

Mrs Barbara J Craill

October, 2008.

The Secretary
HMAS SYDNEY II
Commission of Inquiry
Level 18, Defence Plaza
270 Pitt Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Secretary and Commission,

This is a supplementary1 letter to my submission of September 30, 2008.

I wish to make notice to the Commission regarding the submission of Mr J H Eagles, CORR number 002.0051, titled "Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank and Charles Drage", specifically page 4 of that submission.

Mr Eagles has made reference to my father, W.E.A.FREER, A.B., and Gunner who lost his life with HMAS SYDNEY II. It is necessary that I make comment on incorrect information put together by Mr Eagles.

I would like to state that I had written about this to Mr Eagles in June of 2003, when I first read the copy he sent to me of 'Operation Fish' with an "ADDITIONAL INFORMATION re: Page 29", where he stated in the 'additional information' wrong information of my father. I asked him at length to correct it, or take it out altogether. I notice in his submission listed above, that he has chosen not to do so. I therefore am impelled to make statements on this section (only) of his Submission to the Commission of Inquiry, 2008 as posted on the Commission Web Site.

I wish to address 4 Items:

1. W.E.A.Freer of Brompton Park, S.A.
2. The Commonwealth Bank, my father's role. (incorrect)
3. My father's desire to be re-united and receive a posting on HMAS AUSTRALIA. Posted to HMAS SYDNEY the first ship coming to Sydney Harbour after FND.
4. The Commonwealth Bank Honour Roll for the War Dead/Lost. (incorrect)

Quotations of my father, will be written in **Bold** print and his letter excerpt in his own handwriting, will be attached underneath. Reference to my previous submission for verification of the hand writing of W.E.A. FREER, my father, countersigned by a Justice of the Peace of the Magistrate's Court of Christies Beach, Sth Australia and which I declare to be the same handwriting as presented here.

I also submit again, my father's home address on re-enlistment, in the form of an addressed envelop to his wife, my mother. We lived at the address stated on the envelop and the house was sold in 1989. Wives took their husband's initials as their own, which verifies my claim.

Barbara J Craill
23/10/08

1. W.E.A.Freer of Brompton Park, S.A.

W.E.A.Freer's place of birth was Brompton Park, S.A. He was a station hand at the time of his first enlistment to the R.A.N on the 1st March, 1923 aged 19 years. His allotment therefore went back to the parental home of Brompton Park under the name of Elsie Mary Freer, his Stepmother, (where he was not living and had not lived for many years) very faintly written on his wider service record, but too faint to be recorded by someone who doesn't know the family history. I can read the names as they are known to me.

His home port became the city of Sydney. He boarded with family friends in Newtown, Sydney. Years later, he was able to rent a home in the same suburb when he married.

W.E.A.Freer was married in 1930 in North Adelaide S.A. and took his wife to Sydney. His Allotment address then changed to 139 Darley Street, Newtown, N.S.W. Two of his daughters were born whilst there. This was his home until 28/2/1935, when he left at the end of 12 years peacetime service. These details although known to me as family, are also on his Service Records that I was sent on request, from the Navy Records.

He returned his family to Sth Australia. He was given a rental home, Richmond Avenue at Colonel Light Gardens, one of the 1,000 new villa homes in that new suburb. I was born at that home in that new suburb.

We moved to a larger home in the next street of Penang Avenue, when I was 3 years old. I have many memories of my time at this address with a complete family. It is from this home that our last photos were taken. He had been a civilian for 6 years.

W.E.A.Freer re-enlisted in May of 1941 at Birkenhead S.A. and took up his position at FND, Flinders Naval Depot on the 2nd June, 1941. His home address is on his records for this date: 46 Penang Av. Colonel Light Gardens, Adelaide SA. I submit an envelop in my father's handwriting addressed to my mother Mrs W.E.A.Freer of 46 Penang Avenue Col. Light Gdns Adelaide S.A. as proof of my father's address.

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

PAQUE

H.M.A.
SHIPS

Mrs W.E.A. Freer
46 Penang Avenue
Col. Light Gdns
Adelaide
S.A.

