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Mr. Edmund Jones,  
26 Clarendon Gardens,  
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Dear Mr. Jones,

H.M.A.S. Sydney & H.S.K. Kormoran

Shortly before 19 November, 1989, I telephoned my good friend Otto Jürgensen to have a word or two, because I had not been in touch with him for some time and that anniversary date was approaching. In the course of our conversation, he mentioned your intended visit to the reunion and wondered if I had known your father. Unfortunately I had not known him, nor could I ever be sure of recognising him even now, notwithstanding that I served in the ship from late June to late October 1941 as part of my training as a prospective officer. In later correspondence, Otto sent me a copy of some of your correspondence with him - quite a lot really - and it is my assessment of that which causes me to write to you.

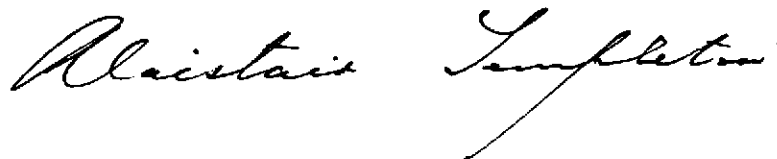
Otto may or may not have mentioned my name to you. You will see it in the acknowledgements in Montgomery's book and on one of the photos. I acted as a kind of sub-editor for that book, resulting in exclusion from it of much that would have betrayed some of Montgomery's ignorance of matters naval, but some of my verbal and written criticism of it was unacceptable to the author so it did not get dealt with. Nevertheless I remained pleased that the story of the action between the two ships was being told and did not, at the time, seek to discredit Montgomery. By reason of some of his later writings on the matter, he became completely unworthy in my eyes and I have severed connections with him. To add to my loss of faith, I started to look at things a bit more closely and in relation to what I knew as matters of fact, and found I could not just let the whole thing drop. Additionally, I made contact with Barbara Winter, went to see her in Brisbane, had many long and interesting discussions there and by telephone later, and came to judge her as a woman of great integrity. We continue to keep in touch. Notwithstanding her careful and honest conclusions and knitting together of the circumstances as she was able to establish them, there are materially large holes in her story. She told me quite openly that a naval man had written to her about one of these. Having had it very much in mind to ask her the same question myself, it became a simple matter to pursue it with her. Her answer was that it had never occurred to her, yet to me it was an integral part of the crux of the reason for Sydney's demise.

With greater application to the task - and a lot of luck - I am hoping to write yet another book about the action. It should basically complement Barbara Winter's book, decry much of

Montgomery's, and totally rebut critical sections of the Australian Official History. It is scarcely likely to be a best seller, or even slightly popular, but I have been encouraged to try by the more open-minded people in Australia (who are not prolific), a few in Britain with an appreciation of naval history, my Kormoran friends, and lastly but not least by people like yourself. A couple of years ago, I met two daughters of one of the chaps lost with the ship. The elder was still bitter, for, through family circumstances, she and her mother carried the burden of survival for herself and the rest of the family when her father was lost, and they could get neither help nor comfort from "the authorities" - and the main grievance was not knowing. They tried members of parliament, cabinet ministers, naval authorities at all levels, and appeared to me to have been pretty forceful in their endeavours. Much later, I rang them up, partly to have a chat and partly to get a lead on another naval man who might have information I could use. I spoke to each sister separately. Each responded by saying that I had told them more in half-an-hour than they had been able to get out of anyone else in 47 years. Although they did not rejoice in what I told them, they each volunteered that it made absolute sense and that for the first time in their lives they felt they really knew what had happened to their father.

My purpose in writing is to offer you the same sort of chat, man to man and no holds barred. I may thus be able to say more than I can put in a book, or maybe just express it differently. I have no intention of retreating from what I have determined is the truth, but you will appreciate that there are differences of approach and I would hope to avoid the vitriol which is not undeserved and settle for measured judgment. If you would be interested to have a chat, please let me know and give me a telephone number where I can contact you. I am a fairly regular visitor to England - London is a second home to me - and look like being there for about a week from 6th to 12th May next, and again later during the period 3rd June to 9th July. I do, of course, have commitments, but it must be possible to fit in our meeting if we are agreed it should occur.

Yours sincerely,



cc Otto Jürgensen