

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE LOSS OF HMAS SYDNEY II

Before The Hon TRH Cole AO RFD QC

Held at residence of Mr Karl Schulte
[REDACTED] Germany

Counsel Assisting: LEUT Matthew Tyson
LEUT Stephen Harper

On Wednesday, 9 July 2008
(Day 10)

32 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: There is no need for you to stand up for the oath.

33

34 THE PRESIDENT: Today is 9 July 2008 and I've come to the

35 home of Herr Karl Schulte [REDACTED] which is about

36 100 kilometres from Düsseldorf in Germany.

37

38 Herr Schulte, thank you for seeing me. I understand

39 you're prepared to give some evidence to my Inquiry and

40 I would ask you to take the oath.

41

42

43 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Today is 9 June [sic] 2008. We are at Mr Karl

44 Schulte's house [REDACTED] 100km from Düsseldorf in Germany. Mr Schulte, I

45 would like to thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this

46 Inquiry. I would now like you to take the oath.

47

1 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes.

2

3 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Would you please take the Bible in your hand.

4

5 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes.

6 THE PRESIDENT: the evidence you are about to give is the truth, the
7 whole truth and nothing but the truth, say 'So help me God'.

8 Ich möchte mich sehr herzlich bedanken, dass sie bei dieser Befragung

9 <KARL ALBERT AUGUST SCHULTE, sworn:

10

11

12 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: So help me God.

13

14 LEUT TYSON: Q. Good afternoon, Herr Schulte. My name

15 is Leut Matthew Tyson. I'm here with the interpreter,

16 Herr Frank Thomas, and my colleague, Leut Stephen Harper.

17

18 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Hello Mr Schulte. My name is Matthew Tyson. I am

19 here with our interpreter Mr Frank Thomas and my colleague Mr Stephen

20 Harper.

21

22 LEUT TYSON: Q. And, Herr Schulte, can you just confirm that you've

23 been

24 shown the Instrument of Appointment for this Commission of

25 Inquiry?

26

27 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Mr Schulte, would you please confirm that you have

28 seen the Instrument of Appointment for this Commission?

29

30 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes, I have.

31

32 A. Yes, I do.

33

34 Q. Thank you, sir. I'd like to start by - could you

35 please tell us your full name?

36 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Thank you. To start with could I ask you to state

37 your full name please.

38

39 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Oh, I have three or four names ... Karl Albert.

40

41 (Correction interjected by a female voice in the background, presumably

42 the interviewee's wife: "Karl August.")

43

44 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Karl August.

45

46 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Karl August Schulte? Or are there more?

47

1 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Only Schulte. Three Christian names.

2

3 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Three Christian names? But I have just ...

4

5 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Karl August Albert I think it is.

6

7 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Karl Albert August Schulte.

8

9 A. Karl August Schulte - my full name is Karl
10 Albert August Schulte.

11

12 Q. Herr Schulte, can you tell us, please, your date of
13 birth?

14

15 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Would you also please state your date of birth?

16

17 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: [REDACTED]

18

19 A. [REDACTED]

20

21 Q. And, sir, could you please tell us your current
22 address?

23

24 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Would you please state your current address?

25

26 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: [REDACTED]

27

28 A. That's in [REDACTED]

29

30 Q. Herr Schulte, before the outbreak of World War II,
31 what was your occupation?

32

33 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Mr Schulte, what was your occupation before the
34 outbreak of World War II?

35

36 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: I did a three-year apprenticeship at a steelworks. Then
37 I worked in the country for a year where I helped out on a farm, (did)
38 pre-military training and then signed up as a volunteer with the Navy.

39

40 A. I was working - I did an apprenticeship at steelworks
41 for three years. Then, after that, I did work on the
42 country - I had one year of country service working with
43 farmers, and after that I volunteered for the Navy.

44

45 Q. On the Kormoran, what division were you in,
46 Herr Schulte?

47

1 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Which division were you in on the Kormoran?

2

3 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: First Division Seamen. There were Seamen, Stokers,
4 Engineers etc.

5

6 A. I was in the First Division of Seamen. There were
7 several divisions - one was for seamen, stokers and for
8 engineers.

9

10 Q. And, Herr Schulte, what were your duties on Kormoran,
11 what did you do?

12

13 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: What were your duties on board the Kormoran?

14

15 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Seamen's duties and ordnance. Operation of guns. 15cm.
16 How many inches are that?

17

18 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: They don't need to convert that in Australia. It
19 would take us too far.

20

21 A. My responsibilities were seamen tasks and duties and

22

23 I was also at the 15-centimetre gun.

24

25 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: I should add that for the last three or four months we
26 were one person short on our duty roster and they needed someone to hand
27 out breakfasts and dinners. I was called upon to distribute breakfast and
28 dinner to 400 men during the day. And then I kept watch at the gun at
29 night like I did every night. Every four hours we changed guards. There
30 was a guard at each of six guns from eight to twelve, from twelve to four
31 and from four to eight. They had to sleep there or take up their
32 positions at the guns.

33

34 A. I have to add the
35 last three months somebody was missing in the
36 administration division and so I was commanded to work in
37 the mess doing the breakfast and the dinner, serving
38 breakfast and dinner, so during the day time I worked in
39 the mess and served dinner and breakfast for more than 400
40 people, and at the night I was having my watch at the gun,
41 and that was a watch of four hours and there was one person
42 during the night at each of the six guns. The watch shifts
43 were from 8 to 12, 12 to 4, and 4 to 8, and each gun had
44 somebody sleeping next to it.

45

46 Q. Now, sir, I want to ask you some questions about the
47 encounter between Sydney and Kormoran on 19 November 1941.

1
2 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: I would now like to ask you a few questions about
3 the encounter between the Kormoran and the Sydney on 19 November 1941.

4
5 Q. And I'll ask a series of questions that hopefully go
6 through step by step your personal experience. Can I start
7 by saying on the afternoon of 19 November 1941 do you
8 remember the alarm ringing?

9
10 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: I will be asking several legal questions and would
11 like to work through them step-by-step. Do you understand?

12
13 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes. The Sydney came into sight on the horizon
14 starboard side around four o'clock in the afternoon. She was far out. A
15 long way back. But she approached very fast. She was a warship after all.
16 She was twice as fast as we were. It only took us a short while to
17 realise that this had to be a warship. So the general alarm was raised.
18 'Everyone to their battle stations' that meant. And our Captain tried to
19 get the Sydney to come as close as possible by not allowing anyone on the
20 upper deck so that up there the entire picture we presented was that of a
21 merchant ship. Furthermore we were able to, and this is very important,
22 International Maritime Law ...

23
24 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: May I just translate this first?

25
26 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes.

27
28 A. Well, it was 4 o'clock when the Sydney was first
29 sighted at the horizon on the starboard side, but quite a
30 long way behind us. However, she approached very quickly.
31 As she was a warship, she was at least twice as fast as our
32 ship. Then when she came closer, we could see that this
33 was in fact a battleship. Shortly after this the general
34 alarm rang, which commanded everybody to go to either the
35 guns or to the battle stations and it was our captain tried
36 to have her approach as near as possible, and he did so
37 by - or one of the things he did also was to have nobody on
38 deck so we would have the appearance - the perfect
39 appearance of a merchant ship and not of a warship.

40
41 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Some people moved about looking like civilians.

42
43 A. Some
44 people even moved around on our deck and were disguised as
45 civil persons.

46
47 Q. Sir, did you see Sydney, or the warship, before the

1 alarm rang at 4 o'clock on the afternoon of 19 November
2 1941?

3

4 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: As soon as the Sydney came into view the alarm went and
5 we were called to arms.

6

7 A. No, it was almost the same time. (In German - not
8 translated).

9

10 THE INTERPRETER: Can you just repeat the question for me?

11

12 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Did you see the Sydney before the alarm rang? Did
13 you already see her before then?

14

15 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: There was a speck on the horizon.

16

17

18 LEUT TYSON: Q. Sir, when you just gave that
19 explanation --

20

21 THE PRESIDENT: Q. The question was did you see Sydney
22 before the alarm.

23 A. Only as a bigger point at the horizon.

24

25 LEUT TYSON: Q. Where were you when the alarm rang, do
26 you remember that?

27

28 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Where were you when the alarm rang? Do you
29 remember?

30

31 A. On my way to the gun - very quick - in a few seconds
32 we were at the guns. My English is not so good. I didn't
33 speak years.

34

35 Q. We'll just take it step by step. Herr Schulte, when
36 the alarm rang, can you please identify on this diagram
37 where about you went on Kormoran?

38

39 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: When the alarm went off, could you perhaps show us
40 on this picture where you went?

41

42 A. Gun No. 1, and I was about - under deck, and --

43

44 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Would you say about here?

45

46 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes

47

1 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: So you went from here to there to go to your gun.
2
3 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes ...
4
5 (Discussion in German between interpreter and witness)
6
7 THE WITNESS: Well, I went from this position.
8
9 THE INTERPRETER: Shall I mark it maybe?
10
11 LEUT TYSON: Yes.
12
13 THE WITNESS: Perhaps. So I went from more or less here
14 under deck, this position, to my gun, which is here - a few
15 seconds.
16
17 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Roughly speaking, amidships to the
18 gun at the bow - that was gun No. 1, was it?
19 A. Starboard side.
20
21 LEUT TYSON: Q. Starboard side 15-centimetre gun in the
22 bow.
23
24 Mr President, would that be convenient if that be
25 marked as an exhibit?
26
27 THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that can be exhibit 25.
28
29 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Mr Chairman, I would like to request that this be
30 marked as an exhibit. It is exhibit number 25.
31
32
33 EXHIBIT #25 DOCUMENT MARKED BY MR SCHULTE.
34
35 LEUT TYSON: Q. Now, Herr Schulte, when you reached that
36 battle station, what was your job on the No. 1
37 15-centimetre gun?
38
39 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: When you reached your battle station, what exactly
40 was your task?
41
42 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: ... to adjust the direction after the shots somewhat by
43 turning a little wheel on the side. I wore head phones and was connected
44 to the Bridge and the orders came from above. From the Control Centre.
45
46 A. I was at the gun and I was turning its little wheels
47 after it has fired to reset the direction. I was connected

1 to the director control unit via headphones. That's where
2 I received my orders from.

