

Basic Detail Report

ANMS0147[012]

Title

Newspaper clippings of the KRAIT Appeal Fund

Date

c 1963

Medium

Ink on paper

Dimensions

closed: 340 x 230mm

Name

Scrapbook

History

The little fishing boat was known originally as KOFUKU MARU, and by the time it came into the possession of the Australian military, it already boasted an adventurous history, having assisted in the evacuation of civilians from Singapore in 1942 (a story for another blog perhaps). In 1943 a plan was devised to infiltrate Singapore Harbour in a clandestine attack on Japanese shipping. The operation was codenamed Operation Jaywick and required Allied commandoes to sail to Singapore disguised as a Japanese fishing crew, enter the harbour and use delayed action explosives to destroy enemy cargo ships. KOFUKU MARU was to be used to maintain this disguise and so the vessel was refitted and renamed KRAIT, after the deadly Indian snake. The 14-man crew was led by an Englishman, Major Ivan Lyon and comprised a mix of British and Australian Navy and Army personnel. On the night of 26 September 1943, after sailing the vessel from Australia, six operatives set forth from KRAIT in folboats and paddled into Singapore Harbour. Under the cover of darkness the men attached limpet mines to Japanese ships before returning to Krait. The mines detonated at 5 am on 27 September, damaging and destroying some 39,000 tons of Japanese shipping including the 10,000-ton tanker SINKOKU MARU. For a brief and tense moment on the journey back to Australia KRAIT was trailed by a Japanese ship, but they were not challenged and returned safely to Australia. The operation was an Allied success, and most members of the party were decorated with military honours.