

1 <ALAISTAIR RANKIN TEMPLETON, sworn: [12.30pm]

2

3

<EXAMINATION BY CMDR RUSH:

4

5 CMDR RUSH: Q. Mr Templeton, could you state again your
6 full name to the Commissioner?

7

A. Alastair Rankin Templeton.

8

9

Q. Do you live at [REDACTED]?

10

A. Yes.

11

12

Q. Are you a retired accountant?

13

A. Yes.

14

15

Q. Did you join the Royal Australian Navy in 1940?

16

A. Yes.

17

18

Q. How old were you when you joined?

19

A. Nineteen.

20

21

Q. Did you attend the Flinders Naval Depot or HMAS
22 Cerberus?

23

A. Yes, I enlisted in Brisbane, in Moreton, then we went
24 down to Flinders.

25

26

Q. Did you undertake a course at Flinders?

27

A. Yes. In September 1940, the navy recruited people for
28 the communications branch, first ever outside permanent
29 service, and we all went down to Cerberus to continue our
30 course in communications.

31

32

Q. I know this is difficult, but I'm going to have to ask
33 you to try to speak to the Commissioner in answering
34 question. If you want to conclude that answer, you were
35 indicating --

36

A. I commenced the course of visual signalman at
37 Cerberus.

38

39

Q. In relation to that course, did you complete that
40 course?

41

A. Yes. I completed it, but I was not allowed to pass
42 out, to qualify, because I had been selected for officer
43 training and there was no point in having a signalman in
44 the officers course, so there was a conversion to seaman to
45 do the seamanship course as part of the officer training.
46 I forfeited my communications training to do that.

47

1 Q. Did you undertake a course in seamanship in
2 preparation for becoming an officer?

3 A. Yes, yes.

4
5 Q. Did part of that course include a requirement for time
6 at sea?

7 A. Yes. The requirement at that time was a minimum of
8 three months in a cruiser.

9
10 Q. Did you join a cruiser during the course to become
11 a seaman officer?

12 A. I joined Sydney on 1 July 1941, but I'd completed the
13 seamanship course probably in May 1941.

14
15 Q. So you joined Sydney in July 1941, and when did you
16 post off Sydney?

17 A. I left her on 17 October 1940 in Fremantle.

18
19 Q. Would that be 17 October 1940 or 1941?

20 A. Oh, sorry. 1941.

21
22 Q. When you joined HMAS Sydney, in what port was she?

23 A. Would you repeat that, please?

24
25 Q. Where did you join Sydney?

26 A. I joined Sydney in Sydney.

27
28 Q. After completion of your time on Sydney, did you go
29 back to Flinders and there complete your officer training?

30 A. Yes, yes.

31
32 Q. Were you commissioned in April 1942?

33 A. That's correct, yes.

34
35 Q. Thereafter, what ships were you on during the course
36 of the war?

37 A. As a commissioned officer, I commissioned
38 HMAS Launceston in Brisbane initially and then was
39 appointed as gunnery officer on HMAS Toowoomba in August
40 1942.

41
42 Q. What was your posting on Launceston?

43 A. I'm sorry?

44
45 Q. What was your posting on HMAS Launceston?

46 A. Launceston - I was a commissioned officer.

47

1 Q. What type of ship was Launceston?

2 A. She was a Corvette.

3

4 Q. And Toowoomba?

5 A. Toowoomba was a Corvette also.

6

7 Q. Thereafter, Mr Templeton?

8 A. Thereafter, I did a stint in a ship called Falie,
9 which operated in the islands largely, store carrying,
10 landing commandoes, that type of thing. I was effectively
11 first lieutenant of that ship, although the name "first
12 lieutenant" didn't apply; it was a small ship. After that,
13 I was appointed first lieutenant of Warrnambool as part of
14 the 20th mine-sweeping flotilla and remained in that
15 position until I virtually left the navy in January 1947.

16

17 Q. Mr Templeton, when you joined Sydney, do you recall
18 the type of role or duties that Sydney was undertaking
19 initially upon your joining?

20 A. Initially, yes. She was doing escort work primarily.
21 Initially, there was a trip part way to South America to
22 escort a freighter said to be carrying anthracite. Then we
23 did a further trip to the north, to Noumea, landing
24 a detachment of army troops and two 6-inch guns, and
25 I think it was after that that we escorted Awatea loaded
26 with RAAF personnel. We picked up New Zealand airmen in
27 Auckland and then proceeded to Fiji, to Suva, and then on
28 to drop off Awatea somewhere in the eastern Pacific or
29 central Pacific, and these men were going as part of the
30 air training scheme. A lot of airmen from Australia and
31 New Zealand went to Canada for training.

32

33 After that, I'm not quite certain of the timing of
34 these things, but I'm pretty sure we took Queen Mary out of
35 Sydney and headed south and west, and I think that was the
36 trip we had when Queen Mary went on alone somewhere off
37 Western Australia. There were later trips with Queen Mary
38 and Queen Elizabeth when we acted as escort. That was the
39 type of work.

40

41 Q. Just in relation to the latter duty that you referred
42 to, the log on the 21st day of September 1941 indicates
43 that Sydney left Westernport Bay bound for Fremantle.

44 A. That's correct.

45

46 Q. And secured in Fremantle on 25 September 1941.

47 A. That is correct.

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Q. May I ask you firstly about routine during your time on Sydney. Was there a routine for the ship to come to action stations in the morning?

A. At sea, dawn action stations, yes.

Q. Was that daily?

A. Daily at sea, yes.

Q. Did that require the ship's company to go to the various allocated positions throughout the ship for each member of the crew for action stations?

A. Yes.

Q. Where was your position for action stations?

A. I was the communications number on the after .5, that is the anti-aircraft gun, which was just abaft the mainsail and virtually above "X" turret and the after control.

Q. When you say "the communications number", what was your responsibility?

A. I wore headphones and a microphone, with a telephone linkage to the air defence officer on the bridge. The telephone was in a shelter forward of the gun platform, and that is basically where I was. The phone had a long lead, which would have enabled me to get to the gun platform in case of need, which never did occur. In fact, I have always regarded the - the likelihood of my ever being on the gun platform was virtually nil. On one occasion I was instructed on how to fit a magazine on the gun, and that was all. Apart from that, I was communications number.

