

1 UPON RESUMPTION:

2
3 CMDR RUSH: Sir, I call Glenys McDonald.

4
5 <GLENYS EILEEN McDONALD, sworn: [2.18pm]

6
7 <EXAMINATION BY CMDR RUSH:

8
9 CMDR RUSH: Q. Mrs McDonald, could you state your full
10 name to the Commission?

11 A. Yes, it's Glenys Eileen McDonald.

12
13 Q. Your address?

14 A. [REDACTED]

15
16 Q. Your occupation?

17 A. Retired local government manager.

18
19 Q. Mrs McDonald, you are a director of the Finding Sydney
20 Foundation?

21 A. Yes, I am.

22
23 Q. You were on *Geosounder* at the time it located the
24 wrecks of both *Kormoran* and *Sydney*?

25 A. Yes, I was on the *Geosounder* for the entire search -
26 the sonar phase and the ROV phase.

27
28 Q. I think you were in the Inquiry this morning when you
29 heard the comments of Dr McCarthy. Firstly, were you in a
30 position to see on the screens that were in *Geosounder* when
31 *Sydney* was first located?

32 A. Yes. We spent all our time in the survey room
33 watching the screens for the entire length of the search
34 pattern. I was sitting there looking at the screen when
35 the *Kormoran* was located. The day we found *Sydney*, I had
36 been watching the screen for a couple of hours, and I just
37 went out to get a headache tablet when *Sydney* came on the
38 screen. They came and got me straight away, I went back
39 and it was still on the screen and unfolding.

40
41 Q. Then obviously you watched the images as they went
42 around and showed the ship?

43 A. Yes. John Perryman and I were the two observers - he
44 for the Commonwealth and me for the Finding Sydney
45 Foundation directors. We had a role to play during the
46 video footage. We were logging hopefully what we were
47 seeing and the time that we saw it for the entire 60 hours

1 of film footage, and I was there and saw every single one
2 of the 1,400 photographs being taken. I also took about
3 500 photos of my own on my own little pink anti-shake
4 Instamatic camera. We were there for the entire period.
5

6 Q. The photographs that have been produced on the Finding
7 Sydney Foundation website, and I think you were at the
8 Commission of Inquiry when the DSTO gave its reports -
9 those photographs are the photographs that were taken?

10 A. They are the photographs that were taken.

11 David Mearns took some considerable time with each
12 photograph. You had to make sure that the ROV could come
13 in closer when he wanted to focus on a particular part of
14 the ship that we were filming, and the ROV had to hold as
15 still as possible. Those issues were behind every single
16 one of those photographs.
17

18 Q. Mrs McDonald, you had a book published in 2005 which
19 was entitled "Seeking the Sydney, A Quest for Truth".

20 A. Yes, I did.
21

22 Q. Your book outlines that you became involved in issues
23 concerning the loss of Sydney in the late 1980s when your
24 family bought the caravan park at Port Gregory.

25 A. Yes. Could I just say at the beginning that with
26 anything to do with my research, I'm speaking as myself and
27 not as a director of the Finding Sydney Foundation. I've
28 always made sure that my work had no involvement with my
29 position as a director.
30

31 Q. Understood. You outline in your book, Mrs McDonald,
32 that you explored I think what you described as the myth of
33 many locals, who indicate that they witnessed a great Naval
34 battle in the area of Port Gregory to Carnarvon?

35 A. Yes. Port Gregory is a tiny little coastal fishing
36 village. When I lived there, there were only 30 adults and
37 30 children. It's very tiny. But the surrounding farmland
38 back to Northampton has another lot of people, and many of
39 the people who were there were the pioneers of the
40 district. When I started to take some oral histories,
41 I eventually, I believe, found every family that lived in
42 the area in 1941. I actually spoke to about 15 people who
43 saw first-hand. Then, in some cases, those people had
44 passed on and I spoke to family members who had been told
45 what their fathers had seen.
46

47 Q. They were people, Mrs McDonald, at Port Gregory and

1 inland from Port Gregory to Northampton?

2 A. Yes. Some of the stations that are there, one in
3 particular which I did try to use to locate the timing of
4 their flashes - as we all know, a whole range of things can
5 be seen on the entire coast during the entire period of the
6 War, but this particular family lived on a farm that was
7 465 feet above sea level. Actually, bar one, the majority
8 of them didn't see the water; they just saw something over
9 the horizon to the north-west.

10
11 I took compass bearings from all their houses, and
12 those compass bearings actually went out to the German
13 position, even though it was some 190 to 200 nautical miles
14 away. So I did initially wonder whether they had been able
15 to see perhaps the looming of the explosion or some sort of
16 phenomena that allowed the light from the *Kormoran* blowing
17 up with about 30 tons of TNT to be seen.

18
19 Q. If I can summarise it, you recount the oral histories
20 of some who, as children, claim to have seen flashes and
21 rumbles of a Naval battle, who attended a function at the
22 Yallabatharra School near Port Gregory.

23 A. Yes.

24
25 Q. That persons who lived on a farmhouse near Northampton
26 claim to have seen something similar at around 2am?

27 A. Yes.

28
29 Q. That at Carrawang Station, further north, an
30 Ivy Mallard claimed to have witnessed flashes of a battle
31 at around 6pm?

32 A. That's correct.

33
34 Q. And heavy booms and flashes and explosions were seen
35 north-west over Dirk Hartog Island?

36 A. Yes.

37
38 Q. And another person who claimed to have heard prolonged
39 sounds and sights of battles and supposedly went to the
40 coast the next morning between Northampton and Geraldton
41 and found pieces of wreckage of the battle?

42 A. That's right. There were a number of stories.

43
44 Q. He was supposedly told to keep his mouth shut?

45 A. Yes. That wasn't actually my research. That was
46 research that was handed over to the Maritime Museum, and
47 because it was in my area of interest I was given a copy.

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THE PRESIDENT: Q. Who did that research?

A. I can get his name for you, Commissioner. He actually said that, in the 1950s, he went to work for a family on the coast from Northampton, and the gentleman on that farm told him that he had witnessed flashes out to sea early in the War; that, first of all, he thought he might have been seeing lightning, a thunderstorm, but then he realised that it seemed to stay in the one place; and in the days following, he saw wreckage washing in, so he rode his horse into Northampton to the police station to report it.

He was told to wait, because some people from Geraldton were coming up to interview him. He waited an hour, and the people from Geraldton came up to interview him. He was then told to wait further, and he was getting quite stressed because he had been there for some hours, and then he was told to go home and not to mention it to anybody; otherwise, there would be serious consequences.

I was never able to track down who that person was, even though at that stage I had found all the families. It's quite possible that it was the father of one of the younger groups of people, but I was never able to find that person.

Q. You never found out who it was who spoke to him?

A. No.

Q. Or who told him not to --

A. No. I spent considerable time trying to find the police daily occurrence records, for both Northampton and Geraldton, and went to the police, to the Battye Library, to a number of places. I did find police records prior to the War and after the War, but the records that I required weren't there, so there was no way.

I also tried to find the VDC records, because I thought people might have reported flashes to sea to the VDC, but apparently the VDC files were shredded at the end of the War and the only surviving VDC records is a box that has been provided to the Battye Library. When I went through that box, it's really only about the number of complement of the VDC at certain stages in the War. It's almost like a promotional package of the VDC, but nothing, so I've not been able to find anything about the Port Gregory flashes anywhere apart from in the

1 Commonwealth Archives. There was one sentence, when they
2 were discussing the ship on fire allegedly seen on Dirk
3 Hartog Island, in which they said that this and other
4 sightings have been ruled out. That was the only reference
5 that I've ever found anywhere of other sightings.
6

7 CMDR RUSH: Q. Mrs McDonald, the stories that you
8 obtained, it would be fair to say, are from people who
9 claim to have witnessed this extending from Port Gregory
10 right up to just beyond Carnarvon?

11 A. Absolutely. They just complicate the issue. They are
12 very complex, and the fact that Port Gregory was shelled by
13 a Japanese submarine in January 1943 added to the
14 complexity of it, because some of those people could have
15 been describing that.
16

17 Q. You even obtained an oral history of a Japanese person
18 being amongst the German survivors?

19 A. Yes. I tried to learn as much as I could about oral
20 history and went back to university and did a number of my
21 Bachelor of Arts courses in oral history. In my book,
22 I used the interviews of people who were on the *Centaur*
23 when she picked up the Germans. There's a bit of an
24 example of how complex oral history is.
25

26 I interviewed a family of children who had been on
27 board and also the medical doctor, the First Mate and the
28 Fourth Engineer, and you have only to listen to their
29 stories that they told with all honesty to see how
30 complicated it is. Two of the children actually said that
31 they thought that there were two or three Japanese in the
32 lifeboat amongst the people who were picked up. There was
33 one Asian.
34

35 Q. A Chinese survivor being stabbed to death by a sharp
36 pen by a German?

37 A. I didn't have that. I've never used that, as far as
38 I know, because, as far as I'm concerned, it's illogical.
39 I've not used that. It didn't come from me.
40

41 Q. If we could look, sir, at COI.006.0178, that is a
42 Google Earth map with the distances in nautical miles and
43 kilometres. You'll see there the sites of *Sydney* and
44 *Kormoran* marked in green and red. Do you see that the
45 furthest point away from those sites is Geraldton --
46 A. Yes.
47

1 Q. -- at 235 nautical miles, or 436 kilometres. So we go
2 to Northampton and Port Gregory at 221 nautical miles, or
3 410 kilometres, and Carnarvon at 154 nautical miles, or
4 285 kilometres. What I want to suggest to you is that it
5 would be impossible at those distances for anyone to
6 witness any element of the Naval battle, that is, it could
7 only be sound or only be flashes?

