

DETAILED REPORT OF CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING CAPTURE OF H.M.S. "MATA HARI"

H.M.S. "MATA HARI".

Tonnage 1,013 gross. Owners: P & O Steamship Navigation Co.

Taken over by Admiralty at Singapore on 31st August, 1939 and converted into Minor War Vessel.

ARMAMENT. One 4 1/2 inch B/L Gun. Two Lewis Guns. ASDIC fitted, and 25 Depth Charges.

Commissioned under my command 10th September, 1939 (approx)

CREW.

European Officers (T. 124)	8.	Malayan R.N.V.R. Officers	1.
R.N. (ASDIC) Ratings.	3.	Malayan Seamen	17.
Chinese Clerk	1.	Chinese Carpenter	1.
Chinese Fitter	1.	Indian Eng. Room Ratings.	9.
Chinese Servants	9.	Ratings (Malayan)	15.

Total Crew. - 63.

DUTIES.

10th September, 1939 to 8th December, 1941.	Engaged on Patrol Duty in Malayan Waters.
8th December, 1941, to 15th December, 1941.	Scheme 'BETTY' on West Coast of THAILAND.
17th December, 1941, to 20th December, 1941.	Covered left flank of Army in company with H.M. Ships RAUB, LARAT, PAHLAWAN, & PANGLIMA. All ships were under my command.
23rd December, 1941, to 2nd January, 1942.	Sebang Defences.
5th January, 1942 to 8th February, 1942.	Singapore Patrols.

NARRATIVE.

11th February, 1942.

Malayan R.N.V.R. and Asiatic T. 124 Ratings made a request that they should not be taken out of Malaya, as they did not wish to be separated from their families for an indefinite period. Prior to this the entire crew, with the exception of the Chinese Servants, had proved very satisfactory, being keen and efficient in their duties steady and cheerful in emergencies. Permission was obtained to allow the Asiatics to land, provided a new crew could be obtained. A new crew was selected from Ratings ex "PRINCE OF WALES" and "REPULSE", already aboard "MATA HARI", and a few Army personnel were pressed into Naval Service. In addition, thirty Royal Marines were drafted to the ship W/T Ratings were not available, but these duties were taken over by Lieutenant Clevely and Gable, Royal Corps of Signals and Sergeant Chishalm A.I.F. All Asiatics left the ship with the exception of two. The new crew therefore was:-

Officers 9. European Ratings 72. Marines 30. Asiatics 2.
Total 113.

Thursday 12th February, 1942.

Embarked passengers, Royal Navy 60, Army 60, Civilian men 118, women and children 132. Total passengers, 370.

Received written orders that on the completion of embarkation "MATA HARI" was to proceed to Batavia via Durian and Banka Straits, taking available cover during daylight. These orders were delivered to me by Lieutenant H.G. Banks, M.R.N.V.R. of H.M.S. "DEMAS"

1930 hours, left harbour. Visibility, owing to smoke from burning oil tanks on Pulo's Bulam, Sabarek, and Sambo, was very poor. 2300 hours anchored at north end of swept channel. Passed orders, received before departure, for H.M.S. "JARAK" to proceed to Batavia at daylight.

Friday 13th February, 1942.

At approximately 0400 hours proceeded through DURIAN Strait swept channel. Approximately 0900 hours anchored off South end of FALSE DURIAN ISLAND to shelter for the day. Within five minutes of anchoring was attacked by nine planes. One civilian was wounded. Shifted to within ten yards of mangroves and anchored at short stay in sixteen feet of water. Throughout daylight the intervals between air alerts were never longer than twenty minutes. Planes came over in groups of from nine to twenty-seven machines. At approximately 1600 hours proceeded on voyage. At 1930 hours and 2200 hours (approximately) flashes were observed ahead. The first flash was probable H.M.S. "GIANT BEE" being sunk, and the second group that of H.M.S. "SCORPION" in action with the Japanese ships. As no wireless warning of enemy surface craft had been received, I thought the flashes to be lightning.

Saturday 14th February, 1942.

