

CAPT R.Arundel RAN rtd

30 July 2008

The Secretary  
HMAS SYDNEY II Commission of Inquiry  
270 Pitt Street  
Defence Plaza Sydney  
Sydney NSW 2000

Your Reference: Commission of Inquiry letter Corr.001.0011, 8 July 2008  
My Reference: R. A. Arundel submission dated 23 June 2008

Dear Sir,

This further submission vide Your Reference above attempts to address some suppositions concerning signal communications, recently resurrected from either the earlier HMAS SYDNEY II Senate Inquiry or from various interest groups over time, that are believed to be either misconstrued or, as yet, untested:

Supposition 1: HMAS SYDNEY II's Commanding Officer alone made the decision to close an unknown vessel.

Explanation: In reality a Bridge File would have existed in SYDNEY for a range of war contingencies at sea, such as approaching and verifying any unknown vessel. It would have listed the procedures and responsibilities of the Command Team providing specialist or sub-specialist expert advice to the Commanding Officer, viz;

Officer of the Watch: ordering action stations, calls the Captain and Command team to the bridge, produces ship silhouette manual, closes up a radio operator in a bridge position for emergency reporting on the ship/shore frequency link.

Navigating Officer (and Communications Officer): location, approach safety, ship identification procedures, visual recognition signals, SIGINT.

Gunnery Officer: weapon states, approach safety.

Torpedo Anti-Submarine Officer: torpedo and depth charge weapon states.

Senior Aircrew Officer: surveillance aircraft and launch status, reporting signals, recovery procedure.

Commander (2<sup>nd</sup> in Command): secondary control position.

First Lieutenant (Mate of the Upper Deck): crew preparedness and action state.

Engineer Officer: damage control status and machinery state.

Operations Officer: intelligence reports, shipping and action plots, threat status, publications and recent signalled intelligence amendments.

Commanding Officer: orders the selected recognition and identification procedure.

Thus for this contingency signal communications and intelligence advice would have been crucial in the first instance in advising the command in approaching and verifying an unknown vessel. However no sub-specialist signals officer was present to assist in monitoring and interpreting both conventional and deceptive visual and radio communication tactics.

Supposition 2: SYDNEY did not properly challenge the unknown vessel.

Explanation: The raider evidently began a well rehearsed series of ruses. The first was to turn immediately away from SYDNEY. This course alteration also conformed to Allied recognition rules in Admiralty Merchant Shipping Instruction (AMSI) no.74, vide My Reference above that further indicates these Admiralty instructions had already been compromised, a fact unknown to RAN ships. At horizon distance flag signalling is ineffective. The initial method of horizon interrogation is signalling by 20 inch searchlight. Apparently, as is normal, the merchant ship's signal letters were sought. The raider's International Call Sign disguise PKQI was apparently hoisted as a flag signal and skewed chaotically as relative wind affected flags that were indistinct from SYDNEY's approach angle. As the cruiser showed no sign of ceasing the interrogation, by continuing to close, the raider could attempt another bluff by briefly signalling its disguise call sign with a small signal lamp further simulating a merchant vessel as the range closed.

Another simple ruse would be to further simulate a merchant ship's sometimes inexpert attempts with visual signalling since normally these responses would have been by a bridge officer. Eventually SYDNEY would have identified this call sign as that of a Netherland's vessel, the STRAAT MALAKKA operating in the Indian Ocean area. That vessel's Secret War Call Sign listed in the Allied call sign master code book was IIKP and the recognition challenge procedure would have been to signal the two central letters, viz. IK. Once this challenge group was signalled SYDNEY would then expect the 'Allied merchant ship' to signal her secret call sign response that was the two outer secret call sign letters, viz. IP. In the absence of signals intelligence that the merchant ship secret call sign book was compromised, on receipt of the correct reply, SYDNEY would immediately believe the suspect was *prima facie* a friendly vessel.

There is another distinct possibility as yet unexamined. By a curious coincidence three letters P, K, and I, in STRAAT MALAKKA's international call sign PKQI also formed three letters in that vessel's allotted secret call sign IIKP ! In the event the raider did not have her disguise's compromised secret call sign it is more likely that in an attempt to deter SYDNEY's approach and interrogation on the one hand or simply to confuse the signal exchange on the other and draw her closer she would have replied by light to an expected and subsequent challenge from SYDNEY, briefly flashing her disguise's international call sign .... PKQI PKQI ....