8 A. Yes. Once we found the wrecks, I realised that
9 perhaps the Port Gregory sightings were not relevant.
10 I still probably have not ruled out the possibility - and
11 I'm not a scientist, but when the *Kormoran* blew up with her
12 360 mines, possibly about 30 tons of TNT, the Mariners
13 Handbook does talk about abnormal refractions that may
14 cause light to be seen further than visual, with the loom
15 of the powerful light often seen beyond geological range.
16

17 I don't know enough about it. I just know that these
18 people were very honest folk. At the beginning, when
19 I started taking these stories in 1992, it's obvious that
20 they saw something. I have tried desperately over the past
21 15 to 20 years to see if anybody can come up with something
22 that they may have seen.
23

24 So I agree, sir, that it is almost impossible, but
25 even Professor Kirsner once wrote to me and said that the
26 oceanography evidence did leave the door open perhaps to
27 their seeing the looming of the explosion.
28

29 THE PRESIDENT: Q. You said that you took compass
30 bearings from their various positions.

31 A. Yes, sir.
32

33 Q. Did those compass bearings intersect?

34 A. I have my chart here where I've superimposed the
35 compass bearings. They all actually go out to the German
36 position. They are slightly south. They go out to about
37 26 40, I would say. If you just extend the compass
38 bearings all the way out, that is about the direction of
39 them.
40

41 THE PRESIDENT: Have you seen that chart?
42

43 CMDR RUSH: Q. I have seen the chart.

44 A. I have it here, if anybody wants it.
45

46 Q. While it's being looked at, sir --

47 A. Sir, I just have to say that I am no authority on

1 working out - I worked out the compass bearings and then
2 tried to superimpose them on the chart, so it is an amateur
3 that has done that chart, sir.

4
5 Q. I just wonder, Mrs McDonald, in relation to oral
6 history, just allowing for Port Gregory, Geraldton and
7 Northampton, if you accept the impossibility, over a
8 prolonged period of time, for those people to be aware of
9 sounds and sights of battle, where does that leave the oral
10 histories in relation to Sydney, in your view?

11 A. I think I've stated many times and in my book that
12 it's a complex issue. I personally feel that the
13 Port Gregory people who actually talked about the sound
14 bounces were probably remembering the Japanese shelling.
15 But amongst those oral histories are a few that just talk
16 about something way out on the horizon that flashed almost
17 like a thunderstorm. We know by the oceanography that
18 there was no thunderstorm at that time. I think that they
19 are complicated and complex, but I believe that some of
20 them could have been relevant and that's why I put my work
21 out there, because it needed to be looked at.

22
23 Q. Without doubting the sincerity with which you say
24 these people put forward their accounts, you accept what
25 I suggest is the impossibility of those people being aware
26 of a Naval engagement over 400 kilometres away?

27 A. Absolutely. Unless a scientist can look at the
28 looming part of it, then it is totally impossible, and what
29 they witnessed was something that we've yet to discover
30 what it was.

31
32 Q. Mrs McDonald, I think you are aware of the book "RAAF
33 Historical Record of No. 4 Service Flying Training School
34 Geraldton" by DJ Brenkley?

35 A. Yes, sir.

36
37 Q. I want to read to you a passage from page 104, where
38 he states:

39
40 *On Wednesday November 19th 1941 training at*
41 *No 4SFTS was very busy with night flying*
42 *being carried out until after midnight. If*
43 *there were many gun flashes from a major*
44 *naval battle between Geraldton and Kalbarri*
45 *or the Abrolhos; they would have been*
46 *noticed by the trainees or very alert*
47 *Instructors.*

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I'm sorry, that was written by GPCAPT Heffernan in the book compiled by Brenkley.

A. Yes. In all my research, I was never able to date the Port Gregory sightings *per se*, apart from one that I'll mention in a minute. Every person that I spoke to just said that it was early in the War. The reason that I thought of the link to *Sydney* was that some people said that shortly after they saw what they saw, two of the Germans came through the town, but one family said that after they witnessed what they called this terrible Naval battle, the family moved to Perth, and because the family moved to Perth, the local school closed. The local school last functioned on 19 December 1941 and never reopened until 1943, and that family never moved back to Port Gregory until 1946, so they were not there to see anything else that occurred during the War.

Q. Mrs McDonald, from the point of view of the Commission of Inquiry - and I'll just deal with Northampton and Geraldton - the oral history accounts could have no reliability?

A. No, no. Oral history is a very difficult science.

Q. If what is written in that book by GPCAPT Heffernan is correct as to night flying on 19 November, there would be no people in a better position to make those observations than the pilots of that squadron.

A. Yes.

Q. The fact that they did not --

A. I actually haven't seen that particular quote before.

Q. From the point of view of the question, if you accept the accuracy of what I've read to you from that book, the fact that they didn't must mean that these accounts, however they came about or whatever they were, are without foundation in relation to an engagement between *Sydney* and *Kormoran*?

A. It would seem so, although Geraldton isn't Port Gregory. Port Gregory is about 50 nautical miles further north.

Q. If they are flying, they are going to be in a lot better position than someone who is 400 or 500 feet above seawater in Northampton?

A. Absolutely, yes.

1
2 Q. Mrs McDonald, I want to ask you some questions about
3 the location of the wreck. You raise a couple of matters
4 in your book. Do you have a copy in front of you?

5 A. Yes, I have one in my bag.
6

7 Q. We can probably bring up the page, in any event. It
8 is page 180, and if you go to the third paragraph, where
9 you say:

10
11 *By far my biggest problem with the German*
12 *testimonies was where the battle was*
13 *alleged to have taken place. This position*
14 *has been established by information*
15 *provided during interrogations and mainly*
16 *covers an area between 26 degrees S, 27*
17 *degrees S and 111 degrees E. I wanted to*
18 *give credence to this position, but my oral*
19 *histories kept getting in the way.*
20

21 I take it from everything we know now that they don't?

22 A. No. I always believed that, for any search, we should
23 search the German position first. I believed from visiting
24 the archives all around Australia and in England that there
25 was substantial evidence that the German position was
26 correct, but, as you say, the oral histories to me kept
27 getting in the way. Now that we have found the wrecks
28 where we've found them, provided that the looming is not a
29 possibility, then facts are facts.
30

31 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Is that really right? In your book
32 at page 182, you refer to some work that your son had done
33 for you.

34 A. Yes. My son was asked by Dr Michael McCarthy and me
35 if he would do some hind casting on the lifeboat that
36 arrived at 17 Mile Well. I was not always comfortable
37 about hind casting the lifeboats that landed on the shore,
38 because they had oars and they had sails rigged up, but he
39 was asked to do this work and he came up with a position
40 off Shoal Point, which is a little north of Port Gregory
41 but over 100 nautical miles out to sea.
42

43 Q. What he wrote was that the work precluded a point of
44 origin from the German position near 26 degrees south.

45 A. That was if they had sighted *Aquitania* as they said
46 they had, and I have no explanation for that. The Sea
47 Power Centre were also asked to do the same hind casting

1 exercise, and they actually came up with a point central
2 off Shoal Point as well. In fact, it was that work that
3 made me probably quite convinced that the Germans were
4 telling the truth, because even though they were a little
5 bit further south, they were still 100 nautical miles off
6 the coast.

7
8 Q. On page 184, you concluded by saying in the third-last
9 paragraph:

10
11 *I am pleased that Mearns and the Sydney*
12 *Search Group are likely to mount a search,*
13 *as it is clear to me that there is a strong*
14 *case for the northern German position, but*
15 *an equally strong case for my area off*
16 *Port Gregory.*

17
18 A. Yes, sir. I think that the 2001 wreck location
19 seminar had the same dilemma. They said that they could
20 not rule out the southern area, and that was why we ended
21 up with no outcome. Hind casting is an imprecise science
22 and you can only go on the weather and the drift
23 information that you have at the time.

24
25 What we discovered when we were on the *Geosounder* and
26 we actually found the wrecks was that it would appear that
27 the debris actually drifted in a northerly track. Most
28 people thought that the wind and the tides would have had
29 more influence than they did, so I think we were all caught
30 by surprise at the fact that things actually just seemed to
31 go in a north-south drift pattern.