B. J. Smith
23/10/08 2

Mr Eagles did not do as I requested and correct his work and update his material from the first enlistment of a 19 year old of 1923, to the 're-enlistment' of this married family man of 1941. In fact, he argued that his AWM Nominal Roll Record did not show this information, which seemed to imply that this Roll was correct and I was wrong with my family history that I have studied along with fuller Naval records.

1. The Commonwealth Bank – my father's role.

At first, my father was in partnership with a piggery, already mentioned. Apart from his Naval experience, he was experienced in Farm work. The piggery was leased on Crown Land at Colonel Light Gardens. The Crown Land was reclaimed for the Centennial Park Cemetery and my father sought employment at the Commonwealth Bank of Sth Australia as a Nightwatchman. Time-line circa 1939 or early 1940.

He was never a Teller. He was never a Bookkeeper. He was a Nightwatchman. Today, he would be called a Security Guard. He had access to firearms because of his Navy training. He may have been called to stand Guard for any night-time incoming or outgoing monetary exchange. The Teller area was kept locked and he could view the entire area from a balcony/walkway above. He was employed there for approximately 2 years or less, before re-enlisting.

In the Navy, in peacetime, he had often acted as armed security on Bank visits to collect the payroll for the crew when in port. So had other trusted seamen. Certainly not a reason to place him on HMAS SYDNEY, specifically because of banking experience and 'accurate money' handling or bookkeeping, or even his previous employer.

He had been wanting to rejoin the Navy, but my mother did not agree. Finally, the threat of a Japanese Invasion, which was threatening everyone in Australia at the time and was on 'our' side of the world, got to my father and because the call was also out for trained men to rejoin rather than be re-called, or receive a white feather, the sign of cowardice in war-time, he re-enlisted in May of 1941. He did not enlist, on a call from the Commonwealth Bank. He re-enlisted on a call for experienced military at the threat of Japanese Invasion, already spreading south and his Naval experience being required for training younger men and desire to be included.

Mr Eagles again, did not comply to my request to update his material from my records in hand, but insisted that all the Navy would see, would be his previous employment and that would be enough to have him placed on HMAS SYDNEY. This seems to override his placement at the AA gun vacancy of the next incoming warship to a home port upon completion of the refresher course with others, at FND.

2. My father's desire to be re-united and receive a posting on HMAS AUSTRALIA. Posted to HMAS SYDNEY the first ship coming to Sydney Harbour after FND.

My father put in a request to be posted to HMAS AUSTRALIA. He was picked for the maiden voyage of the AUSTRALIA, in 1928 and served 6 years on that ship. However, HMAS AUSTRALIA was 'in parts unknown' and with a full complement of crew, he was told and was not due back to Sydney Harbour for some time. HMAS SYDNEY was the next ship due in and would have vacancies when it arrived, with

B. Brail
23/10/08

men due for leave and further training. He and many of the men who completed their training at the same time at FND., found themselves appointed to HMAS SYDNEY. Mr Ken Wundenberg of Sth Australia, came off the 4" AA gun of HMAS SYDNEY on the same day that my father boarded the ship, so replacing Mr Wundenberg. I march with Mr Wundenberg on Anzac Day in Adelaide.

Placed on HMAS SYDNEY because of his employment at the Commonwealth Bank? He was not a Teller or a Bookkeeper, but was experienced in Gunnery and Guard Duty. No doubt, so were many other experienced and trusted crew. It is possible that my father was on guard if there was a gold exchange at sea, but that would depend on his other duties in charge of Provision Stores and availability of other trusted crew. My father never mentioned any such work aboard HMAS SYDNEY during his time and we don't know about the last voyage as letters went with him.

3. The Commonwealth Bank Honour Roll for the War Dead/Lost.

Mr Eagles quotes " A comparison of names with the Commonwealth Banks' World War II Roll of Honour with the names of crew lost on *HMAS Sydney* shows a not unexpected result." (page 4)

I had discussions with Mr Eagles and attempted to correct his assumption that Honour Rolls only had the names of dead personnel and for that purpose only. I explained that my father knew of his name going on the Honour Roll at the Commonwealth Bank in S.A., before HMAS SYDNEY's last voyage. Mr Eagles did not believe me even though I had proof. I not only remembered the occasion and how my mother's friend Mrs Geraghty, took care of us whilst she attended the unveiling, I had proof in the form of letters from my father referring to this grand occasion. He certainly wasn't already dead, but a proud and live member of staff. My mother received an invitation to attend the unveiling and wrote to my father about it. I have my father's replies. One to the invitation dated 9th November 1941 and one letter after the actual unveiling in his final letter of the 11th November 1941. I submit excerpts of both these letters as proof to my claim.