SYDNEY's signalman manning the searchlight or signal lamp would have been peering through his binoculars above a vibrating projector, with the cruiser now at speed, in haze and sea spume, looking specifically for the anticipated correct response, viz. IP. In amongst the raider's deliberate display of poor morse from a misdirected low power signal lantern the alert signalman could easily have read this expected response as the last letter of the international call sign followed by the first letter of the repeated call sign, viz. I P. He would then have shouted to the bridge the correct recognition had been signalled. Such a report could well have changed the demeanour and procedures on SYDNEY's bridge, initially accepting the raider as

typical of 'another somewhat rattled merchant ship' whose obscured contours now only needed to be confirmed!

In either case in the absence of a specialist signals officer the command team may then have not noticed the unusual five letter call sign, in place of the Allied procedure (of a four letter call sign) in the Q signal ruse intended to alert German authorities the raider had been apprehended! The German ruse procedure was to follow the prescribed Allied merchant vessel Q, R, or S distress signal that would be transmitted on the permanently guarded short range 500 kHz medium frequency international distress frequency. SYDNEY would have guarded this frequency and read the transmission.

It was expected these messages would be intercepted and immediately routed by Allied coast radio stations to the Allied high frequency (H/F) area broadcast of which at least one frequency was able to be read in Germany, depending upon the time of day. Thus the German High Command would become aware their raider or blockade runner was in an emergency situation. This procedure, in the German Naval code manual 'Himalaya', is described in Dr. John. W. M. Chapman's four volume translation of the German Naval Attaché, Tokyo, ADML Wencker's war diary (Reference 1, page 664, cable 2653 gKdos para 3) (see Attachment 1). However on this occasion Geraldton Coast Radio Station did not route the incompletely intercepted Q message from KORMORAN to the area broadcast.

As yet there appears to be no evidence uncovered that KORMORAN had her disguise's compromised secret war call sign, but it obviously existed since SYDNEY was using it as a signal challenge. It could also have been compromised. There is evidence that German blockade runners appeared to be using "secret British call signs" at that time "according to the secret call sign list for 1940" and one example is attached (Reference 1, page 710, Tel Nr 1084/41 para 1) (see Attachment 2). If this call sign procedure was obtained from a compromise of an Allied publication it is most unlikely the same secret call sign procedure was not made available to German raiders as a crucial *in extremis* ruse. Knowledge of such a key code book or call sign compromise would have demanded the most secret caveat handling.

Thus it is represented that it would be imperative now to establish authoritatively from GCHQ UK and other authorities whether the Merchant Ship Secret War Call Sign code/decode book, or simply a page correction amendment, or a 1940-41 Indian Ocean Station local area amendment to the master book that included reference to the STRAAT MALAKKA, may have been compromised at the time of SYDNEY II's loss. One of many possible compromise examples was previously discussed in My Reference above. By 1941 a large number of Allied merchant ships had been intercepted, searched and destroyed by raiders and some Allied warships sunk in shallow water and successfully dived upon for classified materials. Until this aspect has been thoroughly researched a suspicion will prevail that this compromise possibility, unknown to the RAN, could be at the crux of SYDNEY's deception.

Supposition 3: SYDNEY sent a voice and/or emergency signal to shore authorities.

Explanation: SYDNEY was operating under conditions of radio silence. If it could not be satisfied with the status of the vessel it was investigating radio silence could be broken to verify its authenticity. Communication would be with the principal area shore wireless station which was HMAS HARMAN or another naval Shore Wireless Station in the British commonwealth of nations ship/shore network.

The Ship's Book, available in the Australian War Memorial archives, clearly lists all the 'as fitted' radio transmitters in the ship as medium and high frequency sets. There was no voice mode capability in any fitted transmitters and the only transmission capability recorded was either carrier wave (CW) morse, interrupted carrier wave (ICW) morse, or Creed Relay high speed taped morse. It was only at the end of WWII that USN Talk Between Ships (TBS) VHF short to medium range voice sets were fitted in ships. After WWII a voice capability was added to high frequency transmitters in ships as frequency stability and other amplitude modulation techniques evolved.

