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Tel [REDACTED] Email - [REDACTED]

3rd September 2008

The Secretary
HMAS SYDNEY Mark II Commission of Inquiry
Level 18 Defence Plaza
270 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Secretary,

I attach my submission to the above Inquiry,
consisting of sixteen pages of typed script plus two diagrams.

I request acknowledgement of receipt of these.

Yours faithfully

Ean McDonald
LCDR RANR (Ret) VRD

Cole 2

The Secretary,
HMAS SYDNEY MARK II COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
Level 18, Defence Plaza 270 Pitt Street, Sydney, NSW . 2000

Submission by LCDR Ean McDonald RANR (Ret) VRD,

Tel [REDACTED] Email <[REDACTED]>

3 September 2008

I feel it sensible to offer something of my background and experience.

My name is Ean Lawrence McDonald, aged ninety years (September 3rd 2008).

I joined the Royal Australian Naval Reserve in 1938 and was called up on the beginning of World War Two on 3rd September 1939. Between 4th September and 23rd October 1939 I continued basic training as an Ordinary Signalman in HMAS CERBERUS V at Fremantle. On 24th October I joined HMAS SYDNEY II.

I believe that Captain John Collins was Commanding Officer and Commander Hilkin RN his deputy. My action station aboard (at first degree of readiness) was on the Flag Deck . I kept occasional watches in the crows nest.

I served in the R.A.N. Reserve for about twenty five years from the beginning as an Ordinary Signalman to Lieutenant Commander, having achieved a Full Watchkeeping Certificate, with extra accredited qualifications in Hydrography, Navigation and Gunnery. I possess an Ocean Going Unrestricted Master Mariner's Certificate. I lectured in Navigation and Small Craft Safety for many years, and wrote a book on Ocean Navigation. I commanded small charter vessels up to my eighty eighth year. I navigated Miss Susie Maroney on successful swims from Cuba to USA and Mexico to Cuba.

As a practicing Architect I was made a Life Fellow of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. I was for fifteen years a Councillor of the City of Perth and served in many community organizations even until today.

I think it important to note that most sailors in warships had special tasks to do in special places within their ships. Most therefore knew only of those places and the tasks they did within them. Fortunately I was different. Up until I left HMAS PERTH in November 1941 I had been a signalman, but not just a one ship one place man. I had by then served as staff signalman to Captain Hector Waller and had served with him aboard every one of the old V and W Destroyers in most of the battles of the Mediterranean in 1940/41. I was aboard PERTH ostensibly to train as an officer, supposedly of doubtful seamanship value. I managed to maintain an unusual freedom as to what I did. At one time I was delegated to oil anything that moved (except in Engine rooms) Being interested, I literally meandered about that ship for four months almost totally unencumbered and taking on many tasks as a volunteer. I thus handled ammunition in six inch shell and cordite magazines and hoists, and observed in turrets. I handled four inch ammunition and loaded those guns. I observed all sorts of maneuvers and assisted shipwrights in their work all over the ship.



COLE 3

I suggest that members of the Inquiry might benefit by reading my book FLIP SIDE WAR that describes much of my experiences and the jobs done by sailors generally. On my discharge from seas service in 1945 I was credited with a massive 72 months of wartime sea time.

At the outset of this submission I am bound to raise questions relating to the status and early actions of the Inquiry team members.

I first question the position of the team of inquirers, a large group of lawyers, who all appear to be both members of the Royal Australian Navy and appointees of the inquiry concerning past activities of the same organization in the subject of the inquiry itself. This becomes more of concern considering the number of occasions over long years when the Navy and its historians have demonstrated bias as to aspects of the same inquiry, or have shown to be inefficient to some degree in the pursuit of relevant information.

I also question the seeming carelessness in opening gambits in this inquiry, that began with a Public Notice calling for submissions to be made, and for requests for authority to appear, before a hearing, at very short notice, and only in Sydney.

Appearances before the Commission were to be determined on that same day of the hearing but no provision was made for applicants not in Sydney. I wrote requesting information on the point but never received a reply.

Trying to make contact I was given a telephone number that answered with a recorded reply that it had not been current since October 2005 but it gave a mobile number that was that of the aged stepmother of one of the legal team who did not have a contact number for him.

I was later interviewed by two of the legal team sent over from Sydney to Perth who consequently sent me a written statement with instructions that it was to be statutorily declared with one of their number at an undesignated place or time.. The statement was unsatisfactory to me as it did not quote extremely significant confirmation of information that I had given in the interview. Another statement was sent that but it was to be signed in front of another lawyer who is in Melbourne. I have ignored that one also, and have heard no more in three months so far. Strangely I was asked to sign as a "retired motor mechanic".

In any case the statement was simply repeating what I had said in my submission to the Parliamentary inquiry of 1998.

In references given for me to contact the Secretary of the inquiry the telephone and fax numbers confusingly alternate.

In the late afternoon of Friday 29th August 08 I am advised by friends in Sydney that a hearing is scheduled in Sydney on Monday next week, and that ex SYDNEY crew members are to give evidence. As I have heard nothing whatsoever from the Inquiry staff in many weeks I am concerned at not being made aware of this.

All this carelessness is of concern to me. At this stage I can have little faith in this inquiry and I feel that SYDNEY and her Crew deserve better.

