

RINGROW Frederick Charles

Name: Frederick Charles Ringrow

Born: 1920

Rank: Leading Aircraftman

Service Number: 925034

Unit/Regiment: Royal Airforce
Volunteer Reserve

Died: 29 November 1943



Pre-War:

Frederick was born in 1920 to Frederick Charles and Ethel Ringrow, of Rainham, Essex.

Wartime experience:

Frederick was captured by the Japanese and became a prisoner of war, at the surrender of Java on 8 March 1942. It is not clear which POW camps he was in, but it is known that he was in Ambon. On 26 November 1943, he was one of 548 sick POWs that boarded the Hell Ship, Suez Maru, bound for Surabaya, North-East Java. It was initially escorted by two minesweepers W.11 and W.12. On 27 November, W.11 peeled off sailing due west for Kendari air and naval base, South-East Celebes, arriving in Kendari Harbour on 28 November.

The Suez Maru was left to carry on its journey, to Surabaya, with just the one minesweeper - W.12. At 8.00 a.m. on the morning of 29 November, just off the Kangean Islands, the USS Bonefish opened fire, its 4th torpedo was a direct hit at the stern of the Suez Maru. Many POWs were killed when the torpedo hit the No. 4 hold but the ship was dead in the water and slowly started to sink. Those that could and were able jumped overboard. The Suez Maru finally disappeared below the surface at 09.40. The surviving POWs, between 200 and 250 of them, were floating in the sea, clinging to rafts, pieces of wood and debris. The Minesweeper W.12 who had managed to dodge Bonefish's torpedoes arrived back in the waters and cruised around picking up the Japanese and Korean survivors only. At 14.00 the last of the Japanese survivors, one of which was Lt. Koshio, were hauled out of the sea.



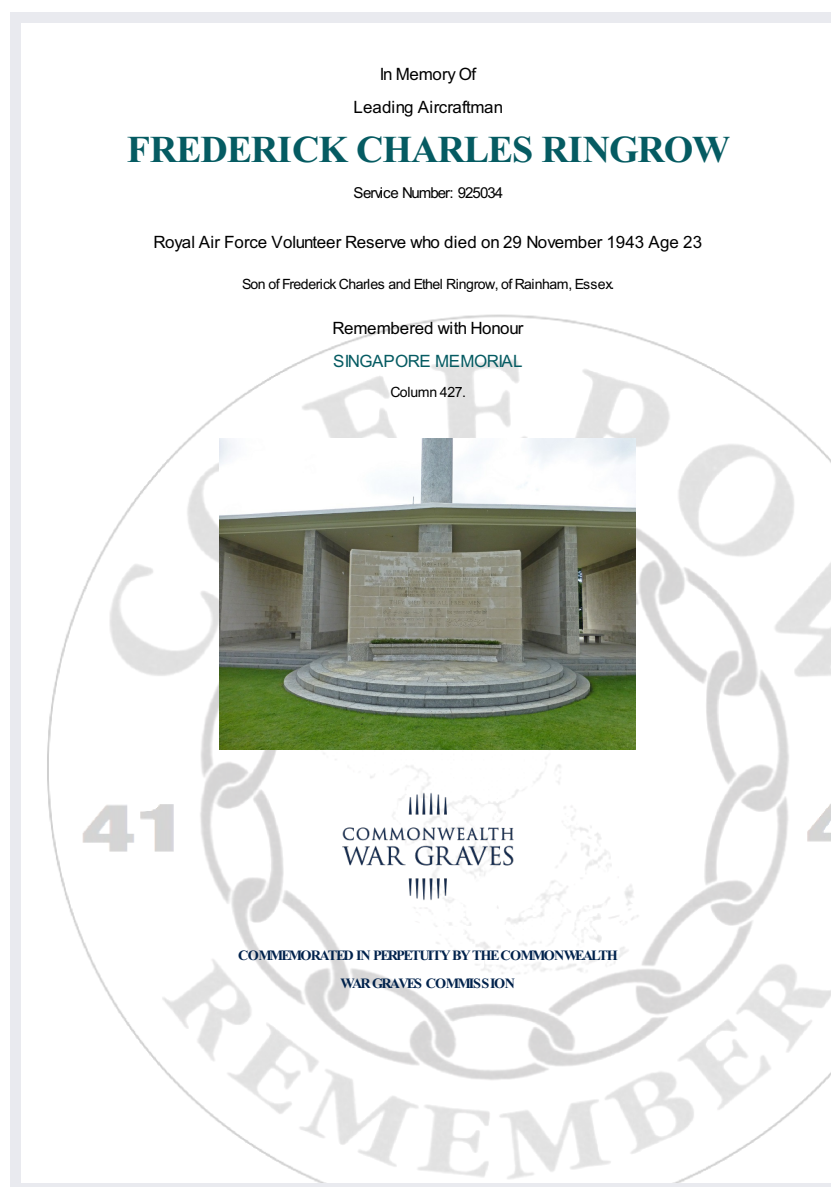
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As Japanese Standing Orders stated that no prisoners were to be left alive, Captain Kawano returned to the bridge and steered the W.12 in wide circles around the POWs in the water, Lt. Koshio organised the machine gun and rifle firing squad.

As the ship circled, the firing squad shot all the remaining 200 – 250 POWs in the sea. The massacre started at 14.15 and ended at 16.30 - there were no survivors.

W.12 then moved off and instead of continuing its journey to Surabaya changed direction to Batavia because US planes had dropped magnetic mines at the mouth of Surabaya harbour.

Sadly, Frederick died when the Suez Maru was sunk on 29 November 1943. He is remembered on the Singapore Memorial, Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore - Column 427.



Some of the above information has been provided by Angela Morgan (Great Niece)
Some information has been obtained from Terry Manttan of the Thai/Burma Railway Centre
With additional information obtained from the COFEPOW website



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