorothy Angell who knew Wilma after the War. AANS nurses were told this outcome after being repatriated to Singapore at the end of the War, by a sailor aboard a ship which found the raft. This of course leaves the fate of at least three of the nurses (including perhaps Matron Paschke) and the two children (one being a three-year-old Chinese girl according to Iole Harper – see her entry) on the raft with them all, unresolved. The last time this raft was sighted being swept southwards down the Bank Straits two of the nurses - Sister Dorsch and Sister Trenerry - were in the sea holding onto trailing ropes from the raft.

One piece of information which suggest that one or more of the nurses made an effort to swim for Banka Island further south along the coast (perhaps when they realised that there was no more land in front of them beyond Banka Island) is that contained in the book “Soldier Surgeon in Malaya’ by T. Hamilton published in 1957 (source: Barbara Angell on the ‘Angellpro’ website). In this book it is stated that Colonel/ Matron A. ‘Annie’ M. Sage of the AANS - who greeted the surviving AANS nurses after release from internment in 1945 - was told that the identity disc of Sister Dorsch had been found by a “... *Mrs Armstrong (now dead) ...*” on a beach on Banka Island. The only Mrs Armstrong interned in Muntok, and Palembang was Mrs. Resie Armstrong, mother of Ralph Armstrong who wrote ‘A Short Cruise on the Vyner Brooke’. Mrs Armstrong, Ralph, and several other members of the family were on a raft after the sinking that was also swept south down the Banka Straits and landed initially on the Sumatran coast before being taken by fishermen to a beach on the south coast of Banka Island (P.48-49 “SCOTVB’) and then to the town of “Koba” on the north – eastern side of the island. Mrs Resie Armstrong died in internment – the conclusion is that this was the person who found the disc and that it is possible that Matron Paschke, Sister Dorsch and Sister Trenerry made it to a beach on the Banka Strait but were killed by the Japanese. So it is possible – as the three women hanging onto the raft drifting south along the Banka Strait, Matron Paschke, Sister Dorsch and Sister Trenerry did make it to a beach south east of Muntok but it therefore also opens up the awful possibility that they would have crossed paths with the second landing force of the invading Japanese Army on Banka island – the one making for the airfield and Pangkalpinang (see the later section on ‘Who Carried Out This Atrocity’ and the related Map 2 of Japanese Army plans). To have met up with soldiers with the record of war crimes in Hong Kong may have almost certainly meant the same fate for these two Sisters and their comrades on Radji Beach.

Where did the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ in fact sink?

it has become apparent to the researcher that, historically, little interest has been paid to exactly where the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ sank and that, to reach an understanding of where this may have occurred, it is necessary to know from which direction the ship was approaching Banka Straits.

It is again surmised that the paradigm in the minds of many writers and readers on the incident may be that the ship was at the entrance to the Banka Strait – which appears not to have been the case.

Once the location of the sinking is determined (as best as is possible) that will then also be helpful in clarifying the location of the beach that Vivian Bullwinkel, and Australian newspapers and media since the War, plus numerous authors have called ‘Radji Beach’. We can attempt to do this by factoring in an estimate of what sea currents were influencing the path taken by the survivors in the two lifeboats which reached the coast of Banka Island. We know already that the currents around

Banka Island and in fact through the entire Archipelago south of Singapore to Banka island - are more powerful than in many other parts of the world.

Once these two factors are determined any conclusion of the location of the sinking will then give a base to later in this document consider the feasible location of Radji Beach.

(1) Firstly, from which direction did the 'SS Vyner Brooke' approach Banka Island?

Captain Borton recorded that after leaving Singapore at 2000 hrs (10.00pm) on **Thurs. 12 Feb.** he later reached, at midnight (after 4hrs steaming) the entrance to the DURIAN STRAITS - about 60 km southwest of Singapore and even today a main shipping channel – this indicates that since he only covered about 32 nautical miles he was averaging only 8 knots, probably because of potential minefields and the darkness. Then on,

Friday. 13 Feb. @ 0800 hrs (8.00am) after a further 8 hours steaming he anchored at '**LANKA ISLAND**' (ORB, p.129 states it was called **LINGGO ISLAND** – it was probably **PULAU LINGGA** the long narrow and large island west of Singkep) indicating he had covered about 65 nautical miles at a speed of still only about 8 knots, once again as a result of darkness and then the narrow channels around LINGGA; then later that morning @ 1130 hrs (11.30 am) he says he " ... *Hove Up...*", meaning raising the anchor, because planes were spotted some distance off, and steamed through what he called the LIMA CHANNEL (this is also referred to on p.166 of the book 'Spotlight on Singapore' as 'Straat Lima' and is today the 'Selat Lima' body of water or Strait between Singkep island and Lingga island) possibly to gain the eastern side of Singkep island. Then still on Frid. 13 Feb., ORB, p.139, has him as either still at the place called '**LANKA /LINGGO / LINGGA**', presumably he was just south of Pulau Lingga, or stationary again at an unknown place, but raising the anchor again @ 2000 hrs (8.00pm) "*... and steering his vessel into the **open sea** ... headed for a nearby island large enough to shield the 'Vyner Brooke'...*".

Then, on **Sat. 14 Feb** @ 0130 hrs (1.30 am in the morning) he anchored at what he calls "TUJING ISLAND" (Major Tebbutt states it was called "**TOEJOU ISLAND**" and p. 166 of 'Spotlight On Singapore' refers to it as '**TOCHLOCH ISLANDS**', but not surprisingly 2nd Officer Lt Mann is most accurate when he records that it was the "**...Tujo group ... meaning seven in Malay...**") – it is almost certainly **PULAU TUJUH** or '**Kepulauan Tujuh**' in Indonesian, known in pre-war maps as '**TOEDJOE Eilanden**', which lies directly to the north of TG. ULAR and TG. BETUMPAH. Then at 1000 hrs (10.00am) on that same day Captain Borton states he again "*... Hove Up ...*" and headed for the Banka Straits, Mann explains that this action was taken at that time because "*... at 1100, with a deafening roar of engines, a plane swooped from over the island to starboard and over us. It looked to me like a Lockheed-Hudson and had red triangular markings of the Dutch under the wings and RAF roundel on the fuselage...*". There was serious confusion in the signals with the plane as to its identity, which was enough for Captain Borton to decide to get on the move again.

[Author **Ian Shaw** (ORB, p.141-142) still has the ship at anchor @ 1100hrs on the morning of Sat.14 Feb (presumably at TUJING ISLAND /TOEJOU ISLAND/ TOEDJOE EILANDEN) at the time of the first aerial attack and machine gunning and soon after that Ian Shaw has him raising the anchor and heading "*... for a small cluster of islands on the horizon, near where the entrance to the Banka Strait narrowed between Sumatra and Bank island ...*" (which is confusing since there are no more islands between there and the entrance to the Banka Strait), then records that after about 90 minutes (making it @ 1230 hrs midday) being "*... in the lee of another small island, one a lot smaller in fact than Borton had hoped it would be ...*". It is problematical as to which island this was, and it may be that the initial short voyage that day was within the TOEDJOE EILANDEN group now known as PUALU TUJUH.ORB, p.143 then records that "*... those aboard realised it was now 1330 hrs, well past lunchtime ...*".]

Borton records that the bombers struck at about 1300 hrs – Lt Mann records that "... At 1330 in the afternoon watch, from the north came a group of six twin-engined aircraft... as we watched they swung round towards us and came purposefully on. As they passed the port side, the Red

Japanese ball was only too clearly seen on their wings...” and Borton records the ship sank at 1340 hrs.

[In contrast, ORB, p.147 has Borton again raising the anchor at 1400 hrs and making for “... a much larger island about 20 kilometres away...”, but the bombers struck about ten minutes into the dash for this large island (presumably Banka Island) and, although not specified by ‘ORB’ it would seem that the book is suggesting that ship must have sunk a little later than Captain Borton recorded, about 1440hrs (2.40 pm in the afternoon of 14 Feb.).]

The key point here is that, primarily because of the ‘8 degrees north of Muntok Light ‘record but also from other less clear information, the ‘SS Vyner Brooke “appears to have approached the west coast of Banka Island and the western entrance to the Bank Strait from DUE NORTH – not from the West as might have been assumed.

- (2) Secondly, at what location did the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ sink and where was it when the two lifeboats struck out for Banka Island?

The ship had a normal speed of 12 knots and was presumably steaming at around that rate of knots (in what appears to have been a comparatively eastern route to the east of Lingga and Singkep”) between the “LIMA CHANNEL” and the “TUJING USLANDS/TOEJOU” or TOEDJOE EILANDEN – 12 knots equate to the same number of nautical miles an hour and also equates to about 22 kph. However as recorded by ORB, (p.148) on the day of the sinking Borton had ordered full speed ahead for the dash to Banka Island (15 knots equate to 28 kph) so we will use a range around this speed for this last part of the journey.

If we firstly work from **Captain Borton’s record** and assume that he had left PULAU TUJUJUH @ 1000 hrs he would have had some 3 hrs 20 minutes to get to the location where he was bombed, and the ship sank – and he was presumably pointing his vessel directly towards the northern entrance of Banka Strait, which is almost exactly due South. Over the next 3 hours to 3 hrs 20 minutes, at 15 knots he would have travelled about 83 to 92 kilometres; at 14 knots average (i.e. starting to make allowance for his evasive zig-zag course towards the latter stage of his journey) he would have travelled about 78-85 kilometres; and at an average of 13 knots he would have travelled 72 – 79 kilometres. The distance from PULAU TUJUJUH (TOEDJOE EILANDAN) to TG. BETUMPAH/BETUMPAK is about 80 kms - so he would have sunk close to that headland and possibly at least 5 kilometres off the coast since the water becomes shallow near the headlands.

If we then use the times and interim anchoring of the ship at a small island **as stated by Ian Shaw** in ‘ORB’, which are rather confusing when looking at a map of the area, then Captain Borton would have spent a total of approximately 2hrs 30 minutes steaming - including the last run of about 1 hour from what could have been PULAU LALANG. After PULAU LALANG travelling at 15 knots he would then have travelled almost one hour which equates to 28 – 30 kms, which would leave him 35 kms north of TG. ULAR/OELAR (the distance between TG. LALANG and TG. ULAR/OELAR is about 65kms).

The ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ sank (according to Captain Borton) “...eight degrees north of Muntok light...” - one interpretation for this statement (but not the normal one in modern nautical terminology) is that if a line is drawn directly vertically North above ‘Muntok Light” (i.e., Tg. Kelian lighthouse), then moved about 8 degrees (on a 360-degree compass) to the right or East then the ship sank well to the north.

Survivors also talked about being approximately 10 -12 miles / 16-19 kms from the western coast of Banka Island; ORB, P.165 states that the ship sank about "... 15 miles north of Banka island ..." which is about 24 kms.

The result of all these assumptions and calculations indicates two alternative locations for the sinking - and the starting point for the two undamaged lifeboats;

- Firstly, probably 5 to 10 kilometres north of TG. BETUMPAH/BETUMPAK and say 5 or 6 kilometres out to sea from the coast directly East.
- Secondly, using the ORB information, and starting with PULAU TUJUH as the base - which is another 5 to 10 kilometres further North – and then a simple journey of one hour from LALANG the starting point for the lifeboats would be north of TG. ULAR.

As the second lifeboat with Vivian Bullwinkel and Second Officer Miller plus passenger Eric German clinging on, began their long drift to shore it is recorded (BEW, p.144) "*... after sundown they saw flashings from two lighthouses about five miles apart on the coast. Midway between them burned a large bonfire. They pulled for the fire ...*". These two lighthouses would appear to have been TG. KELIAN to the south and Tg. ULAR/OELAR to the north, on the west coast of Banka Island. These two lighthouses are 12 kilometres apart (about seven miles) which, given that the distance was estimated by men in a sinking lifeboat probably seven to ten miles offshore, is a reasonable estimate. **Halfway between these lighthouses is TG. BETUMPAH**

Note: Vivian Bullwinkel said that one lifeboat had "... civilian women and four or five sisters ..." (testimony to Australian Board of Enquiry into War Crimes 29.10.45) which she later expanded when she said the other two lifeboats had 30 -40 women aboard including 10 nurses and 30 men of the ship's crew ; and a third lifeboat (the one she was aboard) had 12 nursing sisters, 3 civilians (a Miss 'Beaston', and a woman and her husband) plus one ships officer.

What happened on Radji Beach?

On the morning of 16 February quite a sizeable group of some 80 -100 people had gathered on the beach (that was later to be called 'Radji Beach') from the two (or three) 'Vyner Brooke' lifeboats, and the steel hulled lifeboat apparently carrying "*... about 20 Englishmen from the English Ordnance Corps ...*"(Bullwinkel testimony to the 'Australian Board of Enquiry into War Crimes' on 29.10.45) which she expanded to 20 -25 RAOC soldiers (Bullwinkel testimony to War Crimes Tribunal in Tokyo in 1946) which landed early that Monday morning – this was the lifeboat on which CFN/Pte Kinsley reached 'Radji Beach'. Other sources say the latter lifeboat was carrying a soldier who died quite quickly and was also buried on the beach from the ship (now known to have been the 'Pulo Soegi') which had also been sunk around the same time in the waters northwest of Banka Island.

The identities of these 20 plus British servicemen and ship's crew arriving in the lifeboat on the morning of the atrocity have been somewhat of a mystery since the War – apart, of course, from that of CFN /Private Cecil Gordon Kinsley, RAOC, who survived the massacre and was cared for by

Vivian Bullwinkel for several weeks in the jungle bordering the beach before entering a POW camp where he died on 24 March 1942.

Kinsley had been on a small 150-foot RN auxiliary patrol vessel (it appears to have originally been a trading vessel from Batavia) by the name of the 'Pulo Soegi' which was attacked by Japanese warships and sunk during the previous evening of 15 February. The personnel on board did as they were ordered and most jumped overboard, it seems with life jackets, as soon as the vessel was struck by shells, but many men were later drowned – however according to the RAOC officer in command, T/Maj. Marsh, some good swimmers swam back to the vessel and launched a lifeboat and rafts before it sank. So, Kinsley and a few of the ship's crew plus Officers and men of the 'ZAOW', 14 Section, RAOC must have managed to climb into the lifeboat and make it to shore on Banka Island early the following morning.

Other men from the ship drifted on life rafts and those who abandoned those rafts at some stage and swam to shore seem to be the only other survivors to have reached land.

Recent (June 2018) research of the UK Archives in Kew (WO361/316) has raised the probability that perhaps the people in the War Office in Liverpool in late 1945 - investigating the fate of the 'Missing' from the 68 RAOC men (many in the Section 14, 'Z Advance Ordinance Workshop') who originally evacuated Singapore on the 'Pulo Soegi' on 13 February - may not in fact have appreciated at that early stage of post war analysis any significance in a man quoting 'C. G. Kinsley' as his source for information on some missing 'ZAOW' RAOC men killed Banka Island. It is also highly probable that at that point in history, the investigators were not aware of the massacre on 'Radji Beach' and would not have been looking for massacre victims.

Starting with the more directly linked (somewhat 'first-hand'?) evidence of the identities of RAOC men and others in the lifeboat arriving on the morning of 16 February, it is possible to reasonably suggest that at least two and up to eight of these men who were murdered on Radji Beach from the 'Pulo Soegi' can be identified with varying degrees of confidence.

In simple numerical terms the total of RAOC men murdered on 'Radji Beach' appears to have been some 15 men.

Firstly, an archived document completed by one 'C. H. Cotterrell', REME, for the War Office and received on 7 December 1945 records he had been told by 'C. G. Kinsley' the names of two men bayoneted to death on Banka Island on '18 February 1942' and he tells us that the two men were;

- CFN. A. Atkins, # 7646745, Z.A.O.W.
- Sgt. R. G. Hurrell, # 5768950, Z.A.O.W.

CFN/Pte. A. Atkins fate is also recorded as having "... *Died on Banka Island ...*" by another soldier with the name of 'R.W. Thomas, REME' on another official form provided to the War Office after his release as a POW – his source is stated as "... *Members of ZAOW ...*".

The use of the date '18 February 1942' may at first glance seem at variance with the now understood precise timing of events of Radji Beach, but (at least for this researcher) in thinking through the practicality of the sequence of events it is unlikely that Cpl Kinsley saw anyone killed on the 18 February 1942 - since he was severely wounded from both the attack on the 'Pulo Soegi' and then the Japanese bayonets at 'Radji Beach' - and on that particular when date was lying hidden in the jungle adjacent to the beach where the massacre took place. Kinsley could only have relayed this information to Cotterrell in Muntok POW camp at least two weeks after the massacre, he might also

have been delirious from his wounds (he died from his wounds only three weeks later) and it seems impractical to expect that he would lucidly recall the precise dates of events. The fact that C. H. Cotterell managed to retain this information through a variety of POW camps until his release from "... Sendai No 2 Japan..." camp three and a half years later is truly admirable! It is also worth understanding that CFN. Kinsley would also have known only some of the RAOC officers and men in the lifeboat, since it is recorded by the officer in charge (T/Maj. Marsh) that the 68 men on the 'Pulo Soegi' had been suddenly assembled from disparate units of the RAOC from all over Singapore on the night of departure on 13 February. He probably knew only a few men in the ill-fated lifeboat.

If Kinsley saw anyone bayoneted in February 1942 it would have been his comrades on Radji Beach.

Secondly, in addition to the 'Cotterell/Kinsley' record the UK Archives also contain another record by one 'W. A. Stroud, RAOC 14 Sec' who reported on another form to the War Office on 30 November 1945 which lists two other men as being "...Bayoneted in Sumatra between 13th and 15th February 1942 ...";

- S/Sgt. T. Hodgson, # 7610705, RAOC, 14 Sec
- Cpl. W.G.J. Sherrington, # 7624357, RAOC 14 Sec.

The source is stated to be "... a party of survivors ..." who were "... brought back to Singapore in July or August 1942 ...", which included 'Capt/ Major [actually T/Maj.] Marsh' who led the contingent of 14 Section, ZAOW, RAOC onto the 'Pulo Soegi' on the night of 13 February and would have also been a POW in Muntok camp after the sinking. This is not quite as directly applicable as the 'Cotterell /Kinsley' information, but it offers a reasonable base to suppose that S/Sgt Hodgson and Cpl. Sherrington may have been on 'Radji Beach' – if not at that location, then almost certainly bayoneted to death some where adjacent on the Northwest coast of Banka Island.

Sherrington's death at the hands of the Japanese is also corroborated to the War Office by one 'James T. Thompson, RAOC' of Dunfermline on another official form dated 27 November 1945 where he records Sherrington was "... Believed reported killed by Japs ..." on "...either Banka Is. Or Southern Sumatra ..." and states the source as "...Survivors of Regt. who were later returned to Changi S'pore. Is. Believed reported in RAOC records there. Men belonged mainly to 'Z' AOW, Malaya ...". Thompson also then records another man killed by the Japanese and in the place as Sherrington;

- A/P/Sjt. A Skimming, #7634180, 14th Sect. RAOC.

At the final, 'third hand' level of identification it is worth noting that T/Maj. Marsh also says in his December 1945 report, that he was told in Palembang POW camp that Kinsley had arrived at Muntok camp after he, Marsh, had been moved to Palembang and that Kinsley is reported to have said that he "... reached shore in the ship's boat containing twenty men **including officers** ..." [Underline by researcher]. Marsh continues in his report that the officers referred to [i.e.as those having been in the lifeboat] "... were possibly 2nd Lt. Radford, RAOC, three ship's officers, Lt. Martin, NZRNVR, another NZRNVR officer name unknown, a R.N.V.R. Eng. Officer and a Lt Day RN or V. unknown (in talking to him on board he said he was attached to Malaya Command) ...".

In this context it is worth noting, but not conclusive since CWGC dates of death often refer to the date on which the deceased was last seen, that the dates of death recorded by the CWGC for Lt. Martin and Lt. Day are 16 February 1942 – which is not the date of the sinking of the 'Pulo Soegi' – but on the other hand also worth noting that Marsh's speculation on the fate of Lt Radford is contradicted by one 'Craftsman Hope T. Cairns, 14th Section ,RAOC ' recording on a signed form that

he was an eyewitness to the fact that Lt Radford had 'Drowned' and this appears to be also the view of the CWGC who have Lt Radford's date of death as 15 February.

The newspaper 'New Zealand Herald' of 20 April 1942, when listing Lt., RNZNVR, as 'Missing on Active Service' noted that "... *He was in command of a small naval vessel which left Singapore on February 13, with two other New Zealand officers and a crew of 30 ...*" [Underline by researcher].

After taking this information into consideration we are left with possibly the following additional men being victims of the massacre on 'Radji Beach';

- Lt. Arthur John Martin, RNZNVR
- Lt. Leonard Stephen Day, SSRNVR
- Plus, at least one other 'unidentified' New Zealand Officer of the RNZNVR who - following investigation into NZ records - could very possibly have been Lt. Henry Alan Moray-Smith, RNZNVR, whom the CWGC and NZ Navy records have as based with 'HMS Sultan' in Singapore and dying on 16 February 1942, but with no known place or cause of death, except a reference to 'HMS Sylvia' which ship did not exist. He may have been attached to the launch 'Sylvia' prior to the fall of Singapore, but that launch had been damaged and then repaired by Army soldiers and local Volunteers and made its way from Singapore on 15 February to reach Sumatra unscathed.

This leaves a remaining eight or nine RAOC men and crew of the 'Pulo Soegi' as still unidentified victims of the 'Radji Beach' massacre.

During the morning of 16 February, one of the senior Australian Army nurses, in consultation with either engineering officer Sub-Lt. Jimmy Miller or Sub – Lt. Sedgeman, appears to have instructed the civilian women and children, plus passenger Mr Dominguez and A/S Cake and A/S Noble (who had been wounded by shrapnel in a manner that prevented them being helpful carrying the many wounded on stretchers later that morning, as appeared to have been the plan) to start the trek into Muntok- with the idea that the others would move off after them, at perhaps a faster pace. A/S Wallace Cake, RN, in his post war affidavit recalled being "... *instructed to go with a party of about 8 women and three children (I think all civilians) up a path from the beach ...*".

Others describe the group as anything up to 20 people. Vivian Bullwinkel's later testimony allows us to work out that the group which left Radji beach to walk to Muntok consisted of at least.

- Miss Louise Beeston
- Able Seaman Wally Cake, RN.
- Mr Dominguez
- Mrs Dominguez
- Mrs Kathleen Hutching
- Mrs Langdon – Williams
- Leading Seaman George Noble, RN.
- Miss Alice Rossie
- *Mrs Civah Warman* and her infant son Isidore 'Mischa' Warman.
- Dr Tay (*presumably Dr Tay Soo Won*)
- *Possibly Mrs Nellie Ellen Tay (and children?)*
- Mrs Myrtle Ward

In the book 'ORB' author Ian Shaw has written (p.209) that after the civilian women and children set off for Muntok "... there were considerably fewer than 100 people left on Radji Beach ...".

- 22 Australian nurses
 - About 25 uninjured men (we know from Vivian Bullwinkel that these were mainly Royal Artillery Ordinance Corps soldiers including Private Kinsley who survived the massacre and spent several weeks in the jungle with her) and sailors but also civilians and including the Chinese doctor, the engineering officer from the 'Vyner Brooke' and a number of NCOs from both the Royal Navy and the British Army)
 - About 25 wounded (he puts it as "...the numbers of uninjured men was matched by the number of wounded, most of who were incapable of walking and would have to be carried on stretchers ...") which would have comprised 2 or 3 civilian women, a couple of civilian men, plus wounded sailors and soldiers.
 - One elderly European woman
- These numbers, totalling 73 people can be used as a general guide.

Page 225 of 'ORB' tells us that the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal accepted the conclusion that the number of people murdered on Radji Beach amounted to 83 people;

- 50 men
- 22 women
- 10 stretcher cases [we assume that this included women and men]

The official records point to the sequence being that the Japanese split the 50 - 80 people left on the Beach into three groups – the Officers and senior civilian men; the naval ratings and Army ORs from the RAOC and other civilian men; and finally, the 22 AANS personnel and the one civilian woman – leaving a small number of wounded women and servicemen on stretchers and in a fisherman's hut. They then took the groups who were able to walk, one at a time, along the beach and murdered them.

Ian Shaw's book states that the Chinese doctor mentioned as being on the beach earlier in the day was murdered by the Japanese – research strongly indicates that this Chinese doctor may have in fact been Dr Tay Soon Woon of Singapore (see entry for Thay/Tay below) whose wife, Mrs Nellie Ellen Tay of 61 Rochor Road, Singapore, died in internment in Sumatra in 1944. In conflict with Ian Shaw's record is the statement by Vivian Bullwinkel that in this group which left Radji beach "...they had a Chinese doctor named Tay, but the Japs were on his track and he committed suicide later on ...".

The records state clearly and consistently that there were 22 Australian Army nurses on Radji Beach, and their identities are well recorded.

There is one discordant note insofar as identity of these nurses given that they were either wearing remnants of their Australian uniform, remnants of civilian clothing or possibly garments donated by servicemen once they had reached the beach. The unexplained fact is that one Corporal Robert Henry Seddon, Royal Marines, who had been sunk on 16 February on the "HMS Yin Ping", had floated at sea in a lifebelt for 24 hours and as he drifted in towards Radji Beach witnessed the massacre of Naval Officers, servicemen, merchant seamen and the 21 nurses and one civilian

woman. In his post war signed affidavit he makes a couple of very relevant observations he recalled from his position a short distance out in the sea - he saw three groups formed on the beach; then “... 2 or 3 men and women made a break for it to get into the water ... one was shot but kept swimming away from the beach to the sea...” [Presumably Stoker Lloyd]; also “... Some of the remaining men and women were trying to escape. They were bayoneted and shot ...” and finally “... the Japs started from my right to bayonet the women one by one from behind their backs ...”. After floating ashore and playing dead when inspected by the Japanese patrol that were still at the Beach, he left the water after a few more hours and spent the night in the jungle. The next day he went back down the beach and says in his post war report “... I searched around and found the bodies of fifteen New Zealand and Australian Nursing sisters, 15 British service personnel and 5 merchant seamen ... nearby I saw the bodies of 7 R.N. personnel...the latter included 2 officers”. Given that there were not supposed to be any nurses in New Zealand uniforms this remains a strange statement by Seddon – although there was one nurse from New Zealand, but she would have been wearing an AANS uniform. Perhaps the explanation is that a wallet with “New Zealand” was found at the scene – this could also have been a possession of Lt Miller, RNR, or Lt Arthur ‘Peter’ Martin or Lt Moray-Smith, RNZNVR from the ‘Pulo Soegi’.

The ‘... 7 RN personnel... the latter included 2 officers ...’ statement of Corporal Seddon is also an important record. We know that Stoker Lloyd and Able Seaman McLurg made a run into the sea, so their bodies would not have been on the beach therefore the bodies seen would have included Sub-Lt Sedgeman, Sub-Lt Miller and five others – we are told they were all naval ratings. Because of their ranking it is possible that these bodies included those of Royal Navy Servicemen Able Seaman Brooks, Clements and Keenan. There is also the probability that the person identified as the mysterious and so called ‘Extra Second Engineer’ from the ‘Vyner Brooke’ by the name of Trehwitt (see entry below) was also in this group. In addition, there is the probability that there were at least two ship’s Officers from the ‘Pulo Soegi’ - Lt Arthur ‘Peter’ Martin, RNZNVR, and Lt. Leonard Stephen Day, SSRNVR.

The overall total also correlates with there having been at least 50 people massacred on the Beach – with a few having floated away at the time they were killed and about six more further up the beach and, in a hut, (which Seddon does not appear to have found, no doubt because at that time a Japanese patrol appeared, and he ran into the jungle). This must have left some 45 -50 bodies scattered around the Radji Beach area.

Major Tebbutt, AIF, who had been a passenger on the ship but who made it on his own to Banka Island that same afternoon by swimming (because there was no room to hold onto on the rafts being used by the nurses and civilians) collected a lot of information on the atrocity during his time as POW and significantly records “...that Sedgeman and one nurse tried to escape and failed ...”, he also confirms that “... after the shooting the Japanese bayoneted any bodies of whose death they were uncertain...”. Corporal Seddon also recorded “... A few did attempt to rush into the water but they were shot and killed before they were able to swim out of range ...”

The remaining women, who may have included one or two of the most seriously wounded nurses together with several civilian women wounded also in the attack on the ship, were lying on stretchers and there were up to half a dozen servicemen (perhaps a civilian man as well) in a fisherman’s hut or shelter further up the beach.

There remains the mystery of the identity of the “... English boy...” or “... English lad...” mentioned by Eric German as having been in the same submerged lifeboat and the same seat as they rowed to shore – in the second lifeboat to arrive. It was this teenager who, that night, was the only person to go with Eric and help the wounded nurses - probably Sisters Casson/Wight/Halligan plus one other -

move another of these nursing sisters along the beach to the bonfire. This researcher conjectures that the 'English boy' was presumably somewhere between 12 – 18 years of age so as to be described as such. This unidentified boy/young man described as "... *The young Englishman ...*" on p. 148 was shot and then bayoneted in the first group of eight men on Radji Beach. Was he a son of Mrs Stevens?

After shooting and bayoneting the officers, civilian men, ship's crew and servicemen further along the beach; and then committing the atrocity against the nurses and civilian woman, the Japanese walked - presumably still laughing amongst themselves as they are recorded to have done when they came back to collect the nurses - back to where they had started and bayoneted the remaining wounded men and women on their stretchers in the fishermen's hut.

The awful aftermath of the atrocity is described by three eyewitnesses;

- Leading Seaman William / Richard 'Dick' Wilding who had been on the 'HMS. Li Wo' (also sunk in the vicinity of Banka Island) and reached the shore in a damaged lifeboat on 16 February after the massacre also made a signed affidavit which is held in the War Crimes file in NAA in Melbourne. He tells us that he was with a 'Malay boy' named Abdulla (a Telegraphist in the Malay Navy – or more likely the MRNVR) and they went to a kampong on Banka Island - later meeting Corporal Seddon. On 17 February, they all went to Radji Beach and "... *we found a lifeboat and a dozen bodies, all women except two. Some were scantily dressed possibly as civilians, some in nurse's uniforms and one naked. Flying on sticks on the beach alongside was the Red Cross of a nurse's uniform. We found one Englishman still alive (possibly either Mr Watson or Mr Betteridge) sitting further along the beach. He was an Englishman badly wounded, and I think he could not have lived Of the only two women I examined one had been shot and one had been killed by a sword ... we then moved further along the beach and found roughly 20 (??) bodies (mostly servicemen) also shot and bayoneted ... we were joined on the beach by an American [this would have been Eric German]. He told us that he was a member of a party of nurses, civilians and servicemen who had been killed on the beach ...*".
- Another perspective on the horror – this time seen by Richard Wilding, and related to fellow POW Hal Richardson, 8 Division, AIF, is contained in a newspaper article in 1946 ("The Japanese Leopard with unchanging Spots", 'The Sun', Sydney, 8 .9.46 held by Trove website) when Richardson recalls Wilding telling him that when he returned to the beach with Corporal Seddon, "...*I saw the Australian nurses. One was nearly naked. Another had three bayonet wounds in the back. Foot prints showed where the women ran up the beach. At the end of the footsteps they lay – heads cleaved – I counted twelve nurses and two civilian women. They were too gruesome to go around and accurately count. There had been no attempt to bury them. They lay mostly face downwards. I did not see any bullet wounds – they appear to have been bayoneted....*". *The two men explored the little hut at the top of the beach where the nurses had been tending two naval ratings. The ratings were dead – shot through the head. Round the headland was another shocking sight – the bodies of Lloyd's companions strewn in death. "... there were fifteen to twenty men dead there. And it seemed as though they had been shot ... I did not stay there but, full of fear, went up into the jungle to hide ...*".
- The same 'The Sun' newspaper article interviewing Hal Richardson tells what he seems to have heard from Stoker Lloyd "...*He said that, after crawling from the beach into the jungle, he collapsed for three days. Then he went down to the beach again and came to the spot where he had originally landed 'There I saw the Australian nurses ... All were dead. I recognised two or three. I counted 12 or 15 nurses and about 25 men dead... Two or three of the women had practically all their clothes torn from them. They were in the most horrible*

positions – some kneeling – some doubled up. Some had bayonet wounds as well as bullet holes. I saw the chief officer dead and his clothes covered in blood. The nurses were scattered. Some had fifty yards between them. I reckoned they had been dealt with individually...”.

- Eric German then tells us what he found the day after he had been part of the massacre and when he walked back (with the above-mentioned three survivors of another ship he met on the way) and found “... *The stretchers also were where they had been left and in them the patients lay staring sightlessly at the sky. Two stretchers were empty. One had been the wounded soldier Kingsley’s [sic – Kinsley]. What had become of Kingsley? Buridge [it appears this was Betteridge, and this may be Eric German’s or William MacDougall’s admitted effort to hide the identity of people he talks so openly of on the beach] and the three women had been bayoneted in the chest. ...”* (p. 152-153 BYE)

Another witness to the scene, but after the killings occurred, was Lance Sergeant Brice Clement Halls, NX53123, 2/15 Field Artillery regiment, AIF. Brice Halls made a written statement which is held in the war crimes file on the Radji Beach murders in the National Archives Melbourne, and he says that he heard shots as he was in the water swimming towards Banka Island and later came across the scene of the atrocity (Note: the official statement is incorrectly typed to record his initials as ‘R.C. Halls’).

We now know from wartime notes secretly taken and hidden in POW camps by Private Hal Richardson, an Australian journalist serving in the AIF and also a POW in Muntok and Palembang, that some of those people present on ‘Radji Beach on the morning of 16 February who lost their lives at the hands of the Japanese that day did not all die at the time of the massacre either on that beach, or in the adjacent cove or in the sea.

A group of British servicemen had left ‘Radji Beach’ independently and headed for Muntok lighthouse just before the arrival of the Japanese on the morning of the 16th February. The reality is also that as the massacres began men and women ran for their lives along the beach and up into the jungle cover as the Japanese started bludgeoning, bayonetting and shooting the victims.

Firstly, insofar as those actually attacked during the massacre, we know from Leading Seaman Wilding, RN from ‘HMS Li Wo’ who swam ashore at Radji Beach several hours after the massacre that he “... *staggered up onto the beach, into one of those empty, peaceful coves and he was ready to collapse when he heard a moaning from the fringe of timber above. He forced himself up the slope and on the grass found a man lying on his belly, groaning as a cloud of flies buzzed hysterically around him. Wilding rolled him onto his side and saw the man had been lying on spilled intestines. He didn’t open his eyes, managing to gasp, “Japs”. Obviously, this man was dying...”*. Wilding then investigated the neighbouring cove and saw the scattered dead – he saw many of them were in Australian Army nursing uniform and their belongings scattered around the beach because their bodies had been searched. He then moved on to the next cove where he found survivor Eric German, the American brewer, who had also been severely bayoneted. Wilding then met up with Cpl. Seddon, Royal Marines, from the sunken tug ‘HMS Yin Ping’ and then Wilding told Hal Richardson, “... *We went along the beach, northwards, over rocks and dunes and we sighted an attap hut. A beach lean-to. Fisherman’s hut, we reckoned. We went to it, carefully, and saw inside a white man doubled over. We said ‘hello’ and the man fell forward, right onto his face. We sat him up and asked him ‘Japs been here?’ He mumbled, dribbling and managed to point back along the beach. Dead nurses and all that. Wilding asked him to come back with us and he said gasping ‘I’m not going to last too long’. I said, ‘Don’t be silly’ and he sat right yep and showed us his guts spilled out of a gash in his belly. He must’ve been in shocking pain. He gave a long groan and said, ‘In the hut’. Inside, past where he lay, we saw three men, R.N. ratings they were, laid out on a pile of fishing nets.*

Fly blown they were, stinking...". The two men then walked inland" ... following a faint trail in the deepening woods. Then they saw a European lying with his back to the broad base of a kapok tree. He was folded like a deflated sack, slumped in a pool of blood vibrating with flies, a shimmering, noisily avaricious sheen. He barely muttered but was able to inform them he had been on the beach and had feigned death, waited for the Japanese to go; but now he could go no further...". There will have likely been a number of other people who died away from the Beach after the massacre.

Secondly, insofar as the group of servicemen who were present on Radji Beach, but left just before the Japanese arrived, Pte. Hal Richardson, AIF, continues in his monograph in the Australian War Memorial Museum that he learned during his interviews in POW camps from one 'Victor Spencer' (this was Leading Seaman Victor Spencer, DSSX 23078 aged 25 years from Hull who was ex 'HMS Prince of Wales' and then 'HMS Li Wo' – and who died later as a POW on 24.7.45) who had come ashore at Radji Beach, and with others had "...gathered wood for the fires that warmed and cooked for survivors..." and had then with "... other able bodied men..." had "...struck out for the lighthouse a mile or so along the beach...". This unknown number of men then turned inland, but encountered a squad of Japanese soldiers when they "... reached a tar road..." and Spencer says he was bayoneted and struck unconscious, when he came around, he found that all the others "... were lying around, shot and bayoneted...". Spencer then walked off, but soon encountered another badly wounded sailor "... Leading Stoker Hadley who had served in REPULSE then LI WO..." whom "... was in pain from his wounds and could not move without assistance..." – it seems that Hadley might also have been on Radji Beach - this was Leading Seaman James Bruce Douglas Hadley, DJX 142890, RN aged 23 years from Coventry who died soon after in POW camp from his wounds.

The 'Radji Beach' massacre victims died in a chaotic and dispersed situation that extended along the coast and inland – the harsh fact is that their unburied remains still lie on Banka Island along with the remains of many hundreds of bodies of British civilians and servicemen which washed ashore on the beaches of Banka Island during the weeks of mid-February 1942. .

Are the victims buried at Radji Beach?

One of the more disconcerting aspects, in the context of honouring the deaths and perhaps the remains in a mass murder such as the war crimes on 'Radji Beach', is the question of what happened to the remains of many of the victims given that so many people were killed in the area.

Much of official history and modern comment seems to be based on the broad and simple assumption that the sea had washed away the remains of all those nurses, civilian women, civilian men, soldiers and sailors killed at Radji Beach.

This view appears to be largely the result of Vivian Bullwinkle's testimony to the post war investigation and subsequent War Crimes trial in Tokyo where she stated that she returned to the beach each day during her couple of weeks of freedom but that one day (seems to be 25th February 1942) when she went to the beach "... she was surprised to find a beach empty of all bodies : a particularly high tide appeared to have scoured the beach clean of all traces of the killings, including the bodies of the Australian nurses ..." (ORB p.226).

Without demeaning in any way the integrity of Vivian Bullwinkel's statement to the War Crimes Tribunal it is valid to note that an officer who met her and listened to her when she was first brought into internment states in an official affidavit that (most understandably given her wounds and starvation) she "...was in a semi – delirious condition at the time I saw her ..." (Lt Russell F. Wright

testimony in the War Crimes file in NAA Melbourne – he had been the Assistant Embarkation Officer for the departure of the ‘Vyner Brooke’ from Singapore).

Given the very strong sea currents around Banka Island there is no doubt that some of the bodies of the nurses and the Ordinary Ranks soldiers and Naval Ratings (the two groups who were actually killed in or at the edge of the sea) would have been washed away by incoming and ebbing tides ; but this is not the full story and on closer inspection there are some records by survivors which indicate that certainly for a period after the killings there would have been quite a number of bodies well beyond the reach of the sea.

To be specific the records show;

- A Malay sailor (who had been badly burned in the attack on the “SS. Vyner Brooke”) died upon reaching shore in one of the first lifeboats and was promptly “... *buried in the sand ...*” on the night of 15th February (BYE, p.146)
- A mortally wounded soldier who drifted ashore in a metal lifeboat with other soldiers on the morning of 16th February died and was immediately buried that morning next to the Malay sailor (BYE. P.146) – obviously before about 9.00am
- Depending on whether we follow the sequence recorded in ORB (Officers first then the ORs and ratings in the second group or BYE (Ratings and ORs first); the first group (eight men according to Eric German, BYE p.147, and six according to the book ORB, p. 212) of victims to be executed – this may have been the ratings and ORs and appears to have included the young English boy (identity ?) who had helped Eric German bring the wounded nurses to the main group on the first night on Radji Beach- may have had “ ... *their bodies thrown into the jungle at the edge of the beach...*” (ORB, p.212), leaving seven bodies presumably in or close to the jungle. Stoker Lloyd, who in his post war affidavit states that he was in the first group to go, had of course escaped. Stoker Lloyd’s account is contradicted in Eric German’s account which mentions seeing when his group arrived at the execution site “... *at the water’s edge, lying face down, sprawled the bodies of those who had gone before them ...*” (BYE, p.148)
- The next group - Eric German and the Officers (Sedgeman, Reith and Miller) and the senior civilians such as Mr. Watson and perhaps Mr. Betteridge and “... *several other British servicemen ...*” (ORB, p.212) – were ordered to stand in line facing the sea and from his account they (apart from Mr Watson who had been left sitting against a log before the final spot where the killings took place) were on the edge of the sea.
- Suggesting that there was some post massacre handling of the bodies is also raised in a statement by Stoker Lloyd (“Singapore’s Dunkirk”, p.146) where he recounts that after laying in the jungle **for a few days** “... *all the male bodies had been piled on top one another in a big heap. Then I went along and found the bodies of the Australian nurses and other women [we should note this is a plural description of the number of women] ...*”. This seems to contradict Vivian Bullwinkel’s statements.
- This particular account also gives further credence to the record in the book ‘A Short Cruise on the Vyner Brooke’ by Ralph Armstrong who writes (pp.53-54) “... *A little known ending to this horror is described by another survivor, who said a group of Australian soldiers were rounded up by the Japanese and ordered to carry the bodies of the massacred men and nurses from the beach to be burned. They had to collect all the wood and debris that they could find, build a large funeral pyre and then place all the bodies one by one on this pyre until only the ashes remained ...*”. This, of course, suggests that the remains of the people massacred are not actually on Radji Beach but somewhere close by. A telephone conversation with Ralph Armstrong in June 2017 confirmed his memory of this and he made the comment that the bodies were buried after being burned.

- The Australian Army nurses, as is well known, were ordered to walk in a line into the sea and presumably did so – but there are several exceptions. Eric German the day after the killings found “... a *red-haired nurse*’ was lying higher on the beach than the others ...” (BYE, p.152); Corporal Seddon (who was swimming to the beach at the time the killings took place, having survived the sinking of the ‘HMS Yin Ping’) saw some men and women trying to escape but they were bayoneted and shot. So not all would have been at the water’s edge.
- Finally, there were, depending upon the source record, between three and ten men and women who were “*stretcher cases*” (probably two or three women and around six men) who had been bayoneted and left dead either in the fisherman’s hut or in the shade under the trees at the edge of the jungle bordering the beach i.e., well above the high tide line. Vivian Bullwinkel’s evidence to the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal stated that there were “... *about ten to twelve stretcher cases*... “(Knights of Bushido” by Lord Russell of Liverpool, p.103) whilst Eric German said there were five stretcher cases – Mr Buridge /Betteridge, the elderly magistrate Mr Watson, and “... *the nurse with the ripped breast and two civilian women with shrapnel wounds* ...” (BYE, p.146)
- Apart from those inevitably washed away by the tides and currents , these ‘above the high tide’ victims may of course have been buried later by local people in which case, when added to the graves of the Malay sailor from the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’ and the soldier from either the ‘HMS Li Wo’ or the ‘HMS Yin Ping’ who were definitely buried by the large group of “SS. Vyner Brooke” survivors assembled on the beach on 15 February 1942 indicates that there were/ are probably at least eight people buried in the area of the Beach – but maybe many more.
- One such record of local people burying the bodies comes from a niece of Sister Jean Ashton who along with siblings visited ‘Radji Beach’ in 2012 after which she has recorded the following to this researcher (email Sue Akeroyd 16.11.16) “...*Our aunt was a POW and so two of my sisters and a brother went to Muntok to visit the site as you probably learned from the blog. While we were there we visited all of the significant spots and one day, were lucky enough to be taken to Radji Beach. We walked along the beach and watched the water ebb and flow. There was a fisherman on the beach and we chatted to him and told him what we were there for. It was this man who said that he was very familiar with the story of the massacre because his grandfather helped to bury the dead bodies of the nurses. I do not know his name or anything more than that, but he probably still fishes on that section of beach*... “.
- Finally, in the context of the idea that perhaps the bodies of the AANS nurses were not swept away by the sea as promptly as recalled by Vivian Bullwinkel is an item contained in an Australia War Graves investigation report dated April 1946 held in the Australian national Archives , Melbourne “ ... *here I might mention during our trip to Pangkal Pinang, Captain FODEN making further enquiries around Muntok was given by his Malay rating, who had received it from a native of Muntok, an identification card inscribed and belonging to Sister M.E. McGlade, AANS. The man said it was taken from the body of a white woman in the area previously mentioned as being the place of the shooting of the nurses* ...”

It is also worth recording that, according to Sister Ada Syer, whilst the Australian nurses were initially being held in the Muntok cinema building a Japanese soldier asked Sister Hannah what uniform she was wearing – when it was explained he said “... *we have just buried 25 women wearing that uniform* ...” (Sister Ada ‘Mickey’ Syer oral history record, end of Tape 2, held in Australian War Memorial, ID # SO 4057). [Researcher Note: author Lynette Silver has corrected the researcher’s understanding here so that it was apparently a Royal Navy serviceman and POW who made this statement to Mavis Hannah]. Apart from the obvious implication that the bodies of the nurses (and others?) may have been buried at Radji Beach there is the fact that the number of nurses referred to is more than the 21 nurses executed by machine gun. Given that at least three civilian women were also killed in the

massacre (probably Mrs Betteridge, Kathleen Waddle and at least one other) this number of 25 women may have more importance than previously attributed to it; because if tasked with burying that many people, this researcher doubts that an ordinary Japanese soldier [or a traumatised Royal Navy POW] would have later made a differentiation about a few women in civilian clothing amongst a much larger number of bodies with their clothes in disarray. [The possible flaw in this piece of information is that it seems highly unlikely that this Royal Navy POW would have kept such information after the War – and if he had died during POW years, he would have almost certainly told other POWs of his experience].

The awful and almost overwhelming question of the remains of men and women, and children, from the “SS. Vyner Brooke” and other ships sunk between 13 – 16 February 1942 in the seas around Banka Island and being washed ashore on its beaches, is one that is underscored by the following excerpt from the report by Captain Yemm of the ‘Mission to Bangka island, Bintan island and Pom Pong island’ during March 1946 as part of the War Graves investigation “... *many human bones were discovered along the coastline stretching from Muntok harbour to Tanjong Kalian and north to Tanjong Oelar. These remains are those of shipwrecked soldiers and civilians. It is estimated from interrogation of the natives that they amounted to several hundreds. There are no means whatsoever of identifying the remains, a few bones were however collected, as proof and for examination upon our return to Singapore ...*”. He does record that they found 347 graves around Muntok (the majority Dutch internees) and talks of 76 AANS graves, but he may have been classifying all the women's graves as AANS.

Apart from the bodies of perhaps 50 – 100 people who lost their lives in the attack on the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’ or whilst adrift at sea after the ship sank, many of the bodies which were noted as having washed up on the beaches of Banka Island would have been from the at least 900 women, children, civilian men and servicemen who lost their lives in the attacks and sinkings of a large group of evacuation ships around the islands just north, north west and east of Banka Island during 13- 17 February 1942. These ships included;

- **‘SS. Redang’** (sunk on 13 February in the Berhala straits between Banka and Singkep islands with up to 110 passengers and crew)
- **‘HMS Siang Wo’** (attacked and run aground on 13 February NW of Banka Island - near the lighthouse - with about 200 passengers and crew)
- **‘HMS Hwang Ho’** (sunk off Lingga Island and the survivors taken to Banka as POWs – including Lt Cmdr. H. Vickers)
- **‘HMS Dragonfly’** (sunk on 14 February)
- **‘HMS Giang Bee’** (sunk on 14 February in the Banka Straits with around 300 passengers and crew)
- **‘SS. Kuala’** (sunk on 14 February at Pom Pong Island north of Banka Island with 750 passengers)
- **‘HMS Li Wo’** (sunk on 14 February by the Japanese invasion fleet just north of Banka Island)
- **‘HMS Grasshopper’** (run aground at Sempang island, near Singkep, on 14 February)
- **‘HMS Scorpion’** (sunk near Sempang island on 14 February)
- **‘HMS Yin Ping’** (A tug sunk by shellfire from Japanese warships near Muntok lighthouse on 15 February with about 75 on board – 50 of whom were killed)
- **‘SS Pulo Soegi’** (sunk on the evening of 15 February carrying about 80 people including 68 from the ‘ZAOW’ of RAOC.)
- **ML 311** – (sunk in Banka Straits on 15 February with about 75 people on board)
- **‘Elizabeth’** (a launch sunk in Banka straits on 16 February with 26 people on board)

- **‘SS. Tandjong Pinang’** (sunk 30 miles north of Banka on 17 February) – with a large group of 180 or so nurses, women and children on board who had been rescued from Pom Pong Island after the sinking of the ‘SS Kuala’.

A Lt. Russell F. Wright, who had assisted in the embarkation of evacuees onto the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’ in Singapore and retained a continuing interest in their welfare (he actually boarded the ‘Mata Hari’ and coincidentally arrived at Muntok just prior to the first survivors from the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’) had an experience as late as 28 February 1942 which reinforced just how many bodies of victims of the shipwrecks were being washed ashore on Banka Island “... About a day prior to Sister Bullwinkle’s[sic] [arrival?], while in a working party I arranged with the Jap guards to proceed to the foreshore in an endeavour to identify bodies washed ashore (also to view some lifeboats ex ‘Hong Tat’). I covered one and a half to two miles of foreshore adjacent to the Cinema Camp, there were about 15 bodies on the beach and in shallow water - some were recognisable as nurses. So far as I knew the scene of the tragedy [he is referring to Radji beach] was some distance from Muntok, possibly 20 miles away. An identification party under Air Comdr. MODIN made an official inspection of the beaches in the immediate vicinity of Muntok. I am not sure of the date, but this was just after Sister Bullwinkle’s [sic] arrival...”.

Who carried out this Atrocity and what occurred in truth at Radji Beach?

After the War the Japanese Government, during the demobilisations phase of its forces, was instructed (Instruction #126, dated 12 October 1945) to compile accounts to record the plans and actions of its military arms prior to and during the War. One such document (Japanese Monograph #67 ‘Palembang and Bangka Operations Record, January – February 1942’ was produced and copied into English in 1953 – copy supplied by Dr Neil McGregor April 2017) gives the identities of the military units involved on Banka Island at the time of the sinking of the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ together with a lot of detail as to the dates and places of their deployment.

Essentially this report, compiled by senior Japanese officers including the Chief of Staff of the 38th Division, tells us that on 20 January the 38th division of the Japanese Army (at that point still stationed in Hong Kong after invading that city in December 1941), which included the Division Headquarters Companies of the 229th Infantry Regiment who had committed terrible atrocities around Xmas Eve 1941 at many places in Hong Kong, moved to Camranh Bay in French Indochina (Vietnam) prior to invading southern Sumatra and particularly Palembang .

The specifically allocated ‘Bangka invasion unit’ of the larger 38th Division invasion force – being two companies of 229th Infantry Regiment plus shipping engineer elements - left Camranh Bay on 12 February 1942 and arrived at Muntok anchorage at 0100 hrs on 15 February.

The Japanese plan had been;

“... one platoon was to land in the vicinity of Muntok pier, with the main body, composed of one company and two platoons, landing 2,000 metres south east of Muntok (See map 2) After securing the airfield and its surrounding area, one company which was to remain for occupation was

to capture Pangkalpinang. The remaining troops were to rejoin, as rapidly as possible, the main body of the advance force in Sumatra...”.

As planned one company of the 229th Infantry Regiment remained to occupy Banka Island while the other company, on the 17 February, began movement across the sea to the Palembang area to join the main body of the invasion force attacking southern Sumatra.

[Researchers Note: The following definitions of the typical makeup of Japanese Army units may clarify the descriptions used in this memorial document;

- Company – up to 150 men comprising 3 platoons and commanded by a Captain.
- Platoon – up to 50 men comprising 3 sections commanded by a Lieutenant.
- Section – up to 15 men consisting of three teams commanded by a Corporal.
- Team – about 4 men led by a Senior Private.

These definitions give us a close approximation of the numbers of Japanese around Muntok and on Banka Island when the survivors of many ships began to land.]

So as the survivors of the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ and other ships began to struggle ashore on Banka Island they were not to know that they were arriving at the same time as two Companies of the infamous and ruthless 229th Infantry Regiment from Hong Kong which had been involved in the war crimes during Xmas 1941- the very reason for their original evacuation from Singapore!

As a result, the ‘die was cast’ for a repeat of the brutality and murder experienced in Hong Kong.

Soon after the War, as Allied forces began to land on Banka Island in late 1945 and early 1946, they started to officially investigate the atrocities being reported by the Australian nurses, men and women internees and POWs who were finally being discovered in the atrociously deprived and neglected Belalau internment camp in southwestern Sumatra.

A Captain Yemm was the first to complete a comprehensive investigation into the events at Radji Beach and (from his report in the War Crimes file held in the NAA in Melbourne) he was told by a Japanese soldier that it was “... the ‘Orita Butai’ - No. 1 and No. 2 Companies, the MG Company and the HQ Company...” - who had carried out the massacre (a ‘Butai’ is a general term for a Japanese Army unit – it seems to be applied to units the size of regiments down to units the size of platoons and is usually accompanied by the family name of the officer in charge of that unit). Specifically, his report notes that the soldier told him it was the No. 3 platoon of ‘Tamaka Butai’ (sic) of 229 Infantry Regiment who had killed the nurses.

The ‘Tamaka Butai’ or more correctly the ‘Tanaka Butai’ were, of course, the 229th Regiment of the 38th Division of the Japanese Army under Major-General Tanaka (also spelt as ‘Tamaka’ or ‘Takaka’ in some records) Ryosaburo who had invaded Hong Kong, and these were specifically the troops who had raped and murdered European and Chinese nurses at St Stephens Hospital, Hong Kong.

It appears that, to get specific, the Japanese soldiers - to their eternal shame - who carried out the atrocity on Radji Beach were;

**# 3 Platoon,
2nd Company (part of the unit known as ‘Orita Butai’)
1st Battalion
229th Infantry Regiment.**

In the file compiled by Captain Yemm there is also an isolated handwritten note recording a statement that appears to have been made by a Japanese soldier (he appears to have been one TANEMURA KIYOSHI) to the effect that it some men named "... SHIMIZI KINICHI and TANEMUKA [sic?] KIYOSHI, [were in?] a platoon of 2 Company under 2nd Lt. KOHIYAMO FUMO who made a patrol to the coast where they met many foreigners who were shot. These included women". This suggests that apart from the identified war criminals Captain (later Major) Orita Masaru and Sergeant – Major Taro Kato there was another officer in the killing squad at Radji Beach named 2nd Lt. Kohiyamo Fumo.

The original, formal source for this note by Yemm may have originally been the information from the [surviving] '2nd Australian War Crimes Section' file records (many of which appear to have been destroyed). Specifically, the files compiled by **Sgt. A.H. Weston**, Investigating Officer, [NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/1965 PART 11] contain the following in his report of 20.1.50 "...Lt. KOHIYAMA was the leader of the platoon which massacred the nurses and other survivors on the S – W coast of BANKA Is; which Ldg/ Pte MATSUO Akira was thought to have been a member of that platoon...".

There also follows in Yemm's file a note to the effect that "... Japs also killed 5 BORs [i.e., five British Other Ranks] from a sunken gunboat [possibly the 'Li Wo'?] – they were bayoneted one survivor told E.A. DOMENEY, RAOC '2' AON..." this looks to be a reference to the same unit that massacred the Australian Army Nursing Service Sisters and continued their killing spree around the coast of Banka Island.

It is worth remembering at this point that there were a number of survivors from other evacuation ships – including the 'SS Tandjong Pinang' which had rescued 180 women, children and nurses from Pom Pong island after the sinking of the 'SS Kuala' there but only to be sunk itself within a day of rescuing these women and children – who were struggling ashore on Banka Island and some of these people were also summarily executed by the Japanese on the beaches. Notably amongst these were the Captain of the 'SS. Tandjong Pinang' (Lt Basil Shaw, RNZNVR, from New Zealand) and a crew member (Able Seaman Oswald Young, ex 'HMS Repulse') who landed near the lighthouse near Muntok and were executed on the spot, on 21 February. Also, Lt Commander Horace Vickers, Commander of the Malay section of the MRNVR / Royal Navy was also executed soon after landing on Banka – his mutilated remains (contemporary wartime reports record he was originally found missing his ears) were found in a plantation behind Muntok by a post war search party.

The book 'ORB' (p.211) - drawing on what Vivian Bullwinkel included in her post – war affidavit to the War Crimes Tribunal - suggests that the size of the Japanese force of troops arriving at Radji Beach was likely to be around 18 soldiers led by a Sergeant-Major and a Captain. This is of course approximately the size of a 'platoon'.

The Melbourne domiciled War Crimes file in the Australian National Archives has nothing further to offer on the subject of pursuing those responsible for the Radji Beach atrocity (the files for this phase of the investigation must be in another war crimes prosecution file perhaps linked with the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal), but it is clear that by August 1946 the Allies had absolutely not given up their hunt for the criminals responsible for the murders on Radji Beach and in 'The Canberra Times' (30.8.46) there appeared a report that "... The whereabouts of the Japanese responsible for the massacre of 21 Australian army nurses on Banka Island are slowly being uncovered. Lt. Masayuki Takeuchi, commander of one of the companies on the island was recently identified in a POW stockade and is now in Taiping gaol, northern Malaya. A second suspect, Sergeant – Major Taro Kato, was captured in New Guinea...".

So, it seems that the Japanese invasion force on Banka Island - comprising two Companies was led by Captain Orita Masaru with #1 Company led by Lt. Masayuki Takeuchi and #2 Company led by Lt. Kohiyamo Fumo. It seems that the officers of this relatively small invasion force were being given command authority a little above that usually accruing to their rank. In the same manner, we seem to have Sgt. Major Taro Kato in command of a platoon – although on the day in question Masaru and Kato look like being the ones ordering the murders on Radji Beach.

Some sources state that the commander of Japanese forces on Banka Island (presumably Captain Masaru Orita) had from the beginning given orders that all survivors of sunken ships landing on the Island were to be killed. In this context, it is also reported that the Japanese Naval Commander who captured another ship – the ‘SS Mata Hari’ laden with men, women and children – would not allow the ship to berth at Muntok pier until the Army Commander gave his assurance that they would not be killed.

It seems that there was also another Japanese platoon searching elsewhere on the coast of Banka Island for survivors.

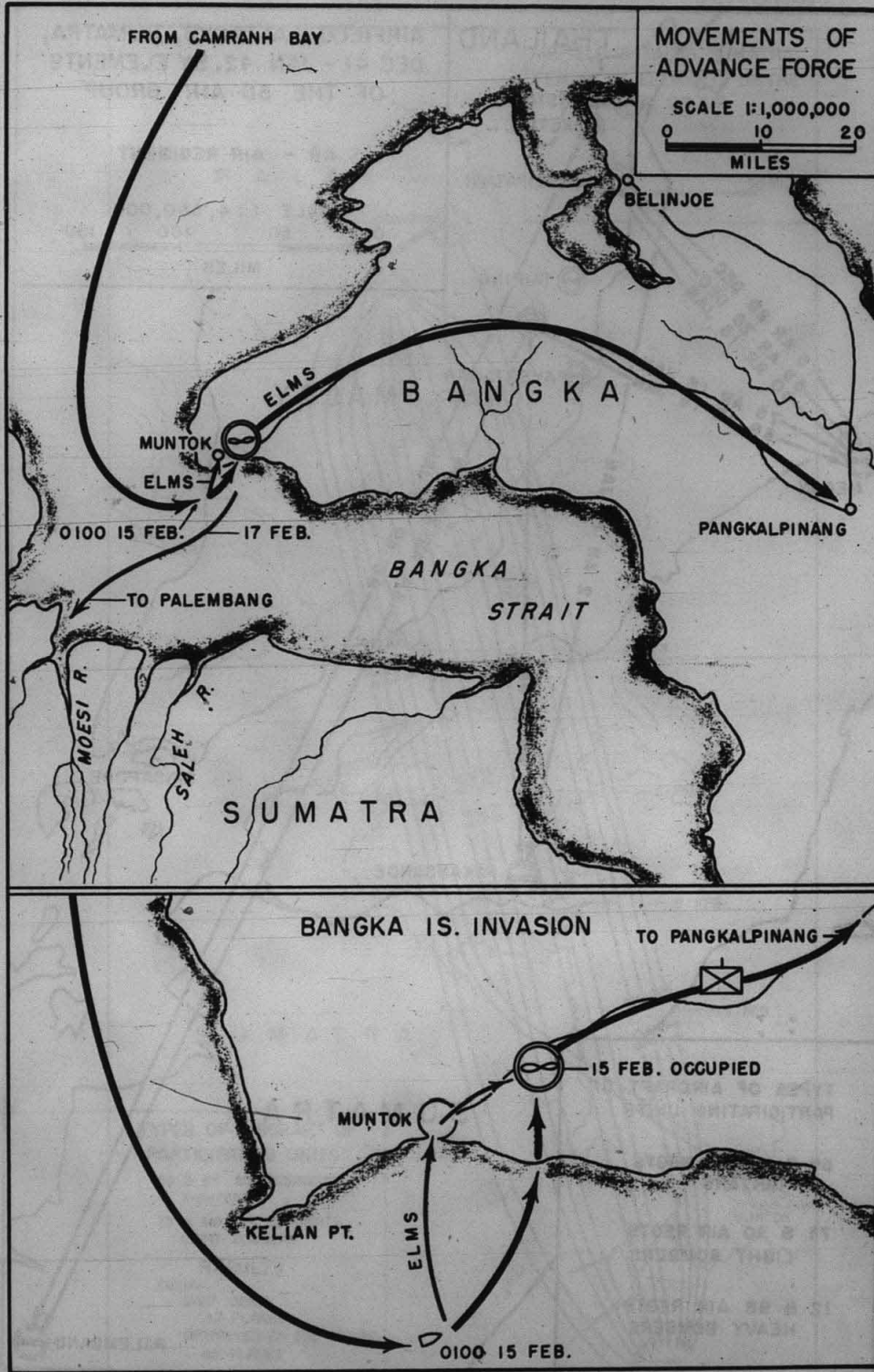
Later in the post war investigation process “The West Australian” (26.10.46) carried this item in a similar story but added that the two men (Takeuchi and Taro) mentioned above;

*“...were regular army veterans who fought against China, participated in the storming of Hong Kong, and followed the Japanese troops into Palembang in early 1942. The companies were detached from the main force for the capture of Banka Island. The entire division later fought in the eastern area and met retribution almost to the last man at the hands of Australians and Americans. In 1942 a battalion of the regiment sailed for Guadalcanal in 14 ships, 11 of which were sunk with 1,000 men. Most of the 500 survivors died in the fighting around Henderson Airfield (Guadalcanal) Another battalion was almost wiped out by the 7th Division, AIF, at Buna, only 11 escaping – a third battalion endeavoured to land in the New Admiralty Islands in June 1944. Half landed and was subsequently reported missing. The other half failed to land and returned to Rabaul. Twenty-six survivors are still being interrogated there, including Major-General Tanaka who commanded operations in Sumatra. **Captain (later Major) Masaru Orita**, who commanded the two companies at the time of the massacre, fought on in the Manchurian front against the Russians in 1945. The Soviet section of the Allied Council for Japan has just informed Australia that this badly wanted man has not so far been found in the Soviet’s POW compound ...”.*

The book ‘ORB’ (p. 319) also holds the historical view that it was the same soldiers of the 229th Regiment at Banka Island who had been the killers and rapists at St Stephens college, Hong Kong six weeks earlier and says “ ... It seems likely that Orita had been directly in charge of the soldiers who had raped and murdered their way through St Stephen’s College ... and it was certainly Orita who issued the orders for all the killings on Radji Beach ...”, then later that book (p.320) closes the story of the sadistic, psychopathic individual who orchestrated and perpetrated the massacre “... What happened at Radji beach was the result of a premeditated decision by **Orita Masaru**, who took what he saw as an easy option.... His [own] surrender at the end of the war does not seem to have weighed too heavily on his heart. Orita was a POW in the Soviet Union for almost 3 years before his extradition to Tokyo ... on the eve of his being tried as a war criminal ... he committed suicide”.

After the war Major – General Tanaka Ryosaburo, 229th Regiment, received 20 years imprisonment for the mass murders by troops in his command whilst in Hong Kong.

MAP 2



Scanned by MilSpecManuals

Now moving to the nature of the atrocity against the Australian nurses, civilian women, civilian men and servicemen on Radji Beach the question is 'Did it happen in the manner stated by Vivian Bullwinkel at the War Crimes Tribunal?' which has become the accepted explanation over the past 70 years?

There have been various murmurings and conjectures which need to be addressed to ascertain the full culpability for their crimes of the Japanese Army personnel on Banka Island and the level of total shame these men carry into history – particularly against a backdrop of admitted 'secrets' amongst the AANS nursing survivors.

Firstly, it may be worth contemplating that in Western countries the social paradigm of the 'stigma' of rape against women has materially altered in the 70 years since 1945, as social 'mores' have changed insofar as any women victims of rape having some sort of ongoing 'damaged honour' and reflecting the growth in the authority, role and independence of women - which has escalated beyond anything that could have been imagined prior to the Second World War or even 1945. This researcher proposes the view that, in considering the information in the next few paragraphs, the reader contemplates whether the paradigm in which we live at any point in history can alter the perceived interpretation and impact of information – particularly when it is a case of reputation, honour, morals and gender role.

The name TANEMURA KIYOSHI also comes up as a witness to the events on Radji Beach in an alleged report by War Crimes Investigating Officer (Captain James Gowing Godwin) "File 152 Bangka Island Atrocities, 17 February 1942" in the book "Betrayal in High Places" by James McKay. Described in the book as "... Former Ldg Private Tanemura Kiyoshi of the 2nd Platoon, 2nd Company, Orita Butai" he had ostensibly been recalled by Godwin for reinterrogation concerning the fate of Mr. V.G. Bowden (Australian Trade Commissioner, Malaya) on Bangka Island on 17 February 1942. To quote from the File mentioned in the book "...Kiyoshi admits that his platoon took part in the successful assault on the lightly defended island and that some Europeans (amended to all) were captured, including a number of Australian nurses. Kiyoshi displayed a most worried attitude that was not lost on this investigating officer. His answers to questions were evasive and devious, similar in context to an earlier interrogation conducted by Sergeant A. H. Weston.... He strongly denied being one of the guards... and had sought permission from his immediate superior NCO Sergeant Furukawa (FNU) to rest in the shade of some trees...". Without going into detail described in the book and the supposed File 152, the relevance of Kiyoshi's statement is that he claimed that the nurses had been raped before being returned to the beach, the nurses in fact being "... forced to bathe (ostensibly) whereupon a machine gun had opened fire and disposed (executed) them. Kiyoshi strongly denied participating of the male prisoners by reason of feeling unwell, and because of his disposition, he had not felt inclined to join in the raping incidents during the night with the rest of the platoon....".

Frustratingly for anyone attempting to get to the truth of the Radji Beach atrocity, the researcher of this memorial document has found that the relevant content of the book 'Betrayal In High Places' is not backed up by the content of Godwin's files from 2 AWCS held in the National Archives of Australia – it has been found from the original files that the report by Captain J.G. Godwin actually starts exactly as McKay states, but the second sentence of Godwin's actual Weekly Investigation Report 152 (dated 13 January 1950) in the NAA Melbourne then states "...Results of this reinterrogation will be reported in the Weekly Investigation Report of Sgt. A.H. Weston ...". **On obtaining and reading the original files compiled by Sgt Weston this researcher determined that there is no evidential foundation for the supposed account by Tanemura Kiyoshi account recorded in "Betrayal in High Places"!**

It seems James McKay, despite knowing that there was no recorded admission by Tanemura Kiyoshi for the rape and murder, was going to see history recorded in the way he (and probably many others at the time) genuinely believed it to have occurred. So, we must put aside the McKay book as a credible source – even although he may have heard rumours to that effect.

Despite the lack of any evidence produced for James McKay's view that the AANS nurses and others had been violated on Radji Beach, there are two other important pieces of information on the matter of whether the nurses were raped and then murdered we which this researcher believes we should consider before again reverting to eyewitness statements around the time of the atrocity;

- A journalist with 'Independent Australia', Ms Tess Lawrence, on 19 March 2017 published an article which stated that during two meetings she had personally with Vivian Bullwinkel at a Club in Melbourne, she was told by Vivian that most of the nurses including Vivian had been violated before being shot at Radji Beach. Tess Lawrence also claims that she was told by Vivian that she had been instructed not to divulge this to the war Crimes Tribunal in Sydney.
- This conclusion is also supported by author Barbara Angell on the website Angell Productions, who with questions in mind as to whether there was something behind the obvious secrets being kept by the surviving AANS nurses who returned to Australia, and also the inconsistencies in the statements over the years by the surviving nurses set out firstly to check the veracity of Vivian Bullwinkel's story against the only tangible evidence left from the murders i.e. the bullet holes in the nurses uniform Vivian was wearing on the day at Radji Beach and then apply logic to the evidence left in the affidavits made by the men who survived the massacre or arrived on Radji Beach within a day or so from other sunken ships. Angell's very thorough investigation concludes that the AANS nurses, including Vivian were raped and there may have been other nurses also killed elsewhere around the cost of Bank Island.

In summary, research has also brought forward several pieces of information which drive the logic of what occurred at Radji Beach to a strong conclusion that some of the AANS nursing Sisters who landed on Radji Beach were almost certainly violated before they were murdered.

- Firstly, the fact that the exact same Japanese troops who raped and murdered the nurses in St Stephen's Hospital, Hong Kong were the troops who had invaded Banka Island and were present at Radji Beach – a situation which left them after the killing of the two groups of men with a large group of defenceless women.
- Secondly, Japanese troops had a practice during their invasion of South East Asia, when coming across a group of men and women, of firstly separating and then killing the men before assaulting and later killing the women.
- Then there is the evidence of men who survived the massacre or survivors of other sunken ships who were present at Radji Beach after the killings which states very clearly that some of the clothing on the bodies of the nurses was in disarray or had been removed and some nurses were naked – there is no suggestion in any survivor's records that the nurses were naked before the Japanese arrived.

- Also, the researcher of this memorial document, whilst in the Singapore National Archives in January 2018 came across the following statement in an Oral History Recording (Accession No. 000232) by Tan Kok Kheng (the adult son of a wealthy and highly influential Singaporean resident in pre-War Singapore by the name of Tan Kah Kee). Tan Kok Kheng - who was highly credible in the history of commerce, administration and politics in Singapore - is talking about an account related to him by an acquaintance by the name of Toh Soo Tong who had survived the sinking of a ship near Banka Island “ *...but was then taken prisoner and forced to cook for the Japs on Banka Island ...*”, he records that Tok Soo Tong said “ *... 50 young Australian nurses ... confined to two long wooden houses, stripped completely naked and chained hands and legs to the floor. Half naked Jap soldiers lined up outside the buildings and took turns to rape them. In the kitchen where he worked, he heard them scream for help at the top of their voice. Nobody could help them. It was pitiful. Many of them died from the sexual assault...*”. This is a credible piece of historical information which this researcher feels must be taken seriously.
- Barbara Angell’s empathetic analysis of the location of the bullet holes in Vivian Bullwinkel’s uniform gives real weight to the possibility that Vivian was in a state of undress at the time she was shot.
- Next, but not least, is the article by journalist Tess Lawrence in the ‘Independent Australia’ of February 2017 which states bluntly that Vivian Bullwinkel confirmed that some of the nurse had been raped by the Japanese on Radji Beach.

