27 Theories: Japanese submarines

27.1 In his 1981 book *Who Sank the Sydney?* Mr Michael Montgomery put forward a theory with two elements:

- A Japanese submarine was acting in liaison with HSK KORMORAN.

- After the engagement between KORMORAN and HMAS SYDNEY, a Japanese submarine finally accounted for SYDNEY and then either assisted in or was wholly responsible for the disposal of SYDNEY survivors in the water.

27.2 Mr Montgomery enlarged on the theory in his submission and his evidence to the Inquiry. He maintained that during the engagement SYDNEY was hit by an underwater torpedo and perhaps two further torpedoes from KORMORAN. He also suggested that after the engagement with KORMORAN SYDNEY was involved in a further battle, with a Japanese submarine 12 miles from KORMORAN. According to Mr Montgomery, the Japanese submarine torpedoed SYDNEY and blew off her bow.

27.3 Mr Montgomery maintained that KORMORAN and the unidentified submarine were waiting some way off the Western Australian coast with the aim of sinking the troop ship AQUITANIA and, further, that Commander-in-Chief China Station had directed SYDNEY to engage with KORMORAN.

27.4 He argued that at the time of the loss of SYDNEY various governments and government instrumentalities knew about Japanese involvement in the sinking but ‘covered up’ that knowledge. He said the reason for this was the ‘extremely tense political situation’ with Japan.
27.5 According to Mr Montgomery the following individuals and organisations were among those conspiring to cover up Japanese involvement in the sinking of SYDNEY:

- Prime Minister Churchill and every British government since
- Prime Minister Curtin and every Australian government since
- the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board of 1941 and the Royal Australian Navy since
- the Admiralty and the British and Australian Navies since
- Commander-in-Chief China Station.\footnote{TRAN.019.0001_R at 0059_R}

27.6 Since publication of *Who Sank the Sydney?* other writers and commentators have adopted, promoted and copied Mr Montgomery’s theories.

27.7 In *Somewhere Below*\footnote{PUB.001.0001} Mr John Samuels suggested the submarine was in fact the I-class submarine I-58. He claimed it had been ordered to rendezvous with KORMORAN in order to destroy AQUITANIA.\footnote{PUB.001.0001 at 0048} Mr Samuels supported the Montgomery theory of Japanese killing SYDNEY survivors\footnote{PUB.001.0001 at 0095} but alleged a more limited cover-up than Mr Montgomery; this time it only involved the Royal Australian Navy. Mr Samuels alleged that the Navy failed to reveal the involvement of the Japanese submarine to the government of the day.\footnote{PUB.001.0001 at 0102} He wrote:

> A later chapter will show how both the government and the citizens of Australia were deceived by means of the most unspeakable crime ever perpetrated [sic] in Australia, one that once proven will send shock waves around the world.\footnote{PUB.001.0001 at 0102}

The ‘unspeakable crime’ was ‘the criminal slaughter [of SYDNEY’s survivors] carried out by Kitamura and I-58’s crew throughout the night and into the next day’.\footnote{PUB.001.0001 at 0115}

27.8 The Inquiry also received submissions and papers supporting or raising the idea of Japanese involvement.\footnote{CORR.008.0203 at 0353 to 0357; USQ.001.0003 at 0315 to 0319; COI.005.0184; CORR.018.0065_R}
Mr Michael Montgomery’s theory

27.9 The asserted basis for Mr Montgomery’s theory of Japanese submarine involvement is as follows:

- an account given by a Mr Grossmann, said to have been a sailor on KORMORAN, to a Pastor Wittwer in 1951
- the interpretation of sketches by Dr List
- a Japanese mural at the Japanese Naval Base at Ita Jima
- the diary of RADM Crace
- an article in the Daily Express in London on 3 December 1941
- the taking of survivors from SYDNEY to Japan
- sightings of Japanese submarines
- aircraft sighted in early November 1941, said to have come from a Japanese submarine
- small footprints seen at Ningaloo Station on 30 November 1941
- the clean-shaven condition of survivors picked up by AQUITANIA— it is suggested they were allowed to shave on board a Japanese submarine, even though the submarine could not accommodate them
- lack of wreckage—the wreckage must have been burnt by oil fires or sunk by a Japanese submarine in order to ‘cover their tracks’.

27.10 The Montgomery theory relies on two or three German torpedoes and at least one Japanese torpedo (probably two) striking SYDNEY. The expert opinion of the Defence Science and Technology Organisation and the Royal Institution of Naval Architects is that one torpedo hit SYDNEY; this is confirmed by the photographs of the wreck. When this was put to Mr Montgomery it served to demonstrate the rigidity of his approach and his refusal to apply objective analysis:

Q: Mr Montgomery, you don’t really propose, do you, that three or four torpedoes hit Sydney in almost the identical position?
A: I don’t see that there is any strong argument against that. The bows are the first point of aim for anybody torpedoing a ship moving at speed, or at some speed.

Q: So you will maintain your theory of more than one torpedo on the basis that they have all hit in really an identical position?

A: Yes.

27.11 The concept of SYDNEY being torpedoed in the same structural location by four torpedoes is not credible: with damage demonstrating only one torpedo strike to SYDNEY, the Montgomery theory of Japanese submarine involvement and multiple torpedo hits cannot stand. This explains Mr Montgomery’s unwillingness to make any concession about the number of torpedo hits in the face of incontrovertible evidence.

The Wittwer account

27.12 Mr Montgomery relied on an account of Japanese submarine involvement allegedly given to Pastor Ivan Wittwer in 1951. In his submission to the Inquiry he described the account as being given to Pastor Wittwer by ‘Kormoraner Gerhardt Grossman’ and said Mr Grossmann ‘confessed’ to Pastor Wittwer that after SYDNEY had disengaged from KORMORAN she was ‘hit broadside by two torpedoes fired from an unnumbered Japanese submarine liaising with Kormoran 2½ miles off’.23 Pastor Wittwer (now deceased) had previously stated that Mr Grossmann told him he was the gunnery officer on KORMORAN and that in order to migrate to Australia he had taken the name of his brother, Waldemar Heinz Grossman, but that his name was Gerhard Heinz Grossmann.24

27.13 On Anzac Day in 1997 Pastor Wittwer gave an address. He recounted a story allegedly initially told to him by a Gerhard Heinz Grossmann on 13 May 1951 whilst Pastor Wittwer was a chaplain in the Snowy Mountains. At the time of first telling the story Grossmann was drunk. The circumstances of the ‘Wittwer account’ were set out in a statement prepared by Pastor Wittwer after his Anzac Day address and forwarded by him to inquirers, among them Dr McCarthy of the Western Australian Maritime Museum. Pastor Wittwer wrote in his statement:

The bit of information which I deduced during 1951 was that Security had withheld the true story of the sinking 18 days before Japan entered the war, because 18000 of our boys were in Japanese hands. If the story

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23 SUBM.006.0079_R at 0098_R
24 WAM.031.0212
got out, so I understood, it could give rise to a rage in Australia which could only make the fate of our prisoners worse. In fact, this was hardly possible, since 7,777 of our men died in Japanese captivity through overwork, starvation, brutality and the like.25

27.14 The Wittwer account was as follows:

Grossmann claimed he was a Gunnery Officer on the Kormoran. The Sydney approached to within seven nautical miles and asked for identification. Capt Detmers tried to pass his ship off as the Straat Malacca, a Dutch ship. The Sydney drew within four miles of the Kormoran, bow on and asked for the secret sign of recognition. The Germans hoisted the German flag and fired simultaneously with the Sydney. Each scored hits on the other. Then there was a massive explosion as two torpedoes from a Japanese submarine hit the Sydney broadside on. Grossmann stated that sub was two and a half miles from the Sydney. I have not fired torpedoes, so do not know if this degree of accuracy could have been attained.

Note how this differs from the official account. This states that the Sydney approached the the Kormoran broadside on from a distance of less than a mile. I am not a naval person, but I am sure no captain would act in this way. Yet history to this date has branded Capt. Burnett of the Sydney as incompetent for approaching so closely that it was suicidal.

Grossmann maintained this story, and his claim of the Japanese submarine’s involvement. He stated that Detmers gave orders to abandon the Kormoran because she was on fire and held a number of mines. The Sydney was on fire and drifted away from the engagement, but remained afloat for three hours. There was thus ample time for the survivors to take to lifeboats.

Through the night of 19-20 November the Kormoran survivors heard small-arms fire as the Japanese submarine surfaced and turned machine gun and rifle fire on the Sydney survivors. By 10 a.m. on the 20th all was silent and the Kormoran survivors made their way to the W.A. coast and were rounded up in due course, some of them rescued from the sea by, if my memory serves me correctly, the empty troopship Aquitania. In due course the survivors (I believe he said 304 or 310) were kept together and they agreed on a story which did not involve the submarine, in case any of them could be persuaded to give more than name, rank and number. Grossmann maintained that the submarine and raider were in contact with each other before and throughout the battle. He maintained that the number of the submarine was camouflaged. From this I deduce that there had been surface contact prior to 19th November.

25 WAM 031.0212 at 0214
Perhaps three weeks later an officer of ASIO (I will now use the term, though I knew it only as Security) called at my Canberra base at 60 McLeay St., Turner, and asked if I would meet Col. Spry on neutral ground. I suggested the YMCA office, which was on the second story of a building in Civic Centre. Hec Holmesby came with me.

In due course Spry came along together with two or three others. I am vague on the number, but two carried big black cases. I had never seen a tape recorder to that date, but it was a massive contraption compared to those of today.

Then to my surprise, Sir William Hudson, Commissioner of the [Snowy Mountains] Authority arrived with Grossmann. I think another person showed them to the room, but I don’t think he was present during the interrogation.

I was asked some questions, which no doubt went into ASIO files, but they were inconsequential. Then Grossmann was questioned. At first he did not wish to answer, but I intervened and told him he would make a liar of me and undermine my work if he did not repeat his story, and in any case, his story could do no harm.

First a person of naval background tried to establish his bona fides by asking questions about the Kormoran, her complement, armaments, even food, position and the like. It was clear that Grossmann was what he told me, a naval person and not an infantryman. He was questioned for perhaps an hour and a half or two hours. It was clear to me that his story was accepted by ASIO. While I did not like the man, no one doubted his version of events. He seemed to revel in telling his tale after the initial reluctance.