Because of this my submission may not be as well constructed as it might be. I do not have the heart to bother over batting my head against a wall. I simply offer what I believe to be the reality.



COLE 4

Because of the large volume of doubtful information on SYDNEY's last battle from both the German and Australian sides, I see that the challenge to the members of the inquiry team to be that of acting morally and ethically with strength and courage, with loyalty to truth rather than any direction otherwise. I would not like to see a repetition of the behavior of various seemingly promotion seeking naval officers or party politicians or perhaps misguided lawyers as indicated at the inquiries concerning the loss of HMAS VOYAGER.

Whilst I have been asked by Inquiry Counsel to sign two differing but incorrectly worded versions of Statutory Declarations prepared by one of them after a recorded interview I see no point in that. I made various submissions to the 1997 / 98 Parliamentary Inquiry into the SYDNEY / KORMORAN Battle and see no point in repeating those. That would entail rewriting and repeating some sixty or so pages of submission to that Inquiry, that are already available to that Inquiry.

Although disturbed at the carelessness demonstrated by staff of this current inquiry I am however happy to write, and Statutorily Declare, that what I append below is my own and that submissions printed in the record of the 1998 Parliamentary Inquiry were also my own.

I suggest that my 1998 submissions should be read with care, as it seems to me that those submissions (and others) were not so treated, nor accepted at the time.

Whilst I made a number of inquiries over a number of years to a number of members of parliament including two senior ministers of the last parliament, I have never ever received a sensible or informative reply, so that I have the distinct impression that either they did not wish to bother, or that they were reluctant to enter into the SYDNEY "controversy" for reasons not given.

Whilst the recent discoveries of the wrecks have shown that the German location was reasonable correct, they have left more questions than have provided answers.

I am not ashamed of having been one of those who miss-estimated the battle position. I was joined by a number of others.

There was the seemingly strong evidence of sights and sounds that pointed to a battle off the Abrolhus Islands, reinforced by a confirming estimate by a senior naval navigator, and further reinforced by a workshop of other senior naval experts. Most of us used data from Admiralty sources and from evidence of German survivors, that have now proven to be misleading.

From the wreck discoveries emerge a number of facts to which I will refer.

I will refer to comments in Gill's "official" history and the denial of the Xmas Island body over two decades

I will examine German statements relative to the battle, to final locations, and to indications of the effects of winds and currents on both vessels in their final hours.



Reference Submissions 1997 / 98 Parliamentary Inquiry

I now offer amendments, additions to, or deductions from my 1997 / 98 Submission as hereunder.

Inquiry notes page 531, correct "Torpedoes" plural to singular.

Page 531 - para 2 - Torpedo time of travel would be more like 3 / 4 minute.
- Clearing of KORMORAN guns more like 30 seconds

Add a last paragraph -

"KORMORAN's Pak and machine guns could open fire much faster. At the range stated it was said that they could do severe damage to SYDNEY's bridge and personnel thereon".

I will question that later.

Page 532 - Omit first three paragraphs now proven incorrect

Reference to signal with time of origin 1500/25 proves Germans were lying.

Noting second last paragraph reference Japanese, I repeat that I have difficulty in accepting Japanese participation in the SYDNEY action

Last para to remain . Refer also to page 541 .

Page 535 Para 1 - Refer confirmation by Gordon Laffer on page 536

Para 2 from bottom - see later for later report by Artillery Captain Reg Kidd and other gunners at Rottneest and Fremantle

Page 543 - I now see that my estimates of battle location, made as far back as in 1980's were incorrect, but note that they were based on incorrect data regarding such as wind and current directions and speeds.

It is significant that senior naval navigators and other experts in specially convened work shops also made similar incorrect estimates.

Some of my remarks could still be valid, such as the sightings of AQUITANIA by Detmers and Von Gosselyn

Reference diagrams as submitted in 1998 :-

Page 558 - No change

Page 559 - Comment - First positions (as reported by B Winter) of Detmers and Von Gosselyn were incorrect.

They reported sighting AQUITANIA at 1200 / 23 Nov. At that time - 84 hours after the action - they must have been still drifting within only ten miles of the wreck. This seems in need of investigation .

Page 560 - incorrect bases used.

My estimates of the 1980's were more soundly based than those done later. I had then used a general drift on a line of 340 degrees .

Page 561 - similar but interestingly had I used the more correct drift at 352 degrees at 0.72 miles per hour I would have back plotted from a number of pick up points to arrive at the final wrecks. This can be observed in a number of my diagrams .

This indicates that data such as the German records (eg Meyer, Von Malapert) was wrong, and raises the question as to whether that was deliberate. It is too different to be simple mistakes

COLE 6

Diagrams A to M – Pages 567 - 574

My diagrams 13A and 13 B will be amended in the final pages of this submission

Page 577 Add to list.

Statement by Captain Reg Kidd of the 35th Fortress Company stationed on Rottnest Island at the time of KORMORAN's advent into Gage Roads off Fremantle that simply adds to other declarations by similar artillerymen (This statement is available on request)

When I have , in this submission , made general remarks, I am still in possession of evidence to back much of them that has never been called despite my previous advices to the Parliamentary Inquiry of their existence.

Further comments:

I draw attention to the fact that my following comments may include additions to, or amplify, observations on matters that may have emerged since 1998.