The compelling **conclusion**, arrived at through the lengthy research conducted in compiling this memorial document, is that the events at Radji Beach were even more complex, cruel, and barbaric than mainstream reports have to date led us to believe. The empathy of those honouring the memory of those women murdered at Radji Beach may need to also consider the torture experienced during their last hours - perhaps even more so than has been the case to date.

Nothing detracts from the exemplary behaviour and everlasting honour of these brave and noble women.

The shame, detraction from honour and a further immense stain on the reputation of the Japanese Army can likewise never be removed.

What happened to the Sisters on the raft swept along the Banka Strait?

There is also another similarly painful interpretation to the information assembled more recently on events on Banka Island and that is the possible fate of Sister Dorsch, Sister Trenerry, Sister McDonald and perhaps Matron Paschke from the raft last seen drifting along the Banka Strait towards the Sunda Straits between Sumatra and Java.

We learned that this raft was last seen being swept away by the powerful sea currents around Banka Island. As related by Dr Neil McGregor (son of Sister Sylvia Muir) the bodies of Sister McDonald and two other unidentified nurses were found on a raft in the Indian Ocean two or three weeks later (the raft having floated in that time down to and through the Sunda Straits to the Indian Ocean which is the direction of ocean currents around bank island and Sumatra at that time of the year) – this was also confirmed by Sister Wilma Oram to ex – nurse Dorothy Angell who knew Wilma after the War. Both these AANS nurses were told this outcome after being repatriated to Singapore at the end of the War, by a sailor aboard a ship which found the raft. This of course leaves the fate of at least three of the nurses (including perhaps Matron Paschke) and the two children (one being a three-year-old Chinese girl according to Iole Harper – see her entry) on the raft with them all, unresolved. The last time this raft was sighted being swept southwards down the Bank Straits two of the nurses - Sister Dorsch and Sister Trenerry -were in the sea holding onto trailing ropes from the raft.

Then there is a piece of highly credible information which supports the scenario that one or more of the nurses made a successful effort to swim for Banka Island further south along the coast (perhaps when they realised that they were entering more open ocean beyond Banka Island) contained in the book ‘Soldier Surgeon in Malaya’ by T. Hamilton published in 1957, which states that Colonel/ Matron A. ‘Annie’ M. Sage of the AANS - who greeted the surviving AANS nurses after release from internment in 1945 - was told that the identity disc of Sister Dorsch had been found by a “... Mrs Armstrong (now dead) ...” on a beach on Banka Island. Now the only ‘Mrs Armstrong’ interned in Muntok, and Palembang was Mrs. Resie Armstrong - mother of Ralph Armstrong who wrote an account of the family’s experiences in ‘A Short Cruise on the Vyner Brooke’. Mrs Armstrong, Ralph and several other members of the family had been on a raft that, after the sinking of the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’, was also swept south down the Banka Straits and landed initially on the Sumatran coast before being taken by fishermen back across the Strait, to a beach on the south coast of Banka Island (P.48-49 “SCOTVB”) and then to the town of “Koba” on the north – eastern side of the island. Mrs Resie Armstrong and her two adult daughters all died in internment leaving a small boy who was her grandson as the only family survivor in the women’s internment camps of Muntok, Palembang and Belalau (Ralph having been moved to the men’s camp) – the conclusion is that she was almost certainly the person who found the disc.

This therefore also opens up the awful possibility that at least Sister Dorsch would have crossed paths with either the perpetrators of the Radji Beach massacre or the **second** landing force of the invading Japanese Army on Banka Island – the one making for the airfield and Pankilpinang (see the later section on ‘Who Carried Out This Atrocity’ and the related Map 2 of Japanese Army plans). To have met up with soldiers with the record of war crimes in Hong Kong may have almost certainly meant the same fate for these two Sisters and their comrades on Radji Beach.

The logic for this having occurred starts with;

- The finding of Sister Dorsch’s identity disc and here we quote from the excellent website angellpro.com by Barbara Angell “... *The only way for anyone’s identity disc to be found is for it to have been forcibly ripped or cut off...* [it is noted that Matron Sage gained the knowledge of the identity disc from women internees , rather than nursing sisters, which makes it even more credible] and Matron Sage is also reported as having said that “...

Miss Paschke, Matron of the 10th Hospital was seen on a raft after the ship sank. She gave up her place to a younger nurse, then tried to swim to the beach...". Despite Miss Paschke being known to have been a non-swimmer, this is a very strong piece of evidence that the fate of Sister Dorsch, and perhaps the others, being a tragedy that occurred on Banka Island. Sister Dorsch's identity tag would not have floated off her body and all the way to a beach on Banka Island by itself – whether Mrs Armstrong found the tag by itself on a beach or on the body of Sister Dorsch is not known.

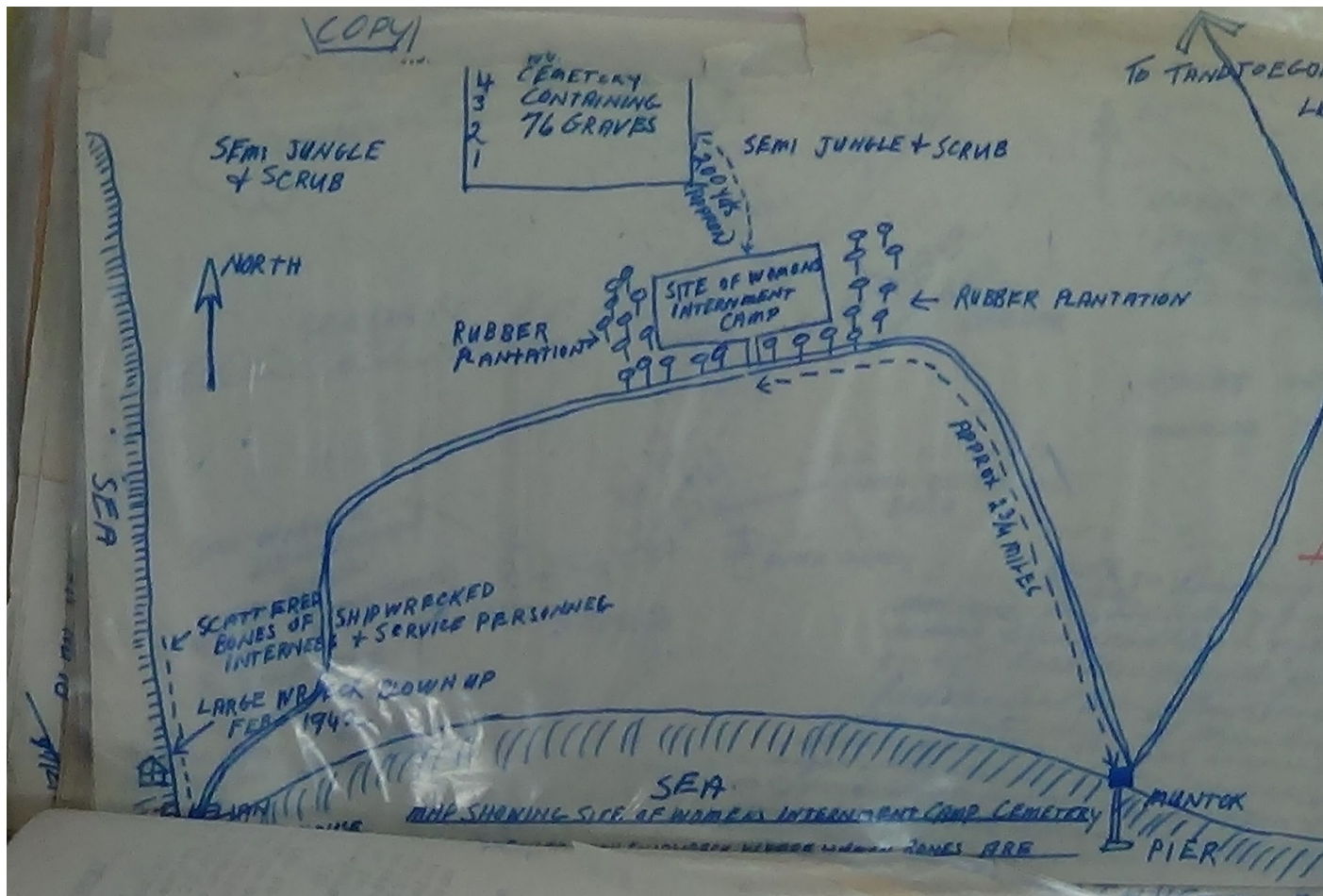
- Then we have the reports (albeit controversial and from 'Betrayal in High Places') that one Private Tanemura Kiyoshi claims to have heard , again quoting Barbara Angell "*... screams coming from nearby houses situated between groves of paw paw and mango trees , and was told that some NCOs and officers were pleasuring themselves (raping) some Australian nurses...*" – and then being taken away to be killed. It is important to note the reference to 'houses' as opposed to being on Radji Beach.
 - And thirdly the statement by Tok Soo Tong (p.33 above) that whilst working for the Japanese as a cook on Banka Island he heard from the kitchen he was working in, a group of nurses being raped in "*...two long wooden houses...*" on Banka Island (presumably in Muntok since he was cooking for the Japanese troops at their base) and some dying as a result.
 - There were a number of atrocities and executions along the coast of Banka Island during the period of 15 – 20 February 1942 and it may be that Sister Dorsch, and others were simply executed along with any servicemen being found in the same circumstances.
- The essential point here is that we have two reports referring to nurses being raped and killed in buildings. This steers logic away from these atrocity reports being part of being the accepted account of events at Radji Beach and point instead to either a village or buildings in or around Muntok itself. It seems unlikely that the Japanese would have put in too much effort into marching the nurses all the way from Radji Beach to Muntok and then all the way back to that specific location to be killed.

There looks to have occurred a second atrocity involving some of the nurse, probably in the vicinity of Muntok, and this may be the explanation of the fate of Sister Dorsch, and possibly Sister Trenerry and Matron Paschke.

Finally, whether at Muntok or later in the Palembang internment camp it has become clear that apart from the nurses at Radji Beach the Japanese troops raped some of the Australian nursing sisters during internment - as noted by renowned author Lynette Silver who records in her book 'Angels of Mercy', quoting Australian Army doctor, Charles Stewart Johnstone's diary. This diary tells us that when the POW nurses were released and came aboard the hospital ship; the 'Manunda', Matron Sage was weeping because '*they were in a shocking state physically and mentally. All had VD (venereal or sexually transmitted disease).* # his words.

Banka Coast as a Graveyard:

Finally, one piece of information – a hand drawn map (c. 1946) from the War Crime investigation file (located in NAA Melbourne) on the events at Radji Beach - gives some idea of what was found by the investigation party soon after the war;



This researcher's conclusion is that, at least for those with an empathy for the tragedies arising from the evacuation of Singapore and in the context of honouring the memory of all those women, children and men who lost their lives in February 1942 attempting an escape from Singapore by ship; the whole north, north western and north-eastern coastline of Banka island is in fact hallowed ground that cannot practically be separated into graves and simple natural spaces.

POSTSCRIPT - Where is 'Radji Beach';

During 2018 it became apparent to family members of victims of the massacre and people close to the effort to remember and memorialise those who had lost their lives during the aftermath of the sinking of the 'SS Vyner Brooke that there exists some difference of opinion as to exactly where is the location of 'Radji beach'.

The group is still researching and assessing the information available to determine the answer – and the researcher of this memorial offers the following thoughts in the matter as the survivors made their way to Banka island after the sinking of the ship.

Firstly, the influence of Sea Currents around Banka Island and the rowing ability of those in the lifeboats;

The sea currents encountered by all the survivors as they passed along the western and southern coast of Bank island are reported to have been significant and strong – which is the case for the region all the way back up to Singapore – at this indicates an ebttide at about 2 -3 knots (about 5km per hour). From anecdotal records the tidal current seems to be consistently in a southerly direction towards the entrance of the Banka Strait and then along the Bank strait to the east and much later sweeping out the Sunda Straits (between Sumatra and java) out to the Indian Ocean.

There were two lifeboats which reached 'Radji Beach'– the 'Sedgeman/Drummond' lifeboat, which appears to have had some or all rowing ability and no serious damage, and the 'Miller/Bullwinkel/Eric German' lifeboat which was semi submerged (after initially being overturned and damaged by machine gun fire) and would simply reach shore by virtue of sea currents and whatever little wind there seems to have been on that evening.

The first lifeboat seems to have got away rowing to shore at about 1400/ 1500 hrs (2.00/3.00 pm) and the other survivors that night saw a bonfire where it landed. If we assume a 2-knot tidal current and a rowing speed of 1 knot - by probably only four already exhausted men rowers in an overloaded lifeboat (which might even have had people hanging onto ropes alongside) – then it would have taken about two to five hours with these two propulsions aids giving it a maximum speed of 5km. At a more likely speed of 3-4 km per hour it would have taken three to six hours to have reached land in a south easterly direction. Tg. Betumpah seems be a likely headland it would have reached in that time and is in line with the sea current. If the current in the area is stronger then it would have reached land faster or could have travelled further.

The second lifeboat, half submerged, and it appears with no rowing capability left an hour or so later would have been entirely at the mercy of the tidal current and therefore moving at about 3 km per hour. It would have taken that lifeboat four to six hours and reach a spot said to be a mile of several kilometres away from the bonfire (it is assumed north of the bonfire which may have reduced time at sea by almost an hour).

Looking at the map it is possible, but seems less likely, that the current would have naturally swept the lifeboats around the headland TG. BETUMPAH to TG. BESAJAP, but this is a question only local knowledge would be able to answer.

Secondly, the location and description of 'Radji Beach' and 'camp site' by survivors;

When the second lifeboat with the wounded nurses was washed ashore - the 'bonfire' lit by the first lifeboat was several kilometres away (ORB p.177 and this appears to be confirmed by the fact that it took Second Officer Miller and Eric German's rescue party "... over two hours ..." to walk back to the location where the wounded nurses were located and bring them back (ORB. , p.200)). In BEW (p.145) German recalled that the lifeboat was 'a mile away'. This tells us that either there was a very

long beach or relatively uninterrupted piece of coastline. We assume that the second lifeboat landed north of the bonfire, but this is an important fact to clarify, if possible.

We are told, “...daylight revealed that they were on a sandy beach that stretched into the distance in the north and was about 20m wide at high tide. To the south there was a rocky outcrop that extended into the water and separated that beach from another, smaller but equally sandy beach... the second lifeboat was not visible...”. (ORB, p.202).

The bonfire appears to have been lit some 50-100m from the headland which is described as being to the south (ORB).

Then we have some descriptions of the geography beyond the ‘Headland’ and to its south.

One is that First Officer Sedgeman nominated four sailors to explore the beach beyond the headland (ORB p.203). This exploration party had found a freshwater spring bubbling out of rocks behind the headland. The spring formed a small stream that flowed inland to a swampy area back from the beach.... They also found a fisherman’s hut in this vicinity. (ORB, P.205). This is an interesting piece of evidence – firstly springs generally come from water running of a higher piece of land, they tend to be very old and resilient, and this one came out of rocks and flowed inland. It makes sense that fishermen, who possibly lived further inland at Kg Menjelang, would build a coastal hut near clean fresh water to save them constantly returning inland to their kampong for supplies of fresh water. On Mapcarta today the only real evidence of fishermen’s huts is at the northern end of the beach between Tg. BETUMPAH and Tg. BESAJAP – although there is a small structure south of Tg SABAJU.

Then there are the descriptions of where the two groups of men were killed. The first group of men were led around the rocks at the end and onto a small beach beyond (ORB, p. 212) - the soldiers and their eight prisoners climbed over a small promontory of rocks and driftwood about two hundred feet away and disappeared (BEW, p. 147). It is worth noting that these were not rocks one could walk through but needed to be climbed over. Others described this as “...they took half the men down the beach about 100 yards behind the headland ...”. Insofar as the second group of men, the Japanese officer and two soldiers are said to have “...reappeared, climbing over the rocks ...” (ORB, p.147) – this second group of men taken in the same direction as the first (ORB, p.213) and “... were in a small cove ...” (BEW, p.148). An idea of the distance they had been taken is given by survivor Vivian Bullwinkel “...I suppose they [the Japanese soldiers] were away five or ten minutes ...” (Vivian Bullwinkel War Crimes evidence signed statement, Melbourne 29.10.45) and then again, “...How far away were the men taken? ... 100 yards ...” (Vivian Bullwinkel War Crimes signed statement, Melbourne 29.10.45). So, this tells us that the men were taken no more than 100 yards, across a small promontory of rocks to such a distance that the Japanese could get the dozen or so men to that location, kill them individually by bayonetting and shooting, and return to the ‘camp site’ within - let us say 15 minutes to allow for memory error under stress by Vivian Bullwinkel. That suggests it would be no more than 200 meters from the original ‘campsite’.

Finally, there are descriptions of the geography to the south of the place the two groups of men were killed. Eric German (after briefly running into the jungle once he was sure the Japanese had left) ran “... for about a mile ...” [south] along the beach until he came to a stream flowing into the sea. (BEW, p.151). Next morning, he ventured across the stream and headed south... he met some other survivors [of other ships] walking north ... Eric led them back, across the stream, to the fatal cove. (BEW, p.152). This indicates that about a mile south of the site of the men being killed there is a stream - Sungei Menjelang?

So, the descriptive statements used in the book "On Radji Beach" (Bullwinkel and other survivors) and "By Eastern Windows" (survivor Eric German) and Vivian Bullwinkel's war crimes statement in Melbourne, provide the following criteria that a 'Radji Beach' location should satisfy;

- The 'camp beach' should be sufficiently long to "... stretch into the distance ..." suggesting perhaps more than a kilometre.
- The 'camp site' should, about 200 feet to the south, have
- a rocky outcrop extending into the water, or an "outcrop of rocks" or "small promontory of rocks" and,
- On the other side of the small promontory, there should be a smaller but equally sandy beach to the south, also described as a "small cove",
- On the "south side of the headland" (this headland could conceivably comprise both the 'coves' of Tg. Betumpah as observed on Google Maps and Mapcarta) there should be a 'spring forming a small stream that flows inland to the jungle'.
- and further south again, on the south side of the 'smaller beach/small cove' there should be a,
- Stretch of beach at least a mile before which there is a,
- Small stream running into the sea and a,
- Beach that continues beyond the 'small stream'.

In the view of this researcher the AANS nurses, civilian women and servicemen on stretchers were killed on the beach 100-200 feet north of Tg. BETUMPAH.

There are three possibilities for the location of where the two groups of men were killed,

- In the most northern of the two 'coves' forming Tg. BETUMPAH – this one appears to be approximately only 30m across (therefore meeting the definition of a 'cove') and appears to be the most likely location, since it seems unlikely that the Japanese would have bothered to climb over a further two sets of rocky outcrops to reach the second option and Vivian Bullwinkel stated that the Japanese managed to walk the men to the site, kill them individually and return within ten minutes,
- The beach between Tg. BETUMPAH and Tg. BESAJAP/BESAYA – this beach appears on Mapcarta to be some 600 metres long and does not meet the definition of either a 'small beach' or a 'small cove'.
- On Teluk Menggeris between Tg. BESAJAP and Tg. SABAJU – this seems just too far away from the 'camp site' location and is over a kilometre long so does not meet the definition of a 'small beach' or cove'.

NOTE: The March 1946 Graves investigation Unit report held in the Melbourne Archives throws us a contrary scenario insofar as location since it states that, a man named YAS SIN took them due west 4 km from 'KAMPOENG MENDJELONG' to a beach just south of Cape SABAJAU where there was a fisherman's hut opposite a fish trap in the water (Note: today there is one small structure -is it a building?- evident on Mapcarta at that site but no sign of fishing boats) – and this is where YAS SIN said he "... found many bodies of white men and woman mostly in a decomposed state ..." two (?) days after the shooting. AS SIN then took the GRAVES Investigation Unit to the place he said there were many bones "... This was at Cape BESAJAP about a mile further north and as he said there were many amongst the rocks and the half earth half sand on the edge of the water ..."

It is perhaps worth noting that today the main collection of fishermen's huts along that stretch of coast is on the immediate south of TG. BETUMPAH, which is even further north again. Whether the Graves Investigation Unit's final written reconciliation and report - based on YAS SIM's guidance and descriptions and whatever maps they were using - was geographically accurate may be an issue. On the other hand, Teluk MENGGERRIS can be verified on Mapcarta as being due east of Kampung MEJELANG, YAS SIN was a local and seems unlikely he would have wrongly described two key features in his natural environment, and the use of the estimate by the Graves Investigation Unit of '*... about a mile further north ...*' between SABAJAU and BESAJAP is supported by the look of the distance on Mapcarta.

Researchers conclusions; Care must be taken with the assumptions by YAS SIN in this record because so many bodies (men and women including nurses) would have been washed up on this part of the coast from the 'SS Vyner Brooke', the 'SS Tandjong Pinang' and the 'HMS Yin Ping' and other vessels that it would have been hard for YAS SIN to distinguish the massacre victims from those coming from sinking ships, and the number of days after the event he visited the site in 1942 is questioned in the Grave Investigation Unit report.

It is also possible – highly likely - that other isolated small groups of survivors of the ships were also being summarily executed along this stretch of the coast, quite apart from the Australian Army nurses' group, civilians and servicemen with them. Reality is that with no known survivors from these possible killings we would have no record of those war crimes.

Having said that some records suggest that the males could have been killed at Cape BESAJAP at the northern end of Teluk MENGGERRIS. This location is quite some distance from where it appears the survivors first made camp and does not equate with the apparent time taken for the Japanese soldiers to return on two occasions to the Nurses camp after killing the males. However, it does fit quite well with the memory of Eric German who said that, after he survived the killings, he ran for "... about a mile..." (south) until he came to a stream flowing into the sea – this distance coincides with the location of Sungei MENJELANG, as shown on the 1940 map copied to us by Judy Balcombe.

Given the estimated location of the ship when it sank and the 'evidence' from survivor accounts the conclusion of this researcher is that – on balance but not conclusively – the evidence points in greater probability to the campsite and location of the massacre of the women and stretcher wounded being just north of TG. BETUMPAH and the site of the massacre of the two groups of men probably in either of the two 'coves' on TG. Betumpah.

Sources:

- **Borton** – the official report held in the UK National Archives by Lt R.E. Borton, captain of the “SS. Vyner Brooke”
- **BPPL** = List of people from Singapore and Malaya with their last known situation prepared in Changi prison camp during 1942 by Mr. Jack Bennett (aged about 45 years and described as a merchant with the General Import/Export Borneo Co., internee # 386 in Changi) from internees in Changi Civilian internment camp and POWs and Internees passing through that camp in Singapore during 1942. The list is recorded in tiny “Pinpoint” writing on eighteen sheets of ‘Jeyes’ toilet paper that is unreadable to the naked eye. It is held in the National Archives of the United Kingdom and is a unique and invaluable record of the last known sightings of many missing men.
- **BYE** –the book “By Eastern Windows” by William H. McDougall Jr.
- **Coolies** – the book “White Coolies” by Betty Jeffrey.
- **CORD** – Colonial Office Register of Deaths
- **Cross** – list prepared by Mrs. E Cross, a Swiss internee in Palembang married to a British immigration officer in Malaya, of ‘British Internees in Palembang 1942’ with a cipher for each ship on which the internees had travelled from Singapore
- **CWGC** – the records on the website of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.
- **Goldberg** – the report by Dr Anne Marie Goldberg – Curth held in National Archives of Australia, ‘472 WO 30744, pp 104-06, listing the names of survivors she knew of on her raft and in internment camps, plus those who died in ‘Mundok’ and ‘Luebok Lingoe’ camps
- **JMM** – The ‘Malayans’ database compiled by Jonathan Moffatt, author and researcher.
- **MMPM** – The Muntok Memorial Peace Museum website
- **ORB** – the book “On Radji Beach” by Ian W. Shaw.
- **SD** – the book “Singapore’s Dunkirk” by Geoffrey Brooke published in 1989.
- **SOS** – the book “Song of Survival” by Helen Colijn published 1997.
- **SUM** – database of Sumatra internees on the Malayan Volunteer Group website
- **SCOTVB** – the book “A Short Cruise on the Vyner Brooke” by Ralph Armstrong
- **SFPMA** – the newspaper archives at the website of the Singapore National Library containing past copies of the “Singapore Free Press & Mercantile Advertiser”.
- **ST** – the newspaper archives at the website of the Singapore National Library containing the past copies of the “Straits Times”.
- **SYER** – Nurse Ada Syers (later married name Corbitt), Oral History recording, AWM, ID # SO 4057
- **Tebbutt** – official report comprising five pages compiled by Major William Alston Tebbutt, Intelligence Officer, AIF, whilst in Changi POW camp later in the War and held in the National Archives of Australia (NAA. B3856, 144/1/346).
- **WBTW** – the book “Women Beyond The wire” by Lavinia Warner and John Sandilands published in 1982.
- **WHP** – the book “While History Passed’ by Sister Jessie Simons, AANS., published 1954, The Advertiser printing Office, Adelaide, S.A.

- Importantly amongst the sources used is the list on the next page which appears to have been compiled in Palembang camp by internees of people who were on the ship; but believed by the internees to have been killed, or considered "Missing" (source is the UK National Archives),

"VYNER BROOKE"

| NAME | ADDRESS | REMARKS. |
|--------------|---|---|
| WADDE | MRS RAFFLES GIRLS SCHOOL S'PORE. | LAST SEEN IN LIFEBOAT. WOUNDED. HEAD T HAND. 30 |
| WATSON | MRS. KUALA LUMPUR. | |
| SIMMONS | MISS MATRON - ST ANDREWS HOOP. S'PORE. | |
| STANLEY | WILLIAM. VICTORIA HOUSE. VICTORIA ST. LONDON. | SEEN IN WATER. |
| GOODING | MR SAM. STRAITS TRADING Co. Penang. | DEAD BODY SEEN IN SEA. |
| PARFAT | MRS. KLANG | |
| PRATT | MR J. SEREMBAN. | SEEN ON SHIP. BOTH LEGS SHOT OFF. |
| MADDEN | MR JB. TAPIING | WOUNDED IN BACK & ILL. |
| WATSON | E.C. JUDGE. IPOH. | LEFT ON BEACH - DEAD. |
| ALSPRENGER | MISS OLG. TODD ENGLISH SCHOOL. K.L. | BELIEVED DROWNED. |
| WALLER | MR & MRS. P. & J. Dept. S'PORE. | |
| ATGLENACROSS | MRS. 40 COMMERCIAL UNION S'PORE | |
| BETTERIDGE | MR & MRS. HALLAM. & Co. K.L. | SEEN ON BOARD. |
| CARR | MISS. 40 TRENGROVE & Co. K.L. | " " " |
| ANGLIS. | MRS. MISS & 2 BOYS. SINGAPORE. | |
| PEARSON | MRS (SIAMESE). | |
| RITCHIE | MRS. BOARDING HOUSE - OXLEY RD S'PORE. | |
| CHAN | DENYS SON OF MRS CHAN JOO KIM S'PORE. | |
| MUSTELL | SISTER MALAYAN NURSING SERVICE. | |
| STRANGE | DAPHNE | LAST SEEN IN WATER |

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at any rate supply, so far as you can about individuals, or would
 indicated on this form as being required.
 Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.
 Yours faithfully,
 M. R. N. V. R., Large Encl. not seal
 Sheelmae
 Atoll

14. N. E. P. C. Langdon
 Lavinia
 Springhill Road,
 Waikanae

Anyone who has corrections, amendments, clarifications or additional material on the passengers of the 'SS. Vyner Brooke' is most welcome to contact the researcher and compiler of this document: Michael Pether, 2/23 Sanders Avenue, Takapuna, Auckland, 0622, New Zealand. Email mncpether@gmail.com. Telephone number is New Zealand 09-4865754 or mobile New Zealand 0274543695.

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Passenger List (recreated);

- **ANGUS – Laura Angus (nee Shelley)**, who had married Hugh Angus was on the same evacuation ship out of Singapore as her mother Mrs. Alice Shelley (see SHELLEY below) according to the family history of the de Cruz family (source great granddaughter Lara Poyton in the UK email 8 February 2016); the earliest newspaper record of Laura Shelley is in 1902 when she won a prize in the Infant School of Raffles Girls School ('Straits Times' 8.1.1902), which indicates she was born in 1895-96; there are records of a Mr & Mrs. Hugh Angus attending funerals and leaving wreaths in the Eurasian community during 1930s until 1941 [and then sadly later in the War there is a record of - possibly their son - a Private Hugh Shelley Angus , # 25266, of the 2nd Battalion , SSVF, born Singapore in 1920 ,who had been sent from Changi POW camp to the Burma railway camps on 12.10.42, died when the Japanese POW transporter "Rakuyo Maru" was torpedoed on 12.9.44 and 1159 of the 1360 men on board lost their lives (JB database of Malayan Volunteers)]. The scale of the tragedy for the Angus family is not shown in CWGC or other records but is evidenced in two documents compiled in Palembang Internment camp – firstly from the Netherlands Red Cross interview papers showing amongst those missing as "... Angus Family, 4 women and 2 children(witness E.M. Papineau)..." then in a handwritten list of the dead and missing from an unknown author "...Mrs & Miss Angus and 2 boys..." – from which it looks like apart from Laura Angus and her mother Mrs Alice Shelley there were two other women from the Angus family and also two boys who lost their lives . The memorial record was updated on this aspect in August 2021 with the additions of the following three deaths,
- **ANGUS – a Miss Angus.**
- **ANGUS – a Master Angus.**
- **ANGUS – a Master Angus.**
- **ANGUS – Mrs. Lucille Angus;** born 1916, employed by Cold Storage (Changi Museum Civilians database); Miss Lucille Angus appears as bridesmaid to Miss Irene Shelley when she married Mr William Campbell Alexander in Penang in 1934 (SFPMA 25.11.34); and attended the wedding of Miss Louisa Band to Mr. Kenneth Blackler of Penang when they married in Singapore (SFPMA 29.6.38); *possibly ANGUS Ms, Eurasian Matron, St Andrew's School, Singapore.* Changi and Sime Rd internee (JMM); also, Ms Lucille Yvonne Angus, daughter of Mr & Mrs Hugh Angus of Singapore and a Singapore Cold Storage employee. Survived the Vyner Brooke sinking, then interned in Palembang Women's camp, Sumatra, 1942 "... left Camp 12.2.43...". Returned to Singapore and became a Changi & Sime Rd internee No. 3299 and when in Changi was in Cell 38 on the top Floor of A Block in Changi Prison (cipher is A.5.38 in Changi records) and also shown in the 'Sumatra Internees' list; in the List of British Women and Children in Palembang there is recorded a Miss L.M. Angus as an internee in the camp; after the War Lucille married James John Coyle of the RAOC in Singapore and they moved to the UK where they had four children - Roy William (born 1947), John Geoffrey (appears to have died and may be buried in Nudgee cemetery), Peter Derek (born in 1950 and later moved to Queensland and in 2016 retired from Manager at Bunning's hardware Ltd., to "... return to Scotland

...”) and Susan Laura Martha. In 1957 the family had migrated from Folkstone, Kent to Western Australia. During 1960-1974 Lucille and family lived in Papua New Guinea where James worked for the PNG Administration. She died in 1994 aged 78 years of age.

- **ARMSTRONG - ARMSTRONG Mrs Theresia ‘Resie’ Armstrong, Palembang Women’s camp 1942. Sumatra internee.** Died in captivity 7.2.45 [51] Muntok. She was the wife of “...ARMSTRONG H M MERCHT HEEREN B’LDG WIFE + 2 CHIL PALEMBANG...” who is listed in the secret ‘Jeyes’ list in Changi; also, the mother of Ralph Armstrong, Dixie Armstrong and Mrs Grace’ ‘Anna ‘Watters-Pryce and the grandmother of Marc Watters-Pryce who were also all on the ship, see also ‘ARMSTRONGS OF SRI LANKA’ on the internet;
- **ARMSTRONG - Ralph Emil Hilary Armstrong, son of Mrs Resie Armstrong, who was also a passenger on the ship and Mr H.M. Armstrong who had remained in Singapore;** Ralph was about ten years of age when he boarded the ship with his mother two adult sisters and his little nephew Sivo Marc; his story is told in detail in the book he wrote and published in 2003 “ A Short Cruise on the Vyner Brooke”; he survived the sinking with all his family members and they(plus June Bourhill, and a White Russian woman who had been also living in the Heeren Building in Singapore who may well have been Mrs Warman) together floated on a raft for four days without food or water before landing on a small island in the Banka straits; after paying some fishermen to lead them to safety they reached Banka island and after time in Kobe, Pangkalpinang they were taken to Muntok and interned ; Ralph was initially in the womens camps because of his age but in April 1943 he was moved to the mens camp; he endured the serious hardships in Muntok and Belalau mens camps and survived the war to return to Singapore ; he worked as a clerk at Fort Canning for many years before finally leaving Singapore in 1974 for Queensland, Australia where he lives today(telephone conversation with Ralph Armstrong May 2016). Ralph Armstrong passed away in Queensland in 2019.
- **ARMSTRONG - ARMSTRONG Ms Dixie Resie Armstrong, daughter of Mrs Resie Armstrong (above). Palembang women’s camp 1942. Sumatra internee.** See Ralph Armstrong story and book ‘ASCOTVB’. Died in captivity 5.4.45[32] Muntok.
- **ASHTON – Sister Carrie Jean Ashton, SFX 13548, 2/13th Australian General Hospital.** Jean Ashton was born at Woodside, South Australia on 31.5.05, and the 2 IC of the 2/13th Australian General Hospital nurses. She enlisted at Wayville, South Australia, on 27.5.41 and was a senior nurse with that AGH group when they were in Malaya and then Singapore (St. Patrick’s School, Katong). When the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’ began to sink and they had cleared most passengers off the ship, she boarded a lifeboat full of women and children, but the ship began to turn over on that lifeboat and everyone had to jump out. So, she jumped into the sea with Wilma Oram and Mona Wilton (p. 87 ORB) and narrowly avoided being taken down by the sinking ship (as tragically happened to Mona Wilton) she then made her way to an overturned raft where a large group of nurses, women and children gathered (p.174 ORB). She reached Banka Island and was interned at Muntok in the Customs House where because she was the most senior survivor in the 2/13th AGH group and a natural leader, she became a camp leader during internment and ran the camp hospital with a nun. Her bravery and effort during the war were recognised by her becoming ‘Mentioned in Despatches’. After the war, her niece published her wartime diary as a book. Jean Ashton passed away, aged 96 years of age, in 2002.
- **AXON (also referred to as EXHAM) – Mrs Queenie Mary Axon;** AXON Mrs Queenie Mary Axon (nee Danker), wife of Army L/Cpl Alfred John Axon, Manchester Regiment. They married October 1940 at Johore Bahru. Aged 31 in 1942. With

daughter Patricia Ann. aged 3, a Palembang Sumatra internee. Cross list notes “... (?) Died on 28.9.45 in Singapore...” L/Cpl Axon remained in Johore 1945 [Jalan Waterworks JB]. In 1963 Patricia married Bill Bagby, son of Sumatra internee Wally Bagby (JMM); also Queenie Mary Danker married Alfred John Axon from Ireland (ST. 13.10.40) *in this context it is worth noting that the best man at their wedding was a William McLurg (ST. 13.10.40) and when the ‘Vyner Brooke’ was sunk it appears that one of the survivors appears to have been a Hamilton McClurg (also referred to as ‘Jock’ McGlurk by survivor Stoker Ernest Lloyd);* in 1941 there was the birth notice “ ... to Queenie nee Danker , wife of Mr. A. J. Axon, a daughter on 18.7.41 (ST. 23.7.41); in a recording held in the Singapore Oral Archives (#001717) a cousin of Queenie by the name of Mrs Hedwig Elizabeth Anuar says that “ ... Queenie had her baby with her on the ship (*presumably Patsy*) and during the sinking her baby was thrown down to her from the ship, also that mother and daughter were later in Palembang internment camp, later in the Oral Archive it is stated that “ ... Queenie died after a week or so of being repatriated to Singapore from kidney trouble and malnutrition ...”.

- **AXON (also referred to as EXHAM) – Miss Patricia ‘Patsy’ Ann Axon,** daughter of Mr & Mrs. A. J. Axon, SEE ABOVE ENTRY, is sometimes stated as being three years of age when the ship sank but was in fact only seven months old and still a baby; she and her mother survived the War and internment and in 1963 Patsy married Bill Bagby son of the well-known horse trainer Wally Bagby (ST. 21.2.63), but this marriage did not last and they were divorced in 1968 (ST. 20.2.68), in which same newspaper report it is mentioned that there was one son from the marriage.
- **BALFOUR- OGILVIE /OGILVY– Sister Elaine ‘Lainie’ Lenore Balfour – Ogilvie,** born 1912, was from Renmark in the Murray River area of South Australia, the daughter of a highly decorated Australian soldier and one of five siblings in a successful family of graziers; as well described in the book ‘ORB’ she was one of those people who excel at most things they undertake in life and are liked by most people they encounter. Recalled as a beautiful singer, she became a dedicated nurse after training at the Adelaide Children’s Hospital. In 1940 she enlisted in the AIF as an AANS nurse (# SFX 10596) in 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station and after the Japanese invasion of Malaya served at Kluang and Tampoi caring for hundreds of wounded and earning a reputation for being loved by these men for her singing and personality. Along with other nurses on the “SS. Vyner Brooke” she volunteered to be one of the group who stayed on board the ship to the last in the event of a sinking and ensure all the passengers reached safety on lifeboats; in fact after the sinking she was seen holding onto a rope trailing from Matron Drummond’s lifeboat and possibly that is how she reached Radji Beach; in a tribute to the natural, positive, confident character and personality that was Elaine Balfour – Ogilvy it is recorded that (p. 214-215ORB) after observing the massacre of the two groups of men , she suggested that the nurses all run in different directions so that at least some of them would survive. This being probably the most sensible idea that anyone had on Radji Beach she was overruled by Matron Drummond and told they must all comply with Japanese instructions to avoid letting their wounded patients down. Elaine then died with the other 21 nurses on the beach. Interestingly Major Tebbutt in his affidavit recalled seeing, after the massacre, the body of one nurse on the beach some 50 yards away from the main group of victims (as did Eric German BYE p.152) so it is possible that even in her last moments Elaine Balfour – Ogilvy did make a desperate, heroic and independent attempt to survive – which seems completely in character with her positive approach to life and the probable influence

of her father's bravery in war – rather than be passively slaughtered by a callous enemy.

- **BATES Sister Louvima (also known as Louvinia) 'Vima' Mary Isabella Bates, WFX 11169, 2/13th Australian General Hospital.** Daughter of Mr & Mrs A. E. Bates of South Perth. Little is known of Vima Bates' early life and it is not until 1937 that she first appears in local newspapers as taking charge of the Kalgoorlie Infant Health Centre, presumably as a registered nurse ("The West Australian", Perth, 6.4.37). The following year she was still in Kalgoorlie and appears as a guest at a farewell party for a friend (22.3.38) and later in the year is reported as leaving Kalgoorlie Infant Health Centre ("Kalgoorlie Miner" 7.10.38). She appears to have moved to Perth because in 1939 she is reported as jointly holding a party at the 'Waldorf' ("Sunday Times", Perth, 5.2.39) – this period of her life featured her as a very social person. The pay book photo taken on her enlistment in the AANS, c. July 1941, shows a good-looking young woman with brown hair and a direct, confident gaze. She served in Malaya and Singapore and after the 'Vyner Brooke' was sunk we are told she "... made a safe escape from the ship and a short time later was seen alone on a life raft. She soon drifted away from the main group of survivors, however, and was never seen alive again..." (p.165, ORB); in fact it was Sister Ada Syer who, in the sea the night of the sinking heard Louvinia Bates (of the 'flaming red hair') call out and when Ada Syer responded, Louvina called back her name was 'Bates' and then never seen again (Ada Bates interview # SO 4057 at the AWM); a bereavement notice placed by her parents Mr & Mrs A. E. Bates, 190 Douglas Avenue, South Perth in "The West Australian" (26.6.44) notes her family called her 'Vima' – reflecting Vima's social and possibly gregarious nature she had four other death notices in that same paper on the same day, all stating that she was believed to have been killed near Sumatra on 11 February 1942 (details were naturally still very confused until the surviving nurses were taken to Singapore after the Japanese surrender). Later in 1950 a 'War Nurses Memorial Hostel' was opened in Queens Crescent, Mt Lawley by the Governor of Western Australia - one of the nurses memorialised by this building was Vima Bates. Since she was from Western Australia and the RSL remembered her at the Applecross ANZAC Day ceremonies in 2016 along with others on the "Vyner Brooke". Vima is also remembered on the Singapore war memorial at Kranji.
- **BEARD- Sister Alma May Beard, WFX 11175, 2/13th Australian General Hospital,** was born in 1911 to Edward William and Katherine Mary Beard of Toodyay, WA, and had two siblings. She trained at Perth Hospital and then moved to one of the larger Sydney hospitals to gain experience ("Toodyay Herald", 20.9.40). After returning to WA she enlisted in the AANS on 19 June 1941 and in September 1941 was sent to Malaya for overseas experience ("The West Australian", 1941 which has a group photo of Alma with "... Louvina[sic] Bates, Iole Harper and Mina Hodgson together with Lt. Gen. Sir James Mitchell at a farewell function at the Adelphi Hotel, Perth..." and also "The West Australian" 30.10.45 – the latter newspaper article is accompanied by a pre-war photo of a most attractive young woman). Alma Beard lost her life in the massacre on Radji Beach – when the nurses were forced to the execution place Alma was on the far left of the line of Australian nurses facing the sea – next to Vivian Bullwinkel, and said "... Bully, there are two things I've always hated in my life, the Japs and the sea and today I've ended up with both ..." (ORB, p.216). In 1944 the "Toodyay Herald" (16.4.44) advised that Mr. & Mrs. E. W. Beard of 'Pellnell', Culham (a town in the Toodyay shire northeast of Perth) had received notice that Alma was now "Missing Believed Killed" on or after 11 February 1942. On Anzac Day 1945 ("Toodyay Herald", 4.5.45) the Toodyay CWA laid a wreath in

remembrance of Alma and 10 soldiers of the district. She is memorialised by the Alma Beard Community Health Centre at Toodyay, Western Australia.

- **BEESTON** – “... *Ms Louise Beeston* b.22.9.07 at Stoke-on-Trent. Teacher, St Andrew’s School, Singapore from 1936. Lived at Temple House, Tank Rd, Singapore. Palembang Women’s Camp, Sumatra internee. Repatriated on Antenor from Singapore, arriving in Liverpool 27.10.45. To Stoke on Trent. Returned to St Andrew’s, Singapore. Later Supervisor for all three Anglican schools in Singapore: St Andrew’s, St Hilda’s, St Margaret’s. Retired on health grounds 1960. Died 12.1983 Barnstable, Devon ...” (JMM); some pre-war newspaper references are firstly, as a teacher from Upperly House, Bucknall, Stoke on Trent on the ‘Maloja’ in 1931 bound for Colombo (ST 26.6.31); then a return journey in 1934 as a ‘teacher from Ceylon’ on the ‘City of Baroda’ from Calcutta to London (ST 26.3.34); her arriving in Singapore on the “Chitral’ from Marseilles (ST. 8.4.36); as a producer of a children’s show at the home of General Dobbie (ST. 18.7.36); her arriving in Singapore on the “Rajputana’ in 1937 (SFPMA. 18.1.37); and in 1940 on the ‘Glenberg’ aged 33 years and a teacher (who had been living in ‘other parts of the Empire’) bound for the Straits Settlements. According to a list prepared in Palembang camp Miss L. Beeston was on the “Vyner Brooke” (Cross); it seems that Miss Beeston was also a Missionary for the Anglican Church because in their review of the period 1941-49 under the heading ‘Lay Workers’ it states “... Miss Louise Beeston of St Andrews School remained almost to the Surrender, working at the General Hospital as a nurse. She was captured and interned in Palembang. She survived and returned to duty in 1946...” (Anglican Diocese archives, Singapore). We know from the testimony that Sister Vivian Bullwinkel gave to the Melbourne based ‘Australian Board of Enquiry into War Crimes’ on 29.10.45 that Louise Beeston (named ‘Miss Beeston of the Education Department, Singapore’ by Vivian) was in the second lifeboat to reach ‘Radji Beach’ with Vivian , 12 other nursing sisters, a civilian woman and husband and a ships officer and then with the others had to walk two miles south along the beach to where they could see the bonfire from the first lifeboat. Clearly Miss Louise Beeston survived the terrible experience of the internment camps of Muntok., Palembang, Muntok again and then Lombok Linggau for in 1945 Miss Beeston arrived at Liverpool on the ‘Antenor’ from Singapore via RAPWI giving her address as ‘The Mill House’, 4 Fenton Road, Bucknall, Stoke-on-Trent. Her love for the Orient does not appear to have been compromised by her wartime experiences because she continued to travel to South East Asia for work after the War and in 1953 she was on the ‘Corfu’ from Southampton to Singapore as an Education Officer and then again as an Education Officer travelling from Singapore to London via Hong Kong in 1960. Louise Beeston passed away in December 1983 at Barnstable, Devon
- **BETTERIDGE (note that there is no record of a BURRIDGE or BURIDGE) - Thomas Daniel Betteridge**, born 1880 Lancashire, the son of Thomas Harper Betteridge (d. 1920) and Elisabeth Betteridge. Partner, Hallam & Co. [Brokers] Kuala Lumpur from 1929. Lost at sea 15.2.42 on the *Vyner Brooke* **with wife** Carrie Rose Faraday (JMM); Thomas Betteridge spent most of his adult life in Malaya. The earliest reference to him is in the Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser in 1907 when he is noted as arriving in Singapore on the P & O ‘Oceania’ (SFPMA 13.5.07); later that year he is reported playing tennis in Singapore and in 1909 he is playing water polo at the Singapore Swimming Club and still participating in tennis. By 1912 he returned from Home Leave on the P & O ‘Sardinia’ and the following year he was appointed as the new Manager for Guthrie & Co. in Kuala Lumpur; the following year he was on the Committee for the Selangor Turf Club; Mr & Mrs. Betteridge went on ‘home leave’ during 1916 and became established residents of KL so that by 1919 Thomas

was also appointed on to Committee of the prestigious Selangor Club. It appears he never relinquished his KL links because in 1938 he was still on the Committee of the Selangor Club and involved in a the vigorous debate over whether the Club should merger (SFPMA March 1939) ST. ; in 1921 they were transferred to Guthrie's in Singapore and Thomas took up lawn bowls in his forties; they obviously were well accepted into Singapore society for in 1923 they are listed at a government house 'tiffin' and later that year Thomas is playing competitive billiards at the Singapore Cricket Club; Thomas did not relinquish his original involvement in the Masonic movement in Kuala Lumpur because in 1927-28 he is reported as an officer of Read Lodge, Kuala Lumpur; the following year he moves to Hallam & Co as a partner (with A.N. Farquharson) and that same year Miss Maureen Phyllis Betteridge was given away in marriage by Thomas to Ernest John Douglas (ST. 3.8.29); 'home leave' occurred every four years or so with the additional break in 1937 when he left for Hong Kong "... on a short health trip to recuperate after his recent illness ..." (SFPMA 16.1.37); in 1938 he is reported "going on his eight home leave.." and always via Suez because it fascinated him; the 'Jeyes' secret list compiled in Changi states "... BETTERIDGE THOS D HALLAM CO LEFT LATE W . WIFE ..." (BPPL); so, at age 62 years Thomas, as a senior member of the business and social establishment in Singapore and Malaya, boarded the ship with his wife Carrie after 35 years of family and business life in the land he had chosen. Little is known of what occurred to Mr & Mrs. Betteridge during the short voyage and the sinking but it seems highly likely that Thomas is the person referred to by survivor Eric Germann in the book "By Eastern Windows" as "... the South African Mr. Buridge ..." since the researcher can find no trace of a man named Buridge in pre-war Malaya. If this is correct Thomas had been wounded severely in the bombing of the ship by a bomb fragment in his kidneys (BYE, p. 146) and probably put aboard the first lifeboat to leave the "SS. Vyner Brooke". On Monday 16 February 1942 Thomas was lying on Radji Beach, Banka Island, on a stretcher with at least five other wounded. He would have heard the first eight men taken along the beach and executed by the Japanese patrol which carried out the atrocities and then again heard the second group of men taken away and murdered by machine gun fire. Tragically (see below) he may have even been aware that his wife of many decades was also in the group of Australian army nurses massacred on the beach. The account by Eric Germann states that when he returned to the place where the stretcher cases had been left 'Buridge the South African' had been bayoneted in the chest, as had the other stretcher cases (BYE p.153) and this generally is confirmed in 'ORB' p.217 where the author states that a second group of the Japanese soldiers "... worked its way through the wounded on makeshift stretchers in the shade of the trees, bayoneting them all ..."; so, contrary to the simple and unemotional official records that would otherwise tell the story of his death, was reality of the cruel and unnecessary murder of Thomas on a beach on Bank Island by a psychopathic group of Japanese soldiers; the list compiled in Palembang camp of those passengers they believed had died simply states "Mr & Mrs. Betteridge, Hallam & Co., KL, last seen on board ..."; in the UK Archives a list of missing and dead includes "... Mr Betteridge, Kuala Lumpur, Killed on board Vyner Brooke..."; the official CWGC website simply records "Thomas Daniel Betteridge, civilian, died 14.2.42 in the sinking of the 'SS. Vyner Brooke'"(CWGC); whilst the Colonial Office record has "...Thomas Daniel Betteridge, Hallam & Co., Kuala Lumpur died on or about 14.2.42 in the Banka Straits as a result of the sinking of the 'SS. Vyner Brooke', Source , Searcher Organisation Clearing House. Reg M1, Folio 202, Serial 1022" (CORD); the final record of the life of Thomas Betteridge is the Grant of Letter of Administration 1947 (where people die intestate) (Item

1947/273). Both Thomas and Carrie are recorded on the gravestone of Thomas' parents in Rake Lane Cemetery, Wallasey, Wirral, UK.

- **BETTERIDGE – Mrs. Carrie Rose Faraday Betteridge (it appears her maiden name might have been Faraday).** Little is known of Mrs. Betteridge except for a mention that she arrived in Malaya a year before her husband (must have been 1906) and later whilst she was living in Kuala Lumpur in a group raising money for a plane during the First World War, referred to as 'A Woman's Aeroplane' (ST. 29.3.16), in 1929 her daughter Maureen Phyllis married Ernest John Douglas, and then in 1939 Carrie arriving on the 'Perseus' from Plymouth (SFPMA 20.7.39). Carrie Betteridge may be the same person referred to in a 1946 letter to the parents of the deceased 2nd Engineer of the 'SS Vyner Brooke', Jimmy Miller, wherein his close friend Miss Ivy Allen mentions that " ... Mrs B. an elderly 16 stone refugee who was on the 'Vyner Brooke' was amongst a party which reached the beach...". There are also references in the books 'BYE' and 'ORB' to "... There was also one elderly European woman who had politely declined the offer to leave with the other civilian women and children. Her husband was amongst the seriously injured. They had not been separated in nearly 50 years of married life and they would not be separated now..." (ORB. P.210); by deduction on the identity of the man named Buridge (no Buridge can be found living in Malaya or Singapore at that time) it seems very likely that it was Carrie Betteridge who is described in 'ORB' as the lone civilian included in the group of women described as "... the 22 nurses joined by an elderly civilian who had refused to leave her husband and now stood weeping in the middle of the line ..." (ORB, p.216); so , most awfully, it seems that Carrie Betteridge lost her life in the massacre of nurses on Radji beach by a group of soldiers who committed one of the more callously unnecessary mass killings by the Japanese of European women in the Second World War; her official record states "*Carrie Rose Faraday Betteridge, civilian, died on 14.2.42 in the sinking of the SS. Vyner Brooke ...*" (CWGC) and her official death entry in the CORP records are " Mrs. Carrie Rose Faraday Betteridge, wife of T.D. Betteridge of Kuala Lumpur, Selangor died on or about 14.2.42 in the Banka Straits in the sinking of the "SS. Vyner Brooke' . Source C-in-C ALFSEA. Reg. M1, Folio 219, Serial 1085); the final record on her life is an advertisement in 1948 being "... Notice re the estate of Carrie Rose Faraday Betteridge, late of 7 Stoner Road, Kuala Lumpur ..." (ST. 23.10.48). Both Thomas and Carrie are recorded on the gravestone of Thomas' parent in Rake Lane Cemetery, Wallasey, Wirral, UK.
- **BLAKE –Sister Kathleen Constance 'Pat' Blake, NFX 70528, 2/10 Australian General Hospital.** Pat Blake who was aged 29 years (born 1913?) at the time of the sinking of the 'Vyner Brooke' was the third daughter of Mr. & Mrs. George Blake of Lindfield, Sydney, NSW ("The Australian Womens Weekly", 15.12.45) and had trained at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney. She passed her Nurses Registration Board exams 'General Branch' whilst at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in 1936 ("Sydney Morning Herald". 18.12.36). She must have enlisted during 1940 because she was in the contingent of 2/10th AGH personnel who sailed from Sydney in January 1941 for Malaya (AWM). Little is known of her experiences but after the sinking she was captured on Banka Island and endured internment in Muntok, Palembang and finally Belalau where she became very sick. In fact during internment she was "... so ill that she was not aware that one night a rat actually chewed the end off one of her toes ..." (ORB, p.277) She survived and after the War was discharged as Captain Blake in July 1946 (ORB, p.300) – the actual timing of her discharge is put into question however because in "The Sun", Sydney of 2.12.45 there is the report that "... Survivor from the ship 'Vyner Brooke' and of a POW camp, Army nurse Kathleen Blake was married at Shore Chapel yesterday to Lt. Keith Dixon, AIF, to whom she

became engaged at the beginning of the war ...” – there is also a photo of the newly married couple in “The Australian Women’s Weekly”(15.12.45). Over fifty years later, in the “Sydney Morning Herald “of 11.4.98 there was the funeral notice of “Pat (Kathleen Constance) Dixon” to be held on 17 April 1998 at Ourimbah – a small town on the central Coast region of NSW.

- **BLANCH** - Sister Jessie Jane ‘Blanchie’ Blanch, QX 19074, 2/10 Australian General Hospital, was born on 18.3.10 in Bangalow, northern NSW; she may have trained at Lismore but was nursing in Brisbane when she enlisted and was posted to the 2/10 AGH in Malaya. An attractive dark-haired young woman in her early 30s she was regarded as a very good operating theatre nurse and someone who remained very calm under even the stress of bombardment. This showed up in the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke’ when she was probably the last person to leave the sinking vessel and had to jump off the stern as it went down bow first. In the sea, she joined a group of other nurses clinging to a piece of wood and they remarkably began singing “We are off to see the Wizard” and other songs to keep up their spirits. This group were swept by currents quite close to Radji Beach that night and then also through the ships of the Japanese invasion fleet where the Japanese just laughed at the survivors. By Sunday morning they were carried onto a beach on Banka Island and soon captured by the Japanese and imprisoned in Muntok cinema. She survived the horrors of three years internment in Muntok, Palembang and Belalau and after the war worked as a private nurse. She married Sydney photographer Albert Eaton – Lee in 1950 and in 1973 they retired to her hometown of Alstonville, NSW. She appears in the book “Willingly into the Fray: 100 years of Australian Army Nursing “and a book on her life was also compiled – “Blanchie – Alstonville’s Inspirational World War Two Nurse” by Ina Kirkland. ‘Blanchie’ passed away in Alstonville, aged 89 years, in 1999.
- **BOURHILL** - Mrs Dorothy Bourhill was the wife of Alexander George Bourhill [MBE 1953, Maintenance Engineer, Power Station, Municipal Electrical Dept from 1927. Former RQMS 1SSVF. Late Changi internee 1943.]; she is mentioned arriving on the P & O ‘Macedonia’ in Singapore from London (SFPMA 5.10.27)and five years later returning from home leave with Alexander (ST. 1.3.32); in 1941 Dorothy was a member of the newly opened YMCA Club in Orchard Road (SFPMA 2.10.41); Dorothy was lost at sea on the “ SS. Vyner Brooke”- according to ‘ORB’ p. 165 Dorothy may have drowned when the second lifeboat capsized - but her daughter June survived, they also had a son in the UK possibly by the name of Crawford Bourhill (ST 14.12.34) attending Tanglin Preparatory School; official records show “ ... Mrs M. Bourhill wife of A. G. Bourhill, Singapore Municipality, on or since 14.2.42 , at sea off Singapore, presumed to have lost her life at sea during the evacuation from Singapore (various private sources)...” (CORD. Reg. M1, Folio 286, Serial No. 1325); Alex & June were repatriated 1945 arriving Sydney on Tamaroa 10.10.45. Alex returned post-war to Electrical Dept. Singapore: appointed Assistant Power Station Superintendent 1949. (JMM), and her daughter,
- **BOURHILL** - Miss June Bourhill is first recorded in local newspapers in 1938 as one of the ‘Capitol Dollies’ of the premier Dance Studio in Singapore performing at the capitol Theatre (SFPMA 28.10.38 including photo) and the following year as a Flower Girl at the wedding of Miss Sheila McDonnell to Lt Cdr John Mansell at the sailors Chapel (ST. 18.3.39); she was aged 10 in 1942 when she boarded the “SS. Vyner Brooke” and at the time of the sinking ended up on a little raft with teenager Ralph Armstrong, a White Russian woman [it is possible that this was Mrs Warman – mother of the small boy called ‘Mischa’ , because author Ralph Armstrong notes that “ ... The White Russian lady may well have been living in the same block as in

the Heeren Building in Singapore , but in one of the upstairs apartments ...” and fellow passengers the Warmans had a hairdressing business in the Heeren building] plus a badly burned Malay seaman – their raft collided with another , severing the end one of one of June’s fingers. They were all on the raft for three days and nights during which time the Malay seaman began to drink seawater, lost his mind and leapt overboard to his death. The raft appears to have firstly washed up on an island near Banka Island and then some days later the small group were taken to Banka Island by local natives (see pp.43 – 48 of the book SCOTVB); She was interned in the terrible Muntok, Palembang and Belalau camps in Sumatra and despite many in those camps dying she survived which is a tribute to the ‘totally devoted’ care (p.128 WBTW) she received from “SS. Vyner Brooke” survivor Mrs. Ena J. Murray who ‘adopted’ her for the duration of internment[the wife of Kenneth ‘Ken’ Scott Murray of William Jacks Ltd building supplies department and who was also a Changi internee. Ena and Ken were repatriated to the UK on the ‘Cilicia’ in October 1945 and returned to Singapore in 1946, later moving to retirement in Jersey where Ena passed away in 1995 (JMM)]. Post war June is mentioned as arriving back in Singapore from School on the ‘Charon’ for Xmas Holidays (ST. 13.12 47). In 1995 June 9 Bourhill) Brown travelled from Ireland to attend Ena Murray’s funeral (source J Sawyer, a nephew of Ena Murray and Norah Chambers). Today June Brown is living in Ireland (JMM); informal information suggest that June has now passed away?

- **BRIDGE Sister Ada Joyce Bridge**, NFX 76284, 2/10 Australian General Hospital (also 2/13 AGH in Singapore), AANS, was born in 1907 in Scone, NSW. Her family home was ‘Stoney Creek’, Belltrees. She trained at St Luke’s Hospital, Darlinghurst, Sydney during 1930-34 after which she undertook private nursing until enlisting on 15.9.41. In her Army records she is described as ‘brown eyes, brown hair’ and there is a pleasant photo of her in official (AWM) records. She survived the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke’ but tragically was amongst the nurses massacred on Radji Beach (ORB p. 218). A small book (PP 36) was written in 1989 by Joan Crouch “One Life is Ours: the story of Ada Joyce Brookes”. The local newspaper in 1954 described her as “ ... a popular and brave district servicewoman ...” and on 27.8.54 “The Scone Advocate” published an article about the dedication by the Scone & District Country Womens institute of its new Baby Health centre and Assembly Hall, “ ... with all conveniences in Kelly Street, part of the land on which the Cottage stands (facing Kingdon Street) ...”, to Joyce Bridge with a most warm description of her “ ... To those who knew her in private life there remains the memory of a lovely girl with laughing brown eyes, unafraid to face the horrors of war in her eagerness to help nurse the wounded and suffering ...”.These days the baby centre has been absorbed into the wider medical facilities of the town of Scone but the Country Womens building remains where a photo hangs of Joyce Bridge – sadly the original medals issued to her posthumously which hung in the Assembly Hall were stolen some years ago, but have been replaced with miniatures .
- **BROWN –Mrs E.A. ‘Mary’ Brown**. On the Vyner Brooke with daughter Shelagh [see below] Son Robert Alexander [POW?]? Sumatra internee – Palembang 3.42-11.44 then Muntok. Died in captivity 17.1.45 Muntok, Sumatra (JMM);although the first newspaper report of Mr E. A. Brown is him arriving in Singapore to join Brinkmann & Co. (ST. 6.7.36), the first newspaper record of Mary Brown was her arrival in Singapore on the “Roon” in 1910 (SFPMA 8.6.19) and she almost immediately becomes involved in the elite social circle with an attendance at a reception and a Coronation ball at Government House in 1911 (ST. 5.6.11); her daughter was born in 1911 at ‘Burnsall’ ,Grange road (SFPMA 4.10.11) she is reported at the Governor’s Ball in 1913 and a society wedding in 1915 and in 1916 there is another birth notice

for a daughter, again at 'Burnsall' on 23 March 1916 (this must have been Shelagh Brown); more reports of her at Government House dinners ; in 1929 there is another birth notice for a daughter at 'Mrs. Stevens Nursing Home', Kenny road, Kula Lumpur (address given as Kalumpang); by 1929 Mary Brown has become an icon of Singapore society and is shown (photos) presenting prizes at the Geylang School sports and organising the Poppy day Appeal at Katong park at which the Governor attended (more photos); photos show her as a tall, stately woman with dark hair; by 1931 she seems to be involved in every community good work and attending society wedding and funeral in fact it was a rare society event at which she was not present; in 1939 the family lived at 'Grove Court', Goodman Road, Katong; the final newspaper report of her is in 1941 at a clothes making group in Singapore; She was the wife of *Mr. Edwin Arthur Brown, OBE 1934 VD JP b.1878 Eccles, Manchester. He arrived in Singapore in 1901. Joined Singapore Volunteer Rifles. Captain 1913. Brinckmann & Co. till 1918. Adiz & Ezekiel Exchange Brokers. 1918- Commander Chinese Company, Singapore Volunteers 1913-23 then Acting commandant SVC. Major Retd 1933. Joined Cathedral Choir 1901. Choirmaster 1910-42. Municipal Commissioner for Singapore Merchant and Exchange Broker: Proprietor E.A. Brown & Co. D'Almeida St and resident Nunes Buildings, Malacca St, Singapore. Singapore Musical Society – started the children's concerts and Amateur Dramatics/ G&S. Singapore Film Censor. Changi and Sime Rd internee. To British Military Hospital, Poona 9.45 then repatriated via Bombay with daughter Shelagh, arriving Southampton 20.11.45 on SS Arundel Castle. Wife Mary, 2 daughters: Shelagh [see below] & Barbara. Son Alec a POW in Europe. The family lived at Grove Court, Katong, Singapore. He retired to Lyminge, Kent and died on 15.9.55 [77] at Gloucester (JM). In November 1945 there appeared a notice in the magazine of the 'British Malaysians' noting "... We regret to announce the death whilst interned at Muntok, Banka Island, Sumatra of Mary Elizabeth Brown, wife of E.A. Brown, OBE., of Singapore. Mr Brown and Miss Shelagh Brown are safe ...".*

- **BROWN** – Miss Dorothy Shelagh Brown, born in 1916 in Singapore. Educated in UK returning to Singapore in 1939. Worked at the Ministry of War Economy. Evacuated with mother [see above] on the Vyner Brooke [sunk]. **Sumatra internee.** Palembang 3.42-11.44, Muntok 11.44-4.45, Loebek Linggau 4.45- 9.45. She was a keen singer. Married Arthur Lea and lived in Canada 1946-1952 then UK. Arthur died 1988. Sheila (sic) died 30.11.05 [89]. Papers donated to IWM. (JMM); Shelagh Brown is reported to have returned from home leave with her father and sister Barbara on the 'Bremen' in 1936 (SFPMA. 16.4.36); in 1939, she was the bridesmaid at the wedding of her sister Barbara; there is a report describing how she saved a small boy from drowning in a lake in Singapore – poignant given her later experience on the "Vyner Brooke" (ST. 10.9.40); by the time Shelagh had been moved to Palembang camp she is described by fellow internee, Helen Colijn, as living in House No. 9 with her mother and a dozen other people "... packed like the proverbial sardines...". She became friends with Helen Colijn and they would take walks around Irenelaan in the camp and by then she is quoted by Helen as experiencing her "past sickness' – her longing for the lovely evenings in Singapore when friends took her out to tennis and dinner parties; late in their internment Helen records Shelagh's excitement at being bequeathed a hairbrush on the death of a fellow internee saying "... its lovely to be able to brush my hair again. It's been more than two years since I did ..." (SOS); Shelagh's manuscript at the IWM is Document 1729.
- **BULL** – Mrs. Annabelle Bull; she was the wife of *Harold Robert Bull, MA b.1888, who had been educated at Framlingham & Queen's College, Cambridge. He went to Malaya 1911 as Cadet SS. By 1937 District Judge [Civil] SS Singapore and Police*

Magistrate SS. Captain Taiping Swimming Club. Aged 54 in 1942. Changi and Sime Rd internee. Wife interned at Palembang. Eldest daughter & 2 children missing? Member of BAM till 1973 (JMM). ; it appears that Mrs Ann or Annabelle Bull (nee Benn) (source is freeweb.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry website) was born in c. 1899 and married Harold Bull (prior to 1923 according to the History of Suffolk website) there is also a reference to one son by the name of Daniel Bull and the freeweb.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry website states that she had two sons and two daughters; Singapore newspaper reports show Mr and Mrs Bull were married in 1931 (ST. 26.11.31); as the only woman on board identified with about four children it would seem that Mrs Bull was a the calm and composed mother recorded by Betty Jeffrey (ORB, p. 150) during the bombing of the ship “... *It was most uncomfortable on the floor [it seems of the saloon] ...it did not leave much room for my long legs and I always seemed to have a small child’s foot under my stomach. The poor little kid was wonderfully brave ... She didn’t utter a sound. Her mother had four small children with her and she calmly prayed aloud – the Lord’s Prayer. Poor soul. If anyone needed help she did....*”, in fact Molly Bull’s recollection (telephone conversation with Researcher 18.2.20) was that as the first bombs hit the ship she was with her mother and siblings in the Saloon, at the foot of some stairs, they lost consciousness for a few moments [presumably bomb blast] but upon coming to she recalls being on her mother’s right side , with Robin on the left and her mother carrying Hazel up to the deck where they came across a woman in a grey uniform who was dead. He mother told her to sit on a mattress on the deck and say the Lords Prayer, then they reached the railing and her mother climbed down with Hazel – next it was Molly’s turn and she remembered someone lifting her onto the rope ladder which she began to climb down, she recalls” ... *men’s shoes in her face...* “ but this may have been a man falling dead down the ladder. In the sea Mrs Bull took Molly to the far side of a [upturned?] lifeboat and told her to “...*put her hand in the hand of God...*”.She recalls about this time that some objects like chicken coops which had been tied to the ships deck landed on her and she kicked it away, then she saw her brother on a raft with Mrs Pearson so she swam to that raft and witnessed the actual sinking of the ship. There were objects that she thought looked like ‘chicken coops’ floating in the sea. One poignant memory is of a woman coming out onto the ships deck as it was sinking carrying what looked like a baby shawl – Mrs Bull told her later that there were no babies son board [Researcher note: there seems to have bene many unidentified children and almost certainly babes in arms] and that women went down with the ship. ; during the sinking Mrs Bull and her daughter Hazel managed to cling to the overturned lifeboat in a group with six AANS nurses (Mittleheuser, Clancy, Hughes, Raymont, Gardam and Ashton) two civilian men, a few other women and a Malay sailor named Billy. Mrs Bull said that her other two children had drifted away from her - and Hazel had also lost her ‘teddy bear’ in the sea so Jean Ashton swam after the teddy and returned it to the little girl. Mrs Bull and her daughter later switched to a raft as did everyone in the damaged lifeboat when it began to sink. (Pp.174-175 ORB; it was the understanding of Mrs Bull and everyone else from the ship that the two children had been lost and this was the situation until after the War when Lady Mountbatten, after hearing the story, flew to Java and within 24 hours flew back again with the children them with their mother by bringing them to the bedside of Mrs Bull who was recovering in Singapore after the internment years. Mrs Bull refers in that article to her 12-year-old daughter ‘Millie’ and 10-year-old son Robin. ‘Millie’ (correct name Molly) told the newspaper reporter “... *Robin and I had to jump from the boat as the Japanese machine – gunned us. We swam until we were picked up by a raft. We reached Java*

where the natives helped us for months. Later we were interned. We never believed Mummy was dead. We saw her in the water with hazel on her back. We always prayed for them. Lady Mountbatten is like a fairy godmother to us, but I did not recognise mummy” (‘The Advertiser’, Adelaide, SA 1931-54)

