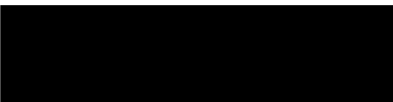


David Kennedy
31/10/2008



OCTOBER 2008 SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE LOSS OF HMAS SYDNEY II

To be read with earlier provisional submissions, when it was not certain when they would close, and documentation and some 150 hours provided so far of DVD of video and audio tapes of interviews with German, Australian and allied people who were there, or thereabout.

It would be impossible for me to cover all the aspects of the action between HMAS Sydney and HSK Kormoran that have come to my attention, considering that the physical task of supplying the above information to the inquiry has inhibited time to frame a submission. But I have done it gladly. I would have preferred to submit a more ordered submission but providing 35 three-and four hours DVDs for the inquiry has taken so much time. If any queries please make contact.

I think it is best if I address:

1. Wireless signals from Kormoran and Sydney and their monitoring.
2. The use of the underwater tube torpedo.
3. Ciphers and codes that played a part.
4. The research and search.

When I first read the official account of the action in the Australian War Memorial Official History in the early mid-1990s, I thought it very definite that Theodor Detmers had overcome Joseph Burnett with acceptable naval craft, as may be perceived by a reasonable reader. But as I researched the action - as I had ^{done} chronologically according to the raider departure times with Atlantis, Orion, Komet, Widder, Thor and Pinguin -- it became apparent that there was more to the story. I had already done work on all the raiders of the first wave and only Thor's second voyage and Michel's first would take a toll in shipping like the early raiders.

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It was in visiting Roald and Fae Larsen in Sydney in 1996 for photographs of Norwegian shipping attacked by the early raiders that the doubts really manifested themselves. Roald was a radio operator and a long-time president of the Norwegian veterans association in Australia, in which he was aided by Fae. During our conversations, they offered that they had been aboard a Norwegian ship in Sfax, Tunisia, a few years after the war and had gone aboard a Swedish ship, Flora, berthed beside theirs to seek out its radioman socially. It eventuated that the radioman was a German who had operated out of the Tokyo embassy during



the war. When informed by Fae that she had lost an uncle in the Sydney, the German told them that he had been in contact with Kormoran during the action -- a point they have repeated several times since -- and the German said he had been "horrified" at what happened. It took some time and the help of the Swedish Embassy in Canberra and Swedish shipping lines before I established the radio operator as having been Heinz Herrmann. Herrmann was trained in the network of German Intelligence chief Wilhelm Canaris -- hanged by Hitler for working against the regime and giving information to the Allies of impending operations -- and was sent to the Tokyo Embassy. The Naval Attache in Japan was Admiral Paul Wenneker, who used Canaris networks that avoided his information reaching pro-Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop.

While the word "talking" was as an alternative to using "contact", it was taken that the Kormoran and Kulmerland used morse code, although radio telephone was not ruled out by other German wireless operators. Heinz Herrmann was in Kulmerland near the Society Islands in the Pacific after having replenished Kormoran in the Indian Ocean a month before the action. (Details and pictures of Herrmann are in DFATS volumes from 5 on). Apart from the allied shore bases listening for enemy signals there were wireless intelligence ships. Ian Pfennigwerth, former RAN Director of Naval Intelligence, shows in his book "A Man of Intelligence", among others, the signals monitoring capacity of Eric Nave's people in the Pacific. Admiral (Viscount) Andrew Cunningham in his autobiography "A Sailor's Odyssey" writes of his service on the wireless-intelligence gathering cruiser Hawkins between the wars.. The role also of the Armed Merchant Cruiser Hector appears to have been underestimated as a wireless intelligence ship. She operated in tandem with regular cruisers (including RNZN and alone). Pfennigwerth, by the way, has told me that he does not think the Christmas Island body was from the Sydney.

Direction-finding bearings would have been available from Kormoran and Kulmerland if these accounts are considered.

As a result of the Larsen meeting, I contacted the RAN at Garden Island, Sydney, and asked to whom I should talk about HMAS Sydney. I was told to contact either Barbara Winter or Tom Frame . . . both authors. Winter (Poniewierski), who backed the official version in her 1984 book "H.M.A.S. SYDNEY, Fact, Fantasy and Fraud", discouraged me from pursuing the matter of signals. She had written the German POW account "Stalag Australia" and would write "The Intrigue Master" -- a biography of wartime head of Australian Naval Intelligence, Rupert Long. Frame had been an RAN lieutenant and Research Officer to the Chief of Naval Staff, later Bishop to the Defence Forces, and in 1993 wrote "HMAS SYDNEY, Loss and Controversy". Frame considered that the German version was false and encouraged me to pursue the signals lead.

It is of interest that the pivotal 1981 book by Michael Montgomery, the son of HMAS Sydney's Royal Navy navigator Clive "Roger" Montgomery, "Who Sank the Sydney?" -- which first seriously challenged the official version -- was quickly followed by Winter's, which had been encouraged by the Kormoran Veterans Association who had complained about the Montgomery book. Soon after a story by me appeared in The Australian in 1996 on the signals, the then Features Editor D.D. McNicoll mentioned to me that the German ambassador has been in to see the editor of the paper.

With books coming out alternatively for and against the official account -- Wes Olson's "Bitter Victory: The Death of HMAS Sydney" would follow in 2000 -- I continued my overall raider search by contacting a WRANS office bearer. She

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told me: "You are playing with fire" and no information was offered through official channels.

With the signals aspect gaining interest - officially Kormoran had transmitted, and repeated an unidentified ship approaching alert with QQQQ, Geraldton responding without answer -- Dr Michael McCarthy of the West Australian Maritime Museum advised me that Winter had written in "The Intrigue Master" (Page 117) that Robert Mason, writer to the officer in charge at Harman naval wireless station in Canberra, had told of HMAS Sydney reporting having "bailed up a quere (sic) customer" in the Indian Ocean and was "about to open fire". McCarthy said that he had telephoned Mason and suggested that I might like to talk to him because he lived not too far south of Sydney. Mason, later a coder in Manoora and legal public servant in Canberra, repeated his account to me on video (your DVD reference) in the presence of former RAN chaplain David Hill not long before he died. Highly experienced wireless operator Jim Delaney commented later that by "quere (sic) customer" Sydney was reporting a "Q ship" -- disguised raider -- and Kormoran wireless operator Hans Linke would later state that Kormoran and Sydney both knew what the other was.

Mitch Frankcom, still a friend of Mason in 1996, who had worked in the Y intelligence hut at Harman and on direction finding in the Indian Ocean, said of Mason that "there was very little that went on that he didn't know about". Frankcom said: "I personally think that a signal was sent from Sydney and Harman got a bit of it. I think that it was picked up only partially and the feeling was we had better not cause a big furore when we haven't got the full story." Petty Officer Charles Cole, who finished up as chief at Harman, said "Bob Mason was bright chap, very good". Cole said he recalled a rumour of "a signal received and dealt with in the usual way. They were told not to worry about it". Of the WRANS, Judy Alley (married Saunders) said in 1997 that she had not read Mason's account but recalled Harman's commanding officer Archibald McLachlan "putting the headphones down and going out, I presume into his office, and from that I knew, from what someone had said, that he was ringing Navy Board" and "we then had to keep listening out for the Sydney." and "as we came off we all knew that there was no Sydney". It has been established that with the Kormoran signals at around 1800 Perth time, hence 2000 Canberra time, the signals would have hit at change of watch. (Note that Detmers said in his book that Perth acknowledged the QQQQ, not mentioning Geraldton.). Judy Alley, who had been encouraged to tell her account by officer and RSL leader "Nobby" Clark, was subsequently pressured by some WRANS to alter it. There had been stories that a WRAN had missed the signal and I found they were defensive and had been contacted by Barbara Winter, who on more than one occasion has attempted to affect the accounts of witnesses. Alley, somewhat shaken, stood by her account to me. WRAN Daphne Wright, in a reconstruction of watches at Harman, said that Jack Gore would have gone to breakfast at 8am after getting off watch. Wright said that A and B watches of herself, Gore and Marion Stevens would have been on duty, relieving each other, on the evening and through the night of the 19th-20th.