3

4 Q. Who was the gun Commander of the No. 1 gun?

5

6 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Who was the Gun Commander of the No 1 gun?

7

8 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Ahlbach.

9

10 A. Ahsbaas. I don't know exactly in the Australian
11 Navy --

12

13 Q. The equivalent.

14 A. Subofficer or --

15

16 THE PRESIDENT: Petty officer.

17

18 THE WITNESS: That was Obermaat Ahsbaas.

19

20 LEUT TYSON: Q. But was it your job to receive the order
21 from director control and pass it on to Ahsbaas?

22

23 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Was it your job to pass on the orders you received
24 from the Control Centre to Mr Ahlbach?

25

26 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: No, I received orders via head phones ,Twice to the
27 Left' ,Twice to the Right'.

28

29 A. No, I received the orders via headphones - orders
30 like, "2 more to the left" or "2 more to the right."

31

32 Q. Who did you receive those orders from?

33

34 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Who gave you these orders? Who did you receive them
35 from?

36

37 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: They came via head phones from the Bridge. From Control
38 Centre.

39

40 A. They were given to me via headphones from the director
41 control unit.

42

43 Q. Was that Skeries or Ernst?

44

45 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Was it Skeries or Mr Ernst who gave them?

46

47 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: No, Skeries.

1

2 A. No, it was Mr Skeries.

3

4 Q. Sir, when you refer to "2 more to the left", "2 more
5 to the right," can you please explain what you mean by
6 that; what does that refer to?

7

8 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: When you say 'Twice to the Right', 'Twice to the
9 Left', can you explain what this refers to?

10

11 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: (It means) that the shot needs to hit further to the
12 left or right. Do you understand?

13

14 A. That the shot will hit a little bit more to the left
15 or to the right.

16

17 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Did you also adjust elevation?

18

19 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Did you also set the elevation?

20

21 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: That was on the other side.

22

23 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Somebody else did that?

24

25 A. No, someone else did that - it was on the other side
26 of the gun.

27

28 LEUT TYSON: Q. Sir, when you reached your battle
29 station on the afternoon of 19 November 1941, did you have
30 the opportunity to observe Sydney?

31

32 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: When you reached your battle station that afternoon
33 were you able to observe or see the Sydney?

34

35 A. We were afraid. We felt our life going away, you
36 know? I was 20 years old - 20 years old.

37

38 Q. But, sir, can you explain to us how you were able to
39 see Sydney? Did you see her through a scuttle, or did you
40 see her over the ship's side, over the plating? How was it
41 that you could see her?

42

43 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: How could you see the Sydney? Could you see her
44 through a scuttle, over the railing or how was it that you saw her that
45 afternoon when you were at your battle station? Just tell us in German.

46

47 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: (I saw) nothing at that stage because our disguise was

1 still down until the order came to 'remove disguise'. At that point two
2 tons of iron were pulled up by means of counter-weights including the
3 railing. The view was shielded from where we were and at the same time it
4 was closed off. We were the fastest gunner unit. We trained for a whole
5 year. There was a canon below deck for training purposes. We were timed
6 60 seconds and we came first several times. For a whole year we trained
7 below deck once a week. That was the so-called 'loading canon'.

8

9 A. At this very moment I didn't see anything, because the
10 disguise was still lowered. Only when the order came to
11 remove the disguise, then we were able to see Sydney.
12 Those were two flaps, they had counterweights, and then
13 they were basically two tons of metal, including the rail
14
15 of the ship, and once this was moved away, then we had a
16 good view of the Sydney and could point our guns - swing
17 our guns out and point at Sydney. I must add also that we
18 were the quickest gun of all of them, because for one year
19 we trained under deck - we had a special gun under deck
20 just for training purposes, and times were taken after
21 60 seconds, and a number of times we were the first gun to
22 be ready for battle. It was one year long we did this
23 training, once per week. We called this gun the so-called
24 load gun.

25

26 Q. When you did those training exercises with the gun,
27 was it timed how long it would take the gun to
28 decamouflage?

29

30 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: During this canon exercise, this shooting practice
31 were you timed? Timed accurately?

32

33 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: In seconds.

34

35 A. Yes, in seconds.

36

37 Q. And how long did it normally take in those exercises,
38 the No. 1 15-centimetre gun, to remove its camouflage?

39

40 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: How long did it take during these exercises at your
41 gun before the camouflage came off?

42

43 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: You mean with the shooting exercises? They were below
44 deck. We only had artificial light there.

45

46 A. These training guns were under deck, so they didn't
47 have any camouflage - there was just artificial light under

1 deck.

2

3 Q. I just want to go back and clarify what you saw of
4 Sydney. Now, you said initially you saw Sydney as a point
5 far away.

6 A. Yes.

7

8 Q. Did you ever see her at any stage after your initial
9 observation but before any firing began and before the
10 camouflage was removed?

11

12 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: You mentioned earlier the Sydney initially was just
13 a distant speck. Did you see the Sydney again between this time and the
14 time the camouflage was removed?

15

16 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: No. After the camouflage was removed the Sydney was
17 located a very short distance away. My guess would be about 800m away.
18 She was abeam at a very short distance. And we both shot at the same
19 time, both the Sydney and us. We received two hits into an empty oil
20 storage tank. Flames began to ...

21

22 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: We'll get to that later. We'll do it step-by-step.

23

24 A. No, I didn't see any of Sydney. Just when the flaps
25 opened, when the disguise was removed, then I could see
26 Sydney, that she was about approximately 800 metres away,
27 so she was very, very close and she was abeam.

28

29 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: I should add something here that I know and that might
30 be very important. May be the question will come up later, then again may
31 be it won't. I know that according to International Maritime Law
32 auxiliary cruisers were allowed to sail under camouflage but before the
33 first shot was fired, the German war ensign had to be up. We had
34 signallers who had been trained for a year to change flags in less than
35 60 seconds. One flag fell down and the other one went up at the same
36 time. The flag was folded and unfolded in a way that you wouldn't believe
37 your eyes. One moment the neutral flag was still flying, the next there
38 was the war ensign. The Commander was very proper. He actually belonged
39 to the Crew 21 after World War I. He was one of the old guard of officers
40 who were the last to leave their ship, the kind that more often than not
41 went down with their ship. Those were Kaiser Wilhelm's days. Do you
42 understand? It was the time of the last German emperor. I just wanted to
43 throw that in.

44

45 A. I have to
46 say something considering this whole thing - maybe this
47 question will come up later, but I want to talk about it

1 now. I am referring to the international admiralty law,
2 which says that any auxiliary cruiser can be disguised as a
3 merchant ship, or as another ship, and it has to show its
4 war ensign before doing the first shot, and we had on board
5 of Kormoran, we had this specially trained signalling crew.
6 They were trained for one year and they could hoist a flag
7 within seconds. They were both - the war flag was folded,
8 whereas one flag was hoisted and the other one was lowered
9 at the same time and it took just a glimpse and then the
10 flag had changed really.

11

12 And I must also add that our captain, Mr Detmers, was
13 a really honourable person. He was one of the World War I
14 guys - that's when he joined the Navy - he was one of these
15 old people also who would drown with their ship. He was
16 from the time of the German Kaiser, really.

17

18 Q. Herr Schulte, the Commission is very interested to
19 hear what you have to say about the flags, but we'll come
20 to that just in a little while.

21 A. Yes.

22

23 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Mr Schulte, the Commission of Inquiry is very
24 interested in what you have to say about flags etc., however, we will get
25 to this point later anyway.

26

27

28 Q. But I want to go back now to what you said. You said
29 when you first saw Sydney she was 800 metres away and she
30 was abeam of Kormoran. I would just like to go back to
31 that point.

32 A. Yes.

33

34 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: I would like to get back to a point from earlier.
35 You said that when you saw the Sydney for the first time, she was abeam
36 at a distance of about 800m.

37

38 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes.

39

40

41 Q. When you first saw Sydney at that time, can you please
42 tell us what did you see?

43

44 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Her canons were trained at us. I had the impression
45 that the propeller of the plane was running, a pilot was sitting inside.

46

47 A. Well, I could see that her guns were pointed at us,

1 and I think I could also see that the propeller of the
2 aeroplane was turning, and a pilot sat inside the
3 aeroplane.

4

5 (Discussion off the record re refreshments)

6

7 LEUT TYSON: Q. Thank you. You said, "The guns were
8 pointed at us." Were they all four main turrets, or just
9 some of the main turrets, or which guns?

10

11 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: You just said that the guns of the Sydney were
12 aimed at the Kormoran. Was it all the main turrets that were aimed at the
13 Kormoran?

14

15 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: I had that impression. There was also a set of four
16 torpedo turrets on the Upper Deck if I remember correctly. A set of
17 four.

18

19 A. I had the feeling, yeah, that all four turrets were
20 pointed at us and, in addition, there were these four tubes
21 of torpedoes pointed at us.

22

23 Q. Now, you mentioned you saw the propeller turning on
24 Sydney's aeroplane and I might have missed it - did you say
25 you saw a pilot in the aeroplane?

26

27 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Then you said the plane's propeller was rotating
28 and a pilot must have sat inside.

29

30 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: I had that impression. The plane received a direct hit
31 very early in the piece. Very early. Upon the second or third shot. The
32 wings went flying through the air.

