



Captain Detmers has been dead now for six years, but even if he was still alive I would not wish it otherwise; to me there is something more than a little distasteful in the continuing hounding of old men that is still perpetuated in certain quarters, usually for narrow political ends. For those who do have something to conceal, there is surely no punishment worse than the burden of having carried that knowledge for so long.

That I have succeeded in answering all the many questions which have ever since surrounded this 'most curious incident of the seas' would be altogether too large a claim. What, for instance, is to be made of the following reply from the (Australian) Department of the Navy in 1973 to a letter seeking their assistance in identifying certain naval personnel listed on the back of a photograph: 'Navy Office records show that three of the persons whose names appeared on the list supplied by you were serving in H.M.A.S. *Sydney* when that ship was lost during action on November 20th, 1941 [sic]. Able Seaman Cecil John Anderson and Able Seaman Herbert Herrett lost their lives when H.M.A.S. *Sydney* was sunk; but Able Seaman Colin Frederick Stevens was a survivor. . .?' One must assume that this is simply the product of a clerical error, and yet if it is so, it is certainly a most curious one for even the humblest clerk in the Department to make; furthermore, when I asked if it would be possible to examine the relevant file, I was informed that it had been destroyed.

What is one to make too of the following sequence of cryptographs, another of the finds that Mr Robotham made during his unofficial inspection of the prisoners at Carnarvon?

K T M S W E R O    S Z B N L    B W P A    B K G F M S T

E                    S                    B                    T

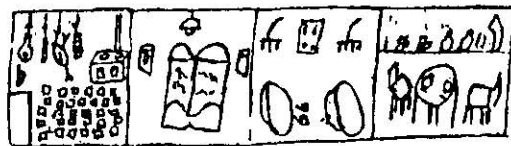


Figure 7 Cryptographs found at the time of the Germans' imprisonment at Carnarvon