Consequent to the discovery of the wrecks I have deduced that from the pick up points of "inanimate", that is un-propelled objects like life belts, and life raft, as recovered (AQUITANIA, WHYRALLAH, EVAGORAS) that the natural drift was on a line of approximately 352 degrees at a rate of about 0.72 nMph (nautical miles per hour)

It can thence be deduced that SYDNEY, whilst subject to that same set / drift, and wrecking some 12 miles South east of KORMORAN, must have been under power ,under command, and steering near South east, towards Geraldton, until she blew up and sank..

Her explosion was stated by Detmers to have been about 2300 H, that is, about 5 hours after the close of the action. The final wreck location at indicates that SYDNEY actually traveled South south east at a rate of about three knots.

From pictures and diagram of the final wreck taken by the discovery team can be seen a line from the debris of foremast and forecastle of about 150 degrees (South south east) to the hull wreck, reasonably close to my estimated line of advance.

Further, as the hull section is about 400 meters South east of the bow section , that also indicates an "advance" of about three knots along that line.

It is therefore reasonable to conclude that SYDNEY was still under way, under power and under command, when either a forward magazine finally exploded or the whole bow section fell away and she slid to the bottom.. It should be noted that as the spread of debris is quite wide then explosion seems to be more likely.

From the same set / drift figures as above can be deduced the set/drift and propulsion data of some German survivors .





COLE 7

Whilst SYDNEY was normally under command of ACNB there is strong evidence that she was under C in C China based in Singapore at the time of her last battle.

It is beyond doubt that Captain Burnett well knew of a raider in the area.

He would have been ordered to engage with it if possible in some circumstances but to observe other orders such as to capture if possible so as to try to replace British losses of merchant ships, but also to avoid harming possible British prisoners aboard, and to avoid wasting ammunition.

We now know from German evidence that SYDNEY challenged as normal from a distance then came close to the enemy and circled her, then stood by on her starboard quarter, which, under Admiralty instructions, was considered to be the so called "safety position"

There is the White Flag evidence and there is evidence that SYDNEY was in the process of lowering a boat, which would mean she was practically stopped and had accepted the fact that the enemy had surrendered. Such a boat is apparently with the others.

One may ask whether Burnett had considered ordering KORMORAN to proceed towards Geraldton but was put out of action before that could be effective.

There is evidence that some Germans were rowing towards SYDNEY, reinforcing the possibility of simulated surrender. It is worth considering whether that was part of a blind "surrender" trick.

That could indicate that Detmers had set up a clever move by putting down a "surrender" boat but left enough of his people at their action stations and ready to fire when ordered.

Cole 8 follows

Gill's History

COLE 8

It is important that Gill's history be examined.

In regard to the story of SYDNEY's last battle he seems to have made many mistakes or miss statements. One wonders why it became, as it were, set in stone by navy. There have since appeared many cracks in the stone.

To highlight what I see as his catalogue of miss information I state that he :-

--- seems to have totally accepted the now seen very doubtful German story.

(*There are now many differences such as statements by Kitsche, Albers, von Malapert –et al*)

--- accepted that KORMORAN was on a course of 025 degrees but also that Detmers said he was heading for Batavia

(*Question at 340 degrees. that was just 45 degrees difference. A moments thought raises the suspicious content of those directions*)

--- missed the fact that it was not possible for STRAAT MALLACCA to be in the area and to be unknown by navy.

(*Navy was meticulous in issuing Sitreps twice daily giving ships' positions courses etc*)

--- accepted that both ships were travelling at 15 knots whilst battling.

(*There is evidence that both were practically stopped* -

--- accepted a most unlikely timing of gun rounds by KORMORAN.

(*KORMORAN could not be expected to decamouflage and train her guns to fire under perhaps half a minute. She could not get six rounds away (say 50 seconds) before SYDNEY could get a first round away .SYDNEY would certainly be at least at Cruising Stations with two turrets closed up, with two rounds per turret laying in trays ready to be instantly rammed and fired within a maximum ten seconds. Detmers in his book admitted to as much as a minute to bring his guns to firing state*)

--- accepted that KORMORAN fired one shot that went "over" then another that went 'under' within 4 seconds of opening fire.

(*That is surely and impossible rate of firing. The range has been established by the Germans at 900 metres. For naval gunners to miss a ship as large as a cruiser at that distance is almost impossible. Note that Gill accepted that KORMORAN fired her last rounds at a range of 11000 yards – about 10000 metres.*)

---accepted that the action took place over half an hour.

(*Detmers in his German edition book said he waited for an hour expecting a call for a Secret Signal . Gill also accepted that SYDNEY was put out of action within 15 minutes.*)

---accepted KORMORAN's first shot "short" at 1400 yards =1300 metres.

(*German evidence is that the range was 900 metres*)



COLE 9

----accepted a second shot "over" at 1750 yards (+1600 metres)
(the trajectory pf a 5.9 inch gun (the German) would not change to that degree and miss a fairly large ship at that close range)

----stated that Germans used their 3.7 inch (or was it 37 mms) Pak gun with effect at a range – his own- of a mean of 1450 metres
(Note that the PAK gun by German reckoning had an effective range of only 600 meters)

---- accepted that SYDNEY's B turret had been blown overboard
(it is still there)

----quoted KORMORAN's cargo of 200 mines
(There is evidence elsewhere of 300 mines)

----accepted that the mines blew the ship up about midnight and that she sank rapidly by the stern
(He did not question the obvious fact that that if KORMORAN"s 300 mines - or even 200 mines – exploded, her crew would not have been able to see for many minutes, so that the story of her sinking by the stern must be a fabrication. We now know that at that time there was no "stern" section KORMORAN.