32
33 Q. Further up the page, you say this after saying "Wow":

34
35 *Here was an expertly researched paper*
36 *stating that a position north west of*
37 *Port Gregory 27 degrees 51 S and*
38 *112 degrees 01 E fitted all the*
39 *environmental and sighting considerations*
40 *as the likely battle area. If in transit*
41 *Detmers and Von Gosseln's lifeboats sighted*
42 *Sydney ...*

43
44 A. Actually, that's a mistake, sir. It should have been
45 "*Aquitania*".

46
47 Q. Yes.

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... and the Aquitania rescue of Germans provided accurate coordinates, then the battle could not have taken place where the Germans state.

A. That's what that paper said, sir.

Q.

Not only did my son's paper validate the possibility that the coastal sightings were of the Sydney-Kormoran encounter, it appeared to validate my suspicion that Detmers gave a coded position which equated to deducting 2 degrees from the latitude and 1 degree from the longitude.

That is suggesting that the position that Detmers had given was not in truth the correct position but something different.

A. That's right, yes. I wrote the book in 2004. It was published in 2005. The wreck location seminar in 2001 had actually said that there was evidence to suggest that the battle could have been further south, oceanography and drift, and I was trying to figure out where the battle was.

It is really good in hindsight when you know where it was to say that it was really easy; the Germans said it was there and all the evidence points to it being there. But you had the Navy and the Maritime Museum looking at anomalies off the Zuytdorp Cliffs. We were trying to collate as much evidence as possible to determine where the battle took place and if the Germans were telling the truth.

My son is a Commander in the Navy. He's a specialist navigator. I've talked to him since about his paper, which was similar to the Sea Power Centre's paper. He said that if he were able to source the updated weather and drift information that was provided to Finding Sydney just before we sailed, his equations and final outcome would have been different.

He did approach the same people who Finding Sydney approached with David Mearns and was told that they had no time to devote to the work that was required to do it. It was only when we had somebody of the reputation of

1 David Mearns involved and the money and the search being
2 imminent that these people got behind us and actually burnt
3 the midnight oil to provide us with the latest weather data
4 and the latest concepts of the drift.
5

6 CMDR RUSH: Q. Mrs McDonald, could we turn to page 185,
7 the chapter "The Aftermath" and the paragraph there:
8

9 *While I am willing to accept the Kormoran*
10 *survivor's testimony for the battle as*
11 *detailed in the last chapter, I cannot*
12 *accept the official version of the*
13 *aftermath and search for Sydney. I believe*
14 *there was a cover-up of some grave errors*
15 *of judgment. I also believe the debris*
16 *field from the sinking of Sydney was*
17 *located and never made public.*
18

19 What was the cover-up and what is the basis for saying that
20 the debris field was located and never made public?

21 A. This comes back to issues that Mike McCarthy alluded
22 to - the signals issue and the *Cape Otway* issue. As far as
23 the signal issue goes, I always from my archival
24 research thought --
25

26 Q. What I'm particularly directing my question at here is
27 your statement:
28

29 *I also believe that the debris field from*
30 *the sinking of Sydney was located and never*
31 *made public.*
32

33 A. Okay, you want the reasons I made that comment? The
34 two reasons were that I believed that it was possible that
35 the *Cape Otway* did locate bodies on its transit run down
36 the coast on December 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th, because of the
37 various issues surrounding the bodies. I also did some
38 research on a crew member who had been on the *Ohio*, which
39 was a Texas oil company hired ship that had taken part in
40 the search. We know that it took part in the search
41 because it is listed on the MMS plotting sheet. There was
42 some anecdotal information that they had taken part in the
43 search and picked up debris. The *Ohio* doesn't appear in
44 any of the archival information.
45

46 Q. I'll come to each of those matters. In your statement
47 there where you are putting forward the proposition of a

1 cover-up of grave errors of judgment --

2 A. The signals were included in that statement.

3
4 THE PRESIDENT: Q. I'm not clear, I'm sorry. May I go
5 back to the earlier sentence. You say:

6
7 *I cannot accept the official version of the*
8 *aftermath and search for Sydney.*

9
10 Is the "aftermath" the signals issue?

11 A. Yes.

12
13 Q. Anything else or just the signals issue?

14 A. What I referred to as a cover-up was the signals
15 issue. I felt that if signals were received - and
16 I honestly believed then, and I still will be very
17 interested to hear what the Inquiry says about the signals
18 issue, but I believe that only snippets of signals were
19 received and, when they were received, people did not think
20 that *Sydney* could possibly be in trouble; they thought that
21 really she was invincible. Afterwards, when it was
22 discovered that she was lost with all hands, nobody was
23 going to come out and say, "Well, we got part of a signal
24 and we didn't act on it." That was the type of cover-up
25 that I was referring to there.

26
27 Q. So you held the view then that signals were somehow
28 sent by *Sydney*?

29 A. Yes.

30
31 Q. That they were received?

32 A. Yes.

33
34 Q. And that they were not acted upon?

35 A. They were received, but they were not full signals.
36 It would create a difficulty for somebody looking at those
37 signals to be totally sure it was *Sydney*, and if it
38 indicated that it was *Sydney*, then they thought that that
39 is not possible.

40
41 The second issue, of course, is the *Cape Otway*. In
42 talking about a cover-up, if - and I know it's a big "if",
43 but we're going back to 2004 in this book - the *Cape Otway*
44 did find bodies, I actually don't think that that would be
45 broadcast around the archives or to the families. It would
46 have been quite an horrific thing. It would have been
47 about 12 days after the battle. The bodies would have been

1 in a terrible state and it wouldn't have been something
2 that would have been broadcast, so it would have been
3 covered up. If the signals issue was true and the bodies
4 issue was true, then there was a cover-up for probably a
5 lot of good reasons.
6

7 Q. The error of judgment?

8 A. The error of judgment is probably to do with the
9 Geraldton Cooper signal. It may well be that that was
10 reported to the RAAF and they thought *Sydney* couldn't be in
11 trouble, and there were these people at the Esplanade
12 Hostel, which originally they thought was the Geraldton
13 Hotel. It could have been that the RAAF in Geraldton
14 dismissed it and didn't forward it on, and it was forwarded
15 on on 4 December.
16

17 CMDR RUSH: Q. I want to ask you about the last
18 sentence:
19

20 *I also believe the debris field from the*
21 *sinking of Sydney was located and never*
22 *made public.*
23

24 As you probably heard Dr McCarthy say today, there was a
25 signal from Navy - I think it was 28 November - which gives
26 the precise location pretty much of where the wrecks were
27 recovered.

28 A. Yes. You really have to realise that we never really
29 found the debris field of *Sydney*. We found the debris from
30 the *Kormoran*, and we found a couple of items from *Sydney*,
31 like a Carley float and a life jacket, that could well have
32 blown overboard during the battle, but we have never found
33 the debris field of *Sydney*.
34

35 THE PRESIDENT: Q. But you were writing here in 2004,
36 and you said in 2004, before they found *Sydney*:
37

38 *I also believe the debris field from the*
39 *sinking of Sydney was located and never*
40 *made public.*
41

42 A. That's right.
43

44 Q. What is the basis for that?

45 A. Again, the *Cape Otway* bodies and the *Ohio* that was
46 supposed to have cleaned up and collected information.
47

1 Q. How does that relate to the finding of the debris
2 field of *Sydney*?

3 A. If the bodies were from *Sydney* and the life jackets,
4 et cetera, that were picked up - I mean, I don't believe it
5 now, sir, but in 2004, when I wrote this book, I did
6 believe it.

7
8 Q. It's a very serious allegation.

9 A. Yes, sir.

10
11 CMDR RUSH: Q. As you indicated, one of the matters you
12 refer to in your book concerns the bodies allegedly located
13 by *Cape Otway*.

14 A. Yes, sir.

15
16 Q. As I understand it, you use part of your oral history
17 research in your book to put forward the proposition that
18 the crew members on board *Otway* saw bodies in the water off
19 the Zuytdorp Cliffs?

20 A. No, sir. If I could just clarify that?

21

22 Q. I'm going to go to each one. So you say no?

23 A. No. In my book, I referred, way back at the beginning
24 when I was first learning about all the conspiracies --

25

26 Q. I have to say that this is not in your book, but it is
27 in your submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry in 1998.

28 A. Yes. Malcolm Barker told me, when I first got
29 involved with *Sydney*, that bodies were found off the
30 Zuytdorp Cliffs.

31

32 Q. That's the basis of it?

33 A. That's the basis of the Zuytdorp Cliffs, was his
34 statement.

35

36 Q. I'll come back to it. I just want to know that I have
37 the propositions - that *Cape Otway* was ordered out of the
38 area?