THE PRESIDENT: Q. When the ship went to action stations, the 4-inch guns were manned?

A. Yes.

Q. And the machine-guns?

A. The machine-guns, sir - do you mean my gun?

Q. No, not your gun. Were there any machine-guns on board Sydney?

A. Not to my knowledge. There must have - I'd say as a matter of general possibility there were machine-guns somewhere, but they were not mounted anywhere, to my knowledge.

CMDR RUSH: Q. You don't recall machine-guns being

1 mounted on Sydney?

2 A. Nowhere, no. The .5 anti-aircraft guns were
3 effectively machine-guns. They didn't fire explosive
4 bullets or anything like that.

5

6 THE PRESIDENT: Q. And they were manned at action
7 stations?

8 A. Yes.

9

10 Q. As well as the 4-inch guns?

11 A. Yes.

12

13 CMDR RUSH: Q. And the torpedo tubes - were they manned
14 at action stations?

15 A. I believe so. I couldn't see them, but I believe so.
16 Everything was manned.

17

18 Q. Do you recall - and if you don't or you weren't in
19 a position to see it, say so - anything with the aircraft
20 occurring at action stations?

21 A. I couldn't really see. I had always understood - I'd
22 see airmen about when action stations was piped or on
23 securing action stations - there was movement around the
24 aircraft but I couldn't be more positive than that.

25

26 Q. What was your rig on Sydney? What did you wear?

27 A. Mostly the sailor's blue uniform, and unless we moved
28 into the tropics, when it was normal to change into white
29 shorts, tropical gear.

30

31 Q. As far as your observations on Sydney, what was the
32 officers' rig or uniform?

33 A. The officers were the same - blue uniforms always and
34 white uniforms if we went into the tropics.

35

36 Q. Mr Templeton --

37

38 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Sorry, had you finished?

39 A. I was going to add that I did see - I'm talking about
40 officers on the bridge, because you only went on the bridge
41 if you were properly and fully dressed. I did see the
42 gunnery officer, Michael Singer, appear on the bridge every
43 now and then dressed in the officers white overalls. That
44 seemed to be done, because he was working on the gunnery
45 control system and/or doing something to fix "A" turret,
46 which was on my last, the previous trip, my trip, out of
47 action. So in dress, full uniform always, and I made the

1 exception.

2

3 CMDR RUSH: Q. Mr Templeton, I asked you what your role
4 was at action stations. What was your duty in day-to-day
5 operations of the ship?

6 A. In day-to-day operations, I was the port after lookout
7 of the red watch on the bridge each time, on the bridge.

8

9 Q. Perhaps if we could take it step by step. Port after
10 lookout?

11 A. Yes.

12

13 Q. What did that involve you in doing?

14 A. Keeping eyes open on what I'd call the port quadrant
15 of the ship and with a pair of binoculars on a stand for
16 use and to report anything sighted to the officers of the
17 watch.

18

19 Q. That was the port. Was there an equivalent person
20 performing that duty on starboard?

21 A. There were four bridge lookouts - there was the
22 starboard aft and port and starboard forward.

23

24 Q. Did each have binoculars?

25 A. Yes. The difference was the forward lookouts had, I'd
26 call it, a more aristocratic system - a pair of binoculars
27 on a stand --

28

29 Q. I might stop you there. You said the forward after
30 lookout had a --

31 A. The forward lookouts had a more elaborate system.
32 Their binoculars were operated in a stand, but those could
33 be linked to the director, known as the Evershed bearing
34 indicator, which was fitted to those forward lookouts. But
35 I just had a manual - port and starboard after just had
36 a manual pair of binoculars to look through.

37

38 Q. You mentioned the red watch. The significance of that
39 in the running of the ship is just to indicate what watch
40 you were on?

41 A. I was always red watch. At sea, at cruising stations,
42 we were in three watches - red, white and blue - so that
43 one discharged these duties on the bridge when your turn
44 came. Does that answer it?

45

46 Q. Thank you. Mr Templeton, you spoke about "A" turret.
47 Firstly, I want to ask you did you make any observation

1 from the Sydney's progress between Westernport and
2 Fremantle of any damage occurring to "A" turret on the ship
3 over that period of time?

4 A. Yes, certainly did. It was a pretty violent sea and
5 the ship took an awful thrashing. During the dawn action
6 stations, the turrets were trained - "A" turret had been
7 trained 90 degrees to port and it could not be trained fore
8 and aft. It stuck at 90 degrees to port. My own judgment
9 and that of others was that she had suffered some kind of
10 physical damage. I can say that amongst the seamen in the
11 mess afterwards there was a consensus that the old ship had
12 never taken a thrashing like this for years and years, so
13 it was very heavy sea, monstrous sea.

14
15 To give an example for a picture, it was possible to
16 see Aquitania, 46,000 tonnes of ship, with her bow right
17 out of the water at that type of angle (indicating).
18 I might mention that the view from Aquitania, expressed to
19 me by one of her people later, talking of Sydney, saying,
20 "We thought we were being escorted by a submarine rather
21 than a cruiser." It was as bad as that. So there was
22 terribly severe damage done to "A" turret.

23
24 Q. I think I was asking you about the damage. Was it
25 observable? What did you see?

26 A. There was no --

27
28 Q. As far as the turret was concerned?

29 A. As far as the turret was concerned, it was only
30 observable that it was jammed 90 degrees to port. What
31 caused that I don't know.

32
33 THE PRESIDENT: Q. This was on a voyage from Westernport
34 to Fremantle?

35 A. That's correct, yes.

36
37 CMDR RUSH: Q. You indicated that, in your opinion, the
38 ship took quite a pounding.

39 A. Yes.

40
41 Q. Do you recall at all the ship reducing speed during
42 that weather?

43 A. Yes. She came down to 6 knots during one watch.
44 I particularly noticed that, but she increased speed when
45 the seas abated a bit. But she was forced to come down to
46 6 knots, and I think the convoy speed was around 15 to
47 18 knots normally, so it was a very considerable reduction

1 of speed.

2

3 Q. At that stage, Sydney was leading a convoy of what
4 ships?

5 A. Yes, of four ships - Aquitania - four ships, two
6 columns. On the port column, Aquitania and she was
7 followed by the Dutch Sibajak. The starboard column were
8 the two Dutchmen - Johann van Oldebarnevelt and Marnix van
9 Sint Aldegonde.

