

Last week, on Remembrance Day I attended an Ecumenical Service at St Patrick's Basilica in Fremantle.

I was amazed, even after 67 years has elapsed, at the enormity of feeling still evident in Fremantle in relation to the crew of Sydney.

The Mayor of the City of Fremantle, Councillor Peter Tagliaferri spoke of how the people of Fremantle had developed close relationships and alliances with Sydney and her crew.

I'm sure there is a story to be told about every one of the crew of Sydney. To put more of a human face on this, today, I'd like to tell you of one person, who we recently discovered, was born right here in Geraldton.

I speak of Thomas Edgar DAVIS who was one the seven children of Charles & Maude DAVIS. Charles Davis served as Geraldton Councillor between 1926 and 1930.

Young Thomas (or Edgar as he was known) joined the Royal Australian Naval Academy at the tender age of 13 and enlisted with the RAN in January of 1933 when he was just 14.

In ensuing years he rose to rank of Lieutenant and had served his country with distinction before he lost his life at the age of 21 when "Sydney" went down with all hands.

Imagine for a moment, if you will, the devastation thrown upon the Davis family at that time. As I said earlier, apart from his parents there were 6 other siblings.

Again, imagine the enormity of this family's grief.

Given there were 644 other lives lost, in this, Australia's biggest naval tragedy, it is easy to understand how the tragic loss of the crew of "Sydney" would have effected and became so ingrained into the history of Australia.

Again, stop and imagine the enormous number of people directly and indirectly affected by the calamity.

This service is, and will continue to be, in remembrance of these brave people who fought to protect and make our lives better.

LEST WE FORGET.