

Statement

For some time I have been endeavouring to fix a precise date on the explosions, flashes etc. reported by people on the Coast. Mrs. A. Cox states that it was the 19th-20th November, 1941. She also states that it was a dark night with no moon. The Moon set at 1914 W.A.S.T. on 19th November, 1941, so this confirms Mrs. Cox's statement on the date.

The Guide to Commonwealth Government records re H.M.A.S. Sydney, record people on the shore seeing smoke, hearing explosions etc. at times coinciding with the time of the battle. I am endeavouring to find out where and who these people are. Mr. R. Summerell, Canberra is making further inquiries for me.

Now we have this article by Cliff Munyard re the Farmer who witnessed what he first thought was a storm, but later believed it to be a Naval Battle. This action occurred late on 19th November, 1941 and this information was passed on to Cliff 8 or 9 years after the event, so his date should be correct.

If the other sightings from the Port Gregory area turn out to have been on the 19th November, 1941, then they are connected with the Sydney.



D. King

28/4/97

Jerry Rose was fishing from the beach at Drummond's Cove in November, 1941, with some friends, when their attention was drawn to a plume of smoke rising out at sea. Jerry's immediate response was, that it was Cordite burning. When questioned by his friends as to how he would know it was Cordite, Jerry explained that, as a lad, he lived near a Naval Depot in England. Periodically they burnt the old Cordite and once you see Cordite burn, you will always recognise it. He maintained that it was definitely Cordite beyond all doubt. A day or two later they heard rumours in Geraldton that the Sydney was lost.

D. King 23-4-42

D.R.E. King

I knew Jerry for many years. One day we were talking about the loss of the Sydney when he told me of sighting this plume of smoke and how he wondered if it was connected with the Sydney in any way. I have no doubt in my mind that he saw that plume of smoke. I have spoken to Naval personnel and they claim that Cordite does burn differently and could be recognised as same. Also, if it was Cordite at sea, it could only mean one thing and that is the Magazine had blown. Although Jerry did not give any time of the sighting, to be fishing from the beach they would be fishing for Tailor and from my own experience I would say that time would be around 1600 hours to just before dark.

D. King 23-4-42

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