10

11 Q. Thank you, and each of those ships maintained its
12 speed with Sydney?

13 A. Yes, yes.

14

15 Q. After Sydney docked in Fremantle after that convoy
16 duty, you indicate, as I understand your evidence, that she
17 entered dock with "A" turret 90 degrees to port?

18 A. We berthed, yes, with "A" turret 90 degrees to port,
19 yes.

20

21 Q. During her time whilst tied up at Fremantle, did you
22 make any observation as to whether that bearing and
23 position of "A" turret changed?

24 A. Well, it did not change. I observed that. It did not
25 change at all.

26

27 Q. You went to sea in Sydney I think on 28 September --

28 A. Yes.

29

30 Q. -- when Sydney went on escort duty to rendezvous in
31 the Sunda Strait?

32 A. Yes.

33

34 Q. Do you have any recollection of the gun as Sydney set
35 off on 28 September?

36 A. "A" turret was still pointing out to port at that
37 point and remained so during the whole of the northern
38 voyage, and on the voyage south in October. Bringing the
39 ship back to Fremantle, which was around 7 October, perhaps
40 within a day of that, "A" turret was still pointing 90
41 degrees to port. May I continue on that?

42

43 Q. Yes.

44 A. That was rectified - how, I don't know, but it was
45 rectified at that time within perhaps the week or so
46 I remained on board. Of that I am certain, because on one
47 of the evolutions which I was required to attend as part of

1 my training, we moved out of the harbour to do a mooring
2 exercise, mooring ship. Now, as part of my officer
3 training, I was generally, if not always, present when
4 evolutions were carried out. That mooring ship exercise
5 had me standing in front of "A" turret guns trained fore
6 and aft, so whatever the fault was, it was corrected at
7 that point and before she sailed again.

8
9 Q. I am trying to work out what point you're referring
10 to. You have stated in your evidence, and you agreed
11 I think with the ship's log, that Sydney set sail from
12 Fremantle on 28 September.

13 A. Yes.

14
15 Q. And you say that at that stage "A" turret was still
16 bearing to port.

17 A. Yes.

18
19 Q. And remained in that position throughout, up the coast
20 to Sunda Strait, and return?

21 A. Yes.

22
23 Q. And the evidence you've just given relates to
24 a mooring exercise that occurred upon return from the Sunda
25 Strait?

26 A. Yes.

27
28 Q. What did you observe in relation to "A" turret being
29 corrected, if you like, or the position remedied?

30 A. "A" turret was trained fore and aft. Perhaps
31 I haven't expressed that well. "A" turret was trained fore
32 and aft at the time of the mooring ship evolution, because
33 I was standing in front of or under the guns of "A" turret
34 midships and it would have been totally obvious to me if
35 "A" turret had been still out to port, and she was not. It
36 had been corrected. How I don't know.

37
38 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Some time after 7 October 1940?

39 A. Yes, that's correct.

40
41 Q. And before you left on 17 October, it was rectified?

42 A. Yes.

43
44 CMDR RUSH: Is that a convenient time, sir?

45
46 THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I will adjourn to 2 o'clock.

47

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

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1 UPON RESUMPTION:
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3 CMDR RUSH: Q. I want to clarify a couple of things.
4 The Commissioner asked you a question just before we
5 adjourned, Mr Templeton. On the basis that the ship's log
6 is correct and Sydney returned to Fremantle from her voyage
7 to and from the Sunda Strait on 7 October, on your evidence
8 at some stage when mooring in Fremantle the "A" turret was
9 pointing fore and aft. Were you aware of any course of
10 action in "A" turret during the time that the ship was at
11 sea when the gun would be deliberately not pointed fore and
12 aft?

13 A. I don't quite understand the question, because --
14

15 Q. What I want to suggest to you is that "A" turret was
16 deliberately trained on the outboard bearing when the ship
17 was at sea?

18 A. When crossing the Bight?
19

20 Q. No, not when crossing the Bight. When it was
21 deliberately trained --

22 A. It wasn't deliberately trained. It was an enforced
23 training 90 degrees port.
24

25 Q. I want to put this proposition to you, that "A" turret
26 was always trained on the outboard bearing to prevent water
27 entering the area where the gun barrels leave the gunhouse,
28 when at sea?

29 A. Not in my experience at all.
30

31 Q. I need to ask you during your time of the three and
32 a half months on Sydney, "A" turret was not a place where
33 you would go?

34 A. No. That's fair.
35

36 Q. Apart from your observation of the gun pointing to
37 port, you, I suggest, would not be aware of the position as
38 to the serviceability of "A" turret? You wouldn't be in
39 a position to know as to its serviceability.

40 A. Other than general knowledge of the ship personally,
41 no.
42

43 Q. Mr Templeton, during your time on Sydney, do you have
44 any recollection of the subject of a raider, a disguised
45 merchant raider, being raised, and, if so, in what
46 circumstances?

47 A. That was raised on 28 September after we left

1 Fremantle heading seaward, and we probably altered course
2 to the north, being sufficiently offshore to avoid mine
3 risk. Divisions was piped, five-minute warning, which is
4 not in the log, but it was, and those of us off watch fell
5 in on the quarterdeck in our various groups - seamen,
6 stokers and others. Apart from the prayers and hymns, the
7 captain ended the divisions by telling us that he knew that
8 there was a raider in the area and to keep vigilant and
9 that, if we met her, we were to increase the reputation and
10 standing of the ship. So that was a very positive
11 statement, which was taken on board by all of us, and of
12 course it went round the ship like lightning. Every man on
13 board would have known that.

14
15 Q. You have indicated in that answer that you have
16 examined the log of Sydney in relation to that date of
17 28 September.

18 A. Yes.

19
20 Q. What caused you to examine the log, why?

21 A. For some of the things I'd written, I tried to get
22 accuracy, and it was necessary to get copies of the log for
23 the times I was in the ship, and then I married them up as
24 well as I could with my letters home, because memory faded
25 a bit over the years. But that was done and I was
26 satisfied that the log was accurate, and my letters home,
27 which couldn't say that much, but they refreshed my memory
28 to be as certain as I could possibly be about what happened
29 and when.