At approximately 0100 hours in position 110° Perhala Lighthouse 13', heard shouting in the water, stopped and picked up swimmers, Sub. Lieuts ARNOLD and BUCKWELL, and four ratings from H.M.S. "SCORPION". They informed me that two or three hours earlier H.M.S. "SCORPION" had been sunk in action with one Japanese cruiser and two destroyers. This was the first information I had received that Japanese Surface craft were operating in the vicinity. Course was altered towards the coast of SUMATRA, and steamed south inside the 3 - 4 fathom line. Approximately 0900 hours anchored close inshore in a bay about twenty miles North of MOESI RIVER. Whilst proceeding to the anchorage eighty-one enemy bombers and twenty fighters passed directly overhead at 2000/3000 feet without attacking. It was learned later, that these planes dropped paratroops on PALMBANG Airfield. I broadcast a W/T warning to all British Warships that enemy ships were operating North of BANKA STRAITS. It was decided to land passengers at PALMBANG if possible before proceeding through BANKA STRAITS. 1600 hours, proceeded on voyage. 2030 hours arrived off MOESI (Palembang) RIVER without sighting enemy craft. River lights were not burning and I could not obtain a pilot. From 2100 hours onwards the searchlights and gun flashes were visible in many directions in North end of the straits. 2300 hours, gave up attempt to obtain a pilot, for searchlights were coming closer, and proceeded in an endeavour to slip through BANKA STRAITS.

There were not sufficient boats to accommodate the women and children, and as their presence on the ship prevented me from fighting an action I decided that in the attempt of being intercepted by the enemy, I would surrender the ship. The White Ensign was therefore struck, the gun's crew dismissed, and the Offices of the Watch instructed not to use the British or Allied challenges.

Sunday 15th February, 1942.

At approximately 0015 hours, searchlights accompanied by light gunfire, were focussed on H.M.S. "MATA HARI". Stopped engines. Endeavoured to ascertain identity by morse lamp. 0030 hours, searchlights were switched off. 0045 hours having received no reply to Morse Lamp, I proceeded on voyage, still uncertain as to whether H.M.S. "MATA HARI" was amongst American, Dutch or Japanese craft.

Approximately 0300 hours in position, two miles south-east off first lighted buoy in BANKA STRAITS, the ship was again lit up by searchlights. Stopped engines. Received signal by Morse in International Code

- (1) Anchor at once.
- (2) Do not attempt to lower boats.
- (3) Show a light.

To these I complied. Tried again to establish identity, but received no reply. Was still in doubt as to nationality. At dawn observed many warcraft and several transports in the Straits. The Japanese had made a landing at Muntek shortly after midnight. Among the warcraft was a cruiser of the Sendai type, and steaming round us a light cruiser of the Yudari type. As light improved the Yudari Class cruiser was seen to be flying the Japanese Ensign. All secret documents and confidential books were immediately destroyed. Ammunition, 4" gun breechblock lock, small arms, navigation instruments, binoculars, etc., were thrown overboard. The Yudari class cruiser was preparing to send a boat to H.M.S. "MATA HARI" when H.M.S. "FAIRMILE" 311 appeared. "311" was magnificently handled, and I estimate that the cruiser fired ten to twelve broadside

Before she was destroyed. This action gave us ample time to completely destroy ASDIC, even to unshipping and dumping the oscillator before boarding party came aboard. H.M.S. "MATA HARI" was escorted into Muntok by a Torpedo boat.

Monday, 16th February, 1942.

Passengers and crew were landed on MUNTOK.

NOTE. The Japanese Officer-in-Charge of the Boarding Party warned me that if any pistol ammunition was found with bullets not nickled or other wise cased, but just plain lead; the person possessing the ammunition would be shot immediately.

sgd/- A.G. CARSTON LIEUTENANT R.N.R.
COMMANDING OFFICER,
H.M.S. "MATA HARI".

REPORTS ON PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS.

16.2.'42 to 3.3.'42.

MUNTOK, Banka Island. Under Army Authority. Work: repairing an airfield.

4.3.'42 to 26.8.'42.

PALANBANG, Sumatra. Under Army Authority. Work: extending P.I. Airfield working in docks and PLADJOE OIL REFINERY. While in this camp, under instructions from Commander P.H.S. REID, R.N., I recorded the narrative of survivors regarding the fate of Singapore local craft. I handed a copy of these narratives to Commander SIFFRE, R.N., at the liberated P.O.W. Camp in Manila on 27.9.'45.

27.8.'42 to 29.8.'42.

Aboard Japanese Oil Tanker "YOYO MARU" for Singapore. This ship had loaded a cargo of crude oil at PLADJOE.

30.8.'42. to 19.9.'42.

Aboard S.S. "HAURAKI" Naval Base, Singapore. This ship had been captured by two armed merchant raiders south of Colombo on 12th July, 1942.

20.9.'42 to 23.9.'42.

Aboard "MATA HARI" for passage to Japan. The First Lieutenant, all Engineer Officers and a few Ratings had been forced to remain in the ship; the ship had taken part in the capture of "RENGAT" and had carried troops to Borneo. All European Personnel had been transferred to work aboard an oil-tanker prior to my boarding.