39 A. Yes.

40

41 Q. That's something that you put forward?

42 A. Yes.

43

44 Q. That the log of *Cape Otway* was tampered with --

45 A. Yes.

46

47 Q. -- to remove the references to bodies?

1 A. Well, it was tampered with. I don't know for what
2 reason.

3
4 Q. There are witnesses on *Cape Otway* who have been told
5 to shut up?

6 A. Yes.

7
8 Q. And that the ship *Ohio* may also have been involved in
9 some way with the locating or the sighting of bodies?

10 A. Yes.

11
12 Q. Do you still maintain that bodies were sighted by
13 *Otway*?

14 A. I'm very interested in what the Inquiry makes of it.
15 I was given the role of chairing the oral history segment
16 of the wreck location seminar, so I felt it was my duty to
17 put forward all the oral histories that were out there.
18 The *Cape Otway* story came to me via Montgomery's book, with
19 Jack Heazlewood, whom I spoke to and heard his story about
20 the bodies. There was also, around the time of the
21 Parliamentary Inquiry, a signaller who wrote an anonymous
22 letter to a newspaper that said that he had actually --

23
24 Q. I will come to all of that. My question is: you put
25 forward some pretty strong propositions in your book
26 concerning the bodies --

27 A. Yes.

28
29 Q. -- that you say, in the way you put it in your book,
30 were located, relying on your oral histories, by *Otway*. Do
31 you still hold to what you said in your book?

32 A. I still think it's a possibility, sir.

33

34 Q. From the historians' point of view, Mrs McDonald,
35 before publishing an account such as the serious one that
36 you put forward, you would agree that it's very important
37 to go to source materials?

38 A. Yes.

39

40 Q. You say that, from your point of view, this was first
41 raised to your attention as a consequence, I think, of the
42 1983 publication of Montgomery's book "Who Sank the
43 Sydney?"

44 A. Yes.

45

46 Q. In that book, he referred to Mr Jack Heazlewood, a
47 petty officer stoker on *Sydney* until September 1941, and

1 Mr Heazlewood's allegation that in a shore posting at
2 Albany he had a conversation with two people, as Montgomery
3 refers to it, who purported to be the Captain and an
4 officer of the crew of *Cape Otway*, and Heazlewood said that
5 they informed him that when they were taking part in the
6 search for *Sydney*, they found several bodies floating in
7 the sea, they signalled the information to Navy
8 Headquarters, and Navy Headquarters signalled back that
9 they were to leave the area from where they were?

10 A. Yes.

11
12 Q. Mr Montgomery went on to assert that the log had been
13 tampered with and pages had been inserted. Do you hold
14 that?

15 A. When I was trying to investigate the story, I went and
16 had a look at the log, and it did appear that a page had
17 been removed. The serial numbers were different. I think
18 that nearly all of the historians who have looked at that
19 log believe that it had been tampered with.

20
21 I found it unusual that the *Cape Otway* log would be
22 tampered with in any way, because she had just really been
23 doing her normal lighthouse tender trip down the coast.
24 She didn't recover any German lifeboats. So there really
25 seemed to me to be no reason why the log would be affected.

26
27 I then tried to go and interview one of the crew
28 members of the *Cape Otway*. I spent some considerable time
29 with a Bill Gosling, who said that he was on that transit
30 down the coast and that they had not found bodies, and
31 I thought this is really good; I can refute this particular
32 story. I asked him for his service papers, and he was very
33 upset to discover that he had actually left the *Cape Otway*
34 some months before. So I did what I could to see if
35 I could follow the story through.

36
37 Q. What did you make of that? Here is a person telling
38 you that he has seen bodies, and he wasn't even on the
39 *Otway*?

40 A. No, no, no. This particular gentleman said that he
41 was a crew member on board and they did not find bodies.
42 I thought finally I have somebody who can refute this
43 story.

44
45 Q. The pages that you say have been tampered with mean
46 that consequently the log finished on 18 November 1941 and
47 restarted I think on 30 March 1942?

1 A. Yes. I am going back to early 1993 when I think
2 I looked at that log, sir. From what I can remember, it
3 looked like a page had been torn out and it looked like
4 there was a difference sequence of serial numbers, but that
5 is my memory going back to 1993, so it is a bit hard to
6 discuss it now.

7
8 Q. Was it on the basis of your memory of 1993 that you
9 put forward your account that, on your view, the log had
10 been tampered with?

11 A. In that chapter, I put forward every single account
12 that had come forward about *Cape Otway* and bodies.

13
14 THE PRESIDENT: Q. I'm sorry, what you wrote at page 190
15 is this:

16
17 *It is therefore no surprise that the*
18 *Cape Otway was ordered to leave the area,*
19 *its crew sworn to secrecy, and a*
20 *page removed from its log.*

21
22 A. That was the conclusion I came to from --

23
24 Q. That's not possible. They are statements of facts.
25 You go on:

26
27 *Could this be the source of the rumour*
28 *about the crew from Sydney being*
29 *machine-gunned in the water?*

30
31 A. The reference there was if we found bodies 12 days
32 after the battle and they were in bad condition, we might
33 have dealt with them in the same way as the bodies from the
34 *Indianapolis* were dealt with, and that was to shoot them,
35 to sink them.

36
37 Q.
38 *The last thing the Navy would have wanted*
39 *made public in 1941 was that badly*
40 *decomposed bodies of sailors from Sydney*
41 *had been located floating in the ocean.*
42 *The weather in November is warm. There*
43 *were no refrigerated trucks in the area in*
44 *1941. The only way to 'clean up' bodies*
45 *would have been to bury them temporarily on*
46 *the coast, or machine-gun them in the water*
47 *to sink them, as occurred with the bodies*

1 *from the Indianapolis.*

2

3 A. That's right, sir.

4

5 Q. You conclude from that paragraph:

6

7 *It is therefore no surprise that the*
8 *Cape Otway was ordered to leave the area,*
9 *its crew sworn to secrecy, and a*
10 *page removed from its log. Could this be*
11 *the source of the rumour about the crew*
12 *from Sydney being machine-gunned in the*
13 *water?*

14

15 So what you have done, it seems to me, is to go on the
16 basis of your oral histories from a statement that the Navy
17 would not wish to make public decomposing bodies, to the
18 next step, namely, that you would clean up those bodies by
19 either machine gunning them or burying them on the beach,
20 and therefore express a conclusion that there is no
21 surprise about three matters which you assert as facts,
22 namely, *Cape Otway* was ordered to leave the area, its crew
23 was sworn to secrecy and a page was removed from its log.
24 Did you have any basis at all for those three statements of
25 fact?

26

27 A. Only the way I've revealed them there, sir.

28

29 CMDR RUSH: Could we have PINQ.SUBS.008.0024, which is a
30 letter from Mr Heazlewood of 9 May 1994 to Dr McCarthy and
31 the Fremantle Maritime Museum, which was put before the
32 Parliamentary Inquiry. While we're waiting, sir, I tender
33 the Google Earth map.

33

34 **EXHIBIT #159 MAP SHOWING POSITIONING OF HMAS SYDNEY II**
35 **WRECK AND DISTANCE FROM GERALDTON AND OTHER TOWNS**

36

37 CMDR RUSH: Q. This is a letter, as I indicated, written
38 by Mr Heazlewood to Dr McCarthy. I just want to take you
39 down to the third paragraph and read four paragraphs of
40 this letter:

41

42 *During my stay in Albany the Cape Otway*
43 *came into port. On this particular visit*
44 *I met the captain of the Cape Otway and two*
45 *of his Officers in the Freemasons Arms*
46 *Hotel. They invited me to join them which*
47 *I did.*

1
2 *During the conversation the Captain Aubrey*
3 *Baddham or Baddham Aubrey, I believe was*
4 *his name (I had forgotten but have since*
5 *been told this was his name) asked what*
6 *ships I had served on and I told them that*
7 *my main ship was the Sydney. Whereupon the*
8 *captain said to his two Officers, "Will*
9 *I tell him", they agreed "why not" or*
10 *something similar.*

11
12 *The Captain of the "Cape Otway" then went*
13 *on, "We found the bodies and debris off the*
14 *Sydney". I of course was astounded by*
15 *this. "What happened then?" I asked. He*
16 *said, "We radioed the Navy and told them*
17 *what we found." After some time the Navy*
18 *back, "Any survivors" and we answered "No*
19 *apparent survivors".*

20
21 *"Later came the signal from the Navy,*
22 *"Leave the area immediately, resume your*
23 *normal duties".*

24
25 *I can see that Captain to this day and*
26 *I will describe what I can remember of him.*

27
28 You were aware of that account, I take it?

29 A. Yes, I had spoken to Mr Heazlewood many years ago.
30 I was aware of this account before I saw this letter. It
31 was put to me by a whole range of other people, and it was
32 in Montgomery's book as well.

33
34 Q. You have yourself made a submission to the Parliament
35 inquiry, which is at PINQ.SUBS.001.0079. If I could ask
36 that we go to page 0085 to the left-hand column, do you see
37 at the bottom of the left-hand page "Cape Otway", you
38 addressed the Parliamentary Inquiry:

39
40 *The Cape Otway's log would have been*
41 *particularly interesting given the*
42 *anecdotal, but unprovable oral histories*
43 *which surround it.*

44
45 What did you mean by that?

