

26 October 2008

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

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Loss of HMAS Sydney II

At the former inquiry by the Senate in 1999 there was some discussion about whether the enigma code used by the *hilfskreuzers* had been 'broken' by the allies, and whether it was possible to locate the source of these transmissions by triangulation.

I draw the Commissions attention to the history of the voyage of the *HK Pinguin* which is available on the internet. It is recorded there that when Captain Krüder captured the Norwegian whaling fleet in the sub Antarctic, he deliberately made a five day side excursion, before transmitting a long message back to HK headquarters in Berlin.

The whaling fleet consisted of three factory ships and about a dozen smaller whale chasers. The whale chasers had potential value as anti submarine ships, and some were subsequently adapted for that purpose. It was a valuable prize, the most significant coup by the *hilfskreuzers*, and the *Pinguin's* primary mission.

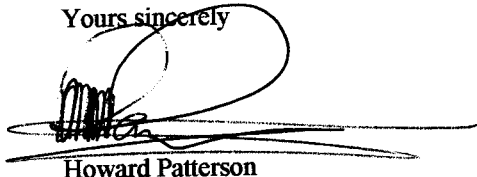
The message was intended to be picked up by the allies, to give them a false impression of the location of the captured whaling fleet. The ruse could not have worked so well if the allies could not read the message. Krüder must have known or suspected that the code had been broken. At the very least he knew or suspected that his transmissions were being monitored and were sufficient to locate the position of his ship.

Even if The British could read the code, it is unlikely that they would share the secret with the Australians. After all the RAN was a very junior player in the war, and the risk of confirmation getting back to the German High Command that the code had been broken would be too great.

The British did generously provide the Australians with a dossier on the *hilfskreuzers*, but only after *HK's Pinguin, Atlantis, Komet, Orion, and Thor* had been operating in the Indian and Southern Oceans, the Tasman Sea, and the western Pacific Ocean for nearly a year. The RAN, lead by Colvin and Burnett, could have compiled its own dossier complete with 'box brownie' photographs, but apparently did not do so.

They preferred to believe, on the basis of no evidence at all, that the hundreds of mines, and beer keg 'dummies', were being laid around the coast by a swarm of U boats, although no submarine had ever been sighted, and no ship had ever been lost to a submarine in 'Australasian' waters until 1942.

Yours sincerely



Howard Patterson