33

34 A. I had the impression, but very early in the battle the
35 aeroplane received a full hit - I think it was with the
36 second or third shot.

37

38 Q. Do you remember whether you saw any of the boats on
39 Sydney being lowered, or any men in the boats?

40

41 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Can you also remember if anything happened with the
42 additional boats which the Sydney had on board? Were they let into the
43 water?

44

45 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Nope. They weren't put into the water. Besides we were
46 fully occupied.

47

1 A. No, they were not lowered, not as far as I know, and
2 I must say that also we were very busy at that time.

3

4 Q. I just want to see if there is anything else you
5 remember on this point, Herr Schulte. Did you see any men
6
7 on Sydney's decks or in her bridge?

8

9 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Then there is another point if I may. Did you see
10 any men on deck?

11

12 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: I think that three or four of them ran to their guns.
13 That's the impression I got. Somehow.

14

15 A. Well, it seemed to me that three or four men were
16 running towards their gun.

17

18 Q. Which gun was that, sir?

19

20 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Which guns would that have been?

21

22 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Front Tower, I presume.

23

24 A. It was the fore turret - the fore ship I assume.

25

26 Q. Are you referring to the A or B main turrets --

27 A. Yes.

28

29 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Do you mean one of the main turrets of the Sydney
30 or secondary armaments?

31

32 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: That's hard to say. It is possible that the people
33 manning the heavy guns were not visible. They could have been inside,
34 couldn't they? I didn't really have that much time to observe.

35

36 Q. -- or one of the secondary guns on Sydney?

37 A. That's hard to say, really, because the people in the
38 main turrets were probably not visible, as they were inside
39 the turrets, and I didn't have that much time to really
40 observe in detail what happened there.

41

42 Q. Now, I just want to ask you about Kormoran's
43 movements. After the warship was first identified as a
44 point on the horizon, did Kormoran change her position, her
45 heading at all?

46

47 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: I would like to ask you again about the course of

1 the Kormoran. After the Sydney had been sighted as a speck on the horizon
2 did the Kormoran change course at all?

3

4 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: No. I can even show you the course of the battle in a
5 book.

6

7 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Not in a book but please describe it. We know what
8 the books say.

9

10 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: It happened slowly. And it had to do with the fact that
11 the Captain wanted to bring the Sydney closer. In the end we were abeam.
12 Abeam and on the same level. And then two things happened simultaneously
13 following the first shot. The Sydney ... well, we fired off two torpedoes
14 and the Sydney probably fired off four. I couldn't tell you exactly to
15 the second. At that particular instant we are supposed to have had a bit
16 of engine trouble. Somehow we appeared to have come to a halt. All four
17 of the Sydney's torpedoes missed our propeller in the back by a fraction
18 of an inch. Not only that but we scored a double win. One of these
19 torpedoes hit her bow. The Sydney dipped a little bit but then came back
20 up again. I observed this. Do tell them about the torpedoes which missed
21 in the back because I wasn't in the back. I was in the front of the ship.
22 We were lucky that a torpedo hit. Four hundred mines on board, the
23 ammunition depot out the back full and (all this) on fire. I have seen 10
24 ships blow up. Ours blew up the highest. It broke in half when they
25 detonated it in the end.

26

27 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Hold it. Hold it. Wait a minute. Give me a chance.

28

29 A. Well, no, the Kormoran did not change her heading and
30 her course. The only thing I noticed, that we were not
31 going so fast anymore, and I think that was part of the
32 captain's strategy, to lure the Sydney to come closer to us
33 and at the end, as I said before, we had the same height,
34 we were abeam of each other and parallel to each other.

35

36 Then what I have to say, after the first shot, that
37 was when we, the Kormoran, we fired two torpedoes and
38 I think a question of seconds, but I cannot really tell how
39 much time, but at the same time the Sydney fired four
40 torpedoes, but because at that very moment our engines
41 weren't running for a very short moment, these four
42 torpedoes shot by Sydney, did not hit our ship - they went
43 very close behind our stern, but did not hit us. Then
44 there was the Sydney - our torpedoes, the two torpedoes we
45 shot, they hit Sydney in the fore ship and that's when
46 Sydney lowered a bit her bow but came up again. However,
47 I must say that I know all these things only from accounts

1 that were given to me later by friends.

2

3 However, we were very, very lucky with this, because
4 we had 400 mines on board and also a number of ammunition
5 rooms. One hit by the torpedo of Sydney and we would have
6 exploded. I must say that we sank 10 ships or more before,
7 and none of the explosions of these ships were as big as
8 the explosion I saw when I was in the rubber boat and when

9

10 Kormoran exploded.

11

12 Q. Thank you, Herr Schulte. That's very useful
13 information. But I want to just go very slowly through the
14 battle, and the President is very interested in not what
15 others told you --

16 A. I understand.

17

18 Q. -- but what you saw.

19

20 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Could I just go back one question.

21 You said that you practised under deck training your guns.

22 Can you tell me how long it took you to train the gun from

23 its stationary position to wherever it was to be pointed in

24 these practice sessions?

25

26 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: You said earlier that you practised using the guns.

27 Can you tell us how long it took approximately for a gun to go from the

28 stationary position to be fire-ready?

29

30 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Well, these guns have a semi-automatic closing
31 mechanism. The ammunition was separate. The firing mechanism and the
32 cartridges were separate from one another. First the projectile was
33 pushed down as far as the marker rings with a capstan screw which is a
34 thick rod. It weighed about 50kg. And the cartridge was about this long
35 and was inserted behind it. I think in the British Navy they used a lot
36 of ammunition which was conjoined. Or they used bags with powder for the
37 heavy artillery such as the 38cm and 40cm guns. They would have taken
38 three or four bags of powder. They burnt. And it could happen that a
39 cartridge would get stuck inside. This was so-called disconnected
40 ammunition. Now the job was this: within 60 seconds first load the gun to
41 the rings, then pack in the cartridge, the closing mechanism would then
42 operate semi-automatically, a lever was activated and the shot was fired.
43 Bear in mind though that we didn't do it with this gun because this was
44 only a practice gun. We did all this several times over in the course of
45 60 seconds. Several times. Only at the practice canon which was only
46 this long. The protection went in here and in front of the bench there
47 was a table which the dummy shell fell on to. It was one that was not

1 live since it was a practice canon. Is that called a dummy? Or what is it
2 called?

3

4 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: A dummy. So let me translate this now.

5

6 A. We had a semi-automatic closing mechanism and, also,
7 in our guns the ammunition was divided. We had shells and
8 cartridges, and the shell was put into the tube, then the
9 cartridge, and then it was stuffed inside with a stick.

10

11 LEUT TYSON: Q. A rammer?

12 A. A rammer, until it reached some rings inside the gun,
13 and the cartridges, the weight was about 50 kilograms.
14 That's different from the British Navy I think - they have
15 another system - they have the shells together, or they put
16 three or four backs of powder behind it before it is shot.
17 However, as far as the speed is concerned, it was the task
18 to put in - well, we used dummy shells for practising.
19 However, it was the task to put in the cartridge plus the
20 shell and use a semi-automatic closing mechanism and the
21 lever within 60 seconds - that was the task.

22

23 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Sixty seconds?

24 A. Sixty seconds and then one shot was fired and we could
25 do this, or a number of times we were within this limit of
26 60 seconds and we were the gun who - yes. However, then
27 also these dummies that came out just fell on the table.

28

29 Q. Did you also practise removing camouflage?

30

31 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Did you practise removing the camouflage too?

32

33 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes, the alarm went off from time to time. This might
34 have happened particularly when we actually picked up a merchant ship and
35 stopped it. For most part we would fire a shot in front of the bow. At
36 times this happened at night too. If the ship stopped, well and good. A
37 boat with a Commander would go across. They confiscated the ship's papers
38 and the cash box which they receipted. They got their prisoners back
39 later on. We captured several ships captains too. And once or twice
40 prisoners were sent on their way to the South of France. They mostly
41 arrived there too. There was an incident involving a u-boat once I think.
42 They weren't careful in front of the French coast. They were meant to
43 guide them into the harbour and that's when the whole thing happened. The
44 survivors were not allowed to say anything afterwards. During the war
45 they were not allowed to say anything.

46

47 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: May I

1
2 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: I'd say the u-boat Commander mustn't have been careful
3 enough.

4
5 A. Yes, of course we did. Every now and then there was
6 an alarm, especially of course we practised when we met
7 other merchant ships, those we captured. This happened in
8 such a way that mostly they just got one shot before their
9 bow, which also could have happened - sometimes happened
10 that night, but then, if they stopped, then everything was
11 all right and then we sent over a party to get their papers
12 and their ship's money upon receipt and also we took the
13
14 captain's. Once or twice it happened that prisoners were
15 sent to the south of France and they usually also arrived
16 there - just once there was a problem where something
17 happened with a U-boat and the survivors of this were not
18 allowed to tell anything about it until the Second World
19 War ended.

20
21 Q. Yes, but my question is a different one. Did you
22 practise removing the camouflage and, if so, how long did
23 it take?

24
25 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Thank you. My question was a different one,
26 however. I asked you if you practised removing the camouflage too. And if
27 so, how long did it take?

28
29 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Well, our main disguise consisted of the heavy part
30 which was pulled up by means of counter-weights. The counter-weights were
31 balanced in a way that it was sufficient for two or three men to suspend
32 their weight from a hook for two tons of iron to lift. From a hinge. At
33 that the entire view would be clear. You could shoot about 80 degrees out
34 the front and 50 or 60 degrees to the back. That was the angle at which
35 the canon could be turned.

36
37 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: But how long did it take for the disguise to go up?
38 Till the disguise was gone?

39
40 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Two or three minutes. Then there was another kind of
41 disguise...

42
43 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: May I just translate this first of all?

