



BOOK DESCRIPTION

Many years have passed since Henry Chow passed away in 1978, just over 45 years in fact at the time of writing. On 29 March 2024, we just marked the 70th Anniversary of the Semporna Pirates Raid. Second World War 1941-1945 in Sabah (British North Borneo) was many decades ago. Year 2025 is the 80th Anniversary of the end of World War 2, exactly 80 years ago.

So, why write a book NOW about Henry Chow Fook On?

I mentioned the Semporna Pirates Raid and World War 2 – Henry Chow was involved in both important events in the Region. Henry was wounded in Semporna Pirates Raid. These two events alone justify the biographical writing about the heroism and courage of any human. Up to today, there have been no official records of what Henry Chow has done and achieved.

In the last few years, several newspaper articles, belatedly, attempted to throw more light on the past heroes of Sabah history. Better late, than never!

However, in this book, we are doing much more to correct that imbalance.

“We” for this book – are my siblings and myself – children of Henry Chow whom we are forever indebted. Without the courage of Henry Chow, none of us would be here today, he protected and saved our lives and my mother’s during the Semporna Pirates Attack. Collectively, we reflected on Henry Chow and thought the best way to honour this heroic, but humble person is to write a book about him.

At a personal level, my siblings are making contributions to the book. Each of them has their own personal thoughts, experiences and feelings about our father. Each contribution is different and will make interesting reading on its own. Each chapter of the book is a story on its own and can be read separately.

At a public interest level, the book will document and record some of what Henry Chow had contributed to the public and communities he worked in. Through his years of service, he put his own life on the line.

Henry Chow was wounded in two places during the Semporna Pirates Raid. He was wounded on his right arm, slashed by a sword wielded by one of the four pirates who attacked the family house in Semporna on 29 March 1954. The second wound was on his left shoulder caused by pirates’ gunfire when Henry Chow led his young family running across the padang (football field) into the jungle.

No official recognition by the then authorities (British administration), not even a “thank you”!

Twelve years prior, Henry Chow already put his life on the line by helping the Australian Army against the Japanese Imperial Army occupation of British North Borneo (Sabah). If caught, the Japanese were most brutal. Execution is usually instant by beheading, a swing with a Japanese long sword! Henry Chow put his life on the line and was recognised by the Australian Army and Governor General of Australia.

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