If, as has been stated by some Harman personnel, telegraphist Rex Cross, in another room, took down some or all of the signal from the Sydney, and kept it in a diary, this should be sought. Cross's widow Joyce told me in 1997 that Rex had been "very correct and meticulous and if there had been anything he would have put it down, written it down". She said "A gentleman had come to the house from the National Library" when he died 10 years before but she did not know if he had taken anything relevant".

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The Volume 5 submission to the DFATS inquiry from Page 957 also contains testimony from other protagonists who support the sending and reception of more signals than the QQQQ.

Kormoran wireless operator Hans Linke: A short signal after the action received by Norddeich and Bodensee at least. Kormoran wireless operator Adolf Marmann, when head of the Kormoran veterans' association told me later that, contrary to the official/Detmers versions, the main Kormoran radio room had power long after the fighting and until he was released from duty to abandon ship. HMAS Sydney researcher and Voyager survivor, German-speaking Alex Hagerty, recounts Marmann telling him (your DVD reference) that Kormoran jammed Sydney's signals.

Linke also recounts animatedly (your DVD reference) the jamming of Sydney signals with a Marconi spark gap transmitter that could obliterate other signals. The NAA Guide (Richard Summerrell) Page 38-39 AWM640/2 would appear to be an amalgam of the signals sent and the jamming.

Kormoran communications officer, Reinhold von Malapert, told me in a phone interview (your DVD reference) that Linke's account of radio signals after the action "could be accepted, that is completely clear".

Former German merchant navy man Alfons Schmitt, later on the Australian coast and probably the man Patrick Burnett met on his master's ticket process but whose name he could not recall, told of being informed that Sydney signalled and Kormoran attacked. Detmers believed that the reply to Sydney's signal would be notification that the real Straat Malakka was in Southern African waters. This fits with Jack Nichol's account of Devonshire checking with its base as to the whereabouts of the Polyphemus, the ship's disguise adopted by Atlantis.

Thor wireless operator Heinz Weitzel: Heard about Sydney and Kormoran's clash within a day or so while that raider was in the process of breaking out of Germany.

The "Call from sea (or C.) Sydney calling. Send carrier. Men on board . . . " heard by the service people at Geraldton's Esplanade Hostel. Wing Commander Eric Cooper confirmed to myself and Dr Bruce Horsfield in his only videoed interview (your DVD reference) that he received word of that signal from the listeners on the night of November 19 and passed it on that night to Pearce air base at Perth for immediate onpassing to the Navy. He came forward because the SWACH record has it down on December 4.

Wireless operator on Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth and QANTAS, Jim Delaney, confirms that the Esplanade signal made sense for frequencies and intent. A "carrier" signal could give a direction bearing to a ship in trouble to head for a base.

HMS Rodney, PMG and OTC wireless operator Lou Brown confirmed the possible use of morse and radio telephone in a case of "what equipment is available and, let's face it, what staff would still be available".

RAAF direction finding operator Lee Hitchins: "The direction-finding station would always be near a sigs office and you would have a barrage of receivers there, operating on all sorts of frequencies. You're all on telephone and you would immediately be told to listen to a particular frequency."



I have done some 12 years of research into German surface raiders. This has involved hundreds of hours of interviews with German, Axis and Australian and allied individuals with connections to them, and submissions to the parliamentary DFATS subcommittee hearings 1997-1999 and the RAN Wreck Location Seminar in Fremantle of 2001 and, with overflow, to its subsequent Navy workshop.

I made submissions to this inquiry while travelling in May-June of this year when it was unclear as to when submissions would close and this is in conclusion of them and this submission should perhaps lead them.

It has become apparent that:

Politicians were making war and servicemen had to make the politics.

British tanker officer captain Denis ~~(check)~~ Sandford, captured on British Advocate ~~(check)~~ by warship raider Admiral Scheer, and Charlie Lacey, captured from Teddy by Atlantis, told me on video and/or audio tape in Brisbane that conditions at the initial German POW camp at Sanborstal had been abhorrent, particularly with the treatment there of Russian prisoners. The maritime prisoners were moved to Milag Malag where conditions were much better. The treatment of prisoners generally was reasonable under captains such as Bernhard Rogge of Atlantis and Robert Eyssen of Komet. The only raider captain to be tried - after the war -- for war crimes against the enemy and sentenced to 10 years was Hellmuth von Ruckteschell of Widder and Michel. He had been wanted for crimes also in World War I.

If captain Theodor Detmers of Kormoran had been tried for contravening the rules of engagement in the case of HMAS Sydney - and he conceded there was a chance that he felt he might be - the conditions at Milag Malag would have worsened and reprisals taken against British and Allied officers.

As it was, the 20-man "escape" from Dhurringile prison camp in central Victoria in February, 1945, by Detmers and some other Kormoraners could be judged as being ~~one~~ one for the public at home, with the advantage of allowing to be found on Detmers, ~~own~~ own in a jacket, an account of the Sydney engagement that agreed with the official story. If one account had been sent home with Dr Siebelt Habben in a prisoner exchange in 1943 (an occurrence that Captain Peter Hore, who did a report on British archival material for the 2001 Wreck Location Seminar in Fremantle, told a Canberra Archives audience in 2007 was a surprise to him). Hore also commented that "officers do not lie". So what do they tell interrogators when captured?

My research into the raiders, which brought me chronologically to Kormoran-Sydney, resulted from my meeting socially with a neighbour, Karl-Heinz (Charles) Noack, and his return from his first visit to Germany after some four decades. He had footage of German raiders operating around Australia, the original of which had been lost in a nursing home, and I gained more from other German sources including former Komet wireless operator Otto Schmidt. Copies of telephone voice tapes made in the early-mid 1990s with Otto Schmidt have him volunteering the information that "Hundertprozentigers" -- "100 per-centres" or total Nazi adherents among the wireless staff -- could have transmitted messages covertly on the raiders. Admiral Paul Wenneker, the German naval attache in Tokyo, who used wireless specialist trained by Counter-Intelligence

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chief Admiral Wilhelm Canaris --- hanged by Hitler for giving information to the Allies -- used personnel networks that avoided his information reaching pro-Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop.

The issue of wireless messages having reached Wenneker's staff then Germany through Japan, and British, Australian and allied staffs is a main point of my research, along with the action itself.