30
31 Q. Do you have any recollection of a gunnery target being
32 located and --

33
34 THE PRESIDENT: Just before you go to that, could you put
35 up, please, NAA.013.0113_01. That is the log for
36 28 September.

37
38 CMDR RUSH: We have a blown-up copy here, if it assists,
39 sir.

40
41 THE PRESIDENT: I have it. It says, if I read this
42 correctly, "0900 five seamen ratings joined ship".

43
44 Q. Did this occasion, when you say you recall the captain
45 saying something about a raider, occur while the ship was
46 in port?

47 A. No, at sea, sir, well out to sea.

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Q. If five ratings joined the ship at 0900 on Sunday, 28 September, that must have occurred on a different date.

A. I don't recollect saying at 0900.

Q. No, you didn't. I would interpret - unless someone tells me I have it completely wrong - that where the log says that five seamen ratings joined the ship, that necessarily means that the ratings came on board at that time and the ship must have been in port.

A. Yes, that's right. But she sailed --

Q. If that's the case, then the experience that you've recounted to me of hearing the captain say something at Sunday divisions could not have been 28 September.

A. I'm sorry, sir, it was 28 September. It was done at sea once we had cleared the port, and it would have been later in the morning, at a guess 1100. We had sailed from Fremantle --

Q. At 1100, what does it say? I can't read that.

CMDR RUSH: General quarters, which is a degree of readiness.

THE PRESIDENT: Anyway, yes.

CMDR RUSH: Q. I don't want to spend a lot of time on this, but I was asking you, Mr Templeton, your recollection of a gunnery target being located and brought aboard Sydney.

A. Yes.

Q. And I suggest that was on 3 October 1941.

A. At 0110, from memory.

Q. Thank you. And the log of 5 October, which is at 013.0058, sir, at 0930 records "Hands to divisions and prayers" on that day.

A. Yes.

Q. From your research at the log, you would be familiar that when hands were called to divisions and prayers, it was entered in the log?

A. It usually was done, but it was not done on 28 September.

1 Q. And 0930 was normally the hour, was it not?

2 A. That would be normal, at sea or in harbour.

3

4 Q. 0930 was normally the hour for divisions and prayers
5 on Sunday?

6 A. Yes.

7

8 Q. The locating of the gunnery target on 3 October was
9 the subject, was it not, in your mind at least, of perhaps
10 an additional factor or a factor that was pointing to
11 a raider; was that raised?

12 A. No. I was below. I didn't get up to look, like a lot
13 of others, at the raft. It was discussed on the mess deck
14 and we all agreed that it was unlikely to be from a raider.
15 The stories magnified within an hour of the raft that the
16 raider spotted us and raced off, which was an absolute
17 nonsense because it didn't have the speed or the capacity
18 to do that, even if it had in fact dropped the raft.

19

20 I can only add later experience in the Indian Ocean
21 that finding a target in the water was not uncommon, having
22 used one in a later ship as target practice ourselves.
23 Merchant ships were wont to make these things out of spare
24 timber, throw them overboard and defensively equipped
25 merchant ships would use them as target practice. To that
26 extent, it could come from any ship.

27

28 So the raider theory was discounted amongst all the
29 people I knew, because it was so unlikely that a target
30 could have been dropped by a raider and then it
31 disappeared. Tests, I heard later, were made that the raft
32 had been in the water for three hours or something like
33 that. But the raider idea was dismissed. What I did not
34 do was go up on deck to look at the raft or the target, so
35 to that extent I'm deficient. I don't know that I can add
36 to that.

37

38 Q. There is material before the Commission of Inquiry of
39 CAPT Burnett writing in the record of proceedings for the
40 month of October concerning the target and raising the
41 possibility that it was a target for a raider. If we put
42 that into one basket, was there any other matter raised on
43 the backwards and forwards from 28 September to 7 October,
44 on that trip backwards and forwards to the Sunda Strait, if
45 we accept what CAPT Burnett raised, that anything else was
46 specifically raised or brought to bear on the subject of
47 a raider?

1 A. No.

2

3 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Mr Templeton, what is it that makes
4 you so sure this occurred on 28 September, because every
5 time, it seemed, that there were divisions and prayers it's
6 record in the log?

7 A. True.

8

9 Q. And you say it was the 28th. We have an incident
10 where CAPT Burnett apparently thought, on 3 October, that
11 it was likely or it might have come from a raider, so
12 raider was to his mind. Two days later, you have divisions
13 and prayers, which is recorded in the log. And the issue
14 that I will have to decide is whether you are right, that
15 it was the 28th, or whether it was the following week.
16 Everything, if I may say so, at present points to it being
17 the following week.

18 A. No. I'd like to correct something in that. The
19 following week was Sunday, 5 October, and divisions
20 occurred on that day. You're probably working on my
21 address to the Royal United Services Institute --

22

23 Q. No, I'm just looking at the logs.

24 A. Just at the log? I would like to explain why that
25 5 October entry in the log and divisions is different from
26 what I am talking about on 28 September. I have always
27 suspected that it was not entered in the log, the holding
28 of divisions, because it wasn't a proper divisions.
29 Divisions usually has the band playing, we sang hymns, the
30 chaplain spoke, the captain spoke, and the 28 September one
31 fell a bit short on that. We didn't have the band out.
32 There were about three instruments of some kind. It was
33 like a scratch divisions. And I think for that reason it
34 was not logged --

35

36 Q. But, Mr Templeton, the log shows entries at 0700 - if
37 I'm reading them correctly - 0800, 0900, 0905, 1007, 1008,
38 1038, 1100, 1111, 1116, 1127 and 1200. It records an event
39 for each one of those times. If there was also divisions,
40 one would have thought they would have been noted.

41 A. Of which date are you speaking, sir - 5 October?

42

43 Q. I'm talking about 28 September when you say there was
44 divisions and prayers and a speech was made or a statement
45 was made by the captain about a raider being present. The
46 balance of the material would seem to me at present to
47 point towards that having occurred, if it occurred at all,

1 assuming it did, the following Sunday where divisions and
2 prayers are recorded. On the day on which you say this
3 occurred, there are entries for 0700, 0800, 0900, 0905
4 I think, 1007, 1018, 1038 I think, 1100, 1111, 1116, 1137
5 and 1200. There is no mention of divisions and prayers.
6 So for you to be right, you have to say that they didn't
7 record it in the log. But the practice universally was
8 that they did record prayers and divisions in the log.

