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## WWII hero who died fighting the Japanese

The Straits Times, 14 February 1996, Page 5

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### WWII hero who died fighting the Japanese

LIEUTENANT ADNAN SAIDI was born in 1915 at Kampung Sungei Ramal Luar in Kajang, Selangor.

He was educated in the English medium at Pekan Sungei Ramal School.

He joined the Malay Regiment in 1933 when he was 18. Five years later, he married Sophia Pakir, a teacher.

The couple had three children — two boys and a girl who died when she was barely two months old.

His two sons, Mr Mokhtar and Mr Zainudin, live in Seremban and Johor Baru respectively.

In late 1941, Lt Adnan was sent to Singapore to lead one of the Malay Regiments to defend Bukit Candu, in Pasir Panjang, and stop it from

#### HE FELL IN BATTLE FOR BUKIT CANDU

falling to the Japanese.

During the fighting, he was taken captive by

#### Information



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the Japanese and tortured before being burnt to death.

He was the eldest of six children.

Two of his brothers, the late Ahmad Saidi and Mr Amarullah Saidi, were also in the armed forces.


Ahmad joined the navy in Singapore in 1939. Soon after, he sailed for Australia on board HMS Pelanduk.



Everyone was killed when the ship was bombed by the Japanese.


Mr Amarullah, who is now retired and living in Kajang, became a soldier in Indonesia between 1946 and 1948 when his family took refuge there from the Japanese.

EXACTLY 54 years ago, a Malay soldier died defending his country.



He was Lieutenant Adnan Saidi, the famous hero who led the 42-man Malay Regiment in a fierce battle against the Japanese at Bukit Candu, in Pasir Panjang, on Feb 14, 1942. They fought for 48 hours before succumbing.

While other members of the regiment were shot, Lt Adnan was tortured before he was burnt to death.




His wife, Sophia Pakir, and his sons, Mokhtar and Zainudin, who were in Kajang, in Malaysia, took the news of his death rather badly.

Worse was to come a few days later. Another tragedy occurred in the family when Madam Sophia lost her daughter who was barely two months old.


Said Mr Mokhtar, 57: "I was about four when all that happened. I did not realise that that day, when my father left us, it would be the last I would see of him.

"My brother and I shook our father's hand before he



left. He did not say much. He merely asked us to take care of ourselves and not to be naughty.”


About three months before the battle, Lt Adnan's family left for Kajang while he remained in Singapore. Sophia was then expecting their third child.



“She was due to deliver at anytime. When we arrived in Kajang, we heard people saying that Singapore had been bombed by the Japanese. I knew my father was in Singapore at that time but I did not know much about war then.

“I could see though that my mother looked sad. She did not say anything as she was a person who never burdened us with her problems,” he said.


The family rented a house in Sungei Kantan, Selangor, and Sophia worked as a religious teacher to support the children.



“A few days after we settled in Sungei Kantan, my mother delivered her third child, a girl, but the baby died before she was two months old and I cannot remember her name,” he said.


A few days before the ba-

by's death, the family had received news of Lt Adnan's death. That news was confirmed when the family received a telegram informing them officially of his death.



“According to the telegram, the authorities had yet to ascertain that it was my father because he was burnt beyond recognition by the Japanese. That was the only telegram we received about our father. After that, there was no news until Corporal Yaakob came to visit my grandmother at Sungei Ramal.”

He was the only survivor. He was saved by lying among the bodies of soldiers, pretending to be dead.



“Our mother told us the bad news. She merely said:

“Your father is no longer alive and you must learn to be independent and cannot rely on others.

“I did not ask any more about my father because she forbade me from asking. But I could see how sad she was. She probably knew how father was killed.”

The tragic story of Lt Adnan did not end there. One by one, his belongings changed hands because not

a single member of the family dared keep them for fear of being found out by the Japanese. Today, the only things of his father which Mr Mokhtar has are three medals which were awarded to him by the British. NLB

In 1949, Sophia became ill and died. Her sons were fostered out. NLB

Mr Mokhtar, who is retired, has three children between the ages of 20 and 28. He lives in Seremban. Mr Zainudin, 56, also retired, lives in Taman Perling, Johor Baru. — Translated from Berita Harian





**Lt Adnan Saidi was tortured before he was killed.**

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