44
45
46 (Discussion in German between interpreter and witness)

47

1 THE WITNESS: Well, we had this very heavy part that had
2 counterweights and it was cantilevered, so it could be
3 removed very easily and there were usually two to three
4 persons holding hooks there, and these hooks could quickly
5 move these two tons of metal. When the flaps opened, then
6 we had the possibility to shoot with an 80-degree angle to
7 the front and with a 60-degree angle to the aft, and to
8 remove the disguise it took us 2 to 3 minutes.

9

10 THE PRESIDENT: Q. And before the disguise was removed,
11 if you were called to action stations, were the guns
12 loaded? In other words, when you were called to action
13 stations, did you automatically load the guns before any
14 disguise was removed?

15

16 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: When you were called to battle stations, were the
17 canons loaded automatically in readiness for the disguise to fall away?
18 In other words were the canons loaded even though the disguise was still
19 intact?

20

21 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: That's possible. It might have happened that the first
22 shot was a dud or that a practice shell was fired off. The ammunition
23 set-up began about here, the gun was in the corner, two men would walk
24 across with the ammunition I suppose.

25

26 A. That's quite possible, because I remember once that we
27 had a dummy still in our gun, so our first shot was with
28 this dummy, and we had the ammunition elevator was as far
29 away as the corner of this room, which is 3 metres. There
30 were two men who loaded the ammunition that came up with
31 the elevator into the gun.

32

33 THE PRESIDENT: Q. And on the occasion in November when
34 you encountered the Sydney, were the guns loaded before the
35 disguise was removed?

36

37 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Talking specifically about the battle with the
38 Sydney in November, were the guns already loaded when the disguise was
39 still down?

40

41 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Well, I would think so. I wouldn't like to swear an
42 oath on it though.

43

44 A. I think, yes, but I don't want to swear on it.

45

46 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Then there was another kind of disguise. We operated
47 during the entire time in the disguise of three different ships. One was

1 the Sakito Maru, a Japanese ship, one was the Straat Malakka and then
2 there was the Viacheslav Molotov. So at one stage we were Japanese, then
3 we were Russian, then Dutch. The real Straat Malakka was anchored
4 opposite us in the harbour on our way home. She looked much like us.
5 During the entire journey of one year the whole ship got two or three
6 different coats of paint of different colours according to the respective
7 models. And one or two dead trees were put up as cargo derricks. Do you
8 understand? I can't explain all this in English. I am sorry. It's too
9 long ago.

10

11 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: May I just translate this now?

12

13 A. Well,

14 we had several disguises. In fact, we were disguised as
15 three different ships - there was the Japanese Sakito Maru,
16 then there was the Dutch Straat Malakka, and a Russian ship
17 called Viacheslav Molotov. And when we were brought home
18 in the harbour port of Sydney, then we saw the real Straat
19 Malakka also in the port.

20

21 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: I think that was in Brisbane.

22

23 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Oh Brisbane.

24

25 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: I am not exactly sure about that any more though. They
26 were anchored opposite us.

27

28

29 THE INTERPRETER: Oh, Brisbane was the harbour.

30

31

32 THE WITNESS: At the other side of the harbour there was
33 the real Straat Malakka and it really looked pretty much
34 like us, and during our journey with the Kormoran, the
35 whole ship was painted a number of times in this one year.
36 Also, we put up fake derricks to resume [sic] a merchant
37 ship.

38

39 LEUT TYSON: Q. As part of the disguise as Straat
40 Malakka, did you have a dummy gun on the poop deck of
41 Kormoran?

42

43 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: As part of the disguise as the Straat Malakka, did
44 you have a false canon on the poop deck?

45

46 A. I don't think so. We had enough real guns.

47

1 Q. I want to take you back now, Herr Schulte, to
2 19 November 1941 and the period between when you arrived at
3 your battle station but before the firing started.

4
5 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: I would now like to take you back again to 19
6 November 1941. Would you please let me finish ... back to the time before
7 the start of the battle proper but when you were ready to fire. This is
8 the period.

9
10 Q. I want
11 to ask you about communications that you heard and it's a
12 two-part question. I want to ask you about the loud
13 speakers, what you heard, or what you heard over the
14 telephone.

15
16 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: There are two things I would like to ask really. In
17 the main this is about communication. It is about communication via
18 loudspeakers and communication via telephone.

19
20 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Well, I found out that absolutely all allied ships at
21 the time received a new secret code daily. We could disguise ourselves
22 all we liked but this code was something that our Captain didn't have.
23 And at the end of the day that's what was asked of us when the order
24 'Remove Disguise' came across all telephones, wasn't it? And so the
25 battle began. In this part of the world, which after all is near the
26 equator, the sun goes down at about six o'clock and rises around six
27 o'clock in the morning although this is not totally accurate since we
28 were not right at the equator. So naturally during the battle it got
29 darker and darker. As for when it began exactly, I should think ...

30
31 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: May I interrupt you here? Because that was not
32 quite the answer to the question. But I will translate it first of all.

33
34 A. What I was told later is that all allied ships changed
35 their secret signal every day and received a new secret
36 signal each day. Of course, we did not have this secret
37 signal. We could have had any disguise that we wanted, but
38 we didn't have this secret signal, so at the end what
39 happened when Sydney asked us to show our secret signal,
40 then over the telephones there came the order to remove the
41 disguise. At the equator in this region the sun is shining
42 from 6 o'clock to 6 o'clock, although at the position where
43 we were this is not quite exactly because we were not
44 really at the equator. However, during the battle it
45 became darker and darker.

46
47 THE INTERPRETER: And that's the point when I interrupted

1 Mr Schulte, because I told him that this is not really the
2 answer to the question.

3

4 LEUT TYSON: Q. Herr Schulte, I just want to ask you
5 about what you heard before the battle started and when you
6 were at battle stations. You told us earlier that you had
7 some communications with Skeries over the telephone.

8 A. I wouldn't call it communication, not at all, because
9 there were only orders given --

10

11 Q. Sorry, orders, yes.

12 A. Orders.

13

14 Q. Can you tell us what sort of orders you were receiving

15

16 before the battle over the telephone?

17

18 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Can you tell us which orders you received via the
19 telephone?

20

21 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: The entire combat unit received the distance and the
22 alignment. In addition there was the order that guns were to aim for the
23 water line. This meant aim for the point where the water and the ship
24 meet and not above somewhere. The order was 'Focus Point: Water Line of
25 Bow' which meant aim for the bow, front edge and water line. This was the
26 instruction to the gunners and they fired the first shot accordingly
27 which was then probably corrected.

28

29 A. Well, the messages or the orders I received through
30 the telephone was I received the distance and the degrees.
31 Then there was another order which said, "Try to target the
32 water line of the ship" - that's the point where the ship
33 and the water meet.

34

35 LEUT TYSON: We need to just stop to change the tape

36

37 SHORT ADJOURNMENT

38

39 THE PRESIDENT: We are resuming the tape.

40

41 LEUT TYSON: The tape is on. Herr Thomas, you were
42 translating those orders that were received. Can you
43 please complete that translation?

44

45 THE INTERPRETER: Yes.

46

47 THE WITNESS: We received the order to aim at the water

1 line. That's where water and ship meet, this line, and not
2 to aim at the super structure of the ship or anything on
3 deck - that was not the order, but the order was to aim at
4 the bow and the water line. Then, after the first shot was
5 fired, this was however corrected.

6

7 LEUT TYSON: Q. That order that you got to aim at the
8 water line, was that from Skeries over the telephone?

9

10 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Did this order to aim at the water line come from
11 Skeries?

12

13 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Those were the general firing directives for all guns
14 as to what targets they were to aim for. From this fixed point you
15 improve our aim.

16

17 A. Those were the general instructions given from the
18 director control unit, and it could be changed later.

19

20 Q. Those instructions, did they come over a loud speaker,
21 or over a telephone to you?

22 A. No, telephone.

23

24 Q. Were there any general orders over loud speakers?

25

26 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: In addition were there any instructions of a
27 general nature given via loudspeakers?

28

29 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: No.

30

31 A. No, not at all.

32

33 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Was the order to fire at the water
34 line given on this occasion, or was it given on earlier
35 occasions generally?

36

37 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Was the instruction to aim for the water line a
38 general one or was it given prior or at an exact point?

39

40 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: I would assume that officers were instructed to focus
41 on a fixed point during their training when they were taught how to
42 direct fire. This is something they learnt. From this point it was
43 possible to improve on the following shots by alterations to the guns. Do
44 you understand? If despite this the shot had fired too far or too short,
45 this could be improved through small adjustments to the guns so that the
46 next shots would be better and hit. But the distance was so short that
47 every shot was a hit anyway, every shot.

1

2 A. I think that's what the gun officers learned during
3 their training and their education, to have a fixed point
4 as a basis to target at, and then later change the settings
5 of the guns so that the next shots would hit the target.
6 However, the distance was so short that there wasn't - it
7 was very easy to hit the Sydney.

8

9 THE PRESIDENT: Q. So you did not receive an order to
10 aim at the water line. What you received were specific
11 numbers at which you were to set the gun?

12

13 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: So you did not receive the general order to aim for
14 the water line but were given a precise set of figures according to which
15 you were to set your canons?

16

17 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: It was the first fixed point for setting the canons
18 which was subsequently improved.

19

20 A. It was just the first fixed point for setting the
21 guns, and this was corrected later.

22

23 THE PRESIDENT: Q. And the point that you were given,
24 was it a number on a dial mechanism on the gun?

25

26 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: And this fixed point you were given you then
27 calibrated on the little adjustment wheel on the canon?

28

29 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes.

