

HMAS SYDNEY II COI
Statutory declaration of Mr. Austin Chapman

Commonwealth of Australia

STATUTORY DECLARATION

Statutory Declarations Act 1959

I, Austin Chapman of Unit 26, 177 Bellevue Road, Bellevue Hill, retiree, make the following declaration under the Statutory Declarations Act, 1959:

1. I was born on 8 October 1924 in Sydney, New South Wales.
2. For the purposes of establishing my bona fides and background I make the following statements:
 - (a) In January 1943 I was commissioned into the Australian Army at the Royal Military College, Duntroon. In December 1944 I graduated from Duntroon, and was awarded the King's Medal for "First in Class".
 - (b) In about May 1945, I was posted to the 2/12 Australian Infantry Battalion, 18 Australian Infantry Brigade, 7 Australia Division in Balikpapan, Borneo.
 - (c) In about September 1945 I was appointed as Platoon Commander, A Company, 65 Australian Infantry Battalion, 34 Australian Infantry Brigade.
 - (d) In January 1946 I arrived in Kure, Japan, as part of the Occupation Forces and served in 65 Inf Bn. In June 1946 I was appointed Staff Captain-Q at Headquarters, British Commonwealth Occupation Forces.
 - (e) I graduated from Sydney University in 1951 with a Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering.

- (f) In 1955/56 I attended the Staff College India, graduating in 1956 having been awarded psc.
 - (g) I am the son of the late Major General John A. Chapman CBE, DSO and Bar, MID, Legion of Merit (USA), and the grandson of Sir Austin Chapman, member of the first Federal Parliament.
 - (h) Since my early years I have been blessed with what is described as a photographic memory. This memory does not rely on recalling items of information, but recalls actual pictures or, in particular cases, the actual page of book or paper, which appears as though on a visual screen and can be written out word for word. I can quote a number of instances where this capacity was made aware of and commented on by other persons.
3. When I arrived in Japan I served with 65 Inf Bn and then around June 1946 I was posted to Headquarters, British Commonwealth Occupation Forces. I was posted as the Staff Captain-Q and took up residence in the old Japanese Naval Academy which was on an island called Ita Jima in Kure Harbour. The officers lived in various messes, and from memory I was in "C" Mess.
 4. I recall that at some time shortly after I arrived, I was walking around the Headquarters when I came across the old student's Assembly Hall. There was a small hallway leading in from the foyer and on the left-hand wall of the foyer I saw a mural, painted directly onto the wall, that appeared to depict the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941.
 5. The mural had, in my view, been painted as a scene of triumph. However, I noticed that the painting showed a USN aircraft-carrier being present at Pearl Harbor. I knew that this was incorrect as I knew that neither of the two USN aircraft-carriers based at Pearl Harbour was berthed in Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941. The USS Lexington was at sea, and the USS Enterprise was, to the best of my memory, in San Francisco.

6. On the opposite wall of the foyer there was another mural depicting a ship and a submarine at sea. I recognised the ship to be a light cruiser. It was steaming towards the viewer at a slight angle, and as you looked at the picture, if the ship continued to steam towards you it would pass over your left shoulder.
7. In the foreground of the painting was the turret of a submarine and on the turret a red circle was apparent. When I later mentioned this to an ex-Navy person he asked me if I was sure that it was simply a red circle, and not a red circle with white stripes, as appears in the "Japanese Rising Sun". When I assured him that it was just a red circle, he said words to the effect "... Japanese aircraft carried the white lines in the red circle, but submarines only carried a red circle on the turret".
8. I could also see that the cruiser was flying what was definitely an Australian White Ensign. I know that it wasn't a British White Ensign because I could see the blue background with the flag in the corner and what looked like stars underneath.
9. I immediately thought to myself "This is the sinking of the Sydney". Regrettably I did not have a camera with me at the time. However, as I make this declaration at the age of 84 there is no doubt in my mind what I saw, and I can see the picture here and now in my mind.
10. The next day I went to see the Camp Commandant, who told me that he had never seen the two murals in the old student's Assembly Hall. I said to him words to the effect "I think you ought to go and have a look at them and arranged to have them photographed". About two or three days later I went back to look at the murals but both had been painted over.
11. I remember going to the Commandant shortly after and saying something like "Did you get the photographs?" and he said "No, I didn't bother".
12. Whether what was depicted in that mural was accurate or true, or was just wishful thinking by the Japanese, is not for me to judge. However, what I have described is what I saw, and that is what was painted on the wall.

13. It should not be thought by what I have said above that I am saying that a Japanese submarine was involved in the sinking of HMAS Sydney. The truth or otherwise of that fact is not something on which I am able to comment.


I understand that a person who intentionally makes a false statement in a statutory declaration is guilty of an offence under section 11 of the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959* and I believe that the statements in this declaration are true in every particular.

Declared at Sydney on 5th of November 2008.



Austin Chapman

Before me


PAUL WILLIAM KERR
LEUTENANT RANR
LEGAL PRACTITIONER