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STATEMENT BY E.W. COOPER



SUBM.008.0172_R

E. W. Cooper

state as follows:

1. During November 1941, I was Squadron Leader Eric Cooper, Chief Flying Instructor of No 4 Service Flying Training School (No. 4, SFTS) RAAF Geraldton West Australia.
2. On the night of Wednesday 19th November 1941 I was the senior Officer present at the above unit when the Adjutant of that unit, Flying Officer Gerry Bequer came to me with detailed notes he had made of a telephone conversation he had just received from an RAAF Corporal Dawson.
3. Apparently Corporal Dawson with another airman was in the lounge of the Esplanade Hotel in Marine Terrace Geraldton with three ladies listening into a commercial short wave radio broadcast when he heard transmissions in Morse code which he and the other airman could read and he made notes of them.
4. Corporal Dawson then telephoned the Station Duty Officer that night who was Flying Officer Bequer who was also the Intelligence Officer as well as Adjutant of No 4 SFTS, and relayed this information to him.

5. As the Station Commander was not at his home and could not be contacted, Flying Officer Hoyle and I then jointly composed a message from his notes to enable me to pass the information to A.A.F Headquarters, Western Area in Perth.
6. Later that night I telephoned HQWA and was answered by a clerk in Signals Section, I carefully dictated my message to that Signals Clerk and requested that its contents be passed urgently to the Navy.
7. I subsequently took part in the large amount of air searches for lifeboats and rafts from Geraldton, Bernarvon and Ouslow resulting from the battle between H.M.A.S Sydney and a German raider.
8. Many years later in 1991 in the home of Dr Ted Strachan (former Medical Officer RAAF Pearce during World War Two) in his presence and that of John McArthur and Malcolm Barber, I sighted Enclosure 12A of A.A.F Headquarters, Western Area file 2/18/INT which purported to be a record of the message I passed to ^{the} HQWA Signals Clerk. I was astonished and perplexed because it was not a true account of that message. In it I

stressed that the signals received by Cpl. Dawson were
 in Morse code and that he and the other airman could
 read Morse. Also that they and three others heard
 the signals from an ordinary short wave receiver
 at the Esplanade Hostel in Geraldton. This does
 not appear on Enclosure 12A. The word Esplanade
 does appear which I did not mention.

9 It is only recently that I have sighted photo copies of
 page 149 of the South Western Coastal Command Combined
 Headquarters (SWAACH) logbook and pages 40 and
 41 of the 3rd Edition of Richard Summerell's
 Guide No 3 "The Sinking of HMAS Sydney" a
 Guide to Commonwealth Records and more
 specifically the footnotes on these pages 40 and 41.

10 The chronological sequence of events on page 41
 could only have been provided by Flying Officer
 Moque from the notes he wrote down from Cpl.
 Dawson's telephone call on the night of 19th November
 1941. I kept no record of his notes. It is obvious
 from the written comment at the bottom of page 41
 that it was Fly. Off. Moque who passed this message
 by secraphone to someone (name blacked out) at
 1630 H hours on Friday 5th December 1941.



- 1) I emphatically deny that I telephoned any message about HMAS Sydney to RAAF Headquarters Western Area on the 4th or 5th December 1941 as recorded on page 148 of the SWACH logbook and referred to in the footnotes on pages 40 and 41 of Richard Semmerell's 7th Edition of Guide No 3. Once I had passed my message to the HQ WA Signals Centre in the evening of Wednesday 19th November I considered the matter closed.

Dated the 3rd day of January 2002

~~Handwritten signature~~

E.W. COOPER.

Received 2pm 7/1/02
 Originals held in safe
 keeping by me

Bourne 8/1/02