

G.C. Dickson

10 - July - 08

K. Radburn  
Commander RANR  
Secretary  
HMAS Sydney 11 Commission of Inquiry.

Dear Commander Radburn

As requested I am writing my recollections of my conversation with George Hobbs who was a member of the crew of the HMAS Sydney 11 and on leave on a weekend just prior to leaving for another tour of duty in 1941.

We were alone and I can still remember he was very agitated and quietly got me to sit close to him and he asked me to promise not to disclose what he was going to tell, me. As I mentioned at that time there was signage every where "Loose lips sink ships" apart from the worry it would cause his family.

He then told me that he did not expect too ever be home again as he expected the Captain would cause the ship to be destroyed. He then told me of the manner of operations carried out by the previous Captain in that he always approached a suspect ship from a head on direction and with the guns laid on it. . Because they knew there was a raider in the area, and if there was any puff of smoke that could be gunfire, his Guns were to return fire.

The new Captain who I now know to be Captain Burnett had not adopted this approach. But had slowly approached and on two occasions had stopped dead in the water broadside to the unknown ship and refused permission for the guns to be aimed in case of an accidental fire from them.

George's fear being that if it was the raider, they would not be able to return fire if the raider got their shots away, as the raider would be able to accurately aim over the distance Burnett closed on them on the two occasions, mentioned.

When the news broke that the Sydney was missing it was as if the discussion was burned into my mind especially as I had promised not to disclose our conversation out of respect for his family who I was still closely associated with.

Yours Faithfully  
Gordon. C. Dickson