Gill finally stated that "from SYDNEY herself. No word was ever received and only one small float found"

(There is now a number of records of signals being received from SYDNEY and there are the two carley floats as well as the two life belts found by Wyrallah
It is hardly necessary to mention the body found by Xmas Island, also long denied by navy, but finally – in very recent years- accepted as a SYDNEY crewman.

Gill's story can now be seen as either a story written under duress or direction or a complete fabrication. It is thus completely unbelievable but was curiously generally accepted for many years by navy.

Rupert Long attempted to clinch the false tale by ordering the destruction of documents).

Captain Burnett has been branded as lacking in his command.

Admiral Crabb is just one of many people who countered that.

The Xmas Island body was denied consistently for about two decades but finally accepted as a SYDNEY crew member.

Gill in his official history gave times of the SYDNEY KORMORAN action in German kept times (G zone)which translated to the following Western Australian H times:-

1655H First sighting
1800H STRAAT MALLACCA signal
1815H Ships abreast
1830H KORMORAN opened fire
1845H SYDNEY fired torpedoes
1850H KORMORAN's range then 6600 yard
1925H KORMORAN's last shot at 11000 yards. Abandon order given
2200H KORMORAN boats lowered
2230H KORMORAN exploded





The Germans

I question much of the statements made by KORMORAN people.

Firstly there is the strange similarity in about 300 German stories .

Lawyers in particular will appreciate that if we have an accident on a corner with twenty witnesses we all appreciate that there could be twenty versions given as evidence.

Over near 67 years there have been only about half a dozen variants, some quite significant.

It has to be appreciated that very few of KORMORAN's crew would have been in a position to describe the actual action detail.

We have contradictions like that of Herr Ernst, currently president of the KORMORAN Association in Germany, who trumpeted that SYDNEY's "B" turret was "hurled overboard like a football " (not a plate) but that turret is still in place on SYDNEY's wreck.

There are a number of statements that SYDNEY was fully ablaze yet there was little sign of burning on two carley rafts, a body, two lifebelts, the deck planks of the wreck and the ship's boats still near the wreck.

We have a number of differences of ranges of firing, particularly by gunners.

(refer to my comments on Gill's history)

We have Detmers saying that both ships were parallel and abeam and traveling at 14 knots whilst Von Gosseln and Linke said that SYDNEY was almost stopped and on a quarter bearing as she was normally required to be in such a situation. These two are senior officers likely to be keenly observing the whole action.

There is now a picture of the KORMORAN wreck showing the forward gun aiming to starboard at an angle of about 135 degrees – the quarter – thus again point to the "safety position " for SYDNEY.

Linke also reported that SYDNEY cruised slowly around KORMORAN while she was practically stopped

Surely if KORMORAN was still moving at 14 knots there would have been suspicion by Burnett and he would have kept at distance and had her under constant surveillance and have been ready to open instant fire.

That in itself indicates that Detmers had feigned surrender.

KORMORAN had to be near stopped to fire an underwater torpedo.

If we accept the torpedo we must accept the near or stopped situation. Its firing tube faced to the after quarter.

A careful scan of the submissions to the 1997 / 8 Inquiry will reveal many inconsistencies and contradictions. The fact that KORMORAN could have been stopped and at very short range suggests that she must have surrendered but ready to open fire.

The fact that Detmers expected to be Court Martialled also suggests that.

There is evidence that KORMORAN still flew a Dutch flag as fire was opened.

There is evidence that she fired an underwater torpedo.

The German torpedoes were electrically driven and left no bubbles. They could be launched from underwater tubes but only when the parent vessel was practically stopped.

The gun range was said to be 900 metres, but it should be noted that the 3.7 cms PAK guns had a very short effective range of about 600 metres. Any suggestion that SYDNEY's bridge was destroyed by them becomes questionable.

SYDNEY was said to have gone down very quickly (Dertmers , Kitsche et al) but also to have sailed away to a distance and blew up late at night (The wrecks are about 12 nmiles apart)

COLE 11

Aibers stated that fire was opened "as the Dutch flag was lowered". There are statements by Italian war prisoners that fellow German prisoners told them that a white flag was flown as SYDNEY approached. SYDNEY was stated to have been lowering a boat, and Germans spoke of rowing towards SYDNEY. Like many other statements this indicates either the real facts or creation of stories. The problem is one of seeking truth among a plethora of tales.

The well backed story of KORMORAN's advent into Gage Roads some days prior to the action that is not mentioned in either Australian or German reports. It raises a most interesting aspect of the whole matter. From Detmer's point of view it suggests that he did not wish his superiors to know that he got so close to the possibility of bombarding Fremantle and also creating a furore by laying his two or three hundred mines in the port approaches, but he sneaked out without a whimper when revealed. That he did not record this indicates that he was quite capable of falsifying his own log.

