



CORR.016.0348



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
2000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20350-2000

5750 IN REPLY REFER TO
Ser DNS-H/8U118117
September 18, 2008

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

Attention: Commander John Rush

SUBJ: RECORDS OF JAPANESE SUBMARINES ON NOVEMBER 19, 1941

Dear Commander Rush,

On behalf of the United States let me offer my deepest sympathies to the families of the officers and sailors aboard HMAS Sydney II, who gave their lives in service to Australia. The loss of so many fine men is a tragedy for the people of Australia and it is our honor to assist in your investigations as we may. It is my sincere hope that we may aide them in some small measure and that the outcome will bring peace to the families left by these brave souls.

Secretary of the Navy forwarded your request for information which might relate Japanese submarine operations to the sinking of the HMAS Sydney, to me, Rear Admiral Jay A. DeLoach, U.S. Navy (Retired), the Director of the Naval Historical Center. My staff of historians took on the task of searching out records which might indicate operations by submarines or ships of the Japanese Imperial Navy near the HMAS Sydney at the time of her sinking. They searched pertinent records from the various archives of the United States Navy, those of our National Archives and Records Administration, and our National Security Archives. They also inquired of research associates in Japan concerning such records.

Using the Imperial Japanese Navy's Submarine Force Organization of 1 November 1941 as a starting point, our researchers gathered a record of movements for every Japanese submarine, including one assigned on 6 November 1941. This data was drawn from multiple record groups at our National Archives, from Japanese Monograph No. 116 (1952) and the Nihon Kaigun website, a collection of translated Japanese records published on the world wide web. All indications pointed to operations in the Pacific in preparation for the attack on Pearl Harbor and in support of impending operations in Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. Japanese data, our own communications intercepts, intelligence summaries and all general records point to this.



After extensive investigation among many sources, our researchers found nothing to indicate Japanese Imperial Navy submarine operations in the vicinity of the HMAS Sydney in the month of November 1941. Further, we found no record of Japanese submarines operating with German shipping. A thorough search of all documentary evidence in our custody, coupled with extensive research into available translations of Japanese documentary evidence gave no indication of possible Japanese Imperial Navy involvement in the sinking of HMAS Sydney.

In closing, let me restate my hope that this evidence will help to bring closure to the families of the men lost with HMAS Sydney and to the Australian nation. As a seafaring nation, the people of the United States can well understand the tragedy involved in losing ships at sea. That tragedy is even more pronounced when those souls are lost in battle. Our shared experience in this is surely one of the underpinnings for our strong and enduring friendship.

Sincerely,

J. A. DELOACH
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret)
Director, Naval Historical Center

Copy to:
Commodore Vince Di Pietro, CSC, RAN