

**Heathcote Diggery Gardiner**

("Hecky") service number 24257 enlisted with The Royal Australian Navy on the 12<sup>th</sup> April 1940 aged 17 years. He was posted to the Sydney on the 12/02/1941.

My uncle ordinary seaman H.C. Gardiner was raised in the small Great Southern Town of Cranbrook in Western Australia and was unfortunately one of the casualties of the fateful sinking in November 1941.

Enclosed is a copy letter to one of his friends dated the 03/10/1941 describing the typical Australian larrikin of young war time serviceman at that time. He states the Sydney had just returned from a tour of duty to Fiji and New Zealand stopping in Sydney and Melbourne prior to returning to Fremantle for the last time.

His mother died in 1930 in Bruce Rock when he was only seven years old.

His sister (my mother) Mrs Honora Nola Lathwell of Cranbrook, then only 17 years old was laden with the responsibility of raising "Hecky" and his younger brother Bernard Gardiner (a two year old at the time) through the post depression and the second world war years.

My uncle Bernie aged 79 years is now the last of the nine Gardiner family still living.

For 67 years my mother, diligently researched, enquired and prayed that some time in her life time she would find out the full truth about what actually happened and the location of the Sydney's final resting place.

Since November 1941 my mother had accumulated just about every book ever written and every paper clippings ever published on the subject.

She could relate the "Sydney" memorial in Geraldton, of the lady staring out to sea waiting for news of a love one as she often said she would never have full closure until the final position of the ship was found...

It was just so unfortunate that she passed away early this year on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January only weeks from hearing the news she longed for: **THE SYDNEY HAD BEEN FOUND.**

Knowing my mother she would have received the news and be at rest at long last.

I was born during the war in January 1944 and given Heathcote's name as my second name to honour a brave young Western Australian fighting to protect his country.

I trust the Gardiner/Lathwell story is of some interest to you and I have attached an old photo's of "Hecky" and his enlistment details.

Should you require further details, I welcome your response

Yours faithfully

Byron Heathcote Roy Lathwell

6 Shelduck Way  
Mariners Cove  
Mandurah W.A. 6210 Phone (08) 9534 9838 Mobile 0411 690 969



H.M.A.S. SYDNEY

Oct 3 1941  
Mess 7 15/0  
GPO

Dear Bill

Just a few lines hoping you are well and still picking plenty of winners. I suppose you know I'm on the Sydney by now. I've been nearly all over the world since I last wrote and have just come back from a trip over to New Zealand and the Fijian Islands. Gee we had a great time. Especially Auckland. Tons of birds there and they just flocked around us. Gosh didn't I go to town never had any sleep. On our way back to Fremantle I was stopped at Sydney and Melbourne and I went to the Rakes every chance I had but I got high casts but Fretles and Kinty under it was a good race. I had 101 on Fretles. Got ten to one pretty stiff wasn't I. How the bank line going on Bill. I suppose you're a fully blown bank man now. I wish I was there instead of





H.M.A.S. SYDNEY

in the navy it gives you the rush  
 sometimes I'm a real wild devil now  
 Bill and a bit of a diun head and  
 getting real cheeky worse luck I'm  
 always in the rattle now every time  
 I go ashore I have a bust up with  
 the cops or somebody but I'm going  
 to pull my socks up a bit if I can  
 I'm starting my E.R.3, course tomorrow  
 I hope I get through alright its mostly  
 control work and Ringi taking in the  
 D.A. Director Hows all your family  
 getting on Bill I hope they're getting on  
 alright Will Bill old man they  
 going on watch now so I'll have to  
 close them to all the family and friends  
 Hoping to hear from you  
 soon

Your Pal  
 Heathcote D  
 Gardiner  
 Able  
 Seaman

The next letter  
 will be I hope  
 I hope it won't  
 be long














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About this Memorial Roll

WW2 Overlook

Contacts and Links

Mary Carleen Staff

Memory of Names

In addition to viewing this service record, you can also

- produce a certificate of this service record
- get help with the certificate
- view an explanation of the service record details
- request a full service record from the National Archives of Australia