His ruthlessness is clearly demonstrated by the report that he said of his wounded "they have the honour of dying for their country" - or whatever. He also dodged reporting that either. A similar departure from true recording.

Detmers said he was steering a course of 025 degrees (North north east) at first sighting at 1655H /19 Nov. Any ship on that course in that location would have been suspect as it leads nowhere. Note that Burnett was aware of Raider activity in the area. Detmers said he was going to mine Shark Bay. As that bay is all shallow water and he might have sunk but a small fishing trawler that seems a nonsense, He signaled he was heading for Batavia, but that would require a course of 340 degrees, just 45 degrees difference from the course of 025 as stated.. Again we have a seeming nonsense. He sent a "Q" signal as STRAAT MALACCA and gave a position about 30 nmiles north of where he later claimed to be at the time.

The very name STRAAT MALACCA would have alerted British naval authorities who already suspected a Raider and would have known that that ship was very distant. Her name did not appear on any Sitreps (Situation Reports of vessels in the area)

From Detmers' first sighting position to when both ships were said to be alongside took time from 1655H to 1830H, that is one hour and ten minutes, during which time, if he was travelling at his claimed speed of 14 knots he would have travelled 17.5 nmiles, but he claimed that he made only 14 nmiles.

As a long serving and experienced Master Mariner, Detmers' navigation must have been normally efficient providing at least hourly ded. reckoned positions within a mile of the reality. All the different positions and results point to deliberate falsifications, yet more of those on the mounting list.

There were a number of positions given by the Germans (Detmers?). There is still therefore still difficulty in believing where the action actually took place.

Kitsche gave a position on Latitude 25 degrees south.

Detmers gave 26 40 south, 110 32 east (about 50 nmiles south west from the final wreck. .)

He also gave a "rescue position at 26 35 south, 111 east (about 30 nmiles south from the wreck)

He also gave a position of STRAAT MALACCA at 26 south 111 east. (about 8 nmiles north east from the wreck.



COLE 12

KORMORAN was claimed to have been travelling 14 knots on a course of about 260 degrees when the action began, but the wreck finished up some 50 nmiles away to the north east in the opposite direction after suffering a now established drift direction to the north at a rate of 0.72 nmiles for about 3.5 hours after cease firing time. That is about 2.5 nmiles to the north again.

There is a curious statement by Detmers in his German edition book that he waited for a whole hour expecting to be asked for the STRAAT MALLACCA secret signal. That in itself puts much of his story in doubt.

He claimed he was travelling at 14 knots during action time but he could not have fired his underwater torpedo with effect at that speed. He had to have his ship at stopped or near stopped and SYDNEY would no doubt be also near stopped at that time. During interrogation at Fremantle however, he said the cruiser signaled him to stop.

Yet another example of Detmer's falsehoods.

Detmers claimed that SYDNEY was abeam but Von Gosselyn stated that she was on the quarter at about 135 degrees in the correct so called Admiralty directed "safety" position in the circumstances.

Note that Shuh Ah Fah reported that SYDNEY's first shots went over. I believe that the only thing that could have caused an "over" at the stated range (about 900 metres) would be a torpedo hit at the moment of firing. This further indicates yet another Detmers' falsehood.

Yet another is discovered when considering German reports that SYDNEY fired four torpedoes. It is now known positively known that she fired but one.

Here I draw attention to an analysis and perhaps submission by Glen Heilscher who has done a masterful piece of plotting to show that Detmers was perfectly capable of "creating" stories to cover his actions that may have had poor results for him in his career. It demonstrates on no less than two occasions that he was party to complete miss-ecording of his ship's log.

I will later demonstrate a similar "creation" or deliberate "omission" regarding his movement into Fremantle area a few days prior to his final action.

All these comments suggest a complete mish mash of German statements, thus casting complete doubt as to any truth in their stories.

It should be noted that Detmers' orders included that he was to make every attempt to destroy his enemy by means of camouflage, and that unexpected and ruthless use of all weapons should be made.

Detmers ruthlessness can be seen in his remark that his wounded who were drowned at the collapse of a raft "had the privilege of dying for their country"



COLE 13

Continuing

SYDNEY was said to be severely ablaze. Whilst it is now known that her aircraft burned fiercely,, there was little sign of burning on the two life belts collected by Wyrallah or the two carley rafts collected or the body on Xmas Island or the wooden decking of the wreck or the lifeboats. She was said to be over the horizon when she exploded but that was late at night and 12 miles distant. Five only of her lifeboats were finally discovered alongside her hull but not in cradles, indicating that her crew had them readied for launching as the ship sank. B Turret was still in place. She was said (by Albers Inquiry Vol 3 page 500, Vo1 5 page 3560) to be still firing when she blew up – at approx 2300H.

Apart from the Italians there are other reports of the Germans flying a white flag (Lt Peterson aboard C ENTAUR and Gray , Mate aboard KOOLINDA

It is important to understand that the strange rules of war required a Captor to not fire after his opponent had surrendered.

Sightings by Detmers and Von Gosselyn of AQUITANIA over the few later days reveal that they remained in the area near the action position and on the shipping lane .They both moved quite rapidly towards the coast after that time

The progress of the German survivor boats needs examination. Meyer and Kohn boats can be shown to have traveled at quite high rates for heavily laden lifeboats. The question that they could have been towed thus arises. They can be shown to have made about 1 and ¼ nMiles per hour towards shore.

