



PERSONAL **INFORMATION** **SHEET**



Name: Charles Stephen Haviland

DOB: 31 December 1901

Rank: Telegraphist

Service Identity Number: C/J 53451

Service/Regiment/Corps: Royal Navy

Unit: Stonecutters Island, Hong Kong

Died: 2nd October 1942

Personal history before the war:

Charlie was born on 31st December 1901 in South East London. He was the eldest son of six children and in 1916, at the age of 14, he joined the Royal Navy as a boy sailor. He was too young to be assigned to active duty in WW1 and after basic training he was posted to HMS Ganges, a shore based training establishment near Felixstowe on the East coast. Here he studied and qualified as a telegraphist.

When hostilities ceased in 1918 Charlie underwent further telegraphy training at the RN Barracks at Chatham before serving on a number of warships from destroyers to battleships. He clearly enjoyed his time travelling the world, sharing his life with cherished shipmates and participating in many sporting activities, things he could never have done growing up in South East London.

On one of his home leaves he met a younger brother's wife and her family, fell in love with one of her sisters and they married in 1933. A daughter was born in January 1935 and a son in December 1938. A career in the Royal Navy meant time spent with his family was limited to home leaves and in September of 1939 at the outbreak of WW2 Charlie was posted to Hong Kong. He was never to see his young family again!



Wartime experience:

Charlie served in the Royal Naval Communications Centre on Stonecutters Island, Kowloon and when the Imperial Japanese Army attacked Hong Kong on 8th December 1941 Stonecutters Island and Kowloon were quickly overrun. British Naval signalers held on as long as possible but then destroyed the installations before evacuating to HMS Tamar on Hong Kong Island on 11 December. It is not known whether Charlie remained at HMS Tamar for the remainder of the siege period or whether he was assigned to other areas of the island.

At the capitulation on Christmas Day 1941 Charlie became a POW in Shamshuipo Camp and was among those who were later confined in Hold Number 1 on the Japanese prison ship, Lisbon Maru. This infamous ship was sunk by the American submarine, USS Grouper, on 2nd October 1942 with the loss of over 800 prisoners. Several photographs exist showing Charlie as a member of various sports teams, including water polo, so it may be assumed that he was a strong swimmer. Drowning is therefore unlikely to have been his fate on escaping Hold No 1 unless health issues after 9 months of brutal captivity had affected his ability. He, like so many of his comrades on that dreadful day, was probably a victim of deliberate machine gun fire.

The full story of The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru can be seen in the documentary film of the same name or references read elsewhere on this website.

Additional photos:

Charlie's last Christmas card sent to his wife in 1941. Clearly sent before the Japanese attack on 8th December 1941.



The above information was provided by Geoff Haviland.

Completed forms should be emailed back to limmauk@gmail.com with any photos being attached to the email. Please ensure that all pictures are identified with the name, rank and service number (if known).



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