30

31 A. Yes.

32

33 LEUT TYSON: Q. I have asked you some questions about what
34 you heard. I now just want to ask you some additional
35 questions about what you saw. Now, before the firing
36 started, did you see Ahlback or any of the signalling
37 yeomen on Kormoran, did you see any signal flags flying
38 from the triatic stay on Kormoran?

39

40 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: You are wondering if I saw that?

41

42 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Shall I translate it? The question is did you see
43 Ahlback or any other signallers and whether any signals ...

44

45 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: No, they stood behind the guise.

46

47 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Behind the disguise?

1

2 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes. We had absolutely no time to look back. And I
3 should add that at the same time we received two hits from the Sydney.

4

5 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Later. We'll get to this point later.

6

7 A. No, I didn't see any of them. They were half hidden
8 behind the disguise.

9

10 Q. You also mentioned earlier, you said some people had
11 been told to pretend they were civilians I think on
12 Kormoran after the warship was sighted.

13

14 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: You mentioned earlier that some people on board the
15 Kormoran moved around pretending to be civilians.

16

17 A. Yes.

18

19 Q. Can you please explain what you meant by that, what
20 happened with those people?

21

22 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Can you explain exactly what these people were
23 doing? What did you mean?

24

25 (Female voice in the background interjects: [German]: "Playing at
26 deceit.")

27 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes, they were playing at deceit. You there, in the
28 back, be quiet. Creating the impression that we were a merchant ship. In
29 a matter of seconds they would drop their jackets and parts of their
30 uniform surfaced.

31

32

33 (Parties speak in German)

34

35 THE WITNESS: This was just to give the impression of a
36 merchant ship and they could remove also their clothes
37 within seconds and under this they were wearing uniforms...

38

39 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: And as usual on merchant vessels there would only ever
40 be four or five men (doing this).

41

42 THE WITNESS: ...and, as usual, or as on all merchant ships, these were
43 only
44 four to five men.

45

46 LEUT TYSON: Q. And on this occasion of the encounter
47 with Sydney, were four or five men dressed as civilians

1 after the alarm rang?

2

3 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: After the alarm was sounded this day, were there
4 also these four or five people on board the Kormoran?

5

6 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Only in this one case. It was the only chance our
7 Captain had of bringing the Sydney up close. You see we had canons dating
8 back to World War I. They don't go as far as the Sydney's. The Sydney had
9 modern canons. She was capable of just sitting on the horizon and wiping
10 us out. We wouldn't even have come close with our canons. That was the
11 tactic of our Captain.

12

13 A. Yes, but it was only on this one occasion that they
14 were disguised as civilians, and of course it was all part
15 of the tactics of our captain, and I must add also that the
16 Sydney had much stronger guns - very modern guns. She
17 could have stayed there on the horizon and could have shot
18 us, but that was the tactics of our captain.

19

20

21 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Just one more word. Our canons went back to World War
22 I. After the defeat the Navy didn't throw anything away. They saved
23 everything and when our battle was over our canons were broken. The paint
24 ran. On the inside the flues were broken. There was no way the canons
25 could have been used again afterwards.

26

27 A. I just want to add one thing. We had these guns from

28

29 the First World War. That's because the Navy at those days
30 didn't throw anything away, they just kept everything, but
31 after our battle these guns were completely destroyed, they
32 didn't work anymore. All the paint was coming down from
33 the guns and they just didn't work anymore.

34

35 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: The pipes were red-hot.

36

37 A. The tubes were
38 glowing almost.

39

40 Q. Now, I want to come back to something you were
41 mentioning earlier, the flags.

42

43 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: I would now like to come back to something you
44 mentioned earlier and that's the flags.

45

46 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes.

47

1 Q. From your battle station,
2 were you able to see what flags were flying on Kormoran's
3 masts?

4
5 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Were you able to see from your battle station which
6 flags were flying from which masts?

7
8 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: No. I had no time for that. And I only know from
9 hearsay that they hoisted as fast as possible. And I also know that our
10 Commander did this correctly. I know that our lives would later depend on
11 this. Otherwise we would have been branded war criminals straight away.

12
13 A. No, I didn't see it myself. I didn't have the time to
14 watch them. I just know from the signalling crew from
15 later that they were very quick in doing this and I also
16 know from our captain that he was an honest person and did
17 hoist the war ensign, because our life was dependent on
18 this, because if he had not shown the war ensign, we would
19 have been treated as war criminals.

20
21 Q. When you told the President earlier that the battle
22 flag was lifted in 60 seconds, is that based upon what
23 someone told you?

24
25 THE PRESIDENT: I don't think that's right. I think what
26 he told me was that within 60 seconds the guns could be
27 trained is my recollection. I may be wrong.

28
29 THE INTERPRETER: I also think that's not 60 seconds.

30
31 LEUT TYSON: Q. I just want to go back to procedures to
32 raise the battle flag. Are you aware, was there any
33 process or set of rules that Kormoran followed in relation
34 to raising the battle flag?

35
36 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Coming back to the war ensign, was there a
37 particular manner in which the war ensign was always hoisted on board the
38 Kormoran? Do you know this at all?

39
40 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: On a case-to-case basis. The order of the Captain
41 determined it.

42
43 A. It was the order of the captain to hoist the flag, and
44 it was on a case-by-case basis.

45
46 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Do you know where the Dutch flag was
47 flying - on which mast it was flying when the ship was

1 disguised as the Straat Malakka? .

2

3 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Do you know which mast the Dutch flag was hoisted
4 on when the Kormoran was disguised as the Straat Malakka?

5

6 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Not at all. We painted the name on (to the ship). At
7 one stage we displayed the rising sun of Japan, then a hammer and sickle
8 and in the case of the Straat Malakka I only knew of the name from the
9 outside of the ship. The most important thing with the Straat Malakka was
10 the colour and the appearance and the likeness of the ship.

11

12 (Interruption through tradesmen – unrelated discussion)

13

14

15 (Parties speak in German)

16

17 THE WITNESS: It wasn't hoisted at all. We just had the
18 name Straat Malakka painted on the side of the ship and we
19 changed this a number of times. Once we had the rising sun
20 of Japan painted on the side. Another time we had the
21 Russian symbol, the hammer and the other one.

22

23 THE PRESIDENT: Sickle.

24

25

26 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: And no flag flew. None at all.

27

28 THE WITNESS: Sickle, and we never had a flag up and it
29 was more a question that if we disguised as Straat Malakka,
30 the question was to have the right colours, the right paint
31 and the right super structure.

32

33 THE PRESIDENT: I thought Herr Schulte told me that at one
34 point in time they could lower a flag and raise a flag at
35 essentially the same time.

36

37 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: As far as I remember you said earlier though that
38 you could simultaneously lower one flag and raise the other.

39

40 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: There is a rope which goes round. You need two
41 carabiners and it works something like this: down on the ground the
42 folded flag is attached to carabiners. Up above the other one flutters.
43 The rope runs along two rollers above and below. The same force which
44 pulls up one flag draws the other one down so that they meet in the
45 middle about three meters apart. And all this happens in a matter of
46 seconds.

47

1 A. Well, how this works is there's a rope going over two
2 rows and one flag is folded at the bottom and then it was
3 put on the two shackles that were on this rope, and as this
4 was raised, the other one was lowered. So that means the
5 same power that would raise this flag lowered on the other
6 side the other flag so that in the end they met at the
7 level of about 3 metres of a distance and the whole thing
8 just took a very few seconds.

9
10 LEUT TYSON: Q. That procedure that you've described in
11 relation to the flags, did anyone tell you that that
12 happened on the occasion of the encounter with Sydney?

13
14 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: What you just told us about the flags, did anyone
15 tell you that this is what happened on the occasion of the encounter with
16 the Sydney?

17
18 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Exactly. It was like this in every case. As a matter of
19 principle. Our Captain was very proper about things like that.

20
21 A. Well, our captain was very correct, and this was done
22 in any case, always.

23
24 Q. How can you be confident that that was done on this
25 occasion of the battle with Sydney?

26
27 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: How can you be so sure that this is also what
28 happened in the battle with the Sydney?

29
30 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Because I know the Captain. First of all I know him
31 well. And secondly there would have been no other choice. I do appreciate
32 that this is very important to you. We would never have done this. Why
33 would I instigate a lie 60 years on? And I only heard it from other
34 comrades. I know how efficient these signallers were.

35
36 A. Well, because I know my captain, I know he is an
37 honourable man and that's the first thing. The second
38 thing is we would never ever have done this, and
39 I understand that there's a great interest in the
40 Australian public, or that you are very interested in this,
41 but why should I lie after all these years - after 60
42 years? However, I was told this whole thing only by my
43 comrades, and I knew that the signalling crew, they were
44 very, very well trained.

45
46
47 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: They know this book. It's written in English. They

1 have read all that.

2

3 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Well, this one is in German. Tell them just these three
4 sentences from our Captain.

5

6 (Parties speak in German)

7

8 THE WITNESS: If you wish, I ask you, Mr President, if you
9 want me to retranslate three sentences from the book of
10 Barbara Winter.

11

12 THE PRESIDENT: I have Barbara winter's book in English,
13 thank you, and I've read that. Were there some signal
14 sailors whose job it was to raise and lower flags?

15

16 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: That means there were special signal seamen,
17 sailors who specialised in setting flags and pulling them in?

18

19 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes, later on he emigrated to Canada.

20

21 A. Yes, that's it, and one of them later went to Canada.

22

23 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Do you remember the names of those
24 people?

25

26 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Can you remember the names?

27

28 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Not off the top of my head. One of them came along to a
29 reunion in Hamburg and brought along Canadian dollars which were thrown
30 into the lucky dip. He even handed out fishing and hunting licences. He
31 had businesses too. Those were highly specialised people. (Signalling)
32 was a career path in its own right in the Navy. They made the flags too.