24.9.'42 to 1.10.'42.

Aboard S.S. "HAURAKI" for passage to Japan, but the Nipponese had difficulty in getting the engines to work.

2.10.'42 to 9.10.'42.

Aboard S.S. "TOKIO MARU", enroute to Japan.

10.10.'42 to 13.10.'42.

Naval Shrine at BOTOKODEN, nine miles from SASEBO.

14.10.'42 to 15.1.'44

IANGURA. Transit camp about nine miles from SASEBO.

This was a Naval Camp used for transit of P.O.W. landed at SASEBO. Also used as a depot for landing foreign Asiatic crews who had brought salvaged

ships to Japan and awaited return to their own countries. Some members of the Chinese crews gave me the impression that they were more than mere sailors and would make intelligent reports on their return to China. One British and four Phillipine merchant service officers and myself were kept as a permanent maintenance squad. Work consisted chiefly of camp upkeep and road repair. One one occasion, when no ox was available we were hitched to a plough and had to tow it round a rice field. Food in this camp was ample and working hours reasonable, quarters were good and there was no striking.

16.1.'44 to 17.4.'44.

FUKUOKA No. 1. Branch P.O.W. Camp. Situated on outskirts of FUKUOKA city. A Military Camp. Prisoners employed building an airfield. Prisoners:- 300 British, 200 Americans, 250 Dutch. Quarters Bad. Food, fair in quantity and quality. Striking of prisoners prevalent. P.O.W. forced to slap each other for amusement of the guards. Commandant SAKAMOTO CHUI.

5.12.'44 to 18.4.'45.

FUKUOKA No. 2 Branch P.O.W. Camp. Situated in city of UBE on Inland Sea, in S.W. corner of HONSHU Island. A Military Camp. Prisoners employed in a coal mine. P.O.Ws 283 British. Except for the extremely hard and wet work in the mine, this was a good camp, for we had two good Commandants, NURMI CHUI and TAMARA CHUI.

19.4.'45 to 13.9.'45.

HIROSHIMA. No. 5 BRANCH P.O.W. Camp. On April 18th the camp was transferred from FUKUOKA to HIROSHIMA command. A new weak Commandant NYSASHIDA CHUI was appointed. The camp deteriorated immediately. Striking was authorised food dropped to 360 grammes of rice or beans per day, and hours of work increased.

13th September, 1945.

Liberated by U.S. 8th Army.

Throughout the time I was a P.O.W. in Japan, my status as an Officer was not recognised and I received no P.O.W. Officer's pay.

I was classed as Warrant Officer 1st Class, but this rank carried no privileges, for I was forced to do manual labour with other ranks.

At FUKUOKA Nos 18, 1 and 2 Branch Camps and HIROSHIMA No. 5 Branch Camp, I was paid at the rate of 25 sen (three pence) for each day I worked. Outside this I received no money from the Nipponese. Privates received 10 sen (1 1/3 penny) per day.

18th October, 1945.

Arrived Colombo in H.M.S. GLENRARN

Thursday 13th September.	Left UBE by train.
Saturday 15th September.	Arrived Wakansura embarked on V S Hospital Ship "CONSOLATIO".
Thursday 20th September.	Arrived Okinawa.
Saturday 22nd September.	Left Okinawa VSS Haskell.
Wednesday 26th September,	Arrived Manila. Australian No. 5 Replacement depot.
Friday 5th October.	Left Manila aboard H.M.S. "COLLOSSUS".
Saturday 7th October.	Arrived Hong Kong.
Tuesday 9th October.	Left Hong Kong aboard H.M.S. "GLENRARN"
Thursday 18th October.	Arrived Colombo.
Sunday 21st October.	Left Colombo by train.
Thursday 25th October,	Arrived Calcutta.

REPORT ON FUKUOKA - NO. 18 PRISONER OF WAR CAMP.

PERIOD. 15th January, 1944 to 17th April, 1944.

SITUATION At Village of UNIKI in Hills about 12 miles from SASEBO.

COMMANDANT. IKIGAMA CHUI (Lieutenant).

SERVICE IN CHARGE OF CAMP. ARMY.

GUARDS. Army, inside camp. Naval Guards, at work.

PRISONERS OF WAR. 1 British Naval Reserve Officer.
2 British Merchant Navy Officers.
1 American Naval Rating.
252 American Civilians from WAKE ISLAND.
(54 Americans died at this camp).

ACCOMMODATION. A cement shed measuring approximately 150' x 30' no glass windows, two doors, not weatherproof. P.O.Ws slept on a platform each side of the hut. Platform covered with old rice straw sacks infested with lice and fleas.