46 A. Well, I suppose I was hoping that - this is out of
47 context. I don't know. I presume I was saying, given the

1 oral histories about bodies, the *Cape Otway* log would have
2 been really interesting, particularly if it revealed
3 anything.

4
5 Q. But you had seen the log, had you not, by then?

6 A. Yes. I'm not quite sure on the context in which this
7 was written or what 12 footnote - oh, the plotting sheet -
8 yes, I'm not sure.

9
10 Q. Then you say:

11
12 *The Cape Otway was instructed to search*
13 *within 5 miles of the coast and appeared to*
14 *do so.*

15
16 You put the HMS plotting sheet in relation to that.

17 A. Yes, that's this one here, which has the plotting
18 sheet of all the search vessels that were involved and the
19 list of all the search vessels that were involved. It
20 shows the *Cape Otway's* track down the coast.

21
22 THE PRESIDENT: Q. You say:

23
24 *However, located in the WA Archives are*
25 *assorted logs for the Cape Otway, Centaur*
26 *etc. There is some evidence of torn pages,*
27 *reassortment, rewriting or, as in the case*
28 *of Cape Otway's Log a strange gap in*
29 *writing from 18 November 1941 to 30 March*
30 *1942.*

31
32 A. That would have been written at a closer time frame to
33 about 1993, when I had a look at the log, sir.

34
35 Q. And the logs that you saw in relation to *Cape Otway*
36 did not give any indication of seeing any bodies?

37 A. No, sir, but a lot of the logs that I have looked at,
38 like the *Centaur*, et cetera, gave no indication that they
39 picked up German survivors, either. The only log that
40 actually mentions the pick up of German survivors is the
41 *Yandra* log in the National Archives in Sydney. The others
42 make no reference to their pick up.

43
44 Q. We're not talking about survivors here but about
45 finding bodies.

46 A. About bodies, yes. Certainly the log doesn't mention
47 anything, because there's a gap. It stops.

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CMDR RUSH: Q. Mrs McDonald, did you examine the other years of the log of *Cape Otway*?

A. No, sir, I did not. All my research has been self-funded while working full time, and there was a limit to what I could do.

Q. But in looking at the log, did you not want to compare what you allege is a surprising gap from 18 November through into February with what happened in other years?

A. In hindsight, it would have been a good thing to do, but I was taking on face value what I was looking at.

THE PRESIDENT: Q. Because Mr Montgomery had written it that way or for some other reason?

A. No, because I had seen the gap, and with all my concerns I used to go to the West Australian Maritime Museum, to Dr Mike McCarthy, who I saw as my mentor, and I would discuss these things with him and --

CMDR RUSH: Q. The log has been subpoenaed or summonsed to the Inquiry tomorrow morning. What I want to suggest to you is that if you go through the log and look at the years 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939 and 1940, you will find that *Cape Otway* was laid up at Fremantle, generally speaking, for at least three months - between December and into February/March each year.

A. Yes. I know that there is no possibility that the *Cape Otway* found bodies, as has been claimed recently. I was always interested in that last transit down the coast when it was on the MMS plotting sheet as having been involved in the search.

Q. Did you think that there was anything unusual in the log entries, there not being an entry from 18 November?

A. That's what I found was unusual, that that ship was obviously at some stage asked to participate in the search, and it was transiting down the coast and there was nothing in the log from 18 November to 30 March.

Q. If you looked at the log, and you say you looked at it for 1941, between 17 July 1941 and 7 August 1941, there is no entry in the log.

THE PRESIDENT: Did you say "7 August"?

CMDR RUSH: Q. 17 July 1941 to 7 August.

1 A. I was only focused on the time period that I was
2 looking at, sir, and I was quite a novice back in 1992.

3

4 Q. I'm sorry to hammer this, but --

5 A. I'm not sure what you want me to say.

6

7 Q. You've heard Dr McCarthy say how important the *Otway*
8 bodies are, and this is what I'm driving at. You have put
9 in your book that it is your opinion that the log was
10 tampered with.

11 A. Yes.

12

13 Q. It now seems to be your position that you have not
14 properly examined the log.

15 A. It was not just about the dates that I thought the log
16 was tampered with. It looked like a page had been
17 physically removed. From memory, there was like a tear
18 section and the different serial numbers.

19

20 Q. Just dealing with one thing at a time at the moment,
21 you have relied on the finishing date of 18 November as
22 being in some way demonstrative of something unusual about
23 the log?

24 A. Yes.

25

26 Q. And the position is that you did not examine the log
27 prior to that date --

28 A. You are quite correct.

29

30 Q. -- to notice what sorts of entries and when the
31 entries were made in the log?

32 A. You are quite correct. No, I did not.

33

34 Q. Just to be complete on this, you've also indicated
35 that because there is no entry in the log from November
36 through until some time in mid-February, that also, in your
37 view, was unusual?

38 A. Yes.

39

40 Q. And you have not examined the log over previous years
41 to check whether it is unusual?

42 A. That's correct. I did ask the Maritime Museum whether
43 they felt it was unusual, and they affirmed that they
44 thought it was unusual. But in hindsight, we should have
45 had a look at how those logs were written in the past. You
46 are quite correct.

47

1 Q. I take it that you also have not looked at the
2 Navigation Act or the Navigation Master Seamen Regulations
3 and amendments that were made to those particular pieces of
4 legislation to observe what was required and what changed
5 in relation to requirements for entry into the logs?

6 A. I did do some research to try to find what should be
7 written in logs and what should not be, yes, I did, but
8 I certainly have not read those particular publications,
9 no.

10
11 Q. Just going back to 0085, at the top of the next page,
12 you say:

13
14 *Jack Heazlewood sincerely believed that he*
15 *had been told by two crew members of the*
16 *Cape Otway that they had sailed amongst*
17 *bodies against the Zuytdorp Cliffs and were*
18 *told to leave the area.*

19
20 Montgomery says two and then Heazlewood, in what I've just
21 taken you to, says three. You relied on Montgomery, I take
22 it, for that?

23 A. I was putting there the area where believed that the
24 bodies were.

25
26 Q. No, I'm just asking about crew members of *Cape Otway*.
27 In your submission, you have said that Heazlewood sincerely
28 believed there were two crew members. Is that what he told
29 you?

30 A. No. He sincerely believed what he had been told by
31 the two crew members.

32
33 Q. I'm just focusing on the numbers at the moment.
34 That's what he told you?

35 A. Yes, from my memory. I could have been mistaken, but
36 I thought that he talked to two crew members from the
37 *Cape Otway*.

38
39 Q. You would understand from the letter that we've just
40 read contained in the submissions to the Inquiry that you
41 referred to three?

42 A. Yes, but that could have been my error, sir.

43
44 Q. That's what he told Montgomery, too.

45 A. Okay.

46
47 Q. Two crew members of the *Cape Otway*, that they had

1 sailed amongst bodies against the Zuytdorp Cliffs. Now, he
2 didn't say that they sailed amongst bodies at the Zuytdorp
3 Cliffs?

4 A. No, the Zuytdorp Cliffs is an interesting one. I read
5 some correspondence between Jack Heazlewood and another
6 researcher. He said that he was trying to work out where
7 the bodies were located, so obviously --

8
9 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Who, the researcher or Mr Heazlewood?

10 A. I'm trying to remember who it was. It was the
11 journalist that wrote "The Lady was not a Spy" - Jungle Jim
12 Davies. I read some correspondence between Jack Heazlewood
13 and Jungle Jim Davies discussing *Cape Otway* and the bodies.
14 It's in my files at home. In that, it was obvious that
15 Heazlewood had not been told where these bodies were
16 discovered, and he was trying to work it out.

17
18 Q. Who was trying to work it out?

19 A. Heazlewood was trying to work it out. This is where
20 you get this add-on thing happening with oral history.
21 From what I understand, the first reference to Zuytdorp
22 Cliffs came from Malcolm Barker, who said that the bodies
23 and life jackets were seen washed up at the Zuytdorp
24 Cliffs. So years later when Jack Heazlewood was
25 interviewed for the documentary called "No Survivors", he
26 actually is on camera saying that the *Cape Otway* sailed
27 through bodies against the Zuytdorp Cliffs, but that is an
28 add-on sequence, because he was not told that by the people
29 at Albany, allegedly from the *Cape Otway*, and he spent some
30 time trying to work it out. So the Zuytdorp Cliffs has
31 been an add-on along the way.

32
33 CMDR RUSH: Q. But you have indicated, if I may say so,
34 that he had been told by two crew members of the *Otway* that
35 they had sailed amongst bodies against the Zuytdorp Cliffs.
36 That is just not right, is it?