- **BULL** – Miss Hazel Bull aged somewhere around four to six years; in an article in the “The Advertiser ‘Adelaide, post war Hazel’s age is given as 8 years of age at the time by her mother. She spent the war in internment with her mother in Muntok, Palembang and Belalau.
- **BULL** – this is **Molly (or sometimes incorrectly ‘Mollie/Millie/ or even in the book “Out of the Smoke’ she is called ‘Mary’) Bull** daughter of Harold Robert Bull and Mary Bull (above). Molly was the eldest of three children accompanying Mrs Annabelle Bull. It was the understanding of Mrs Bull all through the war that Molly and her brother Robin had been lost after the sinking, This was until after the War when Lady Mountbatten, after hearing the story of the survival of Molly and her brother Robin via ex – internee Mis Leila Bridgman, flew to Java and within 24 hours flew back again with the children her and reunited them with their mother by bringing them to the bedside of Mrs Bull, who was recovering in Singapore after the internment years. Mrs Bull refers in a post War newspaper article to her 12-year-old daughter ‘Millie’ [sic] and 10-year-old son Robin, but this may have been her age at the end of the War and it seems that the children were actually 9 years and 6 years respectively at the time of the sinking of the ‘SS Vyner Brooke”. Molly / ‘Millie’ told a newspaper reporter “... *Robin and I had to jump from the boat as the Japanese machine – gunned us. We swam until we were picked up by a raft. We reached Java where the natives helped us for months. Later we were interned. We never believed Mummy was dead. We saw her in the water with Hazel on her back. We always prayed for them. Lady Mountbatten is like a fairy godmother to us, but I did not recognise mummy”* (‘The Advertiser’, Adelaide, South Australia);); during the attack and sinking of the ship, it seems that ,as the only woman on board identified with about four children, it would seem that Mrs Bull was a the calm and composed mother recorded by Betty Jeffrey (ORB, p. 150) during the bombing of the ship “... *It was most uncomfortable on the floor [it seems of the saloon] ...it did not leave much room for my long legs and I always seemed to have a small child’s foot under my stomach. The poor little kid was wonderfully brave ... She didn’t utter a sound. Her mother had four small children with her and she calmly prayed aloud – the Lord’s Prayer. Poor soul. If anyone needed help she did....”*, in fact Molly Bull’s own recollection (telephone conversation with Researcher 18.2.20) was that as the first bombs hit the ship she was with her mother and siblings in the Saloon, at the foot of some stairs, they lost consciousness for a few moments [presumably bomb blast] but upon coming to she recalls being on her mother’s right side , with Robin on the left and her mother carrying Hazel up to the deck where they came across a woman in a grey uniform who was dead. He mother told her to sit on a mattress on the deck and say the Lord’s Prayer, then they reached the railing and her mother climbed down with Hazel – next it was Molly’s turn and she remembered someone lifting her onto the rope ladder which she began to climb down, she recalls” ... *men’s shoes in her face... “* but this may have been a man falling dead down the ladder. In the sae Mrs Bull took Molly to the far side of a [upturned?] lifeboat and told her to “...*put her hand in the hand of God...”.She recalls about this time that some objects like chicken coops which had been tied to the ships deck landed on her and she kicked it away, then she saw her brother on a raft with Mrs Pearson so she swam to that raft and witnessed the actual sinking of the ship. There were objects that she thought looked like ‘chicken coops’ floating in the sea. One poignant memory is of a woman coming*

out onto the ships deck as it was sinking carrying what looked like a baby shawl – Mrs Bull told her later that there were no babies on board [Researcher note: there seems to have been many unidentified children and almost certainly babies in arms] and that women went down with the ship. ; Molly’s recollection (telephone conversation with Researcher 11.2.20) is of joining her brother on the raft where there was already “...Mrs Pearson, wife of an English soldier, possibly an NCO...”, her recollection is later “... going into mangrove swamps looking for water...” but Molly had “...always been taught not to drink water from such places. “, other memories are that an airman nicknamed ‘Carrot’ joined their escape party and that there was also a ‘journalist’. When they were later attacked by local Javanese and Japanese in the eastern tip of Java the Japanese beheaded ‘Carrot’ in front of the group including Molly and Robin. The story of the children can be patched together from a variety of sources, firstly through the memoirs of Lt. Arthur J. Mann, RNVR, the Radio Officer on the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ - a summary of his experiences at this time is that Arthur Mann slid into the sea from the listing ship at the same time as Captain Borton; he drifted at sea holding onto a piece of mast and then a hatch cover. He drifted towards a raft on which were a ‘Malay’ stoker (in later newspaper articles Mann named this person as ‘Stoker Way’) from the ship’s crew, a Siamese woman, and two British children he recalls as perhaps called ‘Betty’ (11 years) and David (9 years)’, so he joined them on the raft and they continued to drift along the coast of Banka Island in the strong currents of the Banka Strait. They tried to enter the coast of Banka Island through streams, but the mangroves were quite thick, on one attempt they were astonished to come across a Staff Sergeant Knight, RASC, a survivor of another ship sinking who also joined them. Sometime later they all came across a lifeboat under sail with four naval ratings – Lt. Mann names these men in Australian newspaper articles published in 1942 as Henry Wanell, A.B., Ervin Hapshire, A.B, F.A. Murphy, stoker and J.C. King, stoker (“Kalgoorlie Miner” 23.3.42), but it has not been possible to identify any servicemen by these names. Some may have been from the crew of the ‘HMS Siang Wo’, which had been beached at Banka Island, and who were making for Batavia some 300 miles away. The ratings would initially not allow the men from the raft into the lifeboat but did permit the woman and children (even though it was a 25-foot lifeboat). Eventually the men were allowed into the lifeboat, but the three men (Mann, Way and Knight) were put ashore 24 hours later at a beach which appears to have been on Sumatra.[Mann and his two fellow travellers subsequently found a ten-foot sampan and then set off again – on 20 February they reached a river mouth on the Sumatran coast where they came across another lifeboat with three men on board – this time they were allowed to board. By 24 February this lifeboat reached a place named Mogala where a prau agreed to take them south – two days later they transferred again to a much larger boat on which were a party of Dutch soldiers and this boat reached Java on 27 February. Mann was then driven to Tjilatjap on the south coast and on 2 March he boarded the ‘SS. Verspyk’ for Fremantle]; the story of Millie and Robin’s survival at sea is then picked up almost three weeks later (some 300 kilometres south of the sinking of the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ and in the northern entrance to the Sunda Straits) in the book “Out of the Smoke “ by Ray Parkin , a Quartermaster on the ‘HMAS Perth’ which was sunk on 1st March 1942 during the Battle For The Sunda Straits. Parkin had drifted in a lifeboat after the sinking of his ship in the northern part of the Sunda Straits, to Sangiang Island a little further south in those Straits. He records that on the island he came across a “... skiff, painted grey, clinker built, and with her mast stepped ...” together with a young Navy man from ‘HMAS Vendetta’. [NB: the ‘HMAS Vendetta’ had left Singapore on 2 February 1942, but this man had been injured earlier, had been hospitalised and then working driving in Singapore and was no longer on the ships crew]. - it seems [according to p. 19 of Parkin’s book, this man’s name may have been Bill Jenkins and he was from Melbourne (p.53) – but this seems to bear no relation to the names given by Lt Mann above for

the naval ratings in the 'lifeboat' and raises the question as to whether the 'Malay' woman and the children had swapped to another craft after the 'lifeboat'?) who said he had been wounded in Singapore and had escaped in the 'skiff' and two men who were apparently not in the Royal Navy - but in the view of the researcher may have been the Royal Australian Navy men mentioned previously by Lt Arthur Mann - one man apparently went by the name 'Tug'. They said they had come from Sumatra. In the group was also a "... Malay woman in the conventional tight breast – compressing bodice and light skirt of some light stuff. She was young and had a good face and a warm brown skin. Smooth black hair was drawn to a bun at the back of her head... she had been watching two very lovely children in front of her. The youngest, a boy of five with white hair, was playing with the intriguing shapes of the coral fragments between his legs. The elder, a girl of eight, nearly as fair, was his sister and she plaited strips of coconut leaf...the children remained quite silent". Parkin's memory is that the girl said her name was 'Mary' and that her brother's name was 'Robin' and explained that they had been on a ship which had been bombed and sunk. The 'Malay' woman who said (p.55) that she had a soldier husband somewhere in Malaya, appears to have only been addressed as 'Missus' by the three sailors in the skiff. Parkin left them after some time and returned to his shipmates further around the island. During this meeting on Sangiang Island it emerged that the sailing skiff with the three sailors, the 'Malay' women and the two Bull children had literally drifted and sailed through the midst of the Battle for the Sunda Straits the night before - this was an incredibly fierce sea battle involving some 25 warships firing and torpedoing each other with many ships sunk! Parkin again met up with the two children and the Malay woman a day or two later at a kampong where he seems to have learned (correctly) that the children's father was a judge in Singapore and that they led a very good life with "... motor cars. Servants moving about obsequiously., Cool drinks and plenty of food. There was a school and other children ..." (p.56) It is not known what the fate was of the British sailor from the 'HMAS Vendetta' nor the two apparent RAN sailors, but Malay women who later called herself 'Mrs Stanton' and the children made it to the mainland of Java. The story of the children is then picked up in the papers of Miss Leila W. Bridgman, a New Zealander who had been with the YWCA in Singapore and then sunk whilst on the evacuation ship 'HMS Giang Bee' – she had been captured by the Japanese when she reached Java by lifeboat and imprisoned about 20 km inland from Sangiang island "... in a native prison in Serang, West Java under incredibly primitive conditions [which] was followed by less rigorous internment with forty Dutch women and children in a house nearby. During this time, when the guard on our house had been somewhat released, we received word from an Indian neighbour asking us to come to his house that afternoon to meet a woman from Singapore who needed help. Here we met Mrs Stanton, a slight dark-haired Siamese woman and her small boy Peter. Like ourselves she had come down the Sumatran coast in a lifeboat with her children, 'Joan' and 'Peter'. They had landed at Anga Lor, Java, and for some weeks had lived in a native village under the protection of the 'Medans' (the head of the village). Now Mrs Stanton had come to Serang, a twelve mile journey, hoping to find some way of arranging to get to Batavia (now Jakarta) During our conversation peter, a fair haired boy of seven, with great brown eyes, sat cheerfully munching peanuts and equally cheerfully throwing the husks about the immaculate room, quite heedless of request to desist. 'He's such a naughty boy' said Mrs Stanton casting a fond and admiring gaze upon him. Mrs Stanton and Peter returned to the village and we heard nothing more of them for some time...". Leila and a woman by the name of Eileen Higgs were a little later released from internment and travelled

to Batavia, some sixty miles away. They were taken into the home of the local YWCA head in Batavia and before long 'Mrs Stanton' and the children also turned up at the YWCA." ... *Several weeks later Mrs Stanton agreed to have the children placed in a Church home, directed by some Dutch Sisters...*". It was about this time that Mrs Stanton confessed that 'Joan' and "Peter' were not her children but that she had said that "... to protect them from the natives who had proved treacherous where Europeans were concerned, she had said they were her children and 'Joan' and 'Peter', warned by her never to betray the true state of affairs, called her 'Mummie' ...". Not long after that two large internment camps were opened in Batavia and Leila was incarcerated. Mrs Stanton, who was free in the city probably because of her ethnicity, agreed to bring the children to the internment camp but then refused and several days of vacillation and refusal to cooperate ensued. We then learn from Leila Bridgman that 'Mrs Stanton's background was that "... she had been a taxi – dancer in an amusement park in Singapore and despite her fondness for the children, had proved her inability to give them adequate care. We were greatly concerned. ...". Finally, 'Mrs Stanton' [Researcher Note; it seems unlikely that her surname was Stanton – there were two well know couples with the surname Stanton in Singapore during pre-war years and it does not seem she was the wife in either of these. Tracing back to the known passengers on the 'SS Vyner Brooke' it seems very possible that 'Mrs Stanton' was the same person of ostensibly Siamese ethnicity who had boarded the ship in Singapore with the name 'Mrs Pearson – see entry below in this document for that name] acquiesced to the pressure from Leila Bridgman and the children were taken into Tidjeng Womens Internment camp in Batavia. They shared the secret of their surviving the sinking of the 'SS Vyner Brooke' with Leila together with their survival in the journey to Java. Both 'Joan' and 'Peter' (these are the names used by Leila Bridgman in her post war type written account held in the Auckland War Memorial Museum archives – but there is a note appended in the file stating that the two children are elsewhere referred to as 'Mollie' and 'Robin') were fearful of being noticed or even talking in a normal voice during the early days in the camp – they were haunted by the instruction given by 'Mrs Stanton; and the need for secrecy whilst they had lived in the native village in Java before travelling to Batavia. Leila cared for them for the next three years until the war ended and, when she had a chance for repatriation to New Zealand, she entrusted their care to her friend Edithe de Niete, the president of the YWCA of Java who was also interned. [NB: There is a letter written in good copperplate handwriting from Molly and signed by her to her father, whilst she and Robin were in Tidjeng camp, that is now held in the UK National Archives]. Once in Singapore on her way home, Leila learned that Mrs Bull and Hazel were in hospital there and Harold Bull was also free and staying at Raffles Hotel which had become a center for liberated POWs and internees awaiting repatriation. Leila found the children's father and gave him the "... the wonderful news for him that they were alive and well". At that time Lady Louis Mountbatten visited Leila and learned the story of the Bull children and that they were still in Batavia. A couple of days later a great Thanksgiving service was held at St Andrew's Cathedral which Leila attended and Lady Louis Mountbatten also arrived to take her place in the front pew," ... A brief note hastily scribbled on a scrap of paper was handed to her chauffeur after the service. We heard nothing further until the following Tuesday when quite unannounced Peter and Joan arrived with Lady Louis ..." when Leila Bridgeman was at Raffles Hotel that morning. Harold had gone to make his daily visit to the children's mother in hospital, so Leila took them to have morning tea until Harold Bull returned to have a rapturous reunion with his two children. Soon after "... we were off to the hospital to the children's mother and there again, was the indescribable joy of reunion ...". Postscript: the post War "The Advertiser" article give's 'Millie's' age as 12 years; however, this was their age at the end of the War -

the records of the massive (10,000 women and children) Tidjeng internment camp in Batavia provide an accurate picture. The April 1944 records for that camp, which was almost entirely Dutch women and children, state “*Bull. M, internee # 4881, and one other family member aged 8 years of age in Block 10*” (interestingly by then she appears to have dropped the name ‘Joan’ and Molly’s sequence number in the Block 10 was 236) and the camp records evidence that they were at that time under the care of New Zealander and Secretary of the Singapore YWCA, Miss Leila Bridgeman (it states ‘... at Ms. Bridgman[sic]’) who had been sunk on the ‘HMS Giang Bee’ [Researcher Note : Miss Bridgeman , who was 54 years of age at the end of the War was repatriated to NZ and died in 1974 – there is film footage of Leila Bridgman leaving Tidjeng camp in 1945 in the NZ newsreel “ NZ Cameraman in Singapore”] ; in 1945 camp records Molly Bull appears once again in Block 10 as, ‘Brits’ and ‘head of household ‘ for 2 people in Tidjeng camp with a POW number of 4878 (interestingly Ms Bridgeman is shown as # 4877 in those records although she is in a different part of the camp in Block 4);

- **BULL** – Robin Bull - actually his name was Robert Bull but within the family he was called a derivation of his father’s name ‘Rob’ and his mother’s name ‘Ann’ hence ‘Rob-Ann” or ‘Robin’- was aged 6 years of age at the time of the sinking. See above for Molly Bull (also Joan Stanton) how Robin and his older sister Millie survived for days on a raft before landing in Java, being cared for by ‘natives’ for several months and then interned in Java. This was the boy named ‘David’ who Lt. Mann saw was on a raft with a girl named ‘Betty’ and a Siamese woman and the same boy Ray parkin found on Sangiang Island in the Sunda Straits.
- **BULLWINKEL – Sister Vivian Bullwinkel** was born on 18 December 1915 in Kapunda, South Australia and trained at Broken Hill (where her father worked in mining). She began her nursing career at Hamilton, Victoria, before moving to the Jessie McPherson Hospital in Melbourne. In September 1941, she enlisted with the 2/13th Australian Hospital Group. As one of the nurses on the “SS. Vyner Brooke” Vivian was allocated an area of the ship as her responsibility and was one of the last to leave – according to the book ‘ORB’ she was a non-swimmer and entered the water after removing her shoes as the ship was heeling over (p.1630. She joined the others at the upturned lifeboat and was with this group when it ran aground at Radji Beach late on that Saturday night and they walked to the bonfire which had been built by First Officer Bill Sedgeman and the nurses with Irene Drummond. Vivian Bullwinkel was the only nurse to survive the massacre on Radji beach on the Sunday and her noble story is well covered in many books, articles and official records (including her own , now tattered and worn, original statement which is held in the associated War Crimes file in the national Archives, Melbourne) .It is not the intention to repeat her story here except to say that she crawled up the beach after the massacre and the departure of the Japanese troops, hid in the jungle , met up with severely wounded 33 year old Private Cecil Gordon Kinsley, RAOC (who died in a POW camp a month later) and with Kinsley gave herself up to the Japanese some ten days later. She suffered with her comrades through three and a half years of horrendous, cruel, internment and went on to become one of Australia’s most distinguished women. Vivian spent the rest of her life in nursing, firstly with the Heidelberg Repatriation hospital in Melbourne and later as Matron/Director of Nursing at the Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital, Melbourne. She also gave evidence at the war Crimes Trial in Tokyo. In 1955, she became matron of the Army Nurses Training Unit and in 1977 she married Colonel Francis West Statham, changing her name to Vivian Statham. In 1992, she returned to Banka Island to unveil a memorial to the nurses who were killed on the “SS. Vyner Brooke’, those who died in the sinking, and those who perished in the internment camps of Sumatra. She received many great honours and awards during her post war life – including the Florence Nightingale

medal, the MBE, and the AM. Vivian Statham died aged 84 years in Perth, WA, in July 2000. History shows her to be truly a great woman of Australia.

- **CALNAN – Sister Ellenor ‘Nell’ Calnan**, 2/10th Australian General Hospital came from Culcairn, near Albury, southern New South Wales (p. 166 ORB) ;she was the daughter of William Norman Calnan and Mary O’Brien and was born in 1912 in Culcairn; she had one sibling, Noel William Calnan (ancestry.com) who was older and died in 1973; she enlisted (QFX 19072)in 1941 aged 28 years of age and appears as a dark haired pleasant faced woman; she died either during the bombing of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” or soon after jumping into the sea as the ship was sinking; after the War Betty Jeffrey and Vivian Bullwinkel, whilst travelling through south eastern Australia drumming up support and money for a new nursing center to be built in Melbourne in memory of the nurses from the “SS. Vyner Brooke” who had lost their lives they apparently took time out of their schedule to visit Ellenor’s mother – by then a widow who lived in Wilson Street, Albury (p. 306 ORB); she is remembered on the Wagga Wagga, NSW Roll of Honour (jonesfamilyhistory.wordpress.com)
- **CARR** – a handwritten list which appears to have been compiled in Palembang internment camp shows “ ... **Miss Carr**, c/o *Trengove & Co.*, KL ...seen on board “ as being on the “SS. Vyner Brooke”; but no one of that name was ever interned in Palembang internment camp; it is possible that this was a Miss Marion Carr (born 1890) who travelled on the P & O ‘Corfu’ to England in 1932 (ST. 14.4.32 recording her departure from Singapore and ancestry.com recording her arrival on 13.5.32) but this is not proven; the first record of a Miss Carr in Malaya is in 1923 when she left for Europe on the P & O ‘Morea’ (ST. 14.3.23); and then a mention of her at ‘Bukit Fraser’ in 1924 and also in that year being a bridesmaid to a Margery Cooper marrying Mr John Walwyn Braley (SFPMA. 23.9.24); in 1925 there is a photo of Miss Carr when she was in a Gilbert & Sullivan musical in Kuala Lumpur in aid of St. Mary’s Church Fund when she looks to be in her late 20s or early 30s (“Malayan Standard Post”, 7.3.25); in 1930 a Miss F.M. Carr left Singapore for Europe on the East Asiatic Motorship ‘Meonia’ (ST. 25.1.30); it is relevant that in 1935 W.D. Trengove was the proprietor of a music and radio store at 19 Batu Road, Kuala Lumpur which fits with Miss Carr’s interest in musicals; just prior to the Japanese invasion there is a record of a Miss Carr helping with refreshments at the Harbour Board Club with the womens section of that Club(SFPMA. 26.6.41); some of this information re ships voyages may relate to another Miss Carr in Malaya, but it seems that the person who lost her life on the “SS. Vyner Brooke” was the Miss Carr who worked for W. D. Trengove’s musical and radio store in KL.
- **CASSON – Sister (later Lt.) Florence ‘Flo’ Rebecca Casson**, SFX 13418, was born in Warracknabeal, Victoria on 6 March 1903. She trained as a nurse and the first record of her nursing career is at the Royal Adelaide Hospital in 1935 in a group photo of “Matron Draw with Night Nurses”; soon after that she must have moved up in her career to become Matron at a number of small country hospitals including at Jamestown, Port Pirie and the Pinaroo (the Pinaroo Soldiers Memorial Hospital) a small South Australian country town; on 7.2.41 she enlisted at Keswick, south Australia with the AANS and was transferred to Malaya with the 2/13th Australian General Hospital; after service in Malaya and Singapore she boarded the “SS. Vyner Brooke” and at the time of the bombing attack on the ship she was located in the saloon with other nurses where she was hit with a bomb blast – along with Rosetta Wright and Clare Halligan (ORB, p.153) – and the blast caused severe damage to her legs, one of which was possibly fractured and she had to be assisted up to the main deck; somehow her friends managed to get her into the second lifeboat that was launched with severely wounded nurses on board; this lifeboat drifted ashore at

Radji Beach later that night and Vivian Bullwinkel and officer Jimmy Miller walked along the beach to where a large bonfire had already been lit by survivors to get assistance with carrying the wounded nurses to the main camp; Flo and Rosetta Wright were the most seriously wounded as described in ORB ., p. 200 “ ... they were both strong and brave women. Again, shell splinters had caused the damage, with both women suffering deep wounds to the buttocks and upper thighs. They were unable to walk and had to be fed and helped with their toilet functions. The wounds appear to have caused nerve damage, perhaps fractures, and they needed more specialised treatment than any that could be provided on the beach ... Miller eventually put together a rescue party and set off. The journey to the second lifeboat and back with its survivors took over two hours, and the wounded nurses were in agony on the return journey, having to be half-dragged, half-carried for most of the distance. Their pain was obvious and it, in turn, increased the distress of the other survivors...”; so when dawn broke on Sunday 15 February 1942, Flo was probably lying on a makeshift stretcher in the shade of the jungle on Radji beach with other wounded being cared for by Matron Drummond’s team and a Chinese doctor who had also survived the sinking (possibly Dr Tay) plus a group of survivors numbering about 70; it seems that Flo and few other more seriously wounded were later that day transferred to a fisherman’s uninhabited hut further down the beach towards the headland; Flo spent another night on the beach being cared for by her companions with what little they had in the way of medical supplies and when dawn arose on Monday 16th February the survivors were joined by another lifeboat and rafts with many wounded soldiers from another ship sunk in the Banka Straits during the night; the sheer volume of wounded seems to have tipped those in authority to sending the women and children, and a few walking wounded men on a trek towards the nearest town and the nurses were also invited to join that group but declined; so Flo was amongst the group of nurses destined to be murdered by the Japanese; once the Japanese had executed firstly the Officers and then the second group of Other ranks and civilian men they turned their attention to the nurses ; forming the nurses into a line facing the sea , with Flo and her wounded friends being supported at the right hand end of the line by Matron Irene Drummond (ORB, p. 216) by other sisters the Japanese carried out one of their most abhorrent atrocities war crimes against Allied women on record; the book ORB records “ ... Flo and Rosetta and Clare and the sisters supporting them fell under the gun, grouped together in death as in life ...”(p.217); so life was taken from Flo at the age of 39 years of age after several decades unselfishly of caring for others in need; she is memorialised by a plaque at Pinaroo Soldiers Memorial Hospital where the Health Promotion Room is also named after her; and there is a plaque also at Royal Adelaide Hospital; finally at Moonta cemetery in south Australia , at the grave of her parents , Flo is remembered within her family by a plaque inscribed with the names of she and her brother.

- **CASTLE** – Miss E. Castle is listed in the Mrs. E. Cross list of British Women Internees in Palembang camp as having been a passenger on the “SS. Vyner Brooke”; CASTLE Ms Edith Evangeline ‘Ena’ from Doncaster. Colonial Service Nursing Sister: Seremban 1935. Matron, Telok Anson Hospital, Perak. **Sumatra internee**. Died in captivity 19.11.44 [50] Sumatra(JMM); Miss Edith Evangeline ‘Ena’ Castle was born in 1895 (UK census 1911) in the Doncaster area and in 1911 was living at Wheatley, Yorkshire (West Riding) which is a suburb of Doncaster, but apart from being a Colonial Nursing Sister and specifically Matron of the Telok Anson (the town is now known as ‘Teluk Intan’ after a name change in the 1980s and the old hospital has been replaced by a new one less prone to flooding) Hospital, Perak, little is known of

her life apart from the fact that she took 'home leave' in 1931 leaving on the P. & O. 'Mantua' for Europe (SFPMA 10.4.31) and was from Doncaster; in her late 40s when she boarded the ship in February 1942 , she survived the sinking of the 'Vyner Brooke' but died aged 50 years in Muntok Camp on 19.11.44 ('lostgravesofMuntok') ;the official record is **Miss Edith Evangeline Castle**, died on 19.11.44 at Muntok, Banka Island, aged 50 years , daughter of the late Mr. & Mrs. B. Castle of Doncaster, Yorkshire (CWGC).

- **CHAMBERS** - John Lawrence Chambers, BA, B.A.I., M.I.C.E., Civil Engineer, born 16 June 1898, Fintona, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland. Appears in the 1901 Irish census aged 2 years with father James Chambers and her mother Sara Elisabeth Chambers and four siblings plus three servants. Educated Omagh Academy and Trinity College, Dublin. WW1 Service in France, Egypt, and Palestine 1917-1921. To Malaya 1927 as Assistant Engineer PWD FMS. Pte FMSVF [1937]. By 1940 State Engineer Trengganu. Aged 42 in 1942. *Evacuated on Marella out of Singapore 10.2.42* [this is incorrect]. Vyner Brooke survivor? Palembang, Sumatra internee. Repatriated to India then on the Ranchi from Madras, arriving Southampton 24.11.45. To Glasgow. Returned to post war Malaya (JMM); in 1932 he is recoded on the passenger list of the Blue Funnel Line ship Achilles' as a Civil Engineer, FMS, from "Fintona" [there is a village by this name], Co. Tyrone. At the time of the War , John and his wife Norah had escaped from northern Malaya together ahead of the Japanese (see next entry on Norah Chambers for this impressive story); there is a reference to him in WBTW (p.52) " ... *Norah Chambers who had got her sick husband away and was also accompanied by her sister Ena ...* " (John contracted a serious tropical infection during the trek from Kuala Trengganu to the north-south railway line and was hospitalised in Singapore where Norah's father , James Laidlaw Hope , was already an in-patient (James Hope died in Miyako Hospital on 19 February 1942); also Shelagh Brown mentions him in her diary when they shared their meal on 13 February with Ena Murray and Shelagh Brown (SD P. 136); it is not known how John and Norah reached Banka Island but they both ended up as internees in Muntok, Palembang and Loebok Linggau camps.; both survived the War and were repatriated to the UK before once again returning to Malaya on the "Raub" for John to take up the position of Senior Executive Engineer with the PWD (ST. 2.9.46); in 1947 he was transferred to the role of Senior Executive Engineer, Malacca (ST. 16.4.47); and in 1949 he is recorded as Chairman of the Malacca Central District Boy Scout Association (ST. 4.11.49); in 1951 he is recorded on the passenger list of the 'Chusan' from London to Singapore and then a few years later (1956) on the 'Aureol' to Lagos, Nigeria. In about 1953 john and Norah retired to jersey, Channel Isles with their daughter Sally. They lived in the parish of St martin. Her sister Ena and husband Ken Murray had earlier settled in the nearby parish of Trinity. John died in Jersey on 23 January 1989.
- **CHAMBERS** - Mrs Margaret Constance Norah Chambers, born 26 April 1905, Singapore, wife of John Lawrence Chambers – see above - (he was the State Engineer with the PWD at Trengganu and a Private in the FMSVF) she was aged 37 in 1942. Palembang, Sumatra internee. Norah's 8-year-old daughter Sally was evacuated to the UK with Norah's middle sister, Barbara Sawyer, plus Barbara's sons Jim & Tony, on the 'SS Orion' on 31 January 1942, arriving Fremantle WA on 6 .1.42 and Barbara's husband Harry Sawyer evacuated on the 'SS Kuala' and finally made it to Ceylon on 'HMAS Hobart' (email Diane Whitehead 22.3.17). Nora's father Mr James Laidlaw Hope died in Miyako Hospital on 19 February 1942 – he was 65 years of age and his wife Margaret had also been interned in Changi; she is listed in Mrs Cross' list of British women internees in Palembang 1942 as "... Mrs M.C.N.

Chambers , husband in Palembang ...”; Norah had arrived in Malaya in 1927 with her mother and two sisters (one being Ena Murray) to join their father James Hope an engineering consultant in Perak ... she had been a student at the Royal Academy of Music in London (WBTW p. 20); John Lawrence Chambers and Margaret Constance ‘Nora ‘Hope had married in Ipoh in 1930, she was the daughter of James and Margaret Hope of Ipoh and her sister was Ena Murray (SPFMA. 1.3.30); there is a pre-war photo of Norah Chambers in WBTW (p. 50-51); as the Japanese had advanced through northern Malaya , Norah and her husband John sent their five year old daughter Sally to safety in Kuala Lumpur , but soon found themselves trapped in Kuala Trengganu and had to embark on a quite extraordinary trek over five days and six nights through the hills and jungles of Malaya until they reached a railway line where astonishingly a train to Kuala Lumpur just happened to be passing(WBTW p. 25); the three sisters (including Ena and another sister Barbara) managed to assemble in Singapore and with the city under bombing daily she took the decision to send Sally with her aunt Barbara and family to Australia in January 1942 (WBTW p.39); Norah boarded the “SS. Vyner Brooke” with her husband John and this is made clear when she is mentioned in the diary of fellow passenger Shelagh Brown “... *Given half a tin of Asp. Saus & Pot. at night. Best meal so far! Shared it with Ina Murray, her sister Mrs Chambers and husband, and Mrs Parfait (sic) ...*”; on the second day of the voyage as the ship stopped amongst the Rio Islands (SD p.136) after the sinking Norah and John were eventually picked up by two Airforce men in a ‘commandeered ‘launch. They were landed at Muntok pier , but the airmen hastily sped off in the launch when the Japanese started firing(source Norah Chambers 1988); after they were transferred to Palembang Norah did not see her husband again until the end of the War; there is a comment in ‘ORB’ (136) that “ ... *Norah Chambers was a singer, musician and a teacher and was prepared to give of herself to help make other’s lives just a little bit easier ...*”; additional information from the database of Internees in Sumatra is that whilst in Palembang she and Miss Dryburgh prepared music from memory for a four part orchestra and “...as there were no instruments we hummed the accompaniment and it sounded lovely...”, then in Muntok camp later in October 1944 she was one of the fine women who , with her sister Ena Murray and also Audrey Owens , who volunteered to carry out the ‘...filthy and nauseating task...’ of emptying overflowing latrines.(Phyllis Briggs diary); Nora’s father Mr Hope died in Changi. . Repatriated to India then on the ‘Ranchi’ from Madras, arriving Southampton 24.11.45 with husband John. To Glasgow. Returned to post-war Malaya. Died 1987 (SUM); John and Norah returned to Malaya after the War when he arrived on the “Raub” to take up the position of Senior Executive Engineer with the PWD (ST. 2.9.46); in 1947 he was transferred to the role of Senior Executive Engineer, Malacca (ST. 16.4.47); and in 1949 he is recorded as Chairman of the Malacca Central District Boy Scout Association (ST. 4.11.49).; In later life John and Norah settled in St Heliers on the island of Jersey, as did her sister Ena and her husband Kenneth Murray; Norah died in 1987.

- **CHAN – Mr Chan.**
- **CHAN** – the photograph record of a page probably prepared in Palembang by internees listing the names of those who died shows “Chan Denys” and then “son of **Mrs. Chan Joo Kim, Singapore**”; also, Mrs Chan and sons Daris (?) & John, Vyner Brooke sinking survivors. **Palembang internees.** Dennis/Denis/Daris died at Muntok 2.42. Released (SUM); also it appears that a Master Peter Chan survived; in the book SCOTVB (p.59) survivor Ralph Armstrong describes Mrs Chan and her son Johnny, who lived in the same house # 11 as the Armstrong’s (and many others) in Irenelaan,

Palembang as “...Mrs Chan was an Englishwoman who had married a Chinese ...”; there is a rather more dark record in WBTW (p.94) of the attempt by the Japanese to canvass European women in Irenelaan camp in Palembang to ‘entertain’ the Japanese officers in their leisure hours at an officer’s club “... A Mrs. Chan, in fact an Englishwoman married to a Singapore Chinese conducted this operation. She was a tall, statuesque brunette with a loud voice who could hardly have been less suitable for such a delicate mission. As she moved about the houses, she had something like the effect of a wolf in a dovecote ... It turned out to be one dollar per attendance, in Japanese military currency, thirty cents to go to Mrs Chan as commission ...”, it seems the canvassing by Mrs Chan produced poor results; on the other hand - giving a different picture of the Mrs Chan - Sister Vivian Bullwinkel in her testimony to the ‘Australian Board of Enquiry Into War Crimes’ at Melbourne on 29.10.45 stated that a Mrs Chan “... an Englishwomen with a bit of French in her. She married a Chinese in Singapore...” was instrumental in distracting the Japanese Officers at the first ‘invitation ‘for those women to join the ‘Club’ and spent the whole night talking to those officers to allow the Australian Sisters to return to their Camp; the “List of British women and Children in Palembang” compiled by internees shows “... Chan Mrs. A. (left 24/8/42. Retd. Camp 12/10/42)” and “... Chan John & baby (left 24/8/42, retd. Singapore with father 12/10/42) ...” – the date of 24 August 1942 was when a group of Chinese and Eurasian women left Palembang camp to go to Singapore with some going into Changi internment camp. However, it looks like Mrs Chan, in the final event, stayed in Palembang. **From the archival record of ‘UK Passengers Outward’ it can be figured that the wife of ‘Chan Joo Kim’ – who had been a student/sportsman in Singapore and then in the 1930s is reported as a ‘student’ helping at functions arranged by the Governor of Singapore whilst in London – may have been one ‘Annette ‘ (b.1915) is recorded as someone who travelled from the UK to Singapore in 1940 - it seems together with (presumably her husband) Chan Joo Kim (b. 1914) and presumably her son named ‘Dennis’ (b.1937), and a ‘John’ (b. 1934) possibly also her son.**

- **CHAN – Master Dennis (or Denis/Denys or Daris?) Chan** appears to have died in Muntok in February 1942; there is also the record of “... Denis Chan ‘drowned from the ship’...” in the official War Crimes file in the National Archives of Australia (a telegram from ‘NOK Fremantle to Brillist’ in 1945); it is not entirely clear whether Mrs Chan, who was a European married to a Chinese, had three or two sons on board with her and whether her sons included a boy named ‘Dennis/Daris/Denis’ , who would have been four or five years old if this is the correct identification; finally **it is possible** that one of Mrs Chan’s children - specifically ‘Dennis/Denis’ - was the “... young Chinese boy ... “ (p.184 ORB) grabbed by Australian Sister Iole Harper as he floated past the raft and she was able to lift the child onto an empty life raft and pull it across to Olive Pasche’s raft, where she passed the child into the waiting arms of Caroline Ennis ...”; on that group of rafts were Matron Olive Paschke, Betty Jeffrey, Iole Harper , and Caroline Ennis – the latter soon took responsibility for holding “... a small Chinese Boy who looked about four ... and a little English girl who was about a year younger ...” (p.171, ORB) – together with Sisters Merle Trenerry, Gladys McDonald, Jess Dorsch and Mary Clarke. The tragic outcome was that, apart from Betty Jeffrey and Iole Harper who swam to safety, the rafts and its occupants were never seen again.
- **CHAN- Master John Chan** appears to have survived; and Ralph Armstrong in his list of the internees allocated to individual houses in Irenelaan, Palembang shows Mrs Chan and Johnny Chan in House No. 11 with the Armstrong and Boswell families (but no mention of Master Peter Chan, but then again Peter is only ever referred to as a

'Baby' so was presumably born in the internment camps?) but again there is some conflict in official records because a telegram from 'NOK Fremantle' to 'Brillist' in 1945 (NAA files) states that apart from Mrs Chan there was a Master Chan and a John Chan who survived (but also that Denis Chan was drowned from the ship).

- **CHAN – Master Peter Chan** also appears to have been a survivor (source from internee list ??). A clue here is also given by Sister Jessie Simons in 'WHP' (p.38) where she talks of whom appears to have been Mrs Annette Chan's motivation for 'collaborating' with the Japanese to procure 'hostesses' in the Camp – saying that Annette Chan "... *was more than pleased when we nurses took over her baby who otherwise would certainly have died. He had no routine or regular feeding hours. His eight year old brother just pushed something into his mouth whenever he cried...*" and later (p.39) when the internees had to suddenly move to another camp "... *Hurriedly we bundled the child home to his neglectful mother...*".
- **CLANCY – Lt. Veronica Ann Clancy, #NX 76282**, was born in 1910. A Sister in the 2/13th Australian General Hospital, by the time she faced the horrors of the attack on the "SS. Vyner Brooke" she was clearly an assertive woman in her early thirties with a cool head and presence. Her personal papers and memoir are held in the Australian War Memorial Museum in Canberra and are to quote ORB (p.242-3) "...*what may be the best memoirs of a prisoner of war and Australian nurse ever written*". Once she had boarded the "SS. Vyner Brooke" with the other nurses she was one of those who volunteered, in the possibility of the ship being attacked and sunk, to stay on board and swim to shore. In the event, when the ship was attacked, she took cover with others in the main bathroom behind the ship's saloon (ORB, p.148) and then during the chaos of the bombs and sinking ship she led the nurses to move amongst those passengers who had been too terribly wounded to be moved to lifeboats, administering heavy doses of morphine knowing they had no hope of survival when the ship sank(ORB, p. 157). Upon jumping into the sea she joined those already clinging to the overturned lifeboat – later joining a small liferaft when the lifeboat sank – it was at this time her sense of right and wrong prompted her to climb on board that liferaft and give the self – centred Dr Goldberg a few good punches when Goldberg refused to take her turn in the sea so that others could climb onto the raft. She and the other occupants of the raft spent the first night after the sinking swimming and attempting to push the liferaft towards land against unpredictable sea currents. The next day she, along with the others, were picked up by two RAAF men in an old launch and Veronica was given a coat by one of the RAAF since she had lost most of her clothing whilst swimming and had used her uniform as a sail to try and get the raft to shore (QH, p.107). This group were delivered to Muntok wharf by the launch (which immediately left at the sight of Japanese troops) and Veronica was locked with the other survivors in Muntok cinema. She survived the awful internment camps in Muntok, Palembang and Belalau but whilst in Palembang was diagnosed with myocarditis (ORB, p.254). To quote ORB (p.242-30 "... Veronica Clancy was regarded as one of the great givers ... plus she had a wicked sense of humour and an egalitarian attitude ..." She left the AANS after the War in late 1946 and married, later passing away in 1977 (AWM) .
- **CLARKE - Sister Mary Dorothea Clarke, NFX 70938**, 2/10th Australian General Hospital was born on 20 July 1911 in the small country town of Rylstone, NSW (current population 615) in the NSW tablelands as the eldest of six children of Henry and Flora Clarke. She trained at Coats Hospital, Little Bay, NSW 9 (now Prince Henry Hospital) and by 1937 was in the midwifery branch of the Metropolitan Hospital, Sydney where she passed her nurses registration exams. She enlisted on 7 January 1941 with the 10th Australian General Hospital, AANS and embarked on the 'Queen

Mary' for Singapore before later being reassigned to Malaya. ORB p.148 records that when the bombing of the ship started she took cover in the main bathroom behind the ship's saloon with other nurses and passengers and after the ship sank she was seen holding onto the raft on which Matron Paschke was sitting – she was last seen (by Betty Jeffrey and Iole Harper who had also been on the raft – p.105 QH) sitting on the raft with Olive Paschke and Caroline Ennis (who had the two small children on her lap) and Gladys McDonald, with Jess Dorsch, and Merle Trenerry holding onto ropes around the raft. The raft was last seen by the other nurses being swept down the Banka Straits towards Java and “... *swallowed up in the darkness of the night and not seen again ...*” (p.105 QH). More recent information (Dr Neil McGregor email November 2016) advises that a merchant ship found the remains of Sister McDonald and two other nurses “... in the Indian ocean ...” several weeks later – meaning that the raft had travelled in that time south and out to the Indian ocean via the Sunda Straits. Perhaps the best epitaph on record for Mary Clarke was contained in a n article in the local Rylstone newspaper around the time of the War wherein it extended sympathies to Mary Clarke's parents and remembering her as “... *a fine specimen of Australian womanhood, a girl who had everything in life to live for and one who got all that life had to give ...*”.

- **CUTHBERTSON – Sister Mary Elizabeth Cuthbertson**, VFX 38746, was born in 1910, the daughter of Mr W. M. Cuthbertson of Ballarat. She was known to her loved ones as 'Beth' (“The Courier” Ballarat 22.1.04) and was nursing in Ballarat when she enlisted with the 2/10th Australian General Hospital. Her Army records photo in the AWM and a photo taken soon after embarkation for Malaya in 1941 show a tall, attractive, dark-haired woman who, at the time of embarking on the “SS. Vyner Brooke” and her death in the massacre on Radji Beach was aged 31 years. Beth was given an area of responsibility on the ship on its last voyage (ORB p.157) and as recorded by Betty Jeffrey “... *Beth Cuthbertson searched the ship when it was a very odd angle to make sure all the wounded people had been taken off and that nobody remained while other nurses were busy getting people into the sea. At this stage there were quite a few people in the water ... and the ship was listing heavily to starboard ...*” (p. 138 SD); she presumably landed on Radji Beach in a lifeboat with Matron Paschke with the other nurses. She was killed in the massacre with 21 other Australian Army Nurses. After the war, when Betty Jeffrey and Vivian Bullwinkel were travelling Australia to raise money for the Nursing centre, they planned to build in Melbourne they gave a speech on the subject in Ballarat. An older man approached them after the speech, gave a donation, thanked them for what they had said and explained he was Beth's father ('ORB'). In 2004 Beth's sister was still living in Ballarat and told the local paper (“The Courier”, 22.1.04) how the family first learned of Beth's death in listening to a radio interview with Vivian Bullwinkel who read out a list of names of those who died!
- **DANIEL – Mrs S. A. Daniel** was on the ship according to the cipher attached to the list of British internees in Palembang 1942 prepared by Mrs E. Cross; another source is “DANIEL Mrs Sarah Emilia 'May', Teleprinter Operator, Malaya Command Signals. Wife of Frederick. **Sumatra internee.**; she is also listed by Dr Goldberg – Curth as one of those women from the ship who died in 'Luebok- Lingoe' – simply listed as Mrs Daniel; She died in captivity 5.8.45[44] Sumatra (JMM); **Mrs Sarah Emilia/ Amelia 'May' Daniel** is only mentioned once in Malayan newspapers before the war – when she was on the committee for the Selangor Poppy Day fund raising fair (ST. 26.10.39) and presumably made it to Radji beach by lifeboat or to Muntok via the RAF launch ; she was aged 44 years when she died two weeks before the war ended and was the daughter of Harry and Flora A. Bamford (Victoria Institution website);

it was reported after the war (ST. 14.9.47) that she and her husband Frederick had one son (a 2nd Lt in the Royal Artillery in 1947, who had been in the UK since 1933) and two daughters who were still at school in the UK in 1947; [insofar as her husband he was Frederick Daniel BSc. b.1899. Educated Lady Manners School, Bakewell and Manchester University. Colonial Education Service: General Science Teacher, British Guiana 1922 then to Malaya in 1930. Science Master, Victoria Institute KL from 1930. In Australia on 7.12.41. Returned to Singapore 23.12.41 and reported to MAS HQ, Singapore. Aged 43 in 1942. **Changi and Sime Rd internee.** Wife died in Sumatra. He wrote and conducted Science classes in Changi. Repatriated to the UK n Antenor, arriving Liverpool 27.10.45 Science Inspector post-war then Principal, Victoria Institute 1946. Retired 1949 Lived and gardened in Aberystwyth. Died 29.7.71 at Ivybridge. (JMM).

- **DARLING – this is a post war married name for Pat Gunther. See GUNTHER.**
- **DAVIS – Sister Winnie May ‘Win’ Davis, NFX 70498, 2/10th Australian Hospital Group.** Win Davis was born on 7.7.15, the oldest daughter of James and Lorna Davis, Goldstream Street, Ulmarra, which is in the Clarence River District of NSW. She first enlisted in the emergency Unit at Victoria Barracks, Sydney on 10.12.40. Upon arriving in Singapore, she was attached to the 10th AGH (Muntok Peace Museum website). From photos at the AWM she was an attractive, petite woman. On the “SS. Vyner Brooke” she was allocated responsibility for the forward part of the ship (p.48, ORB) with Pat Gunther and Kath Neuss, and they set themselves up in an officer’s cabin on the portside. As the ship sank it was so low in the water she literally stepped of the ship’s deck into the water with pat Gunther(p.163, ORB) and once in the water she clung to a deck chair floating by(ORB, p.170) before she and Pat Gunther reached a raft on which were the ships Eurasian radio operator and two British sailors(one of whom was badly burned and later slipped into the water and drowned) plus another nurse and three civilian women (being Mrs Brown and her daughter Shelagh and a woman who became unconscious and drowned). They were later picked up by a Japanese ship, taken to Muntok and imprisoned. Win endured three years of harsh internment in the Muntok, Palembang and Belalau camps during which she played her part in maintaining spirits. Tragically, less than a month before the war ended, she succumbed to the ravages of beri beri and then dysentery in the camp hospital at Belalau/ Loebok Linggau and died on 19.7.45. She was buried in wretched circumstances covered only with an old rice sack to cover her in death at the cemetery at the top of the hill at that awful camp. (p.222, QH). Her remains were moved after the war to the Jakarta cemetery where she now lays in rest. She is memorialised (as a graduate of the hospital) on the stained-glass panels of the ‘Window of memory’ at War Memorial Hospital, Waverly, NSW. Probably the best epitaph to Win Davis is contained in the book “While history Passes” by Sister J.E. Simons, “... one of our youngest Sisters, was a marvellous girl who gave herself to her friends ...”
- **DAY – Mr George Day.** *The inclusion amongst the passengers of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” (in a book on the sinking by survivor Ralph Armstrong) of Mr George Day “ ... who had been our swimming instructors at St Andrews in Singapore being one of the ship’s officers , guiding us down [to the lifeboats]...” (p.36, SCOTVB) appears to be a case of mistaken identity because another record shows “... DAY G.L. [George] Physical Director, YMCA Orchard Road. Cadet MVAF Killed in flying accident 7.11.41[25] (JMM); in 1939 George day had been Physical director of the YMCA and in 1940 was the judge at St. Andrews School inter house swimming championships; this death is evidenced in a ‘Straits Times ‘report (in the 9.11.41 edition “Honours at*

funeral of RAF Officer & Cadet”) on the funeral of “... Mr George Day, popular Malayan sportsman... who joined the MAAF on Oct 25 this year as a cadet under training in the Govt. Training Flying School scheme in Singapore and his instructor, Flight lieut. Wills died on Friday morning ... they were buried at Bididari Cemetery on 8.11.41”.

- **DELFORCE** – Sister Cecelia May Delforce, QFX 19071, 2/10th Australian Hospital Group. Cecilia was born on 7.9.12, the youngest of the six children of Samuel Delforce and Lydia Elizabeth Ogden of Augathella, western Queensland. She first nursed in Augathella before nursing four years at Stanthorpe General Hospital, and then in Brisbane where she signed up for the AANS in May 1940. In January 1941 she was attached to the 2/10th AGH and arrived in Singapore in February 1941 (Helen Stillman, [issuu.com](#)); her photo in the AWM archives shows a demure, attractive lady but she was a girl from the country and on page 172 of the book 'ORB' there is an amusing insight into the personality of this young women from a large family in outback Queensland since the other nurses on the ship “... *believed she was one of the best swearers they had ever heard, with a gift of combining traditional vernacular with modern idiom ...*”; after the ship sank Cecilia found herself floating in the sea on debris and covered in oil from the ship’s bunkers. She drifted with the currents past islands, bodies, and life rafts. More than 18 hours later she found herself washed ashore at the northern part of Banka Island. After recovering from her ordeal, she walked up the beach where she found a path that lead into the jungle (Helen Stillman, [issuu.com](#)); we should then look to page 189 of 'ORB' to pick up her story “... *as she followed a track that led through it leading to the rear of some sand dunes, she heard a rifle shot. In front of her, a Japanese soldier had just shot a prisoner, probably a local volunteer with the Netherlands East Indies Forces. Several others, with their hands tied behind their backs, stood nearby. The soldier seemed surprised to see Cecilia, indicating a small hut nearby. When she opened the door, Cecilia saw there were several women inside, including some nurses wearing uniforms that she did not recognise. There was no further shooting and within an hour another group of Japanese soldiers arrived and marched the women the relatively short distance to Muntok ...*”; so, Cecilia joined her fellow nurses in over three years of the harshest internment and deprivation through the camps of Muntok, Palembang and Belalau. Where survival became their focus and Cecilia cut firewood to earn her livelihood “... *no doubt a skill she learned at home in Queensland ...*” (Helen Stillman, [issuu.com](#)); Cecilia was the first to leave the AANS on being repatriated to Australia after the war and was discharged with the rank of Lieutenant on 9.1.46 but soon after was awarded mentioned In despatches for her leadership as a POW; in 1946 she married Allen McPhee in Wollongong, NSW, and they went onto have two sons. In later years they moved to the Gold Coast where she died, aged 98 years, in March 2011. She was the last of the 24 nurses who survived the war to pass away and it is an insight into her strong feelings of comradeship that she requested no flowers at her funeral – since she was not able to bury her friends in Sumatra with flowers, she did not believe she should have flowers either. (Helen Stillman, [issuu.com](#))
- **DOMINGUEZ** - John Gallagher Dominguez, born 1879 Wandilong near Bright, Victoria. Left Singapore on the Vyner Brooke [sunk]. Mining Engineer, Anglo-Oriental Mining Ltd. Palembang, **Sumatra internee**. Died in captivity 11.9.44 Muntok (SUM); John Dominguez was born in the small gold rush town of Wandilong (near Bright in Victoria) on 6.3.1879, as the youngest son of Antonio Salvador Dominguez (a Spaniard) and his wife Mary Ann (nee Gallagher and an Irishwoman). He was later employed as a winchman and then a farmer in other small towns in north-eastern

Victoria, Australia, named Lower Buckland, Parpunkah and then back to Wandiligong. He married Agnes Gertrude Dunphy on 7.12.1907; in 1921 he is mentioned as being in Indi, Victoria; they must have moved to Malaya during the 1920-30s and the first mention of them in Malayan newspapers is in 1936 when they left for a few months leave in Australia on the 'Nieuw Zealand' (SFPMA 18.6.36) and returned on the same ship later in the year (SFPMA 3.10.36); it is possible they had at least one son who moved from Australia with them because there was a Sgt John Anthony Dominguez , born in Australia in 1911, employed by Anglo Oriental Mining and 1st Btn Perak, FMSVF, and married to Mabel, who became a POW – he may have been the person named 'Jack' in the 1945 death notice – below - in Australia for Mr & Mrs. Dominguez); According to rootsweb.ancestry.com "... *It is alleged that John was managing a rubber plantation in Malaya when the Japanese invaded...*"; in 1942 John Dominguez had reached the age of 62 years; Mr Dominguez is listed in the report by Dr. Goldberg as a "Vyner Brooke" passenger who died in Muntok; the official post war record by the Colonial Office was 'J. G. Dominguez , Anglo Oriental Tin Ltd., died 11.9.44 in south Sumatra of Colitis and Beriberi' (CORD, Reg M1, Folio 114, Serial No 680); there was a death notice in "The Argus" on 20.10.45 for both Mr & Mrs Dominguez which states "... *at internment camp , Muntok, Banka Island ... loved father of Jim and Jack , grandfather of Brian, Ian and Judith ...* "; neither he nor 'Gertie' are listed on the CWGC website.

- **DOMINGUEZ** -Mrs Agnes Gertrude 'Gerte' Dominguez, nee Dunphy, born 1881 The Buckland near Bright, Victoria. Wife of J.G. [married 1907]. Left Singapore on the Vyner Brooke [sunk]. Palembang **Sumatra internee. So**, Agnes Gertrude 'Gertie' Dunphy had been born near Bright, Victoria at "The Buckland" and married John Dominguez on 7.12. 1907. See the story of John Dominguez (above) for what is known of their life in Australia and Malaya; she died aged 63 years of age in Muntok camp, and her death was recorded in the same death notice as her husband. Died in captivity 9.11.44 Muntok. (SUM).
- **DORSCH – Sister Hilda /Heulda / Hulda Millicent "Millie" Maria/Marie Dorsch**, SFX 10597, 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station, Australian Hospital group. [NB: there is a huge amount of discrepancy in the names show for Sister Dorsch in even the AWM records (Roll of honour/POW records/photos etc) and most other references to her that should be cleared up out of respect for Millie Dorsch's memory.]In the book 'ORB' she is referred to as 'Jess' Dorsch but it is not clear why this is used perhaps this was her nickname amongst the nurses on the "SS. Vyner Brooke". For the purposes of this record, we will refer to her as 'Millie' Dorsch. With the name of 'Senior Sister Millicent Hilda Marie Dorsch' she is recorded as the [only] daughter of Adolph John Walter Dorsch and Elsie Victoria Dorsch of Hove, Holdfast Bay, South Australia (CWGC and Singapore Memorial, Column 140). She was from the Adelaide area of South Australia where her family were prominent in educational and religious affairs (ORB, p.92). Her photo in the AWM archives shows a demure pleasant woman. The date of her birth is shown on the RSL Virtual Memorial as 'Lt. Millicent Hulda Maria Dorsch born Brighton, South Australia on 25 February 1912' (rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au). Sadly, this researcher has not been able to find any internet record of her early life, nursing training or career. After the sinking of the "SS. Vyner Brooke" Millie was last seen in the sea (with Sister Merle Trenergy) hanging onto trailing ropes off the raft upon which were Matron Paschke, Mary Clarke, Gladys McDonald, and Caroline Ennis together with the two small children (P.234 ORB) as it was swept down the Banka Straits (p.234 ORB). ORB states that they were never seen again but new information (email November 2016 Dr Neil McGregor advising that his mother Sister Sylvia Muir who was on the ship was told

this in Singapore after release from internment in 1945) has come to light that in fact this raft with the remains of Sister McDonald and two other nurses was located several weeks later by a ship in the Indian Ocean. One piece of information which suggest that one or more of the nurses made an effort to swim for Banka Island further south along the coast (perhaps when they realised that there was no more land in front of them beyond Banka Island) is that contained in the book "Soldier Surgeon in Malaya" by T. Hamilton published in 1957 (source: Barbara Angell on the 'Angellpro' website). In this book it is stated that Colonel/ Matron A. 'Annie' M. Sage of the AANS - who greeted the surviving AANS nurses after release from internment in 1945 - was told that the identity disc of Sister Dorsch had been found by a "... Mrs Armstrong – since died ..." on a beach on Banka Island. The only Mrs Armstrong interned in Muntok, and Palembang was Mrs. Resie Armstrong, mother of Ralph Armstrong who wrote 'A Short Cruise on the Vyner Brooke'. Mrs Armstrong, Ralph and several other members of the family were on a raft after the sinking that was also swept south down the Banka Straits and landed initially on the Sumatran coast before being taken by fishermen to a beach on the south coast of Banka Island (P.48-49 "SCOTVB") and then to the town of "Koba" on the north – eastern side of the island. It is possible that either, or both, Sister Dorsch and Sister Trenerry did make it to a beach south east of Muntok, but it also opens up the awful possibility that they would have crossed paths with the second landing force of the invading Japanese Army on Banka island – the one making for the airfield and Pankilpinang (see the later section on 'Who Carried Out This Atrocity' and the related Map 2 of Japanese Army plans). To have met up with soldiers with the record of war crimes in Hong Kong may have almost certainly meant the same fate for these two Sisters and their comrades on Radji Beach. Clearly and understandably during the war the authorities had no knowledge of the fate of Millie because she comes up in official POW records, then the Army casualty list on 9.7.42 as ' Missing – Dorsch M.H. M. S-nurse , Hove' and then later in the war there is the record in the Public notices of the "Advertiser" (Adelaide , South Australia) on 29.6.44 " ...To the memory of our dear friend Lieut, Millie Dorsch(AANS) believed to have lost her life by enemy action after the fall of Singapore – forever remembered by Mr. and Mrs. Cook. Betty and Murray, 2nd AIF...'.Memorials to her service are that she is listed (as Sister Hilda Millicent Dorsch) along with the names of 77 other AANS nurses who gave their lives during WW2 on the memorial at Kapunda; and also her medals are held - under the name of Nurse Millie Dorsch – at the Brighton (South Australia) RSL Sub-Branch with the notation that they were donated on her behalf " ... as being a resident of the Brighton area killed in action during WWII .." (brightonrsl@bigpond.com.au). So Millie must have lost her life in the sea or still on the raft as it was taken by the powerful sea current that run down the east coast of Sumatra into the Sunda Straits and out into the Indian Ocean.

- **DOYLE – Sister Jess Gregory Doyle**, NFX 70449, 2/10th Australian Hospital Group, was born in Gladstone, Mosman on 27.11.11 (ancestry.com) the daughter of Richard Henry Doyle and Nina Rebecca Gregory. Little information has been found on her early life, but she did pass her Nursing Exam in December 1935 at Prince Henry Hospital, Sydney. She may have lived and worked in London soon after during 1936-37 (ancestry.com). After the sinking of the ship, it is not clear how Jess Doyle made it to land on Banka Island, but it was clearly not through Radji Beach, and she ended up an internee of the Japanese in Muntok, then Palembang and finally Belalau internment camps and suffered severe malnutrition and deprivation during those years. It is clear she was a *personality* "... outgoing and bubbly, Jess was always good for a story, many of which were directed against herself and her family who were

prominent in sporting circles in Sydney. Her maternal uncle was Jack Gregory, the finest all round cricketer that Australia had provided to the point ..." (p.127-128, ORB). She also featured as a potential 'international' cricketer in one of the internment camps when the women internees – by now skeletal – began to assemble an England versus Australia 'cricket' match to boost spirits. The book 'ORB' also relates how – being small, dark and attractive, Jess was one of the women that the Japanese internment camp officers wanted to staff their so called 'club' in Irenelaan, Palembang – this was a resounding failure for the Japanese in the face of the brave and forceful reaction of the Australian Army Nurses! Upon her release after the war a photo (in the AWM archives) was taken of Jess Doyle which shows exactly how malnourished she and the other women had become – an indictment on the Japanese forever. Captain Jess Doyle left the AANS in March 1946 to be married to Norman Gilmour MacAulay of the 2/30th Battalion 9 8th Division AIF) who had been a Transport officer and Staff captain in Singapore and then a POW in Changi camp. She also received a 'Mentioned in Despatches' in 1946 for '*... services rendered whilst in Japanese hands ...*' (AWM). They later moved to New Zealand for Norman's work and had two daughters and a son. Norman passed away in 1968 in Australia and Jess returned at some stage to New Zealand (Upper Hutt) where she passed away on 27.6.93.

- **DRUMMOND - Matron Irene Melville Drummond** was born on 26 July 1905 at Ashfield, Sydney, daughter of Cedric Drummond, marine engineer, and his wife Katherine, née Melville, both Queensland born. Educated at Catholic schools in Adelaide and at Broken Hill, New South Wales, Irene returned to Adelaide, trained as a nurse at Miss Laurence's Private Hospital, qualified in obstetrics at the Queen's Home and worked at Angaston Hospital. In 1933 she moved to the Broken Hill and District Hospital where she proved to be a compassionate and extremely competent nurse, well-liked and respected by her superiors and colleagues. She served as a surgical sister, assistant-matron and acting-matron.

Appointed sister in the Australian Army Nursing Service, Australian Imperial Force, on 8 November 1940, Drummond was called up for full-time duty with the 2nd/4th Casualty Clearing Station in January 1941. Next month she sailed for Singapore to join the 2nd/9th Field Ambulance. Briefly back with the 2nd/4th C.C.S., she was promoted Matron on 5 August and posted to the 2nd/13th Australian General Hospital in September. When the Japanese invaded Malaya on 8 December, the hospital was situated near Johore Bahru. In January 1942 it was hurriedly moved to St Patrick's School, Singapore. Despite chaotic conditions—brought on by the hasty retreat, enemy air-raids and increasing admissions of battle casualties—Drummond's quiet efficiency helped to ensure that the wards were operational within 48 hours.

By early February 1942 surrender to the Japanese appeared likely. Although the nurses had begged to be allowed to stay with their patients, they were put on board the steamer, Vyner Brooke, scooping up a small Chinese boy as the Vyner Brooke sank, Drummond escaped in a lifeboat.

A group of survivors, including Drummond and twenty-one fellow nurses, came ashore at Radji Beach, Banka Island. They were joined by some twenty British servicemen from another sunken ship. Having discovered that the island was already in the hands of the Japanese and that no help could be expected from the local population, on 16 February the party resolved to surrender. One of the Vyner Brooke's officers was sent to Muntok to negotiate with the Japanese. While he was away Drummond suggested that the civilian women and

children should leave for Muntok. Shortly after the civilians departed, a Japanese officer and twenty soldiers arrived at the beach.

Ignoring pleas that the remaining group was surrendering; the Japanese separated the men from the women. The men were marched around a small bluff to another cove; there they were shot and bayoneted. The Japanese returned to the nurses who had been left sitting on the beach and ordered them to walk into the sea. All knew their fate as they entered the water in silence. The Japanese soldiers opened fire with a machine-gun. Irene Drummond was one of the first to die.

She was mentioned in dispatches in 1946. A children's playground, the Sister Drummond Memorial Park, opened at Broken Hill Hospital in 1949, commemorates her. ("Australian Dictionary of Biography" by Julie Gorrell). This researcher contemplates the possibility that such a memorial is most fitting to Irene Paschke and the nurses on the raft protectively holding and caring for two small children on a seemingly endless and cruel sea. There is so much more to the leadership of Irene Drummond throughout the war up to the events on Radji Beach and it is recommended that anyone interested have a read of "On Radji Beach" to obtain a full understanding of this staunch leader.

- ELMES – Sister Dorothy 'Bud' Gwendoline Howard Elmes, NFX 70526, 2/10th Australian Hospital Group, (known as Benda or Bud to her family and Buddy to her friends) was born in Armadale Melbourne, on 27 April 1914 to Robert Maynard and Dorothy Jean Elmes (nee Howard). She had one elder sister Beatrice Jean Howard Banks (nee Elmes). She spent most of her life in Melbourne and Cheshunt in Victoria's King Valley. She was the personality of the family, an outgoing, attractive confident young woman with a quirky sense of humour. Her friend Jean Smithenbaker (Smithy??) noted "Buddy was a most exceptional person.... hair worn in a bun.... hazel eyes, an infectious laugh and a long striding walk.....on the rare occasions she wore high heels she was decidedly awkward. Buddy was tolerant and kind to both humans and animals. She was tune deaf and an avid reader...her expression of endearment was to address one as "old hound" or "old tripe hound". She trained as a nurse at Corowa Community Hospital [on the banks of the Murray River] for 4 years, graduating in May 1939. In 1940 she was described by her matron as "one of our best trainees". The local vicar opined she was a "young woman of excellent character and lady like training with a cheery disposition". She was appointed to the Australian Army Nursing Service in November unaware of her destination. She disembarked in Singapore on 18th February 1941. She says in a letter to her aunt in March 1941 "our quarters here are very comfortable...the climate is not frightfully hot but rather sticky. The country is very pretty here, rice seems to be the main thing that is grown. The English people living about here are awfully good to us, inviting us out to tennis and swimming and afternoon tea etc. It must be a bit of a strain to them to have large numbers of plain, unattached females parked on them". Her last letter to her parents was on 8 February 1942 from "Abroad". *"We have been fairly busy, not so much busy but on duty over 12 hours a day.... all we have for a light is a lantern with blue paper wrapped around. Sorry this is so short but there is nothing to write about these days"*. Bud was evacuated from Singapore on 11 February 1942 on the 'SS Vyner Brooke' and following the sinking of the ship, somehow made her way to land. Two days later on 16th February 1942 she was marched into the water at Radji Beach and massacred by the Japanese with 20 other nurses. The one survivor of the massacre, Sister (then Captain) Vivien Strachan (Bullwinkel) advised Bud's niece that Buddy "was wonderfully brave – like her colleagues when they were ordered into the sea. None cried out or called for mercy." A letter sent to Bud by her mother on 2 March 1942 showed her anguish, "My Darling little Bud, Oh dear, I wish I knew where you are in the world." This letter was

marked ‘Returned to Sender’. Her parents searched frantically for information, but it was not until June 1944 that the Red Cross advised that “S/Nurse G Elmes is now officially listed as missing believed to have been killed on or after 11/2/42”. Her mother never gave up hope and for many years, even though she had by then been advised of the details of her daughter’s death, thought Bud would turn up at their cottage in Cheshunt. (Sara Alsop - nee Banks, niece, email 29 November 2016). Little is known about Bud’s last voyage on the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’ apart from the fact that, after somehow attaching herself to either a raft or lifeboat she made it to land and then two days later, this lovely caring young woman in her late 20’s was brutally murdered by the Japanese Army on Radji Beach with twenty other Australian Army nurses on 16 February 1942.

- **ENNIS – Sister Caroline Mary Ennis, VFX 38751, 2/10th Australian General Hospital.** She was born in Swan Hill, Victoria on 13 August 1913, the daughter of Hugh Martin Ennis and Mary Josephine Ennis and the eldest of four children and known as ‘Carrie’ to her family. When she was about nine years of age her father died, and her mother married Joseph Graham about three years later (nephew Stephen West email 6.6.17) – which explains why some official records list her mother as Mary Josephine Graham of Cheshunt, Vic (ww2roll.gov.au). Caroline helped look after the younger children before she went nursing (nephew Stephen West email). She passed her Nurses Board exam in April 1936 whilst at Beechworth Hospital (“The Argus”, 2.4.36, trove.nla.gov.au) and it seems that she worked at the bush nursing hospital at Yackandandah (nephew Stephen West email) where there is a memorial plaque with Caroline’s name inscribed, plus the Wangaratta Base Hospital in 1940 with Dorothy Elmes and also possibly the Corowa Hospital since she was included (with Dorothy Elmes) in their ANZAC service in 2013. “...Her family remembers her as a fun loving girl with many friends. She loved ballroom dancing and was quite a good tennis player. When she came home during the holidays, she would always have something for her sisters and her brother. A very kind, caring and loving family member. A very good friend, always ready to assist others ...” (email from nephew Stephen West 6.6.17). She was nursing in the northeast of Victoria when she joined the AANS in Melbourne on 20 August 1940. When Caroline was on the “SS. Vyner Brooke” it is recorded by Betty Jeffrey (p.153, ORB) that she was lying flat in the saloon “... chatting with Sister Ennis about near misses ...” and that when a bomb eventually hit the ship – it went down the funnel to burst in the engine room and the gun with its crew was blown over the side “...Sister Ennis and I made a bee-line for the bridge... taking a child with us, we were the first out. We left the children with an Englishwoman and dashed toward the bridge, only to find it was an unrecognisable mess and burning fiercely ...” (p.137, SD). Soon after the sinking Caroline was seen already sitting on a raft “... Also sitting out of the water was Caroline Ennis, who was holding two small children, a Chinese boy who looked about four years old and a little English girl who was probably a year younger ...” (p.171, ORB). The young Chinese boy had been floating past Betty Jeffrey who, grabbed him and lifted him onto Olive Paschke’s raft - into the waiting arms of Caroline Ennis (p.184, ORB). Another comment by Betty Jeffrey “... Aboard the raft Caroline Ennis had assumed the responsibility for the children and had developed a particular affinity with the little English girl who was soon calling her Auntie Caroline ...” (p.186, ORB). They floated on the raft all Saturday night and before dawn on Sunday they drifted through a convoy of small Jap transport ships carrying soldiers and equipment. Although the raft actually bumped into those craft, there was total silence as they passed through them (p.186, ORB). Their raft was swept about by strong currents, and they could not reach the shore - on the Sunday morning they could see Muntok

pier and they had been swept south along the Coast of Banka Island so that they were parallel with large trees and mangroves - the northern beaches had disappeared. Betty Jeffrey and Iole Harper had during the night volunteered to lighten the raft and swim alongside, but it seems that at dawn they were swept away by the strong currents – they “... called out but there was nothing either group could do about their situation, Betty and Iole watched the raft grow smaller, with Mary Clarke and Gladys McDonald sitting on either side of Olive Paschke, and Jess Dorsch and Merle Trenerry in the water alongside hanging onto the trailing ropes. And there, back to back with her matron, sat Caroline Ennis, cradling two small children in her lap. The raft and its occupants were never seen again ...” (p.187, ORB). However new information (email November 2016, Dr Neil McGregor advising that his mother Sister Sylvia Muir who was on the ship was told this in Singapore after release from internment in 1945) has come to light that in fact this raft with the remains of Sister McDonald and two other nurses was located several weeks later by a ship in the Indian Ocean. So, Caroline Ennis probably lost her life in the sea or still on the raft as it was taken by the powerful sea current that run down the east coast of Sumatra into the Sunda Straits and out into the Indian Ocean. This caring, happy woman from a loving family, someone who obviously had a strong love and affinity for children is commemorated (with Dorothy Elmes) at King Valley Road, Cheshunt Hall, Vic. 3678, by trees planted in 1995, together with a memorial plaque. She is also recorded on a plaque at Wangaratta hospital and the Memorial panel ‘96’ at the AWM. Her name is recorded on the CWGC website where her parents are noted as from Moyhu, Victoria, Australia and which also tells us that Caroline’s name is on Column 141 at the Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore.

➤ **EXHAM** – see **AXON**

➤ **FAIRLEY**- Mrs Marie Suzanne Fairley died 13.2.42 on the “SS. Vyner Brooke” (CWGC); she was the wife of *James Henry Barrie Fairley, BSc [Edinburgh], AMICE, WW1 Service: Captain, Royal Field Artillery. District Engineer, Sudan Government Railways 1929-1931. Executive Engineer, Batu Pahat 1936 then HQ Staff, PWD, JB. Sapper 792 JVE. He was lost at sea on the “Giang Bee” 13.2.42. Wife Marie Suzanne lost at sea 15.2.42 on the Vyner Brooke. Their child? J.H.B. on deceased list of Journal of Institution of Civil Engineers 1946. Mrs in National Probate Register. (JMM); there is a record of James Fairley being appointed Exec. Engineer PWD Batu Pahat, Johore in 1936 (ST. 5.5.36); the Colonial Office death register records “James Henry Barrie Fairley, presumed to have lost his life following the sinking of the ‘Giang Bee’.* Source: *Governor of Singapore, Death certificate 30.11.46. Register No. M1. Folio 273-138. Serial No. 1285”;* There is no mention of him in the CWGC records but is on the deceased list of the *Journal of the Institution of Civil Engineers*; in September 2014 his name was added to the CWGC database of deaths during WW2 as part of a private effort known as “In from the Cold”; James Henry Barrie Fairley and Maria S Fueter (nee Walker according to the marriage records) were married in December 1922 at Hackney, London; Mrs. Marie Suzanne Fairley (with the same CORD ref and Serial No. 1286) was presumed to have lost her life following the sinking of the ‘HMS. Vyner Brooke’ on or after 14.2.42; In the ST archives Mrs. Fairley and a child are listed on a ships passenger list leaving Singapore in 1936 and also Mr Fairley participating in Batu Pahat school entertainment (presumably as a parent) in 1936 so that child was presumably at least 6 years old; in 1941 Marie Fairley was involved in running a toy stall at the fund-raising fair held by the Womens section of the Malaya Patriotic Fund in Johore (SFPMA. 5.5.41); on the 12 February 1942 Mr and Mrs Fairley boarded a ‘water boat’ in Singapore Harbour after obtaining exit passes and under the instructions that men were to be taken to the “HMS Giang Bee” and

women to the “SS. Vyner Brooke” which we can only assume the authorities believed to be safer (for women) since it was a merchant ship and not flying the White ensign of the Royal Navy (report by Mr James Reid whose wife and children were instead placed on the ‘Mata Hari’ rather than the ‘Vyner Brooke’ and as a result survived the War); it has not been possible to trace their child mentioned above and if correct determine whether the child (she/he) was also on the ship. But there can reasonably be the assumption that if the child were on a ship returning with its parents to the UK in 1936 that - by 1942 - the child would have probably been aged at least 8 years of age and so by then at a boarding school in the UK.