WORK. Building a dam - a Naval project carried out by civilian contractors. P.O.Ws worked under civilian HANCHO (Foreman).

HOURS OF WORK. 0530 - 1730. Ten minutes rest periods were given at 1000 and 1500. Thirty minutes allowed for the mid-day meal. Work was carried out in most weathers, only exceptionally heavy rain or snow caused cessation.

REST DAYS. 1st and 15th of each month. One rest days P.O.Ws were kept busy doing camp fatigues, learning Japanese army drill (including the goose-step) and on cold days ten minutes Physical Drill every hour.

PAY. My status as an officer was not recognised. I was forced to do manual labour in a stone quarry, on a sand transporter, in a rock bin, feeding a conveyor, on a cement mixer; excavating (with pick and shovel) the side of a canyon and riffling a river-bed. For this labour I was paid a Warrant Officer's rate of 25 sen (three pence) for each working day.

CLOTHING. Each P.O.W. was provided with one Japanese Army uniform Greatcoat, one shirt, one set of underpants cap, pair of cotton socks, a pair of tabbies, (i.e. Japanese cloth-inside boots), a gas cape (from captured stock) and ten blankets (five Army and five Navy). We were not permitted to wear Japanese uniform to work, though no working clothes were provided.

FOOD. Food in this camp was considerably less than I received in later camps. We were given three meals a day; at 0500, 1200, and 1800 hours. At each meal a P.O.W. received only half a standard bowl of rice and a bowl of thin vegetable soup. We received no bread. Small quantities of fish octopus, whale, etc. were issued at intervals of from four to seven days. Meat, which we rarely received, would never be more than 12 lbs for the whole camp. All P.O.W were very thin and very hungry. I am convinced that the shortage of food in this camp was due to misappropriation by the Nipponese Camp Staff. Koreans working in a camp next to us were able to throw food away.

RED CROSS PARCELS. While I was in the camp, approximately twelve cases of Canadian Red Cross comforts were received by the Nipponese Staff. Each case contained eight individual parcels. One individual parcel only was issued to P.O.W. My squad consisted of 19 men, and we shared one twelve ounce tin of tomatoes, one spoonful per person. The American Camp Leader

(Mr. J. TRUCY) refused to sign for the remainder of the Red Cross packages but later was forced to do so by the Commandant.

(Trucy was killed in August, 1945, by a food package dropped from an American relief plane.)

HEALTH.

There was no P.O.W. Doctor in the Camp. A Japanese doctor visited the camp at intervals. A Nipponese H.C.O. attended to the sick, and as his objective was to keep the working parties as large as possible many unfit men were sent out to work. I saw many sick men unable to walk being assisted or even carried out to work where they would lay all day in the snow. The Guards and Civilian Foreman had great sport throwing rocks at these men and proding them with rifle butts or sticks. In the evening they would be carried back to camp. Many prisoners died as a result of this treatment. Practically all the fifty-four deaths in this camp were due to lack of medical attention.

**GENERAL.
TREATMENT.**

Striking of P.O.W. was common in camp by the Military Guards and at work by the Naval Guards and Civilian Foreman. I was struck on many occasions for trivial offences, such as bending my fingers when standing to attention, not bowing deeply enough as a guard passed through our quarters, using a shovel, when I had been detailed to use a pick etc. After being struck we were frequently made to do hand presses in the snow, failure to keep the body straight resulted in a beating with a shovel or pick, or kicks in the groin, stomach or face.

The Commandant, IKIGMA, led his men in brutality. He would make prisoners stand to attention in front of him and knock them down. If a prisoner could not rise the guard would lift him up and hold him in position to be punched again.

Every P.O.W. in the camp was always hungry and naturally tried to get food when out at work.

IKIGMA informed us that if any P.O.W. was caught obtaining food outside the camp or from the KOREANS, the punishment would be (a) the offender would be kept in gaol till he died of starvation or cold, (b) the remainder of us would have our already short ration cut in half, and we would each receive BO-HI-KU. (BO - cudgal or staff, HI-KU - issue.)

Prisoners were lined up with hands above their heads while guards passed along the ranks giving each man five or six hefty two-handed smacks with a solid cudgal measuring four feet long and about three inches thick. Prisoners who dropped their hands had the bones broken. Squad leaders received double issue. I was NOT a squad leader. Mr. Knox, an American, was found guilty of cutting a blanket to make a shirt. He was put in gaol till he died and the remainder of the P.O.Ws received BO-HI-KU.

sgd/- A.C. CARSTON. R.N.R.
LIEUTENANT.

COMMANDING OFFICER H.M.S. "MATA HARI".