There is no record of any transmissions from SYDNEY during the action. Any emergency or enemy report would have been addressed with the highest message precedence to both the Naval Board and the Fleet Commander by an H/F ship/shore transmission. If KORMORAN began to jam this H/F transmission SYDNEY would have been alerted immediately that this was not a normal merchant ship. Supposition 4 is also relevant.

Supposition 4: SYDNEY should have signalled when under attack.

Explanation: Evidence indicates that within seconds of the action commencing SYDNEY was struck on the bridge and foremast, main armament range finder and Principal Director Control Tower aft of the bridge. The transmitters in the Second and Auxiliary Wireless Office's were directly below. These high explosive (HE) direct hits could also have damaged or destroyed the fragile deck insulators leading to the foremast vertical transmitting aerials and the main roof trunk aerials to the after (main) mast. Further, an anti-tank HE shrapnel blast from a direct hit, almost certainly, would have brought down these aerials when transmissions would not have been possible from either the forward offices or the Main Wireless Office aft until an emergency wire aerial was rigged on the upper deck. Evidence indicates the upper deck was raked by constant direct fire at close range when such an evolution would have been unsustainable.

The subsequent torpedo hit and constant barrage of HE shells exploding in the ship's interiors would have cut down groups of men congregating at their now smoke filled action stations, started numerous fires and destroyed the essential low power circuits to radio equipment and well as weapon systems. Within a very short time span radio communications and emergency generation could not possibly have survived this onslaught at 'point blank range', at best until the fire fight had ceased.

Supposition 5: SYDNEY was between 1 and 3 miles from the raider when the action began.

Explanation: A London PRO folio includes a translation of the German action record and is understood to indicate that, from a hidden bridge rangefinder in KORMORAN, the cruiser was at '9 hectometres', or 1,000 yards on the raider's starboard beam when the action began (Reference 3). Thus SYDNEY had taken station on the raider initially satisfied from a prior signal recognition exchange she was a friendly vessel before proceeding to confirm her silhouette from the bridge manual.

Thus SYDNEY's manoeuvre positioned the vessel in accordance with the specific Allied Naval Manoeuvring Distance station keeping regulation of 1,000 yards between a cruiser and another unit, and at no greater distance, when taking station in a friendly formation.

Supposition 6: KORMORAN did not have the Allied Merchant ship Secret War Call Sign book or select extracts.

Explanation: She may have obtained a copy or extracts from another successful raider HSK ATLANTIS with whom she met up in April 1941 before moving into the Indian Ocean. ATLANTIS had stopped, searched, sunk or taken as prize ships a number of merchant vessels including MV AUTOMEDON, the latter off Singapore in 1940 whilst also disguised as a Netherland's ship. Curiously, according to Chapman, the full details of the cache of classified material taken from that ship and spirited to Tokyo and thence Berlin are not to be released by British authorities until 2015. This is also referred to in My Reference above as well as in Chapman (2002) (see Attachment 3).

KORMORAN's complement included more than 15 radio operators who would have been employed in building up a SIGINT plot of target shipping. The Indian Ocean was a rich field in which to intercept and correlate international call signs with secret war call signs in the address of merchant ship coded messages resulting from poor procedures. The Netherlands capitulated in mid 1940 but their East Indies' military and mercantile activities continued normally. To avoid mishaps with Allied warships on the Indian Ocean Station it would have been imperative to include 'in area' Netherlands shipping in local amendments to the Allied Merchant Ship Secret Call Sign book. Chapman also refers to a Dutch operative who compromised details of Netherlands shipping, mentioned in ADML Wenneker's Tokyo attaché war diary.

KORMORAN's unclassified log that was despatched to Germany by a support vessel also includes a reference to a signal to the German High Command requesting "details" of the STRAAT MALAKKA after the raider changed her disguise to the Netherland's vessel. Furthermore as blockade runners operating out of Japan at this time were issued with secret call signs (Reference 1, page 710, attached) it would be most unlikely KORMORAN was not also similarly issued with a disguise secret war call sign. Secrecy measures to safeguard intelligence of a compromise of the codebook or portions of it would have been rigorous. Perhaps no more than 3 of KORMORAN's own command team would have been privy to such information.

Secret Allied call signs would have been essential as an *in extremis* disguise ruse for all raiders as well as blockade runners.