There has long been suspicion that their tow boat could lie offshore at Red Bluff landing points.

Detmers maintained that he was moving at 14 knots with SYDNEY moving parallel to him at the same speed, but Von G has said that S was on the starboard quarter i.e. at 135 degrees to KORMORAN that was the so called safety position as dictated by Admiralty.

That indicates that Burnett could thus be seen to be obeying his orders in that situation.

Was Detmers wrong again ?

Despite strong statutorily backed evidence that KORMORAN came into Gage Roads off Fremantle some few days before the action Detmers never ever mentioned that, indicating that he did not wish his own people in Germany to know that he had bungled an opportunity to do a great deal of damage and also cause panic. That suggests that he was not averse to creating a stories to suit his own purpose.

I can give an excellent provable example of a Royal Navy Captain of one of my wartime vessels fabricating a story by himself rewriting a couple of pages of our ship's log for a similar reason.

It is also of significant interest to realize that there is no account whatsoever of the advent of KORMORAN in that location in any Australian record apart from the declarations of a number of army men on Rottneest at the time.



COLL 14

THE AIRCRAFT

Detmers drew attention to the fact that the 19th November was a pleasant weathered day with a reasonably calm sea, SYDNEY's aircraft had been warmed up in the early approach to KORMORAN, Carnarvon was within only about three hours flying time, Geraldton was not much further. The aircraft engines had been readied but switched off. All this reinforces the fact that KORMORAN had surrendered so that there was no need for the machine to be flown.

SIGNALS

I draw attention to the extensive notes on Signals in my submission to the Inquiry in 1997 98 eg on pages 535 to 537 of its Vol 3 record.

Since that time there have been a number of reinforcing discoveries of more signals in Singapore, in Harman, and elsewhere.

I particularly draw attention to what became to be called the "Chrystal Ball Signal" that described actions that did not take place until after the signal was supposedly sent. (My submission Vol 3 page 537 of Par't inquiry 1998

I also refer to the signal received I think by SLDR Cooper I think that includes "all men on board". This signal was dismissed as having nothing to do with SYDNEY the ship, but one must ask why Singapore was mentioned as an addressee of that signal supposedly one in the Australian PMG loop only.

Since 1998 there have been further revelations about signals such as something received by Kilindini (Refer D Kennedy)

There is the evidence given by Hetty Hall reference signals being received in Singapore and passing through her hands.

Inquiry should include discovery as to when the various "rescue" vessels departed from Fremantle. It appears that they could not have done so until the 25th November, that is, some five days after the action took place.

There are curious discrepancies in times of sailings of rescue vessels and their collections. (Vol 1 page 54 records signals that have WYRALLAH, YANDRA, OLIVE CAM sailing from Fremantle on both the 24th and the 27th, but also record collections on the 26th and 27th. One must question whether N O I/c Fremantle was that inefficient ??

There is still the question of the record and intent of the signals I saw aboard HMAS PERTH, and their strange receipt some five days after the action. Refer Parliament submissions Vol 3) Then there is and their confirmation in a since missing RAF file in Perth City some long time later. (Laffer) (again refer Parliamentary Submissions Vol 3)

Fremantle people generally well aware of some problem of SYDNEY well ahead of any official recognition. They had always had almost phsyic knowledge of the fortunes of their favourite ship. Signalman Briddick remembers that he had to advise his sister of the demise of her fiancé aboard well before any announcement was made.

~~PMG~~ wireless operators throughout the north west of WA were also aware of the action some days before officialdom.

It should be understood that many tram drivers in Sydney were aware of the action some days before it was announced.





COLE 15

The evidence given years ago by Jack Gabbedy ought to be examined.

There is the curious " disappearance " of Telegraphist Petty Officer Crawford Young over a period of some days about the 21st to 27th November plus the confiscating of his log by somebody naval.

One must wonder about a strange unexplained delay of some days in reporting involving Admiral Royle.

It is unlikely that every one of 643 men aboard SYDNEY would have gone down with the ship.

I am able to demonstrate that SYDNEY was under power, under command, and under way for some five hours after her final action was broken off.

Her main wireless room was between decks on the starboard quarter and thus well away from likely damage caused by the enemy in the early stages of the battle. . There were many men in sheltered places like that who would have certainly escaped damage and survived at least until she sank some five hours after the action.

Survivors

COLE 16

My attached amended diagram 13 A shows the courses of various craft searching for action survivors.

Consequent to the discoveries of the wrecks I have been able to deduce that the drift of the inanimate un-propelled objects such as lifebelts and carley rafts was on a line of 352 degrees at a rate of about 0.72 nMiles per hour. The heavy line drawn on my diagram 13 A from the wreck of SYDNEY is that 352 degree line.

It will be seen that most of the searching was being done well inshore to the east of the drift line so it is not surprising that no SYDNEY survivors were seen.

They could have gone on drifting for days as long as they lasted. At least we now have full recognition that the Xmas Island raft and body came from SYDNEY.

It must be appreciated that survivors drifting on or with flotsam would spread over great areas of ocean.

Similarly the searching aircraft were generally too close in to the coast.

