



Mrs B. Poniewierski
39 Winston Road
Sheldon, Qld 4157
10 December 1993

Alec Bandeen,
3 Jamie Nicol Court,
Strichen,
Aberdeenshire AB4-4SZ,
Scotland

Dear Alec,

Thank you very much for your Christmas card and good wishes. I wish you a good holiday in Teneriffe in January. May I be able to get around as well as you do that that age!

I have had a few health problems this year, with an operation in March, which seems to have done no harm but also not much good. However, at last a new doctor discovered that my main problem was a hiatus hernia, and the tablets he has prescribed have done a lot to overcome the sickness and pain I was having after meals. I wish someone had discovered this much earlier.

Alaistair Templeton may have mentioned a TV documentary which was being made here. I do not know if it will be shown in Scotland. It was shown in Western Australia a few weeks ago, and in Sydney and Brisbane last week. Not too bad; also not too good. It is a pity that they left the theories and allegations about a certain wireless message from Sydney unrefuted; the people making these allegations have been shown proof that one of the messages they claim to "know" about was sent on 4 December from a Postmaster General's station in Sydney, New South Wales, and the other is very dubious. Also gratuitously irresponsible were the allegations of an Australian ship finding a lot of bodies from Sydney, sinking them and concealing the find, and this on no better evidence than that somebody says he thinks he remembers somebody (unidentified) saying this in a hotel bar fifty years ago.

The TV crew flew me down to Sydney to film my pieces there. It was absolutely hilarious. They filmed in a park close to the centre of Sydney, and they constantly had to repeat "takes", as we had a lawn mower in the park nearby, ferries on the harbour, joggers, trains, buses, planes, even a naval helicopter passing by. And a group of Japanese tourists who could not resist stopping to take photos while smiling and bowing, while I tried not to grin or take any notice.

I heard a little from Otto Jürgensen, and a little from the people in Western Australia about the day spent filming in Germany for the documentary. It was shown in Western Australia about two weeks ago, and in Sydney and Brisbane on Sunday, 5

December. I have had some reaction to it. One person rang to say that people thought the Germans seemed to be "decent blokes". A number of others have rung in some disgust about Tom Frame, particularly as he was a naval officer; they ask themselves what the navy is teaching young officers these days: not much, it seems.

Tom Frame's book has been published. The only review I have seen of it was in the Sydney Morning Herald. There has been no review in the Brisbane Courier-Mail nor in the Australian, which goes to all states. Nor have I heard about reviews in any other state, nor interviews on radio or television. I have not seen a copy on sale in Brisbane yet, though I have received comments from people who have seen it in New South Wales. Unfortunately, he has made a mess of it, and this has been picked up by the Sydney reviewer, and by knowledgeable readers. I read part of the book in manuscript form and was disappointed with it. He was just too ignorant of facts, and pretty unwilling to listen when facts were pointed out to him. He is an attractive youngster, but a bit too impressed with his own cleverness in obtaining his doctor's degree a couple of years ago. I was sad to see him make such a fool of himself, as I think this book will always be held against him and he will regret it in later life.

A weird creature here in Queensland has managed to put it over a wet-behind-the-ears newspaper reporter and get into the local Courier-Mail a story that Sydney was ambushed on the morning of 20 November by Orion, Komet and Thor, fought all day, and was then finally sunk by Kormoran. (I don't know what he thought happened to these other three ships. Were they supposed to have been sunk with no survivors? If the ships survived, why did they not pick up the Kormoran crew?) They were, of course, all accounted for well away from Australia on both 19 and 20 November.

Anyway, on to fresh fields and pastures new. I have not responded to the above stupidity, though there has been one letter of protest about it in the paper. I have finished my book on Naval Intelligence and am trying to arrange publication, and I want to get on with my next one.

All the best for Christmas 1993 and the New Year 1994.

Barbara