It should be noted that the main naval wireless receiving station in Australia in November 1941 and its global transmitting station Belconnen get one indexed mention in the two volumes of the official history of WWII by G. Hermon Gill. That is Page 415 of Volume I, which refers to the placing of 14 Wrens for service at Harman in April 1941 and it adds that by year-end about 50 were in place at Wrens postings. My research shows that there were Wrens in Melbourne at the time that wireless operator David Griffiths said he took a wireless signal at Cerberus just before 8pm that he brought to the attention of a leading hand WRAN. He said that he went to the latrine and when he came back a few minutes later she was making coffee and the headphones were on the table. Ten Wrens had been sent to Melbourne from Harman and eight went back. There were also other female wireless/coding operators in Melbourne.

There are other examples to support the use of radio, some which may have more significance with particular experts, but time inhibits their addition.

There are the possibilities that:

. * There could be no overt allied action until Atlantis was intercepted and nullified in the search cycle that included Komet (Odenwald the unintended victim or sacrifice) and Kormoran.

* The great likelihood that any action based on information in German or Japanese ciphers resulting from the engagement could reveal that those codes were being broken and read by the allies with little delay.

* Australian stations received part of the signals and would or could not act on what was received. (Frankcom et al)

* Australian stations were in the loop but the raider search operation was being handled by Admiralty with Singapore, Colombo, Simonstown, Kilindini and Freetown more involved..

* Australian stations were not in the loop due to factors such as uncertainty about the new Labor government in Canberra and its solidarity, or otherwise, with London.

The last is not the least possibility in light of the Bob Wurth book on John Curtin's attempts to reach an understanding with Japan on mining resources in exchange for peace.

Handwritten initials

The Report on the Loss of HMAS Sydney from the Joint Standing Committee on the Loss of HMAS Sydney, March 1999, notes in 4-111 on Page 47 that: "Under interrogation, Captain Detmers had initially admitted that Sydney had ordered Kormoran to stop, but later changed his story."

In 4.114: "The committee believes a strong case can be made that the Kormoran's underwater torpedo capability played a major role in the defeat of Sydney."

The firing of the underwater tube torpedo to start the action had been addressed by Michael Montgomery (1981) and Tom Frame (1993) and endorsed by the experienced Commander Reg Hardstaff, with whom the subject came up as I worked with him on the lifeboat voyages to shore of Malapert and Koehn.

It may be noted here that in 4.113 it states: "Mrs Glenys McDonald told the Committee that 'in [her] interview with Herman Ortman (sic) he admits now that . . . [Kormoran] did fire the underwater torpedo.'" Apart from misspelling the name of Hermann Ortman throughout, Mrs McDonald also described Ortman as "admitting" something, when he was in fact referring, three times in the interview, to the underwater tube fired late in the action at a departing Sydney at a distance. This late single underwater torpedo shot had been referred to numerous times before and had been illustrated in the 1957 Official History. Cover interviews of people with no serious research on major points or previous interviews can be used to devalue serious evidence. It would be equivalent to David Mearns and Peter Hore not asking Kormoran communications officer Reinhold von Malapert about the evidence of Hans Linke or Adolf Marmann on wireless messages.

Reg Hardstaff's approach scenario on page 47 of the DFATS report is endorseable to me but I would use the figure of 35-37 degrees abaft abeam because of my interviews with Kormoran torpedo officer Joachim Greter. Greter said he fired the deck torpedoes after the shooting started, with a 10 degree turn so as not to interfere with the gunfire.

Linke said that the underwater torpedo firing would have been in the charge of a torpedo maat (petty officer) [your DVD reference]. With the desirability of a slow speed, or no motion, to allow the torpedo to clear the tube without being affected by the rush of water along the hull, a turn may have allowed a better angle for the aiming of the torpedo tube. However, as WWI and II veteran and the last Great War sailor alive at the time, Evan Allen, said, a good aim was ideal but torpedoes then had gyroscopes. Allen, interviewed at my request by Frank MacDonough, who lived near him in [redacted] when asked what he knew of the encounter stated the Kormoran was "lying doggo" (motionless, making no sign. From dog - Oxford; out of sight, hide -- Collins) (Your DVD reference). Evan was scathing in his criticism of such tactics.

In his book, "Hilfskreuzer Kormoran" (Moewig, Page 43) with author Jochen Brennecke (himself a raider man), as detailed by me previously elsewhere in full translation, Detmers describes how he arranged a practice session with destroyer Z23, commanded by a friend, in the Baltic for "das Anhalten" (stop, pull up check -- Colliers) of a freighter. He states that he succeeded in firing a torpedo out of an underwater tube at the destroyer that its captain could neither prevent nor outmanoeuvre. The second part of the account — that neither captain realised how bitter a situation would develop in which torpedoes would play a role — is omitted in English versions of the book. Later, the book in German mentions that a fault in a smoke generating machine caused it to start by

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itself and adds that it served the purpose of ensuring that such a situation would not happen again. Kormoran Mines Officer and Adjutant Heinz Messerschmidt told me that he remembered the practice torpedo shot at the Z23 and he had also been a friend of the Z23 captain.

Hermann Ortmann, an ammunition handler for No 4 gun, behind the funnel, who had watched Sydney's approach through a door slot, said that he had some trouble at times observing Sydney at close range because of smoke.

The best chance for Kormoran was to get Sydney into a situation that had been rehearsed in the Baltic with Z23. That is close. Graf Felix von Luckner in his motorised sailing ship raider Seeadler had used that ploy with a smoke generator in the First War to get a steamer to come close to afford help, only to be seized. In his book "Seeteufel" (C. Bertelsmann Verlag 1951), von Luckner describes (Page 171) in the original German how he got a freighter to come to his aid: "'Los, steck das Schiff an!'. Dazu hatten wir eine besondere Vorrichtung. In kurzer Zeit brannte das Schiff." (Get going, burn the ship? For this we had a special apparatus. Soon the ship was burning). Simulated of course but the WWII raider captains talked to those of the previous war . . . which ended 20 years before the second started. Much closer than we are looking at World War II from today. British cruisers were told to fire at an enemy ship that was trying to burn and scuttle, to get it to stop the process so it could be boarded. In any case, burning ships were boarded. If Sydney had intended to capture a German supply ship or even a raider she would have needed to come close enough to board and prevent the target scuttling. Sydney's log shows that anti-scuttling parties had been practised constantly, Sydney's June escort of Zealandia showed a close-range practice searchlight approach on Zealandia and there was the matter of prisoners and ammunition. When Cornwall sank Pinguin earlier that year, there was a heavy loss of prisoner lives. Incidentally, Pinguin had radioed that she was going into action.

Earlier also, Captain Harold Farncomb had it drawn to his attention that he had used a great deal of ammunition when he led his ship and HMNZS Leander in action against the Coburg and Ketty Broevig. Coburg was well alight and could not be saved while Leander approached Ketty Broevig on the quarter to board but the now-German ship was too far down by the stern to save. Derek Simon of Kanimbla (your DVD reference) told me of leading boarding parties onto German and Italian ships, some alight, to save them in the 1941 Abadan raid.