We were separated and then Col. Spry, standing on my left, put his right hand on my right shoulder and said very conspiratorially: You won’t mind signing this document? What I signed was blank as I recall, but in due course I received a copy of the Official Secrets Declaration. I had this until shifting to the home I had built with my own hands in 1992, but it seems to have been discarded. I attached no importance to it and willingly kept silent until well after the 30 years limitation. In fact, until Anzac Day, I told the story briefly to only one person, a survivor of the Perth, who had been in captivity, also on the infamous railway. I think this was in 1989. Incidentally, Spry told me that as a civilian I was not required to sign the Official Secrets declaration, but since I received some benefits from the Authority, I might be considered a “public servant”, I had no problem with this.

I had to leave the Snowy Mountains area in 1952. I was told by a successor that Grossmann was deported after failing a dictation test in Gaelic. I cannot verify this nor have I cared.26

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26 WAM.031.0212 at 0214
27.15 Mr Montgomery relied on this account to support his Japanese submarine theory—two torpedoes being fired from a Japanese submarine 2½ miles away which hit SYDNEY ‘broadside on’; during the night the Japanese submarine surfacing and, with machine guns and small arms, shooting SYDNEY survivors; and a cover-up of the true story by ASIO. It fitted well with the implicit suggestion in chapter 11 of his book, entitled ‘The Sydney: why no survivors?’ that SYDNEY survivors had been machine-gunned in the water, his chapter 13, entitled ‘A submarine’ and his chapter 14, entitled ‘The Navy’s cover-up’.

Accordingly, Mr Montgomery relied on it in his submission to the Inquiry.

27.16 By 2008, however, when Mr Montgomery gave evidence, inquiries had established the following:

- Gerhard Heinz Grossmann was not the real name of the alleged Wittwer informant.
- The real Gerhart Großmann was not the gunnery officer on KORMORAN.
- The real Gerhart Großmann had not left Germany since his repatriation there after World War 2.

Mr Montgomery knew these things, as he conceded.

27.17 The integrity of the Wittwer account depends on two factors:

- the recollection in 1997 of events said to have occurred in 1951, some 46 years before
- the truthfulness of the man Pastor Wittwer talked to in 1951.

As noted, if one were to accept that in 1951 Pastor Wittwer had the conversation he recounted in 1997, the person he spoke with was plainly not Gerhart Großmann because it had been established, as Mr Montgomery agreed, that the real Gerhart Großmann who had been on
KORMORAN had not left Germany after his repatriation on SS ORONTES on 21 January 1947. Nor did he speak English. He could not have spoken to Pastor Wittwer on 13 May 1951 or to Colonel CCF Spry CBE(C) DSO or Sir William Hudson. If someone had spoken to Pastor Wittwer, as he alleged, that person was a fraud and was not Gerhart Großmann.

Further, there was on KORMORAN no gunnery officer called Großmann or Grossmann. On board was a sailor called Gerhart Großmann who had been a weaver in civilian life and so had no maritime background. He was rescued by AQUITANIA. When interrogated, he said he was a ‘Bosun’s mate’. His interrogation notes state:

Confirms ship having sunk Australian “MARIBA”. This last action (when German was sunk) took place at approx. 10 kilometers, when she was intercepted by English ship and asked her nationality. German replied “Holland”, whereupon English ship opened fire. Sank last English ship 8 weeks ago and crew was transferred for passage to Germany.

27.18 Whatever story this fraudulent person pretending to be Großmann might have told Pastor Wittwer, assuming such a story was told, it is no basis for any finding that a Japanese submarine was involved in the encounter with SYDNEY. This is so for at least the following reasons:

- There is nothing to suggest the fraudulent person was on KORMORAN on 19 November 1941.
- The account the person is said to have given of the encounter is now known to be untrue.
- Evidence before the Inquiry establishes there was no Japanese submarine in the area.
- SYDNEY was hit by one torpedo, not two.
- The notion of two torpedoes launched from a distance of 2½ miles and hitting SYDNEY in the same spot is not credible.
- The story that the ‘304 or 310’ survivors ‘were kept together and they agreed upon a story which did not involve the submarine’ is now known to be untrue. The survivors were rescued by different

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35 NAA.077.0013
36 PUB.035.0001 at 0123 to 0125
37 NAA.077.0013
38 AWM.008.0022 at 0025
vessels and interrogated in different groups. In particular, AQUITANIA, by which the real Gerhart Großmann was rescued, took those rescued to Sydney, where they were interrogated before they had had any contact with the survivors in Western Australia.

27.19 I have the gravest reservations about whether Pastor Wittwer was ever told the story he alleges he was told by the so-called Gerhardt Heinz Grossmann.

27.20 There is no doubt that a person known as ‘Heinrich/Heinz Grossmann’ was working in the Snowy Mountains. Similarly, there is no doubt that Pastor Wittwer provided religious services to migrant communities in the Snowy Mountains region. There are, however, some extraordinary circumstances associated with Pastor Wittwer’s account in April 1997, at which time a parliamentary inquiry into the loss of SYDNEY was being contemplated and the loss was a matter of public controversy. They include the following:

- First, the reason Pastor Wittwer says he broke his 46-year silence was that on the Monday before Anzac Day he heard someone on the radio ‘condemn Capt. Burnett’s seamanship and capability’. That had been the position since G Hermon Gill wrote the history of the encounter in 1957, a history of which Pastor Wittwer was aware.

- Second, recalling in 1997 that the account had been provided to him on ‘May 13, 1951’ is an extraordinary feat of memory and is improbable.

- Third, the idea that a senior constable would ring the director of ASIO and that the director ‘came at once’ is inherently improbable—particularly since ASIO headquarters was in Sydney, where Col Spry was based. Further, in 1951 the question of how SYDNEY was sunk in 1941 raised no security or intelligence concerns.

- Fourth, the statement that some three weeks later an ASIO officer asked the so-called Gerhard Heinz Grossmann to meet Col Spry ‘on neutral ground’ is also improbable. There was no requirement to meet on neutral ground. Further, it is known Col Spry was overseas between 8 May 1951 and 16 June 1951.
Fifth, it is improbable in the extreme that Sir William Hudson, head of the Snowy Mountains Authority, would accompany the person pretending to be Gerhard Heinz Grossmann to any such interview. There would be no reason for him to do so. If ASIO was investigating supposed evidence about the loss of SYDNEY in 1941, Sir William Hudson had no part in that.

Sixth, because Col Spry was overseas between 8 May 1951 and 16 June 1951, he could not have attended the first alleged meeting shortly after 13 May 1951 and probably not the second, which was said to involve Sir William Hudson.

Seventh, Pastor Wittwer’s account that ‘Col Spry, standing on my left, put his hand on my right shoulder and said very conspiratorially, “You won’t mind signing this document?”’\footnote{WAM.031.0212 at 0213} is the stuff of fiction, not fact. So too is the signing of a ‘blank’\footnote{WAM.031.0212 at 0213} document, which later evolves into a restriction under the Official Secrets Act.

Eighth, the fact that Pastor Wittwer deduced ‘that Security had withheld the true story of the sinking 18 days before Japan entered the war, because 18000 of our boys were in Japanese hands’\footnote{WAM.031.0212 at 0214} makes it clear that Pastor Wittwer was prepared to assert a cover-up without any evidence whatsoever. He also ‘believed’ that Grossmann’s revelations were withheld in 1951 because an American envoy was visiting Australia in an effort to nurture better relations with Japan since Japanese bases were required for forces fighting in Korea.\footnote{WAM.031.0212 at 0214} In fact, hostilities in Korea began on 25 June 1950, and Japanese bases were well established by May 1951.

I suspect the account of Pastor Wittwer is a fabrication, created at a time in 1997 when the question of the loss of SYDNEY and CAPT Burnett’s responsibility was topical and intended to bolster CAPT Burnett’s reputation. Much apparent detail is included in the account in an effort to give it verisimilitude, but when the detail is analysed it is destructive of the account. Even if the account is a true rendering of what was said and occurred, it provides no basis for a finding that a Japanese submarine was involved, for the reasons just listed.
In connection with the Wittwer account and the alleged involvement of ASIO, the following is noted:

- The then Director-General of ASIO, Mr D Richardson, provided to the Parliamentary Inquiry a submission about the Wittwer interview. The submission stated in part:

  As you may be aware, ASIO was approached by both the Australian Archives and The 7.30 Report in June of this year [1997] for access to the record of an alleged ASIO interview which took place in 1951, which involved a former gunner on the Second World War German ship Kormoran. At that time ASIO carried out a thorough search of all its records and was unable to locate any reference to the alleged interview. It is possible that such an interview did take place and the record was subsequently destroyed prior to the operation of the Archives Act 1983. Prior to the introduction of the Archives Act, there were no guidelines or regulations affecting how or when Commonwealth agencies destroyed their records.

  Alternatively, if this interview was conducted by ASIO it may have been decided at the time that the matter was not of concern to ASIO and the records associated with the interview may have been transferred to the predecessor of the present day Department of Defence.\(49\)

- In an attempt to further clarify whether the interview alleged by Pastor Wittwer took place, counsel assisting this present Inquiry wrote to ASIO, seeking information about a number of matters pertaining to the account of Pastor Wittwer.\(50\) The Deputy Director-General of ASIO replied on 7 January 2009.\(51\) The Inquiry was informed as follows:

  - In May 1951 ASIO headquarters was located in Sydney. Col Spry was based there.

  - It would be unlikely that source or informant records concerning Pastor Wittwer would be destroyed. If by administrative anomaly such records were destroyed, index records (which are never destroyed) would still show that a record concerning Pastor Wittwer had been held by ASIO at some stage. The index records were searched but no reference to Pastor Wittwer was found.

\(49\) PINQ.SUBS.013.0004 at 0011
\(50\) CORR.009.0315
\(51\) CORR.020.0236 R
- ASIO records were searched for ‘Gerhard Grossman’ and ‘Waldemar Heinz Grossman’. The searches did not produce any records.

- Col Spry was not in the country from 8 May 1951 to 16 June 1951.

- In ASIO files there are no files relating to SYDNEY.

- Files dealing with ASIO’s liaison with the Snowy Mountains Authority and Sir William Hudson were searched. They contained no record of any interview as alleged by Pastor Wittwer.

27.22 The Inquiry made a further request of ASIO—to search files in consequence of material supplied to the Inquiry by Mr John Doohan. The material Mr Doohan supplied included a ‘field officer’ report bearing the handwritten date 11 February 1952. The report was about German migrants employed on the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electricity Scheme. In the report a ‘Heinrich’ Grossman is referred to as an absconder from employment with the Snowy Mountains Authority. The Inquiry asked ASIO to search its files for ‘Heinrich’ Grossman and ‘Hans’ Grossman, yet another name mentioned by Pastor Wittwer.

