

10 James Street,
Carnarvon,
Western Australia, 6701.

December 24, 1989.

Mr. Edmund Jones,
26 Clarendon Gardens,
London, W9, 1AZ,
U.K.



Dear Mr. Jones,

I hope you do not mind me writing to you right "out of the blue" like this. My German friend, Otto Jurgensen, recently wrote to tell me of your recent visit to Hamburg to participate in their annual HSK Kormoran reunion. I was very moved by your journey, particularly the reason for it and the eventual outcome.

Firstly, though, I should explain my interest. For the past 3 or 4 years I have been undertaking quite a lot of lengthy and detailed research into the Sydney-Kormoran sea battle and have been putting together quite a lot of oral history from the survivors and others who were in any way connected with the affair. Everyone concerned are now very elderly and I thought their accounts, reminiscences, diaries, letters, etc., should be carefully documented while they are still with us. In this endeavour I have been assisted generously by Otto and several of the other ex-Kormoran men and have been fortunate in being able to unearth quite an amount of subject matter that has never before been read by English speaking people. In the long term, possibly about the time of the battle's 50th anniversary, I might have sufficient to collate it all together into book form.

I feel sure you would be familiar with the earlier books by Michael Montgomery and Barbara Winter. I have, in the past, met and spoken with both writers. In all conscience, I have come down on the side of Barbara Winter in this never-ending controversy. MM's claims and theories do not, to my mind, have much substance. There is, unfortunately, a tendency to sensationalise the issue by inventing Japanese submarines, etc., and, over all, MM exaggerates somewhat, even with documented evidence. On the other hand, BW is a thorough, meticulous researcher, generally speaking, and she does not appear to have any axe to grind. Another obvious difference between the two are their basic attitudes towards a fellow researcher: MM is secretive; BW is completely open and supportive. That has been my experience, anyway.

As you are probably aware, the scene of the famous sea battle took place off the coast of Carnarvon, where I now live, and two of the German lifeboats - one carrying 46 and the other 57 men - came ashore north of Carnarvon. So, in a geographic sense, we have a firm historic interest in the event. Also the 103 German survivors were eventually taken into custody and interred in the old Carnarvon gaol before being taken away down south and interstate to be imprisoned as POW's in Victoria (my home State) until being repatriated in 1947.

Incidentally, in looking through HMAS Sydney's crew list I noticed the entry who I would think was your Father: "Chief Petty Officer, Philip Trevor Jones, of Victoria." Is that correct?

I also lost my Dad in the same war. He was in the Army. I was born in Melbourne in August, 1939, and my Father died in 1943, leaving my mother with myself and a younger sister to rear. I can still remember it clearly.

I hope you do not mind me writing to you like this. In any event, I wish you and your family well for the new year ahead and I hope that your nostalgic journey to meet the Kormoran survivors has given some peace to



That does not come altogether as a surprise; the last two letters I had from him made me think that something was wrong, but I could not put my finger on the problem. They were rambling, repetitive, and not altogether up with the current situation. Pity! Still, he has seen the fulfilment of a long-cherished project - to get my book published in German. I wonder if the Kormoran reunions will continue when he is no longer fit to organise them. I don't see anyone else around willing to put that much work into them.

I hope you keep well and enjoy your forthcoming excursions. I'd love to go back to Europe in mid-summer. I am trying to accustom my husband to the idea of returning to Europe perhaps in 1996, when we could go together to Poland, Germany, maybe Paris, and of course England. We both have the occasional medical crisis, so I hope we are well enough for this.

Anyway, all the best for 1995.

Barbara