

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

Lieutenant J Nottle

Dear Sir,

#### THE CHRISTMAS ISLAND BODY

An article was published in SMH on the 21st August 2008 showing a photograph of some of HMAS SYDNEY's personnel, including a Lieutenant Commander, who is now being considered as the body found in the Carley Float.

This was caused by the finding of material which has been identified as being the remnants of white overalls by the forensic scientist.

It has always been accepted that the body was clothed in white overalls. It was not until Submission Volume 16 page 3875 was published, which gave the colour and style of clothing issued at that time, after which, claims were made, the overalls were originally blue, indicating the body was that of a Rating, or in modern parlance, Sailor.

Had the Float originated from HMAS SYDNEY, it would have indicated, the wearing of non-issue clothing was tolerated, which in itself would be surprising for a cruiser.

If such toleration existed, it is quite feasible, the Ship's Company on going to action stations were not wearing the correct clothing, of overalls, anti-flash head and shoulder covering and long sleeved gloves, plus steel helmet and leather shoes/boots, and accounts for the high casualty rate.

The drift of the two rafts and other flotsam shows the drift from the wreck sites to be in a Northerly direction, tending to the east.

Had the carley float originated from HMAS SYDNEY, it would have been launched at the approximately 40 minutes before KORMORAN's rafts, that is, 1820/19<sup>th</sup> November, short when SYDNEY disappeared from sight.

The weather pattern experienced by the German survivors indicated the area was under the influence of a low pressure system to the North, This would have eventually caused the wind to settle from the South West.

Submissions Volume 19 pages 4587/8, describes the flow of water influencing the general area of the Indian ocean, and the affect on small craft and flotsam.

This can be checked against the information printed in the reference book, 'Meteorology for Seamen'. (This was the approved reference book studied by candidates for 1st Mate and Master Certificates of Competency).

The Carley Float was not water tight. It was open to the elements, with a bottom board which could either be 'trussed' up to the round flotation cylinder, or lowered to allow more survivors to stand vertically within the safety confines of the float.

The description of the Christmas Island Float indicated it was trussed-up. This would allow the free flow of water within the confines of the Float, and would at all times be the same as the draft, and at least 20 centimetres.

The body would then been semi-immersed in water for all the time, which over the period from 19<sup>th</sup> November until it was found and recovered in the New Year, would have rendered the soft tissues to a opaque mass, if it had not been attacked by marine life.

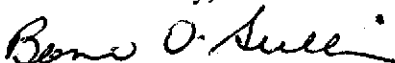
There has been considerable research of all wartime casualties at about that time, with a result or claim it could not be from any other ship.

When Singapore fell, people were trying to escape by any means, (reminiscent of Dunkirk). Anything that floated, even some that did not for long. The Japanese on sighting them, bombed, machine gunned and shelled them all.

The carley float itself was of Lysaught Zinc coated steel sheeting, (galvanised iron), and packed with kapok.

HMAS SYDNEY would have been fitted out with British Equipment, made with non-ferrous metal and packed with cork.

Yours sincerely,



Bernard O'Sullivan

  
31<sup>st</sup> August 2008