Edward Hannan





Rank: - Able Seaman

Number: - P/SSX 29249

Service: - Royal Navy, H.M.S. Li Wo

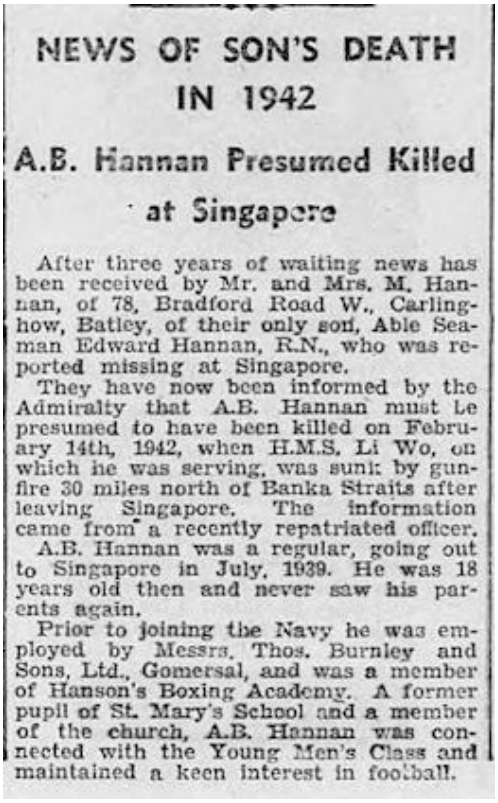
Died: - Killed in Action whilst attacking Japanese convoy, 14 February 1942 aged 22 years

Memorial: - Portsmouth Naval Memorial Panel 64, Column 1.

Batley News, 3 Nov 1945; 10 Nov 1945 (photo)

Edward was born in 1921 the son of Michael and Ida Hannan nee Ripley who had married in 1920. The family lived at 78 Bradford Road West, Carlinghow, Batley. Michael attended St. Mary's School and was a member of the church. He was connected to the Young Men's Class and had a keen interest in football. Edward was a member of Hanson's Boxing Academy and was employed by Messrs. Thomas Burnley and Sons Ltd., Gomersal before he joined the Navy as

a regular. In July 1939 he went to Singapore and was never to see his parents again.



NEWS OF SON'S DEATH IN 1942

A.B. Hannan Presumed Killed at Singapore

After three years of waiting news has been received by Mr. and Mrs. M. Hannan, of 78, Bradford Road W., Carlinghow, Batley, of their only son, Able Seaman Edward Hannan, R.N., who was reported missing at Singapore.

They have now been informed by the Admiralty that A.B. Hannan must be presumed to have been killed on February 14th, 1942, when H.M.S. Li Wo, on which he was serving, was sunk by gunfire 30 miles north of Banka Straits after leaving Singapore. The information came from a recently repatriated officer.

A.B. Hannan was a regular, going out to Singapore in July, 1939. He was 18 years old then and never saw his parents again.

Prior to joining the Navy he was employed by Messrs. Thos. Burnley and Sons, Ltd., Gomersal, and was a member of Hanson's Boxing Academy. A former pupil of St. Mary's School and a member of the church, A.B. Hannan was connected with the Young Men's Class and maintained a keen interest in football.

Michael was reported missing in 1942 but it was not until November 1945 that they received news from the Admiralty that he must be presumed to have been killed on February 14 1942 when HMS Li Wo, on which he was serving was sunk by gun fire 30 miles north of Banka Straits after leaving Singapore. This information came from a recently repatriated officer.

The *Li Wo* was a passenger riverboat built by the Hong Kong & Whampoa Dock Company for the Indo-China Steam Navigation Company Ltd. for service on the Yangtze River. In 1940 she was requisitioned and commissioned into the Royal Navy at Singapore. Shortly before the British surrender, *Li Wo* was ordered to head for the safety of Batavia in the Dutch East Indies. Her crew consisted of 84 men, mostly naval reservists, but also included several survivors from the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse*, five men from the Army, two from the RAF, ten Malayans, and six Chinese.

She left Singapore at dawn on 13 February 1942, and was attacked several times from the air, suffering some damage. The next day while passing north of the Bangka Strait, she encountered a convoy of Japanese transport ships accompanied by a squadron of warships launching "Operation L", the invasion of Sumatra. The commander of *Li Wo*, Temporary Lieutenant Thomas Wilkinson RNR, informed the ship's company that he intended to close and attack the enemy.

Li Wo altered course towards the leading transport ship of the convoy at full speed, unfurling her battle ensign, and opening fire with her four-inch gun (for which she had only 13 shells, plus three practice rounds. She scored a number of direct hits on the transport, starting fires aboard, and causing the troops aboard to abandon ship. She then attacked another transport ship with machine gun fire.

Li Wo was then heavily shelled by the light cruiser *Yura* and the destroyers Fubuki and Asagiri. Out of ammunition and now sinking, she rammed the first enemy transport, which later sank, before finally sinking herself. Of the 84 crew, only 7 survived to be taken prisoner.

Edward was awarded the 1939-45 Star; 1939-1945 War Medal

He is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group