

eK119251
Hon Terence Cole AO RFD QC
President
HMAS SYDNEY II
Commission of Inquiry
Office of the Chief of the Defence Force
270 Pitt Street
Defence Force Plaza
Sydney NSW 2000

Your Reference: EK118939

Dear Sir,

HMAS SYDNEY HSK KORMORAN WHY A DEDUCED RECKONING
HMAS SYDNEY II A DEDUCED RECKONING

Thank you for the acknowledgement of the receipt of "HMAS SYDNEY A Deduced Reckoning.

I am enclosing copies of the above two papers, both of which preceded the a deduced conclusion and although some of the arguments proved wrong, the basic sequence of events are relevant to the final solution.

The former papers were originally forwarded to HMAS SYDNEY II. Wreck location Seminar held in Fremantle, 16th November 2001. The pages numbered 1 to 32 with an Addenda titled 'The Christmas Island Carley Float. The additional pages are added for my convenience and were written at various dates in response to letters addressed directly to me.

I think one of the relevant matters is identification of the ship as a neutral ship. In the first papers addendum I have enclosed a copy of a photograph of my first ship, ss FORT MAUREPAS, in Cardiff Dock July 1946. The DEMS Armament has been removed and the markings of the managing shipping company (J & C Harrison) painted on her funnel. She was built at the New Westminster BC Canada in 1942. The year after SYDNEY's loss.

Still noticeable is the Armour cladding on the bridge front, the AA gun emplacements in the wings of the upper Bridge deck, and on the after end of the boat deck. The forward 20 pounder (fixed ammunition) emplacement has been removed, while the 4 inch gun was sited on top of the Stern accommodation housing. Still being carried were the four life rafts. One of the reasons for these rafts, a ship loaded with ore, if torpedoed in the forward holds, steamed under within one or two minutes. The rafts were fitted with a pressure release which freed it from the sinking ship, when it would float to the surface and be within proximity of any survivors who had been fortunate to jump over the side.

I think it may be the reason there has been an apparent lack of interest about the loss of SYDNEY by Merchant seamen, for far too many of their ships were lost with all hands.

In the photograph what cannot be seen is the ships name, which is normally displayed on each side of the ship's bow, and at the stern, which also disclosed the Port of Registry.

All Ministry of War Transport chartered ships, had their names and ports of registry painted out. Their names were shown on hinged sight boards, fixed on either side of Bridge deck housing, for display in port and when assembling for convoy. When the convoy departed the rendezvous, the top half was lowered covering the name.

It was also the same for warships, which painted out their 'pennant numbers' on their bows.

This then would cause some confusion to SYDNEY, for STRAAT MALAKKA would have been painted on KORMORAN's bow, and the Port of Registry, Batavia below the name across the stern, completing the camouflage.

I trust this information has been of some help to you.

Yours sincerely,



Bernard O'Sullivan



5th June 2008