

F & T Sheldon-Collins,  
3 Nepean Ave.  
PENRITH NSW 2750

(047) 22.2282

21 November, 1989

Rear Admiral G J B Crabb,  
37 Lucinda Ave.  
WAHROONGA NSW 2076

Dear Sir,

I seek your opinion regarding a request from Otto Jurgensen, Navigator of the auxiliary cruiser Kormoran and President of the Association in Germany.

My wife and I and several other members of the HMAS Sydney Association both from here and Melbourne, have accepted Otto's hospitality in Hamburg. Also my wife and I attended the three day Kormoran Reunion at Erlach near Ochsenfurt, Germany over the Whitsuntide of 1984 weekend, where the hotel was taken over for that period.

The Association made us most welcome and at the wind-up dinner were seated with the executive and Mrs Detmers, wife of the deceased Captain of the Kormoran. During the dinner both the Australian and German Ensigns were displayed and the fallen members of the crew of HMAS Sydney along with the fallen members of the Kormoran were honoured. Since that time we have remained in contact with the Jurgensens.

Now I come to the point. Otto is preparing the reunion for the 50th Anniversary of the action and I quote verbatim the request from his letter:-

"I would like to have wreaths with an English text laid at Sydney memorial on Martin Place in Sydney and at the Sydney Oak in Melbourne.

First problem: I do not know whether you, Alistair Templeton and Doug Price will agree with my idea of having a wreath laid in Sydney.

Second problem: Who shall lay the wreath? There is one ex Kormoran man living in Sydney, but will he be allowed to lay the wreath? If there should be any disturbances caused by laying a wreath, and moreover by an ex Kormoran man, I would have to renounce a wreath for the Sydney crew. You know my

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opinion in this matter. The crews of the two ships fought a fair, honourable action for their countries and we honour the brave crew of HMAS Sydney. There are no hostile feelings towards the Australian cruiser. But I do not wish to start any disturbances before, during or after the ceremony on Martin's Place. Can you discuss my idea with Alistair Templeton and with Doug Price and tell me the points of view of you three." unquote

There are Kormoran survivors known to be living in Melbourne and NSW with Helmut Kloppe residing in Blacktown. Helmut has given a talk to the Naval Historical Society, Garden Island about 12-18 months ago and would be the logical person to lay the wreath in Sydney if the approval was granted.

Although Otto has only sought the opinion of Alistair Templeton whom he knows reasonably well, Doug Price and myself through me. I thought it appropriate that your views on the subject should also be included.

Instead of conveying your views through me, perhaps you would prefer to communicate direct, the address being:

OTTO JURGENSEN  
GOSSELKOPPEL 35  
2000 HAMBURG 63 - HUMMELSBUTTEL  
WEST GERMANY

Finally, I am sending a copy of this letter to Doug Price and Alistair Templeton for their opinion as requested or for their direct reply.

Yours sincerely,

  
F C SHELDON-COLLINS