- **FAIRWEATHER – Sister Lorna Florence Fairweather**, SFX 13431, 2/13th Australian Hospital Group. Lorna was born on 31 January 1913, at Stirling West in the Adelaide Hills, the daughter of Percival Sidney and Florence Annie (nee Johnson) Fairweather and one of five siblings. Her parents were devout Methodists and instilled in their children a love of family and community. She attended Nailsworth Primary School eventually completing her Qualifying Certificate [a coincidence of history is that the slightly younger Vivian Bullwinkel - who would stand also on Radji Beach on that fateful morning of 16 February 1942 - was at the same time attending the neighbouring Prospect Primary School in Adelaide, whilst living with her grandmother, and a slightly older Millie Dorsch – who would lose her life on a raft in the Banka Straits or Sunda Straits after the sinking of the ‘Vyner Brooke’ - had both also attended Prospect Primary School]. During this time Lorna lived firstly at Second Avenue, Sefton Park and then eventually at 78 Galway Avenue, Broadview. She then attended Adelaide Girls High School where she decided that nursing was her vocation. She trained at the Mareeba Babies Hospital where she was known for her compassion and caring nature (Panel commissioned by the Prospect Local History group for Nailsworth Primary School in 2015 under the “100 years of ANZAC for South Australia” program). Lorna specialised in paediatrics during her training and was one of the most highly qualified nurses in the AANS; she was also relieving Matron at the Crippled Children’s Home at Somerton, SA, when she enlisted (ORB, p.142). Enlisting in the AANS she departed for Singapore in September 1941. Whilst it is not known how she reached Radji Beach it must be surmised that she was in one of the two lifeboats which landed. Photos in the AWM archives and on the memorial panel at Nailsworth Primary School show a lovely young woman, slightly studious who clearly only thought of her fellow human beings in a caring light. Her life ended on Radji Beach with a group of trusted and loved friends, under a hail of bullets from Japanese troops who without doubt were the antithesis of Lorna Fairweather – men who had not a shred of human decency and makes the researcher trust that history reaped a punishment on them that meant they did not live long lives.
- **FARMANER- Sister Peggy Everett Farmaner**, WFX 3438, 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station. A newspaper article records that she” ... *Was the daughter of Mr and Mrs George F. Farmaner of 9 Lapsley Place, Claremont, WA and part of an old pioneer family well known in that area. She was educated at Methodist Ladies College and St Mary’s Church of England Grammar School, from where she matriculated. She did her nursing training at Perth Hospital. When war was declared she was in Sydney but immediately returned to her home State to enlist. In August 1940[aged 28 years] she left on the ‘Queen Mary’ for Malaya. She worked with four other nurses at a Clearing Station in the most forward area of North Johore. The Nurses then moved to Kluang where they established a hospital on a rubber estate. On January 20, 1942, they were again evacuated at two hours notice, were moved to another place, which within 12 hours was found to be the wrong place. From here they moved to Singapore... The last letter her parents received from her was written on February 9,*

1942. *She was killed a few days later, 'God knows the position is desperate, but I am strangely unperturbed. Don't worry about me, mother' she wrote ...*" ('The Daily News' Perth, WA. 19 Sept 1945). The newspaper article is accompanied by a photo of Peggy - a refined looking young woman proudly sitting for the photo in her nurse's uniform. In happier times earlier in her life, a newspaper article and photo ('West Australian' 17.6.37) records her at the 9th Annual Ball of the Methodist Ladies College Old Girls Assn at the Karra Katta Club. After the ship sank Peggy reached the lifeboat with Matron Drummond and grabbed a trailing rope (p.169, ORB) and so reached Radji beach. She was one of the Australian nurses forced into a line facing the sea and murdered by Japanese troops at the beach. Peggy Farmaner is included in the memorial to all the nurses unveiled in 1999 by Mrs Vivian Statham (nee Bullwinkel) and Wilma Young at Honour Avenue (at the lake near the tennis court of the Botanical Gardens), Kings Park, Bicton, WA. – Her plaque is number M264. Perhaps the best memorial to Peggy is reported to have occurred when the surviving nurses returned to Australia on the 'Manunda', "...when the nurses were spending the night at Hollywood Military Hospital, Perth, the reception rooms were banked with flowers. For each nurse was a special gift of a posy from the garden of the late Sister P. Farmaner, one of those who died on Bank Beach. Her mother brought the flowers to her daughter's comrades ..." ("The Australian Womens Weekly" 3.11.45)

- **FREEMAN – Sister Rubina Dorothy 'Dot' Freeman**, VFX 39351, 2/10th Australian Hospital Group. Dot Freeman was the daughter of Albert Edward and Ada Beatrice Freeman and was aged 32 years when she died in internment in 1945 just a few days before the Japanese officially surrendered. She was the sister of Miss N. Freeman (AWM). [To date no information on her pre-war life has been found by the researcher and it is not known how she reached Banka Island after the ship sank. Anything on this period known to a reader of this document would be appreciated by the researcher to enhance the memorial record of Dot Freeman.]. On 7 February 1942 whilst she was nursing in Singapore "... long range Japanese artillery appeared to deliberately target the school [this was the Methodist Girls School hospital annex] ... during that barrage, one medical orderly and one patient were killed while Dot a junior staff nurse from Melbourne was lucky to escape unscathed ..." (p. 95, ORB) and then "... she was now in a front line situation later the same week with Jap planes machine gunning all around the field hospital she was working in with Matron Paschke and the others ..." (p. 96, ORB) Dot certainly presents as an unselfish and indeed generous person – in 1944 Dot and her best friend Rene Singleton volunteered (whilst in Irenelaan internment camp in Palembang) to move out of their now totally overcrowded house accommodation and they built a small lean-to in the backyard of the house (p. 258,ORB).Also in 1944, again whilst in Irenelaan, Dot was one of the nurses who set up a bakery to use every scrap of rice they could beg , borrow or steal (p.263, ORB).However the three internment camps Dot found herself in during the war were some of the worst of the Second World War and severe starvation, sickness and death were a constant feature of her very harsh existence during those years." ... On 8 August 1945 Dot – Rene Singleton's best friend – died [at Belalau] from a combination of malaria, dysentery and beriberi. She too, had been fading away for some time and simply curled up into a foetal position, closed her eyes and passed away ..." (p.278, ORB). She was" ... buried in the cemetery at the top of the hill at Belalau (Loebok-Linggau) - in wretched circumstances with only an old rice sack to cover her not knowing that peace had come at last ..." (p.222, QH). Her grave remains were later removed to Jakarta after the war, and she now lies in (Muntok Peace Museum). She is memorialised

along with the other AANS nurses who gave their lives during the Second World War on the Kapunda memorial. A brief epitaph is the statement by Betty Jeffrey's in her book "while history passes" "... *Dot Freeman, another Victorian was a sweet girl, with whom internment went very hard ...*" ("The Age", Melbourne. 26.6.54)

- **GARDAM – Sister Dora Shirley Gardam**, TFX 2183, 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station. Note, incorrectly spelt surname in the book 'Quiet Heroines' as Gardham. Shirley Gardam was born in Ulverstone, Tasmania the daughter of Richard Alfred and Dora Emermengarde Bickford Gardam (who died aged 61 years on 21.3.42) and sibling to two sisters and a brother. She trained in Launceston General Hospital, Tasmania with Jessie Simons before they both enlisted in the AANS for Malaya. Her photo in the AWM Archives shows a most refined looking woman. Interestingly, although apparently Shirley's hospital matron in Tasmania thought she might be '*too nervous*' to work in a Casualty Clearing Station with its usually front line proximity, the fact is that Shirley was personally selected with all the nurses of that unit by its commanding officer Colonel Tom Hamilton (ORB, p. 92) and later when the nurses were ready to evacuate he had sufficient confidence in her personally – no doubt after observing her fortitude under the bombing and shell fire they had experienced - to give a letter he had written to his wife back in Australia (ORB, p.113).After the "SS. Vyner Brooke" had sunk Shirley was one of those nurses who managed to reach the overturned lifeboat with Sylvia Muir, Mitz Mittleheuser, veronica Clancy, Gladys Hughes, , Mina Raymont, and jean Ashton. To their absolute credit his group managed to actually right this large, heavy, capsized craft and some of the nurses gave up various parts of their clothing to plug the holes created by machine gun fire and shrapnel (ORB, p. 175). Later they abandoned the lifeboat which continued to sink and they all congregated around rafts. They were eventually rescued by two RAAF men in a launch and taken to Muntok where they were immediately interned at the Muntok cinema building. Later in internment it is recorded that young Shirley came to the forefront amongst the nurses with her "*... musical talents and sweet disposition ...*" and she became a feature playing the piano found by the internees and giving lectures on Tasmania (ORB, p. 246). Her life in internment has the tangible legacy in the archives of the AWM (PR 86/129) in the form of a "Hand drawn birthday card and two portions of notes with greetings from Palembang camp". Like all the internees in the harsh and deprived internment camps of Muntok, Palembang and, Muntok again in 1944 Shirley suffered increasingly from starvation, a lack of resources for hygiene and disease. For her it seems the return to Muntok was the tipping point in her health and she saw her friends Rene Singleton and Blanche Hempstead succumb to the ravages of Beri Beri before she too died. To quote from 'ORB' she was a "*... victim of starvation and neglect as much as the dysentery that eventually took her away.* She died swiftly and left behind a host of friends who would always remember ha tall fair girl who was loved by all who knew her. During her three years of captivity, Shirley had not received a letter from home and was unaware that her mother had died in 1942. Like Mina Raymont, Shirley had always loved flowers; her coffin was covered in them when it was lowered into the ground in the little jungle clearing ..." (ORB, p.269). This explanation of the death and burial of Shirley Gardam, whilst accurate, does not convey the reality of her death – her 'coffin' was merely slats of wood and it took up to 20 starving, sick, skeletal women internees to carry her emaciated frame. She was the last Australian nurse to die on Banka Island.
- **GARDEN** – in Goldberg record she states that a 'Sr. Garden', who had been in the 'RAF' launch which picked them up from the sea after the sinking died in 'MUNDOK' [sic]. This will be a misspelling of the name of Sister Shirley Gardam.

- **GERMAN/ GERMANN** - Eric Harrison Germann a US citizen from Buffalo NY. The first reference found on Eric German is in the 'Morning Tribune' (4.9.37) where Mr. W. Eric German is recorded as being a passenger on the 'P & O Naldera' bound for Penang. American brewer, Malayan Breweries from 11.41. Sent to Singapore to step up beer production for the troops. Bayoneted on Pom Pong Island (sic, this is meant to mean Banka Island) February 1942 but survived the massacre of 18 men. Palembang Sumatra internee. There is a full chapter on "The Saga of Eric German" in the book 'BYE' and earlier (p.41) it describes him as a "... 31 year old brew master... New York was his home. He had been called to Singapore shortly before the war's outbreak to help step-up production of beer for troops brought in to strengthen Malaya's defences: his physical description in the book states (p.40), "... he was a big, well built fellow in fantastically patched shorts and shirt which did not conceal his powerful neck, broad shoulders and slim hips. Below the shorts was a pair of well – muscled legs. ...I was looking into a pair of harsh, blue –grey eyes. A scraggly, sandy coloured beard covered his face but not enough to hide a prominent jaw and a wide, but thin lipped mouth. My first impression was that I wouldn't want to meet him in a dark alley ... the wide mouth grinned and his whole face transformed into the rugged features of a good guy..." - perhaps this explains the amazing survival success of Eric German both during and after the sinking, again after having been bayoneted on Radji beach, as well as through internment camps? Also, in 'BYE' by William MacDougall it states that Eric boarded the ship wearing "... a pair of high leather boots and a fireman's helmet, donned while helping Singapore's bomb-set conflagrations ...". Eric gave MacDougall a very detailed account of the voyage and events at Radji Beach whilst they were both POWs in Palembang (see BYE, pp. 142-155 for the full account). In summary he helped lower the lifeboats and then entered the sea trying to help women struggling towards lifeboats and rafts. He then realised that there were more people back on the ship and returned to climb back up a ladder and reached the deck only to have three-year-old 'Mischa' Warman thrust into his arms. Eric held his hands over the child's mouth and nose and jumped "... Mischa was quiet and smiling when they bobbed to the surface and they both laughed ...". He took Mischa to the nearby submerged lifeboat and handed the child to a "... fat civil engineer" – a man who was later to die at the hands of the Japanese on Radji Beach. With three rafts attached to the submerged lifeboat they rowed the whole contraption to the coast near Radji Beach by about 2030 hrs that same night. About thirty survivors (First Officer Sedgeman, some soldiers, sailors, nurses, civilian women and children) had reached Radji Beach earlier and lit a bonfire. Eric probably helped the seriously injured AANS Sisters Casson, Wight and Halligan along the several miles of beach to the bonfire that night. Two days later, on Monday 16 February, after the small group of women and children had moved off to Muntok led by Mr Dominguez and accompanied by two wounded sailors, Eric German saw the Japanese take the first group of eight men (including Stoker Lloyd who survived) along the beach, over a small promontory of rocks and driftwood about 200 feet away and murder them. The next group with Sedgeman and German were then ordered to march the same route - German and Sedgeman were ordered to lift the injured Mr Watson or his stretcher and take him as well. After being unable to lift him over the 'rocks and driftwood' the Japanese officer told them to leave Watson at that point – leaning up against a log. They were then ordered to stand in line facing the sea - German began to pray -First Officer Sedgeman made a dash for the sea and was gunned down. The next thing German knew he was face down in the sea and in pain – he played for dead. After some time, he could see the Japs had left him, but he continued to lie still – which was just as well because two Japanese

soldiers soon reappeared on the rocks and surveyed the scene. After signalling some sort of confirmation that all were dead, they too left. Eric German waited a long time and then ran up the beach into the jungle and then south about a mile until he found a small stream running into the sea where he hid and rested, at that point finding that he had been bayoneted completely through the chest. The following day he continued further south and came across three survivors of another ship. He took them back to the scene of the atrocity where bodies of the victims lay on the beach and on the stretchers. After being given water by some Malay fishermen he continued in to Muntok and was interned in the cinema. Eric endured the privations of internment in Muntok and then presumably Palembang, Muntok again and finally Belalau. After the war he returned to his career as a brewer in breweries in New York then outside the USA – in Ecuador in 1947 (where he married) then in Costa Rica, Puerto Rica, Spain, Rotterdam, and Nigeria. In 1974 he retired to Florida with his wife Connie - later in 1989 he was noted as 'retired 'and playing badminton in Boca Raton (news. Google).

- **GLENCROSS** – Barbara Louise Glencross (nee Ellercamp) was the wife of Gordon Glencross; they were married circa 1940 (Gordon Glencross obituary in MVG newsletter July 2010) *her husband was Gordon Mackenzie Glencross, b.1918 Streatham. In 1938 he was appointed Assistant, Commercial Union Assurance Co. Ltd, Robinson's Rd, Singapore. Enlisted in the Volunteer forces in June 1939. 2nd Lt 2SSVF POW Singapore to Thailand 10.42. Ended the war at Nakorn Nyok. Wife Barbara Louise last seen Keppel Harbour on 12.2.42 and believed lost at sea on "SS. Vyner Brooke". Gordon returned to Singapore 1946. 2nd wife Betty; daughter Sonia. Son Peter born 1949. Later with New Zealand Insurance HK then from 1951 General Manager NZ Insurance, Australia. Died April 2010 Sydney. Wife Jocelyn. (JMM); in 1946 Gordon Glencross was still searching for his wife as shown in a 'Straits Times' advertisement of August that year "... Glencross – Mrs Barbara Louise (wife of Lieutenant Gordon Mackenzie Glencross) last seen Singapore docks 12 February 1942. Anyone with further information please inform F/Lt. E.H. Prior, RAF Tengah, Singapore ..."* (ST. 8.3.46); the list compiled by internees in Palembang camp of those they believed had died during or after the sinking states simply " Mrs. Glencross, c/o Commercial Union S'pore ..."; the official record of the death of Barbara Glencross is contained in the Colonial Office Record of Deaths which states '...Mrs. Barbara Glencross, wife of G.M. Glencross of Singapore, presumed to have lost her life on or after 14.2.42 in the Banka Straits as a result of the sinking of the "SS. Vyner Brooke". Source C – in –C ALFSEA ... '(CORD, Reg. M1, Folio 283, Serial 1314); there is no record of her death at the CWGC.
- **GIBSON** – Mrs. Dorothy 'Dot' Mabel Gibson is identified as having been on the "SS. Vyner Brooke" from the list titled 'British Women Internees in Palembang 1942' compiled by Mrs. E. Cross and this list also records that "...Gibson D. (Mrs) left the camp on 4.12.42 for S'pore..." which indicates she was one of the Eurasian families allowed to return to Singapore in late 1942; the records of Changi Museum have her listed as Dorothy Mabel Gibson, born 1905, housewife, #1837, British/Eurasian (Changi Museum website) but Dorothy clearly spent most of the war at liberty in Singapore because she was not actually interned there until 25.3.45, when she was interned in Sime Road camp – in late 1944/early 1945 many Eurasian people were interned in Sime Road as the Japanese became more desperate and paranoid ; she was 37 years of age when she boarded the "SS. Vyner Brooke" after the ship sank Dorothy Gibson is mentioned by Australian nurse Wilma Oram "... a voice called out, and a woman swam a short distance to the raft and asked if she could climb aboard. Wilma welcomed her aboard and the woman introduced herself as Mrs Dorothy

Gibson. A civilian evacuee. The two then untied the oars and decided to try to row to Banka Island ... "(ORB P.170). Later that night of 15 February Dorothy and Wilma were "... sitting quietly on their raft, was almost run down by the Japanese invasion fleet supporting the invasion of southern Sumatra and Banka Island. They too had seen the bonfire on the beach, but it was too far away and the current was too strong for them to have any possibility of reaching it...the current eased a bit, and Wilma and Dorothy were able to paddle ashore amid the Japanese landing craft. Once ashore they were promptly taken prisoner by the Japanese ...marched under guard to one of the larger buildings in the town an old customs house..." (ORB. P188) – so Dorothy was saved from being a victim of the atrocity on Radji Beach simply by the random nature of strong sea currents; it is not known who Dorothy was married to before the war, but it must have been an Australian because of the following," ...Mrs Dorothy 'Dot' Gibson, Palembang, Sumatra internee. Repatriated 1945 arriving Sydney on Tamaroa 10.10.45 ..." (JMM).

- **GOLDBERG – CURTH** – Dr. Annemaria Eleanor Goldberg – Curth was certainly the most controversial and divisive figure in the story of the "SS. Vyner Brooke" [researcher's note: whilst the entries for passengers on the ship are intended to be respectful but factually accurate, occasionally someone appears for whom it is more appropriate to simply lay out the facts on record and let the reader decide. Much of the material quoted hereon is from the official Australian Government Immigration department file NAA A434, 1948/3/11818], but firstly the "Jeyes" list records "... GOLDBERG D B T RAMBULAN LEFT NEI? WIFE PAL..."; In the diary of Phyllis Briggs is noted "...Dr. Goldberg – a German Jewess, she had been on one of the ships from Singapore and up until September 1943 had lived in freedom in Palembang and worked in the hospital. She was an unpleasant woman with little sympathy for the sick. Never ill and always well dressed..." (SUM); Often referred to as Doctor Goldberg, her name was Annemaria (sometimes she used Annemarie/Annamaria on documents) Eleanor (sometimes referred to as Eleanora) Goldberg – Curth. She was born in Trebnitz, Silesia on 24.2.04 the daughter of Judge Emil Curth from Silesia and Gertrude Curth (nee Brodnitz) from Berlin. Qualifying as a medical doctor she moved to Pisa, Italy and met and married Dr Erich Goldberg in 1934. In 1939 they were apparently moving to Australia but whilst in Malaya they stopped in Ipoh, Malaya where Erich secured a temporary role as a doctor in the Tanjong Rambutan Mental Hospital and Annemaria began a practise as a general practitioner – she was a specialist in children's health and 'internal medicine'. Insofar as what is on record this was the first time; she displayed her ability to be abrasive with people and 'be misunderstood' - something which crops up in her recorded history many times. In the official files in the Australian Archives her file is voluminous and throws up many questions as to her motives and behaviours, including the following advices from the British High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur on the pre-war picture of the Goldberg – Curths; when working in Ipoh the Goldberg – Curths were considered to be " ... carrying on anti-British propaganda amongst the native staff ... "and "also showed great interest in shipping movements ..." (Dr Murdoch , Medical Superintendent of the Hospital who resigned his position because of his negative working relationship with Erich , Murdoch took an intense personal dislike to him and resigned to move to Perth , Australia); in July 1941 Erich resigned from his position and the High Commissioner, KL, gave them until August 1941 to leave Malaya or they would be interned as enemy aliens. Soon after in Singapore, Erich was charged with Fifth Column activities and, according to Annemaria, he then tried to commit suicide. They attempted to gain approval to go to Australia – but were told they would only be admitted to Australia as internees and then immediately deported at the end of

the war. In November 1941 they were both interned in Singapore. Annemaria later stated to the Australian authorities that they gained an exit pass to leave Singapore (this seems a little strange given their internment) on the “SS. Vyner Brooke” but Erich was unable to board because it was only taking women and children [this may or may not be the truth because there were many other men on board]; she duly boarded the ship with other passengers and states that she never heard of Erich again [researcher’s note: whilst she later gave a date of death of death of Erich as August 1992 – obviously a typo and presumably meant to be 1942 – there remains the possibility that Erich may have been summarily executed at the Singapore wharves as a ‘Fifth Columnist’ by someone who knew his recent history. There are a number of unofficial reports of this occurring to ‘Fifth Columnists ‘ around the wharf area during the last few days prior to the Surrender]; the first mention of Dr Goldberg – Curth after the sinking of the ship is from ‘ORB’ (p.176) wherein it is recorded, presumably from the memoirs of the Australian nurses, that - when it was agreed that all able bodied adults on a small life raft should take a turn in the sea to ease the strain on the 23 people (included Mrs. Neubronner, Mrs Chambers, Mr Chambers, Mrs Murray, Mrs Bull and her daughter Hazel, Miss Moreton and the boy John Chan) clustered on and around the drifting tied together rafts - Dr Goldberg refused to share the burden and take a turn in the water. Because there is no record of her ever having children, she is inexplicably quoted as saying “... *I am the mother of three and more important than any of you ...*”. That prompted Sister Veronica Clancy to climb aboard the raft and punch Dr Goldberg as hard as she could in the middle of the back, but despite Goldberg’s screams she refused to budge off the raft. This was then closely followed by Sister Blanche Hempstead climbing onto the raft, putting Goldberg in a headlock and dragging her backwards into the water. The matter is recorded as solved. The group of rafts was later picked up by an old motor launch with two RAAF airmen aboard and delivered along the coast to Muntok wharf where the women were all interned. Thus, began the hostile relationship between the Australian Army nurses and Dr Goldberg – Curth which was to continue throughout internment and well into the post war era. 1945-47 official files created when Annemarie Goldberg – Curth was attempting to enter and then stay in Australia, contain written affidavits from half a dozen Australian Army nurses, including Sister Nesta James, who had a serious contempt for and anger with Dr Goldberg- Curth’s behaviour whilst they were interned and what they considered to be her collaboration with the Japanese. Ellen Hannah said the doctor told the Japanese as soon as she was captured at Muntok that she was German and should not be interned, whilst Wilma Oram quoted the doctor as saying “... *I’m a German, I am German, I am your friend ...* “ and both nurses record that Dr Goldberg – Curth was then set free from the ‘Customs House’ internment camp at Muntok in February 1942;until April 1942 when she was brought into Palembang camp “... *for a very short period ...*” then released again and allowed to work on a paid basis at Charitas Hospital until August 1943 ;the nurses also alleged in their affidavits that she caused death and imprisonment of some internees, that she slapped a sick and dying Sister Raymont ;, refused to get up to patients at night, gave preferential treatment to patients with money but who were not very ill, benefitted from extra rations obtained from funds contributed from male POWs and wealthy people outside the camp, and was very friendly with the Japanese guards. Sister Vivian Bullwinkle recorded for the official enquiry that Dr Goldberg – Curth “... *was never known to do a kindly act to anyone. She was first and what was left over went to her friends who could pay. She was a very selfish woman whose actions were inspired only by expediency ...*”; to be fair, after the war, the doctor was able to elicit several

letters of support from other internees (including missionary teacher Miss Glasgow and the Swiss national married to a British citizen, Mrs Elsa Cross) during the post war enquiry by the Australian Army and Australian Immigration Dept into her conduct whilst in internment; in the various phases of being an Axis ally living free in Sumatra to paid medical professional working in the internment camp hospitals at Muntok, Palembang and Belalau during the war Dr Goldberg – Curth seemed to prosper and according to Ellen Hannah “... *she suffered practically no hardship ...*”; suffice to say immediately after the war the doctor applied for and seems to have initially obtained a medical post in the Dutch East Indies before the Dutch authorities cancelled that appointment and her application to live in the DEI after enquiries amongst internees; she then tried to gain medical registration in Australia but this was declined for the same reason and finally , after enquiry her application for residency in Australia was declined as well; by then she was the owner of a staggering 30 packing cases of her possessions which had been shipped out of Singapore to Fremantle during the week before the Surrender on the ‘SS. Gorgon’ (this was remarkable because almost everyone else boarding ships for Australia by then was restricted to one suitcase) and during 1946/7 after the declaration of the death of her husband she had inherited *his* “... *not inconsiderable estate ...*” which the records show to have been 600 pounds and \$ M 10,000!! Much of this money appears to have been held for safekeeping by the Swiss Consul in Malaya. With all avenues in Australia closed and her reputation in tatters, she returned to Singapore in 1948 and the file shows that, as she left, the Australian Dept of Immigration cabled the Singapore authorities to remind them “... of her history ...”. She is soon mentioned in the Straits Times (26.10.48) as a voluntary woman doctor at the newly opened St Andrews Mission Hospital working three or four times a week at that hospital. She was clearly one of life’s ‘survivors’ and had the means to support herself comfortably in post war Singapore because she seems to have lived for many years in the upmarket Goodwood Park Hotel where she surfaces again in 1952 applying for naturalisation in Singapore (ST. 17.10.52). That there was more to making this application than simply gaining residency in Singapore was soon revealed by the fact that two months later she is reported in newspapers as marrying none other than the Chief Justice of Singapore, Sir Charles Murray – Aynsley, at St Andrew’s Cathedral (ST. 21.12.52) and must have felt truly victorious or vindicated socially when she was then able to use the title of Lady Murray – Aynsley. Sir Charles had been a Puisine Judge in Singapore since 1937 and had been appointed Chief Justice in 1946. His first wife had died suddenly in 1951. They continued to live in Singapore until 1955 when Sir Charles retired - he later died in Florence, aged 74 years of age, in 1974. Lady Annemaria Eleanor Murray – Aynsley (to quote her death notice) died at Cox Hill Manor nursing home, Chobham, Surrey on 13.4.1997 aged 90 years of age (The Gazette).

- **GOODING** – Stanley W. Gooding was born in 1903 in Australia and became a long-term resident of Singapore and Malaya; the ‘Malayans ‘database of Jonathan Moffatt has the following “...GOODING S.W. [Stanley William] To Singapore 1913. Manager, Straits Trading Company, Ipoh. Wife F.H. evacuated – living in Fleet 1948. He was lost at sea 14.2.42 on the *Vyner Brooke*. Daughter Ellen Patricia.” (JMM); the first mention of him in Malayan newspaper is when he arrived in Singapore from London on the P. & O. ‘Sardinia’ on 6 June 1913 (ST. 6.6.130; by 1916 he had established himself in Singapore where he had become a member of the Singapore Cricket Club and is mentioned in several ‘Straits Times’ reports representing that club in cricket and tennis; as the first world war progressed he must have been

interested in joining up but like many men in the tin, rubber and oil sectors he was prevented from doing so as the report of the Singapore manpower Advisory Committee reported in 1917 when they stated that S. W. Gooding , Tin Buyer, Straits Trading Co. Ltd “ ... *Cannot be spared till replaceable by War ineligible. Certificate* “ (ST. 2.5.17); during 1918 and 1919 he is again frequently reported as representing the SCC in tennis, cricket and association football , on 15.11.18 he played in front of 2,000 people for the SCC on the Esplanade ground and is reported as “ ...Gooding did good work for SCC against the team from the Straits Chinese Football Association” (ST. 15.11.18), around 1920 he appears to have ceased active sports games and there is a mention for the first time of a Mr & Mrs. Gooding (not necessarily Mr S & Mrs S.W. Gooding) attending as guests at a wedding in Singapore (ST. 13.8.20); no further newspaper reports are in evidence until 1928 when he boarded the liner ‘Aenas’ with Mrs Gooding and also the Misses Gooding for a voyage from the UK to Singapore (presumably after a home leave); at this point he must have received a transfer to Ipoh because he appears in 1931 as Secretary of the Perak Cricket Association (which post he retained until 1937 when he moved to the General Committee) with comments made by the President that it had had a “ ... *full season of matches thanks to the energetic efforts of the Secretary Mr Gooding ...*” (SFPMA 9.1.31) ;in 1932 he is shown again boarding the ‘Aenas’ from the UK to Singapore (SFPMA 2.1.32) and upon arrival he took charge of the Mengelembu Agency in Ipoh soon after he was in Pusing (a small town about 5 km from Batu Gajah and also within the massive tin ore deposits of the Kinta Valley – one of the world’s great resources of tin at the time) in 1934 ; he again sailed for ‘home’(ST. 26.11.34) and must have had a nine months leave, since he did not return from the UK until August 1935 on the ‘TSS. Patroclus’ (SFPMA 9.8.35) ; he then joined the ‘Non Benders Cricket Club of Malaya’ and was the Perak Representative for several years (SFPMA 14.8.365); in 1936 he was again on leave in the UK (ST. 15.10.36) ; and the final newspaper record is of him on board the ‘Aeneas’ in 1939, again this time from Marseilles to Singapore (ST. 30.3.39) ; when the Japanese invaded Malaya it was not many weeks before they arrived near Ipoh and Stanley’s wife, Marjorie Gooding was at her house at 94 Gopeng Road, Ipoh when a friend drove up to the house and told her that they had to leave at once because the Japs were only half an hour down the road. Stanley was already in Singapore on business, and they reunited there. When Marjorie achieved an exit pass on the “Duchess of Bedford” Stanley took her down to the Singapore docks and wrote his will on the back of an envelope and got a passer by to witness it; aged 53 years in 1942, Stanley Gooding was an older man by Malayan pre-war standards; the ‘Jeyes’ secret list compiled in Changi records “... GOODING STAN WILL STRAITS TRAD. LEFT 12/2 ... “(BPPL); having boarded the “SS. Vyner Brooke” he lost his life in the sea after the sinking and the story of his death is recorded in a letter from a family friend who was also on the ship and made a huge attempt to save him. Mrs Myrtle Ward knew the Gooding family well and only became aware of the fact that, despite his wide sporting abilities, Stanley was unable to swim just before the bombers struck. She knew then that she may have to assist Stanley if they ended up in the water. As events transpired, as the ship was sinking, Stanley managed to escape by lowering himself through a hole in the ship’s side but the time he entered the water he either had been wounded or had become unwell because after Mrs Ward reached him in the sea, he only remained conscious for a few minutes. She tied him to two life belts and a piece of wood and attempted to keep his head above water – sadly he passed away a few hours later whilst in the sea off Banka Island. After what should be considered heroic efforts, Mrs Ward was finally convinced to allow Stanley Gooding

to slip away in the sea later in the evening; in the list compiled in Palembang camp of those people the internees believed had died in the sinking there is “Mr. Sam Gooding, Straits Trading Co, Penang, Dead body seen in sea ...”; the simple record at the CWGC is “Gooding, Stanley W. died 14.2.42 in the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke”, husband of F. H. Gooding...” (CWGC);

- **GREER – Sister Jean ‘Jenny’ Keers Greer**, NX 70937, 2/10th Australian General Hospital, was born on 13th October 1913 at Petersham, NSW. Anecdotally the records give a picture of a spirited, fun loving woman and this fits with a photo in “The Telegraph” Brisbane (24.12.38) titled “Over She Goes” which show Miss Jean Greer having fallen from her roller skates and being picked up by the instructor with the caption “... rolling in holiday spirit ...”. She enlisted on 16.12.40 and was attached to the 2/10th. As the “SS. Vyner Brooke” left Singapore harbour Jenny’s nature came to the fore again when she began singing “Wish Me Luck as You Wave Me Goodbye” (P.123, ORB) and later after the ship sank, she and four other nurses were sitting on a plank in the sea when she led the nurses in “Were Off To See The Wizard” (ORB, P.163). They all drifted on this plank away from the main group of nurses talking and reminiscing at one stage, even coming near to Radji Beach and its bonfire on the night of the sinking, before early on Sunday morning being carried straight to a gently sloping beach. They walked and came upon a small village before walking towards Muntok and on the way surrendering to a Japanese soldier who took them to the old cinema building to be interned. Jenny suffered with the other nurses through the harsh and deprived internment camps of Muntok, Palembang and Belalau before being freed several weeks after the Japanese Surrender. In 1943 (“The Sydney Morning Herald” 30.10.43) mentioned “... Mrs. I. Greer of 17 Napier Street, Petersham, has been notified by the Department of Defence that her daughter, previously reported missing with the 10th Australian Hospital Group is presumed to be a POW...”. Emaciated from years of internment, as were the others, it is recorded (ORB, p. 289) that Jenny “... had been one of the biggest nurses in 1941 but upon being repatriated to Singapore in 1945 weighed just over 20kg – one third of her enlistment weight ...”. Jenny was discharged in September 1946 and was able to resume her relationship with her pre-war ‘beau’ whom she had met in Sydney in December 1940, becoming married the following year. In Singapore (ST. 16.2.47) it was reported with the title “Ex POW nurse married at Cathedral” it was noted that “... Miss Jean Greer, a former Australian POW nursing sister was married in Singapore at St Andrews Cathedral yesterday to Mr Duncan Robert McLeod Pemberton ... son of Mr & Mrs. Pemberton of Inverness, Scotland. He is attached to Sarawak Oilfields ... A reception followed at the Adelphi Hotel ...”. They later moved to Chichester, England and many decades later Jenny passed away there on 7 December 2001.
- **GREGORY – Mrs. Muriel A. Gregory** was identified as being on the “SS. Vyner Brooke” in the list prepared by Mrs. E. Cross titled British Women Internees in Palembang camp; she was born in Bangor, Wales c. 1903, and appears in Welsh papers in 1916 (‘The Chronicle’ 4.2.16) passing exams conducted by the Bangor Diocesan Sunday Schools and then in 1918 achieving Senior Certificate at the Bangor County School for Girls (this school was merged with two others in 1971); it is presumed that she attended University during the early 1920s, she was clearly a very intelligent woman; it is not known when or where she was married but her husband was “GREGORY C.P. [Charles Pressley] ‘Greg’, a former London journalist. Manager of 5 Estates in the Temangan area, Kelantan [Duff Development Corporation, Kelantan]. **MAS** District Supervisor, HQ Finance. Changi and Sime Rd internee. Wife Muriel died in captivity, Sumatra. He remarried 1946 – wife Dorothy.

He died 16.8.51 Bridport, Dorset (JMM)”; the first newspaper record is of Mr Gregory writing a letter to the ‘Straits Times’ on rubber planting (ST. 19.7.32) and he appears in 1934 going on home leave on ‘Hector’ and then returning five months later on ‘Patroclus’ (but no mention of Mrs Gregory with him)and then in the context of Duff Development Corpn (ST. 30.10.34 and 12.4.41); there is no record of Mrs Gregory in Malayan newspapers; she would have been about 39 years of age when she boarded the “SS. Vyner Brooke”; the final record for Muriel is when Greg Gregory inserted the following death notice in ‘The Times’ on 14 .11.45 “... In proud and loving memory of my dear wife Muriel Gregory (nee McKie) , M.A. (Wales)., B.Litt. (Oxon) of Bangor, North Wales and Kelantan, Malay peninsula who died in a Japanese prison Camp at Muntok, Sumatra on 14 Nov. 1944 after 33 months internment courageously endured. A truly brave woman and a most devoted wife. In my thoughts every hour of every day. G.P. Gregory, Kelantan, Malay Peninsula ...”; the official record is Muriel Gregory, B.Litt., M.A., aged 43 years, of Castle Bank, Bangor, Wales, died 15.11.44 at Muntok Banka Island, daughter of William and Edith McKee of Castle Bank, Bangor, Wales, wife of Charles Pressley Gregory (CWGC).

- **GUNTHER – Sister Janet Patteson ‘Pat’ Gunther, NFX 70493, 2/10th Australian General Hospital (posted to 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station).** Pat Gunther was born on 31 August 1913 on a farm near Casino, NSW – the second of eight children of Arthur and Jane Gunther. Pat attended so called ‘bush’ schools at Mongogarie and Deep Creek before leaving school at the age of 12 years to help on the family farm. She trained as nurse at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital at Camperdown, NSW before passing the “General Nursing” exams and becoming registered in 1936 (“Sydney Morning Herald”. 8.12.36) and then worked in private nursing for three years. It appears that she enlisted with the AANS in 1940 and joined the 2/10th AGH before being posted to the 2/4th Casualty clearing Station in Malaya. In the SMH archives (smh.com.au) there is a photo of Pat which shows an attractive young woman. The book ‘ORB’ records Pat’s obvious fascination and delight with the new sights, sounds and flowers of Singapore and Malaya (ORB, p.33 etc) Once on the ‘Vyner Brooke’ and just prior to the bombing attack Pat – along with her friend Kath Neuss and also Winnie May Davis – were responsible for the forward part of the ship and made themselves comfortable in an officer’s cabin on the port side of the ship (ORB, p. 148). ‘ORB’ also teaches us that pat was injured in the bombing of the ship but helped her more seriously injured friend, Kath Neuss, into the second lifeboat to be launched to join Rosetta Wight and Clare Halligan. Pat herself was thrown into the water when the lifeboat overturned, and she then drifted alone for a while before being joined again by Winnie May Davis. She was later helped onto the raft that Jessie Simons had earlier reached and joined Mrs Bull (and daughter) plus three badly injured crew (one called ‘Stan’ was badly burned and that night he slipped off the raft and drowned). They ended up amongst the landing craft of the Japanese force invading Banka Island and – most surprisingly - were helped onto one of these craft by Japanese sailors and taken to a nearby beach. The next day they were taken under guard to Muntok and interned in the cinema. Pat then began her three and a half years of survival in the harsh internment camps of Muntok, Palembang and Belalau. In the camps she “... *proved more than a competent artist whose sketches and drawings were always sought after as gifts ...*” (ORB, 250). She had at least one very bad attack of malaria (muntokpeacemuseum website) and her weight dropped to 33 kg. She left the AANS in February 1947 having continued working for the 113th AGH in Concord in Sydney – that year she was awarded ‘Mentioned in Despatches’ for “Services rendered whilst in Japanese hands “. Pat Gunther continued nursing until 1957 when she married Colin Darling - a widower with four children – and

moved with him to live at Wollongong. She published two books – “Portrait of a Nurse’ and also “An Eastern Interlude” (1998). Colin passed away in 1970 and Pat Darling died at her home in December 2007 – the last of the ‘Vyner Brooke’ nurses.

- **HADDON – Mrs Haddon???** A ‘Mrs Haddon’ is listed by Dr Goldberg – Curth as having been one of the women from the ‘Vyner Brooke’ who died at ‘Luebok-Lingoe’ (along with Mrs Daniels and a Mrs Price). Given that there are a number of spelling mistakes for surnames in Dr Goldberg-Curth’s official statement in the NAA, plus there was no one with that name or anything similar in the list prepared by Mrs E. Cross in 1942 of the women in Palembang camp – it must be assumed that this is actually **Mrs Eva Madden** who died in Loebok – Linggau shortly after arriving in that last and dreadful camp.
- **HALLIGAN – Sister Clarice ‘Clare’ Isobel Halligan**, VFX 47776, 2.13th Australian Hospital Group, was born in 1904, the daughter of Emily Watson Halligan of Kew, Vic., (AWM). In the battle against the Japanese, and after the British retreat to Singapore, we know that Clare was based with the others from the 2.13th at the Methodist school and, along with Matron Paschke and six others she nursed in essentially a ‘front line’ situation with Japanese planes making machine gun attacks all around their field hospital (p.96, ORB); during the bombing of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” Clare was badly injured by a bomb blast at the same time as Rosetta Wight and both “... suffered deep shrapnel wounds to the back of their thighs and buttocks, wounds that penetrated to the bone Partially in shock and bleeding profusely, both women were unable to move ...” (p.153, ORB). fellow nurses helped her up to the deck and into what would be the second lifeboat to be launched, however this lifeboat overturned as it hit the sea and overturned, throwing most of its passengers out (p.160, ORB) nevertheless Clare managed to hold onto the upturned craft and – in what must have been excruciating pain – endured many hours of this situation before the sea currents eventually washed the upturned lifeboat and its survivors ashore at one end of Radji beach at about 2200 hours that night. Clare’s wounds, whilst terrible, were apparently not quite as severe as those of the other two wounded nurses and she was “... able to walk and simply needed some stitching and some medication to be guaranteed a full recovery ...” (p.199-200, ORB) – but there is no doubt that she would have been in agony as she managed to make the journey along the coast to where the first lifeboat had lit a bonfire. Clare would have been in real pain during the next two days until the time the Japanese troops arrived at Radji beach and proceeded to massacre firstly the officers, servicemen, crew and civilian men from the “SS. Vyner Brooke’ before in an unbelievable act of totally senseless brutality they lined up the nurses near the water’s edge - with Clare and the other wounded nurses towards the left facing out to sea – and opened fire with their machine gun. Thus, ended the life of a woman in the prime of life whose life had been dedicated to caring for others in pain and suffering.
- **HANNAH (married name ALLGROVE) – Sister Ellen Mavis (‘Nell’) Hannah**, SX 10595, 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station, was born on 12.1.0.10 in Perth, WA. She was a builder’s daughter who grew up in Adelaide where she began nursing. Her nursing colleagues called her Mavis (it seems that her husband who she married after the war called her ‘Nell’). In August 1940 she enlisted at Goodwood Park, SA. There were a few occasions in her escape from Singapore that circumstances meant she survived almost against the odds – when she boarded the “SS. Vyner Brooke” she was offered an officer’s cabin as accommodation but declined under orders from Matron Paschke and it was given instead to an elderly couple – this turn of events saved her life because during the bombing that cabin received a direct hit and the elderly couple were killed. After the sinking of the ship Mavis “... spent three days in

the water. Some of us, myself included could not swim ... "(pow-of-japan.net – Winstanley) - she had the view that the fact she could not swim saved her life otherwise she would have been able to swim over to the lifeboat with Matron Drummond aboard and reach Radji beach and the terrible fate of those particular nurses. Instead, she grabbed a passing liferaft and joined those nurses, who after a day and night at sea were finally pulled to shore by a Malay fisherman and they soon after walked into Muntok and internment. Clearly a strong character who was well regarded by her colleagues Mavis was the senior surviving nurse from the 2/4th CCS and when Vivian Bullwinkel arrived in camp, Mavis was one of the few senior people in whom Vivian confided the details of her survival on Radji beach. During internment Mavis kept as positive an attitude as possible at one stage borrowing a sewing machine from a Dutch internee and making new clothes from old garments (ORB, p.2510 and early in the internment years proving, along with her friend Jessie Simons, to be one of the best "chook stranglers" in camp (ORB, p.250). She endured the deprivation and starvation of the years in Muntok, Palembang and Belau camps "... I was only 4stone 6 pounds (approx. 26 kg) when liberated and near the end of my tether ... "(pows-of-japan. Net – Winstanley). After liberation she returned to Australia and was discharged with the rank of Captain in late 1946. She apparently wrote to her pre-war friends Joe and Marjorie Allgrove and found that Marjorie had lost her life in the same convoy evacuating Singapore - in fact on either the 'HMS Giang Bee' sunk on 13.2.42 (according to the CWGC) when it was attacked by Japanese destroyers, or the 'SS. Kuala" (according to ALFSEA and a document in the UK National Archives) which was bombed and sunk on the 14 February 1942 – both in the same broad area as the 'SS Vyner Brooke'. Joe had also been a POW and had survived the terrible rigours of the Burma Railway camps. She and Joe (Joseph William Allgrove), who was a rubber planter, struck up a relationship and they married in 1946. They returned to rubber planting in Malaya where Mavis ran the plantation's medical clinic. They had three children and life was good until the Malayan Emergency and its associated terrorist attacks by Communist Chinese. "...After the Malayan emergency drove them out of Malaya in 1953, they settled in Dedham, England and grew apples ... she fought hard for full entitlement pensions for all of the Australian nurses who had been interned and frequently returned to Australia for reunions ..." (book "The Facing Island" by Jan Bassett, p.50). Mavis died on 29 October 1993 in Australia, shortly after a reunion which had taken her and six other nurses who survived the War back to Radji Beach to unveil the memorial which has stood there for many years. Another member of the large group of relatives and nurses which went to Radji Beach on that occasion remembers that the seven surviving nurses were badly shaken and overcome – the sights, smells and sounds of Banka Island where they had been prisoners was overwhelming.

- **HARDING – William Smythe Harding**, is recorded by the CWGC as being on the "SS. Vyner Brooke" and losing his life on 14.2.42 in the sinking, this possibly has been sourced from the Colonial Office Register of Deaths which has "...William Smythe Harding , United Patani (Malaya) Rubber Estates Ltd, presumed to have lost his life on or about 14 February 1942 in the sinking of the "SS. Vyner Brooke", source Searcher Organisation Clearing House, Reg. M1, Folio 203, Serial 1025 ..." (CORD); also "... HARDING W.S. [William Smythe] b.1888 or1891. To Malaya 1912. Planter Manager, United Patani Estates, Sungei Patani, Kedah. In 1926 on 'SS Hector' from Liverpool to Penang. In 1939 on 'SS Fionia' from Southampton to Penang. Left with A. Mourin c.12/13.2.42. Lost at sea 13.2.42 on the "Giang Bee", wife was Margaret. Colonial Office Deaths Register places him on the "Vyner Brooke" but the diary of a "Giang Bee" survivor [G.S. Reis] records otherwise ... "(JMM and other sources); the

'Jeyes' toilet paper record created secretly by the internees in Changi states "... HARDING W S U. PATANI BVD P'BANG ..." (BPPL).

- **HARPER – Sister Iole Harper, AANS.** Iole was born in Guildford, Perth the oldest of nine children and the daughter of a state cricketer. She stayed at school until she was 18 years of age and then helped her mother at home until aged 22 years she started as a trainee nurse at the royal Perth hospital. Anecdotally in 1930 she is reported in "The Daily News", Perth as "... Miss Iole Harper has gone to Gingin for a short stay with relatives ...". After completing her training, Iole travelled to Sydney where she worked at several large hospitals. After three years she returned to Perth to live at home and work at a private hospital - she enlisted with the AANS in August 1941 (ORB, p. 49); home was in York Road, East Guildford ("The West Australian" 29.9.45 includes an attractive photo of Iole Harper). Iole was (standing at 150 centimetres) the smallest of the AANS nurses on the 'SS. Vyner Brooke' and she was the final nurse to board the 'SS. Wanganella' for Singapore. After the sinking of the "SS. Vyner Brooke" she managed to reach Olive Paschke's raft where she handed a small Chinese boy up onto the raft and it was there, hanging onto a rope trailing from the raft that she met Betty Jeffrey for the first time (ORB, p.184). The nurses on that raft took turns to row or sit on the raft, or lower themselves into the water and hang on (ORB, p. 187) and a praiseworthy tribute to Iole is contained in the book "Singapore 's Dunkirk" where it is observed that "... the raft was being paddled, somewhat ineffectually with pieces of planking, until another sister, Iole Harper, climbed on board. 'Iole was wonderful; when not rowing she would get off, swim all around, count everybody and collect those who got tired of hanging on, making them use their feet properly to assist in pushing the thing along ..." (SD, p. 139). Later during the first night, along with two Malay sailors also swimming in the sea, they were swept away by currents. Iole and Betty spent 72 hours in the water. – the first day as part of the group around Matron Paschke's raft and the rest alone, the two of them swept along by fluky currents and after struggling through impenetrable mangrove swamps for several days they were (on 18 February) taken into the 'coolie lines' in Muntok (ORB, p.195). In the Singapore national Archives there is an Oral History recording (catalogue #3814) by Ole Harper (Burkitt) in which she recalls that once on the 'SS Vyner Brooke' most passengers slept on the deck and that it was "... 14th after midday and Japanese started bombing the ship ...". When it began to sink, she said she "... could swim and preferred the water...". She picked up a 3-year-old Chinese girl who was wearing a cork life jacket ... she had her arms around my neck...". Iole put her on a life raft, and she held onto the liferaft. "... two days later we realised that the currents had taken us toward land... I was with Jeffreys. We decided to swim to land ... Bet and I swam towards the mangroves and spent a day or two at large... Malay fishermen picked them up and took them to a kampong where there was a Chinese who could speak English ... then were captured by Japanese with fixed bayonets They thought we were American ... we showed them our buttons ... we were loaded into a van ... I had not known Betty Jefferies before this ... I did not know about the massacre until Vivian Bullwinkel told me ". Iole also makes the comment that "... a lot of the evacuation] boats had flown signals that they were carrying women and children ..." [presumably she is talking of the 'Mata Hari'? "Whilst interned in Palembang Iole worked as a washerwoman and nursemaid to a Dutch family (ORB, p.257) and she was part of the 'bakery' team in Palembang which strove to "... to use every scrap of rice they could beg, steal or borrow to produce little rice savouries that they would either sell or swap for more substantial foods ..." (ORB, p.263). In 1943 Mr & Mrs H. R. Harper of East Guildford finally received notice that she was interned in Sumatra ("The West Australian" 23.10.43). On her

repatriation to Australia "The Australian womens Weekly" (3.11.45) reported that when the 'Manunda' berthed at Fremantle "... the Western Australian Iole Harper put her arm through her mother's and would not let her go ...". Iole was discharged from the AANS in 1946 as a Lieutenant. In 1947 ("The West Australian" 7.6.47) there was reported the wedding of Miss Iole Harper, daughter of Mr & Mrs Harcourt Harper of East Guildford to Dr Arthur Burkitt of Sydney at St Matthews' Church, Guildford. She was attended by her sister Miss Nan Harper..." there is no mention of the 'Vyner Brooke' or her POW years but there is a photo of the pretty bride and her new husband. Iole Harper died in 1999.

- **HARRIS – Sister Nancy Harris**, NFX 76285, 2/13th Australian General Hospital. Described variously as aged 28 or 29 years at the time of the sinking of the 'SS. Vyner Brooke' Nancy was presumably born around 1913. Research has failed to find out much on her family and early life – although in the book 'ORB' it says she was from a medical family - but she first appears in regional newspapers attending Balls as a teenager in the Byron Bay area of NSW. In 1934 when she would have been around 21 years of age it was reported in the 'Northern Star', Lismore, NSW (21.12.34) that "... Miss Nancy Harris of Byron Bay has left to join the nursing staff of Prince Henry Hospital [this was a hospital also known as Coast Hospital and was merged some 40 years later with two other hospitals to form the current Prince of Wales Hospital in NSW]. Before leaving she was presented with a fountain pen by the staff of the Byron Bay Post Office..." [This indicates she was probably employed in the Post Office between her schooling and her nursing career]. In 1936 there is another report in the same newspaper that "... Nancy Harris has spent three weeks holiday with her parents at Byron Bay before returning to Sydney to resume duties at the Coast Hospital...". Again in 1937 another paper ("Tweed Daily", Murwillumbah, 13.1.37) reported that "... Miss Nancy Harris after spending the holiday with her parents Mr. & Mrs. G. Harris at Byron Bay has returned to Prince Henry Hospital to continue training ...". It is assumed that in 1938 she would have passed her Nurses exam in NSW. One record states of her life around this time that she "... trained at Royal North shore Hospital, joined the staff of the dental hospital on completing her training. Just before the war she travelled in Fiji, China and Japan ...". From her paybook photo taken on enlistment on 21 August 1941 (AWM Archives) Nancy is shown as a slim young woman with wavy brown hair, hazel eyes and with a confident direct look at the camera. After arriving later that year in Malaya, in a twist of history and several months prior to the wartime boarding of the 'SS. Vyner Brooke' in February 1942, Nancy and Vivian Bullwinkel, had already experienced the layout of the ship because she had actually attended a dinner party hosted by Reserve Officers of the Royal Navy on the ship in Malaya in 1941 (ORB, p.117). After the ship left Singapore on its last voyage and whilst under attack, Nancy apparently shared a 'battle station' with Vivian Bullwinkel (ORB, p. 141) – it makes this researcher contemplate just what those two women would have said during that moment of the bombing attack about this their second experience aboard the ship? Nancy presumably was either in the first lifeboat to reach Radji Beach (although this would only have been if she was ordered on board that boat to care for the wounded) or, more likely, was one of the large group of nurses holding onto the upturned submerged second lifeboat and accompanying life rafts which landed further along the coast with several badly wounded nurses. Nancy would have then walked, with the wounded, along the coast to the beacon bonfire lit by the first lifeboat survivors. On the day of the mass murder of the sailors, soldiers, civilians and nurses on Radji beach and as the nurses watched the Japs return from murdering the second group of men along the Breach, Nancy is reported (obviously

via Vivian Bullwinkel's memory) to have observed to no one in *particular* "... *Its true then , they don't take prisoners ...*" (ORB , p.214). So Nancy Harris a dedicated young woman in her late twenties, who had grown up in the peaceful and serene environment of Byron Bay, was killed for no sane reason with her close colleagues and friends on Radji Beach.

- **HEMPSTED (spelt Hempstead in some newspapers) – Sister Blanche Hempsted,** QFX 22714, 2/13th Australian General Hospital. Captain Blanche Hempsted described as "... *a quiet Queenslander ...*" (ORB, p.93) was born in Alfred Street, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane on 9 September 1908 to Percy Hempsted and Bertha Louisa Hempsted (nee Howard). She had a younger brother Claude Howard Hempsted who tragically died at age 11 years in 1925 when he fell under a train carriage whilst running after the train to open a door ("Daily Standard", Brisbane, 11.6.25). Blanche was only a teenager of 16 years when this tragedy occurred. It seems that she attended St Margaret's School in Brisbane (although she appears in the current website records of the ex-pupils of Slade and St Catherine's Schools?) Her life from that point onwards appears to be a hectic social calendar of dances, parties and Balls according to quite a few articles in "The Telegraph", Brisbane, newspaper and this period of socialising seemed to continue for a decade until about 1934. She was a bridesmaid on at least two occasions in 1932 and 1934 and gave kitchen teas for the prospective brides ("The Telegraph", Brisbane 21.3.32 and "The Queenslander" 29.3.34 – the latter newspaper item shows her as a sophisticated and very attractive young woman in the bride and bridesmaid group photo). A wartime report on her being a POW mentioned that she trained at Brisbane Hospital ("The Telegraph" 6.3.43). Blanche enlisted on 27.4.41 in the AANS – her pay book photo does her no justice in terms of her looks. In complete contrast to her earlier bridesmaid's photo, she is shown on this occasion to be a plain and most serious looking woman of about 5 feet 5 inches in height. As an insight into the personality of this now mature woman and a measure of her sense of equity and fair play, it is laudable to note that after the sinking of the "SS. Vyner Brooke" Blanche reached a raft on which were several civilian women and nurses plus the infamous Dr Goldberg. When Dr Goldberg refused to take her turn amongst the raft survivors and spend time in the water to give others a rest, firstly Veronica Clancy clambered aboard and gave the arrogant and uncooperative Doctor a punch in the back which did not dislodge her - and then Blanche in a more direct fashion climbed out of the water, put Dr Goldberg in a headlock and dragged her backwards into the sea (ORB, p.176). This group were later picked up by a passing RAAF launch and taken to Muntok pier where they were captured by the Japanese and – along with Sisters Ashton, Greer, Short and Clancy - interned in the Customs House. Blanche then began the three years of harsh and deprived internment in Muntok, Palembang and the finally Muntok again. She would not have been aware that in September of that year her father passed away in Brisbane ("The Courier-Mail", 16.9.42) leaving her mother alone in Brisbane. The following year the local newspaper ("The Telegraph", Brisbane, 6.3.43) reported that Blanche (along with sisters Mittleheuser and Trotter) were "...*safe and well as POWs in Singapore...*"! Later in 1943 Blanche was able to send a postcard (dated as March 1943) as a POW to her Mother ("The Telegraph", 7.12.43) and let her know that she was in Palembang camp – it shows the typically coded structure of remarks to evade the Japanese censors – and she said "... *The thrill of being able to write after 12 months silence and to let you know I am absolutely fit and well, in fact never felt better in health. Had trouble with my ear at first, always do with ocean water, but it was soon rectified. We are in a pretty little place, quiet and peaceful, away from any sort of turmoil. You will be disappointed to know your album is at the bottom of the*

sea. When allowed to send parcels please include a good strong toothbrush for we have lost everything, but nevertheless we are among friends who do their best to keep things and us well and contented. Sisters Short, Trotter and Blanch are here with me. Keep well and look forward to the happy day when you will be welcoming me home again ...". Mrs Hempsted considers that her daughter's reference to ocean water affecting her ears indicates that the ship she was on must have been bombed prior to the fall of Singapore. Blanche earned a reputation as a nurse in the POW camps as a hard worker ("White Coolies") and she survived until the second and high death toll move back to Muntok camp on Banka Island in early 1945 where it is clear that years of increasingly harsh treatment, dietary deficiencies, neglect and poor hygiene conditions in these basic camps took its toll. Blanche developed beri beri and a serious cough (which the other nurses felt was a developing cancer) and after being seriously ill for several weeks she died of beri beri in Muntok on 19 March 1945. She slipped into a coma and died within 30 minutes. Her coffin was a rudimentary box made of slats of wood nailed together by the other skeletal women internees. This was filled with flowers and buried in a clearing in the nearby jungle (ORB, p.268-269). It is not clear when her mother learned of her death - most families did not know until after the return to Australia of the surviving nurses, but there was an insert in the "Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser", Queensland, 18.9.45 which recorded that she had died in camp and gave her address as "Verney Road, East Gracefield, Brisbane". It was not until some 18 months later that in "The Telegraph", Brisbane, "Roll of Honour" column there was another insertion "Hempsted – Pauline Blanche – In loving memory of Captain Pauline Blanche Hempsted, Australian Army Nursing Service, died prison camp Muntok 1945 'Her Duty Nobly Done'".

- **HODGSON – Sister Minnie Ivy Hodgson**, WFX 11174, 2/13th Australian General Hospital. [NB: Minnie's surname is sometimes misspelt, as in the book 'ORB', as Hodgeson). There is little information on the like of Minnie Hodgson at the Australian War Memorial Museum website, but more can be found on the RSL site. She was born on 16 August 1908 in Perth, WA, the daughter of John William Hodgson and contrary Hodgson. Her father, who had come from England as a fitter and turner took up farming in Yealering in 1908 (the year Minnie was born). Yealering is a small agricultural service town in the 'wheatbelt' region of Western Australia, about 220 km south of Perth (today the population is about 200 and apart from a hotel/pub dating from 1925 and a couple of shops there is little else). Insofar as her schooling little is known except for the fact that she attended the Presbyterian Ladies College in Perth in 1923 (aged about 15 years) but left after one year. Her relatives described her as "... a good country girl, used to standing up for herself ..." She enlisted in the 2/13th Australian Hospital Group, AANS, at Swan Barracks, WA on 14 July 1941 showing her hometown as Yealering, Wickepin. Her pay book photo shows a lean faced, dark haired young woman who typified the country woman her relatives described. Minnie does not seem to be mentioned in any of the literature on the AANS nurses on the 'Vyner Brooke" but we know that she somehow made it to Radji Beach by the 15 February and was one of the nurses murdered by Japanese troops on 16 February 1942. Her life and work are commemorated by a plaque on the Lake Yealering memorial gates at the local primary school, Sewell Street, Yealering, 6372, WA. These gates were erected by the people of the Yealering District in 1954 in memory of those men and women who gave their lives during the War. She is also remembered on Plaque Number 262 in Honour Avenue, Kings Park, at Bicton, WA.

- **HUGHES – Sister Gladys Laura Hughes**, VFX 61331, 2/13th Australian General Hospital. Gladys Hughes was born on 9 September 1908 in the small town of Waikino which is hidden deep in the beautiful Karangahake Gorge in the Bay of Plenty region of New Zealand. Her father James Hughes and her mother Elizabeth Shore Hughes were at the address of 7 Prospero Terrace, Mt Albert, Auckland, New Zealand after the War. In 1922 Gladys aged 14 years passed her First Aid exams at Waihi technical School in the bay of plenty region(paperspast.natlib.govt.nz). A graduate of Thames Hospital in 1932, she later took midwifery training at St Helens Hospital, Auckland. She was also at other times on the staff of Rotorua Hospital and Patea Hospital in the North Island of New Zealand. In 1938 she went to Australia and undertook private nursing in Melbourne and was the Matron of a country hospital in Victoria for three years. (Kia Tiaki: The Journal of Nurses of New Zealand; v.38, p.275, 15.11.45).at the time of her enlistment into the AANS she appears to have resided at 186A Park Street, West Brunswick, Vic (ORB, p. 148). Her pay book photo shows a stout young woman with dark hair and a cheery smile. On the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’ at the time of the attack by Japanese bombers Gladys took cover with other nurses in the main bathroom behind the saloon (ORB, p.148) and after abandoning ship she swam to the overturned (second lifeboat to be launched) lifeboat to join Sylvia Muir, Mitz Mittleheuser, Veronica Clancy and others. All that night this group tried pushing and swimming with the lifeboat they were clinging to with its complement of mothers and children and Dr Goldberg. They were all later picked up by a RAAF launch which dropped them off at Muntok pier where they were taken prisoner by the Japanese in Muntok Cinema. During her subsequent years in internment Gladys was generally regarded as the best cook in Palembang camp (ORB, p. 258). Towards the end of the war at the living hell that was Belalau internment camp Gladys was ‘outposted’ to what was called the upper camp whilst all the other Australian nurses remained housed in the ‘lower’ camp. The isolation of her work as a nurse in the ‘upper’ camp at Belalau was believed by Betty Jeffrey to have contributed to her deteriorating health and morale, for after suffering from malaria and dysentery for some time she died on 31 May 1945. She was carried by her friends to a shallow grave in a nearby glade and buried there. Gladys is now buried at Jakarta War Cemetery, Jakarta, Indonesia.
- **HUTCHINGS - Mrs Kathleen Mary Hutchings** of 12 Balmoral Rd, Singapore. Wife of Major P.T. Hutchings SSVF and who died in captivity. She survived the Vyner Brooke sinking 15.2.42. Palembang Sumatra internee. Died in captivity 12.4.45 [46] Palembang(JMM); Kathleen Mary Deeks was born c. Dec .1898 in Lewisham , London; in what appears to have been her second marriage [in her death record her parents are Mr & Mrs. W. Deeks], and as Kathleen Mary Mears of Forest Hill, London, aged about 31 years of age, she married Philip Townshend Hutchings in 1929 at St. Andrews Cathedral, Singapore [reception was at the home of Mr & Mrs. J.C.E. Collinge who was later a leader in Changi Internment camp] (SFPMA 24.12.29); Philip Hutchings had arrived in Singapore in 1923 to join the staff of Joseph Travers & sons Ltd (ST. 17.10.230; he was an active sportsman involved in rugby, tennis and flying; by 1931 they were living in Penang; in 1938 a group photo of Cold Storage Creameries staff fare welling Philip Hutchings, who was about to go on home leave, shows both Philip and Kathleen (ST.3.7.38); In her testimony to the Melbourne based ‘Australian Board of Enquiry into War Crimes’ on 29.10.45 Sister Vivian Bullwinkel records ‘Mrs Hutchins’ as being one of the women who accompanied Lt Sedgeman in his first attempt to seek help from a local Kampong and so by deduction Kathleen Hutchings would have been one of the women in the group which left ‘Radji Beach’ just before the massacre to walk to Muntok; Kathleen

Hutchings is also identified as being on the “SS. Vyner Brooke” from Mrs. E. Cross’ list of British Women Internees in Palembang and would have been about 43 years of age when she boarded the “SS. Vyner Brooke”; her husband also died as a POW in the first year of the war against the Japanese “ *HUTCHINGS P.T.[Philip Townshend] Educated Oundle. Lived at 12 Balmoral Rd, Singapore. Wife Kathleen [+Sumatra] Major 1SSVF POW Singapore to Thailand. Died in captivity 27.11.42 Wantan. Grave at Kanchanaburi...*” (JMM).; the official record is “... Kathleen Mary Hutchings, aged 46 years, civilian, died 12.4.45, daughter of William Walter and Kate Deeks, wife of Major Philip Townshend Hutchings (SSVR) who also died in captivity. Died at Palembang...” (CWGC). Cross list says DOD 19.4.45.(SUM); *It appears that Kathleen and Philip died without leaving any family.*

- **INNES** – *“Innes, Ipoh, Killed on board Vyner Brooke”* (Civilian Casualties file); **Robert Innes** lost his life in the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” on 14.2.42 (CWGC); this is probably based on the records of the Colonial Office Register of Deaths “ Robert Innes, J. Wilson & Co., Malaya died on or about 14.2.42 in the vicinity of the Banka Straits as a result of the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” (CORD, Folio M1, Register 206, Serial 1037, source C.in C. ALFSEA); it seems that the correct name of this company was G.W. Wilson and Co;); the secret ‘Jeyes’ document created by Changi internees states “... INNES R. G W WILSON & CO.IPOH LEFT ...” (BPPL); *in a contradictory report [it is unclear from the punctuation in the report whether the statement refers to Robert Innes] the ‘Straits Times’ stated after the War that he had been in Padang Sumatra on 17.2.42 (ST. 29.5.46) which leaves open a suggestion that he either survived the sinking or was never on the “SS. Vyner Brooke”.* Robert Innes was born in Leith, Scotland on 21st January 1878, one of seven children. His parents were Gilbert Innes & Margaret Johnstone. Robert was a relieving manager for J.W. Wilson & Co., Ipoh at the time of the Japanese invasion of Malaya. He first went to Malaya in 1910 and remained working there until 1942 with different firms. He returned to Scotland for periods of up to a year when on leave and resided with two of his sisters in Leith. He considered Leith to be his home. The Innes family lived in Leith for many generations and had a shipbuilding yard there. His last leave was in 1938 and he returned to Malaya in the autumn of that year. He worked in Malaya until well past his retirement age and it was his love of that country that caused him to return there. He was a member of the Malayan Volunteer Forces and his officer’s cane with its beautiful silver cap showing a tiger remains in the family. After the invasion of the Japanese army Robert was evacuated to Singapore. He corresponded with his family back in Leith until January of 1942, they possess items of his correspondence, in the form of postcards and letters some describing his thoughts on the invasion. He stayed in the Rex Hotel, Bras Basah Road, after his evacuation to Singapore and wrote from there to his family back in Leith. He was concerned about his financial affairs, transferring some funds back to Scotland. He was receiving no pay at this time and was worried about how long he could afford to stay at the Rex. These letters from the Rex Hotel have been quite heavily censored. His last contact is a cable sent from Singapore on January 23rd, 1942. It is accepted he boarded the vessel, Vyner Brooke in February 1942. He was declared dead in 1949. Kate Deans, the relative who wrote this history of Robert recorded that he was much loved by his family, and that her aunt (his niece) always spoke about him with great affection. There are also some letters Robert sent to his five-year-old niece, Betty, and his nephew, Norman. The flat in Leith which he considered home was filled with exotic items he brought back to Leith from his times abroad. His little sister, Lily, who was a VAD during WW1 lived there until her death in the 1970s. Unfortunately, the flat was burgled when Lily was in her 80s and she was attacked by the intruders, and she

never really regained her health. She died shortly afterwards. Most of the contents of the property were stolen at that time and have never been recovered. There are a few photographs of Robert, some taken in Malaya and others taken on leave. He obviously enjoyed golf. Robert never married (Kate Deans, Glasgow email April 2021).

- **JAMES** – in the book “On Radji Beach” (p.137) there is a statement, which appears to be based on the recollections of the Australian nurses, referring to a young woman named ‘Maudie James’ being amongst the passengers before the ship was attacked – “ ... *For optimism and good humour the nurses couldn’t go past Maudie James , a young cockney girl , newly married to a soldier she had to leave behind in Singapore ...* ” ; given the absence of any other person with this surname in Palembang internment records (apart from Nurse Nesta James) or in CWGC records, it is possible that this is “ ... *Mrs Mildred F. James , housewife aged 39 in 1942. Palembang Women’s camp 1942, Sumatra internee. Repatriated on Antenor from Singapore, arriving Liverpool 27.10.45 ...* ” (JMM); in the lists of women internees in Palembang internment camp there is recorded a Mrs. M.F.M. James. Jessie Simons in ‘WHP’ (p.57) recalls whilst describing the harsh treatment of local Indonesian people caught smuggling by the Japanese “... *Mrs. Maudie James, an Englishwoman, gave the poor wretch a drink of water, much to the guards’ annoyance. The guards amused themselves by burning him with cigarettes and slapping him...*”. Pre-War newspaper records in Singapore show a Mildred James receiving her home nursing certificate (ST. 10.7.39) and then soon after passing her First Aid examination on Blakan Mati island (ST.30.8.39) so that she could enrol in St Johns Ambulance – the fact that she was on Blakan Mati indicates that she was married to someone in the British Army, - possibly her maiden name was Mildred Florence Wiseman. It is also possible that this was the same person as Mildred Florence M. James who had been born on 20.2.22 and died in Greenwich, London in 1994. [There is also a record of a Miss Mildred Hosegood who was born on Wimbledon, Surrey in 1900 and married Edward N. James in Farnham, Surrey in 1922 – but she appears too old to match the recollections of the Australian nurses.]
- **JAMES - Sister Nesta Gwyneth James**, VFX 39347, 2/10th Australian General Hospital. Nesta was born in 1904 in the UK (SUM). She was the daughter of Mr. & Mrs D. James of Shepparton East, a large agricultural town in northern Victoria, and she was raised in what is said to be an affluent family. She had begun her training as a nurse by 1926 (‘Shepparton Advertiser’ 21.6.26) and it is notable that her family appeared for one reason or another in this newspaper at least once a month for the next decade, so they must have been prominent residents in that town. In 1928 she is again mentioned as a trainee at Melbourne Hospital and the following year reported to have passed her final Nurses exams at that same hospital (“Shepparton Advertiser’ 20.12.28).The same newspaper reported her in 1932 still at Melbourne Hospital but on holiday in Cairns and the Great Barrier reef; then in 1933 boarding the “Manunda” (the same ship that she would be repatriated home in 1945) for a holiday in Perth to visit friends. In 1938 she left Melbourne to go to Johannesburg (“Shepparton Advertiser” 14.2.38) and she remained there as a nurse before returning in 1939 after war broke out in Europe (“Shepparton Advertiser” 11.12.39). In 1940 she was appointed Matron of Dunolly District Hospital (“Shepparton Advertiser”5.8.40). She enlisted in late 1939 and by February 1941 she had arrived with the AANS in Malaya. She was second in seniority in the 2/10th AGH to Matron Olive Paschke in Malaya. After the attack on the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’ and the ship sinking, Nesta James found herself alone in the sea - she managed to find an empty liferaft and was taken even further away from the main group of survivors by the strong sea currents in the area. She drifted with the currents for 12 hours, not really seeing or hearing from anyone else (ORB, p.188). Early the next day (Sunday) she

washed up on a beach near Muntok lighthouse (Tanjung Kelian)- she went into the lighthouse where there were two Malays who told her that the Dutch lighthouse keeper had fled. Soon Japanese soldiers arrived and proceeded to steal the one hundred Straits dollars she was carrying. She went back to the beach where she came across fellow survivor Phyllis Tunbridge and, after being refused access back into the lighthouse by the two Malays, they went into the jungle where they were joined by other survivors from the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’ [researcher’s note: is anyone able to identify who these other survivors were?]. Together this group walked towards Muntok and were captured by the Japanese. As the most senior nurse surviving from the 2/10th AGH Nesta assumed a leadership role in the internment camps (along with Jean Ashton) because of her age, experience, and strength of character 9 ORB, p.261). During that time (November 1942) Nesta’s father died in Australia. Whilst in Palembang she was instrumental in refusing and obstructing the efforts by the Japanese to use the nurses as ‘comfort women’ at a so-called club the Japanese officers wanted to establish. Nesta survived the rigours and deprivations of the hellish camps in Muntok, Palembang and Belalau and after her repatriation was discharged from the AANS with the rank of Captain in October 1946. She later married with her name changing to Nesta Joy. In 1947 she was ‘Mentioned in Despatches’ in recognition of her effort and bravery during the Battle for Singapore. Nesta was interviewed in 1983 and this record is held in the AWM. She passed away in 1984 and is memorialised on a plaque in honour avenue, Point Walter, Bicton, WA.

