

The Montevideo Maru

By Paddy Hamilton

How easy to forget, the slaughter that raged here
For what was once a place of peace, became an abyss of fear
One thousand Aussies drowned, in a torrent of utmost hate
Some said it was an error, some said it was their fate

Taken aboard as prisoners, after the fall of Rabaul
Their names now etched in history, on a heroes' wall
The cursed slaves of Nippon transferred to Hainan
To work until their bodies quit, they were a close knit band

The Sturgeon lurked deep below and saw the rising sun
Four torpedoes on their way, the fury had begun
For those trapped inside, their prison became their pyre
Our greatest naval loss, caused by friendly fire

Bodies, bruised and broken, they sang "Auld Lang Syne"
Voices soon muffled, by the salty brine
No pity for the victims, when will the madness end?
War's common riddle, that foe is now our friend

The guilty have long since passed, no one knows their name
Lost in the oblivion, shielded from their shame
For all their atrocities, no one would stand trial
The common denominator, the silence of denial.

By Tomas 'Paddy' Hamilton

29 October 2022