

HMAS SYDNEY II
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
Office of the Chief of the Defence Force
270 Pitt Street
Defence Plaza
Sydney NSW 2000

For the Attention of Lieutenant J Nottle RAN

Dear Sir,

Your Reference CK 120646 HMAS SYDNEY II COL/OUT/2008/106

MERCHANT SHIP IDENTIFICATION WW1

In my various submissions to the Inquiries, I have tried to convey the difficulties in the identification of Merchant ships, but one I omitted was the German merchant ships requisitioned by the British Government after WWI, as Repatriation Prizes, which were given to various British Shipping Companies as replacement ships lost during that war.

Two such vessels were Orient Lines OMAR and ORMUZ, engaged on the UK - Australia Mail Service. Of course there was a considerable number of ships other than the two mentioned.

The German style of ship building was unique, and was readily identified as such by mariners.

I recently received a letter from a friend, who retired from the P&O as Chief Officer ORSOVA, to take up residence with his Australian wife in Sydney. He found employment within the Stevedoring Industry. (Another credible witness)
I quote from his letter,

"When I was a lad in 1943, sailing in an ex-German ship from the First World War - The "City of Auckland", we sailed across the Indian Ocean un-escorted. We were lucky not to have run into an Australian warship whose crew by this time might have been able to identify one nationality of ship from another".

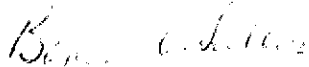
I feel this revelation indicates yet again that the 'standing-off' at a suspect and shooting at them was confined to a minority of 'Gung-Ho merchants'.

One thing in my mind is, it confirms the reason given by senior RAN Officers of the story, Captain Burnett took SYDNEY too close, which without any further explanation as I have argued, (sending away a boarding party) and implying that it was a very fool hardy action, which resulted in the loss of HMAS SYDNEY, with all hands.

This was most convenient, for it gave the Australian Navy a perfect scapegoat, the dead and therefore, inarticulate and silent Captain Burnett.

It is because of not continuing the investigation of WHY he was so close, and the publication of such findings, which led to the rumours and conjectures that have run rife ever since, and of course, the suspicion of the "End Sydney Secrecy" Group, that the Australian Government was hiding facts, when there are none.

Your sincerely,



Bernard O'Sullivan



20th August 2008