9 A. Could I have that page?

10
11 Q. Yes, it's NAA.013.0113_01. I may have got the times
12 a bit wrong; they're hard to read. But you can see all the
13 entries there. Can we put this on the screen and magnify
14 it.

15
16 CMDR RUSH: Sir, I regret to say I don't think this
17 appears on Summation for some reason. It has been skipped.

18
19 THE PRESIDENT: Q. What you're suggesting, as I
20 understand it, is that in addition to all those entries,
21 there was divisions and prayers which are not recorded.

22 A. Well, that's what I know to be fact.

23
24 Q. What I'm asking you to explain to me is why you are so
25 insistent that it was 28 September when the balance of
26 evidence seems to point to the following Sunday?

27 A. The following Sunday is not in dispute. I'm trying to
28 work through this. If we start at 1100, it was in the
29 hour, 1000 to 1100, that we sailed from Fremantle. What
30 happened after 1100 - general quarters, which was the
31 standard procedure for testing all the equipment of the
32 ship. Once we were at sea, we went to general quarters and
33 tested everything, as mentioned at 1100. At 1111, altered
34 course to 270 - I'm working on this - I can't make out that
35 next one. I'll look at the courses to see if that tells us
36 anything. I can't quite read the 1116 entry.

37
38 THE PRESIDENT: Can you read that, Commander Rush? Does
39 someone have a magnifying glass?

40
41 CMDR RUSH: No, I haven't, sir. I think 1100 general
42 quarters; 1111 --

43
44 THE WITNESS: Reverted to fourth degree of readiness.

45
46 CMDR RUSH: Reverted to fourth degree of readiness,
47 correct. Rottnest Island something 16 miles, I think, sir.

1 Distance 16 miles.

2

3 THE PRESIDENT: Reverted to fourth degree of readiness, is
4 it?

5

6 CMDR RUSH: Yes, from general quarters.

7

8 THE PRESIDENT: Then at 1150 is the next entry and at
9 12 o'clock there is some reference to the convoy, I think.

10

11 CMDR RUSH: Yes, sir.

12

13 THE PRESIDENT: Q. If, as you say, this happened when
14 you were well at sea, it must have been in the afternoon.

15 A. It was prior to hands to dinner at least, which must
16 be before 1200. I'm trying to think back on it. We went
17 to general quarters.

18

19 Q. Apart from your memory, is there anything which fixes
20 the date of 28 September?

21 A. I'm holding to my memory, by the way, about the time.
22 I think I wrote in the RUSI address on this point. I wrote
23 something about Sabbath morn at sea when we had retreated
24 to the mess decks hall, retreated from general quarters,
25 and at some point there was the pipe that divisions will be
26 held at such and such a time, a matter of minutes away, and
27 I had to come out from the mess deck with the others, form
28 up on quarterdeck, and the captain had a short service and
29 the captain spoke to us in those words at that point. And
30 that was prior to hands to dinner, prior to 12 o'clock.
31 The timing I think would have been coincidental. It was
32 a case of getting clear of Fremantle, getting clear of the
33 swept channel, get the right distance offshore, not in
34 mineable waters, before turning north roughly.

35

36 Q. Mineable waters being a depth of 200 yards?

37 A. 200 metres, 100 fathoms, yes. My recollection is that
38 that was done before the convoy formed up behind us. My
39 recollection is quite clear that we had gone below after
40 general quarters, or we would have had to have gone below,
41 and then there was the sort of moan about divisions. We
42 hadn't expected it. But I am absolutely certain that
43 divisions, even in their reduced form, did take place,
44 notwithstanding that they're not recorded here. I'm
45 absolutely certain, because it went round the ship like
46 lightning - the presence of a raider - and was very much
47 commented on, and it would not have waited until 5 October,

1 when we did have full divisions.
2

3 Now, I could be partly at fault on something I wrote,
4 because when I did the initial address to the RUSI and the
5 paper followed, I thought - that was done, and then when
6 the parliamentary inquiry came up, I used that address as
7 appendix B to my submission to the inquiry, and I had not
8 initially checked with the logs. Later, I married up my
9 letters, as far as possible, with the log and thought
10 perhaps I have been wrong, I could be wrong, and the date
11 of divisions at which the announcement was made was
12 5 October. So for the parliamentary inquiry, I put
13 a manuscript note alongside my previous comment in the
14 address that possibly I'm wrong and it was 5 October.
15

16 Now, that has been adopted by others as the only date
17 of divisions. When I came to look at it again, I was wrong
18 to put that note alongside my RUSI address. I come right
19 back to 28 September, because it all fitted in in my own
20 mind, my interpretation of my letters, and there is no
21 record of those divisions here. But the only reason there
22 is not, I suspect, is that it was a lower grade of
23 divisions; it wasn't the full divisions. But that
24 announcement was made and we all knew about it.
25

26 Now, as corollary proof of that, the encounter with
27 Islander on 3 October, where we had gone to action
28 stations, the concern of the guns crew, the AA guns crew,
29 and certainly my own, was that if that is the raider out
30 there unidentified, we'll be the first to die. Now, that
31 could only have occurred or been said had we known that
32 a raider was in the area. That was before 5 October. It
33 was definitely 28 September. Does that make sense?
34

35 THE PRESIDENT: I'll consider what you've said. I'll give
36 consideration to what you've said.
37

38 CMDR RUSH: Q. Mr Templeton, if I may briefly deal with
39 a matter you raised in answer to the Commissioner. You
40 mentioned the coming to action stations with the ship
41 Islander and that occurring on 3 October.

42 A. Yes.
43

44 Q. And from the reaction of the guns crew next door to
45 you, there was raised at that time a concern to you from
46 the guns crew as to the potential of that ship Islander,
47 before it was identified, being a raider?

1 A. Yes.

2

3 Q. There was also an identification the day before, was
4 there not, in relation to a Norwegian ship on 2 October,
5 and that was at about 1800 hours on 2 October?