27.23 A response dated 20 March 2009 was received from ASIO. The Assistant Director-General wrote:

(D) Heinrich Grossman

A search of ASIO records for anyone with the surname of GROSSMAN has failed to identify anyone with the first or middle names of Heinrich.

(E) Hans Grossman

A search of ASIO records for anyone with the surname of GROSSMAN has located one record of a Hans Gunter Otto GROBMANN aka GROSSMANN (DOB 27 March 1924). This person was part of an East German delegation to the Sydney Trade Fair in 1967.

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(F) Explanation of name not identified in ASIO indices

The document in question is a Field Report. A Field Officer of that generation may have spoken to a number of people when making an
inquiry, without the necessity of recording their name in ASIO indices. The addition of a person to ASIO indices only occurs when the person is considered to be of security interest and a file is created. ASIO has interviewed many people that do not appear in the indices.  

27.24 It is of relevance to note that the substance of the account said to be given to Pastor Wittwer by the person claiming to be the KORMORAN sailor Großmann is now known to be incorrect. SYDNEY was not struck by two torpedoes. Nor was the torpedo that did strike her fired from 2½ miles away.

27.25 The ASIO material referred to gives no support to Pastor Wittwer’s story.

27.26 In an endeavour to establish whether the person said to have worked at the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Scheme and allegedly spoken to Pastor Wittwer had been a sailor on KORMORAN, Australian and German archives and the records of the Einwohnermeldeamt (the Registration Office) in the town of Oelsnitz, Germany, were examined, and inquiries were made of Gerhart Großmann’s widow.

Gerhart Willy Großmann was born in Oelsnitz im Vogtland, Germany, on 18 March 1917. He was the eldest son of Alfred Willy Großmann and had three younger brothers, Albin Erich, Willi Alfred and Gustav Rudolf. Erich, Alfred and Rudolf were alive in 1951, so it cannot be the case that any of them had been killed on the Russian front, as Wittwer said he was told.

Gerhart Großmann was a survivor from KORMORAN and became a prisoner of war. In the notes of his interrogation, his age is recorded as 25 years. In November 1941 a person born in March 1917 would have been aged 25 years. It is also recorded that Großmann had blue eyes, brown hair, and no distinguishing marks. His occupation is recorded as ‘weaver’. 

Correspondence from the Snowy Moutains Hydro-Electric Authority gives the name of the person whom Pastor Wittwer is said to have spoken to as ‘Heinrich Grossmann’. Heinrich Grossmann was born on 26 October 1906 in Posen, Prussia, until 1918 a part of the German Empire and now Poznan in Poland. In
November 1941 he was aged 35 years, 10 years older than Gerhart Großmann. On 19 May 1951 Heinrich Grossmann embarked in SS SKAUBRYN and sailed from the German port of Bremerhaven to Melbourne. Heinrich Grossmann had never before been resident in Australia. He was married and 172 centimetres tall (about 5 centimetres taller than the former KORMORAN sailor) and had blue eyes. His hair colour is not recorded. He had no distinguishing marks. His occupation is described as ‘electrical fitter’. SKAUBRYN arrived in Melbourne on 26 June 1951. That fact alone makes it impossible that he had a conversation with Wittwer on 13 May 1951.

A picture is attached to Heinrich Grossmann’s immigration form. It records his ‘Intended address in Australia’ as ‘S.M.H.E.A. N.S.W.’—the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority. A picture of Gerhart Großmann was supplied to the Inquiry by his widow, Mrs Jenny Großmann. There can be no doubt that Heinrich Grossmann and Gerhart Großmann are different men.

It is now established beyond any doubt that Gerhart Großmann, the man who served in KORMORAN in November 1941, did not, after his release as a prisoner of war and his repatriation to Germany on

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61 NAA.111.0056
62 NAA.111.0088
63 NAA.111.0093
64 NAA.111.0054
65 PTE.008.0307 and 0308
21 January 1947\textsuperscript{66}, return to Australia to live or work. Nor did he ever work for the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority. The person said to have spoken to Pastor Wittwer was not the KORMORAN sailor Gerhart Großmann.

The List sketches

27.27 Mr Montgomery asserted that sketches drawn on lavatory paper by KORMORAN’s Propaganda Officer Dr Franz List contained shorthand notations that, when deciphered, support his theory of Japanese submarine involvement.\textsuperscript{67} Of the seven sketches, it is sketch number 5—nominally of the caves at Red Bluff on the Western Australian coast where Dr List first landed after the SYDNEY–KORMORAN engagement—that Mr Montgomery maintains supports his submarine theory. Figure 27.1 shows a copy of the sketch.

![Dr List’s sketch number 5](image)

27.28 The sketches were taken from Dr List at the Dhurringile prisoner of war camp in January 1942. Capt Hehir of Army Intelligence interviewed Dr List on 9 January 1942, seeking an explanation of the drawings. Dr List maintained the sketches were childish.\textsuperscript{69} An attempt to interpret the

\textsuperscript{66} NAA.077.0013  
\textsuperscript{67} SUBM.006.0079_R at 0096_R  
\textsuperscript{68} WAM.046.0148 at 0157  
\textsuperscript{69} PINQ.SUBS.006.0004 at 0005
sketches, which Capt Hehir described as a ‘stenographic enigma’\(^70\), was made by Ms Hermine Kevin, who is referred to in Capt Hehir’s diary.\(^71\)

27.29 In evidence before the Inquiry Mr Montgomery said he had looked at Ms Kevin’s report of her attempts to decrypt the shorthand in the sketch. He asserted that Ms Kevin’s interpretation of the sketches was that a Japanese submarine was involved in the SYDNEY–KORMORAN action.\(^72\) That assertion is incorrect: nowhere in the decrypt or report of the sketches by Ms Kevin did she refer to a Japanese submarine. The notes, full decrypt and interpretation of Ms Kevin are as follows:

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SHORT HONOUR CONFERRED ON KORMORAN FOR WORKING
ACCORDING TO IDEALS OF UNITY OF THE GERMAN PEOPLE.

(U NTIL) REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE(D)
IF (WHEN) (UNTIL) … IN THE EVENING.
CONQUER(S) (ED) THE VICTIM.
A JAPANESE GUNFIRE ATTACK (or
A JAPANESE TRANSPORT…GUNFIRE ATTACK) FROM (or VIA)
JAPAN ITSELF.
TWO AIRCRAFT CARRIERS … GERMAN/TRANSPORTS.
UNSELFISHNESS IS EVERYTHING.
A CELL (prison cell)
This word is also used by the Nazi Party to represent [sic] a Nazi unit, or small group of Nazis.
OR (without) TO WYNDHAM (actually to shorthand sign reads WEN-NAH)
A TERRIBLE DEED
IF UNDER (WILL UNDER)
SPECIAL SACRIFICES
IF ALIVE
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The first sentence is apparently one of praise for the way in which the crew of KORMORAN acted.

\(^{70}\) PINQ.SUBS.006.0004 at 0005
\(^{71}\) PINQ.SUBS.006.0004 at 0006 to 0007
\(^{72}\) TRAN.018.0001_R at 0095_R
A suggested interpretation for the balance of the phrases is that they imply a plan for the invasion of Australia from/by Japan, through WYNDHAM. This theory is supported by the remarks made by one of KORMORAN’s officers (overheard by special means) to the effect that “HALF A DOZEN TRANSPORTS COULD TAKE AUSTRALIA”.

27.30 I have little doubt that Dr List was correct: the sketch depicts the cave in which they sheltered on landing and the surrounding rocks. But if one did accept that sketch number 5 contained stenographic symbols able to be decrypted by Ms Kevin, the decrypt and analysis do not refer to a submarine. They refer to surface ships and aircraft carriers. Nevertheless, Mr Montgomery clung to his theory involving submarines. It was, he recognised, inconceivable that Japan would use any surface vessel on 19–20 November 1941, but that did not prevent ‘interpolation’ and ‘interpretation’ by him:

Q: So, insofar as this might be regarded as an accurate decrypt, it said nothing whatsoever about the presence or otherwise of a submarine; that’s something that you simply interpolated?

A: Well I think anybody else would have interpolated or interpreted it as such.

The List sketches provide no basis for supposing a Japanese submarine was involved in the sinking of SYDNEY. Mr Montgomery’s interpretation is without foundation, and the interpretation he attributed to Ms Kevin is wrong.

The Japanese mural

27.31 Mr Montgomery relied on a statement tendered to the Parliamentary Inquiry by MAJ Austin Chapman (Retd), who provided a statutory declaration and gave evidence to this Inquiry. MAJ Chapman stated that he recalled that, while posted to Japan as part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces in 1946, he observed two murals at the Old Japanese Naval Academy on the island of Ita Jima. One mural was said to depict, inaccurately, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. The other, MAJ Chapman said, depicted a ship and a Japanese submarine at sea. The ship, he said, was a light cruiser ‘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’. He believed the mural related to the sinking of SYDNEY. According to MAJ Chapman,
a couple of days after his visit to the academy the mural had been painted over, as had the adjacent mural he believed depicted Pearl Harbour. Mr Montgomery used this account as ‘corroboration’ for his Japanese submarine theory.77

27.32 The ‘unique white ensign’ was recommended to the Australian Government on 21 January 196678; Royal Australian Navy ships began to fly the Australian White Ensign on 1 March 1967. Until this time RAN ships flew the White Ensign of the Royal Navy. MAJ Chapman’s recollection of the flag depicted on the Navy ship in the mural could not be correct. No ‘corroboration’ for Mr Montgomery’s theory is obtained from this recollection or, indeed, from any mural in a Naval base in Japan.

The diary of RADM Crace

27.33 Mr Montgomery relied on an extract dated 24 November 1941 from the diary kept by RADM Crace, which stated in part:

Naval Board are very worried about Sydney. She should have arrived Fremantle on 21st (Friday) and is overdue – she has been called by wireless without result. They think there is a possibility that a Vichy submarine escorting a Vichy ship has torpedoed her.79

27.34 Mr Montgomery and other submarine theorists assert that this diary entry meant that ‘they [the Naval Board] must have had some very real evidence for that [the involvement of a submarine] before they imparted this to Admiral Crace’.80 When asked what real evidence the Naval Board could possibly be referring to Mr Montgomery replied, ‘That is what we would all like to know’.81 In giving this evidence, Mr Montgomery was unable to accept the possibility that the diary entry referred to speculation at a Naval Board meeting held to discuss SYDNEY’s failure to appear, the meeting taking place before any information was known about the circumstances of her loss.

