

on the Sunda Strait - Cape Naturaliste track. The raft would hardly be affected by wind, only the set of any current, which in the area of the encounter, is along that Track.

As I have already stated, this argument can be checked, by the most elementary practitioners of navigation, in fact a good exercise for them.

The popular submissions by the German survivors seem to indicate KORMORAN taking evasive action, should this be the fact, then the only reason HMAS SYDNEY could have had in not opening action from a "safe" distance, was the belief that "STRAAT MALAKKA" was a "Prize" and carried a number of Allied Seamen Survivors as prisoners, and SYDNEY was hoping her to surrender.

I feel, the "harder the battle" the better the story, therefore, evasive action and a prolonged battle, the better story, was adopted.

The "overshoot" of SYDNEY's only salvo was caused by the slight delay in the order to shoot, allowing the KORMORANs' shells to strike as that order was received. The shells all striking the upperworks of Bridge, Fire Director etc. would have caused the SYDNEY to heel, raising the point of aim at the crucial instant of firing the guns and causing the salvo to overshoot their target.

In summary, the incident can be contributed to a successions of misfortunes, had SYDNEY allowed for the westerly set of the current, she would have been on the inside (to the east) and not sighted the enemy, had she not been "hoodwinked" by the disguise, and had she not been struck by shells at the instant of firing her one only salvo, possibly, there may have been a different ending.

I would like my theory to be accepted. A pleasant afternoon in the subtropics, a merchant ship ahead being rapidly overtaken, she is on a well defined track and does not alter course, the expected action of any peace abiding ship, allaying any thoughts to the contrary, of being anything but a Neutral Ship.

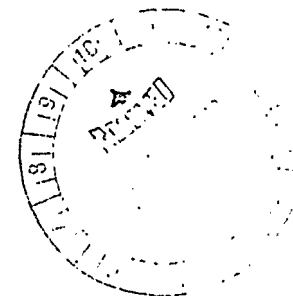
HMAS SYDNEY was sunk through MISADVENTURE.

Yours sincerely,

*Bernie Sullivan*

*3<sup>rd</sup> April 1998.*

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**SUBMISSION No 131**

I was stationed in Darwin In February 1942 as a member of a diving team engaged in salvage work. At that time I was a Petty Officer. Sometime in 1942 a Lt. Petersen [RANR-[S] spoke to me and asked if I had lost a brother on the "Sydney." I replied "Yes"

He then said "Would you give me your word that what I am about to tell you, you will not discuss with anybody as I have had to sign the wartime secrets act. The only reason I am telling you is so you will know what happened to your brother. He wasn't killed. He was murdered "

He then stated " The Germans should be hung for piracy, treachery and murder on the high seas. For they had surrendered and hoisted a white flag and then they opened fire when the Sydney came in close. I will explain that to you later."

I told him I would give him my word not to discuss it with anybody. I have kept my word for 56 years.

He then told me he was the Chief Officer of the "Centaur" which had picked up survivors off the German Raider "Kormoran."

This is exactly what he told me. I still have vivid memories of it.

"The "Kormoran"s" lifeboats had machine guns mounted in their bows, the ratings were armed with rifles and the officers had revolvers strapped around their waists. They were told to throw all arms overboard and only the wounded would be taken on board. After all arms were thrown overboard the wounded were taken on board the "Centaur." The saloon was turned into a makeshift hospital.

Then we joined all ships hawsers and towed the lifeboats astern. We had to reduce speed as the lifeboats were being towed under.

When the wounded were taken on board they were accompanied by a German Officer who asked if anyone spoke German. The reply was No. I didn't tell him that I speak German perfectly as I was taught German at school in Norway. Also I spoke German when trading in ships between Norway and Germany.

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This officer kept lecturing the wounded on what to say day after day." [perhaps this is why when questioned years later, they all tell exactly the same story.]

Lt Peterson said he listened to the wounded talking between themselves about how the "Sydney" had hit them and had caused large fires. They spoke about the "Sydney" starting to come closer after the "Kormoran" hoisted a white flag.

They talked amongst themselves about how they saw ratings in white uniforms come on the upper deck and how the "Sydney" was preparing to lower a boat [These would be Seaboard Lowers, as it is naval procedure to send an armed boarding party to take over the enemy ship.]

