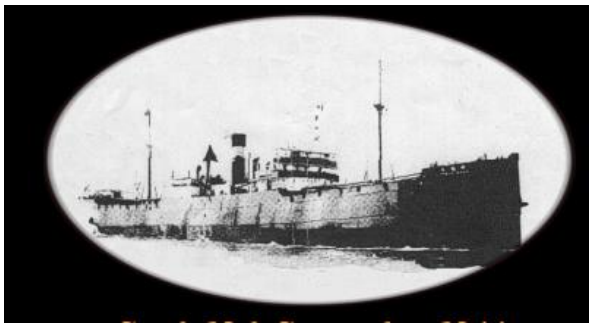
William Clough





Rank: - Leading Aircraftman

Number: - 1352884

Service: - Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, 258 Squadron.

Died: - Died as a POW on the Japanese transport Ship *"Junyo Maru"* when sunk (captured 6 Apr 1942). 18/09/1944, age: 24 years.

Memorial: - Singapore Memorial Column 438.

William was born on 29 August 1920 the son of John George and Lily Emily Clough nee Maughan who had married in 1918. George was born in 1919 followed by William, Robert 1922, Vera 1926, Sarah 1927 and Thomas in 1930. In 1939 the family was living t 1, Mary Street, Stanley, Co. Durham and William was employed as a barman.

William Clough was captured on 6 April 1942 when Java fell and was taken a prisoner. In World War II the Japanese treated captives with extreme cruelty, and never was this more evident than when prisoners of war (POWs) were moved around the Pacific in rust bucket steamers from one forced-labour assignment to another. In defiance of the Geneva Convention, these hellish transports carried no red cross to identify them as prison ships, so many were sunk by Allied aircraft or submarines. This resulted in thousands of prisoners dying by 'friendly fire'.

No single disaster equalled that of Junyo Maru. The old single-stack steamer had been built before World War I and was just over 120 m (400 ft) long. In September 1944 she was sailing up the west coast of Java from Batavia (now Jakarta) to Padang, where her human cargo would work on the infamous Sumatra Railway, intended to transport coal from coast to coast. At least 6,500 unfortunate people had been packed aboard, comprising around 2,300 POWs – British, Dutch, Australian, Indonesian and American – together with 4,200 Javanese slave labourers. Conditions aboard were indescribably bad, with minimal latrine facilities and an acute shortage of water, compounded by sardine-like overcrowding.

The efforts of two escort ships were desultory. It was a serious omission. The British Triton-class submarine Tradewind was lurking and – with no idea what Junyo Maru was carrying – fired four torpedoes. Two struck home, causing pandemonium as packed prisoners fought to escape bamboo cages in the holds. Life rafts were tossed overboard but Junyo Maru settled quickly, the bow rose and she sank by the stern. As men in the water struggled to survive, the night filled with the desperate cries of dying men. When dawn broke and survivors were picked up, the extent of this terrible tragedy became apparent. More than 5,500 had gone down with the ship or died in the water.

The tragedy happened near Mukomuko, Sumatra, in the Pacific Ocean. Survival didn't mean relief. The few remaining Javanese romushas (slave labourers) were worked to death, and barely 100 of 700 POWs saved from the sea survived the brutal conditions and intense heat of the Sumatra Railway construction camps.

William is remembered with Honour at Singapore Memorial Column 438, Singapore and Batley War Memorial. He was awarded the 1939-45 Star and the 1939-1945 War Medal.



收容所 Camp	爪哇 昭 17 年 9 月 1 日	番號 No.	爪Ⅲ 621
姓名 Name	Clough William. クローフ, ウィリィアム	生年月日 Date of Birth	1920. 8. 29.
國籍 Nationality	英	所屬部隊 Unit	No. 1352884. 258 Squadron.
階級身分 Rank	Corporal Air Force E. 空軍伍長		
捕獲場所 Place of Capture	爪哇	捕獲年月日 Date of Capture	昭和17年4月6日
父ノ名 Father's Name	John George	母ノ名 Mother's Name	XXXX Lily Emily
本籍地 Place of Origin	21 Kay Street, West Stanley, Durham England.	職業 Occupation	事務員
通報先 Destination of Report	Mrs. Clough, 7, Chaytor Terrace South, Craghead, Stanley, Durham, England.	特記事項 Remark	

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