37 A. Well, I'm just saying that he sincerely believed that.

38
39 Q. No, no --

40 A. Yes, all right. In my research since, I have actually
41 discovered that he did not say that at the beginning at
42 all.

43
44 Q. But it's not him. You are recounting that he had been
45 told by two crew members of *Otway* that they sailed amongst
46 bodies --

47 A. What I'm saying is that later on, when I was

1 researching for my book, I discovered that initially he did
2 not know where the bodies were.

3

4 Q. Mrs McDonald, we're not talking about Jack Heazlewood.
5 We're talking about what he was told at the Albany Hotel?

6 A. That's right. At that stage when I wrote this to the
7 Parliamentary Inquiry, I thought he had been told that the
8 bodies were at the Zuytdorp Cliffs, and it was when I was
9 researching my book and going through all my files that
10 I found this letter, which indicated that he had not been
11 told that it was the Zuytdorp Cliffs, because he was trying
12 to work out where it was.

13

14 Q. You say:

15

16 *The wife of the first mate of the*
17 *Cape Otway Mrs WE Hardman reported that*
18 *prior to his death, in his eighties, he had*
19 *been hallucinating about bodies in the*
20 *water before he died.*

21

22 A. That was informed to me and other people from the
23 Sydney Research Group.

24

25 THE PRESIDENT: Q. That's just wrong. You know that's
26 wrong.

27

28 CMDR RUSH: Q. Mr Laffer and Mr Ean McDonald gave a
29 paper at the 1991 conference where they referred to
30 Mr Hardman, and Mr McDonald reported he was not able to
31 communicate at all at the time that he interviewed him.

32 A. Yes, and then I think either in that paper or in some
33 other writings, they said that after his death, the wife
34 actually gave them this information.

35

36 Q. You have mentioned in your evidence thus far to the
37 Commissioner an anonymous letter to the Herald Sun
38 newspaper in Melbourne --

39 A. Yes.

40

41 Q. -- of a man who indicated he was at a listening post
42 in Park Orchards in Melbourne and he heard *Cape Otway*
43 reporting on bodies.

44 A. That's right. I did try to ring up the newspaper to
45 see if they had a record of who it was to see if we could
46 track him down, but to no avail.

47

1 Q. That is at PINQ.SUBS.010.0044. Under "Cape Otway",
2 you say:
3

4 *My previous submission and others have*
5 *referred to the anecdotal evidence that the*
6 *Cape Otway sailed amongst bodies*
7 *(I understood this area to be near the*
8 *Zuytdorp Cliffs).*
9

10 *Recently a person, who wished to remain*
11 *anonymous, contacted the Sunday Herald Sun*
12 *with information that when attached to 1st*
13 *Signals Corps Special wireless monitoring*
14 *group located at Park Orchards, an outer*
15 *Melbourne suburb, signallers heard*
16 *Cape Otway reporting the discovery of many*
17 *bodies, but the search ship was ordered to*
18 *leave the area immediately. Copy of one of*
19 *the articles printed on 1 February 1998 by*
20 *journalist Derek Ballantine is attached.*
21 *I have written a 'Letter to the Editor'*
22 *asking for this person to come forward and*
23 *make a submission to your Inquiry.*
24

25 The fact of the matter is that no-one did.

26 A. No-one did. I was just alerting the Inquiry to this
27 that had been reported in to the newspaper. I tried to
28 follow it up to see if they had a name, and they didn't, so
29 I wrote the letter to the editor to see if anybody would
30 come forward. I thought it was important information to
31 give to the Inquiry that was looking into this matter
32 because it actually mentioned where the person was at the
33 time, and I thought that people with better knowledge than
34 me could work out whether Park Orchards was a signal base,
35 et cetera, et cetera. So it was just really handing
36 information over to the Inquiry for their deliberations and
37 trying to see if I could contact the original person. And
38 you are quite correct, nobody ever responded to my letter
39 to the editor.
40

41 Q. Mr Ballantine told you that the signals unit operated
42 at Albert Park and at Park Orchards?

43 A. Derek Ballantine told me what the man had said he and
44 listed exactly what the man had said. He said the person
45 wished to remain anonymous.
46

47 Q. It's your understanding that the person spoke to

1 Mr Ballantine?

2 A. The person spoke directly to Mr Ballantine. As I
3 said, it was anecdotal evidence - the whole *Cape Otway* is
4 anecdotal evidence.

5
6 Q. Are you aware of any other signals being picked up
7 from *Cape Otway* to the same effect?

8 A. No. This is my only reference to the possibility that
9 somebody overheard the *Cape Otway*, and I just thought that
10 the Inquiry would be interested in it.

11
12 Q. Another reference that you make in your book at
13 page 182 I think to anecdotal evidence is a letter in
14 "Reveille" from a person claiming to have seen a BBC
15 documentary concerning the loss of *Sydney*, and two trawler
16 Captains having seen bodies?

17 A. In that chapter in my book I was listing every
18 anecdotal piece of material that had come forward over the
19 years about the *Cape Otway*, and that was one of them.
20 I think that I might have collected that out of the
21 submissions to the Inquiry.

22
23 Q. There is a submission by Mr Sheldon-Collins at
24 PINQ.SUBS.003.0076, at 621 and 624. If we could go to 0077
25 first, the second column on the other page, in the
26 paragraph in the middle, in Mr Sheldon-Collins' submission
27 he states:

28
29 *There was a series of documentaries*
30 *concerning events which took place during*
31 *the war which were deemed classified shown*
32 *on BBC1 in 1994.*

33
34 *One of these documentaries concerned the*
35 *sinking of HMAS Sydney and was witnessed by*
36 *Mrs May E Bounds of Lismore NSW and by her*
37 *husband, a Royal Navy wartime officer.*
38 *Both recent newcomers to this country. A*
39 *photostat of her letter to the RSL*
40 *publication "Reveille" is attached. It may*
41 *not be considered relevant to the Inquiry*
42 *but it does give an indication of the*
43 *shortcomings and mentality of some officers*
44 *and how the officer corps closed ranks to*
45 *protect one and all.*

46
47 The letter is at page 0079, and the third paragraph states:

1
2 *We recently emigrated from the UK to spend*
3 *our last years with our daughter (we are 73*
4 *and 79 years respectively) we were most*
5 *surprised to learn that the British*
6 *Government had placed a 70 year moratorium*
7 *on releasing these war files as, during*
8 *1994 the BBC produced a series of*
9 *documentaries concerning events which took*
10 *place during the war which were deemed*
11 *"classified", one of these being the*
12 *sinking of HMAS Sydney; and if, as*
13 *Mr Macdonald claims, there is such a*
14 *moratorium my husband, the Commanding*
15 *Officer of a minesweeper during the war,*
16 *suggests it can only be because it showed*
17 *the SYDNEY in a less than favourable light,*
18 *for it portrayed ... [the] Captain*

19
20 Over to the top of the next column:

21
22 *Also on this documentary were the two*
23 *elderly skippers of trawlers fishing in*
24 *that area at that time. They spoke of*
25 *their horror on awakening one morning to*
26 *find themselves fishing in a sea of*
27 *floating bodies.*

28
29 *They radioed to Darwin and were told to*
30 *leave the area with all possible speed and*
31 *to forget what they had seen. They were to*
32 *speak to no one about it as this was*
33 *classified information and to do so would*
34 *be deemed treason and punishable as such.*
35 *Neither men had ever spoken of the horror*
36 *they had witnessed until this documentary*
37 *was being made. I suppose one could say*
38 *they were frightened to death!*

39
40 Did you make any inquiry of the BBC for that material?

41 A. No, I didn't. I was just listing all the submissions
42 that had mentioned *Cape Otway* bodies. I personally thought
43 that this one was very airy-fairy, but I didn't follow it
44 up.

45
46 Q. The Commission of Inquiry has been in touch with the
47 BBC. There is an email at EML.001.0181. It is an email

1 from Chloe Rice, "BBC Research Results", to LCDR Kerr:

2
3 *Hi Paul,*

4
5 *I am happy to confirm for you -*

6
7 *I and the team in London have both*
8 *conducted searches of the BBC archives.*

9
10 *No film or documentary under the name of*
11 *'The Sinking of HMAS Sydney' was able to be*
12 *located by either myself or the team in*
13 *London.*

14
15 *No other film or documentary featuring the*
16 *keyword HMAS Sydney II in the log has been*
17 *identified (although there was one item*
18 *featuring the HMAS Sydney transmitted in*
19 *1949) by me or the team in London.*

20
21 That is the aircraft carrier Sydney:

22
23 *Please let me know if you require anything*
24 *else.*

25
26 You said that you were not convinced of that oral history.
27 I tender the email.

28
29 **EXHIBIT #160 EMAIL BBC RESEARCH RESULTS - HMAS SYDNEY II**
30 **COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

31
32 CMDR RUSH: Q. I come back to ask you this question:
33 that is an incredible assertion to place in a widespread
34 publication in Australia. On the basis that there was no
35 such program, where does that leave oral history?