My diagram 13 B similarly shows the areas swept by aircraft. Again it can be seen that very little of the actual survivor drift area was covered by aircraft.

It must also be appreciated that with the spread increasing it would be very difficult to locate small groups of survivors from the air.

Survivors by those search times were too far west and north and by then would have been spread over wide expanses of ocean and difficult to see from the air.

WYRALLAH however, picked up life belts on that drift line and time expected. HEROS on day five, picked up a raft also on that line.

AQUITANIA picked up her raft load on the same drift line and Detmers and von Gossyln were close by at the time.

My Diagrams 13 A and 13 B are attached.

FINALLY

The whole business of this inquiry and its subject has become curiously suspicious of late.

Whether there is any truth in any of the suspicions is a matter for honest investigation.

There are questions being asked by some people as to whether the pictures of wrecks on the bottom are genuine, expressing doubt as to the genuineness of the search team aboard.

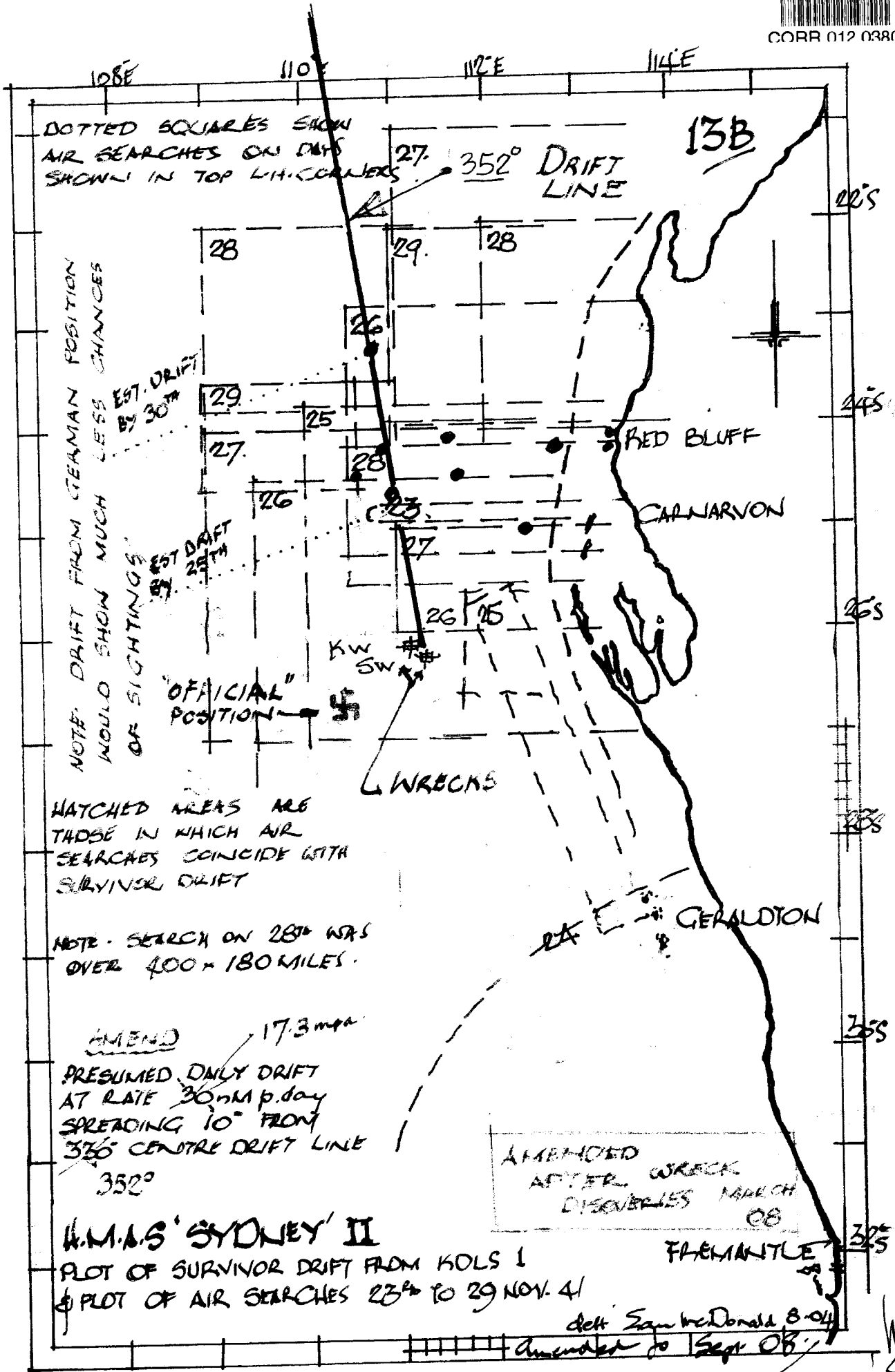
It becomes curious to realise that the real search had begun only some few hours before the first signs of wrecks were found. Search vessel GEOSOUNDER was said to be not fully functional until the day before the discoveries were made. The very rapid result, whilst gratifying, raised eyebrows.