Herewith quoted in **Bold** from the letters home, follow by hand written excerpts:-

(1) November 9th 1941, from 19 Mess, HMAS SYDNEY (page 3 of letter) "**Oh so the Social club sent you an invite to attend the unveiling, Gee things are (page 4 of letter) looking up ...I got a letter from the Club today as well, telling me they are sending a parcel of Xmas cheer to me and wishing me all the best and a safe return...**" (Brackets are my inserts. The Club, being the Social Club of the Commonwealth Bank in S.A. They sometimes sent home-made toffee home to us for a treat, which it was, in those days).

Oh so the Social club sent you an invite to attend the unveiling, Gee things are looking up, I got a letter from the Club today as well, telling me they are sending a parcel of Xmas cheer to me and wishing me all the best and a safe return, well lets hope you had a good time at it
H. Maill 23/10/08 4.

(2) November 11th 1941, from 19 Mess, HMAS SYDNEY (page 3 of letter)
"so you got into the Bank O.K. ...yeah, no doubt the staff or most of them would be in evening dress but not the Manager fellow, a great fellow that...by the way where is the Roll, up in the library (sic library) or out in the Bank in the public eye. So I'm on it after all..."

Bank O.K. huh, yeah no doubt the staff or most of them would be in evening dress but not the Manager fellow, a great fellow that had. by the way where is the Roll, up in the library or out in the Bank in the public eye. so I'm on it after all huh, and old Emma turned up to mind the kids well,

Ref. [MRS GERACHTY] B.G. B.G. Hall.

The Commonwealth Bank was proud of their staff and the war effort and at the time, it was important for not only the Commonwealth Bank in Australia to recognise their staff contribution thus, it was not unusual with other organisations as well. A proud and respectful sign of the times. My father got to enjoy the honour, for a short time left of his life, his worth to his employer. My mother took us, her three daughters to see this Honour Roll and we were received with dignity from the doorman and the nice Manager came out to welcome my mother and us and show us the Honour Roll - in the Public area. No K.I.A. (Killed In Action) or M.I.A. (Missing In Action) or Dec'd, as my father was still alive at that stage of unveiling.

Personnel who lost their lives in WWII, on the Honour Roll of Service, would have KIA, MIA or Dec'd, added to their name if it occurred, as in the case of the Commonwealth Bank Honour Roll. The Honour Roll of November 1941, would differ from the Honour Roll now recorded and available under the Commonwealth Bank. I explained this to Mr Eagles and he did not agree and therefore has my father deceased, in the first week of November of 1941 when he was actually proud to know he was already on the Honour Roll at the Bank as an employee doing his duty for his country - and placed in the public area of the bank for all to see.

In closing, if Mr Eagles took details about my father from the Internet, then they have not been updated, nor do they show his complete record or family history as known to me. Mr Eagles has named my father and included him in his general claims and/or suppositions and continued to do so even after correspondence of 2003 when I gave him the information. As submissions are on the Public Domain, I herewith add corrections in the form of a supplementary submission, as applied to my late father. I have his complete service records as stated, can read the faint print sometimes overwritten on those records that the AWM couldn't read, as they would not know

B.G. Hall
23/10/08

what names to look for, or addresses and in what order of sequence. They, the AWM have also stated quite clearly on the Nominal Roll, that where multiple service has been undertaken, then the original record reveals only minimal detail and the rest is not recorded. Knowing my family history, names and time-line involved, his position at the Commonwealth Bank and with reference to his letters home, I offer these further details with disappointment at having to do so.

This supplementary submission, is for no other reason, than what is stated here for the section mentioned of CORR number 002.0051, page 4 of "Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank and Charles Drage". It is my belief and with my records, to be true and correct.

Yours sincerely



Barbara J Craill

B Craill
23/10/08