27.35 To maintain this theory, Mr Montgomery was forced to unsustainable contentions—that as of 24 November 1941 the Naval Board really knew of the involvement of a Japanese submarine82; that the Naval Board conspired to keep RADM Crace ignorant of that knowledge83; because the Naval Board wanted to keep RADM Crace at arm’s length, the
board told him it was a Vichy submarine and not a Japanese submarine\textsuperscript{84}; and that the Naval Board told RADM Crace it was a Vichy submarine, as opposed to a Japanese submarine, because that represented less of a threat.\textsuperscript{85}

This conjecture has no substance but demonstrates the extreme positions Mr Montgomery was prepared to adopt in order to try to maintain his various theories and assertions.

**The Daily Express article**

27.36 Mr Montgomery relied on an article under the by-line of Mr Bernard Hall in the London *Daily Express* of 3 December 1941—not 1 December 1941, as Mr Montgomery asserts—to support his claim of the involvement of a Japanese submarine. The relevant parts of the article read as follows:

*Sydney was sunk by torpedo in saving raiders*

It was a torpedo which sank the cruiser Sydney. In one of the strangest actions of the sea. It was fired at the moment of the Australian warship’s triumph. By gunfire she had shattered a powerful armed raider, and she was closing the range to sink her and pick up survivors when she was hit, and both victor and vanquished went to the bottom.

Whether the torpedo was fired by the Nazi vessel or by an attendant submarine is uncertain. She was the 9,400 ton Steiermark, listed at the Admiralty as Raider 41, a Hamburg-Amerika vessel specially built before the war for conversion to a formidable naval unit.

The only news of this ocean drama has come from survivors of the Steiermark picked up by us. Taking risks to save drowning enemies was in the Sydney tradition.\textsuperscript{86}

27.37 There is no suggestion in the article of Japanese involvement in the SYDNEY–KORMORAN engagement. Mr Montgomery, however, contended that the article was important and supported his theory of Japanese involvement because it was ‘the first statement in public that there was a possibility that a submarine had been responsible for Sydney’s loss’.\textsuperscript{87} It is of note that the article confirmed that the only source of news of the engagement came from ‘KORMORAN (STEIERMARK) survivors’, none of whom had suggested Japanese submarine involvement.

\textsuperscript{84} TRAN.019.0001_R at 0012_R  
\textsuperscript{85} TRAN.019.0001_R at 0012_R  
\textsuperscript{86} WAM.010.0051  
\textsuperscript{87} TRAN.019.0001_R at 0015_R
27.38 Mr Montgomery claimed that the author of this article, ‘naval reporter’ Bernard Hall, confided to him that ‘his [Hall’s] source had been inside C-in-C China’s Headquarters’. Later in his submission Mr Montgomery stated that CAPT Eric Nave had divulged to him that he was the source behind Mr Hall’s ‘scoop’ and that CAPT Nave was attached to the Far East Combined Bureau. Mr Montgomery claimed CAPT Nave said, ‘We knew all about the Japanese submarine sinking Sydney, it was a terrible business’.

27.39 This was supposedly said by CAPT Nave when he was 92 years old and being interviewed by Mr Montgomery, who volunteered, ‘When I interviewed him, he was a very elderly man’. Even if CAPT Nave did say what Mr Montgomery attributes to him, the account is to be rejected because of CAPT Nave’s age and the improbability of what he related.

27.40 The reference to CAPT Nave being a source ‘... inside C-in-C China headquarters—the same place where Hetty Hall had worked as a cypher clerk’ is misleading and wrong. As Mr Montgomery knew, CAPT Nave was not located ‘inside’ China Station in the same place as Mrs Hetty Hall, nor was he attached to the Far East Combined Bureau. In fact, CAPT Nave was certified medically unfit for tropical service and arrived in Australia in February 1940. In July 1940 he established a small cryptographic unit at Navy Office, Melbourne. The unit specialised in decrypting diplomatic and commercial traffic passing between Tokyo and Japanese embassies in the Pacific.

27.41 The theory that connects CAPT Nave and Mr Bernard Hall, as put forward by Mr Montgomery, involves the following:

- an assertion that CAPT Nave, based in Melbourne, was in constant communication with the Far East Combined Bureau and would have learnt from Singapore of the involvement of a Japanese submarine

- an assertion that CAPT Nave then communicated this information to Mr Hall in Singapore by unknown means.

The route of the alleged information—once one has the correct knowledge and understanding of the whereabouts of CAPT Nave,
which was in Melbourne—makes the theory unsustainable: Mr Montgomery would have it that Singapore told CAPT Nave in Melbourne, then CAPT Nave told Mr Hall in Singapore by some means unknown. If this information concerning the Japanese submarine was given to Mr Hall, as Mr Montgomery speculates, why Mr Hall did not use it in his article is not explained.

27.42 The difficulty of maintaining this story was no doubt appreciated by Mr Montgomery. In a later submission he stated that his notes of the interview with CAPT Nave were in the UK but that he now thought:

... it unlikely that he [CAPT Nave] had any direct communication with Bernard Hall, and that when he told me that he had been the source for Hall’s report he in fact meant that he was responsible for decrypting Japanese signals indicating the presence of a submarine, which he then passed to FECB in Singapore where they were relayed in turn to Hall.97

This new proposition is, of course, the reverse of that put in his evidence and in his submission—namely, that CAPT Nave learnt of the Japanese submarine from the Far East Combined Bureau in Singapore98 and communicated with Hall, based in Singapore, possibly through an intermediary.99 This repackaging is in effect a completely new theory, with yet another attendant cover-up. The new theory is further evidence of the lengths to which Mr Montgomery will go in an effort to sustain his theory.

27.43 Mr Hall’s newspaper article provides no support for the involvement of a Japanese submarine.

Survivors taken to Japan

27.44 In his book Mr Montgomery speculates about the possibility of survivors from SYDNEY being taken on board a Japanese submarine100 that had been involved in SYDNEY’s sinking.

27.45 This speculation is based on the assertion that EVAGORAS picked up a RAN life belt 80 miles north of the area where other belts and items were located. This anomaly, according to Mr Montgomery, ‘... invites the suggestion that the belt’s occupant was taken on board the submarine and the belt itself subsequently discarded’.101 This speculation is without foundation—not only because of the

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97 SUBM.007.0138
98 TRAN.019.0001_R at 0018_R
99 TRAN.019.0001_R at 0018_R to 0019_R
100 PUB.002.0001 at 0109
101 PUB.002.0001 at 0109
improbability of such an event occurring but also because EVAGORAS did not find a life belt at all.\textsuperscript{102} The life belt was recovered by WYRALLAH.

Such speculation is without foundation.

**Sightings of Japanese submarines**

27.46 Mr Montgomery referred to what he alleges were ‘... numerous sightings of Japanese submarines in Australian waters throughout 1940 and 1941 ... eight of which even a sceptical Navy had accepted as “probable” ...’\textsuperscript{103}

27.47 The claim of Japanese submarines in Australian waters before the SYDNEY–KORMORAN engagement is discussed by authors and independent researchers such as Mr John Doohan.\textsuperscript{104}

27.48 Assertions of sightings of Japanese submarines are not supported by examination of archival documents. Indeed, rather than the Navy accepting as probable eight sightings in 1941, the Hon. J McEwan, Minister for Air, informed the War Cabinet on 22 January 1941 that Naval authorities had dismissed eight separate reports in the previous month.\textsuperscript{105}

27.49 In *A Critical Vulnerability: the impact of the submarine threat on Australia’s maritime defence, 1915–1954* Dr David Stevens noted that reports of submarine sightings that did lend themselves to investigation and analysis in most cases were considered to be ‘whales, shoals of fish, or outcrops of rock’.\textsuperscript{106} He observed that reports of submarine activity fluctuated with events during the war: at the outbreak of war in 1939 there was a flurry of activity that tapered off then increased again when Japan signed the AXIS Pact in September 1940.\textsuperscript{107}

**Aircraft sightings, early November 1941**

27.50 Mr Montgomery relied on alleged sightings of unidentified aircraft to support this theory of the presence and involvement of a Japanese submarine. In his book he wrote:

> It has already been established that the *Kormoran*’s plane had not been used since September because of the difficulties of launching it,
difficulties that would have been multiplied at night; there were no
other raiders operating in Australian waters at that time; ‘Pearce lay
outside the range of any single-engined Japanese plane flying even
from Portuguese Timor, let alone from the nearest Japanese airfield;
the only possible source would therefore seem to be an I-Class
submarine.108

27.51 It is necessary to consider the alleged sightings in early November 1941.
Sightings were reported over Geraldton on 1 and 3 November and over
RAAF Pearce on 6 November.

27.52 The Combined Operational Intelligence Centre Weekly Summary for
the week ending 3 November 1941 stated:

4. GERALDTON (W.A.) – Possible Unidentified Aircraft – Two
R.A.A.F. Guards reported having heard what was possibly an aircraft
south west of Geraldton and apparently some distance out to sea at
1840Z/1/11 (0240Z/11 local time). The sound was heard for two to
three minutes but nothing was seen.

No civil or Service aircraft was in the area at the time and the report,
which is graded D.4. is being further investigated.

Comment - In view of the improbability of aerial reconnaissance in the
circumstances stated and the low grading given to the report it is not
regarded as significant. A similar report was made from Geraldton
Aerodrome on 11/9 (Graded C.4).109

27.53 The summary report for the week ending 10 November 1941 dealt with
both the Geraldton sighting of 3 November and the Pearce sighting of
6 November 1941:

4. GERALDTON (W.A) – Unidentified Aircraft – It was reported
that at 1430Z/3 a light considered to be from the cabin of an
unidentified aircraft was seen three miles to seaward of Geraldton at a
height of 2000-3000 feet. The sighting was made by a night flying
instructor in one aircraft and a pilot in another. No corroboration is
available from the lighthouse keeper who was on watch but the report
has been graded B.3.

An air search to a depth of 300 miles commencing at 0830H/4 was
completed with negative results.

Comment – This report recalls that made of a possible aircraft heard
S.W. of Geraldton and apparently some distance out to sea at
1840Z/1/11 (Graded D.4); also a similar report made from Geraldton
Aerodrome on 11/9 (Graded C.4).

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108 PUB.002.0001 at 0105 to 0106
109 NAA.011.0069 at 0072
On the assumption that an aircraft was responsible for the latest sighting and that this aircraft was raider-based, the Indian Ocean raider could have reached the area at 12 knots from the position given by the Dutch “OLIVIA” on 20/10. One of the Pacific Ocean units would also have had time to reach the vicinity of Geraldton.

5. **PEARCE (W.A) – Unidentified Aircraft** - A report received from Pearce states that a guard (at the D/F Station) saw a light moving straight across the sky at an even height in a westerly direction at 0300H/7/11. The intermittent drone of an engine was heard for one minute. Another guard was called and both saw the same light pass across a star. The total time of sighting was 3 to 4 minutes. The report is graded D.5.