- **JEFFREY – Sister Agnes Betty Jeffrey**, VFX 53059, 2/10th Australian General Hospital. Betty Jeffrey was born in Hobart, Tasmania on 14 May 1908 the second youngest child (of six) of William Jeffrey and Amelia Matilda Jeffrey. William Jeffrey was employed by the General Post Office, as an accountant in the Postmaster General’s Department and his job meant frequent interstate transfers. “... *After many years of travelling interstate, the family finally settled down on East Malvern, Victoria, the town Betty Jeffrey would call home for the rest of her life...*” (www.awm.gov.au/education/resources/nurses). In 1926 Betty Jeffrey passed her leaving Certificate in English at Warwick Girls School, east Malvern (trove.au). Various sources say Betty worked as secretary, or a schoolteacher (ORB, p.41), before taking up nursing and the AWM educational resource has an unexplained comment that “... *She had not been happy with other hospitals, so had put off her training for many years ...*”. It may have been also that her involvement in a motor accident and the injury of a child in early 1934 in Brisbane motivated her to take up nursing (trove.au). In 1939 Betty passed her Nurses Board exams (General Nursing) and in 1940 she passed her Midwifery exams for the Nurses Board (“The Argus”, Melbourne, 14.3.40). Also, in 1940 she enlisted in the AANS embarking in May 1941 on the ‘Zealandia’ for Malaya in May 1941 (www.awm.gov.au/education/resources/nurses). Later, the ‘Vyner Brooke’ Betty recorded her feelings and the events around her as the bombs struck the ship (ORB. P.152) she was lying on the floor of the main saloon with Carolina Ennis and a large group of elderly men, civilian women, and children. Shattered glass fell all around her and there were many serious injuries – some fatal. Betty led a group of a dozen or more whilst carrying a small child which she gave to an English woman and returned to the saloon carrying out bandaging of wounded as she went. (ORB, p.1556-156) The ship began listing badly after the first few lifeboats were launched, and the remaining passengers simply had to slide or jump into the sea with their lifejacket’s on – it seems that many people would have lost their lives during this process from falling debris, life rafts and simply the power of hitting the water with

the old-fashioned jackets. Betty swam between groups of nurses in the sea looking for Olive Paschke (ORB, p.171) and finally found her on the group of rafts which had been tied together. This was the one also carrying Caroline Ennis and the two small children plus sisters Harper, Trenerry, McDonald Dorsch and Clarke. Betty and Iole Harper were with this group, holding onto the trailing ropes of the rafts all through the first night as it was swirled around the sea off Banka Island by strong ocean currents. When dawn broke Betty and Iole, volunteering to lighten the raft entered the water again and were swimming alongside when suddenly the currents separated them from the rafts that still carried Matron Paschke, the five other nurses and the two children, and Betty had to watch her friends being swept away down the Bank Straits never to be seen alive again. Betty and Iole were eventually washed up on a mangrove swamp on Banka Island that day and spent that day the following night and the morning of Monday 16 February struggling through sharp mangrove spikes and being constantly bitten by mosquitoes. On the Monday, after 72 hours in the water, they were found by Malay fishermen, helped to a hut given water and few scraps of food and after that helped to the main road to Muntok. They were taken into the 'coolie lines' at Muntok and interned with other Australian nurses. Betty then entered three and a half years of incredibly harsh and deprived internment at Muntok, Palembang and Belalau camps. During this time, she and Flo Trotter set themselves up as hairdressers for the wealthy Dutch internees. She also became the Australian representative on the camp rations committee and apparently "... was always the source of a good joke, or an even better rumour ..." (ORB, p.262). In the truly horrible Belalau camp Betty became very ill with the combination of ailments that afflicted all the internees there and her friend Wilma Oram was so concerned as to her survival that she had a grave prepared for her (ORB, p.278). Betty survived, was repatriated to Singapore and then on the hospital ship 'Manunda' to Australia and in late 1947 was one of the last to be discharged (with Vivian Bullwinkel) from the AANS. She worked closely with her friend Vivian Bullwinkel to establish a Nurses' memorial center in Melbourne – a living memorial to those Australian nurses who had died in all wars and in particular their fallen comrades – a dream that had first been discussed whilst in Palembang internment camp. They travelled all over Australia to promote their fundraising efforts and raised 123,000 pounds (ORB, p.307) and the center was opened at 431 St Kilda Road, Melbourne in 1950, Betty was the first administrator of the center and then its patron from 1986 until her death. In 1987 Betty Jeffrey received the OAM (the 'Medal of the Order of Australia') and around this time she also wrote the excellent book "White Coolies" about her experiences during the war. Betty Jeffrey passed away on 13 September 2000, just three months after the death her very good friend Vivian Bullwinkel – their work was done, and they go into history as icons of Australian nursing.

- **KEATS – Sister Ellen Louisa 'Nell' Keats**, SFX 11647, 2/10th Australian General Hospital. Nell Keats was born at 'Gunyah' (a private nursing home at North Unley, a suburb of Adelaide) on 1 July 1951, the daughter of Mr and Mrs C. C. Keats of Dulwich, South Australia ('The Express & Telegraph', Adelaide, 6.7.15). She had twin younger brothers (one was later listed as 'Missing' during the War) and she attended St Peters Collegiate Girls School, Adelaide ('The Advertiser', Adelaide, 12.12.41). In 1927 she is listed as passing her pianoforte exam for the School Exams and in 1932 she passed the 'Invalid Cookery Examination' conducted by the School of Mines – by then she would have been about 16-17 years of age. She commenced her training at Parkwynd Private Hospital in 1933, transferring to Adelaide Hospital to complete the course. In 1937 she passed her final exam for the Nurses Board of South Australia

and was employed at the Adelaide Hospital as a staff sister (Health Museum of South Australia). Nell enlisted with the AANS on 3.2.41. A studio portrait of Nell taken in 1941 prior to her departure for AANS service shows a serious, pleasant faced young woman, of 5 foot 3 inches in height, in her nursing military uniform (Health Museum of South Australia) – a similar impression is given in her paybook photo in the AWM. According to the documents in the AWM lodged by Mavis Hannah, Nell’s letters home from Malaya to her mother “... *were positively upbeat ...*” (ORB, p.80). Little else is recorded of the life of Nell Keats in literature on the ‘Vyner Brooke’ nurses, but we know that she somehow made it to Radji Beach – in the third lifeboat that landed during the night with Sisters Farnamer, Fairweather, Stewart and Halligan on board (along with some civilian women and Lt Cmdr. James White)– and was amongst the group of nurses murdered by Japanese troops on 16 February 1942. Along with seven other nurses from the ‘Vyner Brooke’ who lost their lives at sea and on Radji beach, Nell Keats is memorialised on a brass plaque in the Royal Adelaide Hospital Chapel [If anyone has more information on the life and achievements of this dedicated young woman whose life was so brutally taken it would be appropriate to amplify this record].

- **KERR – Sister Janet ‘Jenny’ Kerr**, NFX 6279, 2/13th Australian General Hospital. Jenny Kerr was born in 1911, the daughter of John James Kerr and Ida Maud Kerr (nee Ellwood) of Woodstock near Cowra (Note: most records show only one or the other of Mr. & Mrs. Kerr as Jenny’s parents and the reason for this appears to have been that they were divorced in 1930). She followed her mother’s footsteps into the nursing profession – Ida was the Matron of Woodstock Hospital in western NSW – and graduated as a nurse at St George’s Hospital, Padstow/Kogarah?, NSW. She was a theatre sister at St George’s Hospital for many years (Trove, “Queensland Times”, 11.5.46) and in 1946 a plaque to the memory of ‘Sister Janet Kerr’ was unveiled at the Hospital. Sister Janet Kerr enlisted on 21.8.41 and her paybook photo shows a serious looking woman with brown hair and brown eyes. Not much is on public record of Jenny’s life and so we move forward to the fact that she was on the ‘Vyner Brooke’ and made it to Radji Beach on one of the two lifeboats (post war letter from Evelyn Simmons to Jenny’s mother) which arrived a little further along the coast. Jenny, aged 31 years, was amongst the group of nurses murdered by Japanese troops on Radji beach on 16 February 1942. A newspaper record of the time (“Cootamundra Herald” 5.10.45) states “*STOCKINBINGAL – [this is in the same area as Woodstock] – [Janet Kerr] ... was well known and highly esteemed by everyone here. She is a sister of Mrs Ken Kerr and a niece to Mrs T. Ellwood and Mr and Mrs J. Ellwood Sen. She trained at St. George’s Hospital. Kogarah, and enlisted at the beginning of the War. She spent many holiday periods here at the hotel with her brother. Her mother, Mrs Kerr, lives at Woodstock...*”. She is also commemorated on the Roll of Honour at Woodstock, near Young in NSW where there is a beautiful memorial to her in the town’s main street. The memorial was unveiled by the Governor of NSW in 1954 (monumentsaustralia.org and Land, Sydney, NSW 12.11.54). Also, in Woodstock there is a memorial park and a playground – the Jenny Kerr Memorial Park – with a permanent ‘sign’ (installed and unveiled on ANZAC Day 2015) with a photo of Jenny Kerr, what is said to be the wreck of the ‘Vyner Brooke’, and the story of her war service and the massacre on Radji Beach. Also, interestingly – during the late 1950s/ early 1960s there was a photo of Jenny Kerr above the door to the Matron’s office at St George’s Hospital because she was held in great respect and affection by the nurses of that era (ex-nurse Mrs. Jan Hodgson nee McDonald). Sadly, this photo appears to have been lost over the years (it could be in the nurses’ museum at the Hospital) and it occurs to this researcher that with the renewed

interest and empathy in Australian society towards matters ANZAC, veterans and victims of the major wars that it would be timely to restore the photo of Jenny to the same place of honour?

- **KINSELLA – Sister Kathleen ‘Kit’ Kinsella**, VFX 61126, 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station /2/13th AGH. [Note: her name is occasionally spelt incorrectly as is the case in the book ‘ORB’ where she is called Katherine]. Kathleen was born on 18 March 1904, the daughter of Michael James Kinsella a van proprietor and his second wife Susan Kinsella (nee Lockens) of South. At ‘Tullamore’ the family ran dairy cattle and grew potatoes, peas and briefly, asparagus in Yarra (Narre Warren & district Family History Group Inc). She was the youngest of five children and attended school at Koo-Wee-Rup North (or Five Mile) before switching to Cora Lynn State School in 1912. After leaving school, Kathleen trained as a nurse and was working at the Heidelberg Military Hospital when she joined the Army on 4 August 1941. She was assigned to the 2/13th Australian General Hospital, and senior nurse in the 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station unit and arrived in Singapore on 15 September 1941. (Koo-Wee-Rup Swamp Historical Society March 2012). She was one of the older, senior, more experienced nurses enlisting and was highly regarded by her colleagues at the Hospital - she also undertook brain surgery theatre support training at the Alfred Hospital before being posted to Singapore (Narre Warren & District Family History Group Inc.). In Malaya, a photo was taken at Tampoi in 1941 and shows Kathleen as a tall smiling woman with her colleagues of the 2/4th CCS (AWM). As senior nurse of the 2/4th CCS Kathleen was based at Kluang, then Mengkibol, and finally Bukit Panjang in Singapore where she was responsible for a 200-bed facility. Comment on her performance include that she “... led the unit with vigour and compassion...”, “... Was a natural leader with a genuine love for those she led ...” and that her leadership was “inspirational”. After the sinking of the ‘Vyner Brooke’ Kathleen is mentioned by Wilma Oram (ORB, p.165 “... [Wilma] Regained consciousness [in the sea] and believed she had a conversation with Kit Kinsella who drifted past wearing a lifejacket. That may or may not have been so as Kit, also, was never seen again after the sinking of the ‘Vyner Brooke’...”. She is presumed to have drowned on the 14 February 1942. It seems that after the war if she had survived, she would have been given an honour like the royal red cross for her bravery, conduct and work prior to the sinking of the ‘Vyner Brooke’. In her hometown of Cora Lynn, she is memorialised on the Cora Lynn War Memorial at 9 Mile Road and Bunyip River Road.
- **KNOWLAYNE - Keith Owen Frank ‘Kid’ Knowlayne**, a ‘dance agent’ then Manager, NS Dance Hall, Seremban. By 1940 Assistant, Negri Sembilan Aerated Water Company, Seremban. By 1941 Acting Assistant Dredge master, Renong. Lost at sea 15.2.42 on the Vyner Brooke (JMM); the secret ‘Jeyes’ toilet paper list compiled in Changi Prison internment camp records “... KNOWLAYNE K D F NS BENG? [indeciph]WHITE W Co LEFT 12/2 ...” (BPPL) indicating he must have connections to Negri Sembilan and Whiteaway & Co; he is a bit of a mystery man because he appeared out of nowhere in newspapers in 1936 as the new manager at the N. S. Dance Hall, Seremban, having been the former agent of ‘the Royal Balinese dancers and a female East Javanese dance star named Dewi Dja who had arrived in Singapore in 1935 as the start of a world tour’, reviving the popularity of the NS Dance Hall as a ‘rendezvous’ with large crowds turning up (ST. 14.11.36 and ST. 1.12.36); it has not been possible to find any other public records of ‘Kid’ Knowlayne but it appears that after his brief success in the entertainment business he had a succession of jobs culminating with either Whiteaway & Co (which sold fabrics and linen) or working on the tin dredges of Renong Tin; in the UK Archives are some

dog eared pages of pencilled notes on old commercial stationery which are from the Netherlands Red Cross interviews (in Palembang internment Camp) of survivors from sunken ships – one page (Image # 1484 in the Researcher’s files) contains the notation “... Knowlayne, last seen after helping Watson to boat...” which presumably refers to Mr E. C. Watson who was murdered by the Japanese on Radji Beach. The official record after the war by the Colonial Office was “...Mr. Keith Owen Frank Knowlayne, Renong Tin Dredging Ltd died on or about 14.2.42 in the vicinity of the Banka Straits as a result of the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke’...” (CORD ,Folio M1, Register 157, Serial 881 , source C in C ALFSEA); the final record is that Keith Owen Frank Knowlayne died 14.2.42 in the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” (CWGC – name added in October 2015 as part of the ‘Cold Project’.)

- **KNUDSEN –Mrs. Adrienne/Adrianna Marie Knudsen** was the wife of Mr Eigel O. Knudsen , a motor engineer and works manager at Borneo Motors Singapore (SFPMA 9.8.34 and ST 18.5.35);she was the sister of Esmond Anthony Reutens and Emma Ann da Silva – nee Reutens – and Adrienne and Eigel were married on 22.4.35 in Penang at the Church of The Assumption (Gerard van Haren email 7.12.2016);she worked for the firm of Harrison, Barker & Co., accountants and auditors in Singapore; there is a lovely photo of Adrienne Knudsen at the races at Bukit Timah taken in 1936 where she is shown as an , attractive, vibrant woman in her late twenties or early thirties (ST. 12.3.36); she is recorded as having been on the ship in an article in the Singapore Medical Journal “...On 10th February, I had to go into town to meet my sister – in - law Adrianna Knudsen(nee Reutens). She informed me that she had decided to evacuate. She left Singapore by the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’, a fateful voyage because the vessel was bombed and straffed [sic] near Pulau Pinang (an island in the Rhio Group). A large number of passengers lost their lives including my sister – in – law. I understand from survivors that she had been wounded seriously by shrapnel and went down with the ship which carried many Australian nurses and evacuees ...” (“Before and After Syonan-To”, L.S. da Silva, Retired Senior Pathologist, Dept. of Pathology, Singapore General Hospital. Vol. 26 Singapore Medical Journal, 1.2.95); there is also another record that she was on the “SS. Vyner Brooke” which comes from a post war advertisement in the “Straits Times” by a solicitor “... The undersigned would be very grateful to any member of the public who can give any information as to the whereabouts of Mrs. Adrienne Marie Knudsen (wife of E.O. Knudsen) last seen on board “SS. Vyner Brooke” on 12 – 15 February 1942. She was employed under Messrs. Harrison Barker & Co. Signed, E.M. Tampoe-Phillips, solicitor, 21 Bonham Building, Singapore ...” (ST. 2.12 45).
- **LANGDON – WILLIAMS – Mrs. Marion Galloway Langdon-Williams** is identified as being a passenger on the “SS. Vyner Brooke’ from Mrs. E. Cross’ list of ‘British Women internees in Palembang 1942’; from the 1901 Scottish census we know her maiden name and that she was born in 1899; Miss Marion Galloway Black, daughter of the Reverend William Ritchie Black and Mrs. E. Grace Black of Edinburgh, married Leonard Langdon – Williams at the Presbyterian Church , Singapore in 1923 (ST. 3.7.23), she was also the niece of Sir (Dr.) D.J. Galloway of Johore and the cousin of Mrs J.G. Campbell; early newspaper reports are of Mr & Mrs Langdon Williams playing in a mixed foursome of golf at the Keppel Golf Club in 1927 and, in addition to social /charity work, golf seems to have been a prime recreational interest of the couple; Mr. Langdon – Williams worked as Town Planner and effectively the CEO of the Singapore Improvement Trust and was personally responsible for a lot of the slum clearance and a significant rise in accommodation standards (see the art deco buildings in the Tiong Bahru area) for Singaporean’s in the 1930s; Mrs Langdon - Williams appears in an Annual Report of the Child Welfare Society , Singapore as a

member of the 'Committee of Workers' (this was a very successful organisation which employed nurses and coaches for the "... *uneducated masses* ..." in Singapore on the health and wellbeing of their children – Chinese, Indian and Malay infant mortality at the time was 200-300 per 1000 compared with a European rate of 15); they lived in a house on Pulau Ubin which still stands as a heritage building and is said to have been built by Leonard Langdon - Williams; in 1937 Mr. Langdon – Williams, as Manager of the Singapore Improvement Trust was elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects; sadly Leonard died suddenly around 26.10.41 when he was found dead, fully clothed and face down in a stream off the 17th milestone of Kota Tinggi Road, Johore (the circumstances, which were rumoured to relate to the integrity surrounding a large contract, remained unclear and were to be the subject of a Coroners enquiry – but whether this was ever completed in light of the Japanese invasion only six weeks later is unknown); that meant that with the arrival of war with the Japanese invasion only a few weeks after her husband's death and whilst possibly still in the midst of the Coroners Enquiry to determine why he died so unusually, Marion was then relatively alone in the world and must have found it hard to take the decision to leave Singapore; it is even possible that her decision was clouded by the fact that her hugely respected uncle Sir (Dr.) David Galloway (who was by then in his mid-80s and very old for a European in Malaya at that time) had been personal physician to the Sultan of Johore (who was placed under the protection of the Japanese during the War),but had decided against evacuation - the Japanese did not intern Sir David but he died in March 1943 in Meyer Mansions in Singapore; when she boarded the "SS. Vyner Brooke" she was 43 years of age and a member of Singapore's established society. It is not known what happened to Marion during and after the attack on the 'SS. Vyner Brooke' but from the testimony of Sister Vivian Bullwinkel to the 'Australian board of Enquiry into War Crimes' in Melbourne on 29.10.45 we know she made it ashore on one of the life boats to 'Radji Beach' and was one of the women who accompanied Lt Sedgeman on the Sunday in his first attempt to get help from a local kampong, which means she was amongst the group of women and children who left Radji beach before the murders by the Japanese. She subsequently endured the privations and disease of Muntok then Palembang camps, before finally succumbing in February 1945 to malnutrition and disease on the second occasion they were taken back to the Muntok camp on Banka Island. LANGDON-WILLIAMS Mrs Marion Galloway (nee Black). Widow. Sumatra internee. Died in captivity 7.2.45[45] Muntok, Sumatra. Husband was Manager/Town Planner, No.1 Singapore Improvement Trust. He died suddenly [suicide?] 11.41(JMM).; after reaching Banka Island Marion was interned in Muntok/ Palembang and then Muntok camp again where she died aged 46 years of age on 7.2.45(CWGC).

- **MACLEOD** - Mrs Dorothy May MacLeod, wife of Lt Colonel D.G. McLeod [POW Singapore, Thailand], nee Polglase [family in Malaya since 1870s]. Educated Raffles Ladies College and Bruges. Teacher at the Anglo-Chinese School, Singapore and well-known singer. Survived the Vyner Brooke sinking 15.2.42. Palembang **Sumatra internee**. Wrote a recipe book in captivity. Described as "...*an attractive cheerful little woman with a lovely singing voice...*". Died in captivity 1.4.45[59] Muntok, Sumatra. Son Ian wrote the book 'I will sing to the end' [2005](JMM); Dorothy Polglase was presumably born c 1895, but she did attend Raffles Girls School during which time she appears in newspaper reports of the school prize giving, winning prizes in Arithmetic, French and Reading (ST. 22.12.06/ 1.2.08 ,SFPMA 1.4.11) before continuing her study there as a Pupil Teacher in 1912-13 when she again won the prizes for Practical and Theoretical Teaching (SFPMA 3.5.12/25.1.13); clearly a

talented young woman from an establishment family in Singapore, she was prominent through her life from the time she left school for singing as a soloist in aid of charity fund raisers, such as for Dr Barnardo's and the Womens Christian Temperance Union (SFPMA 21.3.18 et al); she continued this amateur career, performing at St Andrews Cathedral, the Presbyterian Church, Victoria theatre, and the Adelphi Hotel right up to the years prior to the Japanese invasion (there is a newspaper photo in 1939), with her final newspaper record as the soloist at the Children's Concert at the Victoria Memorial Hall where she was encored three times for her singing of "I Go My Way Singing", "The Pixie Piper Man", and "Philosophy" (SFPMS 3.4.40). In 1921 she married Mr Donald Gordon Macleod (SFPMA 9.3.21); Donald Macleod was from Inverness and went to Singapore for the eastern Extension Telegraph Co. in 1913 in Java and the Cocos islands. After WW1 (Indian Army) he returned to Singapore to join E. A. Brown & Co and was awarded the OBE in 1933 (ST. 21 5. 39 with photo of Lt. Col. D.G. Macleod). In her married life Dorothy attended dinners at government house and a host of charitable functions – she was clearly a refined and talented woman for whom Singapore was absolutely her home; when the time came to leave Singapore as the Japanese closed in around the CBD area Dorothy would have been no different to other women boarding the "SS. Vyner Brooke" who were also lifelong or long term residents in Singapore and who would have been torn over whether to stay or go – in particular fellow passengers Mrs. Mary Brown , Mrs.. Kathleen Waddle and probably Mrs. Marion Langdon-Williams (via the Galloway – Polglase connection). Dorothy would have known these three women through social , religious and educational networks.; When the ship sank Dorothy damaged her hands badly from 'rope burns' as she slid into the sea – this was a common injury amongst passengers of many of the evacuation ships that were sunk (P.79 WBTW); it is not clear how she made her way to Banka Island but Dorothy was reunited with Mary Brown at the Muntok Cinema camp soon after they all were captured; despite her refined and probably physically easy life in Singapore it is impressive to note that Dorothy did not shirk her responsibilities in the Palembang camp in Irenelaan , where she is reported to have assumed more than her fair share of hard labour clearing sewerage ditches (p. 109 WBTW); unsurprisingly Dorothy also took a lead part in the singing of hymns in the camps a fact that is well recorded in the book her son Ian compiled and, appropriately, in almost every other reference to these terrible womens internment camps in Sumatra; she eventually succumbed to the starvation, disease and harsh treatment at Muntok camp in 1945 - a talented spirited woman whose life was, like so many others, wasted by brutal, inhumane and cruel treatment by the Japanese. In November 1945 there appeared in the magazine of the 'British Malaysans' the following notice "*... We regret to announce the death on April 1st, 1945, while interned in Sumatra of Dorothy Macleod wife of Lt. Col. D.G. MacLeod and sister of Mr. H.B. and Mrs. Polglase, 18 Wanscow Walk, Henleaze, Bristol ...*".

- **MADDEN - Mrs Evelyne Frances Madden (nee Thynne)** known as "Eva" was born in Crowthorne, Berkshire - there is a lovely photo of her on the Muntok Memorial Peace Museum website (MMPM); the official post war record by the Colonial Office is 'Mrs. Evelyn Frances Madden, widow of L.J.B. Madden died 22.4.45 in Sumatra of Beriberi' (CORD, register M1, Folio 127, Serial No. 760); this reflected in the CWGC record of Evelyne Madden, died 22.4.45 , aged 62, wife of Lewis John Butler Madden, in Sumatra (CWGC); she was the second wife of Butler Madden, who had been widowed in 1909, but had already been married to him for about 30 years when they boarded the ship; they had a son in 1913 , Noel Charles Butler-Madden (who died in 1964); it looks as though Butler Madden was a Contractor in the Taiping

area for most of his life but had retired by the time the Japanese invaded and by then may have become a Missionary (Missionary role is mentioned by the MMPM); when the ship began to sink “... Mrs Madden was in the water, she had all the flesh burnt off her hands as she slid down the ropes, and was in a dreadful state for weeks. Mr Madden was badly wounded and refused to have a life jacket, so just went straight down. She died in camp early this year...” (letter from Mrs Myrtle Ward to Mrs Marjorie Gooding dated late 1945); Mrs Madden is mentioned (as Mrs Maddern), it appears based on records left by the Australian Army nurses, in the book “On Radji Beach” (p.175) when the account is describing the group aboard several conjoined rafts who were deciding on which of them should take turns in the sea “... One exception was made: an elderly civilian named Mrs Maddern was in a bad state emotionally. Her husband of many years had been injured in the sinking of the Vyner Brooke, and the couple had been together in the water for several hours with Mrs Maddern supporting her fading partner, who had died in her arms shortly before she was collected by those on the raft. It was agreed she could remain on the raft...”; the people on these rafts were picked up the following day by two RAAF men in a launch and taken to Muntok Wharf where two nurses helped Mrs Madden march down the long pier under guard by Japanese soldiers (ORB, p.185); so Mrs. Madden survived the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” only to become an internee in Muntok cinema and then the awful existence in the Muntok and Palembang camps. She later experienced, probably whilst sick, the horrendous and cruel transportation of the women internees from Muntok in 1945 by ship/cattle truck/truck to Loebek Linggau (Belalau) internment camp where she died either as they arrived or immediately after, in April 1945. Many women died during or soon after this journey. After the War, the Dutch authorities reinterred the remains of Eva at the Dutch War Graves cemetery at Kalibanteng, at Semarang in Java where she remains today. There is also a memorial headstone in the All Saints Church, Taiping to both Eva and Lewis Butler Madden. The MMPM has a very empathetic page on the final years of Mrs Madden. (MMPM).

- **MADDEN – Mr Lewis John Butler Madden**, of Taiping, Perak. A founder member of Taiping Rotary Club 1936. Lost at sea 14.2.42 on the *Vyner Brooke* (JMM); the official post war record by the Colonial Office is ‘*Lewis John Butler Madden, Taiping, Perak died on or about 14.2.42 in the vicinity of the Banka Straits as a result of the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke”*’ (CORD register M1, Folio 205, serial No. 1030, source Commander Reid RN); and the CWGC record is simply Lewis John Butler Madden, died 14.2.42, husband of Evelyne Madden, in the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” (CWGC); the secret list compiled by Changi internees (on 18 sheets of ‘Jeyes’ toilet paper) records “... MADDEN LJB RTD PLANTER – DIED LIFEBOAT WIFE P’BANG ...” (BPPL) which evidences that the internees had heard he had died in one of the lifeboats after the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke”; the little known list which appears to have been compiled in Palembang camp by the internees of those who they believed had died states “... Mr J. B. Madden, Taiping, Wounded in back & ill ..”; Butler Madden appears to have been an older man, probably in his early 70s, when he boarded the ship; the earliest Singapore newspaper report is in 1896 when he attended a fancy dress ball at the Singapore town hall (ST. 4.1.1896); his first wife died in 1909 when they were living in Taiping since there is a newspaper report of the death of Violet Annie (Birdie) Madden at ‘Kildare’, Swettenham, Taiping, wife of L. J. Butler Madden with to quote “*she had been ailing for some days past ...*” (ST. 11.5.09); later that year he drove off the road, ‘whilst adjusting a screw’, into a deep pit and smashed his car (ST. 13.12.09); in 1910 he suffered some sort of health issue and spent a month on holiday in Japan and it was around this time he is referred to

in newspapers as “.. *the well known contractor of Taiping...*”; some time in 1911 he appears to have married Evelyn Frances Madden because he is reported to be returning from holiday in England with Mrs Madden (ST 7.11.11); in 1913 they had a son , Noel Charles Butler - Madden who died in 1964 (MMPM); apart from a holiday in China in 1922 he drops out of news until 1933 when Mrs Madden returns from a holiday in Europe and then in 1934 from a holiday in Yokohama; health problems returned for Butler Madden in 1936 when he was reported as being seriously ill in Taiping Hospital and late that year both Mr and Mrs Madden returned to Taiping from a holiday ‘at Home’ (ST. 28.12.36); even during 1936 he was still active as a Contractor having built the Sitiawan ‘*landing ground*’ and the Taiping Aerodrome (SFPMA. 27.7.36); so, it looks like a few years later he had retired by the time of the Japanese invasion. As someone who had spent possibly all his life, or at least half a century, in Malaya he probably found it emotionally hard to leave until the last minute and so boarded the “SS. Vyner Brooke” as Singapore was about to fall. He either drowned at sea beside his wife (see Mrs Madden entry) or in a lifeboat – probably the former explanation. There is a memorial headstone to both Mr and Mrs Madden in the grounds of All Saints Church, Taiping, Perak.

- **MARIE????**– there are references to a ‘Eurasian’ ‘hairstresser’ named Marie during the voyage and also after the sinking, but no surname is known for this person; the first mention is by the ships officer, Lt. A. J. Mann who after offering his cabin to the Australian nurses and they not taking up his offer tells of being approached on the deck by “... *a very lovely looking Eurasian girl ...*” who confessed to him she had nowhere to sleep on the ship. He immediately offered her the use of his cabin and relates how “... *over a glass or two of Dimple Scotch...*” he learned a little of her history- “...*Her boyfriend had been an RNVR Lieutenant, killed when his ship was hit by a mine off the coast of Malaya. Her name was Marie, I think, and she was very attractive in an Eastern way. I estimated she was half Portuguese and half Malay, but whatever it was the result was pleasing ...*” (p.53 WBTW); after the sinking Marie is mentioned again because she was being refused access to a raft by a group of women – this was resolved by firm intervention by Eric German and others in a nearby (overcrowded and nearly submerged) lifeboat, to quote from BYE “...*Screams from a nearby life raft attracted attention of rowers. They were amazed to see a woman being pushed off a raft by other women. She swam to the boat screaming for help. Eric recognized her as a Eurasian hairstresser named Marie, who had busied herself on shipboard helping old people and the sick. The all-white occupants of the raft would spare no room for a Eurasian. “...Take her back or we’ll capsize you...” Eric yelled. His rowing companions supported him, cursed the women for their hard-heartedness and manoeuvred the boat alongside the raft as though to carry out their threat of capsizing it. The women pulled Marie back aboard...*” (BYE p. 143-144). A letter written by Eric German to Vivian Bullwinkel in 1995 may answer the mystery of what happened to ‘Marie’
- **MCCALLUM – Miss M. A. McCallum**, to Malaya 1939. Nursing Sister, Singapore aged 30 in 1942. Palembang, Sumatra internee (JMM); Miss McCallum appears to have been born in 1912 and was appointed a nursing sister by the Colonial Office in 1939 (ST. 20.2.39); Miss McCallum appears in two lists of women interned in Palembang (and presumably Muntok and Belalau) and in the list prepared by Mrs E. Cross she appears with the cipher ‘6’ against her name indicating that she had been aboard the “SS. Vyner Brooke”. Fellow passenger and survivor, Mrs Myrtle Ward, listed “...*Miss M. McCallum, Malayan Government nursing sister...*” as ‘Survived’ in a post war letter and list. No other information has been able to be gleaned on Miss McCallum.

- **MCDONALD - Sister Gladys Myrtle McDonald, QFX 22815, 2/13th Australian General Hospital.** "... Gladys was born on 17 July 1909 in Brisbane to John and Charlotte McDonald Her father ran a general store and fruit shop. She had black hair and an olive complexion. Her mother died in 1928, when Gladys was 19 years old. Her father appears to have died before 1941 because she has listed her cousin, Mrs Joan Marsh, as her next of kin on her enlistment papers. Gladys trained as a nurse and worked as matron at the Texas District Hospital in Queensland, where she was remembered fondly. When the Second World War broke out, she was working at the Brisbane General Hospital. On 11 July 1941 Gladys enlisted in the Citizen Military Force, transferring to the Australian Imperial Force in August 1941 when she was posted to the 13th Australian General hospital of the AANS. In September she embarked with her unit on the hospital ship 'Wanganella', arriving in Singapore two weeks later. She was variously detached for duty between the 10th AGH, the 13th AGH and the 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station, caring for the wounded and ill on the Malayan Peninsula...." (Christina Zissis, Editor, Military History Section, AWM) – This article at the AWM for some reason has her enlistment number incorrectly shown as VFX 38812. Not a lot else is known of Gladys' life before enlisting except that, it seems whilst training as a nurse, she was a prime witness at a formal Hospital enquiry held in 1930 at the Hospital where she was working ("The Evening News" Rockhampton, 2.9.30). The general medical superintendent and the Matron of the hospital were faced with allegations on their behaviour in lectures and inappropriate conversations with the nurses and Gladys showed confidence and fearlessness in giving her evidence from what is recorded in the newspapers of the time. She actually resigned from the Texas District Hospital as Matron in February 1941 "... to join the AIF nursing staff ..." (The Inverell Times" 3.2.41) so there seems to be a few months' hiatus before enlistment for some reason. Her pay book photo taken on enlistment shows a short woman with dark wavy hair, glasses and a 'no nonsense' look. After the sinking of the 'SS. Vyner Brooke' – in company with Iole Harper, Merle Trenerry, Jess Dorsch, Mary Clarke and Betty Jeffrey plus four or five civilian women – Gladys was in the water hanging on to Olive Paschke's raft on which also sat Caroline Ennis with a four-year-old Chinese boy and a three-year-old English girl. Many of these nurses and the civilian women were swept away from Olive Paschke' raft by sea currents and the last anyone saw of Gladys was her sitting on the raft beside Olive Paschke – with Mary Clarke on the other side and Caroline Ennis holding the two little children (Jess Dorsch and Merle Trenerry were in the water holding onto the trailing ropes) as they were swept down the Banka Strait. It is often written in books and newspapers that they were never seen again, but new information (email November 2016, Dr Neil McGregor advising that his mother Sister Sylvia Muir who was on the ship was told this information in Singapore after her release from internment in 1945) has come to light that in fact this raft, with the remains of Sister McDonald and two other nurses, was located several weeks later by a ship in the Indian Ocean. So, Gladys McDonald must have lost her life in the sea or died still tied onto the raft as it was taken by the powerful sea currents that run down the east coast of Sumatra into the Sunda Straits and out into the Indian Ocean.
- **MCELNEA – Sister Violet 'Vi' Irene McElnea, QFX 22822, AANS.** One reference shows Violet Irene McElnea, b.1904 Ingham, Queensland. AANS Nursing Sister. Survived the Vyner Brooke sinking, Palembang, Sumatra internee. (SUM); a newspaper report later in her life ("Townsville daily Bulletin" 10.3.26) mentions her visiting her parents, Mr and Mrs W. McElnea of Byanda – which may actually be a reference to 'Byanda House' an early residence in Ingham, Queensland or an

area/street of the town of Ingham at the time. The first records of Vi are in local newspapers when she passed her 'First Sectional' nurses exams whilst in Townsville and then in 1928 when ("Townsville Daily Bulletin" 10.5.28) Nurse McElnea resigned from Townsville district Hospital. [Researchers note: there were two nurses with the surname McElnea in that area of Queensland at the time]. By 1929 she was a registered nurse in Queensland and seems to have taken and then resigned from another nursing role at Hughenden hospital ("The Northern Miner" Charteris Towers, 29.8.29). After that and by 1931 Vi McElnea became part of the Mother's Union District Nursing Assn in Brisbane and moved up through the position of Acting Matron in 1935 to assume the position of Matron, District Nursing Assn, Milton, Brisbane by 1936. She continued in managing this area nursing service and its 11 qualified nurses, through until she enlisted in August 1941. There is no pay book photo of her on the AWM website but there is a newspaper photo of Vi McElnea, together with sisters Short and Smith (who were later with her on the 'SS. Vyner Brooke' and in the sea after the sinking) on 29.8.41 leaving Brisbane by train to join the AANS – she presents in that photo as an attractive, vibrant looking woman. The book 'ORB' records that she was one of eight McElneas from Ingham in North Queensland who enlisted in the armed forces in the Second World War It also says that theirs was one of the districts pioneering families. Also "Vi was 38 years old and a caring, compassionate nurse and mentor to many of the younger women in the AANS around her in Malaya..." (ORB, 0.140). On the day [14th February] of the bombers attacking the 'SS. Vyner Brooke' Vi McElnea celebrated her 38th birthday and a small ceremony was held below decks. Once in the water after the ship sank Vi found herself on a raft with Val Smith (with whom she had travelled on the train from Brisbane) and Mavis Hannah – plus 16 others. She made it to Banka Island, was captured and imprisoned by the Japanese and suffered three and a half years of awful treatment and deprivation in the internment camps of Muntok, Palembang and Belalau. In 1943 "The Courier – Mail", Brisbane (20 12.43) reported that a letter or Red Cross card had been received from Vi McElnea (the paper said she was from Murgon) which read" ... *Rice as a staple diet has its limitations, but we find we can get used to most things. All 32 of our girls are here together. We cook and look after ourselves generally. I do not recommend sun-tops and briefs for general wear. I hope never to wear them again when the war is over. We sadly need almost everything in the clothing line. Contract bridge is our main diversion. We have camp concerts occasionally...*". Like many Red Cross cards coming out of Japanese POW and internment camps the POWs or internees chose each sentence carefully to try and convey the truth of their existence without causing the Japanese postal censors to delete their words. Vi McElnea survived the horrors and rigours of internment in Sumatra but drops out of sight after the War. We do know that she was discharged from the AANS in early April 1946 and in 1951 travelled to England to "... combine sightseeing and nursing ...". She passed away in 1984 aged 80 years of age and is memorialised on the Honour Avenue, Bicton, WA memorial.

- **MCGLURK** – this reference will be to Able Seaman Hamilton **MCLURG** who was a crew member on the ship (see below).
- **MCGLADE** – **Sister Mary Eleanor 'Ellie' McGlade**, NX 76275, 2/13th Australian General Hospital Group. 'Ellie was born on 2 July 1902 in Armidale, NSW, to Francis Aloysius and Agnes Beatrice McGlade. Armidale is a city (in fact the administrative centre of the region) in the northern tablelands of NSW. Soon after her birth her mother passed away – it appears for post-natal reasons since later in life Ellie "... specialised in an area that would perhaps allow her to help young mothers in a way that her mother had not been helped ..." (ORB, p.45). Her father also passed away in

1905 And she went to live with her aunt, Mrs Walter Scott, of Wallalong, near Maitland, who became her guardian. The AWM website page on her life records that from her pre-school years Ellie “... attended St Ursula’s Convent in Armidale as a boarder – at first sleeping in a cot beside Mother Berchman’s bed – and as she grew it became a beloved childhood home. On completing her Intermediate Certificate in 1920 she had won prizes for singing, violin, piano, and Christian doctrine and had already begun to care for girls who fell ill. The School report of 1921 noted: owing to the kind solicitude of their College Infirmarian no one has a chance to get seriously ill before she is reported and nursed back to normal by the indefatigable Ellie. On leaving school McGlade visited relatives in Scotland and Ireland, returning to begin training as a nurse at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney. Graduating in 1927 with certificates in general Nursing, Cooking and Dispensing she became a Mothercraft nurse in the Hunter Valley. McGlade often visited St Ursula’s, and was well known there even after her departure. The 1927 School magazine remembered Ellie as a winsome toddler... playing about with Rex, the collie, or her family of dolls’ and later ‘as a girl of amiable disposition, still loved by those who surround her ... untiring and unselfish in her care of the sick...”. Ellie appears in the 1927 and 1929 NSW Register of Nurses as Mary Eleanor McGlade of Wallalong, Hinton, so it appears that after her graduation she returned to base herself in the small suburb of Wallalong in the Hunter Region of NSW. In 1930 as a young nurse Miss Ellie McGlade donated the crucifix for the new Ursuline Convent Chapel when it was being built (The Catholic Press, NSW, 13.2.30). A decade later, as a mature woman, Ellie struck good fortune (“The Newcastle Sun, 22.2.40) and it is reported that a nursing sister Mrs [sic] E. McGlade “... who gave her address as Wallalong a small township north of Morpeth, where she was at the time attending one of her many cases...” won fourth prize of 300 pounds in the State Lottery. She enlisted in January 1941 and her pay book photo in the AWM archives shows a woman with an intelligent, attractive face - with grey eyes – and as we know a strong ethic of compassion and care. Ellie was in the 2/13th Australian General Hospital in Malaya and Singapore and no doubt went about her nursing duties with the same caring attitude for which she was known. The fact that this intelligent, truly caring, compassionate woman was brutally and senselessly murdered by Japanese troops, with the other AANS nurses on Radji Beach on 16 February 1942, remains incomprehensible to the civilised mind. Sister Ellie McGlade is commemorated on the War Memorial on the high Street, Wallalong and on the Roll of Honour at the AWM. Her photograph is displayed at the Pool of Reflection at the AWM. No tangible remains, or evidence, was found of the massacre on ‘Radji Beach’ during post War investigations – except for Ellie McGlade’s ID card - this is recorded in an Australia War Graves investigation report dated April 1946 held in the Australian national Archives , Melbourne “... here I might mention during our trip to Pangkal Pinang, Captain FODEN making further enquiries around Muntok was given by his Malay rating, who had received it from a native of Muntok, an identification card inscribed and belonging to Sister M.E. McGlade, AANS. The man said it was taken from the body of a white woman in the area previously mentioned as being the place of the shooting of the nurses ...”. It is not known what happened to this ID card which was presumably returned to Australia.

- **MITTELHEUSER/MIDDLEHAUSER – Sister Pearl ‘Mitz’ Beatrice Mittelheuser, QFX 19068, 2/10th Australian General Hospital Group. Known variously as ‘Pearl’, ‘Mitz’ or ‘Mitz’ (AWM website), she was born on 28 April 1904 in Bundaberg, Queensland to what the book ‘ORB’ calls “... large Bundaberg family...” (ORB, p.105). [Research**

has failed to provide any background on her early life or pre-war nursing career, and we are reliant on the research from the book 'ORB' for much of the events of Pearl Mittelheuser's last days]. Insofar as her parents, ancestry.com does provide the information that her father was Johannes Henry Mittelheuser (died 1964) and her mother was Margaret Elizabeth Mittelheuser, plus the fact that she had one sister Laura Ethel Mittelheuser (died in 2007 aged 95 years) - this is supported by a post war newspaper item which adds "... Mrs. A. Pattison of Bourke has received word from her daughter (Mrs. J.K. Mittelheuser of Kingsford) stating that Sister Pearl Mittelheuser who survived the frightful shooting atrocities at Sumatra by the Japs had died from starvation and lack of medical treatment. Sister Mittelheuser was the daughter of Mrs. J. Mittelheuser and sister-in-law of Mrs. J. K. Mittelheuser...." (Western Herald, Bourke, NSW, 21.9.45). Pearl enlisted in the AANS and her pay book photo shows a short (5' 3") woman with a pleasant face, hair pulled back to a bun and glasses - making her look a little studious. After the sinking of the 'SS. Vyner Brooke' Pearl "... reached a partially submerged lifeboat ... probably one of those which had dropped into the water from the port side of the 'Vyner Brooke' ... ". She later pulled Sylvia Muir onto the submerged craft, and they were joined by many other nurses, Mrs Bull and her little daughter and others (ORB, p.171). She reached Muntok after being picked up by a passing RAAF launch and was imprisoned by the Japanese. Once again from 'ORB' we learn that Pearl was a committed Christian and was elected 'Captain' of one of the overcrowded houses in Irenelaan internment camp in Palembang. She was one of those short stature nurses identified by the Japanese officers in their futile attempt to coerce some of the nurses to work in their 'comfort' club (ORB, p. 242). Pearl endured the harsh deprivation, neglect, malnutrition and suffering in the Japanese internment camps in Muntok, Palembang, Muntok again, and then Belalau (Loebok – Linggau in Sumatra) until right up to the end of the War. Finally, after the Japanese had surrendered to the Allies (but the Japanese callously did not disclose this fact to the internees at the horrific Belalau internment camp and in fact hid the very existence of this camp from the arriving Allied troops who were searching for the women they knew must be in that internment camp) Pearl simply faded away, sick and wasted, curled up in a foetal position. Her best friend Sylvia Muir was with her when she died, but Sylvia was so dehydrated she was unable to cry. In a good example of the sick psychopathic behaviour of most Japanese running these internment camps, the very next day Captain Seki – the Commandant of Belalau internment camp – called all the prisoners together and told them the war was over and they could now be friends! The War had ended three days before Pearl had died!!! Today Pearl is buried in the Jakarta War cemetery, Indonesia. Probably the best epitaph recorded for Pearl Mittelheuser was the statement by other nurses at Belalau that "... another of the best loved nurses, Pearl Mittelheuser, died ..." (ORB, p.278). Pearl is memorialised at the War Nurses pavilion, cnr. Bourbong & Takalvan Street, Bundaberg where clones from an aged rosemary bush believed to have been planted by Pearl's family are growing. Other clones of this plant are also in the care of the Bundaberg Regional Council Parks & Gardens. The rosemary tribute will continue to be a part of the annual service organised by the Bundaberg Ex- Servicewomen's Assn. Pearl Mittelheuser's name is also located at 96 in the Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial.

- **MORETON** - Miss Dorothy Emily Moreton, Headmistress, Methodist Anglo- Chinese Primary School for Boys, Westlands Ave, Penang. Aged 43 in 1942. Survived the sinking of the Vyner Brooke." ... Whilst in Palembang Women's camp in the Xmas of 1943 she made toys out of sample cloth books from the local Indian merchant. She

made rag dolls and toy animals etc. She was a school teacher and got other people to help her..." Sumatra internee. Repatriated on 'Antenor' from Singapore, arriving in Liverpool 27.10.45. Died 1984 South Glamorgan (SUM); mentioned by Sister Jessie Simons in "WHP" (p.46) "... Miss Morton, a clever British Eurasian infant teacher, supervised the production of cloth books with pictures appliqued on to the leaves and titles, or rhymes sewn in with coloured cottons...". Also simply listed as D.E. Moreton she appears on the list of women internees in Palembang camp as having been on the "SS. Vyner Brooke" by Mrs E. Cross; the first reference to Dorothy Moreton is in 1930 when she appears as the Ipoh delegate at the Malayan YWCA Conference in Kuala Lumpur (SFPMA 16.12.3) where she appears to have been working as a Methodist missionary: in 1931 she was again the Ipoh delegate; in 1932 she played hockey for the Ipoh YWCA (ST. 21 9.32) and later that year is listed as the Ipoh delegate again at the YWCA conference; in 1933 she was on the Kinta Committee of the Perak Badminton Association (ST. 7.2.33) and in June of that year returned to the UK on 'home leave" on the 'SS. Naldera' (SFPMA. 78.6.33); she returned to Malaya from England in 1934 to take up work as a missionary for the Methodist mission in Penang (SFPMA 13.3.34) and at some stage thereafter became the Headmistress of the Primary School of the Anglo –Chinese School for Boys, Westlands Avenue, Penang (Methodist Malaya Conference records 1937-1939, source is images.library.yale.edu); it is interesting to note that on the "SS. Vyner Brooke' were several Anglican Missionaries together with at least one other headmistresses of a school plus others with involvement in schools and social work; it is not known how she reached Banka Island after the sinking but she then endured the horror of Muntok, Palembang and Belau internment camps and survived; in 1977 she was the author of the book " An Irishman In Malaya: the biography of John Lowe Woods ", he was an advocate and solicitor in Ipoh, Federated Malay States at the time Dorothy was working as a missionary in that town. A handsome man who had presumably impressed Dorothy with his work in fundraising for the establishment of a home for destitute and abandoned boys in Ipoh in 1933 when the Depression years had forced families to abandon their children); as recorded by Jonathan Moffatt in the Sumatra internees' database, above, she died in South Glamorgan in 1984.

- **MUIR – Sister Sylvia Jessie Mimmi Muir**, QFX 22816, 2/13th Australian General Hospital. Sylvia was born on 24 August 1915 in the small country town on Longreach, in central west Queensland (about 700 km west of Rockhampton). She was the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. R. F. Muir of that town – from contemporary newspaper items her father seemed to be involved in grazing and horse feed businesses. She received her nursing training at the [Brisbane] general hospital and was, at the time of her enlistment, nursing at Ingham ("The Telegraph", Brisbane, 29.5.41). She enlisted on 29.5.41 and there is a photo in the AWM archives of Sylvia – showing an attractive young woman with a face that conveys the impression the person is someone used to presenting herself in theatrics or entertainment. When the 'Vyner Brooke' was attacked by bombers, Sylvia was quite close to the blast of one of the bombs (an elderly Englishman sitting next to her was concussed and may have suffered the 'bomb blast' effects which often show no sign of external injury, ORB, p.153). Once in the sea Sylvia was grabbed by a panicking Chinese man and could only break his grip with the assistance of fellow nurse Joyce Tweddell (ORB, p.170). She then swam to the partially submerged lifeboat which her friend Pearl Mittelheuser had already reached. They were joined by Mrs Bull and daughter, Sisters Clancy, Hughes, Raymont, Gardam and Ashton plus a few other civilians and crew. This group were eventually picked up by a passing RAAF launch with two

young airmen steering it and then taken to Muntok pier where they were captured by the Japanese and interned in Muntok cinema. Sylvia then suffered the next three and a half years in the harsh and severely deprived conditions of Muntok, Palembang and Belalau internment camps. The book 'ORB' tells us that she was a 'committed Christian' in the camps and showed a talent for flower arranging, plus her "... background in amateur theatrics ..." (ORB, P.246) came to the fore again. In April 1943 her mother, Mrs. R.F. Muir of Rome Street, Brisbane received news that her daughter was a POW in Malaya ("The Telegraph", Brisbane, 5.4.43). Like other survivors of the camps Sylvia was repatriated first to Singapore for some recuperation and then to Australia on the hospital ship 'Manunda'. She was discharged from the AANS in May 1946 with the rank of Lieutenant and on December that year she married Cpl. Colin McGregor, AIF (and also an ex-POW) whom she had met in 1941 when he was admitted to her hospital in Malaya. Sylvia and Colin moved to a dairy farm in Bega, NSW, After Colin's sudden and unexpected death, she later returned to Brisbane. In the AWM there is a recording of an interview with Sylvia on her experiences (AWM, ref SO2889) Sylvia McGregor passed away in 1999 – the same year as her comrade Iole Harper

- **MURRAY-** Mrs M.M. Murray aged 31 in 1942. Survived the sinking of the Vyner Brooke. Palembang, Sumatra internee (SUM)? -this may be a duplication/error with Mrs. Ena Murray below.
- **MURRAY** - "Mrs E.J. Murray ,husband in Changi" is listed amongst the women internees in Palembang who had been on the "SS. Vyner Brooke" by Mrs E. Cross; she is also mentioned as being on the "SS. Vyner Brooke' by Shelagh Brown in her diary; Ena Murray was the wife of Kenneth Scott Murray and she would have been about 33 years of age when she boarded the "SS. Vyner Brooke"; Kenneth Murray was interned in Changi prison and then Sime Road camp , he was listed with the occupation General Merchant, Import & Export and that his NOK was "Mrs E. J. Murray, c/o Shanks & Co., Barrhead, Scotland"; Ena's father James Hope , and mother Margaret had also been interned in Changi and sadly James Hope died in Changi on the first day of internment (17.2.42) aged 65 years; in the Sumatra List on the website of the Malayan Volunteers Group she is listed as " ... **Mrs Ena Jessie Murray**, b.1909. Wife of Kenneth Scott Murray 'Ken' Building Dept. William Jacks & Co. Ltd. He was a Changi internee. Daughter Sally was evacuated [sic, Sally was the daughter of Norah]; Ena was the sister of Nora Chambers [see above in this memorial document]. Palembang, Sumatra internee. During the three plus years of internment Ena 'adopted' and '... proved totally devoted ...' to little June Bourhill whose mother had been killed during the bombing of the "SS. Vyner Brooke" or in the sea after. This included making at least one highly dangerous black-market sortie through the barbed wire fence surrounding the Palembang camp in search of food for June and also Ena's sister Nora who was ill with malaria (P.128, WBTW); in Muntok camp in October 1944 when volunteers were needed to clean and empty overflowing latrines, she and Nora Chambers plus Audrey Owens are recorded in Phyllis Brigg's diary as "...these splendid people who did this filthy and nauseating task..." Repatriated from Singapore with husband Kenneth on the 'Cilicia', arriving Liverpool 27.11.45. Returned to Singapore 1946. Ena died 1995. Her photo is on ancestry.com and there is one of her in WBTW p. 50-51; Ena and Kenneth, later in life, moved to the island of Jersey where her sister Norah and husband John were living (WBTW). Ena and her husband Ken lived in Jersey for 37 years, but she died in Geldeston, Norfolk in 1995.
- **MUSTILL** – It seems that Marjorie B. N. Mustill, who appears to have been born c. 1908, the daughter of Horace and Grace Mustill, grew up in Over, England. She

must have arrived in Singapore in the early or mid-1930s to work in nursing because the first newspaper report is in 1939 when she left on the 'Ranchi' for Europe, which may have been her first home leave since this was usually only granted after at least three years' service in Malaya and Singapore (ST. 15.6.39); there is a post war newspaper article in which she is mentioned under the heading " Tracing of the Missing Continues" and records a Marjorie B.N. Mustill, nursing sister Johore, who was last seen in the sea after the sinking of the "SS. Vyner Brooke"; a post war letter from Mrs Myrtle Ward(a fellow passenger and survivor)provided a list of people she was aware of as having been on board and recorded the "... Miss Mustill, Malayan Government Nursing Service, was believed to have drowned..."; then there is the official record of **Marjorie Beatrice Naomi Mustill**, SRN, SCM, aged 34 years, civilian, died 14.2.42 in the sinking of the "SS. Vyner Brooke", daughter of Grace Mustill, High Street, Over, Cambridgeshire, England. Reported lost at sea off Singapore (CWGC); other records show MUSTILL Ms Marjorie B.N. SRN from Over, Cambs. Colonial Service Nursing Sister, Johore. Lost at sea either 14.2.42 or 17.2.42. [According to Straits Times and Colonial Office Deaths Register on *Vyner Brooke* 15.2.42]. (JMM); Miss Marjorie B. N. Mustill, Malayan Nursing Service, died on or about 14.2.42 in the Banka straits as a result of the sinking of the "SS. Vyner Brooke", source C.in C. ALFSEA (CORD Reg.M1, Folio 196, Serial 1001); Marjorie Mustill is also remembered by the Royal British Legion with a record which adds to that of the CWGC with "... Reported lost at sea off Singapore, ship not known. Grace grew up in Over and was the daughter of Horace and Grace Mustill who kept the Golden Lion in the High Street. She had trained as a nurse and taken up employment in the East to be a Sister. She was caught up in the evacuation of Singapore and was on a ship that was torpedoed, and she was presumed drowned See Over, St Mary.... (Royal British Legion Roll of Honour website and also the Over St Mary Church website where Marjorie Mustill is remembered on a plaque in the church with other people who lost their lives during the Second World War); so, it appears that Marjorie survived the bombing of the ship but (as most nurses on the ship had been instructed to do so) did not attempt to board a lifeboat and was last seen swimming for her life in the sea after the sinking.

- **NEUBRONNER - Mrs Olga Mary Neubronner**, CMB SRN Wife of G.V. Colonial Service Nursing Sister – Senior Superintendent, St. John's Ambulance Brigade, Singapore. Survived the sinking of the Vyner Brooke. She was ill when brought into Muntok having had a miscarriage when her ship went down (according to the diary of Phyllis Briggs Olga had been on the "Kuala" but this may be an error). In October 1942 she was sent with Turner, Macalister, and Cooper to work in a native hospital and did so until April 1943 when the Kempetai, for no apparent reason, put the four British sisters in small cells in the local gaol where they suffered great hardship. While in prison Olga started to write poems. After about six months they returned to Palembang camp, but Olga never really recovered. Palembang, Sumatra internee. Died in captivity 22.3.45 [39] Muntok (SUM); Olga Mary Gunner, daughter of Mrs. Isabelle B. Gunner of Winchmore Hill, London had married Guy Neubronner in 1939 at St Andrews Cathedral, Singapore (in the photo in SFPMA 27.4.39 she is a very attractive young woman); her husband was NEUBRONNER G.V. [Guy Vivian] ED b.1897 KL. WW1 Lt on the Western Front. Incorporated Accountant: Assistant Evatt & Co. NTS Building, Singapore. Lt 1SSVF 2 i/c Intelligence Platoon POW Singapore to Thailand. Wife Olga [+ Sumatra]. He remarried 1948 Eleonor Mary Hitchon at Singapore. Post-war Captain SVF. Left for the UK. Wife 'Nell' died 10.54 at Reigate. A member of BAM till 1973. Died 21.3.74 Reigate, Surrey. (JMM); from newspaper reports he had attended school in Singapore (he was a prolific supporter of Old

Rafflesians), , a YMCA cricketer and a very active hockey player in the 1920s and 1930s; in the book “ On Radji Beach” which seems to largely reflect the experiences of the Australian Army nurses, there is an account of Olga after the sinking being on one of the conjoined rafts with 23 women and nurses (p.175) and being allowed to stay out of the water like most because she was seven months pregnant. The book later recounts how that group were picked up by an old motor launch which took them to Muntok wharf and helped all the passengers disembark, it states “... *The ongoing trauma proved too much for Olga Neubronner who, calling for assistance, collapsed in agony at the end of the jetty. In labour and pain, Olga delivered a stillborn baby surrounded by the nurses who could only hug her and clean her up ...*” (p.180-181 ORB); Olga Neubronner appears in the ‘List of British Internees in Palembang’ compiled by Mrs. E. Cross; in October 1945 there appeared the following notice in the magazine of the ‘British Malaysians’ “... *Neubronner, M.I.S., Olga Mary, Kindergarten Nurse, died 2.3.45. NOK Mrs. Gunner, 41 Bush hill road, Winchmore Hill, London. N.23....*”; an account of her life, but with a different explanation for the still birth of Olga’s baby appears in the Neubronner family website” *Neubronner in the far East*” (Neubronner.com), where are also displayed some of Olga’s poignant poems revealing a woman with obvious education and emotional depth, and the relevant section is quoted here exactly as it presents in the website;

“... As testified by her brother EN Gunner, Olga Mary Gunner was born in Enfield, Middlesex, London on 31st October 1905. She was educated at a private school and on graduation became a governess until 1931 when she decided on a nursing profession. She was trained at the University College Hospital and graduated in 1935. She also became a certified Midwife. In 1936, she joined the Colonial Service as a Nursing Sister and was posted to Malaya where she rose to be Sister-in-Charge of the Changi Colonial Hospital in Singapore. There she met and married a lawyer, Guy Vyvian Neubronner in 1939 and subsequently left the service. The couple returned to Olga’s home in England for their honeymoon but were soon to return to Singapore when war was declared. Guy was an officer in the Straits Settlement Volunteer Force and promptly rejoined his unit while Olga joined St. Johns Ambulance Brigade as Senior Superintendent apparently, when the Vyner Brooke sank, Olga and others drifted on a raft for some 40 hours. They missed the beach where the massacre occurred as did several other rafts. It was on the raft that Olga gave birth to her only child, a son. Sadly, the baby survived for only a few hours. Having eventually landed on another part of Banka, Olga and another English nurse were found wandering in the jungle by some locals. They were taken to a convent or a mission where they spent some time and were apparently well looked after. They were working there as nurses when the Japanese discovered them. They were taken to a POW camp in Muntok in the NE of Banka just across from the main island of Sumatra. There Olga was reunited with the surviving nurses from the Vyner Brooke. Thus began her internment. Over the next three years she was to suffer dismal conditions and treatment. Later in 1942, the internees were moved to Palembang and back again to Muntok in late 1944.

During her ordeal, Olga found time to compose over 20 poems which give a moving insight to her feelings and experiences. In fact Jessie Simons, in her book, mentioned the well respected missionary Margaret Dryburgh who also wrote poems and put some of Olga’s poems to music which were sung at camp concerts. Sadly, neither Olga nor Margaret were to survive their imprisonment.

Olga died of dysentery and malnutrition on the 2nd of March 1945 while Margaret died a little later on another terrible journey to another camp at Lubuk Linggau. The rescued nurses who returned to Singapore told EN that Olga and Margaret gave their lives so that the children might live. They gave much of their meagre rations to the little ones”.

- **NEUSS – Lt. Kathleen 'Kath' Margaret Neuss**, #NFX 70527, was born in 1911 the daughter of John Henry Neuss and Mary Catherine Neuss (sadly she died in 1942, the same year as Kath) of Inverell, and was described as a brown eyed, dark-haired woman; she had attended Inverell High School in northern NSW during 1927-28 before training as a private nurse in Inverell. Kath Neuss enlisted with the 12th Australian General Hospital and served in Malaya and Singapore. At the time of boarding the “SS. Vyner Brooke” she was aged either 30 or 31 (ORB 127) and, along with Winnie May Davis and Pat Gunther, was ordered amongst the various duties of the Australian Army nurses on board to be responsible for the forward part of the ship (ORB, p.148). When the ship was bombed, she “... received a nasty shrapnel wound from the bomb that hit aft. Struck in the left hip, she struggled to walk and had to be helped onto the deck by Wilma and Mona...” (ORB, p.154); when time came for evacuating the ship and the second lifeboat was being filled with the elderly, mothers and children and the more seriously wounded nurses Kath Neuss had to be practically carried all the way into the lifeboat (ORB, p.159). Presumably landing on Radji Beach in the lifeboat, Kath Neuss was murdered by the Japanese on the beach along with the other Australian Army Nurses – whether she was amongst those told to walk into the water and killed or whether she was amongst the wounded on stretchers brutally bayoneted to death is unclear. She is remembered on the Inverell Roll of Honour and a tree is planted at the RSL branch in Inverell in her memory.
- **ORAM - Sister Wilma Elizabeth Forster Oram**, VFX 5878, 2/13th Australian General Hospital (attached to 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station). Wilma Oram was born on 17 August 1916 at Glenorchy, a town in the Wimmera district of western Victoria (“The Australian Women’s Register”). The earliest newspaper record is of Wilma winning second prize in the Drawing Book competition at the Murtoa Show at Lake Marma (“The Horsham Times”. 28.10.24). She started training as a nurse at Warrnambool Base Hospital – apparently a reserved young woman – and became great friends with Mona Wilton (ORB, p.45). In 1937 she graduated as a nurse (angellpro.com) and the following year moved to Melbourne. In May 1940 Wilma and her friend Mona decided to volunteer and a year later they were both called up for service. Wilma appears to have been a very social person and letter writer home of her experiences in Malaya – in October 1941 she and Mona both attended a Ball given by the most prestigious Sultan of Johore. In the book ‘ORB’ (p.152 and p.170) there is a good, detailed explanation of Wilma’s experiences during the bombing of the ‘Vyner Brooke’ and the aftermath once the ship sank. During the bombing Wilma attended to an elderly Englishman who had been fatally wounded by shrapnel and he died whilst she cared for him. Her own legs were badly gashed by flying glass during the bombing, but she and Mona (both injured) still helped Kathy Neuss up onto the deck of the ship and into a lifeboat. She and Mona then jumped into the sea and Wilma received a blow to the head from a life raft falling from the ship - it knocked her out and tragically Mona Wilton was killed by another falling life raft. When Wilma regained consciousness, she believed she saw and conversed with

fellow nurse Kit Kinsella who was drifting past in a lifejacket – this was to be the last time anyone saw Kit Kinsella. Wilma found a life raft and was soon joined by Mrs Dorothy Gibson – that night the two of them were sitting quietly on their life raft drifting at sea when they were almost run down by the Japanese invasion fleet attacking Bank Island. At daybreak they paddled ashore to a beach and were promptly captured and taken to the Muntok Customs house for internment. Wilma was the one who looked after Vivian Bullwinkel when she too was brought into internment after her weeks of ordeal - it seems that the shock of the death of her friend Mona was a motivating factor for Wilma to make a special effort with Vivian Bullwinkel who was delirious when interned for the first time. Wilma then began three and a half years of harsh and deprived internment – at one point she was punished for not bowing to a Japanese sergeant major and was, with Vivian Bullwinkel, made to stand bareheaded in the hot tropical sun for an hour. By the end of the war Wilma was wasted and sick in the awful Belalau internment camp. After repatriation to Australia on the hospital ship ‘Manunda’ with the other surviving nurses, Wilma continued nursing for some years. In 1946 she married Alan Young (who had been a POW of the Germans) and they settled on a dairy farm at Cardinia in south Gippsland, Victoria. They raised four sons. After the death of her husband in 1991 Wilma became very involved in local and State RSL activities. A biography was written about Wilma Oram/Young “A Woman’s War: The exceptional life of Wilma Oram Young” by Barbara Angell. Wilma passed away on 28.5.2001.

- **OXLEY - Sister Christian Sarah Mary ‘Chris’ Oxley**, QFX 19073, 2/10th Australian General Hospital. Chris Oxley was born on 7 June 1912 in Charters Towers, Queensland (ORB, 168). Research has not determined the names of her parents. The earliest reference to her is in a local newspaper (“Townsville Daily Bulletin”, 25.11.22) when ‘Chrissie Oxley’ attended the ‘Children’s Dazzle Ball’ wearing “... white voile, prettily inserted Val and lace, mauve sash ...’. Some years later (“Freemans Journal”, Sydney, 19.12.29) a teenage ‘Chrissie Oxley’ won a prize for needlework whilst at St Ursula’s College, Armidale, NSW [this was the Ursuline Convent in Armidale, NSW, and in 1976 this college amalgamated with De La Salle College to form O’Connor Catholic High School]. This period of her life must have strongly influenced Chris Oxley – in the book ‘ORB’ it is stated that she was probably the most deeply religious of all the ‘Vyner Brooke’ nurses. In 1931 the “Glen Innes Examiner”, NSW (8.9.31) recorded that “Nurse Chris. Oxley” of the local District Hospital [Glen Innes District Hospital] is holidaying in Brisbane. In 1934, aged 22 years, Chris appears on the electoral roll in Richmond, NSW and then in 1936 on the roll in Lilley, Queensland. During this time, she passed the ‘Midwifery Branch’ exams of the Nurses Registration Board whilst working at Women’s Hospital [presumably the Crown Street Womens Hospital], Sydney (“Sydney Morning Herald”, 19.6.36). In 1939 Chris Oxley assisted at a Bridge benefit event raising funds for the Queensland Bush Nursing Assn (“The Courier-Mail”, Brisbane, 1.12.39). It is not known when Chris enlisted in the 2/10th AGFH but she duly went to Malaya and Singapore and eventually boarded the ‘Vyner Brooke’ with the other nurses. After the ship sank and the nurses were all struggling in the water, her strong religious beliefs obviously came into play because as described by ‘ORB’ (p. 168) “... *a practising and devout Catholic... [Chris] was praying quite loudly...*”, another nurse told her to shut up and grab an oar and get the raft away from the debris, bodies and chaos left by the foundering ship – “...*then you can pray ...*”. Chris reached Banka Island and began three and a half years of harsh internment and awful deprivation. At the final camp, Belalau, which was the worst of all camps the book ‘ORB’ tells us (p.281) that Chris, facing almost certain death from starvation in August 1945 gave her dental

plate/bridge which had a little gold in it to a Javanese guard to sell for money she could use for food. Two days later the Japanese Commandant of Belalau camp, Seki, announced the end of the War - luckily the guard had not yet managed to sell the important dental fitting and returned it – the Japanese then produced all the food they had hidden from the internees. Nevertheless Chris Oxley was in a serious way and had to spend time recuperating in hospital in Singapore on her way home - a photo in the “Sydney morning Herald” (17.9.45) showed a pre-war photo of her as an attractive dark haired woman in her AANS uniform and then a few weeks later the ‘Glen Innes Examiner’ (9.10.45) has a photo of her lying in a hospital bed in Singapore identified as “... Sister C.S.M. ‘Chris’ Oxley who trained at Glen Innes District Hospital, talking by radio to her home in Clayfield, Brisbane ...”. Chris was discharged from the AANS in early 1946 and the following year was awarded “Mentioned in Despatches” for “Services rendered whilst in Japanese hands”. The next time Chris Oxley appears in the newspapers is in 1952 when she announced her engagement to James Bennion ‘Ben’ Price and partied at the Surfers Paradise Hotel (“South Coast Bulletin”. 13.5.52) – they were married in April 1952 - and the trail of her life was lost by the researcher of this document. In 1994 Mrs Christian S.M. Oxley Price died on 16 April and was buried at Allambe Memorial Park Cemetery, Carrara, Queensland.

- **PAPINEAU/POPINEAU (SIC)** - PAPINEAU E.N. a miner, Renong Tin. Aged 22 in 1942. Left Singapore on the Vyner Brooke [sunk]. Palembang Sumatra internee. ; The “Jeyes” list records “... PAPINEAU E. R’NONG TIN GUTHRIE P’BANG...”(SUM); this was **Emile ‘Sonny’ Michael Papineau**, born 1920 in Renong , he survived the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” and was then interned in Muntok and Palembang ; he is shown on the list of British men interned in Palembang as ‘E.M. Papineau’; he attended St. Joseph’s Institution and in 1934 is recorded as winning the high jump at the school sports; family knowledge is a little vague on his movements but it appears that after the war he spent time in the UK, and possibly Thailand before spending time in Penang and then moving to Australia in 1955 (shipping records show him arriving in Fremantle from Priok on 11.2.55); from 1977-1980 he lived in Applecross , Western Australia (ancestry.com) ; he had a at least one child , a daughter (Doreen?) in Australia and possibly a son named Michael as well?.
- **PARFITT/’PARFAIT’ - Mrs Helen Parfitt** from Croydon, England. Wife of Edmund Tom Parfitt. Wounded in *Vyner Brooke* sinking. Died 20 .2.42 [40] Banka Island – buried there. (JMM); the official record is Mrs Helen Parfitt, wife of Edmund Tom Parfitt, and of ‘Emoh Ruo’ [note: ‘our home’ in reverse], Telok Gadung Road, Klang, Selangor, Malaya died on 20.2.24 from wounds incurred in the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” (CWGC and MI9 of Tom Parfitt); Mrs Parfait (sic) is mentioned in the diary of Shelagh Brown when the ship was underway on 13 February 1942 after leaving Singapore “... Given half tin of Asp. Saus & pot at night. Best meal so far! Shared it with Ina Murray, her sister Mrs Chambers and husband, and Mrs Parfait (sic). ...” (SD p.136); Helen Parfitt ‘s parents were Mr & Mrs A. Ward of 7 Bridle Path, Croydon, Surrey, England and from the marriage record in December 1927 for her wedding with Edmund Parfitt in Trowbridge, Wiltshire she appears to have been married previously, because her surname at that point was White. Major Tebbutt, AIF, (who was senior army officer on the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ responsible for the Australian Army sisters) had swum to shore at Banka Island after the sinking - after the War he recorded on 25.6.45 that on 15th February 1942 at about 1400hrs he discovered a lady who before she died told him her name was ‘Parfitt’ - the tide had left her on a beach about five miles west of Muntok lighthouse. Tebbutt recalled her as a passenger on the ‘Vyner Brooke’ and described her as “... she had large, bluey-

green eyes; slightly aquiline nose; and – I think – an olive complexion. Age – about 30 years. She was utterly exhausted and was not able to speak coherently...”. He said she was happy to have him with her and smiled. Later in the afternoon she weakened and passed away. An AB. Homer had joined Tebbutt on the beach, and they together buried Helen Parfitt above the highwater mark on the beach near a fisherman’s shack. She had a wedding ring and a gold ring with a blue stone on it, which were left on her body. She also had a ‘bill of exchange’ drawn on the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China’ in favour of Helen Parfitt, a Savings Bank passbook and STG 15 pounds in notes – the latter was distributed (by Tebbutt) amongst Homer and two Army ORs who had also joined them. [Researcher Note: AB Homer was in fact Able Seaman Leonard George Homer, D/J 110705, ex ‘HMS Repulse’ who was captured on 23.2.42. Homer’s MI9 records that his wife lived at 61 Greyhound Farm Road, Speke, Liverpool. Leonard and Mary Homer had a son in 1933 by the name of Leonard Noah Homer. Leonard Homer survived the War and in 1965 was living in Lanarkshire.] CQMS Edmund Tom Parfitt, # 13690, 2nd Selangor Battalion, FMSVF was born in 1901 (or 1903) in Frome, Wiltshire, and his parents were William Thomas Parfitt (1880 – 1943?) a Rubber Worker and Ellen Louisa Parfitt (1878-1966) from Melksham, Wiltshire. . He had two brothers Leslie Parfitt (1909) and Kenneth Stuart Parfitt (1911) and a sister Hilda Alice Parfitt (1904) and he was a rubber technician in Malaya. He was captured and became a POW on the Burma railway (John Brown database of Malayan Volunteers and ancestry.com). After the War he returned to Singapore on the ‘Empress of Asia’ in June 1946 – he is last recorded as the President of the Sutton and District Bowling Assn and being from Cheam Village in 1959.