33

34 A. Not as far as - well, no, I don't know the names right
35 now. One of them, however, came to our meetings in Hamburg
36 one time and he had Canadian dollars with him. What he did
37 over there was he gave away licences for fishing and for
38 hunting. However, they were very specialised crew members.
39 This signalling was a career in the Navy.

40

41 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Do you remember a man called
42 Herr Otte, I think it is?

43

44 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Do you remember a man called Mr Otte?

45

46 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Otte? I think that was him. Yes, it was him.

47

1 A. I think that was him.

2

3 LEUT TYSON: Q. Did you ever have a conversation with
4 Otte after the engagement –

5 A. Not at all.

6

7 Q. -- about the flags. Okay. I now want to take you
8 back to - you mentioned earlier that you heard an order,
9 "Remove the disguise."

10

11 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: I would like to take you back to an earlier point
12 where you said that at some stage the order was given to remove the
13 disguise.

14

15 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes.

16

17 A. Yes.

18

19 Q. After you heard that order, what happened on your gun?

20

21 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: After this order was given, what happened at your
22 gun?

23

24 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: We shot immediately. Took aim. And shot immediately.
25 And in my opinion the Sydney immediately shot too. Our oil storage unit
26 was hit, flames spurted. In our engine room 60-70 men burnt to death. The
27 leading engineer too. And the people in the bow ...

28

29 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: May I just ... otherwise this will get too ...

30

31 A. Well, once the disguise was removed, we started to
32 shoot immediately, but I think - it was my impression that
33 the Sydney shot also at the very same time. Then we
34 received one hit in our ship in the empty oil tank, and in
35 fact more than 60 people must have died - they were burnt
36 in the engine room, including the leading engineering -
37 engineering officer down there. They all died.

38

39 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: And it was no longer possible to move from the bow to
40 the back of the ship.

41

42 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: We'll get to that later.

43

44 A. So it was
45 not possible to move from the fore ship to the aft ship
46 because of this fire.

47

1 Q. But I just want to go back to that order "remove
2 disguise". In minutes or seconds how long was it after
3 that order that the gun that you were at actually fired?
4

5 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: How long did it take from the order to remove the
6 disguise before your gun actually fired?
7

8 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: At once. Immediately.
9

10 A. Immediately, as soon as possible.
11

12 THE PRESIDENT: Q. So what happened was the disguise -
13 the camouflage was lifted, and then the guns trained and
14 they then fired?

15 A. All the same time - lifting, gun out, and fired up -
16 all the same time - nearly the same time.
17

18 LEUT TYSON: Q. And when your gun started to fire, did
19
20 the other guns of Kormoran fire at the same time, or were
21 they a bit delayed or further delayed?

22 A. It was only possible to fire on one side, the
23 starboard side - four guns.
24

25 (Discussion in German between interpreter and witness)
26

27 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: The question was whether all guns fired at the same
28 time.
29

30 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes, all four of them.
31

32 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: All four at the same time?
33

34 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Two couldn't fire.
35
36

37 THE WITNESS: Four fired at the same time, but two were
38 not able to shoot.
39

40 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: The two front and back portside couldn't shoot. They
41 shot later on when the Sydney moved around the back. At that stage she
42 was already on fire though.
43

44 THE WITNESS: The two guns on the port side were not
45 able to shoot, of course, because they couldn't reach
46 Sydney. They only shot at her later when she came to the
47 port side.

1

2 LEUT TYSON: Q. You're referring, sir, to the
3 15-centimetre guns?

4

5 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Are you referring to the 15cm guns? Do you mean the
6 15cm guns?

7

8 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes, mainly. And then there were the 2cm ones.

9

10 A. Mainly, yes, and there were the 2-centimetres, also.

11

12 Q. What I want to know is when the 15-centimetre guns
13 fired, did the 37-millimetre and did the 2-centimetre guns
14 fire at the same time, or was there a delay before they
15 fired?

16 A. At the same time.

17

18 Q. And you say that your recollection is that Sydney
19 fired at about the same time that Kormoran fired?

20 A. As long as it was possible for them, you know.

21

22 Q. And the distance between the two ships at the point
23 when the guns fired, could you tell us again how many
24 metres that was?

25

26 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: I would have to say I don't know the exact distance but
27 my impression was around 800m and our Light Gunnery was able to brush the
28 upper part of the Sydney in a way that made it difficult for them to
29 reload.

30

31 A. I have to say I don't know the exact distance, but as
32 I said before, it seemed to me that it was more or less
33 800 metres. I must also say that our secondary guns were
34 able to shoot over the whole deck of Sydney so that it was
35 very difficult for the people on Sydney to reload their
36 guns.

37

38 Q. Were you able to distinguish, when you looked at
39 Sydney, where 15-centimetre shots hit Sydney as opposed to
40 where the other guns from Kormoran hit Sydney?

41

42 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Were you able to distinguish which guns had hit the
43 Sydney? Could you see well enough to be able to say that was a 15cm hit
44 as opposed to a 2cm hit?

45

46 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: No. It was a veritable fire attack on both sides. It
47 was impossible to distinguish between individual shots.

1

2 A. No, it was literally a fire attack from both sides.
3 You couldn't really distinguish any single shot.

4

5 Q. Now, sir, you've described the position at the
6 beginning when the firing started between Kormoran and
7 Sydney, that relative position. Were there any changes in
8 the relative position of the two ships after the firing

9

10 began?

11

12 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Earlier on you demonstrated the position of the two
13 ships towards one another at the start of the battle. After the battle
14 began, were there changes in this position of the two ships towards each
15 other?

16

17 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: No. In the end the Sydney tried to ram us. Ram us
18 directly. And since we were travelling at slow speed, she passed behind
19 us. Into the darkness. It was starting to get dark.

20

21 A. Well, she tried to ram us - she tried to run directly
22 into us, but the point is that we were still having a
23 little bit of speed and were moving forwards. That's why
24 Sydney passed right behind us.

25

26 Q. So are you saying that Sydney passed astern of
27 Kormoran?

28

29 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Do you mean to say that the Sydney passed astern of
30 the Kormoran?

31

32 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes. [ENGLISH] More or less. I do not know exactly the
33 distance. And.. - [GERMAN] The distance kept getting greater. And she
34 disappeared into the darkness as a torch, a lit-up torch.

35

36 A. Well, I must say, yes, that's true, and I don't know
37 the exact distance, but the distance of course increased as
38 she went away further into the darkness as a burning flame.

39

40 Q. Do you know roughly how long it was after the firing
41 started, either in terms of time or how many shells your
42 gun fired, that Sydney did pass astern of Kormoran?

43

44

45 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Can you give us some indication either in terms of
46 time or shells fired how long it took from the start of the battle to the
47 time the Sydney passed by your stern?

1

2 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: We fired off something in the order of under 100 shots
3 until the canons were glowing. As for the timeframe as a whole, we were
4 in uproar, between half an hour to an hour.

5

6 A. Well, we fired less than 100 shots and then the guns
7 were already glowing. As far as the time is concerned, it
8 must have been something between half an hour and one hour.

9

10 Q. Do you remember what sort of ammunition you were
11 firing at Sydney?

12

13 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Can you remember what kind of ammunition you used?
14 What kind of shells?

15

16 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Regular ones.

17

18 A. Just normal ones.

19

20 Q. When Sydney passed astern of Kormoran, did the guns on
21 Kormoran - did some of the guns continue to fire at Sydney?

22

23 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: When the Sydney passed astern of Kormoran did the
24 guns of the Kormoran continue firing at the Sydney?

25

26 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Only once at the stern. As long as she was on the
27 starboard side. Once she came along portside, the portside gunners were
28 able to shoot but later on it was no longer really possible to shoot
29 properly because of the darkness and so on.

30

31 A. Only one, because the others had stopped already and
32 later, when it became too dark...

33

34 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: She passed by something like this. Starboard then
35 portside and the distance grew bigger. Initially the guns still fired. In
36 the end ... because of the angle ... we would have shot our own ship. It
37 wasn't possible. These ones still shot and these and that was the end of
38 it.

39

40 A. - well, the ones in the aft
41 and some were still firing at her, except for those guns
42 which were not able to reach her due to the angle.

43

44 Q. And do you remember if Sydney was firing at Kormoran
45 after she had passed astern of Kormoran?

46

47 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: And can you remember if the Sydney still fired as

1 she passed astern of Kormoran or afterwards?

2

3 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: At that stage it would have been possible but it would
4 have had to come out of the fire. She was alight after all. I heard later
5 on that wounded people were seen being thrown off the ship in hammocks. I
6 did not see them drown at the time.

7

8 A. That's possible, but with all the fire on board on
9 Sydney, I doubt it. However, later I heard that wounded
10 people were thrown into the water in hammocks from Sydney.

11

12 Q. Who did you hear that from?

13

14 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Where did you hear this story about the hammocks?

15

16 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Somebody probably saw it. We had this measuring device
17 up the top. He observed them as long he could while he was not too far
18 away yet.

19

20 A. Maybe that must have been somebody who was at the
21 range finder and, as nothing happened on our ship at that
22 moment, he could see much further. Maybe he saw it and
23 told me about it.

24

25 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: We were both on fire.

26

27 A. Both ships were burning, though.

28

29 Q. Now, you talked about Sydney moving away into the
30 distance. Can you please describe the way she was moving?
31 Was she moving quickly, was she moving slowly, was she
32 drifting?

33

34 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: You told me that the Sydney slowly disappeared into
35 the distance. Can you tell us what sort of speed she was doing? Was she
36 fast, slow or was she just drifting? Was she running under her own steam
37 or not?

38

39 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: I think she was running under her own steam. It was
40 around this time that we received the order to abandon ship.

41

42 A. I think she was going with her own engines, but at the
43
44 same time there was the order given on board of our ship to
45 abandon ship.