They talked about the "Kormoran" "presumably" drifting closer to the "Sydney" and then the "Kormoran's" Captain ordering the two underwater torpedoes to be fired, hitting the "Sydney" under the bridge. He also ordered the main armaments and close range weapons to open fire. [This is why the Carley Floats were riddled with machine gun bullets.]

At this time one of the "Sydney's" after turrets opened fire hitting "Kormoran" in the engine room causing huge fires. "Kormoran" was so badly hit by this salvo from "Sydney" that they had to abandon ship.

Lt Peterson stated that when he arrived at Carnarvon he told the Investigating Officer what he had told me. He was asked to sign the War Times Act. He was also told that no action would be taken against the Germans as it would lead to reprisals against Australian and Allied POWS.

He was told the documents on the "Sydney" would be held for 50 years before being released to the public."

Lt. Peterson said "Fifty years! We'll all be dead by then!"

I haven't heard from Lt. Peterson and I don't know where he is.

I've often wondered why the lifeboats were armed with machine guns and is this why there were no survivors. Yet at the same time nearly all the crew and officers of the "Kormoran" survived.

Was it a case of "Dead men tell no tales?"

I hope this information has been of some help to you in your enquiries.

Yours sincerely,

A.D.M. Clark

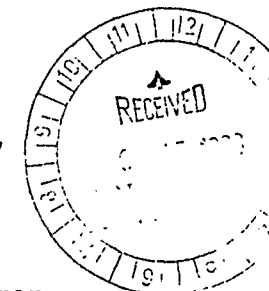
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Submission

SUBMISSION No 132

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6 April 1998



**Inquiry into the circumstances of the sinking of HMAS Sydney**  
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade  
Defence Sub-committee  
Parliament House  
Canberra. 2600.

The following material is submitted in the interests of contributing to a more comprehensive picture of events which took place subsequent to the sinking of HMAS Sydney and KSN *Kormoran*. I believe the matters referred to in this submission can be categorised under section 1 of the Committee's agenda as relevant material.

The paper has resulted from visit in March this year by myself to the Gascoyne region of WA where German survivors of KSN *Kormoran* came ashore. It discusses the current status of relevant sites, and discloses the existence of a previously undescribed Nazi swastika on the inside of the 17 mile tank, north of Quobba homestead. It also offers an explanation of the "cryptogram" drawing of Red Bluff caves by *Kormoran* survivor Dr List, and provides a interpretation of German artefacts recently discovered south of these sites by another person.

In March 1998 while conducting interviews for an oral history of Ningaloo Reef, on behalf of the Commonwealth National Fishcare Program, Fisheries WA's Fishcare Scheme, and the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management, by coincidence I met and subsequently tape-recorded an interview Mr Dennis Harry of Carnarvon.

In recent years this man has undertaken an intensive examination of the coast north of Carnarvon in order to better understand the landings made by German survivors from KSN *Kormoran*. He has discovered some matters of interest which I describe below. He has felt disinclined to publish anything about them himself. I am grateful for his permission to record and report his experience.

Mr Harry's interest in the *Kormoran* survivors was accelerated when a post-war set of black and white photographs relating to the places where the survivors came ashore fell in to his possession. He found these while working at the Carnarvon rubbish dump five or six years ago. He recognised some drawings attributed to Dr List, having previously seen them in the local library copy of Montgomery's *Who sank the Sydney*.

The photographs appear to have been processed by an amateur because there are traces of spilt photographic chemical. The prints of List's drawings appear as negative images of the original drawings. In other words the toilet paper is black and the drawings appear as white lines. According to Summerrell (1997, p.110) the originals of these are located in the Australian War Memorial in file PR88/178. *Kormoran* (2). Summerrell states that there are five sketches in the series, but Mr Harry's photographs show seven. Frame in his book also describes seven drawings, originally drawn with green ink (Frame 1993, pp.158-9).

Mr Harry has made some enquiries in Carnarvon but has been unable to identify who took the photographs, or who discarded them on the tip. However it is obvious that they belonged to someone who had taken an intense interest in the movements of *Kormoran* survivors. Perhaps that person is now deceased?

Mr Harry also recognised some of the locations in List's drawings and subsequently Weaver, P.R. (1998). Submission.

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