- **PASCHKE – Matron Olive Dorothy Paschke**, VFX 38812, 2/10th Australian General Hospital. Olive Paschke was born on 19 July 1905 at Dimboola, Victoria, third daughter of Australian born parents Heinrich Wilhelm Paschke, a long-established stock – and station agent and his wife Ottilie Emma Paschke (nee Krieg). Educated at Dimboola High School (where she was a pupil teacher in 1921), Dorothy helped on her parents’ farm, attended the Presbyterian Church, and played tennis and golf. In Melbourne in 1930 she began training at the Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital for Women and Children and its allied institutions, gaining her nursing certificate in 1934 (“The Argus “1.12.33 recorded her passing her Nurses Board Exam). She also qualified for certificates in midwifery and infectious diseases. Returning to Dimboola, Miss Paschke was matron of Airlie Private Hospital for four years before again returning to Melbourne as assistant – matron of the Jessie McPherson Community hospital. She joined the Army Nursing Service on 23 July 1940 as a Staff nurse. In January 1941 she was promoted to matron and posted to the 2/10th Australian general hospital. The following month the unit travelled by ship to Singapore and thence by train to Malacca in Malaya. Paschke was popular with her staff, patients and medical officers. She led by example, often working long hours beside her nurses. In November 1941 she learned she had been selected for promotion to principal matron. “The Australian Womens Weekly” (28.5.41) had a photo and message ‘home’ amongst other service personnel from Olive to a friend at the Jessie McPherson Hospital - which gives some idea of the positive public and professional profile she had at the time given that another person on the page was General Gordon Bennett. On 1.1.42 she was awarded the Royal Red Cross (“The Horsham Times “20.1.42). During and after the bombing and sinking of the ‘Vyner Brooke’ Olive was the epitome of calmness and authority and earned further admiration from the nurses who already had huge respect for her leadership. She was a non-swimmer but nevertheless she lowered herself into the sea and made her way towards a group of rafts tied together, apparently very pleased with herself for having survived in the sea for an hour with no ability to swim. She joined Caroline

Ennis, Merle Trenerry, Gladys McDonald, Jess Dorsch and Mary Clarke on and around the raft and they were soon joined also by Betty Jeffrey and Iole Harper. Caroline Ennis was soon holding two small survivors of the sinking – a small four-year-old Chinese boy (grabbed by Iole as he had floated past in a life jacket) and a three-year-old English girl. The raft was swirled around by very strong sea currents and later Iole and Betty were swept away leaving the others to the mercy of the currents. To quote the most poignant paragraph from the book 'ORB' (p. 187) "... As the raft was swept away from the swimmers and from the nearest land, Betty and Iole called out, but there was nothing either group could do about their situation. Betty and Iole watched the raft grow smaller, with Mary Clarke and Gladys McDonald sitting either side of Olive Paschke, and Jess Dorsch and Merle Trenerry in the water alongside hanging on to the trailing ropes. And there, back to back with her matron, sat Caroline Ennis, cradling two small children in her lap. The raft and its occupants were never seen again...". Olive Paschke was 37 years old when she lost her life. To date all literature on the subject has the raft never seen again, however new information (ref. email November 2016, Dr Neil McGregor advising that his mother Sister Sylvia Muir who was on the 'Vyner Brooke' was told this in Singapore after release from internment in 1945) has come to light that in fact this raft with the remains of Sister McDonald and two other nurses was located several weeks later by a ship in the Indian Ocean. So, Merle Trenerry must have lost her life in the sea or still on the raft as it was taken by the powerful sea current that ran down the east coast of Sumatra into the Sunda Straits and out into the Indian Ocean. Olive Paschke must surely be an icon in the history of Australia's Service Nurses and richly deserved the awarding in 1951 of the Florence Nightingale award posthumously in 1951 by the International Red Cross Committee in recognition of her work and leadership during the battle for Malaya and Singapore ("The Mercury" Hobart, 24.5.51). In her hometown of Dimboola, Vic, which must have been so close to her heart, she is memorialised at the Dimboola Memorial Secondary College (established uniquely in the state of Victoria as the only war memorial school after the First World War) by a sundial erected in 1949 in her memory and also the event each year when a student of that college gives a speech on her life. The College does not merely pay lip service to the concept of Remembrance, but it is clearly imbued in its culture. Specifically, insofar as Olive Paschke the sundial is featured prominently on its website with a most appropriate explanation – in fact some of the words used are the best epitaph this researcher has read on the life of Olive Paschke viz. "... As she grew to womanhood she began to display those qualities and gifts which distinguished her in later life. She possessed enthusiasm, energy, keenness, and efficiency. Beauty and charm of manner were hers. Moreover, she was very fond of sport, excelling at tennis and golf. She endeared herself to a wide circle of Wimmera people ...". Learning more about Olive Paschke during this research makes one contemplate all she would have achieved if her life had been allowed to run its full natural course.

- **PATON – (ref. Mrs Florence Stubbs and children)** verbal history of the Stubbs family is that Mrs Florence Stubbs left Singapore travelling with her mother. Mrs Stubbs and her two children lost their lives in the attack on and sinking of the 'Ss Vyner Brooke'. Her mother was **Mrs Grace Lydia Paton (nee Stubbs)**, born 1893 in Singapore one of twelve children of one of Singapore's oldest residents Samuel Stubbs and his wife Rose Jeanette (nee van de Meulen). Grace Stubbs married Samuel Collins Paton (sometimes designated himself as S.C. Paton or Samuel Collins-Paton), an Accountant and Company Secretary, at the age of 15 years of age on 22.7.08 and had four or five children including Florence.

- **PEARSON** – a handwritten list held in the UK National Archives file on the ship “HMS Giang Bee” (which was sunk not far from the attack on the “SS. Vyner Brooke” and many of its survivors also interned in Palembang) and which appears to have been compiled in Palembang internment camp in an effort to record those who died in the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke”, or at sea afterwards, or in the atrocity on Radji beach, includes “... **Mrs. Pearson (Siamese)**...”. Given that she was Siamese it is very unlikely that she would have been killed by the Japanese on Radji Beach. Records on people living in Malaya and Singapore prior to the war indicate only two men having the name Pearson with either strong fluency in the Siamese language or links to women of Siamese nationality. Firstly Mr C. W. ‘Bill’ Pearson who had fluency in Siamese and a housekeeper from Siam see [PEARSON C.W. [Cyril William] ‘Bill’ b.1914 Brighton. Educated at Park St Elementary School, Brighton. To Canada at the age 14 – worked as a farmhand. In 1934 joined the British Army: Sapper 1870646 Royal Engineers in Aden then Singapore. Malayan Representative & Service Engineer, Western Electrical Company, Ipoh 1938-1939 then Dredging Engineer, Anglo-Oriental Mining Ltd, Penawat, Perak. Sgt HQ Company 1FMSVF then CSM. Volunteered for Special Ops 12.41. Selected by Colonel Warren RM for promotion to 2nd Lt 1FMSVF attached to 3 Indian Corps. ‘Stay Behind’ Party no.2. Left KL 4.1.42. Captured [wounded] with Elkan 9 miles north of Temerloh, Pahang 17.3.42. 3 other members of the party, Darby, Stubington and Rand killed. POW Pudu Gaol KL to Singapore to Thailand with U Party 28.10.42. Thai speaker. Arrested by the Kempetai at Kanchanaburi early 1945 over out of camp contacts with Seri Thai [Free Thai Movement]. Tortured by the K’buri Kempetai. Sentenced to 6 months hard labour and sent to a Japanese military prison in Bangkok. Captain, Special Forces 1945 attached to HQ 114 Indian Infantry Brigade, 7th Indian Division as a Thai interpreter. Mentioned in Despatches. Not repatriated to the UK till 4.46 [by air]. Married Carmel Johnson 1946 Leeds Returned to Malaya 1947 with AOML: at Penawat then Kramat. To Leeds, Yorkshire 1950. Army service as Lt, General List 1.3.54. Served in Egypt’s Canal Zone 1954-1955 then Cyprus 1955-1959 [Nicosia & Famagusta]. To New Zealand 1960-1993 then settled in St Albans. To Yorkshire 2014. Died 21.10.2015 [101] Leeds. Times obituary 6.11.2015. Children: Mary Cerise, David & Christina (JMM)]; or secondly, Mr J. P Pearson who was also very fluent in Siamese prior to the war and in the POW camps [PEARSON J.P. [John Peter] ‘Percy’ b.1916 London. Assistant, Borneo Company Co. Ltd, Mercantile Bank Co. Ltd, Raffles Place, Singapore Pte 13846 FMSVF, Armoured Cars [Ipoh] POW Singapore to Thailand with D Battalion 12.10.42 – Thai speaker. Mentioned in Despatches re. Battle of Kampar. Returned post-war to Borneo Co. Malaya. 1st Chairman, Singapore Inchcape Bhd. Former county cricketer. Wife Nancy. John died 1.12.2005 Malta (JMM)] – the view of the researcher is that either of these men may have taken the Siamese woman into his care and arranged passage out of Singapore – something a lone Siamese woman would never have been able to arrange given the tightly controlled and heavily racially biased process for issuing the highly sought after and rationed ‘exit passes’ on ships from Singapore during that last few weeks before the Surrender. However this leaves the actual identity of ‘Mrs. Pearson’ a mystery with no official death record at either the CORD or CWGC.; despite being on the Palembang camp list of those who were believed to have died as a result of the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” the matter of whether Mrs Pearson lost her life or survived after the sinking is further put into question because of a statement by the ships radio officer, Lt. A.J. Mann (see the Angelpco.co. website and no doubt also in his personal papers at the IWM), where he recounts that after drifting at sea for some time he managed to catch hold of a raft from the ship on which were “... a stoker, a Siamese woman

and two children by the name of Betty and David ...". This reference to a Siamese woman is confirmed by young Molly Bull who clearly recalls 'Mrs Pearson' as the women on the raft with Molly and Robin - in Molly's memory 'Mrs Pearson' was married to a British soldier possibly an NCO and confirms 'Mrs Pearson' having survived the sinking of the ship and in the opinion of the researcher she is the same person who called herself 'Mrs Stanton' and sailed with the children under her care (they were picked up by four Australian Naval ratings in a lifeboat from the "HMS Siang Wo" who, after leaving Mann at a beach) and continued on their successful attempt to reach Batavia several hundred miles away. See entries for Mrs Stanton, <Millie Bull and Robin Bull.

- **PRATT** - PRATT J.C., to Singapore 1931, Prisons Dept, Singapore, seconded to Johore 1936 then to Seremban. Mortally wounded on the Vyner Brooke 15.2.42.(JMM); then there is a T.J. Pratt embarking on the 'Antenor' for 'home' in 1934 (SFPMA. 17.4.34) and a Mr & Mrs. J. Pratt attending a funeral of a Prison Officer who had been accidentally shot at Changi Prison in 1937 (SFPMA. 21.1.37); then there is "... **Mr. J. Pratt, Seremban, last seen on the ship with both legs shot off...**" from a handwritten list of dead and missing compiled in Palembang camp.
- **PRATT** - PRATT W.H. [William Hay] of W.H. Pratt Ltd, Seremban NS [1933 & 1935 Directories]. Daughter Elsie. Wife Catherine Hay Pratt [died 23.6.57 Brighton]. He was reported killed by the Japanese 14.2.42 Banka Island. The Colonial Office Deaths Register places him on the Vyner Brooke (JMM); this accords somewhat with the official record of his death, which makes no reference to his death being related to the sinking of the "SS. Vyner Brooke" but refers just to the Banka Straits "... **William Hay Pratt, engineer, Seremban, died on or about 14.2.42 in the Banka Straits , source C – in – C ALFSEA...**" (CORD Register M1, Folio 195, Serial 199); the earliest record on William Pratt is in the Malayan newspapers where there is a poignant death notice for Muriel Mary Pratt, aged six and a half years, older daughter of Mr. & Mrs . W. H. Pratt (SFPMA 28.11.21); the next reference is in 1932 when it was announced that William Hay Pratt of Seremban, an engineer, has been granted leave to file a specification of an invention for "... *an improved machine for the preparation of sheet rubber ...*" (ST. 5.3.32); after the sinking and in Palembang Internment Camp amongst the Netherlands Red Cross records of interviews there is "... *W.H. Pratt, Seremban?, badly wounded and left on board...Chambers/ E.M. Papineau...*"; **it would seem that after analysing the occupations of the men on board - and noting Pratt was an Engineer - it is also reasonable to keep in mind that William Pratt could be "...the grossly fat English civil engineer whose most recent job had been camouflaging Malayan airports ..."** next to whom fellow passenger Eric German went to sleep on the deck of the 'SS. Vyner Brooke' as the ship left Singapore (BYE p.141); *[note; the researcher uses these verbatim quotes with the comment that they are definitely not meant to insult the memory of this person if it is indeed William Pratt, but are included in the event that his physical description aligns with another historical record - as yet to be found - that will confirm the identity of the man killed on Radji Beach]*; the next reference to the 'fat civil engineer' is when Eric German is swimming to a submerged lifeboat and finds this same man screaming for help, he pushes him into the lifeboat and tells him to look after 'Mischa' Warman the four year old boy (BYE p. 143), the engineer does not prove helpful in any way as the survivors try and row the semi submerged lifeboat, but they do in fact reach Radji Beach; tragically it may very well have been that William Pratt was in the second group of men, which included First Officer Sedgeman and Eric German, who were taken around the promontory and executed because, after Eric German recovers at the edge of the sea and runs for his life into the jungle, he recalled that "

... he sprang, hurling his body sideways and whirling to scan the beach. It was empty but for the dead. In the instant that his eyes flicked over their still forms one body especially stamped itself on Eric's consciousness. The corpse of the fat civil engineer was sitting upright, its sightless eyes looking out over the Straits..." (BYE p.151); so sadly it seems that William Pratt survived the sinking possibly only to be brutally murdered at the hands of the Japanese soldiers on Radji Beach.; post war the authorities were still inconclusive as to the fate of William Hay Pratt and he is listed in a newspaper article "Tracing of the Missing Continues " in 1946 (ST. 29.5.46); later as his personal affairs were being sorted out along with thousands of other people killed during the War he is listed as being the owner of securities worth \$5000 in a loan maturing 1939/59 (ST. 19.4.47); in 1957 his wife Catherine Hay died in Brighton, England and the notice records her husband as W. Hay Pratt (possibly he was known as 'Hay Pratt') and also just one child ,William J. Pratt (ST. 26.5.57); there is another record of the death of Catherine Hay Pratt, as beloved mother of William J. Pratt and wife of the late William Hay Pratt of Seremban at Brighton ,England (ST. 28.6.57 and ST 22.6.57).

- **PRYCE/ PRICE – see Watters-Pryce.** Also, there is a 'Mrs Price' listed by Dr Goldberg – Curth as having been on the ship and who died at what she called 'Luebok – Lingoe" camp but given that there are a number of misspelt surnames in Dr Goldberg – Curth's statement in the NAA it would seem that this refers to Mrs Grace 'Anna' Watters-Pryce who died shortly after arriving in the awful deprivation of the Belalau (Loebok- Linggau) camp.
- **RAYMONT –Sister Wilhelmina 'Mina'/'Willie' / 'Ray' Rosalie Raymont, TFX 6012, 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station, AANS.**[Note: the spelling of her first name by the AWM in matters regarding her biography is incorrectly shown as 'Wilhemina' – but in two of the photographs on the AWM website and in a 1936 newspaper item on her result in the Nurses Exam and also in 1945 newspaper report of her mother being advised of her death her name is spelt ' Wilhelmina' with an extra letter l). 'Mina' (or it appears 'Willie' to her family) was born in Adelaide, South Australia on 7 December 1911 to William Ernest Raymont (employed in the Locomotive Branch of the south Australian Railways) and Laura Rosalie Raymont, who appear to have been living at Percy Street, Semaphore, Adelaide at the time. The very early years of her life were marked by tragedy with one of her four sisters, Peggy, dying in 1915 and then her father dying aged 41 years in 1916 (he was a Private in the 10th Battalion, Australian Expeditionary Force, and this may have been a result of wounds serving whilst overseas?). Mina also had one brother. Mina passed her Nurses Exams whilst at Adelaide hospital in 1936 ("News", Adelaide, 13.11.36), but was nursing in Hobart, Tasmania when she enlisted. Her photo in the AWM archives website shows a lovely looking woman with most sweet smile. After the sinking of the 'SS. Vyner Brooke' Mina was one of the nurses who reached the upturned lifeboat with a large group of nurses, Mrs Bull, and daughter etc. She later abandoned this submerged craft for a group of life rafts tied together. They were picked up by an RAAF launch and taken to Muntok pier where they were imprisoned by the Japanese. During the next three years of harsh internment and deprivation Mina maintained a positive attitude, organising 'sing-alongs' in Palembang camp and joining in the camp concerts and in an impromptu 'fashion show' in the Irenelaan camp she was selected as '1943' wearing a top and shorts. Late in 1944 she was cruelly 'punished' by the Japanese by being made to stand hatless in front of the guard post at Irenelaan for several hours during the middle of the tropical day until she collapsed – she thereafter apparently struggled with manual labour. (ORB, p. 260). Also recorded in ORB, p. 263 is that same year "... an increasingly frail Mina Raymont

sewed little handkerchiefs from scraps of material and traded these to Dutch civilians for food ...". On 8 February 1945 Betty Jeffrey recoded in her diary "... Our own Ray, Sister Raymont, dies today after 36 hours of being desperately ill. Ray had an attack of malaria, suddenly became unconscious and didn't recover ... Val Smith has lost her best friend. Our girls gave ray a military funeral, all wearing their uniforms ...". Tall, fair, but increasingly frail after her punishment at Irenelaan, Mina Raymont had been hospitalised several times in both Irenelaan and Muntok. Pages 266-268 in 'ORB' have a very moving description of her funeral. It was not until the release of the AANS nurses that "The Advertiser", Adelaide was able to report (18.10.45) "... Mrs. L.R. Raymont of Parr Street [actually 11 Parr Street] Largs Bay has been advised that her fourth daughter, Lt. Sister Wilhelmina 9 Willie) Raymont died of illness while a POW on February 8 ...". So, died a lovely young woman – a victim of Japanese cruelty, deprivation, and starvation. Mina Raymont is buried in Jakarta War cemetery, (grave 5.F.5), Indonesia.

- **REIGH (REITH?)** - interestingly probably for reason of an error the CWGC also have a 'D. Reigh, civilian, as dying on the "SS. Vyner Brooke" on 14.2.42' (CWGC); this probably refers to Lt. David Reith, RNR who was Chief Engineer on the ship – SEE BELOW
- **ROSSIE** - Ms Alice Rossie, QE Nursing Sister, in Malaya since 1935. Singapore General Hospital. Aged 38 in 1942. Initially interned at Muntok where she assisted in surgery for the amputation of an RAF officer's foot. Palembang, later at Labiolingual (Lombok Linggau?) camp. Sumatra internee. Repatriated to the UK on the 'Sobieski' 10.45. Returned to nursing in Malaya till 1950. Linked to Tan Tok Seng Hospital, Singapore. Died November 1969 in Aberdeen (SUM); Miss Rossie was born circa 1904 and was the daughter of William Robert Clouston Rossie and Mary Linklater, one of their four children in Stromness, Scotland she is noted as arriving in Singapore in 1935 on the 'Ranchi' (Malaya Tribune 9.11.35) and again in 1941 is recorded as a witness in a trial of an employee of Singapore General Hospital where she is described as a Sister at SGHG (SFPMA 27.6.41); ; Alice 'Rossi' reached 'Radji Beach' in a lifeboat and was stated by Sister Vivian Bullwinkel as having been one of the women in the first party led by Lt Sedgeman which left 'Radji Beach' on the day before the massacre to find help in a nearby kampong (Bullwinkel testimony 29.10.45 to the ABEIWC' in Melbourne) and was one of the group of women and children who walked off towards Muntok just before the massacre; after their capture at Muntok on Banka Island by the Japanese on 21 February 1942 Alice and another nurse by the name of Phyllis Briggs assisted a surgeon, also imprisoned, in the most primitive of conditions to amputate a man's foot (Phyllis Brigg's diary) she later was interned at Palembang and the final awful camp at Loebek Linggau; when she returned to Singapore after the war she worked at Singapore General Hospital and is mentioned as a guest at a garden party at Government house in 1947 (SS. 14.6.47); in 1948 she was appointed Matron of Tan Tok Seng Hospital (SFP. 25.5.48). She appears to have left Singapore in the early 1950s and is recorded as a 'Regional Matron' appearing to be working in Lagos and Ghana and travelling by ship between the UK and those countries during 1953-55. Her address during those years was 72 Dee Street, Aberdeen (www.robertwhitton.eu). She died in Aberdeen in 1965.
- **RUSSELL – Sister Lavinia Russell**, NFX 70571, 2/10th Australian General Hospital. Lavinia Russell was the daughter of David and Lavinia C. Russell (nee Adams). She was born on 21 December 1909 at Rockdale (St George's district), NSW, at one stage living at 79 The Avenue, Hurstville. She had a brother Robert born in 1904 but who died a year later at Broken Hill and Mary born in 1906 at Broken Hill. Lavinia attended school at St Mary's Star of the Sea convent, Hurstville, and St Vincent's

College at Potts point. She trained as a nurse at St Vincent's Hospital, Crown Street Women's Hospital, and the Tresillian Mothercraft training School at Vaucluse. In 1934 she passed her Nurses Registration Exams 'Midwifery Branch' whilst at the Crown Street Womens Hospital ("Sydney Morning Herald, 9.3.34). Lavinia enlisted with the AANS on 6.1.41 and her paybook photo shows a serious looking young woman with short, wavy dark hair. Just prior to the bombers attacking the 'Vyner Brooke' on 14 February 1942, Lavinia is reported to have taken cover with Mary Clarke, Gladys Hughes and Veronica Clancy and a number of civilians in the main bathroom behind the saloon of the ship (ORB, p.148) After the sinking of the 'Vyner Brooke' there were no further sightings of Lavinia – meaning that she had either been killed late in the bombing and strafing of the ship, in the chaotic abandon ship with falling liferaft and debris or had been swept away by the strong sea currents in the region. On the 20 August 1942 the AIF casualty lists recorded her as 'Missing abroad' and it was not until 1944 that her mother received a letter from the Army stating that her younger daughter 'previously reported missing' was now "Missing Believed Killed" on or about 11 February 1942 ("Daily Examiner", Grafton, NSW, 4.8.44). In 1998 the Hurstville Council responded to a request from the Fund Committee of the Australian Service nurses National memorial for support of a memorial to be built in Anzac Parade Canberra with a donation of \$2000 in regard to Lavinia Russell. The Memorial in Canberra was officially dedicated in October 1999. Hurstville council also made a donation of \$3,500 to the Mortdale RSL Sub-Branch, who had requested this amount to cover the cost of a mosaic inlay in memory of Australian Service Nurses in the Mortdale Memorial Park (28.4.88). Singapore Missing memorial at Kranji – recorded as presumed dying on 14.2.42 on Graves Registration sheet NAA A 8234,121.

- **SALMON – Sister Florence Aubin Salmon**, NFX 70991, 2/10th Australian General Hospital. Florence Salmon was the daughter of John Henry Salmon and Florence Alexandria Salmon (nee Aubin) and appears to have been born c. 1916. Sadly, despite the historic profile of the Radji Beach war crime, not much is known about her life and she appears to hardly be mentioned by her colleagues. Her pay book photo in the AWM shows a smiling woman with the description '... dark hair, hazel eyes ...'. The internet records at the AWM have virtually nothing on Florence Salmon. She passed her Nurses Registration Board exam, notably at the same time as Winnie Davis, whilst at the War Memorial Hospital, Waverly (SMH newspaper 26.6.38). Florence was murdered by Japanese troops with her nursing colleagues on Radji Beach. According to newspaper records a memorial service was held at the War Memorial Hospital, Waverly, on 28 October 1945 in memory of Florence and also Winnie Davis (SMH 29.10.45) – although shamefully for the journalist involved they state even at that early stage of her memory that " *...Sister Salmon was shot by the Japanese after years of imprisonment ...*" [sic] and at that Hospital there is a 'Window of Memory' dedicated to nurses – three stained glass panels honour " ... the memory of Winnie Davis and Florence Salmon graduates of the hospital... ". Here name is also recorded at '96' in the Commemorative Area of the AWM. Her family suffered unbelievable loss and pain as a result of the War – her parents also lost her older brother, Leonard Salmon, 2/12th Field Ambulance, in another Japanese war crime when he was killed in the sinking of the 'Australian Hospital Ship Centaur' which was sunk off the coast of Australia by a Japanese submarine on 14 May 1943 – of the 332 medical personnel on board that clearly marked hospital ship, 268 were killed in the sinking (centaurassociation.files.wordpress.com)
- **SEDDON – Corporal Robert Henry Seddon**, PLY X 17171, Royal Marines, was born on 28.8.18 at Goxhill, North Lincolnshire. He was not a passenger on the 'SS Vyner

Brooke' but had been a Royal Marine on the 'HMS Repulse' and then a survivor from the sinking of the tug 'Yin Ping' which had evacuated servicemen from Singapore and was sunk in the vicinity of Banka Island. He recorded that there were 60 -70 personnel on board this tug when it was sunk by shellfire from a Japanese cruiser at 1700hrs the previous day – and he believed he was the only survivor. Whilst swimming in a life jacket to shore on 16 February 1942 he witnessed the atrocities taking place on Radji Beach and recorded in his affidavit (Australian National Archives, Melbourne) that he saw men and women being shot down and bayoneted *"...a few did attempt to rush into the water but they were shot and killed before they were able to swim out of range ..."*. He continues that he was washed ashore soon after and posed for dead – the same Japanese patrol who carried out the killings on Radji Beach searched and kicked him a few times but must have believed he was dead and left him there. After spending the night in the jungle by the beach, the next morning he walked along the beach and says *"... I searched around and found the bodies of 15 New Zealand and Australian Nursing Sisters, 15 British service personnel and 5 merchant seamen (presumably members of the crew). I walked further along the beach and found 2 more lifeboats grounded and nearby the bodies of 7 R.N. personnel. The latter included two officers and the whole party appeared to have been shot and bayoneted ..."*. Robert Seddon spent the war as a POW in Palembang and survived to return to the UK. He was the husband of Mavis Seddon and they had three children. He died on 16 6 2003 and is buried at St Nicholas Churchyard, Haxey, Lincolnshire.

- **SCHUMANN - Lt. Marjorie 'Shuie' Schuman**, 2/10th Australian General Hospital, was born in 1911, the second daughter of George and Eleanor Mary Schuman (nee Gale) (a post war reference says their address was Manly, Queenscliff). She had one sister named Dorothy and a brother named George Stanley Schuman. She attended school in the small country town of Inverell in northern NSW between 1923-27 and the "Tingha Advocate and North-Western Journal" of 3.2.22 records that she passed her Qualifying Certificate Exam in the Tingha district whilst at Chellas (tiny school four miles east of Tingha) and "The Inverell Times" (6.10.25) reports her in a hockey team, aged 14 years, playing in a fundraising effort for the Inverell District Hospital. No records have been found on her nursing career. She joined up on 16.12.40 - a pay book photo taken on 15.1.41 shows an attractive young woman with a slim intelligent face – and soon left in January 1941 as a nursing Sister with the 10th Australian General Hospital for Malaya and Singapore, serving also in the 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station. At the time of the bombing of the 'Vyner Brooke' she appears to have lost her life in the actual bombing of the ship, or in the process of jumping into the sea because she was not seen by any other passengers in a lifeboat, on a liferaft or drifting at sea (ORB p.166). "The Telegraph" Brisbane newspaper of 17.9.45 recorded her name in a list of 'Vyner Brooke' nurses *"... believed drowned ..."*. In 1954 ("The Inverell Times" 26.3.54) reported the unveiling of an impressive memorial to Marjorie and two other ex-pupils of the little school at Chellas Public School in the presence of Marjorie's family (research is being carried out to ascertain what happened to this memorial since the closure of the Chellas School in 1957) .Marjorie is also memorialised in Honour Avenue, Bicton, WA., on the 8th Division's War memorial at Gunnedah in NSW and on the War memorial at manly , Sydney. Her name is also recorded at '96' in the Commemoration Area of the AWM. The book 'ORB' sums her up as *"... friend and confidante of Buddy Elmes and general character from northern NSW ..."* (ORB, p.166).
- **SHELLEY** – Mrs Alice Shelly; according to the Colonial Office Record of Deaths **Mrs Alice Jane Shelley** of Singapore was presumed killed on or about 14.2.42 in the

Banka Straits because of the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” Source C-In-C. ALFSEA (CORD. Reg. M1, Folio 276, Serial 1276); family knowledge is that Alice Sims was born in Bangkok and married George Edward Shelley although it is unclear whether she became widowed or divorced; early newspaper records indicate that George Edward Shelley travelled to Singapore on the ‘Hecuba’ from Bangkok in 1881 (ST. 21.7.81) and the next reference is in 1911 when a Mrs Alice Shelley of Selegie Road, Singapore reported to the police the loss of a chair and eight dollars (ST.7.3.11); then in 1934 there is a report of Mrs. Alice Shelley and her children attending the funeral of Miss Salome Fox (ST. 25.4.34) with the final record in 1939 when Mr & Mrs. George Shelley were at the funeral of Mrs Josephine Louise Olivero (ST. 15 8.39);there is a newspaper advertisement in 1952 stating “ *...Please say a prayer for Alice Jane Shelley and those drowned at sea 12.2.42*” (ST. 12.2.52).; Alice Shelley was on the “SS. Vyner Brooke” with her daughter Laura Angus (nee Shelley) who also lost her life and her granddaughter Lucille Angus who survived only to be interned in Muntok and then Palembang , before being returned to Singapore for internment. See also passenger ANGUS.

- **SHORT – Sister Eileen ‘Shorty’ Mary Short**, QFX 22911, 2/10th Australian General Hospital. Whilst not certain it looks very likely that Eileen Short was born circa 1905-08 in Dungog, NSW, the daughter of George Bernard Short (died 12.2.47 in Brisbane) and Prudence Amelia Short (nee Smith and died 27.7.64 at Atherton, Qld) – it looks like her parents moved from NSW to Queensland after her birth. According to the book ‘ORB’ (p. 194) Eileen Short was born and raised on a Queensland cattle station. There are many newspaper references to young women with the name ‘Eileen Short’ in Queensland during the 1909-1925 period , passing music exams and attending social events but there seem to have been at least two young women with this name so it is not until 1933 that we have a definitive reference to ‘Eileen M. Short’ passing the Midwifery exams for the Nurses Registration Board whilst she was working at the Womens Hospital (presumably the Crown Street Womens Hospital) in Sydney, NSW that we have knowledge of her life (“Sydney Morning herald”, 9.6.33). Her obituary notice when she died in 1976 (230battalion.org.au) does fill out the picture in that she trained at Kingaroy Hospital before moving on to the Womens Hospital. Eileen then was Sister in Charge at the Maitland NSW Hospital and sometime after that gained the role of Matron at Isisford Hospital - Isisford is a very small town (its population has never exceeded 300 people) situated in the center of Queensland, some 1220 km north-west of Brisbane. In 1941 Eileen wrote to the Isisford Hospital Committee “... *expressing appreciation [for their] ... action in granting leave of absence for the duration of the war ...*” (“The Longreach Leader”, 25.10.41). Events must have overtaken the speed of meeting minutes being issued and newspapers reporting such news because two months previously there was a photo of Eileen (together with Vi McElnea and Val Smith) waving out of a train carriage window at Brisbane on the occasion of leaving to join the AANS (“The Courier-Mail” Brisbane, 29.8.41) – according to her obituary notice in the 230 Battalion newsletter she had enlisted on 1.8.41! Eileen is shown as a smiling, very slim faced woman. After her service in Malaya and Singapore with the 2/10th AGH, Eileen boarded the ‘Vyner Brooke’ with her friends and comrades and suffered the sinking and time in the sea. She made it to Banka Island on the raft with Sister Ashton, Greer, Hempstead, and Clancy and was imprisoned in the Customs House building at Muntok. Apart from the fact that she was the “... *best woodcutter in the camp at Palembang ...*” (ORB, p. 250) – no doubt a skill learned from her upbringing on a cattle station in Queensland - little is known of her experiences during the three and a half years of incredibly harsh, deprived, and malnourished internment in

Muntok, Palembang and Belalau camps. There is a photo of Eileen in the AWM Archives that shows her lying in a hospital bed in Singapore after her release from the truly awful Belalau camp – she has become a tiny, emaciated figure. She was discharged from the AANS in early April 1944 and was apparently matron at Richmond Hospital in Queensland, and Augathella Hospital, but then appears to have returned to her role as matron of Isisford Hospital (230battalion.org.au and “Morning Bulletin”, Rockhampton, 2.5.47). The newsletter of the 230 Battalion, ‘Makan’, #233, March 1977 tells us that Eileen died at Dalby General Hospital [Dalby is about 200 km west of Brisbane] on Anzac Day 1976 at the age of 71 years – “... *Members of the Dalby RSL formed a guard of Honour outside St Mark’s Lutheran Church and the pall bearers were ex-prisoners of war ...*”. A fitting tribute to all that Eileen had endured and survived was to have the respect of her fellow POWs.

- **SIMMONS/SIMMONDS** – “... *Miss Simmons, Matron, St Andrews Hospital, Singapore* ... “ who appears to have died in the sinking or aftermath (list prepared in Palembang camp of those missing or known to have died in the sinking); the St Andrew’s Medical Mission Hospital , Singapore was established in 1913 via the St Andrews Medical Mission which had been inaugurated by the then Anglican Bishop of Singapore and his wife, who was a Doctor, managed the Hospital in its early years - with ongoing funding and overview from the Anglican ‘Society for the Propagation of the Gospel’; another missionary of that Society was Miss Gladys Olga Sprenger, also a passenger on the “SS. Vyner Brooke”, and who would have been well known to fellow Anglican Missionary , Miss D. Evelyn Simmonds.; it is confidently speculated (without any concrete link being proven) that **Miss D. Evelyn Simmonds** was in fact the ‘Miss Simmons’ listed above; the first record on Evelyn Simmonds is in the 1939 Annual Report of the Anglican Diocese of Singapore under the heading ‘Hospitals suffering from Changes’ wherein it states “ ... *Miss D.E. Simmonds who had been promised by December was unable to secure a passage earlier than January...*”(source Anglican Diocese of Singapore Archives); but the following year the Annual report stated “ ... *Miss M.E. Pring (St Mary’s school Kuala Lumpur returned from leave in January and brought with her Miss D. E. Simmonds for service at St Andrew’s Hospital whither a second badly needed sister (Miss Muriel Clark) is bound at any moment ...*” (Anglican Diocese Singapore Archives);in a post war review of the years 1941-49 the Anglican Church stated that “ ... *the same was true of Miss D.E. Simmonds . She was transferred from the Mission hospital to MAS, leaving late and she did not survive the Java Sea attack ...*” (source Anglican Diocese of Singapore Archives); again post War two Anglican priests writing about the Church in Singapore, stated that both Miss Olga Sprenger and Miss Evelyn Simmonds had been lost in the evacuation of Singapore and their fate was unknown (“The War and After: John Hayter and Jack Benitt; anglicanhistory.org/asia); **NOTE – 12. 5. 16 SFTPOTG said they will look into files but no response by June 2017.**
- **SIMONS – Sister Jessie Elizabeth Simons, TFX 6023, 2/13th Australian General Hospital.** Jessie was born in Launceston, Tasmania on 23 August 1911, one of nine children of Jabez Peter Simons and May Ann Muir Simon (nee Lees) then of 43 Canning Street (Jenny Gill’s paper on the memoirs of Jessie Simons, Launceston Historical Society papers & proceedings 2010). A very young Jessie won first prize in Needlework at the St. Patrick’s River Show 7 Sports event in 1924 (“Daily Telegraph”, Launceston, 2.4.24) and the following year passed her piano elementary in the London College of Music exams (“Sydney Morning Herald”, 15.7.25). She was educated in Launceston and did her general nursing training at the Launceston general hospital, gaining certificates in child welfare and midwifery. In 1933 she passed the Nurses Registration Board exams (General Nurses) (“The Mercury”,

Hobart, 27.5.33). In 1941 Jessie enlisted in the AANS and arrived in Malaya in September 1941. During the attack on the 'Vyner Brooke' Jessie was "... struck in the forearm by a bomb splinter, but it was not a serious wound and the splinter would remain in her arm for the rest of her life ..." (ORB, p.154). Jessie was responsible for ensuring that the main saloon of the ship was cleared, which she did so after the bombing stopped. The ship was listing badly and when the time came to abandon ship Jessie slid down a rope into the sea – losing most of the skin off the palms of her hands (ORB, p.162). She finally found a group of nurses gathered around a floating canvas stretcher and liferaft and found both Winnie May Davis and Pat Gunther already there. They were joined by three badly injured crew members (two British sailors and a Eurasian Radio Operator) from the ship (one of the British was called Stan – the other was badly burned and had been on the 'Prince of Wales', Jessie took off her dress and wrap it around the burned sailor because he was practically naked, whilst Win Davis gave him some morphine she had in her pocket. The badly burned sailor slipped off the raft that night and drowned. {Researchers note - research suggest that 'Stan' was probably Wireman Stanley Taylor, # D/MX 70683, RN, ex 'HMS Sultan according to Palembang records, who was transported to Yokohama and died there as a POW on 13.3.43}. They were also joined by Mrs Brown, her daughter Shelagh and another civilian woman. This group drifted through the night at sea, ending up amongst the Japanese invasion fleet attacking Banka Island and were towed to a beach on Banka Island where they were left under guard. The next morning, they were taken to Muntok and interned. So, Jessie began three and a half years of harsh, malnourished, and deprived internment in Muntok, Palembang and Belalau camps. She survived all these trials and was repatriated to Australia via Singapore. In April 1946 Captain Jessie Simons was discharged from the AANS and returned to work for the Launceston General Hospital. The following year she was awarded "Mentioned in Despatches" for "Services rendered whilst in Japanese hands" ("The Argus" Melbourne, 7.3.47). She later retired to look after her elderly parents and in 1954 wrote "While History passes" (later published as "In Japanese Hands"). In 1970 she married Hayman Hookway and moved live on a dairy farm run by her husband near the little village of Boat Harbour on Tasmania's Northwest coast. There was an obituary in northern Tasmania newspaper, "The Examiner", on 24 December 2004 for her, aged 93 years, but no date of death was given so it is assumed that Jessie Simons passed away that month of 2004.

- **SINGLETON – Sister Irene 'Rene' Ada Singleton**, VFX 48842, 2/1^{0th} Australian General Hospital. Irene Singleton was born in Caulfield in 1906. Her family moved to a prosperous dairy farm named 'Ravenswood' near Maffra and Riverslea in the Gippsland region of Victoria. Irene and her two brothers Kenneth and Douglas were raised solely by their father Robert Doulas Singleton since her mother appears to have passed away early in her life. In contrast to some of the AANS nurses on the 'Vyner Brooke' who had been orphans or were from more constrained family circumstance, Irene enjoyed a stimulating upbringing and an active social life. The earliest record of Irene is as a regular letter writer (aged 8 years) to "The Australasian" and its "The Young Folk" column where she asked for suggestions on books to read (17.6.16) and (aged 16 years) when she won a prize of five shillings in a short story competition. Throughout the 1920s Irene appears winning prizes in a flower show ("The Maffra Spectator" 25.10.20) and winning prizes for variously making a 'sponge sandwich cake' and another year for her essay writing at the Maffra Agricultural Show. By the end of that decade as a young woman in her early twenties Irene is reported at parties in Gippsland, the Maffra Tennis Ball and at her sister Valerie's wedding ("Gippsland Times" 16.10.39). In 1932 she began her training as a nurse at Melbourne Hospital This did not mean the end of her social life

and she appears in newspaper articles as a dancer (a pupil of Miss Rose Massey's dance school) at the Royal Australian Historical Society's Ball at 'David Jones' in Sydney and also attending the annual fundraising debutantes (but as a debutante) Ball for the Mater Children's Hospital in Brisbane In 1936 she passed her Nurses Board Exams whilst at Royal Melbourne Hospital ("The Age" Melbourne, 2.4.36) and later that year is reported holidaying with her brother Douglas in Brisbane (attending a Ball whilst there , dressed in '... flame satin and shirred shoulder') and continuing with him on a motor tour of Queensland and NSW. Irene must have moved from the Royal Melbourne Hospital to The Military Hospital because she is said to be working there when she enlisted in 1940. Her pay book photo shows a slim dark haired young woman of average height and a confident smile. A 1945 newspaper report says that Irene left on the 'Queen Mary' in February 1941 for Malaya. We do not know what happened to Irene after the sinking of the 'Vyner Brooke' but she of course must have reached Banka Island and been interned. During the next three years she must have maintained a strong spirit in the camps – we do know that, along with Dot Freeman, she set the so called 'bakeries' to use every scrap of rice around and again with Dot she volunteered to move out of the appallingly overcrowded house in Irenelaan camp to make way for others - living in a 'lean to' at the back of the house for the remainder of their time at that camp in Palembang. In the book 'ORB' it states that Irene *"... had a great sense of humour as well as a profound sense of the ridiculous, and could always be relied upon to raise the spirits of those around her ..."* (ORB, p.99). In 1942 there appeared in "The Gippsland Times" (23.7.42) the report that Irene's loved brother Douglas was Killed In Action in the Middle East and it noted that nothing had been heard from Irene since the Fall of Singapore. Her life came to an end in early 1945 whilst at Muntok internment camp *"... in January 1945 she had been admitted to the camp hospital with advanced beri beri, the dry type that literally consumes the flesh from within as the body seeks sustenance ... [she] went steadily downhill and, from mid-February, slipped in and out of consciousness not really knowing where she was. She died on 20 February ... Rene died not knowing that her two brothers, the lights of her life, had both predeceased her, killed a few days apart in fighting in North Africa almost two years previously ..."* (ORB, p.268) Irene Singleton is now buried in Jakarta War Cemetery in Indonesia. In late 1945 Mr. R. G. Singleton of 'Ravenswood', Maffra was officially informed that Irene had died of illness in Sumatra on 24 February [sic] whilst a POW. The newspaper report also mentions the deaths of Kenneth and Douglas and continues *"... In private life as well as her professional life, she was bright and cheerful and had a host of friends who looked forward to her return ..."* (Gippsland Times" 24.9.45) [we can only imagine what Mr Singleton must have felt with the loss of three of his four children during the war]. In 1947 the small town of Maffra made a huge effort to memorialise the life and death of Irene Singleton and a memorial tablet to her was unveiled by the Matron – In – Chief of the AANS at the memorial hall in Maffra (the memorial hall of the Maffra Mechanics Institute). A large crowd attended with many dignitaries and her father and there were sentries from each of the Armed forces of Australia. ("Gippsland Times" 28.7.47). This memorial tablet is now apparently in the 'Maffra library' and a road in Maffra has been named Singleton Road after her.

- **SMITH – Sister Valerie 'Val' Elizabeth Smith**, QFX 22819, 2/13th Australian General Hospital. From later newspaper records it is calculated that Val Smith was born circa 1912-15, probably in Herberton (a small town in the Atherton Tablelands inland from Cairns, Queensland) since she is said to have lived in that locality for many years. Later her family moved to a nearby farming area known as Upper Barron. No

public records have been found by research as to her family except that she had a sister, Lt. Lily Smith – who died in Brisbane in 1945 from sickness contracted whilst on active service (“Cairns Post” 13.11.45). Several newspaper references on Val Smith during her childhood in Herberton reveal an ability to grow vegetables with a prize for the best bunch of ‘eschalots’ (presumably shallots) at the Herberton Mining, Pastoral and Agricultural Assn Show in 1919 (“Cairns Post” 29.4.19) and then in 1922 appearing at the Herberton Children’s Ball dressed as ‘Penfolds Wine’ (“The Northern Herald” 14.6.22). In 1922 she passed her University Junior Exams whilst at Herberton (“Cairns Post”, 23.12.27) and the following year (presumably around sixteen years of age she appeared a few times in local newspapers as the organist at the Herberton Methodist Church, at fund raising bazaars for the Church, in fancy dress (as ‘Mystery’) at the Herberton Shire Hall and several other social events. Insofar as her nursing career it is said that she trained at Cairns District Hospital, but no references have been found on this period of her life. Val enlisted in the AANS and there is a 1941 photo (“The Courier”, Brisbane, 29.8.41) of her (together with Sisters McElnea and Eileen Short) leaving Brisbane after enlisting - little did they know at the time of that happy photograph they would all end up on the ‘Vyner Brooke’, struggle through the sea to Banka Island and would all survive internment camps and the War! After the sinking of the ship Val drifted up to Mavis Hannah’s liferaft which had some 16 survivors clinging to it (ORB, p. 173) and would later recall spending sixteen hours in the sea (“Cairns Post”, 13.11.45). Val endured three and a half years of some of the worst internment of any Japanese POWs and survived Muntok, Palembang, Muntok again and then the truly awful Belalau camp. She contracted malaria many times (“Cairns Post”, 13.11.45) and lost her best friend in camp, Sister Raymont who died in February 1945 (ORB, p. 257). Confirming her Methodist upbringing Val stepped forward at Sister Raymont’s burial and read from the Bible, passages from Revelations 5 and 7: *“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat ...”* (ORB, p. 267) – apt verses given the punishment meted out so cruelly (and totally mistakenly) to both these nurses by their Japanese captors by making them stand hatless in the searing tropical sun for hours in the middle of the day. Val survived internment - one of her ‘jobs’ being to repair the sandals (referred to as ‘trompers’) during those harsh years – and was repatriated via Singapore and then on the ‘Manunda’ home to Australia and then to Upper Barron, which was probably on a farm. She was discharged in April 1946 and then in April 1947 due recognition was given to her in the form of being ‘Mentioned in despatches’ for “Services rendered whilst a POW in Japanese hands...” (AWM and the “Examiner”, Launceston, 1.4.47). This was the start of a most dedicated and intellectually upward phase of Val’s nursing career. Later in 1947 “Miss Valerie Smith of Upper Barron, Atherton” was awarded the Australian Red Cross Society (Queensland division) scholarship to do post graduate work and study in England - sponsored by the Florence Nightingale Foundation (“Queensland times”, 19.6.47) and the newspaper report goes on to say that for some time she had been on the staff of the School Health Services within the Department of Homes and Health Services at Ipswich. She returned from England in 1949 and began teaching anatomy and physiology at the Brisbane General Hospital (“Townsville Daily Bulletin”, 17.3.49). By 1952 when the same newspaper described her as aged 37 years of Bramston Terrace, Herston another paper (“Sunday Mail”, Brisbane, 10.8.52) recorded another achievement when Val gained the “... *Distinction of being one of Australia’s two representatives chosen by the World Health organisation to attend a nursing seminar in Taiwan...*” It also mentioned that by then she was Sister Tutor in Queensland’s Maternal and Child Welfare Service. In

1954 she was Principal Tutor, Brisbane General Hospital (“The Advertiser” Adelaide, 20.5.54). Sadly, research to follow the remainder of Val Smith’s life has been unsuccessful in producing further information. Nevertheless, from what we know of her life and achievements, Val Smith was a fine example of a professional nurse for whom adversity only seemed to inspire her to achieve greater things.

- **SPRENGER/SPRINGER - Miss Gladys Olga Sprenger**, SPG Missionary/Teacher, Pudu English School Kuala Lumpur. Lost at sea following the sinking of the Vyner Brooke 15.2.42 (JMM); Miss Sprenger is also commemorated on the CWGC website as a civilian who died in the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” on 14.2.42(CWGC); it appears that Olga Sprenger was the daughter of Oliver Sprenger and Charlotte Ivson Sprenger of Surrey, England; she is first recorded as arriving in Singapore on the P.&O. “Carthage” (ST. 17.3.34) and in 1935 appears in several newspaper reports on events in Kuala Lumpur – firstly as the headmistress of St Marys Girls School , Kuala Lumpur at a prize giving (ST. 24.6.35) and then at a Selangor Badminton Association party held in honour of Miss J. Foss (Miss Foss was later interned in Changi during the War), and then at ceremony for the unveiling of the Savage-Bailey Memorial in KL (ST. 7.8.35);later that year she moves to Bangkok, in November 1935 in a circular letter to the ‘Friends of the Society For the Propagation of the Gospel Mission in Bangkok’ it stated “ ... to take Miss Jackson’s place the Bishop has sent Miss O. Sprenger from Kuala Lumpur and she is already settling down and making good progress with the language ...” (source file Anglican Diocese Singapore Archives); in June 1938 the newsletter stated “ ... In the middle of May , the schools reopened under difficult conditions ... and still single handed while Miss Sprenger is on furlough ...” but a few months later she travelled back to Singapore from Southampton on the ‘Dempo’ (ST. 14.10.38) and again in the circular letter to ‘Friends of the SFTPG Bangkok Mission” dated November 1938 it states “ ... Miss Sprenger’s return on November 19th will lessen the strain on Miss Knight...” (source Anglican Diocese Singapore Archives); it seems that Olga Sprenger was working either at St Mary’s SPG School (a day and boarding school in rented premises in Rajadamari Road) but may have also spent time at a boys school known as St Peters in an empty tobacco factory which had three women teachers but which closed in November 1939; the 1940 annual report of the Anglican Diocese in Singapore noted that “ ... in February Miss G.O. Sprenger was transferred from St. Mary’s School , Bangkok to become matron at the boarding House at Pudu English School, Kuala Lumpur ...” she was still a Woman Missionary but also working in schools(source Anglican Diocese Singapore archives); presumably after the invasion by Japanese troops in December 1941 she relocated to Singapore; a post war review of Anglican operations in Asia stated for the period 1941-49 that a lay Worker “ ... Miss O. Sprenger had been in Bangkok. Her future, in December 1941 was undetermined. She left very late and lost her life...”(source Anglican Diocese Archives , Singapore); just two weeks before Singapore fell appears there appeared a most poignant newspaper advertisement in Singapore, asking for a “ ... European lady willing to look after 11 year old English girl on the voyage to England. Miss O. Sprenger, CEMZ School, Sophia Road” (ST. 26.1.42) which, we must assume, is where she had transferred to as a missionary during the years prior to the war or had sought accommodation or employment after the evacuation of Kuala Lumpur. CEMZ School was initially named the Chinese Girls School in Singapore, a school specifically established for those abandoned or enslaved Chinese girls who were being sold as servants, it later became known as the Church Of England Zenanah Missionary school and is now St Margaret’s Secondary School; she is mentioned in a post war publication by the Anglican Church “The War and After: Singapore” by John Hayter and Jack Benitt, priests of the

diocese, “ ... Several of the women missionaries left only a few days before the surrender, amongst them Evelyn Simmonds and Olga Sprenger, of whom nothing has been heard since they left Singapore ...” (anglicanhistory.org/asia); the list compiled by the internees in Palembang camp of those they believed had died in the sinking of the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ states “ ... Miss Olga Sprenger, Pudu English School , KL, believed drowned ...”; this is backed up by the official Colonial Office Death Record “ ... Miss Gladys Olga Sprenger, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Malaya, died on or about 14.2.42 in the vicinity of the Banka Straits following the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” – no source for this information is recorded. (CORD, Register M1, folio 280, Serial 1305). NOTE – 12.5.16 SFTPOTG said archivist will look into files.

- **STANGER** – Mrs N. Stanger appears as a survivor from the “SS. Vyner Brooke’ on the list of Palembang internees prepared by Mrs. E. Cross, and also Myrtle Ward in her post war letter; according to four different passenger lists for her travels back to England she was born somewhere between 1900 -1902; another source records Mrs **Norah Albertha Stanger**, housewife aged 42 in 1942. Working at Fort Canning February 1942. Evacuated 12.2.42 and became a Sumatra internee. She returned to Malaya in 1948. Her husband was William Richard James Stanger, b.1899 Hythe, Kent. WW1 Service from 1915. Armourer Staff Sgt Malay Regiment from 1936, to Lt FMSVF attached to 1st Battalion, Malay Regiment POW Singapore to Thailand 5.11.42. Ended the war at Nakorn Nyok. Wife Norah Albertha interned in Sumatra. Returned to Malaya 1947 (JMM); there is a newspaper record of Sgt. And Mrs Stanger plus two children departing Singapore for Europe in 1934 on the ‘SS. Ranpura’ (SFPMA 16.2.34); shipping records give the names of the children as Bessie (b. 19240 and William (B. 1928) and list Mrs. Stanger as ‘Nora’ (ancestry.com); a further trip back to England was made from Yokohama in 1939 with the children on the ‘Rawalpindi - possibly to deliver the children to boarding school? ; she was repatriated on the ‘Ranchi’ from madras in 1945 arriving Southampton on 24.11.45; she took another trip in 1950 on the ‘Corfu’ and she must still had significant energy at age early 50s because, in 1954, Mrs Stanger opened a boarding and day school for children of 4 – 10 years of age at Port Dickson (ST. 3.12.54); nothing further on her life is known.
- **STANLEY** – a handwritten list which appears to have been compiled in Palembang internment Camp shows “... William Stanley, Victoria House, Victoria Street, London, Seen in Water ... “. This may in fact refer to William Stanley Harding who died in the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke”.
- **STANTON** – this is the name used by a woman, described by Ray Parkin in his book “Out Of The Smoke’ as a young ‘Malay’ woman, handsome, and with a soldier husband in Malaya, who was on a raft after the sinking and who, with the two Bull children sailed with three British and Australian naval seamen through the Banka Straits, and then for three weeks sailed along the coast of Sumatra to an island in the northern part of the Sunda Straits. She managed to get the children to the mainland in Java and stayed there with them in a village for several months before moving again to Batavia where she continued the pretext that the children were her own. An internee in Tidjeng Womens internment camp, Miss Leila Bridgman of the Singapore YWCA (see Millie Bull entry) stated that Mrs Stanton was an ex-taxi dancer from Singapore. It is the view of the researcher that ‘Mrs Stanton ‘was probably the same person as ‘Mrs Pearson’ as listed in this research document as ‘Siamese’ but who the other survivors of the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ recorded as dead in the page compiled in Palembang camp and shown at the end of the Introduction above.

- **STEVENS – Mrs Stevens**, note – she is said to be sister-in-law of Ernest Watson, the Judicial Commissioner and lawyer also on the ship; **Mrs Edith Christie Stevens**, widow of ‘Dr’ William Robert Stevens (he was born c. 1870 and in fact a lawbook publisher in London according to the 1911 census and he died prior to the date of the 1928 engagement notice for their son, George Christie Stevens to Sybil Petheridge – in fact William Robert Stevens took his own life in London in 1921 and George never did marry Sybil Petheridge) of 27 Tambun Rd. Ipoh. Edith was captured at Muntok and became a Sumatra internee. She died in captivity 1945 Muntok (JMM): Edith was born 1875 in West Hempstead, London, had married William Robert Stevens in about 1899 and had two sons, Raymond William Stevens [a musician born c. 1900-1904] and George Christie Stevens [born 1905 who first went to Penang from Britain in 1927] ; she must have travelled to Malaya during the late 1920s/early 1930s and appears in local newspapers at a number of dog shows in Ipoh and Singapore during the 1930s; also a dog breeder of ‘Tambun’ kennels , 27 Tambun Road, Ipoh (ST. 8.12.35); she also must have been close to or a friend of ship’s passenger Mrs. Myrtle Ward since they showed dogs in the cocker Spaniel class in Ipoh and Myrtle seemed to breed the same dogs; “ ... *Mrs Stevens died in May this year [1945] after being in hospital (so called) for almost a year ...* ” (letter from Mrs Myrtle Ward to Mrs Marjorie Gooding, widow of Stanley Gooding, dated late 1945); she died at Loebok Linggau camp on 22.6.45 and after the war was reinterred (with the name Edith Christie Stevens – Corbett) in the Dutch cemetery ,Kalibanteng at Semarang (Block/Row/grave number VIII-145); there was also a Mr Stevens on board but this does not appear to have been her husband ; also Mrs Susie Stevens(below)
- **STEVENS – Mr Stevens**. In a letter dated 1945 from a survivor, Mrs Myrtle Ward, to the widow of Stanley Gooding who drowned after the sinking it is stated “...*Mr Stevens and Ernest Watson were on the ship, and Mrs Eva Madden of Taiping ... Ernest was wounded in the bombing...They got ashore in a lifeboat ...*”. If this is correct – and Mrs Ward did not just make a typographical mistake between the words ‘Mr’ and ‘Mrs’ in her letter – then it poses a bit of a mystery. There is no record of a Mr Stevens being interned in the records of Palembang Camp, so it must be assumed that (if such a man was on the ship) this ‘Mr Stevens’ died in the massacre on Radji Beach **since it is implied, he was in the lifeboat** with Ernest Watson (more research may clarify this assumption). By a process of elimination of other men with this surname known to have lived in Malaya and Singapore prior to the War, this is NOT the husband of Mrs Edith Christie Stevens (above) because her husband had died in 1921; nor is it her son George Christie Stevens of Kinta mines who [according to the ‘secret ‘Jeyes’ paper record compiled by internees in Changi Prison during 1942 which stated “... GEO.C STEVENS ,KINTA MINES- OFF – MVAF- LEFT HOSP SHIP W WIFE...”- he was wounded as, according to the Malayan Volunteer database, Pilot Officer G.C. Stevens, ‘C’ Flight, MVAF, KL at Endau on 14.1.42 in January 1942 and evacuated to England with his ‘wife’, who was not Sybil Petheridge. George Christie Stevens was killed by Communist terrorists in Perak in 1952] or Mr K.B.H Stevens of Dunlop’s who died as a POW in Siam. This leaves just two other men noted in the secret ‘Jeyes’ toilet paper record compiled in Changi – a ‘STEVENS G NEI?’ or “STEVENS J. AOML AVOY?”. Even possibly it was the other son of Mrs Edith Stevens, by the name of Raymond William Stevens – but there is no record of him even being in Malaya or Singapore. There is no record of a man travelling with pregnant Mrs Susie Stevens (below) but Susie’s son post war is referenced as being the son of George Christie Stevens.

- **STEVENS – Mrs Susie Stevens** (listed as ‘Siamese’) and her baby (Christie) were noted on the List of Women internees in Palembang Camp prepared by Mrs E. Cross; Mrs Susie Stevens & son Christie survived the ‘Vyner Brooke’ sinking and became Palembang, Sumatra internees. Released – she a Siamese national (JMM); she was a daughter –in-law of Mrs Edith Stevens above (stated in the list provided by fellow passenger and survivor Mrs. Myrtle Ward after the war); the family connection is unclear since Mrs Edith Stevens had a son (second son) named George Christie Stevens who was married in 1928 – but he had been engaged to a Sybil Petheridge and eventually married someone else with whom the ‘Jeyes’ record says he evacuated to Britain with before the fall of Singapore. Additional information is on the ancestry.com website to the effect that George Christie Stevens was married to one **Sanat Sukkaspar** (1909 -????). The Colony of Singapore ‘Blue Book’ of 1931 records Sanat Sukkaspar employed as a Nurse Probationer.
- **STEVENS – Christie Stevens**, a baby born in 1942 in Palembang Internment Camp. (‘Brisbane Telegraph’ 1.5.1953); Master Christie Stevens who was released from Palembang camp with his mother Mrs Susie Stevens. In 1953 Christie Stevens was sent alone by plane to school in Western Australia – he is mentioned in school records in 1958 and 1959 as winning prizes in gymnastics.
- **STEWART – Sister Esther Sarah Jean ‘Stewie’ Stewart**, NFX 70936, 2/10th Australian General Hospital. Jean was born on 15 October 1904 to Charles Lloyd Stewart and Sarah May Jean Stewart and some sources says came from Coolangatta. One summary of her life is that “...*She was born in Brisbane but moved to Darlinghurst once she got older. She was a devout Presbyterian and trained as a nurse before enlisting in World War 2. Unfortunately, she did not have any close relatives as her next of kin was a solicitor whom she had no relation with named Andrew Muir My assumption is that Jean had nothing holding her back from going on an adventure like travelling to Asia to work. She had no partner, no immediate family, she seemed like a very independent woman who was determined to make a change in her life and use her skills as a trained nurse to help injured soldiers...*” (“Soldiers Story/Eulogy prepared by Alex White). Jean enlisted at Victoria Barracks, Sydney on 16 February 1942 and her pay book photo shows a cheery, smiling, open faced woman with light brown hair and hazel eyes (AWM). There is also a photo on ancestry.com of Jean as a younger woman, perhaps about 20 years of age, showing a sweet-faced young woman. Jean Stewart was one of that group of fine, compassionate, and noble women murdered by Japanese soldiers on Radji Beach on 16 February 1942 after the sinking of the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’. Soon after the surviving nurses were repatriated to Australia there appeared in the “Sydney Morning Herald” on 6.10.45 the insertion in their “Roll of Honour” column “... **STEWART – A tribute of love to NX 70936 Sister Jean Stewart, dear friend of Mrs. Cathro (Urana), Mrs Cheek, and Mrs Edwards (Newcastle)...**” which suggests that if Jean was short on family, she certainly had good friends. Also, interestingly, in contrast to the above summary of her life indicating that Jean was some sort of orphan, there appear in several newspapers after the War evidence of clear actions by Jean’s mother to ensure her daughter was remembered and which give us a clear picture of the progression of Jean’s life. Firstly (‘The Courier - Mail’ Brisbane, 29.1.46) the article “... *Mother perpetuates memory of Heroic Army nurse Shot by Japs’ ... Coolangatta and Tweed heads are perpetuating the memory of Matron Esther Stewart, of Brisbane whose last words when she and 20 other Army Nursing sisters were being slaughtered by Japanese machine guns on the beach at Banka Island, off Sumatra, four years ago were: “Girls take it, don’t squeal!” ... Her mother, Mrs Jean Stewart of Dixon Street, Coolangatta, has presented a memorial electric clock to the local sub-branch of the Returned*

Soldier's league. At the unveiling service the President (Mr. A. Thomas) said that the only survivor of the massacre (Sister Vivien Bullwinkel) of adelaide0 had told Mrs Stewart of her daughter's last words as she and other nurses were being shot downThe late Matron Stewart was born at New farm , Brisbane and was educated at the New Farm and Roma Schools. She entered the nursing profession at Toowoomba, and subsequently trained at the Diamantina Hospital Brisbane and the Royal Prince Alfred and crown Street Women's Hospital, Sydney. She enlisted at Bathurst when 40 and was at Singapore prior to its fall ...". The next record is soon after in the 'Tweed Daily' (20.2.46) in their "Roll Of Honour" classified listings "STEWART – In loving memory of NX 70956[sic on service number] Sister Esther Sarah Jean Stewart, only child of Mrs Jean Stewart (nee Mann), who was murdered by the Japanese at Banka Island, February 1942. " Lest We Forget". *If I could have my dearest wish, And all earth's treasures too; And pick from Heaven what I may, Dear Jean, I would ask for you.... Many a lonely heartache, many a silent tear, But always a beautiful memory, Of a daughter I loved so dear. I keep forever in my heart – Mother".* Finally, there is a report in the "Tweed Daily" (Murwillumbah, NSW 21.48) of the Coolangatta War memorial being built in front of the Council Chambers – the memorial to stand 11 feet high in the form of a cross and containing two drinking fountains and to be lit by electricity. Jean 'Stewie' Stewart (or as it appears 'Esther' to her mother) is also memorialised on the memorial to AANS nurses who gave their lives in the Second World War at Kapunda memorial Gardens, Dutton Park, South Australia; the 'Memorial Garden for Nurses' at Augusta, WA. and the Kranji War Memorial in Singapore (panel reference – Column 142)

- **STRANGE** - Ms Daphne Geraldine Strange, to Malaya 1940. Colonial Service Nursing Sister, General Hospital JB. Lost at sea 15.2.42 following sinking of the Vyner Brooke (JMM); also, the official records that **Miss Daphne Geraldine Strange**, Malayan Nursing Service died on or about 14.2. 42 near the Banka Straits as a result of the sinking of the "SS. Vyner Brooke" (CORD Register M1, Serial 207, 1038 plus 13 on file of Miss M.B.N. Mustill) and the subsequent other official record of Daphne Geraldine Strange, civilian died on 14.2.42 as a result of the sinking of the "SS. Vyner Brooke" (CWGC); there is also a report of Daphne Geraldine Strange of the Malayan Nursing Service (Johore) who was seen in the sea after the sinking of the "Vyner Brooke" (ST. 29.5.46 "Tracing of the Missing Continues") ; she is also one of six nurses memorialised in the South Window of the church of St. Bartholomew the Lesser, London at St Bartholomew's Hospital these being nurses of St. Barts who lost their lives in World War Two; on 28.8.46 in the 'Straits Times' there is a report of Probate issued for Daphne Strange of Playfoot Marfield near Tonbridge, spinster, to Frederick Griffith St Clair Strange, physician and surgeon to the amount of STG 608.
- **STUBBS** – in the UK Archives are some dogeared pages of pencil notes taken it appears during interviews by the Netherlands Red Cross of survivors from ships which had been sunk who had become internees in Palembang internment camp – one page (# 1484 in the Researchers files) records "... Mrs Stubbs & 2 children, reported died on raft after giving birth to infant, witness E.C. Papineau and confirmed Zimmermann...", Mr Papineau survived the war and later lived in Western Australia .Mr Zimmermann died in internment in 1944. There is also a typewritten record stating "... Mrs Stubs [sic] and two children. Husband employed by John Little Singapore ..." (image 1455 in researcher files). This was **Mrs Florence 'Florie' Stubbs (nee Paton)**. Born on 12.8.09 the daughter of Samuel Collins Paton and Grace Lydia Paton (nee Stubbs). She married Cyril Eric Stubbs (whose father Thomas Stubbs was Grace Paton's brother). Stubbs family history is that she evacuated Singapore in the company of her mother, Mrs Grace Lydia Stubbs and Florie's two small children.

- **STUBBS – Miss Maureen Stubbs**, daughter of Mrs Stubbs (above).
- **STUBBS – Master Malcolm Stubbs**, son of Mrs Stubbs (above).
- **Stubbs – unnamed infant**, delivered on raft after sinking, of Mrs Stubbs (above).
- **SYER – Sister Ada” Mickey” Corbett Syer**, WFX 11105, 2/10th Australian General Hospital [Note: the AWM incorrectly spells her middle name as ‘Corbitt’]. Ada Syer was born in Prahan, Victoria on 15 November 1910 to Francis Lionel Syer and Annie Corbett Syer (nee Smith). It looks like the family moved soon after her birth to the Mornington peninsula south of Melbourne (at the time of his death in 1948, because of a motor accident, Mr F.L. Smith’s address was given as Marina Avenue, Mornington). Little is known of her early life except from electoral records which show her living in Melbourne aged 20 years in 1931 and then in Batman (north Melbourne) as a young woman during 1934-37. Soon after that she moved to Western Australia because a post war newspaper article (“The Daily News” , Perth, 17.9.450 tells us that she was born in Victoria but enlisted in Western Australia , specifically “ ... *Ada Syer who enlisted from Devonleigh Hospital* [it was a very small private hospital in a house at 9 Anstey Street, Cottesloe, at the time which included a nurses quarters, midwifery section and an operating theatre] – *where she had been nursing for three years and had been living with her uncle and aunt, Mr and Mrs W.G. Sutton, 18 Central Avenue, Claremont....Sister Syer’s parents live in Mornington, Victoria...*”.Another newspaper, the “Standard” Frankton, Vic. (1.11.45), tells us that she enlisted in July 1941. Ada’s story then continues from interviews contained in oral recordings at the AWM (there are three separate interviews, but the information here is sourced from AWM ID # SO 4057). Ada tells us that on the day of the evacuation from Singapore she went to Keppel harbour [part of the Singapore docks] and with the other nurses she boarded a launch which took them out to the ‘Vyner Brooke’. Amongst her recollections is the important historical insight that “... *a lot of infants needed feeding ...*” which is another confirmation that there was a sizeable group of small children on board – indicating that many of these babies and small children died in the sinking and at sea. She talks of the attack on the ship “...*after lunch on Saturday – 2.00pm I think ...*” and the ship zigzagging to evade the bombs before the lounge receiving a direct hit, one bomb going straight down the funnel and another hitting the bridge of the ship. She also says that the ship went down in 15 minutes and that the bombers came back, and machine gunned the ship and survivors. She talks of there only being one lifeboat (?) and also the fact that before it sank, she and other nurses went through every compartment and cupboard in the ship looking for people. Once in the sea she describes the “... *fairly swift current ...*” and that “... *the sea became choppy and rough ...*”. In the last known sighting of fellow passenger Sister Louvinia Bates, Ada recalls that on the night of the sinking, whilst she was swimming and holding onto debris, she heard Louvinia Bates call out and when Ada replied, Louvinia called back that her name was ‘Bates’ – but she was never seen again. Continuing her story of her time drifting at sea that night Ada recalls “... *a woman, a Lancashire woman, had worked in munitions ... Margaret Guilfoyle from Lancashire ...*” drifted up to her and then a man who said most incongruously “... *how do you do My name is Zimmerman, and I am just passing through ...*”. [Herbert Zimmerman reached Banka Island but died in internment – ‘Margaret Guilfoyle from Lancashire’ has never been identified]. Ada then came upon eight nurses holding onto a log of wood and they all tried to reach the lights [in fact the bonfire] they saw on the beach – where “... *the girls ...*” in the lifeboat had landed – but currents pushed them away and took them around the headland with a lighthouse into a much calmer harbour where a “*Jap*” landing craft went past – the Japanese invasion fleet was landing on Banka Island –

they finally made it to Banka Island and then went into the jungle. Ada was captured by the Japanese with the other nurses and interned in Muntok cinema – she recalls it was whilst there that a Japanese soldier told Sister Hannah that “... *we have just buried 25 women wearing that uniform ...*” in a reference to the massacre on Radji Beach. (End of Tape 2 at the IWM). Ada survived internment in Muntok, Palembang, Muntok again and then finally the horrendous conditions of Belau camp. Returning to Australia (via Singapore) after the war she was interviewed by many newspapers (see Trove newspaper archives) and then in 1947 she was a bridesmaid to the wedding of her brother Francis V. Syer to fellow nursing survivor Flo Trotter (“The Courier – Mail”, Brisbane, 15.11.47). Soon after this happy event her father was killed in a motor accident in 1948 and then in the following year, when Ada is recorded on electoral rolls as living in Flinders, Victoria, her beloved mother also died. At this point in her life Ada seems to have wanted to get out of the mainstream of society, because she headed out to Broken Hill Hospital – in the isolated mining city in the far west of outback NSW - for work and whilst there in 1951 she passed her midwifery exams (“Barrier Miner” , Broken Hill, 7.8.51); then by 1954 she was “... *working as a nurse , 1000 miles west of Brisbane ... in conjunction with the Flying Doctor Service between Jundah and Windorah ...*” (“The Courier – Mail”, Brisbane 16.7.54) – this was contained in an article about Ada attending a debutante’s party in London and then soon after Ada was reported being presented to the Queen as an Australian representative, presumably at a garden party. By 1958 she was living in Ryan a town near Mt Isa in the very isolated part of north-western Queensland. This was followed by some twenty years of moving location every few years from Ryan to the Riverina area of Southwestern NSW; to Moreton, Queensland; back to the Riverina; then Bradfield, NSW, and Geelong Vic. It is not known whether she continued her nursing career at this - she would have reached retirement age by the early 1970s. The book ‘ORB’ tells us that Ada passed away in 1991.