Comment – Although the report has received a low grading this is the third report of a possible unidentified aircraft sighting in Western Area within the last week, but in the absence of any other confirmatory evidence suggesting that a raider is in the area, it is difficult to attach any great significance to these reports.110

These sightings were fully investigated and it was concluded that it was ‘extremely doubtful if in either case the light observed was from an aircraft’. The Weekly Summary for the week ending 17 November 1941 stated:

3. **W.A. – Unidentified Aircraft** – A full report has been received from Western Area in reference to the reports of a light (considered to be from the cabin of an aircraft) observed at 1430Z/3 at Geraldton and a light moving across the sky near R.A.A.F. Station Pearce (W.A.) at 0300H/7. After full examination of the reports it is considered extremely doubtful if in either case the light observed was from an aircraft.111

27.54 Mr Montgomery’s premise that there was an aircraft in the air giving off a light is not sustainable. His conclusion that such an aircraft came from a submarine also fails.

27.55 The process of reasoning involved in the passage quoted from Mr Montgomery’s book indicates a mind determined to sustain the thesis of the presence of a Japanese submarine. Any fair reading of the weekly summaries shows they are replete with alleged sightings of unidentified lights or aircraft.112 Many were discounted as being sightings of aircraft, as were those on which Mr Montgomery relied. It is a major leap to say such sightings indicate aircraft and such aircraft

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110 NAA.073.0027 at 0028
111 NAA.011.0038 at 0039 to 0040
112 See, for instance, COIC summaries for the weeks ending 17 November 1941 (NAA.011.0038 at 0039 and 0040)—sightings over Sydney and Rabaul; week ending 10 November 1941 (NAA.011.0054 at 0055)—sightings over Geraldton, Pearce, Laverton in central Victoria, Ellis Islands; 27 October 1941 (NAA.011.0090)—sightings at Edithburg, South Australia, and Abaing in the Ellis Islands.
must have come from submarines because there was no other possible source. If one were to apply Mr Montgomery’s logic—which I would not—one could equally say that, not knowing whether there was a raider or a submarine in the area (which was the situation at that time), one could suppose that the aeroplane, assuming that was what the light was, came from either a submarine or a raider. The reality is there were many unexplained sightings of lights and supposed aircraft beyond the range of enemy aircraft. These sightings did not necessarily mean raiders or submarines were present.

Small footprints seen at Ningaloo Station

27.56 Mr Montgomery argued in his book that ‘an ex-Hapag steward’ told ‘his interrogator in the truck between Quobba and Carnarvon’ that when SYDNEY was sighted KORMORAN was ‘stopped in the water’ and ‘was in the act of supplying a Japanese submarine’. He deduced KORMORAN was supplying water to the submarine.

27.57 No source for this allegation was provided. No interrogation notes support what Mr Montgomery has written. The evidence is overwhelming that KORMORAN was not ‘stopped in the water’ when SYDNEY was sighted: she was steaming on a northerly course and immediately turned to a westerly course.

27.58 Mr Montgomery wrote, ‘The following item, which appeared two weeks later … might also be thought to be lend support to such a conclusion’. He quoted an article in the _Northern Times:_

On November 30th Mr M.M. McBolt of Ningaloo Station reported seeing the footprints of four adults and two children emerging from the sea at the abandoned whaling station at Port Cloates, 180 miles north of Carnarvon. They led to a derelict house, where _all the taps had been turned on in a fruitless search for water_ (my italics) and an empty medicine chest inspected. The tracks led back again to the sea; natives considered that they were about a week old. Apart from Ningaloo itself which is three miles away, the coast is uninhabited for many miles.

That children could have been in a boat at such a remote spot and in such unfavourable weather conditions as had been experienced throughout the previous week must be considered extremely unlikely; the average Japanese foot, on the other hand, is proverbially small.
27.59 This perverse logic reveals a mind determined to support an unsupportable thesis. The ‘logic’ runs as follows.

Small footprints were seen at Ningaloo Station. It is unlikely children would be in the locality. Japanese people have small feet, so the footprints were those of Japanese people. The footprints were near a house where the taps had been turned on. Someone was therefore looking for water. Because the small footprints were those of Japanese people, it must have been the Japanese looking for water. If Japanese were in the area, they must have come from a submarine. The presence of a Japanese submarine is thus established. This then supports the ex-HAPAG steward’s story that KORMORAN was stopped in the water, supplying the Japanese submarine. Since the Japanese on land, having left small footprints, were looking for water, KORMORAN must have been supplying water to the Japanese submarine.

The thought process is absurd.

27.60 The alleged footprints give no support to the presence of a Japanese submarine.

**Clean-shaven AQUITANIA survivors**

27.61 Mr Montgomery asserts the following:

> The presence of the submarine also suggests an answer to the puzzle of the lack of distress shown by the survivors picked up by the *Aquitania* from their raft on the morning of 23 November, having ostensibly spent three and a half days tossing about in heavy seas …

> An I-Class unit would certainly have been able, if not to accommodate all twenty-six of the raft’s occupants at once (and even the biggest of these submarines were notoriously short of living space), then at least to offer them the facilities to wash, shave, eat and rest in turns.\(^{116}\)

27.62 The theory, apparently, is that a Japanese submarine found a boat containing 26 German survivors, picked them up to allow them to eat, shave and sleep, and then set them adrift again, without water or provisions, to meet their fate at sea.

The proposition is nonsense but is nevertheless advanced by Mr Montgomery to support his Japanese submarine theory.

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\(^{116}\) PUB.002.0001 at 0108; CORR.007.0147 at 0158
27.63 Where the story that the survivors rescued by AQUITANIA were ‘clean shaven’\(^{117}\) comes from is not clear. In a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry, Mr Montagu stated:

> However German survivors picked up by troop ship steamer Aquitania on the noon of the 23rd Nov 1941 were recorded in the ships log as being clean shaven and showing no signs of distress by being in open boats for three days.\(^{(s)ic}^{118}\)

Mr Montagu is wrong about the time the survivors were picked up. It was 2230 GMT on 22 November, which equates to 0630H on 23 November in Western Australia. He was also unable to produce the AQUITANIA log to which he referred. The Inquiry searched both Australian and UK archives, and the AQUITANIA log does not seem to exist. There is no mention of the condition of prisoners in the report on the survivors’ recovery.\(^{119}\)

In his book *Stormy Petrel* LEUT WH Ross, who before November 1941 served in SYDNEY, wrote:

> One point which seems very difficult to decide upon is the date of the sinking. Officially it is recorded as 19th November and although some of the Germans gave that date, others gave November 22nd. This latter date seems more likely the correct one and is to a point confirmed by personnel of the liner which picked up one boat load of the Germans on the 23rd. They stated that the men rescued had practically no growth of beard and therefore could not have been adrift in an open boat for four days (19th to 23rd), whereas if the action had taken place on the evening of 22nd they would have little, if any, growth of beard – and this was the case.\(^{120}\)

Dr McCarthy had thought LEUT Ross’s account was the first reference to the ‘clean-shaven’ survivors, but Barbara Winter (Dr Barbara Poniewierski) stated that this was not correct and that first reports of the ‘clean shaven’ survivors appeared in ‘Eastern States newspapers (possibly the Daily Telegraph) in December 1941’.\(^{121}\)

27.64 Whatever the facial hair condition of the 26 survivors picked up at 0630H on 23 November 1941 by AQUITANIA, the account gives no support to the presence of a Japanese submarine or its involvement in the engagement with SYDNEY.

\(^{117}\) PINQ.SUBS.001.0057 at 0059
\(^{118}\) PINQ.SUBS.001.0057 at 0059
\(^{119}\) WAM.028.0121
\(^{120}\) PUB.064.0001 at 0276
\(^{121}\) WAM.070.0037_R at 0038_R
**Lack of wreckage**

27.65 Mr Montgomery wrote, ‘That the Japanese either assisted in, or were even wholly responsible for, the disposal of *Sydney’s* survivors in the water has an altogether greater probability’.122 He then referred to an order allegedly given to submarine commanders in March 1943, 16 months *after* the sinking of SYDNEY. He continued:

> The temptation to ‘completely destroy’ the crew of the *Sydney* would have been overwhelming.

...  

This imperative need to cover their tracks may also (in addition to the oil fire that continued to burn long after both ships had sunk) help to explain the lack of wreckage discovered in the subsequent search; apart from the Carley floats, lifebelts and dog kennel ... An I-Class submarine may have had a minimal capacity for storing wreckage on board, but there was nothing to prevent it making a sweep of the area and sinking the larger items with its machine gun.

27.66 Mr Montgomery’s ‘logic’ as just expressed is as follows.

There was a Japanese submarine present. It killed all survivors from SYDNEY found in the water. It destroyed all wreckage by fire and sinking. Therefore there were no survivors or wreckage. This, in turn, supports the theory of the existence and involvement of a Japanese submarine.

The circularity of the ‘logic’ apparently did not occur to Mr Montgomery or his followers.

27.67 The absence of survivors and wreckage is fully explained in the report by the Defence Science and Technology Organisation and the Royal Institution of Naval Architects.

**Conclusion**

27.68 None of the 11 foregoing matters—assertions relied on to establish both the presence of a Japanese submarine and its involvement in the encounter with SYDNEY—gives any support whatsoever towards establishing the presence or involvement of such a submarine. The various aspects of so-called evidence are a grab bag of unassociated allegations that, when investigated, turn out to be factually wrong or irrelevant. Mr Montgomery sought to make them relevant by irrational thought.

122 PUB.002.0001 at 0109; CORR.007.0147 at 0159
27.69 Mr Montgomery advanced no material that would support a finding that a Japanese submarine was involved in the SYDNEY encounter or its aftermath.

**Japanese submarine I-58**

27.70 In his book *Somewhere Below* Mr J Samuels proposed that, before the German supply ship KULMERLAND left Japan for its rendezvous with KORMORAN, ADM Wennecker:

... asked her Commander, Captain Pschunder, to come to Tokyo and join him for afternoon tea at the mission. There Wenneker entrusted a hand-to-hand diplomatic pouch to Captain Pschunder, to be given only to Captain Detmers ... Amongst other things, the pouch contained orders from the German Naval Attaché to collaborate with I-58 to sink the troop ship *Aquitania*.

As with most of the claims in Mr Samuels’ book, no source for this proposition is provided. The idea that German and Japanese Naval authorities were aware, on 3 September 1941, of the movements of AQUITANIA during mid-November 1941 at the time KULMERLAND sailed from Japan is, to say the least, highly improbable.