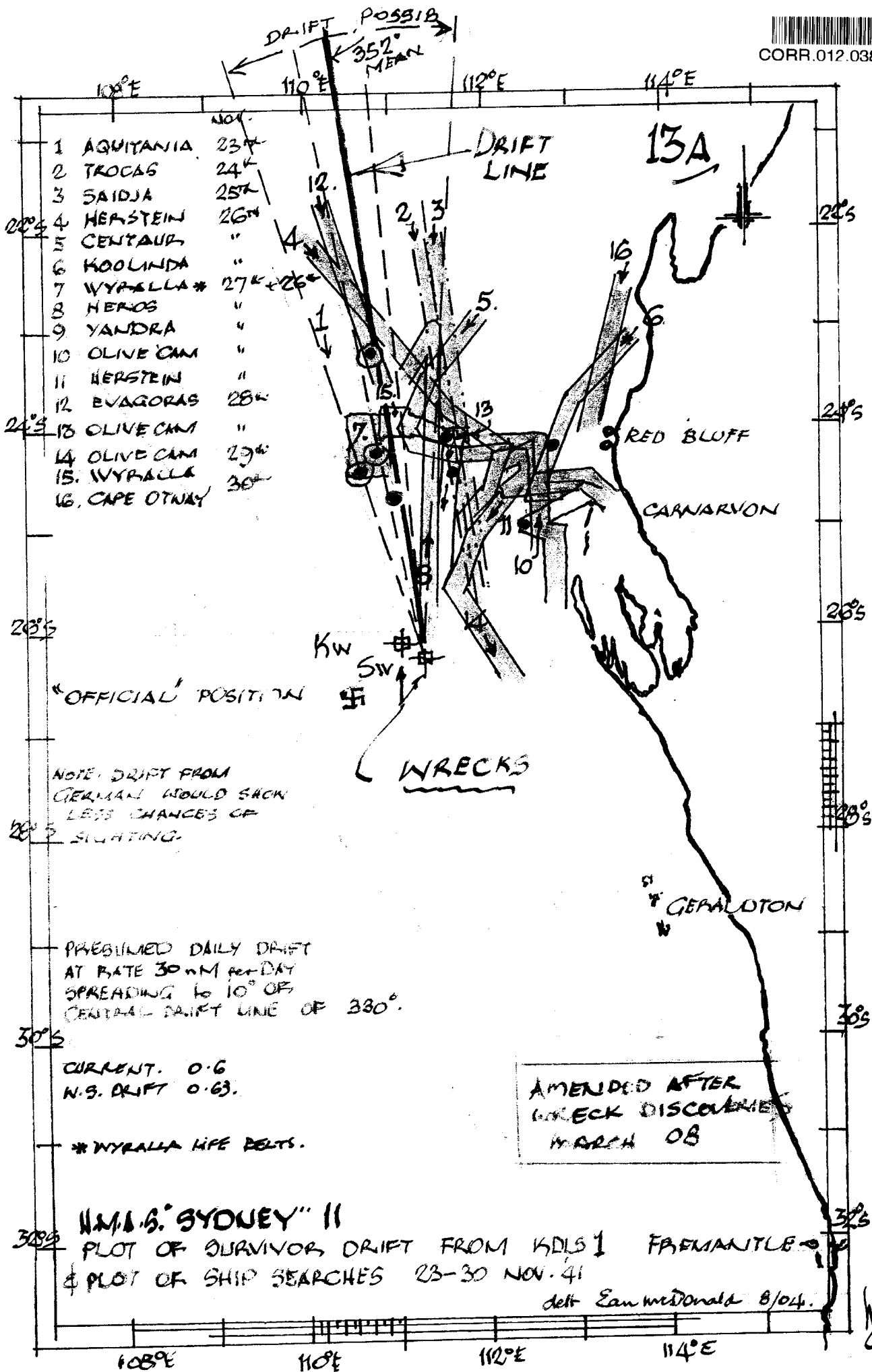
This is further accentuated when it is being said that National Mapping Australia people, Bureau of Mineral Reserves people and thus surely Naval people were aware of location of . magnetic anomalies as strong as individual ships wrecks clearly evident as far back 1978, that is well before the latest series of estimatings and searchings.

All these matters will need thorough investigation to result in dismissal or disclosure.

Diagrams 13 A and 13 B follow.







	NO.	DATE
1	AQUITANIA	23 rd
2	TROCAS	24 th
3	SAIDJA	25 th
4	HERSTEIN	26 th
5	CENTAUR	"
6	KOOLINDA	"
7	WYRALLA*	27 th & 28 th
8	HEROS	"
9	YANDRA	"
10	OLIVE CAM	"
11	HERSTEIN	"
12	EVAGORAS	28 th
13	OLIVE CAM	"
14	OLIVE CAM	29 th
15	WYRALLA	30 th
16	CAPE OTWAY	

NOTE: DRIFT FROM GERMAN WOULD SHOW LESS CHANCES OF SIGHTING.

PREBILMED DAILY DRIFT AT RATE 30 NM per DAY SPREADING to 10° OF CENTRAL DRIFT LINE OF 330°.

CURRENT. 0.6
N.S. DRIFT 0.63.

*WYRALLA LIFE BELTS.

AMENDED AFTER WRECK DISCOVERIES MARCH 08

H.M.S. SYDNEY II
PLOT OF SURVIVOR DRIFT FROM KDLS 1 FREMANTLE & PLOT OF SHIP SEARCHES 23-30 NOV. 41
delt Ean McDonald 8/04.