*Supposition 7: The handful of living KORMORAN's survivors can verify the raider's tactics.*

Explanation: The raider's ruse tactics especially signal communications and recognition deception would have been closely guarded and restricted to a small number of action officers and possibly one senior visual communications sailor none of whom revealed under interrogation or subsequently the highly classified signal procedures in the German Naval 'Himalaya' codebook manual issued to Commanding Officers of blockade runners and presumably raiders (Reference 1, including page 664 attached).

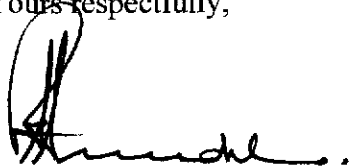
*Supposition 8: Signal communications did not play a significant role in SYDNEY II's loss.*

Explanation: Commanders took for granted that management of naval resources depended upon fast, accurate and secure signal communications. Thus *communications were noticed, more often than not, when a delay or unusual glitch occurred.* Matters involving code security were left to sub specialists and considered more a 'black art' than an adjunct to teeth or fighting arms. There was a dearth of sub specialist signals officers in the fleet. It is not surprising that at a time when the nation's attention was absorbed with all the signs of Japanese aggression and problems in the Middle East that the investigation into SYDNEY II's disappearance did not include an expert examination of signal communications and signal intelligence, potential compromise of key material, recognition procedures.

CONCLUSION: It is still possible to conduct a specialist review of a number of unresearched and unresolved signal communications aspects in the search for some SIGINT answers that may contribute to a better understanding of known unknowns associated with the loss of HMAS SYDNEY II.

Furthermore there is no known forensic examination of the security classification of key action personnel in KORMORAN who were sworn to secrecy for life by the Hitlerian oath. The administration of this procedure with key personnel in blockade runners and attaché staff early in WWII is also attested and referred to in Chapman's volumes.

Yours respectfully,



Richard Arundel

## References

1. Chapman, Dr J.W. (1989) *The Price of Admiralty: The war diary of the German Naval Attaché in Japan, 1939-1943*, Volume IV, 10 September 1941-31 January 1942, Saltire Press, Sussex.
2. Chapman, Dr J.W. (2002) Private correspondence (emails) to R.A. Arundel, dated 10 June 2002 and 20 July 2002.
3. U.K. Admiralty (undated) AWM 1/18899 --- includes NID 06923/45.

Attachment 1

CORR.001.0176\_R

664

665

P A R T 3 88

10 September - 30 November 1941

1500:

Captain Leissner (SS 'Mosele') and Captain Brummer (SS 'Havenstein') reported the office. On the night of 4 October, 'Havenstein' was involved in a collision with a Japanese steamer after the mooring buoy shifted. The blame for this did not appear to be his.

Arrival of cable Aust. IV 2653 gKdos:

Re your 721. 125

1. Transmission of information to ships permissible provided that there are no political objections and that, to begin with, messages are sent in Code 'Himalaya' only to departing ships. Only blind transmissions without call signs and ships not to reply. Follow procedure in Sections 10 and 11 of 'Himalaya' manual. Transmit each piece of information four times or every four times to each area. Suitable wave lengths and transmission times needed in order to reach vessels in particular areas and to be agreed with vessels in advance. Avoid the wavelengths employed for Norddeich and direct beam transmissions. Necessary to choose different wavelengths for day and night transmissions and probably also for different areas transmit only twice a day for each area. So arrange times that ship's radio operators can cope, but in such a way that they do not interfere with the one way Norddeich service and direct beam transmissions especially if transmission programme is extended. Recommended brief transmission from land stations not necessary and in view of difficulty of reception by ship undesirable.
2. Normally please add the phrase 'Urgent for Naval War Staff' when sending on by cable important intercepted messages for relay to ships at sea.
3. Following alterations to be made to 'Himalaya' manual. Paragraph 11, line 6 strike out the word "first". Also eliminate the first sentence concerning cipher table 'Ysop'. Insert at paragraph 16, line 4 after "Norddeich" the words "and on direct beam messages". Add in paragraph 18: "When being pursued or captured by enemy, begin transmitting on 600 metres SOS messages as employed by British merchantmen RRRR or QQQQ, then include secret call sign, except that as the first letter of the call sign should add G in front of it in order to deceive British shipping. All British land stations will repeat such information. This way we in the homeland will hear about an emergency situation affecting one of our ships frequently more certainly than by a signal to Norddeich." Attaché to provide examples of this arrangement on the spot. Addition: Change of letters in the Supply Ship Recognition Signal on the first of the month at 12 noon Central European Time. Supplement to paragraph 20b: "The recognition signal fixed for a given day is valid from 1000 hours CET on that day until 1000 GMT the following day. The Morse letters to be transmitted three times on coming in close to the shore in the daytime fly ensign even if not challenged, and transmit Morse letter at night. If reply from land uncertain, can also be done with two white star shells." Add to paragraph 22: "Code and radio signal jottings to be destroyed daily. Contents of cables to be so set out daily that no connection can be established with any specific code transmission, and both date and time of despatch to be left off."