There are no entries in the detailed diary of ADM Wennecker concerning the supposed order to collaborate with submarine I-58 to sink AQUITANIA.

As will appear, on 20 November 1941 submarine I-58 was ordered to leave Kure for Hainan.

27.71 The Inquiry examined Mr Samuels in relation to this. He was not sure what his source was. He said he had made ‘a calculated assumption’ as to the sequence of events. He agreed he had written this sequence of events in his book as a fact but had not a scintilla of evidence to support it.

27.72 Regarding the supposed involvement of I-58, Mr Samuels referred to a 20 November 1941 signal, from the Chief of Intelligence Staff to the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board, reporting on Japanese submarine activity. He relied on information in that signal, apparently supplied by two coast watch stations, about an object ‘appearing to be a submarine heading west’, to support his theory of Japanese

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123 PUB.001.0001 at 0066 to 0067
124 PUB.016.0001 at 0450
125 PINQ.SUBS.011.0110 at 0112
126 TRAN.022.0001_R at 0077_R
127 TRAN.022.0001_R at 0078_R
128 TRAN.022.0001_R at 0078_R
involvement. He said LCDR Ean McDonald had told him the coordinates given for the coast watchers, 17°19’N 94°33’E, meant the suspected submarine was off the Philippines. In fact, the coordinates are off Burma. The information in the signal did not place any Japanese submarine, let alone the one referred to by Mr Samuels, in the Indian Ocean on 20 November 1941.

27.73 The following exchange provides an indication of the absence of any material to support such involvement:

Q: Mr Samuels, I asked you, after some discussion, if you had any positive evidence, and you said that you did. What you said you had was a document given to you by another gentleman, and you then produced this document. It doesn’t say that there was a submarine. It speaks of two coast watch stations in approximate positions which apparently are somewhere off Burma, or Myanmar, east of an object appearing to be a submarine steering west. That’s not positive proof of anything. Is that all you have to support the notion that a Japanese submarine was involved in the sinking of Sydney?

A: I researched the submarine I-58. I came to the conclusion that when the I-58 encountered the two capital ships - Prince of Wales and the other name escapes me for a moment - they only had a few torpedoes left. I can’t prove that I-58 was involved, either. This is entirely my own theory.

Q: Yes, I understand that, but I’m trying desperately to see if there is any basis for it, of any type. You see, I have to write a report about all this, and ... you say that a Japanese submarine was involved. So I would say to you, “What is the basis for saying that?” and there is nothing you can produce?

A: Not of any concrete evidence, sir, no.129

27.74 Mr Samuels also referred to the interrogation notes of Shu Ah Fah, a KORMORAN survivor who had been pressed into service on that ship as a laundryman after the ship EURYLOCHUS had been sunk by KORMORAN in January 1941. The notes of Shu Ah Fah’s interrogation record him stating that KORMORAN fired three torpedoes that ‘all hit the Sydney at the same time as Kormoran’s first salvo, and caused a terrific explosion’.130 In his book Mr Samuels wrote that Shu Ah Fah had to assume that the three torpedoes came from KORMORAN because he was unaware of the presence of the Japanese submarine, which had, he asserted, fired the torpedoes that hit SYDNEY.

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129 TRAN.022.0001_R at 0073_R to 0074_R
130 PUB.001.0001 at 0093
27.75 According to Mr Samuels\textsuperscript{131}:

- I-58 fired a ‘spread’ of six torpedoes.
- Three missed SYDNEY but three struck her in the bows, as observed by Shu Ah Fah.
- CAPT Detmers was unaware and did not know the Japanese submarine had fired the torpedoes until they hit SYDNEY.
- At the time the torpedoes hit SYDNEY, KORMORAN was stopped in the water, having raised a white flag.
- After the Japanese submarine’s three torpedoes hit SYDNEY, KORMORAN fired two torpedoes, one of which hit SYDNEY.
- There was no collaboration between Detmers and I-58.

27.76 The account is not credible. There is no factual basis for, or logical reasoning to support, the various assertions of Mr Samuels. As noted, he had no basis for the proposition that I-58 was involved in the engagement with SYDNEY. When it was put to him that the evidence of the Defence Science and Technology Organisation and the Royal Institution of Naval Architects, after examination of the wreck, was that SYDNEY had been hit by one torpedo, Mr Samuels agreed that Shu Ah Fah was wrong in his torpedo count and that his evidence therefore had nothing to do with and could not support the presence of a Japanese submarine.\textsuperscript{132}

27.77 Mr Samuels alleged the captain and crew of I-58 killed all SYDNEY survivors. He wrote, ‘The criminal slaughter carried out by Kitamura and I-58’s crew throughout the night and into the next day meant they were taking no chances’.\textsuperscript{133} To write this with no evidence at all that submarine I-58 was in the area of the engagement—let alone involved in the engagement—is disgraceful conduct.

**Mr David Angwin’s assertions**

27.78 Mr David Angwin offered to the Inquiry a theory similar to that of Mr Samuels, save that the Japanese submarine he alleged was ordered to cooperate with KORMORAN to sink AQUITANIA was not I-58 but instead I-67.\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{131} PUB.001.0001 at 0115 to 0117
\textsuperscript{132} TRAN.022.0001_R at 0076_R
\textsuperscript{133} PUB.001.0001 at 0115
\textsuperscript{134} CORR.018.0065_R
The lack of any primary source material in support of this proposition did not deter Mr Angwin from making outlandish assertions about the role of I-67 in the engagement with SYDNEY and its aftermath. In fact, I-67 was lost with its crew of 87 men during a training exercise on 29 August 1940 off the Bonin Islands. Mr Angwin asserted it was lost on 20 November 1941.

The lack of any research, foundation or logic for his assertions is demonstrated in Mr Angwin’s answers to questions when he was examined by the Inquiry. What he asserted as fact was ‘speculation’:

Q: Mr Angwin, just pause for a minute. There are various sorts of opinions, but most opinions are based on some basis of fact or reason. What is the basis for your opinion, stated in this letter as a fact, that the I-67 class submarine sunk on 20 November 1941 off the Western Australian coast?

A: I don’t have any documents to support that, sir.

Q: But have you got anything else, apart from documents, or is it just speculation?

A: I think you could probably call it speculation. I’m more than happy for you to enter that as speculation.

His lack of care in relation to the making of such assertions was demonstrated by a cavalier approach: ‘Now, if that is wrong, that is wrong’. His attitude was exemplified in the following exchange:

Q: Mr Angwin, the question was a pretty straightforward one: do you have any evidence to support the assertions made in this email to the Japanese Prime Minister?

A: We’ve said this already: this is my theory and my opinion, and I’m allowed to express it.

No right-thinking person should have regard to anything Mr Angwin has written or might write in relation to the loss of SYDNEY.

Conclusion

No evidence to support the involvement of a Japanese submarine was produced by any of the proponents of the theory. It is entirely based on speculation. The theory of a Japanese submarine being involved in the
sinking of SYDNEY or the killing of survivors of SYDNEY has no substance at all.

**Factual and reasoned material relating to Japanese submarines, 19 November 1941**

27.83 Notwithstanding the absence of any sensible material that would support the presence of a Japanese submarine on 19 November 1941, as advanced by the proponents of that theory, the Inquiry investigated whether a submarine was present. The following material makes it clear beyond argument that no Japanese submarine was present at the engagement between SYDNEY and KORMORAN off the Western Australian coast on 19 November 1941.

**Japanese–German operational cooperation**

27.84 The alleged involvement of both a German raider and a Japanese submarine in the sinking of SYDNEY raises the question of operational cooperation between the two Axis Navies. The evidence overwhelmingly shows that in a tactical and operational sense there was no cooperation between the German and Japanese Navies before Pearl Harbour or, indeed, after. Searches carried out on behalf of the Inquiry at the Churchill Library in the United Kingdom reveal that Mr Montgomery himself was informed of this lack of cooperation by leading UK and Dutch experts who were intimately involved in Naval intelligence in World War 2. Without explanation, Mr Montgomery chose to ignore this information that did not fit his thesis.

27.85 When Mr Montgomery corresponded with VADM Sir Norman Denning in 1979, he was referred to Mr Patrick Beesley, who worked under VADM Denning in the Operations Intelligence Centre, where he specialised in armed merchant raiders until a month after SYDNEY was sunk in 1941. Mr Beesley wrote to Mr Montgomery on 26 September 1979, stating in part:

> Cooperation in the operational sense between the Germans and the Japanese both with raiders and U-boats was non-existent, although Japanese submarines did make one or two voyages to occupied France ... The two navies did not, however, coordinate operational plans and never worked together on operations.

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140 CHUR.001.0046
141 CHUR.001.0045
142 CHUR.001.0036; this related to a Montgomery theory that the SCHARNHORST may have been involved in the SYDNEY–KORMORAN engagement.
In December 1978 Mr Montgomery wrote to CAPT S Roskill CBE DSC LittD FBA RN, author of *The War at Sea 1939–45*, who had access to sources that, as he said, were certain not to be made public for many years. CAPT Roskill also expressed to Mr Montgomery his disbelief that Japanese submarines were working with the Germans, saying:

As to your questions, I have no knowledge of Japanese submarines (or indeed any other ships) cooperating with the Germans before Japan entered the war. There probably were Japanese submarines in the Indian Ocean in November 1941 but I find it hard to believe that they were working with the Germans. You probably know that cooperation between the two countries was extremely bad – on all levels up to the highest; and it remained so virtually throughout the war.

CAPT Roskill referred Mr Montgomery to Mr Karel Bezemer, a Dutch Naval historian. In reply to correspondence from Mr Montgomery, Mr Bezemer stated that there were ‘no’ Japanese submarines or other warships in the latter half of 1941 in the Dutch East Indies.

Mr Montgomery made no reference to any of these authoritative sources in his book or in his submission to the Inquiry.

Since 1994 historian Dr David Stevens has served as the Director of Strategic and Historical Studies at the Sea Power Centre—Australia. He has conducted extensive research into wartime submarine operations off the Australian coast, and his PhD dissertation was on the subject—‘The impact of the submarine threat on Australia’s maritime defence 1915–1954’. This dissertation was published in 2005 under the title *A Critical Vulnerability*. Dr Stevens has also published *U-boat Far From Home*, which in part deals with German–Japanese Naval cooperation in U-boat operations in South East Asia.