- **TAIT – Sister Mona Tait**, MNX 76281, 2/13th Australian General Hospital. Mona was the daughter of Robert Tait of Newcastle, NSW (AWM) and was born in about 1915. The photo of her in her Pay book records is of a happy, smiling young woman. Sadly, little is known of the life of Mona Tait but ‘ORB’ (p.310) records that she trained at Royal Canberra Hospital and then was a theatre Sister at the Canberra community Hospital, Acton. She was murdered by Japanese troops with the other Australian Army nurses at Radji Beach on 16.2.42. In 1945 there is the newspaper record (“The Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder” 11.10.45) that because Sister Tait had received her training at the Cessnock Hospital the Board approved “... *a memorial bed and plaque to be installed in the new maternity ward as a mark of remembrance ...*”. Mona is also remembered through the RSL Tait/ Hayman Fund – income from the funds’ investments is donated to the University of Canberra to purchase books for its nurses Library. There is also the Mona Tait and Mary Hayman Plaque in Royal Canberra Hospital.
- **TEBBUTT – Major William Alston Tebbutt**, NX 70344, 8th Division HQ, AIF, was born in 1898. He was a Clerk at the start of the First World War and on 2.9.14 enlisted as a Private in the 4th Battalion, AIF, in which he served in the Trench Mortar Battery at Gallipoli, he was hospitalised to Malta for about nine months, promoted to Corporal and then sent to France for Intelligence duties. In 1917 he was promoted to Lieutenant in the School of Instructors and in October 1917 his record shows him ‘Missing Believed Wounded’. By the time of World War Two he was a solicitor in Sydney and was called up in September 1940 and appointed Captain, in May 1941 he was appointed as Intelligence Officer with the AIF in Malaya and in November

1941 just prior to the Japanese invasion promoted to Major. He was married to Gwendoline Mary Tebbutt and lived at 14 Gladstone Road, Lindfield. During the bombing attack on the 'SS Vyner Brooke' he assisted in the lowering of the lifeboats – during which he noted that only two lifeboats remained undamaged – and helped passengers climb down the rope ladders to the lifeboats. He later jumped into the sea and “... *swam about generally in the afternoon and nearing darkness , was near to this life raft, to which were clinging large numbers of nurses and some civilians ... there was no room to cling a hand for support ...*” – so he decided to make for shore which he reached some time before nightfall. He records he was captured by the Japanese after spending two weeks in the jungle on Banka Island and taken to the Tinwinning Labour Assembly Station. He was a POW until November 1945 when he returned to Australia on the 'Duntroon'. He compiled a very detailed five page report “Evacuation from Singapore and massacre of Australian Nursing Sisters and Others” (this is now held in the Australian National Archives in Melbourne) whilst in Changi POW camp – its detailed and logical composition makes it a most valuable record (apparently he had interviewed others in Sumatran POW camps but had to destroy these reports for fear of being found by Japanese guards) and a reflection of his education and abilities honed from years as an intelligence Officer (NAA. B3856, 144/1/346).

- **TAY /'THAY'** – Mrs Tay, died 21.11.44, is recorded in the List of British women internees at Palembang camp by internee Mrs. E. Cross; she is also listed by Dr Goldberg in her post war report as “... *Mrs Thay, British married to Chinese ...*” in her list of those survivors from the “SS. Vyner Brooke” who died at 'Mundok' (sic) (Goldberg NAA 472); in 1968 an Indonesian religious minister visited the derelict cemetery containing the graves of Muntok internees who had not been reinterred by the Dutch War Cemeteries group and noted down what was decipherable on the crosses above the graves, For Mrs Tay he recorded “... **Mrs Nellie Ellen Tay, 61 Rockshore Road, Singapore. Aged 40 buried in Plot 3, Row P, Grave No. 9...**” (Muntok Peace Museum records); **there is no 'Rockshore road' in Singapore, so it seems in fact that it is meant to be Rochor Road in central Singapore and Mrs Tay could have lived there with her husband, Dr Tay Soo Woon, before the evacuation in either one of the shop houses or one of the few multi-level building scattered along the road. A clue to her husband appears to be in the record in the Malayan Volunteers Group website “...TAY Mrs Nellie Ellen 'Soo Wong' from London. Lived at 61 Rockshore Rd, Singapore. Wife of Dr Tay. Palembang Women's Camp 1942. Sumatra internee. Died in captivity 21.11.44 [40] (Sumatra)... “;** this record suggests that Dr Tay was in fact Dr. Tay Soo Woon who graduated in 1925 as a medical doctor after studying at The Medical School in Singapore and then Edinburgh University. In May 1931 Dr Tay had struck financial problems and was declared bankrupt, but was discharged in 1935 (SFPMA 21.9.35); Mrs Nellie Ellen Tay was born Ellen Conoley in Southwark, London on 16.8.06 (ancestry.com), the second child of Thomas Edward George Conoley (1882-1968) and Margaret Sullivan (1884-1965). She was one of eight children – Mary Harriet (1904), Thomas John (1908), Maurice John (1910), Joseph Alfred (1912), Arthur (1914), Patrick James (1916) and Henry (1919). Nellie and Doctor Tay were married in December 1928 in Fulham, London. She must have returned to England for 'home leave' because she is recorded leaving Southampton by ship for Singapore in 1937. In 1941 she must have had some involvement with 'St Johns School' in Singapore because she was reported as the person who was to give away the prizes at the school annual athletics at the Jalan Besar Stadium in Kallang. After the sinking of the 'Ss Vyner Brooke' she presumably walked from Radji Beach to Muntok with other women and children she was interned in Muntok,

then internment in Palembang and finally returned to Muntok where tragically she died in the horrendous circumstances of Muntok internment camp on 21 November 1944 during a period of their imprisonment when so many lost their lives because of starvation, disease, lack of medicine and brutal treatment by the Japanese.

- **TAY /'THAY' – Doctor Tay Soo Woon.** in 'ORB' there are a couple of references, presumably drawn from the memoirs and reports of the Australian nurses by the author, of a Chinese doctor on Radji Beach – this is clarified in the 29.10.45 testimony by Sister Vivian Bullwinkel to the Melbourne based 'Australian Board of Enquiry into War Crimes' where she described the group of women and children sent to walk to Muntok from 'Radji Beach just before the massacre occurred as including " ... *They had a Chinese doctor named Tay but the Japs were on his track and he committed suicide later on...*". This was almost certainly Dr. Tay Soo Woon the husband of Mrs Nellie Ellen Tay who died in internment. Dr Goldberg in her post war report mentioned her as " ... *Mrs Thay, British married to Chinese ...*" in her list of those survivors from the "SS. Vyner Brooke" who died at 'Mundok' (sic) (Goldberg NAA 472); in 1968 an Indonesian religious minister visited the derelict cemetery containing the graves of Muntok internees who had not been reinterred by the Dutch War Cemeteries group and noted down what was decipherable on the crosses above the graves, For Mrs Tay he recorded " ... **Mrs Nellie Ellen Tay, 61 Rockshore Road, Singapore. Aged 40**" (Muntok Peace Museum records); there is no 'Rockshore road' in Singapore, so it seems in fact that it is meant to be Rochor Road in central Singapore and Mrs Tay would have lived there with her husband, Dr Tay, before the evacuation in either one of the shop houses or one of the few multi-level building scattered along the road; a clue to her husband appears to be in the record in the Malayan Volunteers Group website " ... *TAY Mrs Nellie Ellen 'Soo Wong' from London. Lived at 61 Rockshore Rd, Singapore. Wife of Dr Tay. Palembang Women's Camp 1942. Sumatra internee. Died in captivity 21.11.44 [40] (Sumatra)...* "; this record suggests that Dr Tay was in fact Dr. Tay Soo Woon, the second son of the Rev Tay Sek Tin (of the Presbyterian Church movement in Singapore for over 50 years), and who attended the Anglo Chinese School during 1913-1917. He then studied at The Medical School in Singapore during 1918-22 before travelling to Scotland to pass his final year medical exam in Edinburgh. Whilst studying in Singapore he was reported in newspapers as competing in athletics, tennis and football for the YMCA. He remained in Britain studying tropical disease, child diseases and venereal diseases for several years before returning to Singapore in 1928 on 'SS Memnon' (on which he had been appointed ship's surgeon) to start his own practice (ST 7.5.28). In December 1928 he must have returned to Britain because he married a 22-year-old Londoner by the name of Nellie Ellen Conoley in Fulham, London - presumably they had met whilst he was in London, and it is assumed that since she was born Ellen Conoley that the name 'Nellie' was added later as the nickname for people named Ellen. Apart from his professional work he had a more public profile in Singapore - he was one of the Lecturers and Examiners for the St Johns Ambulance classes in Singapore during 1933 and in 1934 he was one of four doctors and a representative from the 'Child Welfare Society' judging babies at the first 'Chinese Baby Show' (run by the Nanyang Chinese Students Society) at Great World. Dr Tay Soo Woon appears to have been practicing as a doctor at a 'Dispensary' in Singapore and become involved as guarantor for two friends in the In 1931 (one of whom had been bankrupted a year earlier) and they were jointly sued by a 'Chettiar' (a money lender) by the name of A.R.P.L Ramanathan in the Supreme Court of the Straits Settlements ,for debts of the business 'Chop Sehat Dispensary' and he was declared bankrupt, but he was discharged from bankruptcy in 1935 (SFPMA

21.9.35). He thereafter appears to have worked in the 'Edin Dispensary' in Rochor Road and in 1937 Dr. and Mrs S.W. Tay attended the funeral of a proprietor of that dispensary Dr A. C. Williams, who it appears had attended medical school in Edinburgh at the same time as Dr Tay. His father, Rev Tay Sek Tin, died in 1944 during the Japanese Occupation and his mother, Madam Ng Pek Geok (known as the 'Grand Old Lady' of the Chinese Presbyterian Church movement in Singapore) died in 1957. There were then four sons and a daughter still living.

- **TRENERRY – Sister Annie Merle Trenerry**, SFX 13419, 2/13 Australian General Hospital. Merle Trenerry was born on 31 March 1909, the eldest child of Edward Joseph Trenerry and Ann Vincent Trenerry – she had two sisters and two brothers. Her father worked in the Moonta mines in the district of South Australia named after these mines. Moonta, which is on the Yorke Peninsula to the west of Adelaide, was 'Australia's Little Cornwall' and many of the miners were Cornish. Merle was educated at Moonta Mines District High School and Moonta Technical School and by 1928 she was training as a nurse at Hutt Street Private Hospital, Adelaide. By 1933 she was working at the Queen Victoria Hospital in Adelaide (in the Midwifery section) and passed her midwifery exam in May 1934 whilst at the 'Queens Home'. As a triple certificated sister, she was a very highly qualified nurse for her time! Shortly after during 1934 she is recorded as working at the Northfield Infectious Diseases hospital, Adelaide and in 1935 she was appointed Matron at the Moonta Jubilee hospital which was no doubt a source of great pride for her family there. Various records have her moving about in several different roles over the next five years – at Meningie hospital, Moorook Hospital as Bush district Nurse based at Tumbly Bay on the Eyre Peninsula and at Poochera Hospital in 1940. By the time she enlisted in 1941 she would have been one of the most experienced nurses in her relatively young age group in the AANS going to Malaya. She enlisted at the Wayville recruiting center in Adelaide on 7.2.41, posted to the AANS and within six weeks was in Singapore, arriving April 1941 (Flo Casson also volunteered at Wayville five weeks later but for some strange reason her Army service number is SFX 13418 – one digit earlier in the sequence?). After the sinking of the 'Vyner Brooke' Merle reached the raft with Matron Paschke, Iole Harper, Gladys McDonald, Jess Dorsch, Mary Clarke and Betty Jeffrey. After Betty and Iole and few other nurses separated from the raft by sea currents Merle was last seen by Betty and Iole being swept away down the Banka Straits holding onto the trailing ropes of the raft along with Jess Dorsch, whilst Olive Paschke, Mary Clarke, Gladys McDonald sat together with Caroline Ennis cradling a small Chinese boy aged four years and a small English girl aged three years. This group on the raft were never seen alive again. To date all literature on the subject has the raft never seen again, however new information (ref. email November 2016, Dr Neil McGregor advising that his mother Sister Sylvia Muir who was on the 'Vyner Brooke' was told this in Singapore after release from internment in 1945) has come to light that in fact this raft with the remains of Sister McDonald and two other nurses was located several weeks later by a ship in the Indian Ocean. So, Merle Trenerry must have lost her life in the sea or still on the raft as it was taken by the powerful sea current that run down the east coast of Sumatra into the Sunda Straits and out into the Indian Ocean. Merle's name is included on both the Moonta and Tumbly Bay Honour rolls and a photograph of her is displayed in the Tumbly Bay RSL. The RSL have ensured that her memory is refreshed each year with the awarding of the Annie Merle Trenerry RSL Memorial medal for 'A' grade netball ("A Nurses Story" by Geoff Stewart and "Yorke Peninsular Country times" 3.5.16). In 2003 a street in Port Hughes, near Moonta in SA, was renamed Trenerry Place to recognise that family's contribution to the area as well as Merle Trenerry's sacrifice.

She is remembered on the family memorial at Moonta cemetery with the caption “... presumed to have lost her life at the fall of Singapore ...”.

- **TROTTER – Sister Florence ‘Flo’ Elizabeth Trotter**, QFX 19077, 2/10th Australian General Hospital. To quote ORB she was “... a devout Christian, she was a Queenslander and one of a group of nurses from the Brisbane General Hospital who enlisted together in 1940 ...” (ORB, p.170). Florence Elizabeth Trotter was born in Sydney on 4th October 1915 (obituary notice “The Australian”, 19.8.2002), the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Trotter of Stanley Terrace, Taringa, Queensland. Early newspaper records show her passing the State scholarship examination in 1930 (“The Telegraph” 24.1.30) and the University Junior Public Examination two years later. In 1932 Flo also completed her two-year course of training at Renwick Hospital, Sydney (“The Manning River Times & Advocate”, 10.12.32). Between 1938-40 she was very active socially in attending Balls and organising these fundraising events for organisations such as the ‘Nurses Assn & Hospitals’ and the ‘General Hospital Nurses AIF fund’ in Brisbane. Writing home to her mother from Malaya (“Sunday Mail”, Brisbane, 11.1.42), just before the Japanese invaded Singapore, Flo explained to her mother her experience with Xmas parties during which the nurses had to wear tin helmets, and her ongoing fundraising involvement - (plus a tour of a tin mine at Kuala Lipis). After the bombing and sinking of the ‘Vyner Brooke’ Flo was part of the group of nurses who, holding on to a plank of wood in the sea, once again showed a real attitude and began singing “We Are Off to See the Wizard [of Oz]”. She made it to Banka Island safely and then endured and survived three and a half years of deprivation, neglect, and starvation in Muntok, Palembang and Belalau internment camps. Ironically in 1943 there appeared a newspaper report in Australia stating that Florence and four other Queensland nurses were “... safe and well in Singapore ...” when in fact they were enduring the harsh conditions of internment in Palembang, Sumatra! During internment there she, along with Betty Jeffrey, set herself up as a hairdresser later saying that she “... trimmed and set hair for them ...” – being the wealthy Dutch internees in the camp. Flo survived the camps and was repatriated firstly to Singapore in a very emaciated condition and then home on the ‘Manunda’. After her discharge from the AANS, Flo was awarded ‘Mentioned in Despatches’, and then joined the leading Brisbane department store ‘Allen & Stark Ltd’ as one of Australia’s first industrial nurses (“The Courier Mail”, 15.8.47). In 1947 she married the brother of her friend, and fellow ‘Vyner Brooke’ survivor, ‘Mickey’ Syer whose name was Frank Syer (Ada “Mickey’ Syer was one of her bridesmaids) and they went on to have two daughters. She continued her nursing career in increasingly senior positions until she retired in 1976. In 1999 the Flo Syer (Trotter) Ward was opened at the Repatriation /Greenslopes Private Hospital in Brisbane. Aged 86 years she passed away on 31 July 2002 – her death being the subject of a public statement by the Minister of Veterans Affairs and an obituary in the nationally distributed “The Australian” newspaper 19.8.2002.
- **TUNBRIDGE – Mrs Phyllis H. Tunbridge**, wife of CSM Godfrey C. Tunbridge RASC, then POW Singapore. Aged 36 in 1942. Palembang Women’s Camp, a Sumatra **internee**. Repatriated to India then on ‘Britannic’ from Bombay, arriving in Liverpool 12.4.46. Son Kerry. Family to Australia 1958 (JMM); Phyllis Tunbridge was the wife of Godfrey Cyril ‘George’ Tunbridge and she had worked in British Army Intelligence at Fort Canning prior to the Surrender of Singapore; George became a POW in Changi and then Japan; her account of her personal experience during the sinking is well told in the book “A Short Cruise on the Vyner Brooke”(pp.61-64) and derives from conversations with Phyllis late in life by her son Kerry Tunbridge; her landing

on the beach at Muntok is also explained on p.188 of “On Radji Beach”: during the last few days before the Surrender of Singapore , she had joined with a group other servicemen’s wives who were late in evacuating from Singapore and boarded the “SS. Vyner Brooke” . When the ship began to sink, she jumped overboard and swam to the nearest raft which was already overcrowded. Along with other competent swimmers she held onto a rope and tried to tow the raft towards land which could be seen in the distance. Realising that they were fighting a losing battle with the strong currents Phyllis and Sister Nesta James struck out on their own towards the shore to get help. After many hours swimming against the tide, they reached shore in the early hours of the morning after the sinking and made for Muntok lighthouse. There they encountered a Malay family and almost immediately a Japanese patrol with fixed bayonets that entered the room at the lighthouse. After keeping them under guard all night the Japanese patrol suddenly departed early morning and Phyllis and Nesta also hurried off to search for other survivors and came across others on the nearby beach. Once again, the survivors were captured by the Japanese and this time taken to Muntok to begin three and a half years of internment. Phyllis aligned herself with the Australian Army Nurses in the internment camps and a group of these women became lifelong friends. Kerry Tunbridge has said that his mother was a competent seamstress and was able to supplement her food ration by earning money from the local Dutch internees who, as in other Dutch East Indies camps, entered internment with vastly more money and possessions than the British internees. Phyllis died in 2003 aged 97 years of age – George died aged 98 years despite both having endured some of the worst conditions of imprisonment of any prisoners during World War Two (emails from Kerry Tunbridge 2016).

- **TWEDDELL – Sister Joyce ‘Tweedie’ Tweddell**, QFX 19070, 2/10th Australian General Hospital. Joyce was the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Tweddell of Moreton Street, Norton/Norman Park, Brisbane (“The Telegraph, Brisbane, 22.3.43). There is a good biography of Joyce in the ‘Australian Womens Register’ and some of the following information is drawn from that source. She attended Petrie Terrace State School and Brisbane State High School, after school she worked and completed courses at Nunns & Trivetts Secretarial School before turning 18 years and thus became eligible to enter nursing. She loved to go bushwalking and made the three-day trip on horseback to O’Reilly’s Guest lodge many times. Training as a nurse in Brisbane she graduated from general training in April 1939 and joined the staff of Brisbane General Hospital (now Royal Brisbane Hospital). She also completed a Therapy Radiography course, which was unusual at the time because it was necessary to have studied physics and chemistry at school, and although this was a rare achievement for a female at the time, Joyce had done so. She received her results for this course after she returned from the war. Her mother received her qualifications while Joyce was interned. She enlisted in the AANS on 17 January 1941 and was attached to the 2/10th AGH. There is a photo in “The Telegraph” 19.2.41 of 15 AANS nurses leaving Brisbane – many of these women were later to be on the ‘Vyner Brooke’ when it sank. According to ‘ORB’ Joyce entered the sea from the sinking ‘Vyner Brooke’ still wearing her tin helmet and then swam over to join the group of nurses holding onto a plank of wood who became famous for breaking into a version of the ‘We’re off to see the Wizard (of Oz)’ song to lift their spirits. During this period in the sea Joyce went to the assistance of Sylvia Muir who was in danger of being dragged under by a panicking Chinese woman. Joyce was washed onto a beach on Banka Island on the following (Sunday) morning with the group of nurses who then headed towards the town of Muntok, only to be promptly captured by Japanese soldiers and interned in

the town's old cinema. She endured three and a half years of extremely harsh and deprived internment in the Muntok, Palembang and Belalau camps – surviving but only just – on repatriation to Singapore at the temporary Hospital at St Patrick's School, Katong, it was considered that Joyce was only hours away from death from malnutrition and disease – malaria, beriberi, and chronic amoebic dysentery etc (ORB, p.290) After some recuperation in Singapore Joyce returned to Australia on the Hospital ship 'Manunda' arriving on 27 October 1945. She was admitted to the Margate Convalescent Home on her return to Brisbane. She was discharged from the AANS in June 1946 and was employed by the royal Brisbane Hospital as second in charge of the radiography unit and remained in that unit until her retirement as Queensland's Chief Radiographer. Joyce retired from nursing in 1979 and took to travelling in earnest, usually with Flo Syer (nee Trotter). She never married. In 1993 Joyce and six of the surviving POW nurses returned to dedicate a memorial on Radji Beach at Banka Island. The Royal Brisbane Hospital honoured Joyce by naming one of their new buildings after her – the Joyce Tweddell Building houses the Infectious diseases unit, Cancer Care unit, Radiation Oncology unit and the Bone Marrow transplant unit. Joyce died in Caloundra in November 1995 aged 79 years – she had (early 1970s) refused a nomination for the MBE as she believed all surviving POWs deserved one!

- **WADDLE – Mrs Kathleen Elise Waddle**, BA, born 17 January 1900. Educated Eggar's Grammar School, Alton, Hants, East London College, London University, Maria Grey Training College, London University. To Malaya 1926 (Blue Funnel 'Sarpedon' 30.1.26) as European Mistress SS. Principal, Raffles Girls School, Singapore 1937-1942. Lost at sea 14.2.42 on the *Vyner Brooke* (JMM and Michael Freeman); Kathleen Elise Berry was born on 17 February 1900 in Shepherds Bush as the first of nine children to Frank and Emily Berry. Clearly a woman with intellect and drive she graduated from East London College, a School of the University of London, with a BA degree in Geography and Latin and then trained as a teacher at the Maria Gray Training College, Bishopsgate. At age 26 years, after qualifying as a teacher, Kathleen travelled to Singapore to take up a teaching position of European Mistress at Raffles Girls School. She also joined the choir at St Andrew's Cathedral and as a result met the Cathedral Organist Robert Waddle. On 14 February 1931 (note – the same day as the 'Vyner Brooke' was attacked 11 years later) she married electrical engineer Robert Alfred Waddle at St Andrews Cathedral, Singapore (SFPMA 16.2.31), and the reception was held by Miss Buckle, Headmistress of Raffles Girls School at the School. The then **Mrs Kathleen Elise Waddle** was a focussed and hardworking teaching professional, with a full-time job in an era when this nature of employment was a rarity for women in Singapore. Family film shows her confidently driving the family car at a time when women driving was a less common event. On 25 April 1937 Kathleen Waddle had a daughter, Jennifer Dorothy, delivered at Singapore General Hospital (SFPMA 26.4.37). Her daughter Jennifer recalls her mother as someone who was obliged to spend long hours involved with the School when she became Principal of Raffles Primary Girls School in about 1938 (the two previous Principals or headmistresses appear to have been Miss Buckle until 1923 and then Miss Richardson until 1937). However, Kathleen always made time to read to her daughter at bedtime and take her to 'Robinsons' on a Saturday morning to hire jigsaw puzzles and buy many 'Dinky Toys' (daughter Mrs. Jennifer Freeman, New Zealand, February 2016) – not dissimilar to the modern professional woman; contemporary photos (and family film) show her as a diminutive, dark haired and slightly built woman (ST. 2.8.36); *Her husband was WADDLE R.A [Robert Alfred] 'Bobby' b.1904. To Singapore 1926. Engineer, Electrical Dept, Singapore.*

Municipality. Late **Changi internee**. Organist St Andrew's Cathedral for 30 years. Wife Joan; daughters Jennifer & Sally. Jennifer evacuated on Narkunda, arriving Fremantle WA 24.1.42. Returned to Singapore post-war: City Electrical Engineer 1951-1958. Retired to the UJ 1958. Died 6.5.69 Williton, Somerset [he had married Joan Mary Lloyds of the British Far East Broadcasting Service 11.47 Singapore].; by the time of the Japanese invasion in December 1941 Kathleen Waddle had become a relatively long-term resident of Singapore, part of the establishment, living at 583 Upper Serangoon Road and occupied a position of responsibility for a large school, so a quick departure with her daughter to safety would have been almost unthinkable. Her mother Emily Berry had come out from England in about 1939 to visit the family and, with the declaration of War in Europe had either decided to stay or was stuck in Singapore with limited travel options home. It is not surprising that by this time Kathleen had become socially well established and acquainted with the Singapore social icon, Mrs Mary Brown and her daughter Shelagh, with whom she later boarded the "SS. Vyner Brooke". In January 1942 Mr & Mrs Waddle organised for Kathleen's mother, Mrs Emily Berry, and Jennifer to get a pass on the converted troop ship 'Narkunda' (which had arrived on 13 January with reinforcements from Durban) and the ship left about 24 January 1942 for Fremantle. At this stage most people in positions of authority were not even contemplating leaving Singapore. Jennifer and her grandmother duly departed on 16 January 1942 (naval-history.com) or a day or two earlier according to some passengers, and arrived in Fremantle, WA, a matter of days later. On 12 February Kathleen Waddle boarded the "SS. Vyner Brooke" when it became apparent all was lost in Singapore; passenger Shelagh Brown told Kathleen's family that she last saw her on the deck of the ship at the time it was bombed; another source "RN casualties" (ADSM 358/2875) records "... Mrs Waddel [sic], Upper Serangoon Road, Singapore, drowned when leaving 'Vyner Brooke'; another record – the original handwritten casualty lists compiled in Changi POW camp state "...Waddle (Wardle?) Dr/ Upper Serangoon Road, S'pore. Drowned leaving Vyner Brooke. At Sea..."; this may have answered the fate of Kathleen Waddle but there also exists, in a handwritten list of people who died in the sinking of the "SS. Vyner Brooke" and the aftermath (the list appears to have been compiled in Palembang Camp during 1942-43), another record showing at the top of the list "... WADDLE MRS, RAFFLES GIRLS SCHOOL, S'PORE. LAST SEEN IN LIFEBOAT. WOUNDED. HEAD & HAND ..."; this raises the strong and awful probability that Kathleen Waddle was amongst the wounded who landed in the first lifeboat on Radji Beach with First Officer Sedgeman and Irene Drummond and died on 15 February 1942 at the hands of the Japanese troops, either as one of the (up to five) women 'stretcher cases' lying in the shade of the trees at the top of the beach, or (less likely because it seems to have been that wounded soldiers were placed in that hut) amongst the half dozen to badly wounded lying in the 'fishermen's hut' at the top of the beach which is also mentioned (ORB p.217) as being at the top of the beach; the official record in the Colonial Office Record of Deaths records "... Mrs Kathleen E. Waddle, Principal Raffles Girls School, died on or about 14.2.42 in the Banka Straits following the sinking of the "SS. Vyner Brooke". Source C-in – C ALFSEA. (CORD. Reg. M1, Folio 140, Serial 822); she is also memorialised by the CWGC as having died on 14 February – it is not known if these organisations were aware of the misfiled List (in the file of "HMS. Giang Bee" documents at the National Archives) mentioned above and compiled in Palembang camp.

- **WALLER** – a list compiled in Palembang Internment Camp of those who appear to have died (see above Introduction for copy of document) in the sinking of the ship or events afterwards shows "... Mr. & Mrs. Waller, P & T Dept., Singapore"; no

person with the name Waller has been found in pre-war newspapers, directories (1935-40) etc. as having been employed specifically by the 'P & T Dept, Singapore' - which this researcher takes to mean the 'Post & Telegraph Department, Singapore', which was a significant entity in pre War years and also operated until the actual fall of Singapore with additional roles for wartime. Miscellaneous records do show a Mr Keith Inet Waller of AO (Malaya) Ltd, Tanjong Tualang, Perak marrying a Miss Norah Leila Hoeden of Penang in 1940 (SFPMA 25.6.40) and then after the retreat from Malaya to Singapore a newspaper advertisement in January 1942 "Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Mrs Keith Waller of Perak who left recently for Singapore to get in touch with Mrs. C. Westerhout, 148 Michael's Road, Singapore" (SFPMA 14.1.42); but there is no link to the "SS. Vyner Brooke", Banka Island, as internees or death records for this couple and the 'P. & T.' link does not appear to exist. One other reasonable possibility for the identity of this couple arises from the document compiled on 18 sheets of 'Jeyes' toilet paper by the internees in Changi during 1942-43 on thousands of European men and what the internees knew of their fate. In this microscopically written, intriguing and very credible and accurate document there is the listing of "WALLER E LEWIS – POSTAL CENSOR - LEFT W WIFE 11/2 (EMP STAR?) ...". The Changi internees were very clear on his unusual name and occupation but seem unsure as to whether this man and his wife actually left on the "SS. Empire Star" which departed Singapore in the last chaotic convoy on 11 February 1942, at a very similar time to the "SS. Vyner Brooke". The next link to the couple listed in the possible death list from the "SS. Vyner Brooke" is that the researcher believes that the wartime role of Postal Censor was under the control of the 'Post & Telegraph Department' in Singapore. Historical references show that one 'E. Lewis Waller' was a somewhat well-known stage and film actor from the UK who got into financial trouble (bankruptcy) and looks to have had a failed marriage to an English actress well before the war. His name later pops up in Singapore newspapers during the 193-40 period as a producer for plays in Singapore – placing him in that city after the war in Europe began - so it is not a long coincidence to see him taking employment as Postal Censor as the war began in the Far East and travel became very difficult to return to the UK. With evidence that many men wanting to escape from Singapore during the final few days overcame the restrictions against men (and the prioritisation of women and children) boarding ships by offering their services as stokers and engineers in the engine rooms of the little merchant ship which had lost their local Chinese and Malay crews, it is relevant to note that the " 'Who's Who' in the Theatre " [Google Books] gives a few details of Edmund Lewis Waller including that in younger days he was an engineer (JM). There are no records of E. Lewis Waller in records available on the internet for the years following 1941 – but one possible contradiction to the identity proposed here is that on the ancestry.com website someone has posted a photo of Edmund Lewis Waller and gives his year of death as 1951. Against this there is a Probate entry for an Edmund Waller who died in 1941. Anyone with knowledge that E. Lewis Waller survived the fall of Singapore and lived until 1951 would be very welcome to contact this researcher and correct the entry!

- **WARD – Mrs Myrtle Ward**; her husband was "*Leonard George William Ward, B.Sc., he was born in 1903 in London. Educated University College, Nottingham. To Malaya 1928 as Assistant Electrical Engineer FMS KL. By 1940 Executive Electrical Engineer, Electrical Dept FMS KL. Lt FMSVF Light Battery POW Singapore to Thailand. Died in captivity 31.7.43[40] Thailand. Grave at Chungkai. Mentioned in Despatches. Wife Myrtle [later a teacher in SA], she died in August 1962 at Westville, Natal SA. She was a survivor of the Vyner Brooke sinking 15.2.42. Interned in Sumatra and*

repatriated to West Bridgeford UK (JMM)”; the first mention of Mrs Ward in Malayan newspapers is her arrival (or possibly return from ‘home leave’) in 1933 with Leonard on the ‘Ranpura’ (ST. 13.6.33); during 1933-34 she is also recorded as successfully breeding and showing dogs at the Central & South Perak Dog Show (her dog ‘Violet of Tambun’ came 3rd in the Black Cocker Spaniel section after two dogs shown by her sister-in law and fellow passenger Mrs E. C. Stevens) and the Perak and North Malaya Dog show in Ipoh (the best Red and Golden Cocker Spaniel was hers by the name of “Brynegold Robinhurst’ (Mrs. Stevens’ dogs were prolific winners at this show) and Myrtle also had a Cocker Spaniel puppy for sale at \$1,000 !!!; by 1936 she seems to be more focussed on lawn tennis and was in the semi – finals of the womens doubles in the Perak LTA championships then later that year she appears in the singles championships for the Malayan LTA; in 1937 Mr & Mrs. Ward are on the ‘Rajputana’ from Singapore to Europe; no doubt she had strength and athletic ability which is why she sounded confident of her own ability and survival in the sea after the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” in the letter mentioned below; almost all that is known of Myrtle Ward’s experiences during and after the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” are derived from two letters which she wrote to Mrs Marjorie Gooding and her daughter Pat Gooding in late 1945, Marjorie was the widow of Stanley Gooding and the Gooding and the Ward families had been close friends prior to the war. In the letter dated late 1945 Myrtle recounts that she had been in the Malayan Auxiliary Service (first aid) in Singapore but by 10 February 1942 “... it was impossible to get petrol, even to get to the First aid post ...” she says that she had been living in a house at Fort Canning, but had moved with eight others to “... Jimmy Strachan’s flat” and slept on a settee in the passage way. Others slept on the dining table and on the floor. On Wednesday 11 February the MAS people told her to” ... get out if she could ...” and she tried but only received the same answer of “... no ships, no information ...” that had frustrated so many civilians attempting to leave Singapore in February 1942. On Thursday at about 2.30 pm she heard quite casually that a ship was leaving and went to get her exit permit - Stanley Gooding decided at about then to also leave. She boarded the “SS. Vyner Brooke” and when it was bombed, and machine gunned she recalls “... We had previously been warned that anyone who could swim would have to, if anything happened, as there was not enough room in the 6 boats for everybody. I went down a rope and waited in the water [researchers note – she was waiting for Stanley Gooding whom she supported in the sea because he was unable to swim and clearly ill or wounded from the bombing because he slipped into unconsciousness after a few minutes in the water and died several hours later]; Myrtle continues in her letter “... We were wrecked about 10 miles off the island of Banka and there are some very strong currents there and we were swept about a good deal. I hoped that the two lifeboats that reached the shore would come out again to look for survivors, but they didn’t. When it began to get dark I was still about 5 miles out and I had to let Stanley go. I managed to get in at about 3 o/c the next morning and spent the night on the beach. Just as it got light two raft-loads of Australian nursing sisters came in. Later we found that the Nips had landed during the night, so in the afternoon we decided to give ourselves up, as we heard there were gunning parties of Japs wandering about.

Mr Stevens and Ernest Watson were on the ship and Mrs Eva Madden of Taiping. I believe you knew her. Ernest was wounded in the bombing. They got ashore in a lifeboat. A party went inland to get help. The Japs found the rest on the beach – bayoneted the stretcher cases – Mr Watson was among these – and the Japs made the rest who could walk go back into the sea and shot them as they went. One man and a girl fell when they heard the shots and shammed dead and eventually came into camp...” Myrtle was interned in Muntok and Palembang camps for the remainder of the War. (Copies of letters supplied by Ronanyne Grant, UK, February 2016); after the War she migrated to Natal in South Africa, worked as a teacher and died there in August 1962.

- **WARMAN – Mr Mischa Warman** , appears to have been a White Russian, born c.1908-12, who had come from Russia to Singapore via periods of working in Shanghai and Ipoh during the 1930s; the Warman family had probably left Shanghai in 1940 when the Japanese had surrounded that city and European residents had been forced to evacuate to Hong Kong on at least one occasion, and moved to Ipoh where he had clearly established a good reputation as a ladies hairdresser (ST. 17.1.42 and St. 22.142, then 29.1.42), before once again being forced to evacuate his family ahead of invading Japanese. In Singapore (where he probably arrived after the evacuation of Ipoh in December 1941), Mischa began working as a skilled ladies' hairdresser at the Heeren Beauty Salon, 240 Orchard Road, Singapore. Interestingly this was the building that the Armstrong family who were also passengers on the “SS. Vyner Brooke” lived in prior to the evacuation and it raises the question as to whether the two families had got to know each other before deciding to simultaneously escape from Singapore; the book ‘ORB’ presents the family story differently (it is not clear what sources the author has used for the Warman story , possibly the memoirs of the Australian Army nurses) , that the Warmans were Polish Jews who had fled to Russia ahead of the advancing German Army and then decided to “ ... continue east through the Urals , across Siberia to Manchuria and then south to Shanghai...” (pp.3-4), the book continues with an account of the fate of Mr. Mischa Warman “... When the first bomb hit, little Mischa Warman’s father just snapped, ran out onto the deck and jumped overboard. He disappeared below the waves and was not seen again...” (p.152); this account is similar to that in ‘WBTW’ (p.56) which appears to be based on the recollections of passenger Eric German and slightly amplifies the circumstances in which Mischa Warman died “... when the bombs started falling his father jumped overboard in terror and at once began to drown because he couldn’t swim. His wife screamed for assistance and a British soldier jumped in after him, but when the soldier reached the frantic man he was locked in a strangling embrace. Both disappeared ...” – this also aligns with Eric German’s recollections in “By Eastern Windows” (p. 142); probably the most accurate record is by fellow passenger and survivor E.M. Papineau who told the Netherlands Red Cross in Palembang Internment Camp “... Mr Warman- Jumped overboard without lifebelt before the ship sunk and drowned together with Malay sailor who jumped in to help him...” (image 1484 in researchers files). There is another note in the files from the Netherlands Red Cross interviews in Palembang camp “... Warman, Russian, drowned. Address Mother i. I. Mrs Diech, Birjevay 84,

Harbin, China..." (image 1455 in researcher files). The researcher can only reflect on the fact that Mischa Warman, if Jewish, had possibly experience terror at the hands of the German authorities, then certainly the fear inspired under bombing by the Japanese in Shanghai, possibly again in Ipoh and then certainly in Singapore for two months – today we would factor in the effects of PTSD to understand behaviour when contemplating the way Mischa Warman reacted when the ship was bombed.

- **WARMAN – Mrs Civiah (Civah?) Warman** had experienced the same insecurity, displacement, fear and shock as her husband over a long time in the same cities and circumstances, and it is not surprising that she is said to have collapsed on the deck of the ship when her the bombs struck and her husband leaped overboard to his death in front of her (WBTW, p.56); in addition it appears that she was unable to speak English so it would have been even more stressful when orders and instructions were being given in English there are two conflicting stories in published books on the death of Mrs Warman – firstly and it appears with little credibility is that Mrs Warman died somewhere between her husband leaping into the sea and the final check of the ship for living passengers who could be moved into the sea, one of the nurses (unnamed) appears to have given foundation for this account in ORB (p.157) “... *There were also a number of bodies and one of the nurses recognised one as being Mrs Warman ...*”, the basis for such an error in identity appears to arise from there being several White Russian women on board as described by Ralph Armstrong in ASCOTVB (p. 37) “... *I then looked over and saw that one of the ladies we had been talking to had been hit by shrapnel, and was lying in a crumpled heap – dead. She was a White Russian, I think ...*”. This White Russian person’s death does not align with the facts of Mr & Mrs Warman being on the ships outside deck and the events surrounding Mr Warman’s death; so, the more accurate report involving Mrs Warman is that of Eric German, with Mrs Warman collapsing on to the deck and thereafter either swimming in the sea to either a lifeboat or life raft. Eric German’s chapter in the book ‘BYE’ (p.146) records that on the beach the first night amounts some 70 survivors was “... *Mrs Warmen [sic] was among them, reunited with her son Mischa. ...*”. This means that Mrs Warman and ‘Mischa’ [actually Isidore] were in the group led by Mr Dominguez and accompanied by the two ex ‘HMS Prince of Wales’ sailors Wallace Cake and George Noble (both from St John’s, Newfoundland) when they left the beach - an hour or so prior to the arrival of the Japanese troops intent on murder and leaving no witnesses. German later recounts how the women held in the first internment camp (the Muntok Cinema) were soon shifted into Muntok Prison and “... *There Mischa Warmen’s [sic] mother died of pneumonia, leaving her little son an orphan ...*”. This account is repeated by Lavinia Warner & John Sandilands in WBTW (pp. 77-78) with the slight clarification that the women internees were relocated from the Muntok Cinema to the coolie ‘barracks’ next to the Muntok Prison and it was there that Mrs Warman passed away; in fact in an unidentified (as to author although it is signed at the top by a ‘W. Chivers’) but very credible list in the files of the UK Archives of “British Women and Children in Palembang” it is recorded that there was a “Mrs .Warman (died at Muntok 9/3/42)” followed by the listing of “Warman Micha”(sic).; also another record states “... *Mrs. M. Warman, died of abscess of lung on 8th March 1942 at*

Muntok, Banka island ..." (Civilian casualty list in UK Archives).In the POW camp diary of Pte. Eric Diss, RAOC (had survived the sinking of the 'Pulo Soegi' who died in August 1942 in Palembang POW camp) he has recorded " ... 4th March, Volunteer for orderly duty on womens' Isolation ward, have three patients to look after. One is a Malay-Eurasian, one a Russian -Jewess who dies from lung congestion and the other an Englishwoman, Mrs Watts – Carter...". Mrs Warman's family came to Malaya and Singapore via Harbin in China, and this is confirmed in another note in the files from the Netherlands Red Cross interviews in Palembang camp "...Warman, Russian, drowned. Address Mother i. l. Mrs Diech, Birjevay 84, Harbin, China..." (image 1455 in researcher files).

➤ **WARMAN – Master Isidore Warman**, mistakenly called 'Mischa' by the internees because as his mother passed away she called out " ... *Mischa, Mischa ...*" and the nurses at the time believed she was calling out for her infant son (conversation with Mischa Warman 2016); he was born in Shanghai on 5 February 1939 when his parents were living there (Iz Warman email 28.11.16); three year old Isidore had been on the deck of the ship when the bombing started and his father leaped overboard and then, with his mother distraught on the deck, surrounding passengers are said to have thrust the little boy into the arms of American Eric German (who had just clambered back onto the ship from the sea after assisting with the launch of the first lifeboat to get away,) later recounted to William MacDougall whilst in internment camp that he told the child " ... *Don't be afraid. We're just going to jump into the water for a nice, cold swim ...*" (BYE p.143) - the story continues that " ... *Calmly Mischa put his arms around Eric's neck. Eric held his hand over the child's mouth and nose and jumped. Mischa was quiet and smiling when they bobbed to the surface and they laughed. Eric swam to the nearly submerged lifeboat and placed the child inside ...*" [this was the lifeboat with First Officer Bill 'Ginger' Sedgeman in command]; the lifeboat was barely afloat, crowded and ringed with people clinging to the looped handlines on the sides. On board were Sedgeman and Germann and Matron Irene Drummond. Three life rafts drifted near and were attached for towing purpose " ... *everyone except rowers then was transferred to the rafts and the long pull began to Bangka island, just visible in the distance ...*" (BYE p.144). So little Isidore was in the first lifeboat away and reached Radji Beach where there were already a sizeable group of survivors. He would have been alone with the lifeboat survivors through that Saturday until reunited with his mother some time on the Sunday (BYE p.146). About 9.00am on Monday morning (16th February 1942) it was decided that the civilian women and children, led by an elderly Australian miner (probably John Gallagher Dominguez) and two "HMS Prince of Wales" sailors (Wallace Cake and George Noble who were both from Newfoundland and who both survived the war) whose arm wounds prevented them from being stretcher bearers, should head off to Muntok. As described in ORB (p.209) " ... *after walking for 20 minutes, a number of children were footsore and tired, so the group sat down to rest a few minutes in a jungle clearing. As they were resting, Bill Sedgeman led a party of armed Japanese soldiers, accompanied by an officer, past them. Although both groups looked at each other, no words were exchanged ...*". So Iz Warman (Mischa) survived the terrible events on Radji Beach by

one hour! Isidore would be firstly taken with his mother and the other women to the Muntok Cinema where the Europeans were being held and then after a few days to the coolie 'barracks' beside the Muntok prison where his mother died from an abscess of the lung or pneumonia. The next three and a half years were spent under the care of a British nurse in Muntok, Palembang and Loebok Linggau internment camps – it is a matter of wonder and a tribute to the women caring for him that Isidore survived these terrible camps when, so many adults died. An email from Iz Warman (28 .11.16) clarified to the researcher that he is vague on the events before the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke’ and, understandably for a small boy who experienced the most extreme trauma in his early and formative years, he has “... *no memory before the age of ten. So, all I know is from books and all the people involved ...*”. Iz explains that from the time of entering internment “... *till August 1945 I was taken care of by Mary Jenkin. After she passed way [researcher note: Mary Jenkin, BSc, from Singapore and possibly also on the “SS. Vyner Brooke”, whose husband Charles an agent for P. & O. had died in Muntok ion 17.11.43, was aged about 50 and died in Belalau on 16.8.45. She is described in internment as a” ... very brave woman, -quiet and unable to cry ...”] I was in the care of Gladys Cullen [researcher note: Miss Sarah Gladys Cullen, a Presbyterian missionary]. Those two woman and Mamie Colley [note: Mrs Mamie Freda Colley, a school teacher who had been on the ‘Mata Hari’], my teacher during internment, were three of fifteen interned together. Five survived. I am forever indebted to them. After liberation, Gladys took me with her to England. After about six months, I moved in with a childless couple who lived across the street whom I liked very much. We lived in a small town called Bebington near Liverpool. Bessie and Jack Bedson sent me to a private school and took wonderful care of me. After about a year and a half, they started adoption proceedings but somehow my uncle and aunt, still living in Shanghai learned that I was still alive. They sent passage and I boarded a ship back to Shanghai. In March 1949 the five of us, including two cousins arrived in San Francisco where we settled. My uncle and aunt became Mom and Pop and cousins became my brother and sister. Brother Jack and sister Sheila are still alive and live in New York and California ...*”. Today Iz Warman lives happily in Florida, USA and reports there are lots of children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren!

- **WATSON** – a handwritten list which appears to have been compiled in Palembang internment camp during 1942-43 shows “... **Mrs. Watson**, Kuala Lumpur ...”. It is possible that this is a confusion with Mrs Stevens, who was the sister in law of Ernest Watson; but it is also possible that if Ernest Charles Watson (below) was married that it was his wife. Other than that there were several other Mrs Watson mentioned in Malayan newspapers that have not been accounted for – Mrs. J. G. Watson of Kepong and VP of the Kuala Lumpur Guiding Assn. (1934); Mrs. R. G. Watson of Kuala Lumpur (1937); and Mrs C. G. Watson wife of Mr Watson of Islay, Kerr & co., (1939)
- **WATSON – Mr Ernest Charles Watson**; the summary in Jonathan Moffatt’s ‘Malayans’ database is “...**WATSON E.C. [Ernest Charles] A Judicial Commissioner in Perak till 1927 then Barrister, Advocate & Solicitor, Adams & Allan, Penang then Watson & Co. 33 Station Rd, Ipoh. Dead on the beach on Banka Island following the**

sinking of the Vyner Brooke 15.2.42...” (JMM); the earliest record of Ernest Watson, who had been born in 1874, is that he was educated at Shrewsbury School (1889-1892 – source ‘Old Salopians’ register), that list also record a Henry Sinclair Watson born 1876 who went on to attend Oxford and later become a consulting electrical engineer. The UK Outward Passenger Lists show an ‘E.C. Watson’ as a passenger from Britain to Forcados, Nigeria (a tiny port town at a river mouth in Nigeria) in each of 1899/1904/1905/1906 and 1907 – on some of these journeys a ‘C.E.G. or C.E.S. Watson” is also on the ship. A publication in London (‘The Solicitors Journal & Weekly Reporter’) in 1912 recorded “... *E.C. Watson, Barrister -In – Law (Attorney General Northen, Nigeria) has been appointed a Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of the Gold Coast...*” (the Gold Coast is now the country of Ghana) and this move from Nigeria to the neighbouring British Colony of the Gold Coast is confirmed in ‘The Colonial Office List’ record books of both 1916 and 1918, where he is recorded as one of the four Puisne Judges in the Gold Coast. After spending almost all his early career in Nigeria and the Gold Coast he arrived in Malaya in 1920 to take up the role of Judicial Commissioner at Kuala Lumpur (ST. 26.6.20 and ST. 4.8.20); he made frequent appearances as a Judge in Ipoh and Penang during the early 1920’s and at Appeal Court sittings. In 1924 he is reported as ‘on leave’ from a position as Judicial Commissioner, Perak, and by 1926, and at the age of 52 years he announced he would be resigning to take up practice at the Bar (SFPMA. 9.9.26); he was admitted to the Bar in 1927 and seemed to lose his public profile, apart from newspaper reports of annual holidays to China and Japan during the mid /late 1930s with his wife (‘Malaya Tribune’ 29.1.37 reported him on the German liner ‘Potsdam’ visiting Shanghai where they had friends). In 1941 he was Chairman of the Perak Turf Club. By the time he boarded the “SS. Vyner Brooke ‘ in February 1942 Ernest Watson was 68 years of age and one of the oldest passengers on the ship; the secret record compiled in Changi civilian internment camp on sheets of ‘Jeyes’ toilet paper states, “ ... WATSON E C IPOH TURF LEFT WITH **SISTER IN LAW MRS A STEVENS** ...”, which is correct because there were two Mrs Stevens also as passengers on the ship (BPPL);we must also assume that Mrs E C Watson was not on board because there is no reference to her; from reading survivor accounts in ‘ORB’ and ‘BYE” it appears that Ernest Watson was wounded in the bombing and machine gunning of the ships and was then loaded into the first lifeboat to get away; this is specifically confirmed in a post War (1945) letter from Mrs Myrtle Ward , to the widow of Stanley Gooding who drowned after the sinking, which states “ ...*Mr Stevens and Ernest Watson were on the ship, and Mrs Eva Madden of Taiping ... Ernest was wounded in the bombing...They got ashore in a lifeboat ...*”; so he landed on Radji Beach with others and then became a ‘stretcher case’ – one of about six lying under the trees at the edge of the jungle. After the first group of men had been taken by the Japanese soldiers away and executed, the Japanese Officer and two soldiers reappeared and ordered the remaining ten men (including First Officer Sedgeman and the US civilian Eric Germann) to march towards a promontory on the beach. Quoting from ‘BYE’, which appears to be the only clear account of what happened to Ernest Watson, William McDougall has written that according to the recollection of Eric German (p.147) “... *Germann and Sedgeman were ordered to lift the old magistrate, who had been sitting up in his stretcher, and carry him between them. Slowly the doomed prisoners walked towards the promontory... they had difficulty getting him over the pile of rocks and driftwood and the officer motioned them to leave the magistrate. They placed him so he was sitting leaning against a log and shook hands with the old man. “Goodbye”, they told Watson and climbed down the rocks to the beach...*”. Eric Germann survived the massacre on the beach

that followed and on the following day, after hiding in the jungle severely wounded, he returned to the scene of the atrocity on Radji Beach to find *“On the pile of rocks and driftwood, still leaning against the log where he had been placed, was the old magistrate. His skull had been bashed in. Flies buzzed around the mess that had been his head ... The stretchers also were where they were left and in them the patients lay staring sightlessly at the sky. Two stretchers were empty. One had been the old magistrate’s and the other the wounded soldier Kingsley ...”* (BYE pp. 140-153); However, Eric German did not record the full horror of what Ernest Watson experienced before dying, Mr Watson had not died from his severe head wounds and other injuries on the day of the massacre because, as reported by Leading Seaman W.S. Wilding of the “HMS Li Wo” - who had landed on the beach nearby on 16 February but hid after being shot at by the Japanese - when he was walking through the scene of the massacre on the morning of the 17 February he “... found one Englishman still alive sitting further along the beach. He was an Englishman badly wounded, and I think could not have lived. He told me that the people on the beach had been killed by a party of Japs led by a Japanese officer ...”. Although he had suffered a further 24 hours, Ernest Watson did eventually succumb to his awful injuries, this is confirmed in the little-known list compiled in Palembang camp by the internees of those who they believed had died, it states “... Judge E. C. Watson, Ipoh, left on the beach. Dead...”. **[The researcher of this memorial document makes no apology for including this brutal description of the scene on Radji Beach that day – this is the reality of what happened to everyone on the beach, and it should not be sanitised because, it is my view, that to do so would diminish and disrespect the ordeal those people endured.]** What finally happened to Ernest Watson’s body is unknown. It goes down in history as one of hundreds of thousands of totally unwarranted Japanese atrocities against an unarmed, defenceless civilian. As the internees in Palembang were trying to make sense of the whole tragedy under the supervision of the Netherlands Red Cross they recorded as one death “... E.C. Watson- Apparently died on beach at Banka (Witness, E. M. Papineau) ...”. He is listed in the Colonial Office Record of Death as Solicitor, Ipoh, Perak dying on Banka Island in February 1942 (ref. Serial 1068 by Searcher Organisation Clearing House, 38/10251/1/46.). There is, unusually for a relatively prominent man in Malaya, no CWGC record for Ernest Charles Watson – a stalwart member of the Colonial Judiciary whose life was savagely taken in a psychopathic manner from him on a beautiful, lonely beach in the tropics.

- **WATTERS/WATTERS – PRYCE** - Mrs Grace ‘Anna’ Watters- Pryce, daughter of Mrs Resie Armstrong. Survived *Vyner Brooke* sinking with baby son Marc. **Sumatra internees.** Marc survived. Died in captivity 13.4.45 [28] Belalau, Sumatra.(SUM); her wedding to Corporal Austin Watters – Pryce ,RAF, is reported in the SFPMA of 22.4.41 with an excellent photo of the happy couple; her story is also told in Ralph Armstrong’s book “ A Short Cruise on the Vyner Brooke”; Grace was a vivacious and fun loving young woman (p. 28 ASCOTVB) and, together with her little boy ‘Marc’, she lived with her parents and family in the Heeren Building on the corner of Orchard Road and Cairnhill Road in Singapore and the book states “... Gracie’s husband was a cheerful young Irishman serving with the Royal Air Force ...” (p.13) and apparently called ‘Paddy’; Paddy apparently was promoted to Flight Sergeant in early January 1942, was being given flying lessons because the Air force was running out of pilots in Singapore and was to be transferred to Palembang; she and her little son managed to remain with her family members after the sinking and subsequent internments in Muntok, Palembang, Muntok and Belalau (see the maps and other information on www.indischekamarchiven.nl); she died in the terrible Belalau

internment camp, aged 28 years of age in 1945 and she was buried initially at Belalau and then post war reinterred at the 'Kalibanteng Field of Memories', Semarang, Java in Grave # V-III, 154'. – SEE ARMSTRONGS OF SRI LANKA

- **WATTERS-PRYCE** – Sivo Marc Anthony Dorian Anatole Raoul Watters - Pryce, also known as Marc, son of Mrs Grace Anna Watters- Pryce and Austin Waters-Pryce was born 31.3.38 in Singapore (above) ; Sivo/Marc was three years old when he boarded the “SS. Vyner Brooke” with his mother, aunt, grandmother and teenage uncle Ralph Armstrong; his family managed to keep him with them in the water after the sinking and they all clambered aboard one small raft together with June Bourhill and a White Russian woman [this researcher wonders if this was in fact the mother of Mischa Warman who could speak no English?], he experienced four days on that raft without food or water , blistered by the sun, weak and disorientated they landed at a mangrove covered beach on an island between Sumatra and Banka Island where the family came across two local fishermen who (for the price of Grace’s wedding ring) led them around the coast closer to habitation . After three more days at the fishermen’s huts they were taken (once again for the price of a gold ring) to Banka Island and the village of Kobe. Later taken to Pangkalpinang they received medical treatment for some weeks before being taken to Muntok and internment. Marc experienced internment with his family firstly in Muntok, then Palembang , Muntok again and finally the truly awful camp at Belalau; during this time he had , as a boy of only three to seven years of age experienced terrible privations of Sumatran internment camps – firstly, the death of his grandmother Mrs Theresia Armstrong and then his aunt Dixie at Muntok during their ‘second’ internment there and finally his mother Gracie soon after reaching Belalau ;he was then cared for by an Australian , Mrs D. Blake, until the end of the War; his young uncle Ralph Armstrong found him again at the Belalau women’s camp after the Japanese surrender in August 1945 ; after a little delay they managed to leave via the town of Loebok Linggau some seventeen kilometres away in September 1945, flying to Singapore to be reunited with Marc’s grandfather Mr H. M. Armstrong who had been hidden by a Chinese family in Singapore during the War(ASCOTVB), it seems that Marc travelled to the United Kingdom sometime after the war and reunited with his father Austin Watters-Pryce; in 1974 he married Valerie Thomas in Lancashire with his father in attendance; he passed away in England in November 2020.
- **WIGHT – Sister Rosetta Joan Wight**, VFX 61329, 2/13th Australian General Hospital. Rosetta Wight was born on 3 December 1908 the daughter of Mr & Mrs L.R. Wight of Fish Creek, Victoria – a small rural town (these days a population of about 8000 south east of Melbourne in Gippsland. Nothing is known of her early life or schooling, but there is a record in “The Argus” Melbourne newspaper on 30.3.35 that Rosetta J. Wight passed her Nurses Board exams whilst at Bendigo Hospital in central Victoria. Rosetta later enlisted with the AANS on 8.8.41 and her pay book photo shows a cheery faced country girl. There is also another photo in the AWM of Rosetta with other 2/13th AGH nurses at a concert party at St Patricks School in Singapore plus another photo (1941-42) in front of an Orchid House in Malaya (could be Singapore) with two other AANS nurses. There is little else of her life recorded until the attack on the ‘Vyner Brooke’ and there is a long account of her suffering during the last two days of her life which is quoted here because it is appropriate to understand what was inflicted on this dedicated nurse whose sole purpose in life was to care for others. In the book ‘ORB’ page 153 immediately after the bombs hit the ship it states “... *the worst of the injuries appear to those suffered by Sister Rosetta Wight, who was one of the older nurses, and Clare Halligan. The two nurses*

had been in the rear of the saloon near the passageway to the cabins when the bomb landed behind them. Both had been facing towards the front of the boat and suffered deep shrapnel wounds to the back of their thighs and buttocks, wounds that penetrated to the bone ...” - unable to move they were half carried to the upper deck by fellow nurses and were loaded into the second lifeboat with the frail elderly and mothers with children. Tragically this lifeboat overturned as it landed in the sea, and all aboard had to hold onto the upturned craft until around 2200hrs on that (Saturday) night when it was washed ashore at least a couple of kilometres from where the first lifeboat had rowed ashore at Radji Beach and where its occupants had lit a beacon bonfire. Vivian Bullwinkel and Jimmy Miller walked from the second lifeboat to the bonfire location to get help for the injured (this request got minimal support from those at the bonfire, only in the form of Eric German and a young English teenager). Rosetta was one of the more seriously hurt and like Flo Casson was unable to walk because the shrapnel injuries had probably caused nerve damage, even fractures (ORB, p.200). in agony Rosetta and Flo were half carried , half dragged by a small rescue party led by Jimmy Miller and it took over two hours to cover the couple of kilometres to reach the bonfire location this time it had taken Vivian and Jimmy about half an hour the first time. Rosetta appears to have been placed on the high side of the beach in the shade of the coconut trees on the edge of the jungle that night, during the following day and night and then until the morning of 16 February when the Japanese soldiers arrived to carry out the atrocity against those left on the beach. When the Japanese ordered the nurses into a line facing the sea Rosetta and other wounded nurse were helped by their friends and supported towards the right-hand end of the line near Irene Drummond who had been supervising their care – this group of noble caring women fell together under the impact of the Japanese machine gun bullets and the life of this open faced country girl from Gippsland was taken at Radji Beach. Rosetta Wight is commemorated along with 28 other ‘Royal Australian Army Nursing Service’ personnel) on the Bendigo Base Hospital Honour Roll located at Pall Mall, soldiers Memorial institute, Bendigo, 3350.

- **WILTON – Sister Mona Margaret Wilton**, VFX 61225, 2/13th Australian General Hospital. Mona (perhaps called ‘Margaret’ by her colleagues) was born on 8 August 1914 at Hamilton Hospital to Frederick (a blacksmith) and Christina (a nurse) Wilton. She had a brother Tom and an older sister Amy. They lived at Willaura, Vic, and in 1924 the family moved to Naringal where Mona attended Naringal State School. In 1928, she went to live with an aunt in Brighton and attended Mordialloc and Carrum High school for a year before returning to the family farm and working as a sewing mistress at Naringal State School until 1933. That year she joined her sister and began training for three years at Warrnambool Hospital before also obtaining her Midwifery certificate. There she met Wilma Oram, and they became good friends. For a while she was head sister at Daylesford. In 1939 she joined the 13th AGH, AANS and persuaded Wilma to do the same - in 1941 they both boarded the ‘Wanganella’ for Singapore (angellpro.com); whilst in service overseas Mona wrote to her family and friends (apparently the letters are optimistic and funny) from Johore and Singapore after the Japanese invasion and some of these letters were hand delivered by soldiers evacuated from Singapore (AWM archives); after the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’ had been bombed and was sinking Mona was climbing down to a lifeboat full of women and children (it was the one with Jean Ashton in it) but the ship began listing or turning over very fast so she and Wilma Oram jumped into the sea. Mona told her friend Wilma that she could not swim and was encouraged to dog paddle away from the ship – but it came down on her and she was not seen again. Jessie

Simons recorded in her book 'While History Passes' that 'Margaret' Wilton "...had been killed by a falling raft...". Mona Margaret Wilton is memorialised in the Mona Wilton Memorial stained glass window at Warrnambool which records she "... trained at Warrnambool Base Hospital 1934-37" - a tribute from Past Trainees Assn. unveiled by Mrs Wilma Young (nee Oram) ex AANS 28.3.51. She is also memorialised (along with Marjorie Schuman and Annie Trenerry) on a plaque in Honour Avenue, Point Walter Road (at the lake near the tennis courts), Bicton, WA.

- **WILMOTT – Sister Bessie Wilmott**, WFX 3439, 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station, AANS. [NB: the book 'ORB' incorrectly calls her 'Peggy Wilmot' and the Bicton memorial in WA also appears to have the surname spelt incorrectly as 'Wilmot']. Bessie Wilmott was born on 24.5.13 at Claremont, Western Australia and (according to heritage@southperth.wa.gov.au) she grew up in Gardner Street, Como, and in 1927 she appears playing 'one of Cinderella's sisters' in a play at the Anglican Hall, Como, WA (Sunday Times, Perth 2.10.27). She trained as a nurse at Royal Perth Hospital there is also a group photo of her as a trainee nurse at the Metropolitan Infectious Diseases Hospital in 1939/40. Sadly, in 1939, Bessie's brother Richard Wilmott (aged 22 years) - was drowned at Albany and that death notice gives us the names of her mother, Lilian Wilmott of Gardner Street, Como and another brother by the name of John Wilmott ("The West Australian", Perth, 5.12.39). In 1941 she appears also as one of a large group of men and women from the 2/4th CCS in Hobart, Tasmania (AWM Archives). Bessie was one of the Australian Army nurses brutally murdered by Japanese troops on Radji Beach, Banka Island on 16.2.42. Bessie is memorialised on plaque Number M270 in Honour Avenue (Point Walter Road at the Lake near the tennis court), Bicton, WA.
- **WOODBIDGE – Sister Beryl 'Woodie' Woodbridge**, VX 53060, 2/10th Australian Hospital Group, was born in Melbourne on 11.2.05 and at 37 years of age when on the "SS. Vyner Brooke" was "... one of the older nurses. A Melburnian she was both pretty and petite ...". Research has not disclosed the names of her parents from any register but there is a record in the "St. George Call", Kogarah, NSW, dated 18.12.31 where a Miss Beryl Woodbridge was bridesmaid to her sister Phyllis Madeline Woodbridge and if this is the same person then her mother was Mrs. Donnelly at the time. The record shows that (ORB, p. 169) "... after leaving the sinking 'Vyner Brooke' she joined Jenny Greer, Joyce Tweedie, Flo Trotter and Jessie Blanche on a plank and this group started singing a rousing "We're Off To See The Wizard". They drifted away from the main group of survivors and this group of women floated at sea through that (Saturday) night, currents taking them close to the ill-fated group at Radji beach. ... before finally washing up on another beach on Banka Island on Sunday morning. This small group were soon captured by a Japanese soldier and taken for internment at the Muntok cinema ..." (ORB, p. 182). Woodie endured and survived the rigours of internment at Muntok, Palembang and Belalau during which time she occasionally made rag dolls for the children in the camps. Her suffering is evident in the look of emaciation she displays in a photo taken in Singapore after her release in 1945 (AWM Archives). Mention of her in several books states that she was never married - interestingly she made the comment to 'The Age' newspaper 9.30.9.81 to the effect that "... You can't help what the War did to you. I am glad to be alive, to be living as I am. Perhaps if we had stayed in Australia we would have been married, we would have had a married life, but it is your own choice It is noted by the newspaper in that article that unmarried nurses did not receive the home loans grant ..." She was welcomed home in 1946 - with a group of other 'Vyner Brooke' nurses - at the 'CWO Younger Set Ball' at Earl Court, St Kilda ('Advocate' Melbourne 16.1.46) Woodie was discharged as Lieutenant in 1946 and maintained strong

contact with her nursing friends. "The Age' (26.4.55) reported that in 1955 she marched to the Shrine on Anzac Day with Vivian Bullwinkel, and Betty Jeffrey – all wearing their nurses' uniforms and at the head of the contingent with the other Army Nurses. Sadly, her health began to fail, and she died on 29.9.86, being buried at Box Hill cemetery, Box Hill, Vic., aged 81 years. Her memorials are at the Nurses memorial on Honour Avenue (Point Walter Road) at the Lake near the tennis court at Bicton, WA – on the same plaque as Vivian Bullwinkel, Jean Ashton and Mavis Hannah. She also appears on "The Australian ex-POW memorial" at Ballarat, Vic. History does of course roll on for all of us and it is interesting that – as this memorial document is being compiled in December 2016 there appears on the internet an advertisement for the sale (Downies, Australia) of Woodie's war medals plus miniatures and her uniform (plus the uniform of her brother) for a price of somewhere between AUD 5400 – AUD 9000. What she and the other starving nurses in Belalau camp - where a few grains of rice were the difference between life and death - would have thought and said of that is anybody's guess!!

- **ZIMMERMAN** - ZIMMERMAN H. [Herbert] Accountant, Singapore Harbour Board. The "Jeyes" list records "... Zimmerman H SHB –X S DANTISON LEFT FOR JAVA? ... ?" Palembang Men's Camp Sumatra internee. Died in captivity 11.6.44 [43] Muntok of beriberi. Wife Sonia. (SUM); Mr. Zimmermann was on the 'VB' and died in 'Mundok' (Goldberg); according to the website "The Zimmermann Family of Singapore" compiled by William R. McKinnon, **Herbert Zimmermann** was born in 1901 to Carl Zimmermann and Charlotte Schoer, he married Sonia Damant (who had been born in Manchuria and who later died in Australia) and they had a son Oscar Charles Zimmermann (who had been born in Shanghai and who, from at least 1958 until his death lived in NSW and Victoria. Oscar died at Milsons Point, Sydney, Australia in 2001). Post War Sonia married a Fergus Duncan in Singapore in 1947 and they later emigrated to Australia ;the earliest newspaper record of Herbert is when he came first in a 150 yards handicap race at Raffles School and also 2nd in a wheelbarrow race(SFPMA 7.6.15); then in 1919 he was playing football for the Boys Scouts Association , against the Manchester Regiment, at the SCC in a charity fundraising match(SFPMA 26.7.19);the following year he played football for Bousteads & barkers combined team against the SCC (ST. 16.6.20) and then again on 4.12.20 against the HKSBC; finally in 1923 he was playing for the YMCA (ST. 13.10.21); he must have then become married because in 1923 there is a report of Mr and Mrs H. Zimmerman arriving from Java on the 'Melchior Treup' ; little is known as to the circumstances of Herbert being on the ship but there is an amusing anecdote recalled by one of the Australian nurse (Ada Syer) that whilst the survivors were drifting through the sea during the night after the sinking she came into contact with a small group who formally introduced themselves and actually said "... *how do you do ...*" and one of the men in the group said "... *my name is Zimmerman and I am just passing through ...*" (AWM oral recording # So 4057 by Captain Ada Syer). The CWGC records that Mr. Herbert Zimmerman, husband of Sonia Zimmerman, died in Sumatra on 11.6.44 (CWGC), he died at Muntok on Banka Island and was buried in Plot 1, Row E, Grave No. 27.

Crew List (recreated):

- **“ABDULLAH – from Malacca...”**. There is no record of him as a POW in Palembang.
- **AHMAD – Leading Seaman Ahmad bin Ali, #234, RN., or Leading Seaman Abdul Samad bin Ali, MRNVR** (as recorded in ‘The Involvement of Malay Children in the Second World War’ Malay Navy website) – “... on ‘HMS Vyner Brooke’ when it sank off Bank Island. He swam a mile to floating wreckage, constructed a raft which he towed back to where four Australian nurses were and help them get on it. After 16 hours in the water, he got ashore at Muntok, Banka Island...” (‘Malayan Pictorial Observer’, 1947). The same publication source also states “... The European survivors were, however, all shot by the Japs...” which is just sloppy reporting. The Malay Navy article states that Samad bin Ali was the only Malay rating to survive out of 20 on board, that he managed to save many Australian nurses but became a POW and forced labourer on Belawan island until April 1943 when he was released and returned to Malaya on a boat. Perhaps he is the ‘Abdullah from Malacca’ mentioned above?
- **AHMAD – Able Seaman Bin Haji Ahmad, # MN 673 (Malay Section)**, died 13.2.42, Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 97, column 1 (CWGC and Plymouth Naval Memorial). This is possibly Telegraphist Abdulla bin Ahmad who was from Kedah and was apparently last seen at Muntok.
- **AWANG – Able Seaman Awang Adam Bin Awang Nong, #MN 1175**, died 13.2.42, Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 97, Column 1 (Plymouth Naval Memorial).
- **BORTON** – Lt Richard Edward Borton, RNR, who had been commissioned as Temporary Lieutenant in the RNR on 3.3.41 (under the T. 124 Agreement) was the Captain of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” at the time of the sinking and employed by Sarawak Steamship Co Ltd; he was born on 4 July 1889 (according to his MI.9 (Jap) post war questionnaire) so was a mature man in his 50s at the time of the evacuation; he had married Jeannie Dorothy Gray, daughter of the late Mr. W.G. Gray of England and Mrs Gray of Singapore at the Roman Catholic Church, Miri, Sarawak in September 1927 (ST. 19.9.27) and they had four children – one daughter was born at the General Hospital, Singapore in 1934 (ST.13.11.34) and this was probably Phyllis (married name Wilson and who, according to the Angelpro website, appears to live in Melbourne, Australia) and another daughter Una. After the sinking he spent 18 hours in the water before landing at Muntok Lighthouse on 15 February 1942 and being taken prisoner by the Japanese at Muntok – it is a surprise he was not executed as so many other ship’s officers, ratings and servicemen who landed around that area. He was a POW in Muntok for two months before being transferred to Palembang where he stayed until March 1945 when he was again shipped to Changi POW camp in Singapore (MI9 Questionnaire). In his MI9 questionnaire he stated his address as Selby Avenue, Leeds, Yorkshire but a letter he wrote to the father of one of the ‘SS Vyner Brookes’ officers, the late 2nd Engineer Jimmy Miller on 2.3.46 records an address of 234 Lidgett Lane, Leeds, Yorkshire. In 1947, he was

awarded the MBE for work evacuating servicemen and civilians from Singapore in 1942 (Trove, The SMH, 6.2.47) specifically for “... *coolness and courage in defending his ship ...*” (Morning Tribune 20.2.47).

