

2K119180
Hon Terence Cole, AC RFD QC
President
HMAS SYDNEY II
Commission of Inquiry,
Office of the Chief of Defence Force
270 Pitt Street
Defence Plaza
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Sir,

BOARDING OF MERCHANT SHIPS WWII

I recently received a reply from a friend to whom I had forwarded a copy of HMAS SYDNEY II A Deduced Conclusion.

In his reply, he referred to having experienced the interception of his ship on three occasions; twice by the RN and once by a Brazilian.

This indicates the Boarding of Merchant ships during WWII as being common place, rather than the exception, as we all have been led to believe by the many submissions to various 'Inquiries'.

It is many years ago and very few persons who experienced those days are still alive, and to discover facts of that time require considerable research.

A Brazilian warship. Why.

The Brazilian Government came into the WWII no later than 1944, when among other duties, patrolled the South Atlantic Ocean, protecting allied Merchant ships from possible Surface Raiders, and the interception of German blockade runners.

These duties released Commonwealth Naval ships to the more active war zones.

My friend is Dr John Spiers, AM, PhD, he is also an Extra Master, who continued his sea going career until 1960, when he migrated to Australia.
He must be considered a credible witness.

I enclose a copy of his letter.

The Germans stated SYDNEY's guns were aimed at them, and I deduced, they were not actually loaded, but the shells and cordite charges were ready in the 'loading trays'.

The actual time of KORMORAN firing her guns, was 6 seconds after the order to 'De-

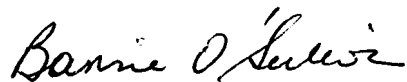
camouflage'. At a range of 500 yards, the actual striking of the shells on SYDNEY would have been another 2 or 3 seconds. Given the response time, SYDNEY's guns were in all probability loaded.

My experience of the RN is, all procedures are documented, this would include the interception and the boarding of Merchant ships.

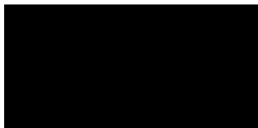
The Gunnery Officer of SYDNEY was RN, and would have followed instructions written in the appropriate Procedure Manual, copies of such would be held in the Books Reference (BR's) Library, whose location I no longer remember, but it was somewhere in the Midlands of England. Australia may have a copy.

NB The RAN's presence in the Persian Gulf is mainly to intercept and board suspicious ships and other water bourn craft, precisely the subject matter of this letter. This confirms, no matter how advanced the communication between ships is, the only way of positive identification is to Board and verify by personal search.

Yours sincerely,



Bernard O'Sullivan



3rd June 2008