The Inquiry asked Dr Stevens to provide his opinion, based on his research, about the movements of the Japanese submarine fleet in November 1941. He was also asked to give his opinion, based on his research and experience, about the nature and extent of any cooperation between the Japanese Navy and the German Navy before 7 December 1941.
Dr Stevens stated that his own research had not revealed any suggestion of coordinated operations at sea between the Japanese and German Navies of the type required to conduct a joint attack on SYDNEY in November 1941.  

27.91 In the opinion provided to the Inquiry Dr Stevens referred to a recent book on the subject, Reluctant Allies: German–Japanese Naval relations in World War II. He noted that the bibliography in this book extends to over 40 pages and lists references in English, Japanese and German. He referred to the authors’ conclusion that operational cooperation between the two Navies was superficial and occurred primarily in the period after 1942. There is no reference in the book to any cooperative venture involving German surface raiders and Japanese warships (including submarines) at any time before or during the Pacific War.  

27.92 Dr Stevens referred to a 21 November 1941 cable sent by ADM Wennecker, German Naval Attaché in Japan, to Germany that provided evidence that the Imperial Japanese Navy and the German Navy as of that date had yet to develop recognition procedures. This apparent lack of cooperation was confirmed by a further document dated 25 August 1945, that being an English translation of documents located in the German Naval Archives. The translated document noted the difficulty of communication between the German and Japanese Navies in 1942 to 1943. It further noted that until 1944 each Navy did not engage in direct communications; rather, they operated through their own Naval attachés and each used its own Naval code.  

27.93 Some commentators have sought to link German supply ships’ use of Japanese ports as a basis for asserting operational cooperation at sea between the two Navies. Mr Montgomery referred to an account of a meeting KORMORAN ‘appears to have made’ with a Japanese supply ship, allegedly in August 1941 in the Indian Ocean. The alleged meeting is based on a statement in Prisoner of the Kormoran, made by WA Jones after he was captured on the sinking of MAREEBA. KORMORAN’s log does not record any such meeting. It records the only meeting with another ship after the sinking of MAREEBA and

152 EXP.001.0011 at 0017  
153 PUB.009.0001  
154 EXP.001.0011 at 0016  
155 EXP.001.0011 at 0016 to 0017  
156 SUBM.007.0330  
157 PUB.002.0001 at 0108  
158 PUB.020.0001  
159 PTE.006.0001 at 0109 to 0117
before the encounter with SYDNEY was one with STAMATIOS G EMBIRICOS.160

27.94 There is no evidence of tactical or operational cooperation between the German and Japanese Navies before December 1941. The evidence is to the contrary. The theory of a Japanese submarine cooperating with KORMORÁN in the battle with SYDNEY on 19 November 1941 or in the aftermath of that battle is unsupported by evidence. It is thus improbable that any Japanese submarine was involved in the encounter.

The location of the Japanese submarine fleet in November–December 1941

27.95 There was no Japanese submarine off the coast of Western Australia on 19 November 1941. This is clear from evidence the Inquiry gathered from Japanese authorities, US authorities and Australian experts.

The Japanese evidence

27.96 In 1998 the Japanese Ambassador to Australia, acting on behalf of the Japanese Government, presented a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry. The submission had been prepared by the Military History Department of the National Institute for Defense Studies in Tokyo.161 It included an attachment setting out the deployment of the Japanese submarine fleet at the outbreak of war. It also provided details of the organisation of the fleet as at 1, 5, 7 and 21 November and 1 and 2 December 1941. A map showing the position of all Japanese submarines on 19 November 1941 was provided. The map does not show any submarine operating in the Indian Ocean at those times.162

27.97 The short opinion provided by the Military History Department contained the following statements:

2 Japan’s Naval Force launched a surprise attack against the United States’ Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbour and at the same time attempted to seize power in South-East Asia. Japan’s Naval Force feared that the United States or the United Kingdom (Australia) might have suspected an attack which might have led to open hostilities. It is unthinkable for a nation to play for such high stakes, and to risk all for the sake of one cruiser.

3 On 19th November 1941, the Japanese Navy possessed 47 I-type submarines and 14 Ro-type submarines (under 1000 tons). These

160 PTE.006.0001 at 0109 to 0117 and 0124
161 PINQ.SUBS.011.0110
162 PINQ.SUBS.011.0110 at 0113
submarines were preparing and deploying for the operations in the Pacific and the South China Sea and were focused exclusively on the forthcoming strike against the United States Pacific Fleet. Their actions were strictly kept by the orders.  

27.98 The Japanese Government’s submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry detailed orders and the subsequent deployment of the submarine fleet between 1 November 1941 and 8 December 1941. The orders provided for the deployment of the Imperial Japanese Navy submarine fleet in late November and early December 1941 as follows:  

Combined Fleet Ultrasecret Operation Order No.2 of 7 November:

(i) 11 Nov: No.3 Submarine Unit (“3SSB”) comprising of 3 Squadrons: (I-8, I-74, I-75, I-68, I-69, I-70, I-71, I-72 and I-73) to leave Saeki for Kwajalein and from there on 23 November for Hawaii;

(ii) 16 Nov: 2SSB: comprising of 2 Squadrons (I-7, I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4, I-5 and I-6) and Submarine Reconnaissance Unit (“SRB”) (I-10) to leave Yokosuka for Kwajalein;

18 Nov: Special Attack unit (“SAB”) I-16, I-18, I-20, I-22 and I-24 to leave Kure for off Hawaii;

19 Nov: SRB I-26 to leave Kure for off the Aleutian Islands;

20 Nov: 1SSB: comprising of one squadron (I-9, I-15, I-17 and I-25) and the Submarine Patrol Unit (“SPB”) comprising of one squadron (I-19, I-21 and I-23) to leave Yokosuka for off Hawaii; the submarines of No. 4 Squadron (I-53, I-54, I-55, I-56, I-57 and I-58) to leave Kure for Hainan.

Combined Fleet Telegraph Operation Order No.5J of 21 November:

21 Nov: Submarines of 6 Squadron (I-121, I-122, I-123 and I-124) to leave Kure for Hainan and from there on 1 December to leave for off Manila);


Navy Order No. 9J of 1 December: This order further directed the Submarines of 4 Squadron (I-53, I-54, I-55, I-56, I-57 and I-58) and of No. 13 Submarine Division of Squadron 6 (I-121 and I-122), referred to in the previous orders, to leave Hainan for the “operational area” on 1 Dec;

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163 PINQ.SUBS.011.0110 at 0111
164 PINQ.SUBS.011.0110 at 0111 to 0113 (information extrapolated by the Inquiry).
165 In a special attack unit each submarine has two midget submarines: PINQ.SUBS.011.0110 at 0111.
166 An Imperial Japanese Navy order with the suffix ‘J’ denoted an order from the Emperor to the Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet (ADM Yamamoto): PINQ.SUBS.011.0110 at 0112.
Combined Fleet Telegraph Order No. 10 of 2 December: “Climb Mount Niitak 1208” (authorised the attack on Pearl Harbour and its date, 8 December 0000 (I)) and also directed submarines as follows:

(i) 33 Division submarines (Ro-64 and Ro-68) to leave Kwajelein on 4 December for the Operational Area;

(ii) No.5 Submarine Squadron submarines (I-62, I-64, I-65 and I-66) to leave San-ya (Hainan) on 5 December for the operational area;

(iii) I-59 and I-60 to remain at Yokosuka and Kure for repairs and Ro-33 and Ro-34 to remain at Sasebo for repairs.

(iv) 27 Division (Ro-65, Ro-66 and Ro-67) to leave Kwajelein on 5 December for the Operational Area;

(v) 26 Division submarines (Ro-60, Ro-61, Ro-62) and 33 Division Submarine (Ro-63) to leave Kwajelein on 8 December for the Operational Area.

Other Operational Force

(i) At Kure Naval Stations: Ro-57, Ro-58 and I-52.

It is of note that the submission did not mention submarines I-61, I-63 or I-67.

In the document entitled ‘Essential particulars of Japanese submarines February 3, 1940’ submarines I-61, I-63 and I-67 are referred to, each being a different model of the I-class, or Kaidai class. According to the Nihon-Kaigan website on the Japanese Imperial Navy:

- I-67 was lost with its 87 men during an exercise in 1940.
- I-63, a KD3B class, was lost with all crew after a collision with I-60 in 1939.
- I-61, a KD4 class, was lost in a collision in October 1941, and was refloated and scrapped.

Dr Stevens confirmed that the results of his research into these submarines were generally in accord with the information just set out.

The Commission made further inquiries of Japanese authorities and received a response from the Japanese Military History Department at the National Institute of Defense Studies. It was in the following terms:

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167 EXP.001.0020 at 0022
168 WEB.001.0049; WEB.001.0052; WEB.001.0054; WEB.001.0055
169 SUBM.007.0136 R, with the exception that submarine I-63 was lost in 1938 rather than 1939.
Response to the HMAS Sydney II commission of Inquiry

Military History Department
National Institute for Defense Studies

In reference to the letter of request for investigation from the Honourable T.R.H. Cole, President of the HMAS Sydney II Commission of Inquiry of the Australian Department of Defence to the President of the National Institute for Defense Studies, please find the following as our response:

1. Request for investigation

It has mostly been confirmed that the Australian cruiser HMAS Sydney II engaged with German armed merchant cruiser HSK Kormoran, and was sunk off the coast of Western Australia on 19 November 1941 as a result of the engagement. However, some still believe a theory of involvement of a Japanese submarine in the loss of HMAS Sydney. Accordingly, this inquiry commission requests for information on locations of Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) submarines around 19th November 1941 based on Japanese-side records (such as materials kept in the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS)).

2. Response

The following are the results of investigation on total 76 IJN submarines (57 ships were assigned to the Grand Fleet (GF), the remaining 19 ships were not) for the period from November to December 1941.

1) On the 19th November 1941, Japan was at the stage of immediately before opening battles with the UK and the US (on 8th December), thus, all operationally capable IJN submarines, excluding four ships in repair docks in Japan, were in preparation for operations (part of them had started moves for operations), and no IJN submarine was found in deployment off the coast of Western Australia. Please refer to Annex, pp. 1-2, for details of locations of IJN Grand Fleet submarines before/on/after the 19th November and operations which they were engaged on the 8th December.

2) Those IJN submarines not belonging to GF were either pre-commissioned new ships (construction completed, but still in testing) or old-type ships to be assigned as training and/or spear ships. None of them were found in action off the coast of Western Australia on the 19th November. Please refer to the Annex page 3 for locations of these submarines.