- **BROOKS – Able Seaman William Ritchie Lamond Brooks**, RNVR, P/ESD/X 1773, died on 14.2.42 on the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’, “Missing Presumed Killed”, memorialised on the Portsmouth Naval Column panel 71, Col.2(CWGC); he was 22 years of age having been born in Dundee on 25.1.20. The City of Dundee Roll of Honour records that William Brooks lived at 23 Hepburn Street, Dundee, his next of Kin are unknown (source Peoples Journal 15.12.45); the ‘X’ at the end of his service number means that he enlisted after a new pay code of the early 1930s; he is also recorded in the file ADM 358/2875 “RN Casualties” as Missing Believed Killed as AB Brookes, RNVR.
- **CAKE** – (from his handwritten MI9 “Liberation” questionnaire courtesy Jonathan Moffatt) “... AB. Wallace Vivien Cake, DAX/DJX211 542, R.N. Vyner Brooke, born 18.11.18, enlisted 11.7.40, captured Banka Island 16.2.42, address W.V. Cake, 74 Brazil Sq., St. Johns, Newfoundland. POW – Mulo School 31.8.42 (Col. Morgan); Chung Wa. 31.8.42 (Cmdr. Reid); Sungi Ron. 18.3.44 (Cmdr. Reid); Wallace ‘Wally’ Cake was born in Lamaline, Newfoundland in 1918, the son of Frederick John Cake and Jemima (nee Bonnell), his wife was Ruth. He achieved Grade 11 at school and intended to become a teacher, even enrolling at Memorial University, but changed his mind and joined the wholesalers Steers Ltd. When he decided to enlist his employer thought so highly of him that he said there would be a job for him on his return. Wally enlisted in the Royal Navy at Devonport, to become a crew member of “HMS. Prince of Wales”. He was one of the survivors of the sinking of that battleship who, along with his ‘buddy’ L/S George Noble (also from Newfoundland) were subsequently attached to the Royal Navy Shore Base in Singapore named “HMS. Sultan”. Many such men were then allocated to crew the assortment of merchant ships left in Singapore harbour just prior to the surrender and which ships, like the “SS. Vyner Brooke”, were ordered to take on board civilian evacuees on 12 February 1942 and clear the harbour. Wallace Cake (identified with his correct service number) appears in the report by Major Tebbutt as being on Radji Beach, again with his ‘buddy’ George Noble, so it is possible that he was one of the crew who had manned lifeboat, but in any event, he was either clinging to a raft or on a lifeboat after the sinking and made it to shore in this manner. Tebbutt states “... *some person in authority suggested that the civilian women and children (about 15) should move up a track as they would be slow, and time would be saved. Two slightly wounded ratings from the VYNER BROOKE (L. Sea. Noble G. d/J 146909 and A. B. cake W. D/JX 211542, both ex PRINCE OF WALES) were detailed to escort this party. The nurses were apparently invited to accompany it, but decided to remain....It is noted that this party consisted only of exhausted looking women and children and the two ratings, exhibiting wounds and blood ...*” (Tebbutt); this event is also covered in the book BYE p.146, “... *About nine o’clock it was decided that the civilian women and children, led by an elderly Australian miner and two soldiers whose arm wounds prevented them from being stretcher bearers, should start along the trail...*”; the book ORB (p. 209) also mentions the departure of the civilian group with Cake and Noble and indicates that it was just prior to 0930 hrs “... *the civilian women and children set off soon afterwards, led by a middle aged man who appeared to have assumed command of the group, and accompanied by a couple of the walking wounded. Both were sailors and both had survived the sinkings of the ‘Prince of Wales’ and the ‘Vyner Brooke’.*”; Wally Cake spent the rest of the War in POW camps in Sumatra (Muntok and Palembang); so, Wallace returned to Newfoundland after the war where his mother and wife had paced flowers on the church altar every

week because they were certain that he was alive all through the war. Wally took the ferry from Halifax to St. John's as his way of coming home and then boarded a train with some 1500 soldiers – he being the only sailor on board- to be met by his wife who had simply been told that there was one sailor on the train, to which she had replied "... it is Wally...". Wally returned to work at his old firm of Steers Ltd for many years, before becoming a well-known furniture salesman on Newfoundland (information from telephone conversation with son George Cake, September 2016). Later in his life his son George Cake placed a note on the 'Force Z' (Prince of Wales) website that Wallace was in hospital. Wallace Vivian Cake passed away in St. John's on 11 September 2002 and is buried at Mount Pleasant cemetery. His was certainly a life that included some extraordinary and horrific challenges, but with the reward of a safe return to the peace of his home in Newfoundland.

- **CLEMENT – Able Seaman William John Clement**, D/JX 168866, aged 22 years, son of Matthew and Gertrude Mary Clement of Llanelly, Carmarthenshire, died 14.2.42, Plymouth Naval Column panel 64, col.2 (CWGC); the D/JX of his service number means that he enlisted and trained at Devonport and was a seaman on the lower pay scale. MPK. Also listed as "...*dying of wounds ... probably buried at sea ...*" in the sinking of the "Vyner Brooke" in the Changi BRE records (Casualty List); also, in the file ADM 358 /2875 "RN Casualties "as AB W Clements [H.O] as Died of Wounds.
- **HUSAIN – Able Seaman Husain Bin Mahmud**, # MN 655 (Malay Section). MPK, died 13.2.42, Plymouth Naval Memorial, Panel 97, Column 1.
- **KEENAN** –the official record is **Able Seaman Robert Letford Keenan**, RNVR, P/ESD/X 1423.MPK, son of Terrance Keenan and of Margaret L. Keenan of Edinburgh (CWGC and Portsmouth Naval Memorial) and is apparently also memorialised at the Garrison Church Graveyard, Portsmouth (Necropole website); he is recorded in the file ADM 358/2875 "RN Casualties" as "...*AB Keenan, RNVR, Edinburgh, Div GSD/K – Danae till 1.42...*", so he appears to have earlier been a crewmember on the 'HMS Danae'. He is also mentioned as having been on the 'Kung Wo'.
- **'LEN'** – the account (provided by Dr Neil McGregor) of the sinking of the "SS. Vyner Brooke" written by Sister Sylvia Jessie Mimmie McGregor (nee Muir), [Private Record PR 84/357] mentions that that when she was in the sea and the ship had disappeared a lifeboat floated past and there were people sitting around its edges. She then mentions "... '*Len*', a British sailor with the British battleship '*HMS Repulse*', very irate with the Japs; this was the third time he had been sunk by them in a fortnight. He hadn't a lifejacket, so I swam to a body and took the jacket from it and gave it to Len ...". From this record it is unclear whether Sylvia and 'Len' continued on the same raft or 'Len' was on the submerged lifeboat so it is equally unclear whether he reached Radji Beach or – as did Sylvia – was picked up with the nurses by the RAAF launch with two airmen and delivered to Muntok? AN inspection of the (force. z website) listing of crew members of the "HMS Repulse" shows 19 men with the name Leonard as a first or middle name so further research will be carried out to identify whether 'Len' survived or lost his life.
- **LI – Li Wong Chuan**, aged 44 years, Cassab, Naval Auxiliary Personnel, MPK, also that he died on 14.2.42, husband of Yah, Singapore. (Liverpool Naval Memorial). A 'Cassab' is a sailor on a ship who was responsible for deck stores – often a 'jack of all trades' on the ship.
- **LLOYD** – Stoker Ernest Lloyd, C/KX 86448, had been on the "HMS. Prince of Wales" before it was sunk and was according to TEBBUTT a rating on the "SS. Vyner Brooke". He was amongst the naval and army ratings that were lined up on Radji beach to be executed by the Japanese patrol. He was on the end of the line and when the man next to him (stated by Lloyd to be 'Jock' McGlurk) said, whispering

out of the side of his mouth, “Here’s where we get it in the back , Lloyd replied “Well, I’m going to give it a go”, both men plus a third man, ran into the sea and managed to swim about 30 yards in the sea before Lloyd saw his companion McClurk (actually this seems to have been A/S Hamilton McClurg) killed by a bullet. According to ‘ORB’ a bullet creased Lloyd’s scalp, and another passed through his leg and lodged in his shoulder (Eric Germann believed that three bullets hit Lloyd, p.154 ‘BYE’). His head wound caused Lloyd to become unconscious, and he drifted away regaining consciousness and swimming out to sea before ending up at the other end of the beach. He remained free for ten days, with the help of local Chinese, before being again captured and taken to the Muntok Labour Station (Tebbutt, pp. 3 and 4). He survived being a POW and the war and met up again with Eric Germann (the first time had been in Muntok prison in 1942 when they had both congratulated each other on miraculous escapes) in the Airport canteen in Singapore on 19 September 1945 (p. 328, ‘BYE’) his address (courtesy Jonathan Moffatt and possibly from the MI9 questionnaire) was wife at 2 Carys road, Coeburg West, Maitlands, Cape Province – suggesting either that he was a South African or his wife had evacuated there.

- **MA’ANOR – Able Seaman Ma’Anor Bin Mahat, # MN 1016 (Malay section).** MPK, also that he died on 14.2.42 (Plymouth Naval Memorial)
- **MALAY NAVAL RATINGS** – apart from the names of **Abdullah, Ahmad, Awang, Husain and Ma’anor** listed above the best source of the number and fate of Malay naval ratings from the MRNVR on board are the references left by 2nd Officer, Lt. A.R. Mann, RNVR. Mann tells us that in its pre-evacuation missions the ‘Vyner Brooke’ had “... 10 Malay ratings manning the guns and two Malaya Navy Wireless telegraphists...”. At the time of the evacuation, he records that (p.3 of his memoirs) there were “... sixteen Malay Navy ratings on board, including four ‘Boys’ and a couple of Signalmen. The ‘Boys’ were little chaps about sixteen years of age who should have been at home with their mothers...”. During the bombing attack on the ship when Mann entered the wireless cabin to get a signal off for assistance, he records that “... the Malay Navy Leading Telegraphist sitting in a corner and ...said... ‘All right, you get and stand by a boat, its no good staying here; I suppose he did but I never saw him again. He was an exceptionally nice little chap, came from an influential Kuala Lumpur Malay family, and, I suppose need not have been there at all, poor lad...”. After the sinking whilst in the sea Mann came near an upturned lifeboat and records that it had two people with it “... The two with it were a Malay deck-Boy and a Malay Signalmen. The signalmen was sitting astride the keel at the after end and grimacing in a pitiful manner. His face and arms had been terribly burned with what I assumed to be some form of acid, we had heard that the bombs used by the Japanese had contained some inflammatory composition which burned whatever it fell upon., it may have been that, where he was when the bombs went through the hatch I don’t know , but if he was in the for’ard ‘tween decks then he may have got it there... The Deck-Boy was standing up supporting himself with a boat hook. We drifted on... I looked at the upturned lifeboat and saw that the Signalmen was now in the water alongside it trying to get hold of the ankles of the Deck – Boy to pull him into the water, but the boy was pushing the boathook at him to keep him off. A while later the Signalmen was back on the boat and was in a terrible state, writhing and contorting his face. The acid had eaten its way into the flesh, and whereas, when I had first seen him the discoloration was black against his brown skin, it was now a vivid red. As I watched, his arms stretched out, his face went rigid with the eyes turned upwards, and he slid off the boat into the water. He didn’t move again except for the motion of the water and floated past me within

three feet. He was dead and it was of course better that it was as so, he must have endured terrible agony. The little Malay Deck-Boy still stood on the bottom of the boat with his boathook...”.

- **MANN** – Lt. Arthur J. Mann, RNVR, had served in the Royal Navy in 1920 on ‘HMS Hood’ and then as a Leading Seaman on the gunboat ‘HMS Dwarf’ on the African Coast before becoming a Customs Officer in China. He was later appointed from Tpy. Sub Lt (in ‘The London Gazette’ 24.8.41) to Temporary Lt. and according to ‘The London Gazette’ became a full Lt on 31.1.42; his personal papers are held in the Imperial War Museum, London (Docs. 23736); he appears to have been fulfilling the role of Second Officer “... another local Lt. A. J. Mann was the ship’s officer ... “ (ORB p.126); he is also mentioned later in the voyage “... ship’s radio officer , Lt. Mann, offered his cabin to one of the older pairs of married evacuees from Singapore [this could have been anyone including the Watsons, the Dominguez’s or the Maddens] – they were very grateful to Nurse Mavis Hannah (who had declined use of the cabin) ... “ (ORB p. 137); whilst the personal papers in the IWM would have his full story these have not been accessible to this researcher , but a summary is that he slid into the sea from the listing ship at the same time as Captain Borton ; then drifted at sea holding onto a piece of mast and then a hatch cover. He drifted towards a raft on which were a Malay stoker (Lt Mann in ‘Kalgoorlie Miner’ article on 23.3.42 says this was ‘Stoker Way’) from the ship’s crew, a Siamese woman, and two British children perhaps called Betty (11 years) and David (9 years), so he joined them on the raft, and they continued to drift along the coast of bank Island in strong currents. They tried to enter the coast of Banka Island through streams, but the mangroves were quite thick, on one attempt they were astonished to come across a Staff Sergeant Knight, RASC, a survivor of the sinking of a motorboat who also joined them. Sometime later they all came across a lifeboat under sail with four Australian naval ratings from the ‘HMS Siang Wo’, which had been beached, and who was making for Batavia some 300 miles away. The ratings – named in the ‘Kalgoorlie Miner’ article as AB Henry Wanelo, AB Ervin Hampshire, Stoker F.A. Murphy, and Stoker J.C. King - would not allow initially the men from the raft into the lifeboat but did permit the woman and children (even though it was a 25-foot lifeboat). Eventually they were allowed into the lifeboat, but after about 24 hours Mann and his two fellow travellers – Staff Sgt Major Knight and Stoker Way - were put ashore again at what appears to have been on Sumatra. They found a ten-foot sampan and then set off again – on 20 February they reached a river mouth on the Sumatran coast where they came across another lifeboat with three men on board – Lt Drakeford, SSVF, Stoker Dunn, ML311, and AB Belmont, ML311 -this time they could board. By 24 February, this lifeboat reached a place named Mogala where a prau agreed to take them south – two days later they transferred again to a much larger boat on which were a party of 20 Dutch soldiers and this boat reached Java on 27 February. Mann was then driven to Tjilatjap on the south coast and on 2 March he boarded the ‘SS. Verspyk’ for Fremantle; the file “RN Casualties’ in the UK archives (ADM 358/2875) shows that at some stage the authorities had recorded him as “... Missing Believed Killed a Lt. V. Mann, MRNVR ...”. Arthur Mann, after surviving the sinking of the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ returned to the Merchant Navy and served as a Beachmaster at the Anzio landings. After the war he was a Customs Officer in East Pakistan.

“...Arthur John Mann was born in south-east London, 20th July 1904. He would have shared a bedroom with his siblings at 4 Brighton Grove, New Cross, a district of Deptford and Greenwich. Built in 1858 for railway workers, that typical London house, topped by an economical flat roof, still stands midway along a short terrace. The humble dwelling,

like its neighbours, in 2020 is now gentrified and worth half-a-million pounds. From his street, the eleven-year-old boy could have watched the 'Kaiser Baby Killers'— the Gotha bomber and the hydrogen-filled Zeppelin — conduct the first aerial bombardments of a crowded city.

Arthur would have been proud of his father. William Mann, had set aside his shovel; he had sweated his way up from railway fireman, heaving anthracite into the fireboxes of locomotives, to the esteemed position of engine driver. He had moved up to town from Dorking, Surrey, where he was born in 1875. By the 1911 census, William had been wed twelve years to Mary Thorn, also of Dorking. Four children kept Mary busy: At the age of 55, on 29th December 1959, Lt Arthur John Mann suffered a heart attack and died in St John's Hospital, Chelmsford, Essex. He had not married, and at the time was living with his sister, Nellie Pickard, at The Croft, Stoney Hills, Burnham on Crouch, Essex. He left his estate (£4,642-15s-4d) to his father, William Mann, retired railway motorman, aged 85. His father lived ten years beyond his son. He passed away in 1970 aged 95 years....” (Extract from ‘One Jump’ Ahead’ edited by Harry Nicholson).

- **MCCLURG – Able Seaman Hamilton McClurg, D/JX 204773**, crew of “HMS Prince of Wales” then, after that battleship was sunk by the Japanese, attached to shore base “HMS Sultan” in Singapore before being allocated to “SS. Vyner Brooke”; the official record is Able Seaman Hamilton McClurg, D/JX 204773, died on 14.2.42, aged 40 years, Royal Navy “HMS. Sultan”, son of Hamilton & Agnes McClurg of Glasgow, husband of Ellen M. McClurg of Glasgow (CWGC); except that it is very probable that Hamilton McClurg - coming from Glasgow it would not be surprising if he was called ‘Jock’ - was one of the naval ratings in the second party murdered by the Japanese on Sunday 15 February 1942 at Radji Beach on Banka Island. According to survivor Stoker Ernest Lloyd, when they were marched along the beach to a small bay out of sight of the remaining nurses and wounded and told to blindfold themselves “... The man next to me, who was a seaman I had known in Singapore - I think his name was Jock McClurk – said ‘This is where you get it Ernie, right in the back’ I said , ‘Not for me , Jock’ and we both dived into the sea, with one other man, as the Japs opened fire with a machine-gun. They mowed down the others first and then turned the gun on the three of us. I was a powerful swimmer and was going well. Jock cried out, ‘I’m hit, Ernie,’ and both he and the other man sank out of sight....” (p. 143 ‘SD’); file ADM 358/2875 “RN Casualties” has “AB Hamilton McClurg, ex – “Prince of Wales “as “Believed Killed in the sinking of the “SS. Vyner Brooke”.
- **MILLER – James ‘Jimmy’ William Miller** was born in Oamaru (in the South Island of New Zealand) on 7 July 1912 to James Miller (1870-1951) and Elizabeth Miller (nee Wisden) (1875-1957). In the 1920s the Miller family moved to Gisborne, on the East Cape of the North Island of New Zealand where Jimmy attended Gisborne Central School and then Gisborne High School – winning the Gisborne High School senior swimming championship. Jimmy developed into a champion swimmer and water polo player for the Gisborne Amateur Surf and Swimming Club, being in the team winning the ‘C Ferguson Cup’ in 1931-32 and in the 4 x100 m relay team which won the ‘Swain Memorial Cup’ in 1932-33. Newspapers recorded him as the “...brilliant Poverty Bay swimmer...”. Upon leaving school he was taken on as an Apprentice engineer at the Gisborne refrigerating Co. Ltd and in 1934 secured the position as 7th

Engineer on the 'SS Doric Star', a Blue Star cargo liner. Jimmy excelled in his work (his references in family archives evidence he was highly regarded) as a Ships Engineer and during 1934 - 35 served on the 'SS Norman Star', 'SS New Zealand Star' and 'TSS Africa Star'. In 1936 he moved to work for Cable & Wireless Ltd. as 4th Engineer on the Cable Ship 'Lady Denison Pender' based in Aden and making repairs in the cables in the Indian Ocean and down the coast of Africa as far as Zanzibar. When war broke out in Europe, he tried to leave C & W. Ltd. but they would not accept his resignation and in 1940 was made an Engineer on the Cable Ship 'CS. Recorder' which had been based in Auckland but had been transferred to Singapore when war broke out. Soon after Jimmy completed the 'Merchant Navy defence Course' which qualified him to take charge of the Armaments of a 'Defensively Equipped Merchant Ship' and joined the crew of the 'SS Vyner Brooke' trading between Singapore and Kuching (Borneo). During this year or so in Singapore Jimmy became very close to an Australian woman, Miss Ivy Allen, and they experienced the fun and entertainment of Singapore society. **Temporary Sub-Lieutenant (E) James William Miller, RNR**, was commissioned to this temporary rank on 2 September 1940 (London Gazette 1940); [Note: Some records of Jimmy's career are misleading – 'ORB', p. 2 states he was a regular officer of the Royal Navy who had survived the loss of his ship and p.125 says he was "... on attachment to the Royal Navy ..." and "... made redundant by the sinking of the capital ships ..." (presumably this means the "Prince of Wales" and the "Repulse").] Once the trading voyages to Kuching were rendered impractical following the Japanese invasion of Malaya, Jimmy recorded in a letter home (dated 28 January 1942) that he was at sea "*... on our way back to Singapore...*" having been "*... on patrol up the East Coast* [indecipherable]. *We have had a helluva time up there of it – been bombed 4 times but not hit but never want to see them any closer some have landed as close as 10 ft away & it is rotten experience. Then we went into the port & most of our crew refused to sail & were taken to gaol – only firemen stuck it out. When we left were bombed at an oil wharf...we just managed to get away...Old man & Mate are only ones on bridge...The nighttime is all we have to look forward to & hope they won't spot us. I think that they are bound to get us sooner or later & the worst part is you can do nothing about it. Down in the Engine Room just hanging on waiting like hell for the next bomb... When we were first bombed I was on deck and heard a bomb whistling down very eerie & at about the same time it exploded about 10 yards off, not very nice I can assure you. Things don't look too bright up this way & God alone knows how it will finish...*". A week later, on 7 February 1942, Jimmy sent his last communication to his parents by Cablegram "... ALL WELL AND SAFE PLEASE DON'T WORRY+MILLER+..." – that was the last time he was seen by his 'girlfriend' Ivy Allen as on 12 February 1942 they both left Singapore in the last flotilla – she on the 'SS Gorgon' which although bombed at sea amongst the convoy with the 'SS Empire Star', reached Fremantle safely. During the evacuation voyage of the 'SS Vyner Brooke' and as Second Engineering Officer on the ship Jimmy Miller did brief the AANS nurses when they boarded on the usage, pitfalls and dangers of the lifejackets and lifeboats. Also known is that after the war Miss Ivy Allen met up with Major Tebbutt in Melbourne – they both knew each other, and Jimmy in Singapore and Tebbutt told Ivy that on board the ship "*... Jimmie was absolutely marvellous in rendering what assistance he could in every way...*". After the ship was hit by bombs and sank, Jimmy reached a partially submerged and upturned lifeboat with some 12 nurses clinging to it, along with Mrs Bull and daughter (this was the lifeboat to which Rosetta Wight, Flo Casson and Clare Halligan were clinging to whilst severely injured) (ORB, p.163) – he was probably the most capable swimmer amongst the survivors and would have had no difficulty assisting people in the sea. Ocean currents took this lifeboat and its clinging 'occupants' toward land all afternoon and that night

washed them all ashore on the northwest coast of Banka Island at about 2200 hours on Saturday night. Jimmy helped Clare Halligan and Rosetta Wight up the beach and then he set off with Vivian Bullwinkel to the bonfire they had seen on Radji Beach some two kilometres away – returning that night with Eric German (the young American brewer) and a young English teenager to help the nurses and other wounded across the same distance to the bonfire (ORB, p.176); the next day Jimmy was one of the ships officers organising the some 70 – 80 people on Radji Beach and finding freshwater supplies. Tragically Jimmy Miller and Tempy. Lt. Bill Sedgeman plus other unidentified naval and army officers and NCOs formed the first group the Japanese troops ordered at bayonet point along Radji Beach, around the small headland and onto a beach beyond where they were ordered by the Japanese to walk to the water before they were murdered by bayonet, rifle, and sword (ORB, p.212). The earliest real news of what happened to the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ would not have been received by Jimmy’s parents back in New Zealand until they read the account of the escape by Lt A.J. Mann RNVN who had survived the sinking, floated down the Banka Straits and with others made it safely to Java and then Australia by March 1942 - his account was published in every paper in Australia and the family archives hold a copy of the same account in a local paper ‘Te Rau Weekly Press’ of 26 June 1942. After that there were letters from Ivy Allen in Melbourne and the Malayan Research Bureau in Sydney with snippets of news from survivors in Japanese internment camps in Sumatra and then after the war the official letters of ‘Presumption of Death’ and finally in March 1946 a letter from Captain Richard Borton saying “... it is definite he was shot on North Coast of Banka Island the same time as Ch. Engineer, Sub Lt Sedgeman & the Australian Nurses as I have before stated...”. It would seem that Jimmy Miller’s parents received only scanty details of his death because on their grave headstone in the Taharuru Cemetery, in Nelson Road, Gisborne, New Zealand is also engraved “... *in memory of Sub. Lt. James Miller, R.N.R., missing on Banka Island on 14 February 1942...*”. Jimmy Miller, from all that we know, acquitted himself with authority, dignity, and courage in the aftermath of the sinking of the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’ and the events leading up to the massacre on Radji beach on 16 February 1942. He is also memorialised on the Liverpool Naval Memorial, Panel 2, Col. 2. The secret ‘Jeyes’ toilet paper lists compiled by the civilian internees of Changi prison during 1942 on the known location of fates of thousands of civilian and Volunteer servicemen after the invasion by the Japanese recorded “... MILLER J. W. 2ND ENG VYNER BROOKE – X C & W – KILLED? ...” . This referred to his earlier employment by Cable & Wireless Ltd, for as an officer on the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ Jimmy was an ultimately an employee of ‘The Straits Steamship Company’ and he is recorded as such in the Colonial Office Record of Deaths (JM) and – along with fellow officers Sedgeman and Reith and they were all commemorated after the war in 1947 with the unveiling of a tablet at St Andrews Cathedral in Singapore. The newspaper in his hometown of Gisborne, the ‘Gisborne Herald’ of the time (19.9.45) stated that “... *Sub-Lieutenant Miller was an engineer in an English shipping line for several years before the war and continued his service in the merchant navy during the early stages of the war. When the Japanese commenced hostilities, Sub-Lieutenant Miller was serving as second engineer on the ‘Vyner Brooke’, which was plying between Kuching in Borneo and Singapore. The vessel was taken over by the British Navy, armed and made into an auxiliary warship and was manned with Royal Naval Reserve men. Beyond the knowledge that their son was on the ship at the time [that it was sunk] no further information has been received by Sub-Lieutenant Miller’s parents, Mr and Mrs J. Miller, Kingsley Road, Gisborne... Sub -Lieutenant Miller was born in Oamaru and educated at the Gisborne Central and Gisborne High Schools. On*

leaving school he became apprenticed to the engineering trade at the Gisborne Refrigerating Company. He later joined the merchant service as a marine engineer. During his school career he quickly distinguished himself as a swimmer and won the Gisborne High School senior swimming championship. He broke many race records for all types of races and was the holder of all the Poverty Bay records for his class when he left the district. He had also competed successfully in the Hawkes Bay championships and at one time won the cup for the most points gained in various events..." ('Papers Past' website).

- **NOBLE** – (from his MI9 questionnaire courtesy Jonathan Moffatt) "L/S George Noble, ex 'Prince of Wales', D/JX 146969, wife at 2 Norwich Lane, Bolton, Lancs.". George Noble was from Newfoundland (born in October 1904 to Lemenuel James Noble and Matilda Margaret Osbourne) and was a great 'buddy' of fellow survivor 'Wally' Cake (also from Newfoundland) who had also been on the "Prince of Wales" when it was sunk off Malaya, they were both then assigned to shore base Singapore "HMS. Sultan" and then the "SS. Vyner Brooke". He survived the sinking and was with the survivors on Radji beach before, as a walking wounded (he was injured by shrapnel in his arms and legs and had severe concussion so was very groggy – in fact at the end of the War he could relate very little about the events according to his signed affidavit in the War Crimes files on the Radji Beach killings held in the NAA, Melbourne) and unable to carry a stretcher with other wounded to Muntok, being assigned to accompany the women and children into Muntok. He was then captured and became a POW, presumably accompanying Wally Cake to the POW camps of Sumatra. Along with Wally he survived these and returned to Newfoundland with his wife after the war (some of this came from a telephone conversation with George Cake, September 2016). George Noble died at the Salvation Army Home in St John's, Newfoundland in 1988.
- **O'BRIEN** – the CWGC record is "... **3rd Engineering Officer Dennis [sic: Denis] James O'Brien**, aged 54 years, Naval Auxiliary Personnel (Merchant Navy), died on 14.2.42 as a result of the sinking of the 'SS. Vyner Brooke', son of Dennis [sic: Denis] Stephen and Elizabeth Jane O'Brien, his parents lived in Lakemba, NSW, Australia. Denis is also commemorated on the Liverpool Naval Memorial column, panel 23, Col.2 ... ". The Liverpool Naval memorial is also known as the "Memorial to the Missing of the NAP of the Second World War" i.e., men from the British Merchant Navy. if he were aged 54 years he would have been born in 1888, but other Australian records indicate he was born in 1896 (therefore was 46 years at time of death). The fact that he was in the service of the Royal Navy under the T.124 agreement also indicates that he must have at some time been employed in the merchant navy, but private family correspondence written in December 1941 from his fellow Engineer on board the 'SS Vyner Brooke' Jimmy Miller, suggests that Denis had been working on a tin mine in Thailand at the time of the Japanese invasion. The T.124 Agreement was for merchant seamen to serve alongside RN in Naval uniform as members of NAP and subject to Navy discipline. The last known record of Denis O'Brien being alive comes from the memoirs of 2nd Officer, Lt A.R. Mann, RNVR, when "... *an hour or two...*" after the ship sank beneath the waves and the survivors milling around in the water, Mann records that he was next to "... *the waterlogged lifeboat was still afloat, crowded inside, and every inch around her sides was occupied by people hanging onto the lifelines on her rubbing strake... Our third engineer, a chap named O' Brien, was also clinging to the boat. He had been working on a tin mine in northern Malaya, the staff of which had been taken off by sea at the start of the war in the east. On arrival in Singapore, he had taken the job in 'Vyner Brooke'. He was an Australian, and months later, when in England, I received enquiries from his people in*

Australia. There was nothing I could tell them that would help in raising their hopes of seeing him again. He also, could not swim...". There is also a record in the file "RN Casualties" that W. O'Bryan, 3rd Engineer Vyner Brooke, probably drowned on way to shore" (ADM 358/2875) also a record of "3rd Engineer, D.J. O'Brien"; **the circumstances of his death are not certain, and he may have even reached Radji Beach to be killed there?** Denis's father died before the War on 20.11.37 and his mother Elizabeth died on 20.9.46.

- **PHIAW – Fireman Phiaw Chew Teck**, aged 40 years, died on 14.2.42, husband of Phen Tee of Hainan Island, China (CWGC); he is also recorded on the Liverpool Naval Memorial, Panel 23, Col. 2.
- **REITH** – Described as an "...elderly reservist ..." (p.126 ORB); CWGC shows **'Lieutenant (E) David Reith**, RNVR and RNR aged 67, died 14.2.42 in the sinking of the "SS. Vyner Brooke", son of William and Christina Malcolm Reith, Panel 2, Column 2, Liverpool Naval Memorial (CWGC); **interestingly probably by reason of an error the CWGC also have a 'D. Reigh, civilian, as dying on the "SS. Vyner Brooke" on 14.2.42' (CWGC);** the file "RN Casualties" has as 'Believed Killed' a Lt. D. Reith, RNR (ADM 358/2875); it would appear that David Reith was born in the 1870s in Aberdeen, Scotland and served as a Ships Engineer; the Crew Lists at Royal Museums Greenwich has a David Reith born Aberdeen, aged 22, as a 2nd Engineer on the 'Crown of Toledo' and then for several years as 2nd Engineer aboard the 'Everlida' – his age is given as variously 22, 31, and 33 years during this time; he appears to have later either been based or then retired in Singapore with return trips to the UK in 1929 and 1935 (SFPMA 20.3.35 when he left on the 'Aenas'); in 1934 he attended the funeral of a ships engineer, George Batt, of similar age who had been Asst Superintendent of the Straits Steamship Co Ltd (ST. 3.9.34); he was an employee of The Straits Steamship Company (via the Sarawak Steamship Company) – as were Sedgeman and Miller; no doubt with the threat from the Japanese he joined the Naval Reserve; one version of his death on the "SS. Vyner Brooke", given that the first bomb to hit the ship went straight down the funnel and exploded in the engine room, apparently killing or badly injuring all the engine room crew (ORB p. 151) it seems that David Reith might have lost his life in the early stages of the attack on the ship. In fact, this is stated in ORB (p. 165) "... Crew members were killed in the engine room by the bomb that dropped down the funnel. The elderly reservist Lieutenant Reith and at least three Malay volunteer sailors among them ... "; **however, the memoirs of 2nd Officer, Lt A.R. Mann, RNVR, give a different and almost certainly more accurate account when he records that when the ship was in the last stages of listing and sinking "...I went aft and down to the 'tween decks by the baggage port. There I met the Chief Engineer – he seemed a bit dazed. I said, 'You better get going Chief', he said 'I can't swim a bloody stroke'. I said, 'Now's your chance to learn; your life jacket will keep you afloat, it's no-good staying here'. He said 'here goes' and dropped out of the port baggage port. I threw some pieces of timber out and having seen the Captain going down the shipside on a jumping ladder, decided to go..."**. This is the last known report of Chief Engineer Reith alive or dead, **however amongst the personal correspondence held by the family of 2nd Engineer Lt Jimmy Miller is a letter dated 2nd March 1946 from Captain Richard E Borton 'Master H.M. A/V Vyner Brooke' (from his home 23H Lidgett Lane, Leeds.7.) in which he confirms to Jimmy's family that "... it is definite he was shot on the North Coast of Banka Island the same time as the Ch. Engineer, Sub Lt Sedgeman & the Australian nurses as I have before stated...". This is repeated in the memoirs [a copy of which is held in the Auckland War memorial Museum, Auckland, New Zealand - in the papers of Leila Bridgman] of Captain Hugh Borton. They are titled "Slow**

Boat to Java' and record his memory during the last fateful voyage of the 'Giang Bee' which was sunk some distance from Banka Island of "...far away on our port beam a flickering light portrayed disaster to another ship. This may have been the 'Vyner Brooke'. Only after the war ended did I hear of her loss, and the fiendish atrocities committed by the Japs when the survivors reached Banka Island. Officers Reith, Sedgman, Mellor [sic- Miller], Trewitt and Sister Clarke – all friends of mine were murdered there..."..So, it is highly possible that David Reith 's life was taken in the massacre on Radji Beach.

- **SEDGEMAN** – First Officer Temporary Lieutenant William 'Bill' Sydney Sedgeman, RN. Born in 1911 in Goodwick, Pembrokeshire, Wales, – the 1911 census records him as a five month old son of Elizabeth Ann Sedgeman (she had been born in the Scilly Isles) ; the earliest newspaper reference to him found is (ST 6.10.33) as a young 'Ships Officer' from 12 Harbour Village, Goodwick, on the 'Hakoyaki Maru' from London to Singapore and then in 1938 he is recorded as being 27 years of age on the 'Ranpura' from Southampton to Singapore (ST 31.12.38). The Colonial Office Register of Deaths record him as a 'Chief Officer Sarawak Steamship Ltd' – the company which owned 'SS Vyner Brooke' - and he was gazetted on 20.20.39 as Tpy. Lt. RNR; also, SEDGEMAN W.S. [William Sydney] 'Bill' b.1911 Dyfed, Wales. From Fishguard, Pembrokeshire. To Singapore 1938. Chief Officer *Vyner Brooke*. Killed 14.2.42 Banka Island [murdered] (JMM); on 2.3.46 the captain of the 'SS Vyner Brooke', Richard Borton, in a letter to the father of one of his deceased officers (Sub Lt. Jimmy Miller) and stated "... But it is definite he was shot on the North Coast of Banka Island the same time as the Ch. Engineer [the Chief Engineer was David Reith], *Sub Lt Sedgeman and the Australian nurses...*". in the Notice of his Estate in 1948 it is recorded that he is "...late of Shirley, Victoria Avenue, Fishguard, Co. of Pembroke..." Public Trustee (ST. 26.6.48); the record at the CWGC is Sub-Lieutenant William Sydney Sedgeman, RNR, aged 27 years, died 14.2.42 in the sinking of "HMS Vyner Brooke", son of E.A. Sedgeman of Shirley House, Victoria Avenue, Fishguard, Pembrokeshire (CWGC); the file "RN Casualties" shows Sub-Lt. W. Sedgeman, as Believed Killed [recovered] which suggests - without further research - that his remains may have been recovered but this seems very unlikely; he left his estate of STG 1462 to 'Sydney Sedgeman, retired railway employee'. In 1947 a ceremony was held to unveil a tablet at St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore in memory of employees of the Straits Steamship Company who lost their lives – including Sedgeman, Miller and Reith.
- **STAPLES** – according to the website naval-history.net and its *Day by Day (14.2.42) diary, Temy. Lt. Edward 'Ted' Lawrence John Staples, RNZNVR, survived the sinking with Captain Borton. In contrast and correctly, the MI9 Questionnaire completed by Staples after the War makes no reference to having been on the "SS Vyner Brooke" and was in fact a Lt on HMML311 being captured in Java on 9 March 1942. There is a record (17.1.45, Hutt News, New Zealand) that his father Mr. A. J. Staples of 7 Harborview, Lower Hutt received a POW card from War Camp No.3, Thailand to say Ted was safe; in peacetime Lt Staples was apparently well known in Rugby Football circles in Lower Hutt, NZ., and had had been commissioned in the Royal Navy in 1940 before seeing service in the waters around Singapore. After the War, he was repatriated to the UK by RAPWI and on his return to New Zealand worked as Senior Technical Officer, Chemistry Section, Wallaceville Animal Testing Station, Upper Hutt, NZ. His gravestone in Waikanae cemetery, New Zealand shows his date of death as 4.11.2001 and that he was the husband of the late Edna Grace Handley Staples and the loved father of Ted and Lawrence Staples. A telephone conversation with Lawrence Staples and his wife Brenda (25.7.16) revealed that Ted never*

(understandably) talked much about his wartime experiences but kept in touch for decades with the POWs he had been close to in Burma .The family have drawn much of their knowledge of his escape from Singapore from the references to Ted (he is unnamed in the book) in Rohan Rivett's "Behind Bamboo" being the story of the survivors of the "SS. Siang Wo" which had been attacked and then run aground at Muntok .

- **TAYLOR** – *after the sinking of the 'SS Vyner Brooke' Sister Jessie Simons, AANS ended up on a raft with other nursing Sisters and three crew men from the ship – two British sailors (one from 'HMS Prince of Wales') and a "... Eurasian Radio Operator...". One of the British sailors was badly burned and slipped off the raft that night and drowned whilst the other – apparently the 'HMS Prince of Wales' survivor - appears to have been **Wireman Stanley Taylor, D/MX 70683, RN 'HMS Sultan'** (then from Palembang POW camp records we learn he was) from 21 Birnie Lane, Chadderton, Oldham, Lancs. He was transported (all having been said to be in good health) from Palembang POW camp on 17 July 1942 in a 'Japan Draft' and died as a POW in Yokohama on 13.3.43. Stanley appears to have been cremated because the CWGC 'Concentration reports' state his remains at first were initially held in 'Wall Niche J-C-12, British Mausoleum, Yokohama on 1.3.46 and then on 13.9.46 transferred to the British Section J.C.14, Yokohama War Cemetery.*
- **TREWHITT/TYRWHITT/ TREWITT** – several sources indicate that a man by one of these surnames, from the crew of the ship, appears to have been shot on Banka Island - either on 'Radji Beach' or elsewhere on the coast. **Research now strongly suggests the name was TREWHITT.** Firstly, we have "... Tyrwhitt, (Extra 2nd Engineer of Vyner Brooke), believed to have been shot [the word 'ashore' has been deleted] on Banka Is. N. coast ..." (RN Casualties file ADM 358/2875 in UK Archives, which lists RN Casualties killed and missing ship by ship , specifically on the page for 'Redang & Vyner Brooke' courtesy Jonathan Moffatt email 11.10.16); secondly there is the record by Lt Hugh Morton, Ships Engineer, 'SS Giang Bee' which was also sunk in the same region as the 'Vyner Brooke', who in his memoirs - which are in the personal papers of Miss Leila Bridgman (another survivor of the 'SS Giang Bee') now held in the archives of the Auckland War Memorial Museum in Auckland, New Zealand – describes on page 2 being in a lifeboat after the sinking of the 'Giang Bee' and states "... Far away on our port beam a flickering light portrayed disaster to another ship.(This may have been the 'Vyner Brooke'. Only after the war ended did I hear of her loss, and the fiendish atrocities committed by the Japs when the survivors reached Banka Island. Officer Reith, Sedgeman, Mellor [sic- this was Lt Jimmy Miller, RNVR and 2nd Engineer on the 'Vyner Brooke', Trewitt and sister Clarke – all friends of mine were murdered then.) ..." ["Reith' would mean Lt David Reith, 'Sister Clarke' presumably is Sister Dorotha Mary Clarke of the AANS]. In the absence any record of a person by the name of 'TREWITT' having been killed in the War, it is pertinent to focus on the only other person with a similar name and date of death i.e., **Robert Trehitt**, an engineer at Jasin Lalang Estate, Malacca and CQMS in the Local Defence Corps. According to the CWGC he was KIA on 10.2.42. In conflict with this DOD is the entry in the 'Jeyes Toilet Paper List' compiled in Changi Internment camp during 1942 which states "...TREWHITT R JASINLALLANG DUNLOP BVD LEFT RNVR 14/2..." – this a highly credible source and whilst the date does not fit with him boarding the 'SS Vyner Brooke' on 12 /2 it does seem to contest the date posed by the CWGC (it is worth understanding in this context that many 'Date of Death' recorded by the CWGC, when they do not know when a person died, are the date a person was 'Last Seen'). He was the husband of L.M.

Trewhitt of North Shields, Northumberland. Mrs Trewhitt is mentioned arriving in Singapore in 1936 with Master R. Trewhitt [sic] (ST. 24.4.36). The son Robert was killed, aged 21 years, whilst at a Flight Training School for the RAFVR as a leading Aircraftsman and U/T Pilot which seems to mean Pilot Under Training). The life story (courtesy of Michael Dale of the UK, his emails July 2020) of Robert Trewhitt is "... Robert was born between April and June 1897 to Elizabeth Rebecca Beveridge and George William Trewhitt in Chiton, part of North Shields in Tyne and Wear. He was one of six children. In 1901 he was living at 56 Front Street, Chirton with his parents and siblings, George William, Thomas Jason, Elizabeth Isabella, and Richard. His oldest sister Jane had already left home. By 1911 he was 13 years old and had moved to 52 Queen Alexandra Road West in North Shields and was living there with his parents and older brother Richard. His father, George, was working as a winding engineman (above ground), most likely at Preston Colliery as his home was near the pit head. He married Louisa Mary Vickers in 1922 somewhere in Tynemouth. In late 1922 / early 1923 the couple had a son, Robert. On the 3rd of May 1925 he arrived in New York on a ship called the 'San Edwardo', he was listed as the Second Engineer. On the 6th of September 1930 he arrived in New York again, this time on the 'MV Winton' which had sailed from Hull on the 23rd of August. He is again listed as being the Second Engineer. The manifest for this voyage has a column recording each crew members length of service at sea, Robert's is listed as 12 years which means he would have started in 1918 at the age of about 21. On the 18th of March 1931 he is on the 'Winton' again when it arrived in New York. It had sailed from Glasgow leaving on the 6th of March and he is again employed as the Second Engineer. On the 30th of September 1931 he arrives at New York, once again on the 'Winton' and again as the Second Engineer. In 1936 Wards directory has him listed as living at 169 Billy Mill Lane in Chirton and says that he is a Marine Engineer. On the 9th of April 1936 Louisa and their son Robert board the P&O ship Ranpura in London, the ship is travelling to Yokohama in Japan however they are only going as far as Singapore. Their address is given as 43 Cartington Road in North Shields and Robert junior is recorded as a 13-year-old scholar. According to his family Louisa did not like the heat in Singapore and wanted to move home. On the 26th of January 1939, the whole family arrived in London on board the Blue Funnel Line ship, the 'Diomed' from Singapore. Robert is recorded as an engineer while Robert junior is recorded as a 15-year-old student. Their last country of permanent residence is shown as FMS (the Federated Malay States which describes most of the States of Malaya at the time) and their intended address in England is recorded as 123 Queen Alexandra Road West, North Shields, the home of Robert's father, George. Four months later, on the 27th of May 1939 Robert boarded the Blue Funnel Line ship, the 'SS Memnon' on his own as a first-class passenger bound for Singapore. His occupation is recorded as an engineer and his address is shown as 33 Glendale Avenue in North Shields. The manifest says his country of intended future residence is Malaya. Robert was working as an Engineer for Dunlop on the Jasin Lalang Estate in Malaysia. It is about 20 miles north east of Malacca town and was 1,963 acres in size of which 1,719 acres was cultivated rubber. On the 3rd of August 1939 he wrote a letter home to his dad, brother George and sister-in-law Isabella. It is addressed from the Jasin Lalang Estate and in it he talks about how hot it is and asks if they have heard from his older brother Richard. The Local Defence Corps was formed in November 1941 and ran along the lines of the British LDV or Home Guard. Men over the age of 40 joined up and Robert was no exception, he became the Company Quartermaster Sergeant (CQMS). His rank as a senior NCO would suggest World War 1 service although none can be found. On the 27th of July 1941 Robert wrote home to his Dad, brother George and sister-in-law Isabella again. This letter talks about how hard Chirton is being hit in the blitz and says not to worry about him as all the LDC training has put them into a position where they can look after the

estate coolies if they become scared and the government can keep their regular soldiers for more important places. He asks if they have heard from Richard again and says he has not turned up in his part of the world. In mid-January 1942, the mainland LDC units were withdrawn to Singapore and played various roles in the defence of Singapore including Observer Corps duties...”.

RESEARCHER NOTE: The following is now included so as to preserve the trail if future research eliminates the name TREWHITT -It is notable that, officially, there were only two men with the very rare British surname Tyrwhitt killed in the Second World War and one was a Lt Commander of a British destroyer sunk by a German U Boat in March 1942; the other man to appear in the CWGC records as having died during the War is in fact “...**Captain Cuthbert Tyrwhitt, # 50924, died 15.2.42, Worcestershire Regiment, aged 29, son of Thomas and Dorothy Marsden Tyrwhitt, husband of Delia Scott Tyrwhitt of Greenwich, Connecticut, USA, Column 67 Singapore Memorial...**” (CWGC) and **the researcher of this memorial document previously considered that there is a very high probability (but admittedly not definite) that the ‘Extra 2nd Engineer’ and Captain Cuthbert Tyrwhitt were the same people.** The phrase ‘Extra 2nd Engineer’ is such a vague and unofficial title for a small ship such as the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ and appears to cover someone included in the crew at the last minute. From one of England’s oldest distinguished families, Cuthbert Tyrwhitt, who was born in Hampstead in April 1912 (his mother’s maiden name was Marsden) and attended Westminster from 1925 (obituary in the Westminster School journal, ‘The Elizabethan’ March 1946), he became an Officer in the Worcestershire Regiment being listed in the ‘Gazette’ on 29.1.32 and until 21.11.39 as a 2nd Lieutenant (plus at times as a temporary Captain and Warrant Officer); he may have been related to the famous Sir Reginald Yorke Tyrwhitt, Admiral of the British Fleet (and C – in C, China Station, 1926-28) between the world wars; it also appears that (at around age 22 years about 1934) Cuthbert was in Shanghai with his Regiment and met the American, Delia Scott, whom he married in Peking at the British consulate. The Westminster School journal ‘The Elizabethan’ suggest Cuthbert left the military in 1936 but rejoined at the outbreak of War – which presumably is intended as 1939. At some stage later and prior to the Japanese war Cuthbert and his wife moved to Singapore and there is a statement in the book ‘Intelligence and the War against Japan’ by Richard J. Aldrich that this move occurred in 1939 - “... In December 1939 [Intelligence in] London despatched a single officer, Captain Tyrwhitt, to join FECB specifically to create a card index of security material from ‘Y’ sources (meaning intercepted from consular and attaché traffic) at Singapore and Hong Kong: in other words a list of Japanese agents ...”. This record therefore reveals that, in addition to his role as an officer in the Worcestershire Regiment, he was also a member of the ‘Far East Combined Bureau’, the covert body which controlled the gathering of information for British Intelligence in the South-East Asia region (some of the FECB files, including a ‘Blacklist of Enemy Agents’ are in UK Archives WO 208/2049). The FECB watched Japanese residents in Singapore and Hong Kong and tried to keep up with the major Japanese secret service effort in the Far East. Post war letters available **on-line** and held in the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University (“ Ida Pruitt and Marjorie King papers, 3.59 Delia Tyrwhitt”) Harvard University Library, written between Delia and her friend Ida Pruitt, evidence that the marriage had broken down whilst they were in Singapore together during 1940-41 and Delia actually refers to having a “...fairly violent affair ...” with another unidentified military man (apparently a colourful personality and a British Marine who was part of the group organising the official escape route from Singapore to Sumatra and who survived the Burma railway camps). By way of background to all this intrigue, Cuthbert had a sibling Jacqueline (see book authored by Ellen Shoshkes on Jacqueline) who seemed to revel in international political and social change movements (at one time being involved with the Fascist movement) and she enjoyed mixing in upper class circles – Delia projects the same motivations and somewhat similar political interests in her correspondence. So importantly for interpreting the possible movements and motivations of Cuthbert Tyrwhitt as the Japanese later advanced down the Malayan Peninsula in December 1941 /January 1942 and then actually landed on and advanced across Singapore island itself in the second week of February 1942, it is necessary to remember Cuthbert Tyrwhitt was a spy in British Intelligence - a person who would have been considered incredibly valuable to the Japanese for interrogation and torture if they ever captured him. The next unusual aspect of Cuthbert’s end is that apart from the ‘Civilian Casualty List’ reference at the beginning of this account and the official CWGC record (which uses a ‘date of death’ of 15.2.42, but this date was also used for many men for whom there is ‘No Known Grave’) there are more than the usual number of differing scenarios for the death of a man supposedly killed in central Singapore at British High Command and in Fort Canning where a death would be witnessed and recorded very clearly. In addition to the two scenarios already mentioned above there is, firstly, another from the ‘Jeyes’ toilet paper list (microscopic writing on 18 sheets of the old shiny ‘Jeyes’ toilet paper on which there was secretly compiled by the civilian internees in Changi Prison a highly accurate record of the fate of

several thousand men from Singapore and Malaya after the Japanese invasion) - this record states “... Tyrwhitt C. Capt. – Red Army – POW – son of Admiral ...” - which is interesting because it suggests a source of someone who knew something about Cuthbert’s past life (but not entirely accurately) and also suggests that Cuthbert was still alive as a POW. But it implies he was alive only after escaping **before** the Surrender, since if he was in Singapore the internees would not have bothered to record him as a POW in any of the local POW camps such as Changi (this was the normal practice for this document since there were already good records of POWs in Singapore). The next wartime record is even more intriguing and makes the researcher conjecture whether it was in fact a ‘red herring’ for security purposes – this time from the records of the Bureau of Record and Enquiry in Changi, a military unit under Captain David Nelson working in Changi (Military) POW camp in an official capacity for the Allied hierarchy with the objective of tracking and recording the movements and fates of tens of thousands of allied servicemen in the far East after the Surrender to the Japanese - this states “ ... Tyrwhitt? Capt. HQMC, F.E.C.B., shot at Fort Canning, buried in Fort Canning cemetery ...”. It is interesting that, firstly, on 15.2.42 the Japanese front line was nowhere near Fort Canning so he could not have been shot by Japanese troops; secondly this usually very accurate and essentially military source, operating in a POW camp in Japanese occupied Singapore chooses not to take the safe option and associate him with the regular force Worcestershire Regiment and, somewhat surprisingly given the secretive nature of the FECB, almost publicly states that he was a member of a covert Intelligence agency and was dead and buried! It also uses phraseology that could mean anything - including that he might have shot himself /or had been shot by the Japanese at Fort Canning/ or that he was shot by his own army at Fort Canning and finally raises the obvious question that, if he was in fact buried in Fort Canning in central Singapore, why was he not disinterred after the War and reinterred in Kranji like all other soldiers? Was all this simply a wartime cover story for an Intelligence Officer who simply had to be made to disappear at the time of the Fall of Singapore, because he would have been rich pickings under torture by the Japanese! It is hard to accept that FECB hierarchy, after having evacuated 98 percent of their personnel to Java on 8 January 1942 ahead of the advancing Japanese, would not have ordered their last remaining one or two personnel (Cuthbert Tyrwhitt and one other it seems were the only FECB people left in Singapore once the Japanese had landed on the island) to escape by whatever means possible once the Japanese forces had physically landed on Singapore Island. Any FECB agent would have been captured, interrogated, tortured, and probably shot as a spy in the same way the Japanese treated the SOE agents they captured in Southern Siam. In the mind of this researcher, the chaotic ‘last convoy’ of 11 -13 February 1942 out of Singapore would have been an ideal escape route for a high-risk individual such as Cuthbert Tyrwhitt and perhaps being classified as an “... *extra 2nd Engineer ...*” was a suitable cover story since Cuthbert apparently had some engineering experience after leaving school. We then have other accounts of Cuthbert’s death which range from what his family were told, being that he was “... *gunned down in the streets of Singapore ...*” (which raises the question of ‘by whom’) to author Justin Corfeld’s statement that he was “... *probably killed by artillery fire on 15 February 1942 ...*” – which is not unreasonable but just another unfounded assumption. After the war, his old school journal ‘The Elizabethan’ (April 1948) listed that his wife, Mrs. D. G. Tyrwhitt in October 1947 gave 150 pounds to the Westminster School Memorial Fund in the memory of her husband Cuthbert Tyrwhitt. The Probate record shows “... *Tyrwhitt Cuthbert of North – court, Great Peter Street, London.SW1 died 15.2.42 in Malaya. Administration London 9 September to Delia Gunnee Scott Tyrwhitt widow and Thomas Tyrwhitt retired architect. Effects STG 2907...*” (ancestry.com); death notice says killed 15.2.42 at Fort Canning. Delia Tyrwhitt remarried in 1990 and died in 2005 in Connecticut, USA. The same school journal ‘The Elizabethan’ recorded “...*Cuthbert Tyrwhitt was born in 1912 and admitted to Westminster in 1925. On leaving school he joined the army, and was gazetted to the Worcestershire Regiment, but retired in 1936. On the outbreak of war, he rejoined his old regiment. He is now known to have been killed in action in Singapore in 1942.*”

- **WAY** – “... *Stoker Way ...*” was recorded by the ship’s Second Officer, Lt. A.J. Mann, RNVR in a newspaper interview soon after he arrived back in Australia the sinking (“Western Mail”, Perth, WA, 26.3.42) and in Mann’s memoirs as a Royal Navy Stoker who had served on ‘HMS Repulse’ being on a raft after the sinking with a woman and two children (these were the two Bull children). Mann climbed onto the raft to join “...*the man from Lancashire...*” who was a Stoker and had been on the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’, the Siamese woman and the two children. This was **Stoker Oswald Way, DKXX 115206**, ex ‘HMS Repulse’ (force z website) who according to Lt Mann had a strong Lancashire accent. Mann and the others, including a Sergeant – Major (or Staff Sergeant) Knight, RASC they picked up along the way, drifted towards Sumatra and then boarded a lifeboat crewed by sailors from the ‘SS Siang Wo’, bound for Sumatra. Based on Mann’s account, the three men from the raft ‘left’ the lifeboat

and the woman and children with the sailors and after many changes of craft and joining together with a large group of Dutch soldiers made their way to Batavia and then Tjilichap where they boarded a ship., the 'General Verspyck', to Australia where Stoker Way appears to have disembarked at Fremantle (Memoirs of Lt A. R. Man, RNVR). Man seems to have not formed any positive relationship with Stoker Way during the whole time they had travelled the escape route together – he never mentions Way by name in his memoirs – only ever referring to him as the “Lancashire stoker”. The surname ‘Way’ was only recorded in an interview that Mann had with Australian newspapers in March 1942.

- **WELCH** – Able Seaman James Dennis Welch, P/JX212444 , was born in Birmingham on 28.4.20, enlisted 14.8.40 with an address of 51 Bishopsgate Terrace, Bishopsgate Street, Ladywood, Birmingham is known to have been a crew member and survived to become a POW on Banka Island on 18.2.42 (which is quite a few days after the sinking indicating either that he was able to hide in the jungle for a couple of days or that whatever raft or debris he was clinging to took some time to reach land) and held at Muntok during 1942 before being moved to the POW camp at ‘Sungei Ron’ (or sometimes spelt as Songei Geron/Songei Ron) near the Pladjoe golf course in Palembang (see Muntok Peace Museum website for details of the camp). A/S Welch returned to the UK after the War. He married Irene and had three children He was a successful ‘landlord’; of a pub /hotel until he passed away. Like many men who had experienced trauma and been a POW of the Japanese he did not discuss his wartime experiences with his children. (James Welch’s MI9 ‘Liberation’ questionnaire - via family member Nicola Booker, Birmingham).
- **WHITE** – Lt Cdr James Cusack Stacey White, RNVR/SSRNVR. some sources seem unclear if he was a member of the official crew , but the report by the Captain of the “SS. Vyner Brooke” is specific that he was on the ship and took part in organising the abandon ship phase; in ‘ORB’ (p. 201) there is a reference to another person in a lifeboat landing on Radji Beach [although the author does not make it explicit as to whether or not this is a lifeboat from the ‘SS. Vyner Brooke’] “ ... A Royal Navy officer, Lieutenant Commander J.C.S. White, was also in the group; originally on another vessel, he had been picked up as he drifted on a life raft ...”;). Lt Cmdr. J C S White joined the Singapore Municipality in 1923 and was later promoted into the Secretariat and then Secretary of the Singapore Improvement Trust in 1931. He must have considered himself a ‘Yorkshireman’ because he belonged to the Society of Yorkshiremen in Singapore. He was initially in the RNVNR, promoted to Lt Cmdr. in 1939 and then the SSRNVR attached to the RN. After the sinking of the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ he was captured in an unknown location and became a POW in Palembang POW camp for the duration of the war. Commander White’s wife and two children were by then living at the Grand Hotel, Nuwara Eliya, Ceylon; On 27 October 1941, a Lt Cdr J.C.S. White had attended the funeral of Mr Leonard Langdon – Williams (of the Singapore Improvement Trust) and Mrs Langdon was a passenger on the “Vyner Brooke”. In the context of this network amongst passengers/ officers there was also the coincidence that Lt Cmdr. White’s wife was in hospital in Singapore having her baby at the same time as Mrs Kathleen Waddle (who lost her life on Radji Beach) was giving birth to her daughter (SFPMA 26.4.37). The mystery of how James White reached Banka island and whether he was ever on Radji Beach seems to be clarified by Lynette Silver in her book ‘Angels of mercy’ p.248 where she recounts “... the next morning Bullwinkel noticed that during the night a third lifeboat from ‘Vyner Brooke’ had come ashore... in it were Sisters Peggy Farnamer, Lorna Fairweather, Esther Stewart, Ellen Keats and Clare Halligan, along with some civilian women and official evacuee Lieutenant Commander James White, Royal Navy. When the castaways

awoke the next morning they discovered that White, the most senior in rank, had disappeared. He turned up later in the prison camp at Muntok. When Major Tebbutt later asked him why the lifeboats that reached Radji Beach were not used to go and search for other people in the water, he replied that 'everyone was too bewildered and exhausted'...". Also, insofar as background on James White we have "...WHITE J. C. S. [James Cusack Stacey] 'Jimmy' b.1891 Highbury, London. WW1 RN Service. Assistant Secretary, the Secretariat, the Municipality, Singapore. Lt Commander MRNVR Singapore. Captured Banka. POW Sumatra. Wife Olga the Supervisor of the SEA Officers Convalescent Home, Neuralia. Jimmy died 2.3.58 [65] Richmond, Surrey..." (JMM).

- = 24 crew identified against Barton's report there were seven officers and 45 ratings (this leaves 28 Ratings yet to be identified – these seem likely to be split between Malay crew from the MRNVR, men in the RNVR and Royal Navy ratings from the "HMS Prince of Wales" and the "HMS Repulse". All the officers from the ship seem to have been identified in this document.)

Victims from the 'Pulo Soegi' killed on 'Radji Beach';

See narrative on pp. 12-15 for the sources of this information and the conclusiveness of these people being identified as being on 'Radji Beach'.

- **ATKINS** – CFN. Arnold Wilson Atkins, #7646745, ZAOW, 14 Section, RAOC. Died aged 32 years on 15.2.42 (CWGC), son of Samuel and Elizabeth Atkins; husband of Gladys Evelyn Atkins of Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury, Yorkshire. The IWM website shows a memorial at Kirklees, Longwood, Yorkshire recording Arnold Atkins and stating "... *Died of Wounds, Muntok, Banka Island, February 16, 1942 ...*".
- **DAY – Lt. Leonard Stephen Day**, SSRNVR. Died on 16.2.42, husband of L. Day [this is actually Elizabeth Pauline Day] of Urmston, Lancashire (CWGC). He was born in 1909 in Barton – upon - Irwell to James (d. 1934) and Elizabeth Ann Day (d.1929 – family gravestone in St Saviour's Churchyard, Wildboarclough, Cheshire) and spent the early years of his life at 66 Brook Road, Flixton (1911 census). The website 'Trafford War Dead' continues with the information that "... *on the 27th April 1929, Leonard embarked on the 'SS Sarpedon', a steamship of the Blue Funnel line and travelled 1st Class to Port Said and onwards to the Malayan Straits. Aged 29, he resided at 69 Brook Road, Flixton and was employed as a Clerk. He must have returned to the UK as he married - Elizabeth Pauline Farrand during the June quarter 1939 in the Manchester R.D. – ref. 8d/395. The UK Colonial Office recorded his death as being on or about the 16th of February 1942 off Muntok in the Bangka Strait.... He was presumed to have lost his life in the sinking of the 'HMS Pulo Soegi', sunk by gunfire from a Japanese Cruiser. There were 25 survivors with 55 missing, one of whom was Lt Day... Administration of his estate was granted to his widow – Elizabeth Pauline Day, on the 8th April 1948 at Manchester. His Estate was valued at STG 871. His*

widow's address was given as 'Shutlingslow', Dane Road, Sale". Other sources tell us that Leonard was an Assistant, Sandilands Buttery & Co., 29 Beach Road, Penang (JMM) and became a Sub-Lt in the SSRNVR in 1936 ('Malaya Tribune' 15.8.36). During that year he began to feature regularly playing golf for Keppel Golf Club at Sepoy Lines and was best man at the wedding of W.H. Swan (Gas Dept, Singapore Municipality) and Hylde Roberts . Again in 1939 he was best man at the wedding of John Brown (Harrisons Barker & co) to Edith Speers in Penang (Malaya Tribune 21.7.39.) Lt. Day was listed as one of the ship's officers believed by T/Major Marsh, officer in charge of the RAOC contingent on the 'Pulo Soegi', in the lifeboat that landed on 'Radji Beach' on the morning of the massacre. Poignantly in 1946 the 'Sunday tribune (15.9.360 published an article listing the owners of privately owned books which had been looted by the Japanese in Singapore and which had turned up at raffles Library and the name of L. S. Day is amongst this long list – which included others who had lost their lives at the hands of the Japanese and also from internment in Japanese camps.

- **HODGSON -Staff Sgt. Thomas Hurrell**, # 7610705, ZAOW, 14 Section, RAOC. Died 16.2.42 (CWGC) aged 37 years.
- **HURRELL – Sgt. Robert George Hurrell**, # 5768950, ZAOW, RAOC. Died 16.2.42 aged 36 years (CWGC). Husband of Violet Agnes Hurrell of Hinckley, Leicestershire.
- **KINSLEY (sometimes misspelt as KINGSLEY) - Private Cecil Gordon Kinsley**, # 7654688, Royal Army Ordinance Corps, 'Z' Advanced Worksop, aged 33 years died on 23.3.42, and was the husband of Elsie Kinsley, Beverley, Yorkshire, he is remembered on Col. 109 of the Singapore memorial at Kranji (CWGC). Private Kinsley was a survivor from the sinking of another ship near Banka Island – the 'Pulo Soegi' and landed in a lifeboat with other 'ZAOW', RAOC soldiers and some members of the ship's crew 9 including ship's officers) at 'Radji Beach' on the morning of Monday 16 February 1942. Kinsley (incorrectly named 'Kingsley' by Eric German in his account as recorded in BYE) had been one of the wounded lying on stretchers at the top of Radji Beach – whom the Japanese proceeded to bayonet after they had murdered the three main groups of men and then nurses on the Beach (BYE, p. 153). Eric German states that when he returned to the site of the killings after hiding in the jungle he found "...Two stretchers were empty. One had been the old magistrates' and the other the wounded soldier Kingsley's. What had become of Kingsley? Thinking perhaps Kingsley had survived the bayoneting and crawled into the jungle they searched the immediate area and called his name. No answer...". Kinsley had in fact crawled into the jungle and some hours after the massacre he heard Vivian Bullwinkel nearby and called out "... Where have you been, nurse?" (Vivian became exasperated with him later and told him off for calling him a 'nurse' – she was a 'Sister'! He told Vivian during the 12 days they hid in the jungle that he was from Yorkshire and his wife's name was 'Elsie' ("Singapore Burning" by Colin Smith, p.534) – he was born in 1909, was from Hull and had married Elsie Pearson in 1933 in Yorkshire. Cecil Kinsley had survived two bayonet thrusts to the lower and upper abdomen (one of which had punctured his lung) during the killings on Radji Beach, which came on top of the shrapnel wound he had presumably suffered in the sinking of the 'Pulo Soegi' which had sliced his left upper arm to the bone (p.535). Vivian Bullwinkel recalled that all his wounds became infected whilst they were in the jungle. After some 12 days they began to trek together to Muntok – incredibly a Japanese naval officer in an open topped tourer picked them up, gave them each a banana, and drove them to Muntok. Without access to the drugs which would have saved him, Private Cecil Kinsley died in hospital in the POW camp there

on 24 March 1942 and was buried in the cemetery there. (“Singapore Burning”, p. 5353)

- **MARTIN – Lt. Arthur John Martin**, RNZNVR. Captain of the ‘Pulo Soegi’. His early years are described in his old school magazine ‘The Taranakian’ December 1950, the magazine of New Plymouth Boys High School “... *ARTHUR JOHN WALLER MARTIN. Lieutenant Arthur John Waller (Peter) Martin came to school from Moturoa in 1928 and remained until 1930. At school he showed interest in many things and was particularly good at games, taking a great interest in athletics. In April 1940 he was granted a commission in the NZRNVR (New Zealand Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve) with the rank of Temporary Lieutenant and left for Singapore in the same month to take up duties there. After extensive training around Malaya, he was promoted to Lieutenant in 1941. In January 1942 he was given command of a small reconditioned naval ship “Paula Soezi” (sic) with a crew of three officers and thirty Malaysians. His ship left Singapore on the night of February 13th and as far as details can be ascertained, the ship was blown up by a Japanese warship on 16th February 1942.*” (Wikipedia). A newspaper article in 1942 titled “Reported Missing: Well known Yachtsmen” then filled out the story a little further “... *Lieutenant A.J. Martin, who is listed as missing, is believed by his mother, Mrs B.I. Martin, of 18 Allenby Avenue, Devonport, to be safe. He was in command of a small naval vessel which left Singapore on February 13, with two other New Zealand officers and a crew of 30, and it is thought by other Dominion officers who have returned safely that the ship may have reached one of the outlying islands without interference. Lieutenant Martin, who was educated at the New Plymouth Boys’ High School, was a member of the senior Takapuna Rugby team and had acted as a forward hand of the Auckland yachts ‘Alpere’ and ‘Little Jim’ ...*” (“The New Zealand Herald”, 20 .4.42). Lt Martin was listed by T/Maj. Marsh, RAOC, who had been in command of the RAOC contingent on ‘Pulo Soegi’, in a post war report as in his view being one of the officers who landed in the ship’s boat on ‘Radji Beach’ on the morning of the massacre.
- **MORAY – SMITH** – (NB: this person is a **speculative inclusion** in this list and primarily included because he was in Singapore attached to shore base ‘HMS Sultan’ and possibly a launch ‘Sylvia’, because another RNZNVR Officer is said to have been in the lifeboat landing on Radji beach, because of a matching date of death and the fact that his cause and date of death are not officially known) Lt. Henry Alan Moray – Smith, RNZNVR, died 16.2.42 (CWGC has on ‘HMS Sylvia’ a non-existent ship at that time – although there did exist a launch by that name which escaped from Singapore – but with no mention of him being on board), son of John and Amelia Moray-Smith of Christchurch. Henry Moray – Smith. He appears to have come from Christchurch in the South Island of New Zealand and there is a record in ‘The Press’, a Christchurch newspaper, of 25.6.34 of him being appointed manager of the Rakaia branch of the NZ. Loan & Mercantile Agency. In 1935 he is reported playing golf and on the Committee of the Rakaia Athletics Association.
- **SHERRINGTON – Corporal William George James Sherrington**, # 7624357, ZAOW, 14 Section, RAOC, died 13.2.42 (CWGC) aged 26 years, son of William and Nellie Sherrington; husband of M. Sherrington of Southend – on -Sea, Essex.
- **SKIMMING – Sgt. Archibald Skimming**, # 7634180, ZAOW, 14 Section, RAOC. Died on 15.2.42 (CWGC) aged 29 years, the son of Margaret Skimming, of Motherwell, Lanarkshire.

Unidentified people on board:

- **A Siamese lady and two British children**, a girl aged 11 years and her brother aged 9 years on a raft, who Lt A. J. Mann thought were called Betty and David (Angelpro.com) – **this is probably either Mrs Pearson or Mrs. Susie Stevens shown in the list above** – the children are almost certain to be the son and daughter of Mrs Bull. They miraculously survived the raft floating down the Banka Straits and – possibly after being picked up by survivors of the sinking of the ‘Siang Wo’ (Australian soldiers) landed in Java and were interned there for the rest of the War.
- **A British crew member named ‘Len’ (referred to in sister Sylvia Muir’s statement) from the “HMS Repulse”** - research on the identity of this person continues. There were 20 men on the “HMS Repulse” with the Christian name ‘Leonard’ so it will take time.
- **British crew member called ‘Stan’** – on page 174 of ‘ORB’ there is a report by Australian nurses Jessie Simons, Winnie May Davis and Pat Gunther that they attached to a raft containing badly injured crew members from the “Vyner Brooke”; a British crew member called ‘Stan’, who spent a lot of time talking about the fact that he had been sunk four times during the War (including twice in European waters) plus a Eurasian radioman on the “Vyner Brooke” crew member and another badly burnt seaman who had been one of the gun crew of the four inch gun on the “Vyner Brooke”. ‘Stan’ had been on the “HMS. Prince of Wales” which cuts down the possibilities for his identity. **Two very possible identities are Stanley Williams, Royal Marine, PLY/X100178 who died on 16.2.42, but for whom the researcher can find no other information (CWGC), or Able Seaman Stanley Alderson, D/SSX17215, aged 22 years and husband of Rosina Alderson of Plymouth, he died on 31.3.42 and had been attached to the shore base “HMS Sultan” in Singapore after the sinking of the “HMS Prince of Wales” (CWGC and Plymouth Naval memorial).** During the first night on the raft the badly burned sailor slipped off the raft into the sea without uttering a word. Both the Eurasian radio operator and the seaman called ‘Stan’ reached Muntok on Banka Island with the nurses.
- **Guifoye/Guilfoyle** - someone by this name (or a phonetic similarity) stating that she was “... Margaret Guilfoyle from Lancashire and worked in munitions ...” (Ada Syer Interview AWM) was reported drifting in the sea by Sister Ada Syer. There is no record of a survivor of this name.
- **A mother with four small children** – during the bombing of the ship Sister Betty Jeffrey was lying on the floor and always seemed to have a small child’s foot under her stomach she recalls “... her mother had **four small children** with her and she calmly prayed aloud – the Lord’s Prayer. Poor soul, if anyone needed help, she did...” (ORB, p.150). Mrs Bull had three children with her – this may have been the family, but there were many more children on this ship, so it seems likely that this was another family - the reciting of the ‘Lord’s Prayer’ it tends to indicate either a British or Eurasian family in that era. Possibly Mrs Read and her five children who survived and were interned?
- **Malay sailors** – it is not clear how many ratings from the MRNVR were on board the ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ – and so many will have lost their lives without specific record but will be in the official records as have become ‘Missing’ whilst attached to Singapore shore base ‘HMS Sultan’.
- **Man from Malaya, a doctor, with a 5-year-old child** tied to him washed ashore dead on the coast of Banka Island.
- “...white Russian woman killed during 2.00 pm bombing ...” (p.37 ASCOTVB)
- “... a young White Russian lady also on the raft...- (P.39 ASCOTVB) – possibly Mrs Warman.