10 September - 30 November 1941

P A R T 3 88

the radio operator service will work out in the future only experience will show. For now a lecture has been arranged about the new tasks and the whole area of activity of the monitoring post, which will be given as soon as possible by Herr Wald. In general, however, the monitoring post has been expanded in practice in ways suited to the new group of functions with effect from 5 October.

S. 'Spreefeld' sailed from Yokohama early today and is making first of all for Kobe, where a change of crew will take place. Kobe has been bracketed to the effect that the inclusion of up to a further 400 tons of cargo may possibly have to be organised there. Negotiations about this are still in progress. However, Kobe has been informed as a precaution in case of the need to make a transfer to the 'Spreefeld' that

Loading in Kobe must be completed by the 13th. The trip to Barren is to be via the Inland Sea. The vessel must arrive at Barren no later than the 17th. Departure from Barren must be so arranged that it starts its final journey as a blockade runner on the 21st.

This was the reason for the despatch of the following cable:

October 1941

00:

Navy High Command, Berlin for Aust. IV 125 further to my 795 gK and with reference to Aust. IV 2605 gK and my 821 gK. Departure from Barren delayed a few days because of loading problems. Earliest departure date from Barren will be attempted, but probably not possible before 22 October. Naval Attaché 876 gKdos.

Enclosed receipt of following direct beam cable (Code 'Himalaya').

For 'Burgeland' No. 9, 'Odenwald' No. 13, 'Kulmerland' No. 12, 'Münsterland' No. 11. Careless work with obsolete feedback radio receivers with which a leakage is possible via antennae because of a lack of high-frequency amplification, so not to be operated in danger zones as the feedback wave can be received and triangulated.

Following an enquiry of Herr Feret who has recently examined the radio stations of all the blockade-runners, it was confirmed that there cannot have been any wireless work with radio receivers on board any of the blockade-runners sent out from here.

At the same time, F. was instructed to work out as soon as possible 'Notes on Identifying and Eliminating any Interference from Radio Equipment with the Help of Equipment on Board'.

It does not seem as if M.S. 'Bhakotis' will have to carry out in the foreseeable future any supply duties for an armoured cruiser, thus ought not to cause any delay in the despatch of blockade runners and the following cable was despatched:

10 September - 30 November 1941

1100: Discussion with Captain Nakamura

1.) I told him of the arrival of 'Münsterland' at Kobe on 29 October and indicated that 'Münsterland' had on board 3,000 naval charts of the Netherlands East Indies taken from a captured Dutch ship.<sup>297</sup> These charts had been despatched to the War Department in Washington and in view of the current situation would certainly be of special interest to the Japanese Navy. I asked him to let me know if the Japanese Navy had any interest in them.

2.) The Japanese Navy had made an offer of ¥71,000 for the wood landed from the 'Bhakotis'. In the meantime I had had the wood measured by a German lumber expert and had ascertained that it had a value of about ¥93,000. I requested him to make arrangements to agree on a compromise price of ¥80,000.

3.) Lately more than 100 Germans would be sent home on board German blockade-runners. This had not been reported to the Japanese police for security reasons and in order not to draw unnecessary attention to this. I will draw up a full listing of the returnees and asked him to work on the Japanese police which had already indicated its displeasure at the unreported departures.

4.) At the end of October 379 tons of gas oil and 1,488 tons of diesel oil had been brought on board three Japanese vessels, the 'Azuma Maru', 'Terukawa Maru' and 'Naruto Maru'. I requested him to let us have as much of these amounts of oil as possible for the Supply Area after their arrival. There were still 4,000 drums of gas oil and 13,000 drums of diesel oil obtainable in Manzanillo. I would be grateful if these amounts could be shipped soon.<sup>298</sup>

## 1100:

Employee Kiderlen who returned on board 'Quito' from Shanghai reported back after completing his assignment (mainly changing US dollars into black yen). He reported that the efforts of Bellstedt to procure oil in Shanghai would probably be entirely successful.