3) In regard to the 19 November locations of the six IJN submarines, specifically requested by the HMAS Sydney II Commission of Inquiry on 10 October 2008, we concluded as follows. For further details, please refer to the Annex page 2.
I-58: in Bay of Hiroshima (departed Hiroshima Bay on 20 Nov)
I-59: under repair in Japan (at anchor in Sasebo on 10 Nov)
I-60: under repair in Japan (at anchor in Tama (Okayama Prefecture) on 10 Nov)
RO-33: under repair in Japan (at anchor in Sasebo on 10 Nov)
RO-34: under repair in Japan (at anchor in Maizuru on 10 Nov)
RO-63: stationed in the South Sea Islands (at work site* on 10 Nov)

* Likely to be either Truk Islands, or Kwajalein Islands, which were under Japanese mandate

3. Reference

“Kaigun Koho (Naval Bulletin)”, September – December 1941
“Onkyukan chosho (Investigation records for pension calculation)"
“Sensukan-shi (Submarine History)” by NIDS Military History Department, 1979, published by Asagumo Shimbun Sha
“Chubo-Taiheiyo Homen Kaigun Sakusen (Naval Operations in the Central Pacific Ocean) Vol 1”, by NIDS Military History Department, 1970, published by Asagumo Shimbun Sha

27.101 The Japanese evidence is thus that there was no Japanese submarine off the Western Australian coast or involved in the encounter with SYDNEY.

The US evidence

27.102 In August 2008 the Inquiry sought to investigate all records relating to Imperial Japanese Navy submarines and held in the United States as a consequence of capture after World War 2. The Secretary of the Department of the Navy referred this request to the Director of the Naval and Historical Center of the US Navy, RADM JA Deloach USN Rtd.

27.103 On 18 September 2008 RADM Deloach advised that his staff of historians searched pertinent records of the US Navy, the National Archives Records Administration and the National Security Archives and made inquiries of research associates in Japan. He said these inquiries revealed the following:

Using the Imperial Japanese Navy’s Submarine Force Organisation of 1 November 1941 as a starting point, our researchers gathered a record
of movements for every Japanese submarine, including one assigned on 6 November 1941. This data was drawn from multiple record groups at our National Archives, from Japanese Monograph No. 116 (1952) and the Nihon Kaigun website, a collection of translated Japanese records published on the world wide web. All indications pointed to operations in the Pacific in preparation for the attack on Pearl Harbor and in support of impending operations in Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. Japanese data, our own communications intercepts, intelligence summaries and all general records point to this.

After extensive investigation among many sources, our research has found nothing to indicate Japanese Imperial Navy submarine operations in the vicinity of the HMAS Sydney in the month of November 1941. Further, we found no record of Japanese submarines operating with German shipping. A thorough search of all documentary evidence in our custody, coupled with extensive research into available translations of Japanese documentary evidence gave no indication of possible Japanese Imperial Navy involvement in the sinking of HMAS Sydney.171

27.104 The US research into Japanese records held in the United States thus supports the view that there was no Japanese submarine in the vicinity of SYDNEY in November 1941 and, further, that there was no Japanese involvement in the loss of SYDNEY.

Australian experts’ evidence

27.105 Dr Stevens provided to the Inquiry an expert opinion on the location of Japanese submarines in November 1941. His opinion contained a breakdown of the number and types of Japanese submarines as at the beginning of 1940 and was based on the following:

- an Imperial Japanese Navy survey of its submarine fleet dated February 1940, the original of which was retrieved by the US Navy from the wreck of Japanese submarine I-I in January 1943
- a US Navy survey of Imperial Japanese Navy submarines conducted at the end of the war
- secondary sources.

27.106 On the basis of his research Dr Stevens’ evidence was that the numbers and types of Imperial Japanese Navy submarines at the beginning of 1940 were as follows:

- 4 x J1 (Junsen) Type: I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4
- 1 x J1M (Junsen) Type: I-5

171 CORR.016.0348
Sixty-nine submarines were listed.

This assessment requires amendment to reflect the loss of submarines I-61, I-63 and I-67, as already referred to.

In 1947 US authorities developed Monograph 108, entitled *Submarine Operations in the First Phase Operations, December 1941 to April 1942*.\(^\text{173}\)

The preface to this document stated:

> Through Instruction No. 126 to Japanese Government, 12 Oct 45, entitled “Institution for War Records Investigation”, steps were

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\(^{172}\) EXP.001.0011  
\(^{173}\) EXP.001.0047 at 0049
initiated to exploit military historical records and official reports of the
Japanese War Ministry and the Japanese General Staff.* Upon the
dissolution of the War Ministry and the General Staff, and the transfer
of their former functions to the Demobilization Bureau, the general
research job continued and resulted in the development of a series of
historical monographs. Detailed instructions covering the preparation
of these monographs were included in Memoranda 15 December 1945
and 21 November 1946, subject “Japanese Operational Histories”.

The basic material contained in this operational record was developed
by former officers, on duty in command and staff units within major
units during the period of operations. It should be noted at once, that
the enormous destruction by aerial bombardment and fire has
practically wiped out the Tokyo records; much of this material was
reconstructed from memory.

The paucity of original orders, plans and unit journals, which are
normally essential in the preparation of this type of record, most of
which were lost or destroyed during field operations or bombing raids
rendered the task of compilation most difficult; particularly distressing
has been the complete lack of official strength reports, normal in AG or
C-3 records. However, while many of the important orders, plans and
estimates have been reconstructed from memory and therefore are not
textually identical with the originals, they are believed to be generally
accurate and reliable. 174

There is no reference to any Japanese submarines operating in the
Indian Ocean in the period between early December 1941 and late 1942.
The monograph does not cover the movements of the submarine fleet in
November 1941, after receipt of Top-Secret Order No. 1 of the
Combined Fleet on 10 November 1941. The movements of submarines
as a consequence of this order, and other orders preparatory to the
attack at Pearl Harbour, did not include any movement to the Indian
Ocean in November 1941.175

27.108 A further monograph dealing with Imperial Japanese Navy
submarines, Monograph 102, was published by the American Military
History Section Headquarters Army Forces Far East Forces on
14 February 1952.176 It was compiled by CAPT Shibaya, a former staff
officer of the Imperial Japanese Navy combined fleet. The monograph
was based on recollections, personal papers, fragmentary battle reports
of the submarine force, and interrogation of former officers of that
force. 177 It noted:

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174 EXP.001.0047 at 0050
175 EXP.001.0047 at 0051
176 EXP.001.0053
177 EXP.001.0053 at 0054
Under the supervision of the Demobilization Bureau, the basic material contained in this monograph was compiled and written in Japanese by former officers, on duty in command and staff units within major units during the period of operations. Translation was effected through the facilities of Allied Translators.\footnote{178}

The monograph provides a detailed explanation of the movements of submarines in preparation for Japanese landings and battles off Malaya and Singapore. The deployment of submarines did not begin, according to this monograph, until 1 December 1941.\footnote{179}

\section*{27.109} In his report to the Inquiry Dr Stevens noted that his research did not permit precision in relation to the whereabouts of every Japanese submarine at the times relevant to the loss of SYDNEY. He wrote, however:

> My research has provided no indication that Japanese submarines operated in the Indian Ocean in November 1941. All Allied documents I have seen, including translations of Japanese originals, only mention Japanese Operations in the Indian Ocean after 7/8 December 1941.\footnote{180}

Dr Stevens’ understanding was that operations of the submarine fleet in the Indian Ocean began only after the outbreak of the war in the Pacific.\footnote{181}

\section*{27.110} This analysis is consistent with the 2 December 2008 submission of Mr D Jenkins, a former associate editor of the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, author of \textit{Battle Surface! Japan’s submarine war against Australia, 1942–44}\footnote{182} and researcher into Imperial Japanese Navy submarines.\footnote{183}

Mr Jenkins had previously researched the possibility of an Imperial Japanese Navy submarine being involved in SYDNEY’s loss. He explored Japanese archives, liaised with Professor Teruaki Kawano of the Military History Department of the National Institute of Defense Studies in Tokyo, and corresponded with or interviewed over 30 former serving personnel from the Imperial Japanese Navy.

His approach was to seek to establish the whereabouts of each operational Imperial Japanese Navy I-class submarine as at 19 November. Mr Jenkins concluded that at the outbreak of the Pacific war Japan had 47 operational I-class submarines.\footnote{184} He was able to
account for 47 I-class submarines on 17 November 1941.\textsuperscript{185} He noted that he would have liked more information for submarines I-59 and I-60, but there was nothing to suggest these submarines operated in the Indian Ocean in November 1941. He stated, ‘In view of all of this [his research and investigations] it seemed to me in 1992, and still seems to me now, extremely unlikely that a Japanese submarine was involved in the loss of HMAS Sydney.’\textsuperscript{186}

It is now known that I-59 and I-60 were in port for repairs on 19 November 1941.

27.111 The location of all Japanese submarines on 19 November 1941 has been established. None was off the Western Australian coast. None was involved in the battle with SYDNEY or otherwise involved in her loss.

**Admiral Wennecker’s diary**

27.112 The Inquiry reviewed entries in the diary of ADM Wennecker, German Naval Attaché to Japan, for November–December 1941, as translated by J Chapman and published in *The Price of Admiralty – the war diary of the German Naval Attaché in Japan, 1939–1943*.\textsuperscript{187}

27.113 There is no entry mentioning orders to KORMORAN to intercept AQUITANIA, and there is no entry mentioning cooperation with a Japanese submarine in relation to such interception. In fact, the relevant entry in ADM Wennecker’s diary shows ignorance on the part of both the Germans in Tokyo and the Japanese as to the fate of SYDNEY until 8 December 1941.

27.114 On 8 December 1941 ADM Wennecker noted in his diary a discussion with CAPT Nakamura of the Imperial Japanese Navy. On the basis of a cable received from Germany on that date he informed CAPT Nakamura\textsuperscript{188}, ‘Ship “41” (Detmers) sank “Sydney”, but perished herself. Majority of crew reached Australia’.

It is improbable that such a message would be recorded in ADM Wennecker’s diary and passed on to CAPT Nakamura if in fact a Japanese submarine had been present at the battle between SYDNEY and KORMORAN and was responsible for the sinking of SYDNEY.
ADM Wennecker’s diary contains no reference to any type of German–Japanese Naval cooperation. He had routine conversations with CAPT Maeda, head of the German section on the Japanese Naval Staff, on 21, 24, 26, 27, 28 and 29 November 1941. None makes reference to a Naval engagement between SYDNEY and KORMORAN or to Japanese submarine movements in conjunction with such an engagement.\textsuperscript{189}

**Conclusion**

No Japanese submarine was present at the encounter between SYDNEY and KORMORAN. No Japanese submarine was in any way associated with the loss of SYDNEY or her crew.

\textsuperscript{189} PUB.065.0001 at 0728 to 0740