6 A. The ship Bramora.

7

8 Q. And the ship was called to action stations then?

9 A. I think so.

10

11 Q. Perhaps if I could show you a copy of the log so that
12 you have in front of you what I have for October. It's
13 NAA.013.0055. It is probably a bit difficult to see it on
14 the screen, is it?

15 A. It depends if I have the right page.

16

17 Q. Could you bring up down the bottom of the page. If we
18 could hand a hard copy of the log to you. It's quite
19 difficult to see, Mr Templeton, but you're looking at the
20 log, up the top of the page, for Thursday, 2 October.

21 A. Yes.

22

23 Q. If I could take you down the page of the log to 1800.

24 A. Yes.

25

26 Q. And take you across to the "Remarks" column. Do you
27 see there "1740 A/E" - altered course, I suggest?

28 A. Yes.

29

30 Q. "To close unknown vessel. Action stations."

31 A. Yes.

32

33 Q. Action stations would take you to your position, the
34 same position that you've identified you were in --

35 A. Yes.

36

37 Q. -- both in evidence earlier this morning and also for
38 the identification of Islander?

39 A. Yes.

40

41 Q. And at 1800 on 2 October, it would be close to dusk,
42 would it not, or dark?

43 A. It was late evening. I'm not sure that it was dark,
44 because --

45

46 Q. At any rate --

47 A. You had secured from action stations. I know I got

1 back to the bridge to my lookout position and we had
2 approached Bramora, which was not identified, but we did
3 a speed turn 180 degrees, which I think I have described.
4 My perception was that this was admonitory and probably
5 words to the effect --
6

7 Q. Can I understand this. This was a turn by a ship's
8 captain that was protecting a convoy?

9 A. Yes.

10
11 Q. The real point here - I want to get to the nub of it,
12 Mr Templeton - is this, that at action stations in the
13 position you were when, between 1740 and 1800, you were not
14 in fear of a raider on this occasion --

15 A. Oh, no.

16
17 Q. -- in the identification process?

18 A. No.

19
20 Q. Yet some hours later, if you turn over the page to
21 3 October and go to 0100 hours --

22 A. We were.

23
24 Q. -- this is the identification of Islander.

25 A. Yes.

26
27 Q. You say that you were?

28 A. Yes.

29
30 Q. To such an extent that the anti-aircraft guns crew
31 left their position to lie in the communications area where
32 you were?

33 A. Yes.

34
35 Q. Yet both involved the identification of a ship in
36 darkness?

37 A. Not in darkness. If we're talking about Bramora, no,
38 it wasn't dark. It might have been late evening, but not
39 dark.

40
41 Q. Was there any discussion with Bramora about a raider?

42 A. I'd have no knowledge of that, anyway. She had been
43 identified.

44
45 Q. No, any discussion between you and the anti-aircraft
46 gun crew about Bramora being a raider?

47 A. No, no.

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Q. None at all?

A. None at all.

Q. And yet a matter of six or seven hours later, there was this discussion about the raider?

A. The circumstances were quite different. You cannot make that comparison. Bramora was a tanker. We came up from astern, overtook her and we left her on the starboard bow. But before we actually got right up to her at some speed, I think there was a 180-degree turn to go back and rejoin the convoy. She must have been identified well before I saw that happen. I think she would have been identified.

THE PRESIDENT: Q. Why do you say that?

A. Because the --

Q. It was the middle of the night.

A. Ordinary procedures, sir.

Q. Are you speaking about the Bramora or the Islander?

A. I'm talking about Bramora.

Q. All right, yes.

A. Ordinary procedure would have had her identified in advance of our getting near her, really, and the --

Q. Well, you're assuming that, are you not?

A. As a matter of logic, she would have been identified, because we came up on her port quarter, and then before getting abeam of her, turned away, and that said to me that she must have been identified, and normal procedure. With Islander, she had not been identified at all. We were within half a mile of her.

Q. Mr Templeton, I just don't understand this. You say that in the case of Bramora, before Sydney approached, she must have been identified; is that right?

A. Sorry?

Q. I had understood you to say that, before Sydney approached Bramora, Bramora must have been identified in accordance with what you described as usual procedure.

A. At some distance, probably.

Q. If that's right, why would Sydney approach at all?

1 A. I put it down to the approach being admonitory,
2 because I couldn't see a reason in my own mind for such an
3 approach being made. Bramora was quite visible. I can
4 still see Bramora on its stern, it was as close as that,
5 and by manifestly coming up at speed and turning away,
6 there could have been no intention of examining Bramora any
7 further, as I saw it. I know I got back to the bridge at
8 the end of the watch, and I did not see the earlier
9 approach while we were at action stations. Does that make
10 any better sense?

11
12 THE PRESIDENT: I'll have to think about what you've said.

13
14 CMDR RUSH: Q. Mr Templeton, just in relation to
15 Islander, the ship again was called to action stations?

16 A. Yes.

17
18 Q. At some stage during of the course of the ship being
19 at action stations, the ship's searchlight was placed on
20 the ship, Islander?

21 A. Yes, yes.

22
23 Q. Prior to that, you were in no position to observe any
24 signalling from Sydney?

25 A. Not to observe it, but vaguely conscious that there
26 must have been a lamp on the bridge challenging Islander.

27
28 Q. What was that consciousness --

29 A. Just seeing it out of the corner of my eye, that's
30 all.

31
32 Q. When the searchlight came on, what did you see?

33 A. I saw the Islander. She practically stopped. So did
34 we. And from somewhere amidships on Islander, a man came
35 out wearing a white shirt, long navy trousers - I could see
36 it with my own eyes - and he raced up the deck of Islander,
37 shot up the ladder to the bridge, and shortly after an
38 Aldis lamp started stuttering. It looked as though it was
39 in terror. So the correct response must have been made,
40 the correct identification given, and we moved away and
41 left Islander. So that's as good as I can do, I think.

42
43 Q. Had you been involved, prior to that occasion, on any
44 other occasion at night when the ship had been called to
45 action stations for the purposes of identification of
46 another ship? Prior to that date, had you been involved in
47 such a procedure on Sydney?

1 A. No.

2

3 Q. Is that the only occasion that you can recall an
4 identification --

5 A. At night like that, yes.

6

7 THE PRESIDENT: Q. It's a little difficult, absent
8 receipt at night of proper signals from a vessel being
9 identified, to think of how one could identify that vessel
10 without approaching closely and using a searchlight,
11 bearing in mind that it's a time of war and radio
12 communications are not permitted.