In "Auf Kaperkurs: Heroic Deeds of German Auxiliary Cruisers" by Walter von Schoen (Ullstein 1934) it is told, in Gothic script, how in February 1916 the raider Greif, breaking out near the Shetland Islands, came to a point where the British AMC Alcantara was about to be relieved by the Andes. A radio signal from the Andes that there was "Enemy in sight, north east 15 nautical miles". The Alcantara raced towards a plume of funnel smoke but found that the ship did not fit the description radioed by Andes. At that point Andes was seen to starboard apparently on the hunt for a different ship. The captain of the Alcantara was now not sure if he should join the Andes in the apparent hunt or stay to inspect the one near him. The Alcantara fired two warning shots and the Greif, disguised as the Norwegian, Rena, stopped. Now 100 metres astern of the Greif/Rena, Alcantara put out a boat and a boarding party jumped in. Greif broke out its battle flag and opened fire with all guns that bore. The boarding party boat was shot to pieces. Communication between the bridge and the guns was destroyed. With the two ships now abeam, Greif fired two torpedoes and there was a huge explosion

in Alcantara's boiler room midships. Alcantara sank and Andes, with cruiser and destroyer reinforcement, finished off the damaged Greif. That account, with the radio signal, is very close to the version of the Sydney-Kormoran except for the area and the number of ships present. Hans Linke said the QQQQ signal was meant to "distract" Sydney. Perhaps to search the whole 26S 111E square for another ship - the "Dutch Straat Malakka" -- "under attack" by a raider while Kormoran, disguised as a Norwegian or other nationality, was making machine-generated smoke as though already damaged by the raider but not sunk. There were ^{cases} of multiple ships being attacked by raiders in one day.

There is a handwritten poem by Kormoran torpedo mechanic Edmund Abel, the only Kormoran crewman to be seen in the typed collective record of interrogations with a sentence that he should be interviewed further, dated 9 XII 1941 in which he describes the engagement. In verse 5 he writes: "Die Klappen auf, Geschuetze rauf, der Torpedo auch schon gischt." (The flaps open, guns out, the torpedo also is already boiling (through the water).) I especially asked Charles (Karl-Heinz) Noack, the German acquaintance and neighbour from Komet and Tokyo Intelligence about this line. He had to concede (your DVD reference) the meaning that the torpedo was going at the time of the decamouflaging. My 1970s-Munich-bought Cassells German-English 1.4kg heavy dictionary gives the following meanings. schon: already, as yet, by this time, so far. gischen: foam, froth, boil, bubble, ferment. Charles, the last time that I saw him before he died, quietly gave me a photograph of an angled underwater torpedo tube (your DVD reference). It is free standing in a large hold area and appears to be able to be reloaded easily by trolley and re-fired in good time. In racks nearby are what appear to be basketball-plus size black round objects, to which he did not refer. . Torpedo net floats or floating mines? When I indicated to him that I would like to know more he just looked at me. I had known Charles for more than 20 years.t

I have a letter and video interview for me by his son of then Lance-Corporal John Lowry who gave his unit as 28th Infantry Battalion AIF (WX 27491) (your DVD reference) . His nominal role record shows his enlistment date as in 1942 but on many other occasions I have come across records that are wrong and do not reflect other service, such as light horse, militia etc. Lowry says that he was on a prison train that took POWs from Harvey to Adelaide and was in conversation with a German doctor from the Kormoran. Lowry quotes the doctor as saying: "I stood leaning on the rail admiring that ship. I thought what a lovely picture postcard it would make. As I looked. I felt a tremor I knew a torpedo had been fired. It struck under the forward guns and a large fire broke out. I immediately went to the sick bay to receive casualties." Lowry said the doctor said Sydney kept moving west slowly. As others have said this, it could be that Kormoran crossed Sydney's bows to avoid the after guns and Sydney later struggled south east for Geraldton or Fremantle.

Montgomery notes in "Who Sank the Sydney?" that the embedded version of action, with the underwater tube fired last, is the reverse of what could be expected with such a weapon. Montgomery also cites (Page 128) , the Admiralty's Director of Training Division as stating that "it was possible that the Kormoran opened fire with an underwater tube before declaring herself" , with a



reference of Public Record(s) Office, London, ADM 199 736). He cites the Admiralty in February putting out a "lessons of disguised raiders" signal to "safeguard ships against a sudden attack by disguised raiders as in the case of the Sydney torpedoed and sunk by the Kormoran" (Public Record(s) Office, London ADM 1115037)

Tom Frame writes that Kormoran could have "fired one of her underwater torpedoes while the Dutch flag was still flying" (Page 215).

Percival Tasker, who supplied a submission to the DFATS inquiry in Volume 18 confirmed to me in a subsequent telephone interview (your DVD reference) that he was told by Chinese survivor Shah Ah Fah (Shu Ah Fah) that he was on deck when Kormoran fired a torpedo and that Kormoran opened fire with artillery when the torpedo hit. He said that only one torpedo was fired at that time.

Kormoran wireless operator Adolf Marmann wrote a submission on March 1, 1998 to the DFATS inquiry (Volume 11), and on Page 2500 states that Sydney "was lost suddenly, almost as if hit by a floating mine or a torpedo". On Page 2501 he wrote of taking a look on deck at Sydney, then: "Back at my direction finder it was not long before I heard the first rumble. No telling what caused it and sitting right next to 360 anchor mines my thoughts were not exclusively on my job."

Kormoran engineroom crewman Heinz Schott wrote in a diary on battle orders that would be heard over the ship's communications system that, after the sighting, Sydney "began to send messages ordering us to stop".

Dr Mike McCarthy of the West Australian Maritime Museum some years ago sent me a copy of a letter from a B. Nelson, who had lived at Rushworth, Victoria, during and after the war. Nelson wrote that he "had a deal of contact with some Kraut POWs who used to be sent to my engineering shop with repairs of odds and ends. One day a Kraut said to me 'See 'zees' fellow over there. He is the torpedoman who was left on the Kormoran with a hidden torpedo tube, when the rest of the Krauts took to the boats'. After the rehabilitation of these POWs, this particular torpedoman - by name Elmecker - came back to Australia, Rushworth and started as a fencing contractor". Wilhelm (Bill) Elmecker, who lives in Tatura, was an Austrian who was transferred to Kormoran from a supply ship, says he was an ammunition handler on No 4 gun, who had to leave his position for the boats because he had a shattered eardrum from the gun discharging. Bodensee, on the Austrian-German border, had torpedo installations. On video tape after a memorial service, Bill was reluctant to say anything on camera but has quiet words with Hermann Ortmann before Hermann, who backs his gunnery role, spoke (your DVD reference). At the memorial on the site of the camp, Bill arrived with a rifle he used for shooting game then took me over to his van, where he pointedly showed me a silver-plated rifle that he kept in a recess under the cab floor. "I said: "Nice gun, Bill." Also at the memorial from year to year was Mavis McNamara. She was the ladyfriend of Heinz "Heini" Homann when the prisoners would be released for work on the local farms and was close to Hermann after Heini died.

With virtual freedom of movement in the latter stages of the war, with allied troops advancing on Germany, why would Detmers be among 20 prisoners who "escaped" from Dhurringile estate house 16 weeks before the end of the war and be



"recaptured" with his account of the HMAS Sydney action concealed in his clothing. Detmers, who had been concerned that he may be prosecuted over the sinking of the Sydney, returned home to Germany as a war hero at a time when the real enemy was no longer the Germans -- but the Soviet communists who now occupied all of central Europe from Berlin and the Polish Czechoslovak borders. Detmers had given his account to interrogators in Australia, had sent one back with Dr Siebelt Habben during a prisoner exchange in 1943 and this was widely published in Germany and its occupied lands. After the war it appeared again in other documents including a dictionary with dots under letters in a code that was known to British schoolboys.

To fire an underwater tube torpedo it has been stated often that Kormoran needed to be travelling at six knots or less.