46

47 Q. You also said that you saw Sydney on fire. Can you

1 try to describe, if possible, was the fire centred in any
2 particular place?
3 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: You also told me that you could see that the Sydney
4 was alight. Were you able to see if the flames or the fire centred in any
5 particular place on board the Sydney?
6 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: (They were) all over the ship.
7 A. No, it was all over the ship.
8
9 Q. Now, you've mentioned an order to abandon ship. How
10 did that order reach you?
11
12 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: You just mentioned that the order to abandon ship
13 was given. How did that order reach you?
14
15 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Via telephone. To the front and the back. Some boats
16 got off at the back, some in the front. I went back below deck to get
17 some supplies. When I came back up they were working on our boats. They
18 were no use. They burnt. But we had two rescue boats sitting on the upper
19 deck from other ships we had sunk. We ended up throwing them over board
20 with sheer muscle power and brute force. They tried to let an inflatable
21 life raft into the water with ropes but I only learnt this later on. I
22 just came back up with a box of provisions when an officer said to me
23 ,Schulte, go and climb down and hold the boat to the side of the ship'.
24 Now the swell was two to three meters. I climbed down a bow rope. So now
25 my backside was in the water. As the rope tightened I got into the boat.
26 They made a jack ladder and more than twenty men slid into the boat. And
27 one of them had a gramophone ...
28
29 A. (In German - not translated).
30
31 Q. The question was how the order to abandon ship reached
32 Herr Schulte. I think he started by referring to a
33 telephone.
34
35 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: So the order came via the telephone. Is that
36 correct?
37
38 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes. For everyone.
39
40 A. It was given at the same time to everybody via the
41 telephone, to the people in the front - we had ships in the
42 front and in the aft and I remember that I went again under
43 deck to get some supply, to get some food, and then went up
44 again. You must see that all our lifeboats had been
45 burned. However, we had two lifeboats which we had
46 captured from other ships - they were in the front - and
47 when I came there, then one officer told me to go down and

1 the swell was very high - it was about 2 or 3 metres - and
2 I went down and I used the rope to go down, and suddenly
3 I was in the water. Then a ladder was lowered to get
4 people into the rubber boats which we used, and then within
5 a very short time everybody was in the boat.

6

7 Q. When the order to abandon ship was given, are you able
8 to recall whereabouts Sydney was at that time in relation
9 to Kormoran?

10

11 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: When the order to abandon ship was given, can you
12 remember the approximate whereabouts of the Sydney at that stage?

13

14 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: She disappeared into the darkness. (That was) the end
15 (of her). She was a small lit-up speck.

16

17 A. She disappeared into the darkness as a small flaring
18 point - glaring point.

19

20 Q. Can you describe the damage to Kormoran at the time
21 the order to abandon ship was given?

22

23 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Can you describe the damage to the Kormoran when
24 the order to abandon ship was given?

25

26 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Our power-generator was down altogether. We could no
27 longer use our own fire-extinguishing system.

28

29 A. Well, all the electricity did not work anymore - the
30 whole power supply. We could not use our
31 fire-extinguishing system anymore.

32

33 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Presumably that's why the Captain said 'Abandon Ship'.

34

35 A. That's probably the
36 reason why Capt Detmers gave the order to abandon the ship.

37

38 THE PRESIDENT: Q. And the engine room was on fire?

39

40 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: And the engine room was on fire?

41

42 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: On fire. I believe two or three men may have escaped
43 through emergency exits. They had severe burns.

44

45 A. I think, yeah, that's right. Maybe two or three
46 people got out through the emergency exits, but they had
47 very serious injuries from this fire.

1

2

3 LEUT TYSON: Q. Where you had been in your gun position
4 in Kormoran on the 15-centimetre gun, were there any
5 casualties there from shells from Sydney from shrapnel or
6 splinters?

7

8 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: At your battle station, the 15cm one, were there
9 any injuries or deaths as a result of shells from the Sydney? Any direct
10 hits or splinters?

11

12 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: On the second gun, so I was told, a piece of sheet
13 metal from an unexploded shell from the Sydney which came through a shell
14 lift shaft ripped open a man's entire stomach. Later on he sat on the
15 upper deck with his innards in his hand. He was given powerful
16 painkillers by our doctor. What was his name again?

17

18 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Dr Habben?

19

20 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes. He was a young man from Berlin.

21

22 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: May I just translate this?

23

24 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Hmm.

25

26 A. No, but I think at the second gun there was somebody
27 killed, and what happened was that a shell which did not
28 explode went through the shaft of the elevator and then a
29 piece of metal came out of this and apparently hit somebody
30 in the stomach and later he sat on deck having all his
31 inner organs outside. Dr Habben, our doctor on board, had
32 to give him some really strong pain killers.

33

34 Q. How was it that the two lifeboats were lowered into
35 the water if the electricity was out of action on Kormoran?

36

37 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: How did you manage to lower the two life boats into
38 the water when there was no power any more?

39

40 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: They worked with sheer muscle power for over an hour
41 since the ship exploded around midnight I think. That's when the last
42 people left the ship. One of them had figured out a trick. He had seen
43 how you can pick up (a boat) with a rope, lift it and then (manoeuvre it)
44 over the railing.

45

46 A. Well, it was quite a lot of work - it took one hour -
47 and we did it just with our muscles, I must say, because we

1 wanted to abandon - I remember that we abandoned ship at
2 midnight. That's when the explosion was, when the last
3 people left the ship, and as far as I remember there was
4 one person who sat - or he knew this trick, how to lower
5 the ship by using just ropes.

6

7 Q. Was that person Herr Ludwig Ernst?

8

9 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Exactly. Ludwig Ernst.

10

11 A. (Inaudible).

12

13 Q. During this period when Kormoran was being abandoned,
14 did Capt Detmers or von Goesseln or any of the other
15 officers give any of the crew members instructions on how
16 to answer interrogations that might take place in the
17 future?

18

19 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: When the order to abandon ship was given and during
20 all these preparations to leave the ship did Captain Detmers, van
21 Goesselen or any other officers give any instructions to the crew as to
22 how you should conduct yourselves in the event of interrogations?

23

24 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: No. General information had been available for months
25 already for such a case. I for my part for instance tried to withhold
26 (information) when I was interrogated at night. I would walk in at 12
27 o'clock at night, the officer was very friendly, I was offered a
28 cigarette, he asked questions and we pretended to know nothing.

29

30 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Excuse me. May I just translate this?

31

32 A. Well, no, but we did have some general information
33 which we received some couple of months before and me
34 myself, I didn't really say very much. I can remember that
35 especially when I was interrogated at night, I remember it
36 that this officer who interrogated was very, very friendly
37 indeed. He offered me cigarettes, but I said - I pretended
38 not to know anything at this point.

39

40 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Did you?

41

42 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes. There were people who said they were ship
43 gardeners, carpenters, etc.

44

45 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Ship gardeners?

46

47 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: (laughs)

1 A. Well, some people even
2 said they were ship gardeners...

3
4 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Ship carpenters.

5
6 A. ...and others said they were
7 ship tailors - ship carpenter.

8
9 Q. I just want to go back to the process of abandonment.
10 The light speed boat, was that at any stage lowered into
11 the water, or what happened to the light speed boat?

12
13 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: I would like to go back to the moment of
14 abandonment of the Kormoran. The speed boat, was it put into the water
15 too or what happened to the speed boat?

16
17 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: It must have gone under.

18
19 A. It must have drowned also.

20
21 Q. And during the period when Kormoran was being
22 abandoned, did you have the opportunity to see Capt Detmers

23
24 at all at that time?

25
26 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: When you left the ship did you have the opportunity
27 to see Captain Detmers again?

28
29 A. No, we were all very busy.

30
31 Q. And the lifeboat that you got into, who was the most
32 senior person in that lifeboat?

33
34 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: In the life boat you were in, who had the highest
35 ranking? Who was the most senior person?

36
37 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: We took in two sergeants whom we fished out of the
38 water. One of them, I think, was Hubenmeister. My boat contained mostly
39 surviving stokers. I was one of very few seamen. And I tried for three
40 days of storm to keep the narrow side of the boat to the waves with a
41 strap. The waves were meters high. Otherwise we would have capsized.
42 Others scooped water out of the boat with the help of a tin can. We sat
43 only just above the water. And every now and then a shark came along.

44
45 A. Well, there were two warrant officers and we helped
46 them to get out of the water. I don't know their names.
47 One was - he was responsible for the pumps, but I think

1 mainly on our ship there were just the stokers and I was
2 one of the very few seamen. Then later we went through
3 quite a strong storm with a very high swell, and in the
4 storm and this very high swell I tried to move in such a
5 way through the waves that we weren't capsized, at the same
6 time whereas other people were responsible for putting the
7 water out of the lifeboat. For this they used tins, and
8 every now and then there were also sharks surrounding us.

9

10 Q. What supplies did you have in the lifeboat?

11

12 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: What kinds of provisions did you have on board?

13

14 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Very little. I think we had a small bottle of Japanese
15 milk. We had received supplies from Japan once. And a large pack of 50
16 American cigarettes. They were vacuum-sealed in double packaging so that
17 they wouldn't get wet. On two occasions we lit a cigarette and everyone
18 got a puff. And over six days I wetted my lips with milk once. Other than
19 that there was no water and nothing to eat and my teeth (fell out) just
20 like that.

21

22 A. We just had very little supply. We had a small bottle
23 of Japanese milk, which we received from our supply ship,
24 plus we had a pack of American cigarettes. They were
25 very well packed, so they didn't get wet, and in the six
26 days two men usually shared one cigarette and had shared
27 their dregs. In all this time on the lifeboat we didn't
28 have any water. I only moisturised my lips once or twice
29 with this milk.

30

31 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Herr Schulte, can I go back a little
32 bit. From your position at the forward starboard gun, did
33 you see any torpedoes fired from the Kormoran?