36 A. Well, I always believed that oral history was
37 problematic, but if you heard the same story from two
38 independent sources, then it was worthy of consideration
39 and scrutiny. What I was doing in this chapter was listing
40 all the comments, all the anecdotal stories, if you like,
41 that had come about the *Cape Otway*. I may have erred in
42 including that without following it along, but it was out
43 there in the public forum with the Parliamentary Inquiry,
44 so it was in the Parliamentary Inquiry documentation. It
45 had been published, so it was just listed there. But I do
46 take your point, and I was more interested, I suppose, in
47 the *Cape Otway* story with the Jack Heazlewood anecdotes and

1 the anecdote from the lighthouse tender person's son. They
2 were the two who I felt were worthy of being looked at with
3 the possibility that it was true.

4
5 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Mrs McDonald, I think you went a bit
6 further than that. If you look at page 186 of your book,
7 what you said was this in the last six lines or so:

8
9 *However, Heazlewood was not the only person*
10 *informed by crew of the Cape Otway of*
11 *bodies in the water. It is very*
12 *interesting to note that Heazlewood was*
13 *unable to locate any record of signals to*
14 *or from the Cape Otway during the search*
15 *for Sydney. However, there is anecdotal*
16 *evidence of signals received by the tender*
17 *during this period, so where are the*
18 *records, and why have they been removed?*

19
20 What you are saying is that because somebody could not find
21 a record which they presumed existed, somebody else had
22 removed that record, and that is necessary, if I may say
23 so, for you to sustain the proposition with which you
24 started the chapter that there had been a cover-up.

25 A. For the 2001 Inquiry, sir, I received a number of oral
26 history pieces of information from the West Australian
27 Museum, and one of those was from a family who had been on
28 board the *Cape Otway* during that search, and they discussed
29 the *Cape Otway* receiving signals to search for a lifeboat
30 containing 40 people, and there was some concern or query
31 about that signal, and they asked these particular people's
32 father to look at the signal with the Captain to try and
33 work it out. So what I was saying was that the oral
34 history suggests that there were signals to the *Cape Otway*
35 during the search, and people have not been able to find
36 them.

37
38 Q. But you did not stop there and say they are unable to
39 be located. What you said was:

40
41 *... so where are the records and why have*
42 *they been removed?*

43
44 You make an allegation that somebody removed them.

45 A. Well, the issue is that we have been told that all the
46 signal traffic is there in the archives that's available.
47 I know that I have spent considerable time searching signal

1 traffic, and I also know that John Perryman, before we went
2 on the search, went and looked at signal traffic, and if
3 everything that is available in the signal traffic is there
4 and the *Cape Otway* signals are not there --

5
6 Q. What's the next step - somebody has removed them?
7 That is what you said in your book.

8 A. That's exactly what I believed, because why aren't
9 they there?

10
11 Q. Somebody, intentionally presumably, has searched the
12 archives, found the records of signals between *Cape Otway*,
13 and removed them.

14 A. Yes, sir.

15
16 Q. And that you need for your cover-up theory?

17 A. Yes.

18
19 Q. But that you have no evidence about at all; it's just
20 supposition?

21 A. It is supposition; yes, sir, I'm guilty of that.

22
23 Q. Assuming the Government or Navy or somebody has
24 engaged in a conspiracy to cover up this item so that the
25 public don't learn about it.

26 A. Yes, with the relatives' distress in mind, sir.

27
28 CMDR RUSH: Q. Mrs McDonald, what does the oral
29 historian do with hearsay when you have the account of
30 Heazlewood and then there is the testimony or the account
31 of two people who are on the ship who have told researchers
32 that they did not see bodies?

33 A. To balance that, you also have some other people who
34 were told that they did see bodies, but for that one, sir,
35 I decided that the two people who were making the claim
36 were aged I think 6 and 8 at the time, they were children,
37 and I did not think that they would be privy to matters of
38 that importance. So the fact that they did not think that
39 they had found anything did not necessarily mean that it
40 had not happened.

41
42 Q. I was not talking about the children. Perhaps if we
43 go to page 188 of your book where you refer to Mr Gosling,
44 whom you spoke about before --

45 A. Yes, I know what you are referring to.

46
47 Q. You say:

1
2 *I had already interviewed Bill Gosling, who*
3 *served on the Cape Otway during the war and*
4 *strongly denied locating bodies on that*
5 *voyage. When I asked Mr Gosling to*
6 *double-check his service record, he was*
7 *embarrassed to find that he actually left*
8 *the ship in March 1941, and was not on*
9 *board on its November voyage. However, two*
10 *other men, interviewed by other*
11 *researchers, did not remember bodies.*

12
13 So, as I understand what you are accounting for there, you
14 have two men, who were crew of *Otway*, and who did not see
15 bodies.

16 A. Yes, that was other researchers' work and they had not
17 put it forward, so it had not been tested or scrutinised.
18 I thought that there may have been two other people, but
19 I was not sure. I put it there actually to try and balance
20 the situation.

21
22 Q. Who were the researchers?

23 A. I believe that Wes Olson said he had spoken to
24 somebody, but he did not put it in his book, and it may or
25 may not have happened. But I put it there to try and
26 balance things a little bit. You would have to ask Wes
27 Olson.

28
29 Q. You followed up various other people --

30 A. I know what you are saying.

31
32 Q. -- who give hearsay-upon-hearsay accounts, and you
33 refer to Mr Olson having apparently spoken to at least one
34 crew member on *Otway* who denied the bodies.

35 A. Yes. I suppose I thought that other people's research
36 is their research, and he should put it forward if that
37 happened. I didn't ring him up and say, "Who are these
38 people? Can I see them too?" I only had a certain amount
39 of time to devote to this research. There are certainly
40 holes in what I was able to achieve and what I was not.

41
42 Q. I will put it to you directly: without going to them,
43 in the next paragraph you speculated as follows:

44
45 *Was it possible that the master and first*
46 *mate of the Cape Otway and just a few crew*
47 *members were privy to this information?*

1 *Could the incident have occurred in the*
2 *early hours, or after dusk when others were*
3 *not on deck? Information circulated on a*
4 *strictly "need to know" basis?*
5

6 They were just questions that I was trying to work through.
7

8 Q. Given your experience on *Geosounder*, it would be
9 impossible to keep from the rest of the crew what was going
10 on in the room in relation to the *Sydney*.

11 A. If you were sworn to secrecy, sir, I don't think so.
12 If something happened on the *Geosounder* at 2am and I was
13 asleep and the people were sworn to secrecy, there would be
14 no reason for me to know about it the next morning.
15

16 Q. The crew on *Otway* weren't sworn to secrecy.

17 A. If you believe the anecdotal story that they reported
18 in and were told to leave the area --
19

20 Q. There was nothing about secrecy, was there?

21 A. Okay, all right.
22

23 Q. And there's nothing to suggest that particular members
24 of the crew were sworn to secrecy from other particular
25 members of the crew --

26 A. No, that was me trying to work out stuff. I'm asking
27 the question was it possible. You are suggesting it was
28 not possible. I'm quite happy to agree with you.
29

30 THE PRESIDENT: Q. I think what is being put to you is
31 this: you had two people on board who said they were crew
32 members and they saw no bodies. You had a story from
33 Mr Heazlewood that he had been told something by somebody,
34 who he didn't know but who said he was the Captain of the
35 *Otway* and possibly accompanied by the first mate, who said
36 that they had. You, as the oral historian, had two
37 conflicting accounts.

38 A. Yes, sir.
39

40 Q. What you did was then to say:
41

42 *Was it possible that the master and first*
43 *mate of the Cape Otway and just a few crew*
44 *members were privy to this information?*
45 *Could the incident have occurred in the*
46 *early hours, or after dusk when others were*
47 *not on deck? Information circulated on a*

1 *strictly "need to know" basis?*

2

3 In other words, you are asking the questions with a bias
4 towards saying that one should accept the information
5 provided by Mr Heazlewood, because all the questions you
6 asked were directed towards a view being formed that that
7 was correct rather than the two persons who had denied they
8 had seen any bodies?

9 A. They hadn't denied it to me, sir, but I didn't follow
10 it up. It wasn't --

11

12 Q. "However, two other men, interviewed by other
13 researchers, did not remember bodies" is what you wrote.

14 A. That's right. It wasn't just on Jack Heazlewood's
15 anecdotal information; it was also on the letter supplied
16 by Jim Blythe.