That Kormoran was told to stop by Sydney, as Detmers conceded in his first interview at Fremantle, was also supported in the translated diary of Heinz Schott: "We could see her on the horizon with the naked eye and then the 'fellow' began to send messages ordering us to stop." (AWM papers collected by Reg Hardstaff).

Perth researcher Lindsay Peet sent me a copy some years ago of the Dino de Laurentis film of the 1950s "Under Ten Flags", about a German raider with the closing title stating that it was based on the experiences of raiders during World War II. Technical advisers were Bernhard Rogge and Ulrich Mohr, the captain and first officer of Atlantis. There is a section in which a raider is challenged by a cruiser (your DVD reference) and the raider opens the action with a torpedo shot from an underwater tube. There was only one action in which a raider fired a torpedo that hit a cruiser. That was Kormoran and Sydney. Would it not have been as dramatic to portray the official story in a film that was somewhat sympathetic towards the raider captain? Flaps and hatches flying up and down as guns were decamouflaged and small weapons and broadsides fired as the flag was unfurled, then a coup de grace blow with torpedoes flying out of deck tubes. No, Rogge and Mohr allowed the underwater tube scenario with their name on the credits.

Also in the film is a scene in which the British Admiralty uses a bogus radio message in an attempt to lure the raider to go to a section of ocean where it could be trapped. There is also a long section in which British agents succeed in removing the raider "flower" chart from German intelligence headquarters in Paris. The German Abwehr chief Wilhelm Canaris is cited in his biography by Heinz Hoehne as spending time in the Paris office. He was hanged for plotting against Hitler and passing on to allied Intelligence advance information on selected operations.

My research has led to the conclusion that there was an Admiralty operation in November 1941 that began with the capture on the 6th of the German blockade runner Odenwald near the equator in the Atlantic by American cruiser Omaha and destroyer Somers. The raider Komet would have been nearer the spot had not her captain Robert Eyssen aptly slowed down her progress. Kormoran was intercepted on November 19 and Atlantis on November 22 in the Atlantic. HMAS Devonshire wireless operator Jack Nichol told me in Capetown in 1995 that the heavy cruiser received a message from Freetown on the night of November 21 to steam to a position overnight, where next morning ~~they~~ it



intercepted Atlantis fuelling a submarine and sank her after checking with base by wireless if the suspicious ship could be Polyphemus as it purported. It should be noted that, given allowance for the time difference, the attempts by Harman to contact Sydney by wireless coincided with assurance that Atlantis had been sunk.

A DNI-held confidential document 491/41 on the Germans picked up by Aquitania, Department of the Army Minute Paper, signed by the Director of Military Intelligence and dated Dec 31, 1941 states that: "Various discrepancies in the stories have been noted, particularly in regard to the wireless operators, one of whom stated that he shut down and went below, while the other claimed to have remained at his radio station." Three of the 26 picked up by Aquitania, hence separated from the remainder, were radio operators. Adolf Marmann, not among them, told me (your DVD reference) that the main wireless room below decks had power until he was ordered to abandon it.

The 89-page written "Report on Loss of HMAS Sydney" cites Kormoran's broadcast "QQQQ 26S 111E Straat Malakka" signal at 1000GMT (1800 Perth time) picked up by tug UCO, Geraldton, Perth (according to Detmers' book) and Canberra (Robert Mason) among others --- and repeated minutes after with a response from at least Geraldton. Such a significant message would have been sourced by direction finding, which was widespread, and not unusual as has been represented in some research. Another common misrepresentation is that Kormoran did not use an Aldis, or other signalling lamp, because merchant ships did not use them, and flag signals were fumbled. Lack of a signalling lamp and fumbled signals in a modern KPM ship of the line would have been suspicious (Straat Malakka's Wim Schroder, your DVD reference). Later in the above report with the 1000Z (GMT) and encounter diagram are, under "Time" . . .

H Fremantle
J Adelaide
K Eastn Sland (sic)
M NZ

Here, we have the introduction of two new zones to the material, J and M, Adelaide and NZ. This would seem to indicate that Adelaide and New Zealand wireless records needed checking.

Barbara Winter (Poniewierski) states that no subsequent signals from the action were received, citing German Navy Wireless Intelligence chief Heinz Bonatz. Bonatz's book "Seekrieg im Aether" (War at Sea in the Ether). Bonatz writes that his section could not say anything about the start or the course of the action because the ships apparently did not, or could no longer, signal. (Ueber Beginn und Verlauf des Gefechtes konnte die FA nichts Aussagen. Beide Schiffe hatten offenbar nicht mehr gefunkt oder funken koennen. Page 199). He does not even mention the QQQQ signal -- intended, said the Germans, for the East Indies and relay and "to distract attention from them" (Hans Linke in 89-page report) -- and Winter does not note that omission.

Jack Harker, wireless operator in HMNZS Dunedin and Leander, told me (audio tape available) that while in port in New Zealand pre-World War II in the Dunedin he and another wireless operator transmitted on voice radio to a pub ashore their collection of dance music. This goes to the answer to my question at the King Hall naval communications conference in Canberra in July 2007 by Air



Commodore Norman Ashworth (rtd) that there was voice radio in British convoy escort ships in the Mediterranean before the American Talk Between Ships (TBS) came in.

The cruiser Belfast on the Thames, has a main wireless transmitter that, according to the description and the information officer there, came from the Leander class cruiser HMNZS Achilles. The set has voice capability (see your DVD reference). There is no evidence that has been presented to my knowledge that supports remarks at the COI two-day hearings in Sydney by a legal team member that the set on Belfast was markedly post-1941.

Admiral and Viscount Andrew Cunningham in his autobiography "A Sailor's Odyssey" writes of exercises in the eastern Mediterranean in 1923 involving a simulated attack on battleship Iron Duke: "The incident remains in my mind because the movements of the flotillas, which of course were working without lights, were coordinated by radio-telephony. This apparatus was afterwards discarded in the fleet, and most mistakenly, because, I believe, of the difficulty of making a record of what was said!"

Harman wireless operator Jack Gore, who was on B-watch on the night of November 19-20, 1941, wrote before his death in 1996 that Robert Mason's statements about signals from the Sydney were "correct in detail" and the "most significant information on Sydney to date". At breakfast the next morning there was talk of "panic stations about a missing signal" in the wireless telegraphy section but being "young ratings at the time we were very security conscious". Gore also said he believed that the Sydney had a radio-telephone attachment to a transmitter. Wes Olson, the Archival committee chair at the 2001 Navy Wreck Location Seminar in Fremantle, wrote in "Bitter Victory: The Death of HMAS Sydney" on Page 19 and 20 that "the emergency set was type 6E although there is evidence to suggest that this may have been replaced in 1941 with a Type 60E emergency set". Then: "Type 60E" wireless equipment had been approved for HMAS Sydney and "it is assumed that the specified equipment was provided and installed before November 1941". Numerous history of wireless authorities specify that Type 60 sets were capable of radio telephony capacity. Ex-HMAS Hobart wireless operator Alfred Johnson, who appeared at the COI this year after having a look at the issue, as he put it, said that radio telephone equipment that he was acquainted with at the time had line of sight capability. But after the war while at Adelaide city airport control tower, he heard a plane on voice radio landing at Sydney. Lou Brown, ex HMS Rodney, Bonaventure, PMG and OTC said that while in the Great Australian Bight he heard aircraft over the Philippines.

Jack Harker added that on Leander there were radiomen assigned to emergency duties with heavy gloves ready to jury rig emergency wireless aerials.