Despatch of Naval Attaché Tel.Nr. 1093/41 gKdos:

Navy High Command, Berlin.  
Re my Naval Attaché Tel.Nr. 1018 gKdos:

- I. Relay of course instructions for 'Ramses' and 'Münsterland' requested, including provision of further data about experiences encountered in interim by blockade-runners.
- II. Request confirmation of following route for 'Osorno' from Head Wailer:
  - Between Falklands and South Georgia, east of Trinidad and east of Orkney northward between 40 and 43° West to 40° North.
  - Steer via *Baltic Crab, Earing* and *Passover Lamb* to Biscay.

Despatch of Naval Attaché Tel.Nr. 1094/41 gKdos:

Navy High Command, Berlin for *Ausland IV*:

- 1.) According to secret call-signs fixed for 'Münsterland', LXTG is the same as the British warship 'Firm' according to the secret call-sign list for 1940 under paragraph 18 of cover note on 'Himalaya'.

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Procedure therefore not useable for 'Münsterland'. Correction requested.

- 2.) Regard transmission four times of letter S (submarine), as well as of letters R and Q as appropriate to begin with.<sup>299</sup>

The procedure therefore is still no guaranteed solution.

Discussion of the following points with G076:

- 1.) New sailing chart for visit of 'Osorno' to Sasebo requested; also details of the size of the items to be shipped on board there.
- 2.) For self-defence purposes (e.g. in carrying prisoners-of-war) 10 revolvers and 500 rounds of ammunition requested for blockade-runners.

6 November 1941

## 1100:

Discussion with the Italian Naval Attaché. He told me that 'Cortellazzo' was sailing for Dairen on the evening of 6 November. The captain has sailing orders drawn up by himself. These contain a number of course directions for the voyage to France. He also told me that 'Tomislav' is leaving Shanghai approximately on 20 November so that it can be chartered to the Japanese. He has reached an agreement with the shipping line according to which goods belonging to Italy and Germany should be brought by the vessel from Shanghai to Kobe. 500 tons of goods for Italy had already been loaded at Shanghai. The remainder of the available 4,000 tons of freight space was available for German use. In Kobe there was an additional load on board 'Orseolo' which could be transferred for the return journey home.

It also emerged from Balsamo's statements that the charter negotiations had been extremely difficult in the light of the Yugoslavian registry of the vessel. The Japanese had sought among other things to replace the Yugoslav master with an Italian. This move had occurred in the last few days and had attracted a lot of attention in Shanghai.<sup>300</sup>

Despatch of Naval Attaché Tel.Nr. 1102/41 gKdos to Consulate-General Shanghai:

For Bellstedt.  
'Tomislav' departing Shanghai round 20 November for Kobe with 500 tons of Italian cargo. Remaining cargo space available for German cargo for Kobe. Send foodstuffs and gasoline. Get in touch with freight company and Italian Naval Attaché Galetti. Exploit opportunity to the full.

This obviates the need to send 'Quito' there again for the time being.

Despatch of Naval Attaché Tel.Nr. 1100/41 gKdos:

Navy High Command, Berlin.  
Re *Ausland IV* 2974/41 gKdos.  
'R.C. Rickmers' 8 July; 'Spreewald' 18 July to 20 September.  
'Havenstein' 2 August; 'Ursula Rickmers' 6 August.  
Charter of 'Mosel' proposed, but in view of lack of fuel Japanese Navy



[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 10 June 2002 10:11 PM  
**Subject:** Re: Email to Dr Chapman

Dear Captain Arundel,

Your enquiry about the loss of HMAS *Sydney* finally reached me and the delay was largely the result of my not having informed the University of Sussex that I had moved back to Scotland in December 1999. I haven't been closely involved with the relevant area of research for some time and therefore am a bit rusty about the details collected in the past. The author of *Betrayal at Pearl Harbor*, however, never was remotely my colleague and I reject his obsessive concern with conspiracy theories.