13 A. I'm trying to - I'm sorry, sir, I've lost the drift of
14 your question. Would you mind --

15

16 Q. My understanding was that you were being somewhat
17 critical because Sydney went close, sufficiently close
18 whilst at action stations to turn on her searchlight and
19 see the Islander at a distance of something like a mile.

20 A. The searchlight didn't come on immediately.

21

22 Q. What I was putting to you was this: there was
23 a recognised method of recognition?

24 A. Yes.

25

26 Q. That involved the Islander responding to lamp signals
27 from Sydney?

28 A. Yes.

29

30 Q. On the account you've given, she had not apparently
31 responded properly --

32 A. Correct.

33

34 Q. -- because you saw a man run up and get a torch and
35 respond. In those circumstances, if Sydney was protecting
36 a convoy, her duty would have been to identify and make
37 sure this wasn't an enemy vessel. I'm at a loss at present
38 to understand how she could do that without going in close
39 so she could turn on her searchlight and see who it was,
40 absent proper signals from the merchant vessel?

41 A. I'm not on the frequency. She left the convoy, or we
42 left the convoy, to make an identification. Normally, if
43 the identification was speedy with a response from the ship
44 being quizzed, we wouldn't have got so close to Islander.
45 The searchlight did not, of course, go on immediately. We
46 approached without the searchlight. But it was when we
47 heard the ignition of the carbon arcs of the searchlight

1 about a metre or two above our heads that the captain of
2 the gun became concerned and said, "Now, if that thing out
3 there is the raider, if that light goes on, he'll know what
4 we are, we don't know what he is; all he has to do is aim
5 at that searchlight and we're the first to die."
6

7 Q. So what was the captain of the Sydney supposed to do?

8 A. Sorry, sir?
9

10 Q. What was the captain of Sydney supposed to do?

11 A. I suppose press more for identification from Islander.
12 But if we didn't - the argument has always been, or our
13 understanding, that if you didn't know what the ship was,
14 you didn't put a searchlight on it. It would sign your own
15 death warrant.
16

17 Q. Has it occurred to you there might have been an
18 exchange of signals between the Sydney and the Islander,
19 that the captain was in fact satisfied, or at least had
20 been told it was the Islander, but in conformity with good
21 practice, it being night-time, he could not make that
22 recognition without going in close? Has that ever occurred
23 to you?

24 A. It's something I would not regard as terribly
25 relevant.
26

27 THE PRESIDENT: Yes, CMDR Rush.
28

29 CMDR RUSH: Q. You were above X turret. Were the guns
30 trained on Islander?

31 A. No.
32

33 Q. Was the ship making way when the searchlight went on?

34 A. I think not. It was borderline. It slowed right
35 down.
36

37 Q. And they would be two other factors, would they not,
38 pointing to the fact that Islander had been recognised, if
39 the guns weren't trained and the ship was not making way?

40 A. No, because I don't think the guns would have been
41 used. I think the "X" and "Y" turrets I think swung round,
42 and our after .5 contribution would have been pretty
43 meaningless.
44

45 THE PRESIDENT: Q. Sorry, did you say "X" and "Y"
46 turrets were bearing?

47 A. Yes.

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Q. And the vessel, which turned out to be Islander, was almost stationary?

A. Yes.

Q. Presumably, having been told to stop by Sydney?

A. Sorry, sir?

Q. Presumably, having been told to stop by Sydney?

A. I can't make that presumption.

Q. Why else would she stop in the middle of the ocean in the middle of the night?

A. I think Islander had probably been challenged by Sydney, and, like many merchant ships, was pretty slow in responding, and they more or less stopped out of terror, almost, or concern for their own safety. That's how I saw it happening. I don't think I can do better than that.

CMDR RUSH: Q. The stopping of the ship is as consistent with it having been ordered to stop by Sydney as it is stopping through terror, is it?

A. Well, I cannot believe that such an order was given, because if it had been given by lamp, there must have been someone reading that challenge, that order. And, on my observation, there probably wasn't anyone on the bridge of Islander who could read Morse like that.

Q. What you observed was a person climbing a ladder and then a lamp and signalling from Islander? You saw a person climbing a lamp and then signalling from Islander?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. There's just one other matter, Mr Templeton, that I want to go to, and it concerns the gunnery target that we've spoken about. It's on the same day, on 3 October, and it's written up in the log. Again, if I could take you to 1800 hours on 3 October, there is reference there to, "Altered course to close object bearing 220 degrees", I think, and I'm not quite sure of the next entry, and then the entry, "Action stations". Do you see that?

A. Yes.

Q. You have indicated that you did not see the recovery of this target?

A. I did not, no, and I was not at action stations. I was not at action stations. I was down below having

1 supper with most of the men.

2

3 Q. When did you first have cause to remember, for
4 example, in such detail the incidents of 3 October 1941, as
5 recorded in the log?

6 A. I think it was almost automatic and I never really
7 departed from it. I checked the logs much later.

8

9 Q. My question is really this: what was it and when was
10 it that brought you back to these specific incidents of
11 3 October?

12 A. It was when I did the RUSI address, I had a look at my
13 letters and whatever in case my mind was wandering and
14 I got something wrong. Now, these incidents --

15

16 THE PRESIDENT: Q. That address was 1991, was it, or
17 earlier than that?

18 A. The RUSI address?

19

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. 1994 that was.

22

23 Q. 1994, thank you.

24 A. Yes. These things had always been in my mind, but
25 I checked the logs before giving that RUSI address,
26 suspecting myself of being wrong or memory failing, but the
27 recollection of the events was practically seared on my
28 brain pretty well, because the ship's company or the chaps
29 that I lived with were so concerned, we all said, "Oh,
30 dear, this can't be right."

31

32 Q. Between 1800 on 2 October and 1800 on 3 October, the
33 ship has come to action stations for the purposes of
34 identification on two occasions that you've just given
35 evidence about and agreed with. I suggest that when
36 "action stations" is written in the log, the same procedure
37 is followed: you have action stations on 2 October at 0110
38 and action stations at 1800. Surely the log is going to
39 provide a better record of what actually occurred than the
40 memory that you come back to 50 years after the event?