Harman wireless operator Alun Morris-Rees names telegraphist Petty Officer Neil Pennicuik as a separate source for Sydney wirelessness that she was about to open fire and that the full message was lost in scenes as described by Robert Mason and Judy Alley. Mason also said that Pennicuik had informed him the day after the action that the Sydney had been lost. Morris-Rees also refers to having heard from telegraphist Jimmy Dawson at breakfast in the mess that a message had been lost during a Tubby Hamilton watch.

In his book, "As Luck Would Have It", previous Sydney captain John Collins writes of an island cruise in HMAS Melbourne and going ashore in the New Hebrides with Eric Feldt (Page 24). He writes: "Eric Feldt and I were the two watchkeepers and were in charge of the landing party."



In August 1941, Collins was made "Assistant Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief, China", based in Singapore. Barbara Winter (Poniewierski), in "The Intrigue Master" writes (Page 33) that in May 1939 "prompted by Long, Collins reported to the CNS Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin, on weaknesses in the Islands coastwatcher screen". That paths of contemporaries Long, Feldt, Collins and Joseph Burnett were connected from the birth of the RAN to the late pre-war and early war years when Feldt was "often away contacting coastwatchers". Part of Collins duties was protection of commerce routes from the raiders active around Australia since 1940. Winter writes (Page 93) that "Long felt that Collins was not outspoken enough on Singapore's weakness and Australia's danger, but the RN might not have tolerated anyone who did speak out".

Derek Simon has spoken of the work of Kanimbla in finding Japanese storage dumps in the islands, obviously helped by island intelligence and observation work..

Feldt's coastwatchers had 3B teleradios with a specified range of 1000 miles with keyed morse or 600 miles with voice microphone - radio telephone or RT. Citing AWM 69: Item 54, The Royal Australian Navy Coastwatching Organisation, Winter writes (Page 39): "By September 1939, seven hundred coastwatchers had been appointed, mostly in mainland Australia."

The point of the coastwatcher's teleradios may well be that they, with ships within range at the time, were the source of the "R/T" inclusions in the December 4 SWACH log entries on messages picked up by RAAF personnel at Geraldton and passed on by Squadron Leader Eric Cooper to RAAF Pearce on November 19 for onpassing to the RAN (NAA Guide "The Sinking of HMAS Sydney" 1999 (Page 40-41). Also, for the reported voice communications picked up by Arthur Lane at the British Army signal post in Singapore.

Collins' book (Page 117) refers to the disposal of "the steel secret cams of the 'X' Cipher Machine" in Java after the fall of Singapore. Hetty Hall discusses having used such a machine in Singapore.

The evidence of Hetty Hall, interviewed by me in 2002 on the advice of former HMAS Sydney wireless operator Len Crabbe, who was present at the interview, tells how as a 16-year-old daughter of a British engineer in Singapore she decrypted a message on November 19 that Sydney was in action with a raider and making off under smoke at three knots. She encrypted a message that nothing was to be done pending a search for the raider. The speed fits the distance from the scene of battle for the ships found this year and it is clear that the signal predated the knowledge that Kormoran had been sunk also. Mrs Hall had impeccable references of her service in ciphers in Singapore, where defence or professional families were called upon to fill security jobs in a place heavy with agents (eg Captain Patrick Heenan, subject of "Odd Man Out, the story of the Singapore Traitor" - Peter Elphick & Michael Smith, Hodder & Staughton) and later army service. I followed up her interview with those of her daughter (Navy ciphers) and brother (merchant navy and army). She has also been taped by the COI. Mrs Hall also stated that she operated an Enigma machine and there are reports, including by Barbara Winter, of bogus messages - some of which were to try to lure and engage raiders.

There is a message of 23/11/41 from ADMIRALTY to COIS ® the Naval Board and New Zealand Board in reply to message of 2359 Z of the 21st. It starts: "VESSEL WAS NOT REPETITION NOT RAIDER 'C', DESCRIPTION APPEARS TO FIT RAIDER 'G' NUMBER 41." The message goes on to describe Steiermark, now Kormoran, and ends with "LAST LOCATED IN SOUTH ATLANTIC MAY 1941 WITH RAIDER 'C'." My research has shown that a





freighter of that description in the Pacific Ocean could have been the Suva, which operated from the north of Australia, but was well known. We have a signal of a sighting of a ship fitting the description of Kormoran two days after the action. Was that description from HMAS Sydney, but transposed to appear as though from another source? The message ends "LAST LOCATED IN SOUTH ATLANTIC MAY 1941 WITH RAIDER 'C'."

This clearly implies that a meeting of the two raiders was established -- located by direction finding of signals arranging and confirming the rendezvous, signals that were read, even though the raider code was supposed to have never been broken.

With radio signals, it is notable that the books of the War Diary of Komet by its captain Robert Eyssen (Koehlers 1960 and 2002) record un many places signals from and through Tokyo and other bases. The translation of the Kormoran War Diary by Barbara Winter (Poniewierski) gives the reception of signals but does not their source.

Admiral Wenneker's diary (The Price of Admiralty Page 664) instructs that ships should put in the letter "G" at the start of the call sign if threatened. This would deceive British shipping and also mean that repetitions of the message by British land stations would mean that Germany would hear about frequently more certainly than by direct signal to Norddeich.

Winter writes in "The Intrigue Master" (Page 116) on the question as to why Burnett had gone so close to an unidentified ship: "... that was not as unusual as has been claimed; even Collins had done it. A seaman's diary records '... we thought it might of being a raider however it turned out to be a British cargo boat we went pretty close she had two guns on the stern which were ready and manned I guess they were relieved when they seen our White Ensign'."

The dog of Detmers was named Senta. Senta was the a heroine of the Wagner opera The Flying Dutchman in which the captain comes ashore every seven years. Sydney I drove Emden ashore in 1914. Including 1914 and 1941, the total is 28 years - seven years by four - to the month.

Kormoran First Officer Kurt Foerster is quoted in the 89-page handwritten report that "Captain never talked about plans and had a private cupboard for all his secret papers. Foerster had never seen anything in it."

In "Prisoner of the Kormoran" by W.A. Jones of the Mareeba, it is recorded (Pages 48-57) that Detemers got very drunk at the time of his birthday, visibly while on the bridge. Later while drinking with the prisoners he told them: "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we may die." It appears that Detmers was more complex and secretive than an Eyssen (Komet) or Rogge (Atlantis) and more like Weyer (Orion) or von Ruckteschell (Widder, Michel) the last of was known to have a drink and was the only raider captain tried for war crimes.

"Grey Gladiator" -- by George H Johnston, Page 160 -- records that Sydney II had a "fragment of the hull of the Emden", destroyed by Sydney I at the Cocos-Keeling islands, in its wardroom. Barbara Winter (Poniewierski) records in

"H.M.A.S. SYDNEY, Fact, Fantasy and Fraud" that "The third Emden, launched by the widow of Captain Karl von Mueller, captain of the first Emden" bypassed mainland Australia on her way to New Zealand in 1929. "Someone decided that it would be indelicate to have an Emden touring Australian ports. . ." She also writes that Sydney II in 1935 was at Cadiz, "where officers exchanged visits with the (German) battleship Schlesien".

There were thus reminders to the Germans that the glamour cruiser of Germany in World War I, Emden, had been driven ashore by the gunfire of the Sydney, which then left in pursuit of Emden's collier. Sydney returned and reopened fire on the then-defenceless and beached Emden because a flag was still flying. More lives were lost.