17

18 Q. Perhaps if we could turn to Mr Blythe, page 188 you
19 write:

20

21 *To add to the confusion were two further*
22 *oral recollections, which I received*
23 *courtesy of Mike McCarthy and WAMM, as a*
24 *submission to the oral history workshop at*
25 *the Wreck Location Seminar. The first was*
26 *a letter, sent to the museum by Mr Jim*
27 *Blythe and dated 6 July 2001. Here is the*
28 *relevant portion:*

29

30 *... Dad's next posting was to Cape Leveque*
31 *lighthouse (1950-53) and we travelled there*
32 *on the lighthouse tender ship Cape Otway.*
33 *It was during that voyage that we were told*
34 *the horrific stories by several crew*
35 *members of the Cape Otway's crew spotting*
36 *bodies floating in the sea on its south*
37 *bound journey in the vicinity of N.W. Cape.*
38 *The conversation came from older members of*
39 *the crew who had sailed with the ship for a*
40 *few years. I remember one of the crew was*
41 *the ship's cook named Syd. Another was Tom*
42 *Arcus, the ship's chippie. Not much went*
43 *on board ship without either of these men*
44 *knowing about it. It was logical for Mum*
45 *and Dad to assume that the event had been*
46 *reported at the time. How many bodies were*
47 *sighted is not known by myself, but*

1 *"bodies" would indicate more than one, and*
2 *there was no mention of what the bodies*
3 *were clad in ...*

4
5 How old was Mr Jim Blythe at that stage?

6 A. I'm not sure whether or not that was in the letter,
7 sir.

8
9 Q. On any view, he had to be a young boy if he was going
10 with his dad to a lighthouse.

11 A. I have 11 in my head somewhere, but I'm not sure where
12 I have that from.

13
14 Q. Did you follow up at all his statements as to Tom
15 Arcus or Syd?

16 A. No, I didn't.

17
18 Q. Would it surprise you if the log indicates that Mr Tom
19 Arcus joined the crew on 2 November 1942?

20 A. Well, I'm glad you've been able to determine that,
21 sir.

22
23 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Which means that account could not
24 possibly be true.

25 A. No, unless it was second- or third-hand. I would
26 really like to say that all of us researchers were funding
27 our own research. We did not have the capacity that this
28 Inquiry has, and in a lot of cases we handed the
29 information to the first Inquiry hoping that they would do
30 just this and answer the questions that we had about the
31 *Cape Otway* and the signals.

32
33 CMDR RUSH: Q. I'm sorry that we have to go through it
34 in such detail, but as I said this morning, Dr McCarthy
35 made it clear that this is one of the important things that
36 have to be considered in this Inquiry.

37 A. As I said, he has been my mentor and he has had some
38 concerns about the *Cape Otway* and the signals issue as well
39 as we researchers. If somebody of his calibre has doubts
40 that need clearing up, it is no wonder that we did, too.

41
42 Q. At page 189, Mrs McDonald, further down the page you
43 refer back to the *Ohio* you say:

44
45 *Supporting this suggestion [Mr Blythe's*
46 *suggestion] were the comments by the*
47 *American seaman who confided to the Ash*

1 family, "No-one was alive from Sydney and
2 they had to get rid of all the evidence."
3 The alleged search for debris occurred in
4 the area off Exmouth. If this seaman's
5 ship was the *Ohio*, he would have been in
6 the Exmouth area on 2 December. According
7 to the plotting chart, the *Ohio* was well
8 out to sea, but could have been diverted to
9 assist in the "clean up" following the
10 Cape Otway ...

11

12 Where do you put that in your oral history?

13 A. I'm not sure what you are asking me. That was a
14 conclusion I made obviously from taking things on face
15 value. If the story about the *Cape Otway* was true, then it
16 was likely to be in that area up near Exmouth/North West
17 Cape.

18

19 Q. You refer to the *Ohio* because of the American seaman?

20 A. Yes, and also where it was berthed and the period that
21 it was in port.

22

23 Q. The relationship between the American seaman and *Ohio*
24 is what?

25 A. He was on board the *Ohio* as a crew member on that
26 voyage.

27

28 Q. We don't know who he is?

29 A. We know his name, but I haven't been able to track him
30 down with what was available to me. I certainly did try.

31

32 Q. Are there orders that we would have of *Ohio* being put
33 anywhere?

34 A. They are on that MMS plotting sheet that you have.
35 You can see the track.

36

37 Q. That is the plotting sheet. There are no orders.

38 A. No, I have no orders except that the plotting sheet
39 lists the ships that were ordered to participate in the
40 search, so that is the only --

41

42 THE PRESIDENT: Q. The problem is that you say that,
43 according to the plotting chart, the *Ohio* was well out to
44 sea.

45 A. That is right.

46

47 Q. Which means that she was not in the area where it is

1 said the *Cape Otway* found bodies.

2 A. No.

3

4 Q. Then you go on to say --

5 A. Yes, I made a quantum leap.

6

7 Q. "... but could have been diverted to assist in the
8 'clean up' following the *Cape Otway* report on 29 November."

9 A. I was saying that if the *Cape Otway* story is true,
10 then I have made a conclusion, sir, and I realise by the
11 degree of evidence that you are expecting of people that
12 that was wrong.

13

14 Q. I am not being at all critical - perhaps I am.

15 A. I feel that you are.

16

17 Q. I'm being analytical I hope, and I recognise the fact
18 that all you people were doing was voluntary and out of the
19 goodness of your heart. It is amazing how much you
20 discovered.

21 A. With full-time work loads and a whole lot of other
22 things.

23

24 Q. My task is to analyse all these things and, as I said
25 this morning, I have to deconstruct them and see if they
26 have any grain of truth in them, so we have to go through
27 every step of this.

28 A. I was trying to be as analytical as I could.

29 Obviously there are certainly gaps in that, and you try in
30 your research to be as objective as humanly possible.

31

32 Q. But what you have done in the paragraph that I've just
33 read to you is that you have taken an oral account of what
34 somebody in the Ash family told you that somebody, who was
35 an American seaman, who might have been on the *Ohio*, might
36 have said about what the people on the *Ohio* might have
37 seen, except *Ohio* wasn't in the area, and therefore you
38 said the *Ohio* might have been diverted. That sounds as
39 problematical as you can get?

40 A. I can see that now.

41

42 Q. The problem is that you then use that to support the
43 previous thesis, which is equally hypothetical.

44 A. That is what you get when there is a vacuum in
45 explanations for things.

46

47 Q. What you don't do is make things up.

1 A. I didn't think I was making anything up. I thought
2 I was saying that if the *Cape Otway* found bodies in that
3 area, and if the *Ohio* oral history, that they were part of
4 the clean-up, then they must have been diverted, and
5 I realise now that I should not have done that.
6

7 Q. No, that is not the problem. The problem is that you
8 were advancing all this as hypotheses which support a
9 finding that bodies were found by *Cape Otway*, because you
10 said *Cape Otway* was ordered to leave the area, the crew was
11 sworn to secrecy and a page was removed from the log. It's
12 not just speculation; it is an hypothesis being used to
13 support another hypothesis to produce a finding of fact.
14 It is not the way logic works, I'm afraid.
15

16 CMDR RUSH: Q. If we could go up the page a little bit
17 on 189, you see the sentence at the top of the page:
18

19 *Following receipt of this letter [which is*
20 *Mr Blythe's], I noted an entry in my file*
21 *referring to a conversation with Barry*
22 *Kempton of Geraldton. Barry's uncle was*
23 *the cook on Cape Otway, and Barry*
24 *remembered him talking about the 'bodies'*
25 *episode.*
26

27 Just to cut to the chase, the Commission spoke with
28 Mr Kempton, and his uncle's name was Eric Walsh, not
29 Kempton, and the log indicates that Mr Walsh first served
30 on *Cape Otway* in 1949.
31

32 The other matter that you referred to in the
33 *Cape Otway* matters is information from Noreen Lings nee
34 Coote and you refer to that halfway down the page:
35

36 *Finally, I received information from Noreen*
37 *Lings, nee Coote, who worked at a shipping*
38 *agency in Port Hedland. She told of a*
39 *MacRobertson Miller Airlines (MMA) pilot*
40 *who flew the coastal route in 1941 and*
41 *reported seeing bodies in Shark Bay and*
42 *'the army were given the job of putting*
43 *holes in the bodies'.*
44

45 It would appear that the pilot has made no report.

46 A. Again, I was listing all the oral and anecdotal
47 information that had come to me in the years of my

1 research. I didn't go chasing pilots or other stuff.
2 Perhaps I should have, but I really did not have the time
3 or the capacity and, in saying that, I should not have put
4 it in my book.

5
6 Q. We are not aware of any other researcher, or anyone
7 else, who has reported that. If a pilot made a report, we
8 would know about it, wouldn't we?

9 A. I presume you would.

10
11 Q. And the position is, as you no doubt heard from the
12 DSTO evidence in Sydney, that an aircraft would have to be
13 flying at 1,500 feet or less to see bodies in the water?

14 A. Yes.

15
16 Q. Accepting that proposition --

17 A. It's highly unlikely.

18
19 CMDR RUSH: If that is a convenient time, sir.

20
21 THE PRESIDENT: We will adjourn until 9.30 tomorrow

22
23 **AT 4.06PM THE COMMISSION WAS ADJOURNED**
24 **TO TUESDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2008 AT 9.30AM**