I've been in contact in past times with Commander Stevens, with whom I exchanged information about the transfer of mines from German warships visiting Japan in 1942 and their subsequent practical testing by Japanese mine-laying submarines off Queensland. But we have also met in Canberra and he was extremely helpful in providing material he had collected about British communications intelligence referring to the Pacific region up to 1945.

I would certainly agree with you and your colleague about the importance of communications intelligence and I have tried to draw attention to the 'extremely severe and longlasting damage to British security throughout 1941' in publications since 1990. The papers released since 1993 still exclude items relevant to security, but it is clear from some statements not omitted that Churchill himself decided that more secret information should not be passed on even to the USA because of the weakness of US systems in peacetime. There is also concern expressed in the spring of 1941 about the lack of security consciousness in the dominions and colonies, so that it is not surprising that this applied not only also to Australia, but particularly to Australia at this time, as there was a huge row between MI5 and the War Office with the Australian General Staff. Consequently, in view of the natural sense of disquiet and mistrust there was at the time, compounded by British accusations, largely misguided, against the performance of Australian forces in Malaya, the tendencies toward Anglo-Australian confrontation have greatly expanded among Australian historians. The German B-Dienst confirmed on 13 November 1941 the continued interest in the interception of British merchant signals traffic in the Indo-Pacific region because of the operations of *Kormoran* in the area and the record of communications with the raider ought in theory to convey whatever information was immediately available, but it would need to be linked to what had been communicated before the start of the voyage and during its passage to the Indian Ocean, including whatever might have been seized from Allied ships intercepted and interrogations undertaken.

I expect to be around for the next few months, but will be at a conference on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in September. I haven't seen the details of the Senate enquiry, but it would be very useful to look at what evidence was explored in order to answer further enquiries. The theory of the sinking by a Japanese submarine, however, remains rather fanciful.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN CHAPMAN

(Hon. Sen. RF, Scottish Centre for War Studies,  
University of Glasgow)

13/06/2002



[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, 20 July 2002 8:53 AM  
**Subject:** Re: HMAS SYDNEY II research

Dear Captain Arundel,

The US allocated personnel and funds to microfilm captured German naval archives pretty soon after their discovery by the AU30 unit at Tambach. An immediate interest lay in locating any operational or technical material on German collaboration with Japan, but what was filmed is now located in the National Archives on its transfer from ONI. From what I learned in Washington, however, it is clear that no files of communications intelligence in the form of the war diaries were transferred to the USA except a bound series of volumes on 2. *Seekriegsleitung* circulars handed over to NSA about 1970. As the UK was by agreement the central repository for all OKM files, the US was supposed to hand over all such material to the UK. It is clear that not all such material was supplied to the UK, as can be seen from files in the Library of Congress and the National Archives. On the other side, however, the UK has held back numerous files from being repatriated to Germany in the past and these usually concern topics such as cryptography and secret service matters which have probably been retained by GCHQ and MI6.

The German Foreign Ministry files when returned to Germany in the 1960s did not include captured material belonging to the UK and this certainly included the materials re the *Automedon*.

There is clear evidence that some of these materials were sent round Whitehall in the post-1945 years and they have apparently disappeared from view. I am sure that the detailed manifests of the code materials and advice to seafarers which filled a large chest were not made available to public scholars and when I produced a draft of my findings when still a D Phil student at Oxford, I was told by a retired officer serving in the Cabinet Office to omit any mention of the losses of British cryptographic and top secret material captured by the Germans:

What I have reproduced is all that I could find in London and Washington and I think there is also some material for 1942-3 in New Zealand, which has not yet been published. My conclusion was that there was a great deal of confusion in Britain itself and that it did not necessarily follow that it was all part of a bureaucratic cover-up. However, it seems clear that in November 1941, the Axis Powers knew more about Allied communications than we did about German cipher systems as the real breakthroughs did not come until 1942. The US interceptions of German naval traffic only begin in the summer of 1942, but GCHQ has never released its more extensive files or they have been pretty well destroyed and probably most of what is in the PRO is material from the copies circulated to the armed services from BP. From what I can understand, the US did not keep much material from German naval traffic on armed raiders except at the end of their operations in 1942-3. If there is anything about raiders in 1940-2, these will be found in the UK and other Commonwealth countries involved in ocean warfare rather than the U.S.A

Am unlikely to be in London in the winter, but will be glad to assist if I can.