Johnston notes in "Grey Gladiator" (Pages 172-173) that much of the activities of the Australian-operated cruisers of WWII "is still classed as 'war secrets'. No complete picture of naval war can be written until after the war has ended".

Even then, the RAN Director of Naval Intelligence stated in October 1945 that he was not prepared to release further information about the loss of the Sydney without a "Ministerial Statement" (National Archives (VIC) MP 1587/1 165r).

In his book "As Luck Would Have It", Captain John Collins, although involved in Singapore with commerce protection from raiders and stationed in Fremantle after the fall of the island state, writes only of the Sydney action: "But mostly we remember her tragic end, when she disappeared with all hands after sinking the German raider Steiermark (Kormoran), and mourn the loss of the friends and shipmates we knew so well."

Michael Montgomery has told me on tape at various times (your DVD reference) that when he mentioned the Sydney to John Collins at a social gathering he got the response that it was a terrible business "and we don't want to talk about that".

Cyril Heyden, who told me in the company of two other merchant sea veterans who knew him on the NSW Central Coast, that he assisted then German survivors aboard Aquitania (your DVD reference), also stated that it was accepted by him that Hitler hated the Aquitania "for some reason". This may well have been that the sinking of a consort of Aquitania, the Lusitania, as the Germans claimed an armed merchant cruiser carrying munitions, had brought the United States into the World War I. Under building programs from the previous century, large British merchant ships were designed to accept weaponry in strengthened areas. The sinking of Aquitania was also desirable to Japan, which was planning to capture Singapore and would have appreciated the loss of one of the then giant troopships. This brings into play whether testimony (your DVD reference) of a mine-laying attempt at Fremantle earlier in November was intended to sink Aquitania there. Sydney had earlier hurried back to Fremantle after a report of a possible attempt to sink the Queen Mary (the "Salland" incident). Kormoran heading north to, as Detmers said, patrol or mine Shark Bay, could well have had a purpose of having a shot at Aquitania with torpedoes - particularly if the long range Long Lance models had been sent to him by Kulmerland by Admiral Wenneker in Tokyo, in cooperation with his Japanese naval and diplomatic contacts.

dz

It was not a case entirely of the giant liners being too fast for torpedo shots. Jim Delaney, wireless operator on Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth (your DVD reference) told of a torpedo shot, presumed to have been from a German submarine (hence far less range than a Long Lance) exploding not far short of the Queen Mary.

Warnings by Burnett about a raider being about and plans to get it - Sydney crew Len Crabbe and Tom Fisher (your DVD references) and referred to by Alaistair Templeton were also evidenced by my inquiries into the barque Lawhill (your DVD reference). A warning was given to Lawhill by Burnett before she sailed from Bunbury to Durban in November. There could well also have been a request or instruction that the tall ship would act as a bait for raiders. News that she had left Bunbury from various sources (Italian settlers, agents etc) and that she would proceed NNW until she picked up the equatorial trades from the east, would have enabled a raider to work out approximate positions. Lawhill was a Finnish windjammer seized by South Africa as the German Passat has also been taken over by the allies. Getting one back could have been a token propaganda success. It may be noted that Kormoran crew initially reported sighting a sailing ship at the start of the Sydney encounter. My research after reading of the interception of the Ussukuma in 1939 and its marked rendezvous position with Graf Spee led to the little-recorded use of the similar-looking French cargo ship Formose to meet the pocket battleship instead - with Ajax, Exeter and Achilles waiting.

Fisher also recalled in submissions to the DFATS inquiry that Sydney had escorted two heavily smoking coal burners into the Pacific and deployed them some 20 miles to port and starboard of her during daylight to attract any raider. Zealandia.. At the same time of the year Sydney escorted Zealandia to Sunda Strait and practised closing on her from the quarter. This was recorded by war artist Frank Norton in the HMAS series of books and he described the convoy work to his daughter Lynne as "secret". I provided a copy of the picture to the inquiry legal team earlier this year. If one took the path of Sydney's searchlight, and fired a torpedo the other way, one would have the path of the underwater tube torpedo according to the evidence of Linke et al.

The information on the object found in the skull of the Christmas Island body needs to be re-examined to see if it is a fragment from a bullet, as was initially officially released, or shrapnel.

The material on the reasons given for it being metal from German munitions rather than, in this case of interest, Japanese, needs to be re-examined. The reasons for it being German because of its metallic composition are at variance with that given by the Australian War Memorial in its "The Scientific Investigation of a Carley Float " (Ashton, Challenor, Courtney) of 1993.

One of the most intriguing episodes during the research was that of the withheld files.

In 1999, I asked Melbourne researcher Frank MacDonough to access signal packs from around the time of the Sydney sinking that were held at the Victorian office of National Archives. Frank replied that some signals had not been released for



public viewing, and we requested that this be done. Frank faxed me on 3/6/99 that all but two had been cleared by the UK government, those still withheld being from File numbers MP1074/9/1 and MP1074/8/0. I then contacted the British High Commission in Canberra to enquire with the defence attache as to the status of these signals, said to be going to Whitehall, and was told that somebody would get back to me. I got a call some time later from the political attache, rather than the defence attache. He said that the process was underway and they would get back. Months passed and I called National Archives. The person to whom, not the usual contact there, told me that so far as Archives was concerned the signals had gone to the Defence Signals Directorate, not Whitehall. Frank sent me on February 18, 2003 copies of two signals he had received from National Archives. One is to Admiralty (FOR DNI) C in C East Indies, ACNB NZNB SO (I) HONG KONG from COIS on 20/11/41 (copy enclosed). Dealing with reports of Japanese submarine activity it includes that on October 21, 1941 a ship closely resembling Japanese submarine depot ship Karasaki was sighted at 10 degrees 14 North and 110 degrees 33 East. It says the ship is the 10th Submarine Squadron depot ship for 153-58 inclusive and 133 and 134. This perhaps could be examined in relation to testimony of submarine movements. The other signal of August 14, 1941 to DNI Admiralty from DNI Melbourne refers to SIS deployments to Australia's north and east. I have no conclusions on these but they go to other lines of research that involve Japanese submarines.

On submarines: It may be noted that one of the late World War I U-boats transferred to Japan was still in use as a test platform until 1936 at least, according to some literature, not stricken with the others in the mid-1920s, There are reports that a Japanese submarine sunk off Darwin had German tower instruments. Also, if Admiral John Crace noted in his diary that Sydney may have been sunk by a Vichy submarine he may have been aware that there was at least one Vichy submarine still present in French Indochina at the time. (Details available if required)

Another signal from released packs MP1074/8/0 to Admiralty 221 * C in C China on 7/12/41 from Naval Board states "IT IS NOT KNOWN HERE WHAT DETAILS THE DAILY EXPRESS CORRESPONDENT SINGAPORE WIRELESSED ON DECEMBER 1ST NOR HIS SOURCE OF INFORMATION BUT BBC BROADCAST OF 1300Z/2 APPARENTLY FIRST TO MAKE NAME AND DETAILS OF RAIDER PUBLIC."

This appears to refer to the story in the London Daily Express of December 1 (note time difference between Singapore and London) by "Express Naval Reporter Bernard Hall" stating that "It was a torpedo which sank the cruiser Sydney . . . at the moment of the Australian warship's triumph." It says that Sydney had shattered the raider by gunfire and was closing "to sink her and pick up survivors when she was hit". It adds: "Whether the torpedo was fired by the Nazi vessel or by an attendant submarine is uncertain."