41 A. I understand your point, but you're not right. You'll
42 find that the 1800 recording of "action stations" was
43 a different handwriting, been added. By whom I don't know.
44 I've tried to identify the writing.

45

46 THE PRESIDENT: Q. The entry at 1810? I'm no
47 handwriting expert, but if I had to make a decision,

1 I would say it's the same handwriting as the material
2 beside it and below it.

3 A. The abbreviation "action stations", I suggest, is not
4 in the same handwriting as the log entry, "Altered course
5 to close", et cetera.

6
7 Q. Are you looking at the document of 3 October?

8
9 CMDR RUSH: Yes, that's what the witness has.

10
11 THE WITNESS: Yes.

12
13 THE PRESIDENT: Q. "Altered course to close".

14 A. Yes, "and increased 20 knots". That is different
15 handwriting.

16
17 Q. So you're suggesting that the log has been tampered
18 with in some fashion, or added to, are you?

19 A. Yes, I am.

20
21 Q. Have you seen the original?

22 A. No. No, I've only had copies. The same as these.

23
24 Q. I have to say to you that my view, looking at these,
25 is that it is in precisely the same handwriting as the next
26 three lines and that which precedes it.

27
28 CMDR RUSH: Q. If I could just put this to you,
29 Mr Templeton: on every other occasion over your three and
30 a half months on Sydney where the log recorded the ship
31 coming to action stations, the ship came to action
32 stations?

33 A. Not - this is one where it did not come to action
34 stations. I'm trying to remember whether there were other
35 occasions when this disparity occurred. I have a feeling
36 there were some disparities. But on this 1810 one, I am
37 absolutely certain that we were not at full action
38 stations, and I wrote saying that there was a pipe, "Close
39 up main armament", which was unusual. We were all eating
40 our supper, and I mentioned some men leaving the mess deck
41 to go to the turrets, presumably, so that the main armament
42 was manned. But full action stations, no. That's why
43 I was so interested to read in the log years later that we
44 were supposed to be at action stations, full. We weren't.

45
46 Q. Let me be specific, then. On 2 October and 3 October,
47 the two occasions when the ship was called to action

1 stations prior to the entry in the log at 1800 on
2 3 October, the ship went to full action stations for
3 Bramora and Islander?

4 A. Bramora and Islander, I think, yes.

5
6 CMDR RUSH: They are the matters, sir.

7
8 THE WITNESS: But the target, no. I think we weren't able
9 to see a threat or a target. There could be a perceived
10 threat from Islander or Bramora, but not a target, and that
11 entry is misleading, in my book.

12
13 CMDR RUSH: Thank you.

14
15 <EXAMINATION BY LCDR RENWICK:

16
17 LCDR RENWICK: Q. Continuing looking at that entry at
18 1810 to 1904, you went so far as to say to the
19 parliamentary committee that you were convinced that the
20 additional words of "action stations" were "considered
21 necessary to improve the presentation to higher authority".

22 A. That was my view.

23
24 Q. Do you still maintain that view?

25 A. Yes.

26
27 Q. And who made the change?

28 A. I don't know.

29
30 Q. And you concede you have never seen the original?

31 A. Yes.

32
33 Q. Do you say that you have an actual recollection,
34 sitting there now, of what happened at 1810 hours 67 years
35 ago?

36 A. Yes.

37
38 Q. You do?

39 A. Yes.

40
41 Q. I see, and has that recollection stayed continuously
42 in your mind in the past 67 years?

43 A. Yes, yes, yes.

44
45 Q. I see, so when your memory differs from the log, it's
46 the log which is wrong?

47 A. Yes.

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Q. Just one other matter. I think you gave evidence that at one point you were a gunnery officer on a ship.

A. On a ship, yes.

Q. What was the maximum range of the principal armaments of the Sydney?

A. Of the Sydney?

Q. Yes.

A. About 22,000 yards.

Q. And how did that compare, in your view, with the maximum range of the Kormoran?

A. My gunnery officer --

Q. I'm sorry, just wait for the question, sorry, sir. You've given us the maximum range for the HMAS Sydney principal armament.

A. Yes.

Q. How, in your view as a former gunnery officer on a ship, does that --

A. You had better define "gunnery officer" .

Q. In the way that you gave evidence before that you held the position of gunnery officer on one of --

A. A Corvette.

Q. Yes, indeed. What do you say the maximum range of the principal armament on the Kormoran was?

A. On Kormoran - I should know this exactly. I've got to rely on memory for this, which is - firstly, it was considerably less than Sydney's. Suppose we work in metres for the purpose, Sydney could have been about - or kilometres - say 11,000, near enough, thereabouts. In talking to the German gunners, I think their maximum range might have been about 9,000 metres or possibly a little less, certainly less than Sydney's.

Q. So the difference is approximately what?

A. Maximum range, yes.

Q. The difference between the ranges of the two ships is approximately what?

A. Just a minute. About 2 kilometres or possibly a bit more than that.

1
2 LCDR RENWICK: Thank you. No further questions, sir.
3
4 THE PRESIDENT: Anything arising?
5
6 CMDR RUSH: I have no re-examination.
7
8 THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Mr Templeton. You've
9 been of great assistance to me. Thank you.
10
11 <THE WITNESS WITHDREW
12
13 CMDR RUSH: I call CDRE Dollard, sir.
14
15 <ALLEN DOLLARD, affirmed: [3.14pm]
16
17 <EXAMINATION BY CMDR RUSH:
18
19 CMDR RUSH: Q. CDRE Dollard, is your name Allen Dollard?
20 A. Yes.
21
22 Q. Could you state your address?
23 A. [REDACTED].
24
25 Q. And are you a retired naval officer?
26 A. Yes.
27
28 Q. CDRE Dollard, did you join the RAN in 1932?
29 A. Yes.
30
31 Q. How old were you?
32 A. Fifteen.
33
34 Q. Did you undertake initial training at the naval
35 college?
36 A. Yes.
37
38 Q. After initial training, were you sent to the United
39 Kingdom?
40 A. Yes.
41
42 Q. Was that for the purpose of undertaking midshipman
43 training at sea?
44 A. Yes.
45
46 Q. Do you recall what ships you served in during that
47 training?