34

35 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: I would like to go back a little way, Mr Schulte.
36 From your battle station at the front starboard gun were you able to see
37 how/whether torpedoes were fired from the Kormoran?

38

39 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: I may have seen traces of them. But we had pivoting
40 torpedoes above water and a firmly mounted one below the water. The ship
41 had to take aim. And I heard that two shots were fired and one of them
42 hit. I did see how it hit. My view was constantly fixed on Sydney and not
43 on what was happening around us. I mean, I couldn't look down the ship's
44 side and see whether torpedoes were fired off from there and when. It is
45 possible that I saw bubbles in the water, however.

46

47 A. It is possible that I saw the track, that I saw the

1 bubbles. I must say that we had two torpedoes over the
2 water - overwater torpedoes, which you could move. Then we
3 had a fixed underwater torpedo. You had to move the whole
4 ship to be able to target with this torpedo. I heard from
5 the others, from my comrades, that we had fired two
6 torpedoes, and that one hit Sydney. I saw how Sydney was
7 hit. What I did not see was how they were fired from
8 Kormoran, because my eyes were focusing on Sydney rather
9 than on Kormoran, and I think that's also when I saw the
10 bubbles.

11

12 THE PRESIDENT: Q. And where did you see a torpedo hit
13 Sydney?

14

15 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Where did you see the torpedo hit the Sydney?

16

17 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: About here. And the second one probably went past here.

18

19 A. It was approximately here between – and the second one probably
20 passed here

21

22 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: It was approximately here..Between the two gun
23 turrets?

24

25 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes, something like that.

26

27

28

29 LEUT TYSON: Herr Schulte is indicating a position between
30 the alpha and bravo main turrets on Sydney.

31

32 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Mr Schulte is pointing to a position between the
33 two main front turrets of the Sydney, alpha and bravo.

34

35 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Yes, and one of them must have passed at the front.

36

37

38 THE WITNESS: The other one passed the bow of Sydney.

39

40 THE PRESIDENT: Q. And did the torpedo hit Sydney before
41 or after the guns had started firing?

42

43 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Did this torpedo hit the Sydney before or after the
44 guns started firing?

45

46 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Shortly after the opening of the fire.

47

1 A. It was shortly after the firing was opened.

2

3 LEUT TYSON: Q. I just want to take you back to the
4 lifeboat. When the lifeboat was first in the water, can
5 you tell us what the sea condition was like?

6

7 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: I would like to take you back to the life boat.
8 When the life boat was first in the water, what was the sea like?

9

10 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: The swell went up and down the side of the ship about
11 three or four meters and back. But on the second day a storm came up.

12

13 A. Well, the swell was about 3 to 4 metres, which I could
14 see on the hull of the ship, but on the second day in the
15 lifeboat, that's when the storm started.

16

17 Q. Now, I just want to ask a follow-up question about
18 training the guns. Can I show you a picture, Herr Schulte,
19 exhibit 18. Is that something that was used in target
20 practice by Kormoran?

21

22 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: I would like to go back to the issue of the
23 shooting exercises and show you exhibit number 18, a photo. Do you
24 recognise this object? Is it something that you might have used in target
25 practice? Do you recognise it?

26

27 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: We didn't do any target practice at all except on our
28 way out of the Bay of Danzig before the journey began. And below deck, at
29 this loading canon, we didn't aim for the bow but only practiced loading
30 on time .

31

32 A. We didn't do any targeting practices - only way back
33 when we were in the Bay of Danzig, that's when we did this.
34 The training gun we had under deck was only for the purpose
35 of training speed, but not targeting.

36

37 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Have you ever seen that before,
38 that --

39

40

41 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Still, have you ever seen the object at all?

42

43 SCHULTE [ENGLISH]: Never.

44

45 LEUT TYSON: Q. Do you know what that is?

46 A. [ENGLISH] Never.

47

1 Q. Never seen it?

2 A. [ENGLISH] Never seen it.

3

4 LEUT TYSON: Mr President, I was going to move on to the
5 final series of topics.

6

7 Q. Herr Schulte, I now want to go to a final set of
8 questions.

9

10 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Mr Schulte, I would now like to come to the final
11 focal point of our questions.

12

13 Q. Herr Schulte, as you know, there have been many
14 theories about the encounter between Sydney and Kormoran
15 and many books and articles written about this episode.

16 A. [ENGLISH] Many lies - many lies, too.

17

18 Q. It's important for the Commission to hear from an eye
19 witness what they say in response to some of the theories
20 that have been expressed,...

21

22 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: It is very important for the Commission of Inquiry
23 to know the responses and thoughts of eye witnesses to theories which
24 have been expressed.

25

26 Q. ...and the President wants to give
27 an eye witness like yourself an opportunity to say whether

28

29 you agree or disagree with any of the theories.

30

31

32 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: We would therefore like to give you the
33 opportunity, the Chairman in particular, so say whether you concur with
34 these theories, whether you disagree or whatever your attitude might be.

35

36 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: Well, I would like to say ...

37

38 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Please wait. We will present the theories in a
39 minute, okay?

40 Q. Now,

41 Herr Schulte, one theory that has been raised is that a
42 Japanese U-boat or Japanese submarine --

43 A. [ENGLISH] I know.

44

45 Q. -- fired at Kormoran [sic]. Did you ever see a
46 Japanese submarine fire at Sydney?

47

1 SCHULTE [[ENGLISH]Not at all. I was in jail four or five days and I heard
2 on the radio 'Japanese' 'Pearl Harbour'. [GERMAN]Fifth December, I think.
3 Or thereabouts. [ENGLISH] 'Japanese' 'Pearl Harbour'. The first English
4 word I learnt was 'quick, quick'. [GERMAN]In the mornings, on my way to
5 the washroom. 'Japanese' is what I understood and 'Pearl Harbour' too. By
6 then I had already been in captivity for five or six days. Apart from our
7 Japanese flag which we had on board we never had anything to do with
8 Japan. If we hadn't burnt down we would have tried to get to Japan. We
9 definitely would have. Because in the whole world there wasn't a single
10 port for us, was there? Everywhere were enemies. [ENGLISH]Only enemies.

11

12 A. That's absolutely impossible, because as far as
13 I remember, I think it was 5 December the same year when
14 the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. I must tell you one of
15 the first words I learned in English was "quick, quick".
16 That was always said in the morning, but also
17 I understood - I heard something on the radio and I could
18 identify the words "Japanese" and "Pearl Harbor" and that
19 was more or less five or six days after I had been
20 imprisoned. I must tell you one thing: if we hadn't caught
21 fire in our engine rooms, we would have tried to reach
22 Japan, because on the whole world there were no harbours
23 for us - no harbours where we could go to, because we were
24 the enemies, and Japanese harbours were the only ones we
25 could approach, at least in those days.

26

27 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Just one thing. Did you ever see a
28 Japanese submarine?

29

30 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Have you ever seen any Japanese submarine at all?

31

32 A. [ENGLISH] Not at all, never - later on in television.

33

34 THE PRESIDENT: We'll just pause while the tape is changed.

35

36 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Short adjournment.

37

38 SHORT ADJOURNMENT

39

40 LEUT TYSON: Thank you. The tape is now changed,
41 Herr Schulte, and just a couple of final questions, please,
42 sir.

43

44 Q. Another theory is that a German U-boat or another
45 Naval unit was involved in the sinking of Sydney. Did you
46 ever see a German U-boat or another Naval unit fire at
47 Sydney?

1

2 SCHULTE [GERMAN]: We supplied two of them with torpedoes. Once in the
3 Atlantic and once in the Indian Ocean. At least I think so. I am not
4 entirely certain. They came on board. They had a wash on board our ship.
5 During this time torpedoes were passed down by dinghy . It meant that
6 they could stay at sea twice as long. Distances were great.

7

8 A. I met a German U-boat twice - once in the Atlantic
9 Ocean and once in the Indian Ocean I think, and we supplied
10 these U-boats with torpedoes, and when these torpedoes were
11 brought over in rubber boats to these U-boats, the guys
12 from the U-boats took a shower at our place and, because we
13 supplied them with these torpedoes, they had the capacity
14 of staying twice as long on sea than without.

15

16 Q. But during the encounter between Sydney and Kormoran,
17
18 did you see a German U-boat attack Sydney in that battle?

19

20 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: But during the battle between the Sydney and the
21 Kormoran did you see a German u-boat or any other kind of German vessel?

22

23 A. [ENGLISH] There was no German U-boat in the vicinity or
24 surrounding.

25

26 Q. And apart from Kormoran and Sydney, were there any
27 other Naval units that were involved in the battle between
28 those two ships?

29 A. [ENGLISH] Not at all.

30

31 Q. Finally, sir, there's a very serious allegation that
32 has been made that survivors of Sydney in the water were
33 shot by members of Kormoran's crew. What do you say in
34 response to that allegation?

35

36 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Furthermore a very serious allegation is being made
37 which is that survivors of the Sydney who were swimming in the water were
38 shot by crew members of the Kormoran? What do you say to that?

39

40 A. [ENGLISH] A big lie. We weren't able to reach them. Between us
41 we had several sea miles.

42

43 Q. Did you see any survivors from Sydney at all in the
44 water after the battle?

45 A. [ENGLISH] Not at all.

46

47 LEUT TYSON: Mr President, they are the questions on

1 behalf of counsel assisting.

2

3 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you, Herr Schulte,
4 you've been very, very helpful. Thank you.

5

6 INTERPRETER [GERMAN]: Thank you very much for this talk. You have been
7 very helpful. It was a big help.

8

9 SCHULTE [GERMAN]:[ENGLISH] Don't mention it.

10

11

12 THE INQUIRY ADJOURNED ACCORDINGLY

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