The fact of the Singapore roles of reportage and information strengthens the case for control of the anti-raider operations and news having been in the colony with C-in-C China, and John Collins there for commerce protection with anti-raider action, and a subsidiary control role for the Australian Navy in Australia.

3. It has become clear to me signals from Kormoran and Sydney, including jamming with false information, were being listened to and sourced by direction



finding with some success. Wire recording and teleprinting existed at the time and German and Japanese ciphers were being deciphered within days and hours. The work of Eric Nave, as recorded in "A Man of Intelligence" by Ian Pfennigwerth, a former RAN Director of Naval Intelligence, shows that and there are numerous books about the work at Bletchley Park by Britain.

Meanwhile there is the contribution to the DFATS inquiry (Vol 17, page 4095) of Sybil Tweedie, widow of Sydney gunnery officer Michal Morgan Singer, that she was told by Admiral Bruce Fraser, a friend of the Singers, that "a signal from Sydney had been intercepted at Mombasa stating -- Am under attack, giving position, time etc." Hans Linke spoke of an African station trying to respond to signals during the encounter (Vol 19, Page 4649)

It has often been stated that the allies were not reading the raider ciphers.

Experts can get by secrecy provisions, either accidentally or intentionally. "British Intelligence in the Second World War" HMSO (1979) by F H Hinsley et al states on Page 337 : "The Foreign key was used only by the pocket-battleships and armed merchant cruisers and was never broken." On Page 346 it helpfully states in another context: ". . . it was not until the middle of June 1941, the first month in which the naval Enigma was read concurrently . . . "

But in "Code Breakers: The Inside Story of Bletchley Park" (FH Hinsley & Alan Stripp - Oxford University Press, 1993), Alec Dakin records (Page 53) that "there was a remarkable signal that revealed that a group of whaling ships had fallen into enemy hands. This must have been sent from some remote area of the South Atlantic, so it was not surprising that it was somewhat corrupt". And "the name of one ship gave particular trouble". The name appeared as "JXLELEGGERJ" . "But the translators were becoming practised researchers in Lloyd's Register of Shipping as well as Jane's Fighting Ships, and the unfortunate vessel duly appeared with her correct name Ole Wegger.." The Ole Wegger was among the whaling ships captured by raider Pinguin in January 1941. And on Page 80: "Apart from a new key used by U-boats that was unreadable between February and December 1942, all important naval keys were read for the rest of the war."

This indicates that it may not have been necessary to locate a raider through its rendezvous with a U-boat or supply ship as has long been argued.

There is also the evidence from Bernhard Rogge's book "Atlantis" that he tried to reach Germany constantly by wireless while crossing the Southern Ocean as a test. This would have been picked up and the attempts dissected for identification purposes.

4. It is my conclusion that the location of the engagement between Sydney and Kormoran was known by radio signals and direction finding on November 19 1941 and the following analysis of German, Japanese and allied signals from and after that date. Japan would have to have been aware of the presence of a German raider in the eastern Indian Ocean in the lead-up to its attacks in Malaya and points southwest. Kormoran could have been monitoring defence and wireless installations off the west of Australia, hoping to intercept the delayed Aquitania or preparing to cut the Cottesloe - Cocos Island submarine cable. Or Detmers, with a ship that had engine problems with white metal deficiencies could have been doing

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a "Flying Dutchman" and going into a battle with the Sydney well prepared to beat her, avenge the Emden and win the Knight's Cross.

With the loss of the Sydney, then Parramatta and the needs of morale, security and the looming Japanese war the engagement inquiries went on the back burner. Then with the agitation, growing in the 1990s, the search for Sydney was on. Admiral Chris Ritchie decided that if it was going to happen the searcher would have to be David Mearns because of his record and the fact that he knew the military. It was unfortunate that Mearns would have to tell the story of what happened and the amount of information in the hands of official authorities would have to be kept under the blanket.

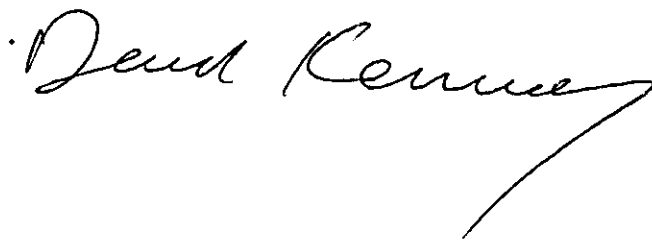
There was the rediscovery of the records in London, the withholding of what was in them until media pressure (mainly the Geraldton Guardian) got them onto the Sea Power Centre site and the embarrassing revelations that the action report and the dictionary had been accessed earlier by researchers. Captain Peter Hore gave the wrong deciphering code to the National Archives of Australia and Mr Mearns had to backpedal on the dictionary discovery and feel the ripples from the fact that schoolchildren knew of dot codes. The depth of research knowledge in Australia had been underestimated. The Blue Water Recoveries website of Mr Mearns gave no information for at least four years of being under reconstruction. Mr Mearns would later say that there had been a lack "of bandwidth".

The national broadcaster the ABC was given the job of the documentary and the information used by the commercial networks was simple "people stuff". It was an extension of an earlier documentary planned to tell of a woman's search for the ship by an author that criticised a "boys' club" and had a chapter called The Weird Mob. The newspaper editors had had the word that they might need to go lightly because of what search organisers and even navy people were calling some researchers "nutters".

With the ships found, some researchers wanting to cross the Ts and dot the Is commented that the stern of the Sydney was not shown, so the public would not know if the name Sydney had been painted over or removed or there were still traces. There was no camera shot up the underwater tubes of Kormoran. Overall, the ships had been found so quickly and the operation handled so clumsily that good will of many long-time researchers had been alienated.

But all in all, just about all of us did what we had to . . . and pretty well at that.

David Kennedy,
Sydney 31/10/2008



Joshua Nottle

From: Kennedy, David [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 13 November 2008 3:19 PM
To: joshua.nottle@sydneyii.com.au
Subject: Rewind

Josh,

For inclusion in the October 31 submission as discussed.

Considering the amount of original material that is being provided and examined, I believe it is imperative that the original, uncut footage of the ABC "Rewind" interview with Kormoran Mines Officer and Adjutant Heinz Messerschmidt be obtained and viewed.

Mr Messerschmidt describes with models how Sydney approached Kormoran, he is asked by David Mearns if the ships proceeded at 14 knots, and says, and repeats, that they slowed. The scene is then cut with no new speed reported. I asked Mr Mearns after the program showed and he said "about 10 knots". Why was this not left in the program? It is an answer to the question, significantly less than the speed given by the Kormoran captain and goes to the stated ability of an underwater tube torpedo being fired. This possibility has been allowed by the 1999 Australian parliamentary report and author Tom Frame as well as stated by Kormoran radioman Hans Linke and others there at the time. In the new edition of his book on HMAS Sydney, Frame says there has been a lack of "death-bed confessions" while admitting that he did not interview any of the Germans, and is relying virtually exclusively now on authors for material in his book. Mr Messerschmidt could well have been reminded in his later COI testimony that 10 knots was mentioned by Mr Mearns. The world will not know unless the ABC provides the Rewind footage.

David Kennedy

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