Name	GARDINER, HEATHCOTE DIGGERY
Service	Royal Australian Navy
Service Number	24257
Date of Birth	11 Apr 1923
Place of Birth	ILANTAGENET, WA <i>PLANTAGENET - Mount Barker WA.</i>
Date of Enlistment	12 Apr 1940
Locality on Enlistment	Unknown
Home Port/Port Division	FREMANTLE
Next of Kin	GARDINER, ALFRED
Date of Death	20 Nov 1941
Rank	Ordinary Seaman
Posting on Death	HMAS Sydney
WW2 Honours and Gallantry	None for display
Prisoner of War	No
Roll of Honour	Unknown

as well as Frances's early death, the family had more than its fair share of tragedy. A son, Peter, died at birth in 1925 and another son, Lancelot, died from diphtheria in 1927 the age of six. A third son, Heathcote Diggory known as 'Hec', perished with the sinking of *HMAS Sydney* in 1941.



Frances Gardiner, Lancelot (on knee) and Hawley, August 1912.



Hec Gardiner and young boy 1941.

## Decendants

- 1 **Hawley Conway Roy GARDINER**  
b.23Oct1910 Albany WA  
d.7Feb1995 Perth WA  
m. WA to Nell BROWN  
b. WA  
d. WA
- 2 **Alfred Lovell GARDINER**  
b.27Feb1912 WA  
d.3Dec1956 Perth WA  
m. WA to Ivy Alice BLANCHE  
b.1912 WA  
d.30Dec1985 Perth WA
- 1 Shirley GARDINER  
b. WA
- 2 Lesley GARDINER  
b. WA
- 3 Pamela GARDINER  
b. WA
- 3 4 Robert GARDINER  
b. WA
- 2 3 **Barbara Joan GARDINER**  
b.20Jul1914 WA  
d.30Aug1972 Perth WA  
m. WA to Anthony YAKOVINA
- 3 1 Patricia YAKOVINA  
b. WA
- 3 2 Gloria YAKOVINA  
b. WA
- 3 3 Anthony YAKOVINA  
b. WA
- 3 4 Viola YAKOVINA  
b. WA
- 3 5 Mary YAKOVINA  
b. WA

- 3 6 Anne YAKOVINA  
b. WA
- 3 4 **Honora Nola GARDINER**  
b.7Dec1916 WA  
m. 31Aug1934 WA to  
Ronald Lawrence LATHWELL  
b.3Jun1913 WA  
d.20Oct1987 Cranbrook WA
- 3 1 Ronald John LATHWELL  
b.22Dec1935 WA  
m. (1) to Lena GARBELLINI  
m. (2) WA to Colleen FAIR
- 3 2 Barry LATHWELL.  
b.19Oct1937 WA  
m. to Shirley CHILDS/LAMING
- 3 1 Darryl LATHWELL.
- 3 **Byron LATHWELL.**  
b.4Jan1939 WA  
m. 1967 WA to Eileen JENKINS
- 3 4 Graham Alfred LATHWELL  
b.22Mar1946 WA  
m. to Christine TOONE
- 4 1 Malana LATHWELL  
b.21Jan1981 WA
- 2 5 **Doreen Peace GARDINER**  
b.7Feb1919 WA  
m. WA to Max WOOD
- 3 1 Dolores WOOD  
b. WA
- 3 2 Donald WOOD
- 3 3 Valerie WOOD  
b. WA
- 2 6 **Lancelot De Garis GARDINER**  
b.4Dec1920 WA  
d.19Jun1927 WA
- 2 7 **Heathcote Diggory GARDINER**  
b.11Apr1923 WA  
d.19Nov1941 *HMAS Sydney*
- 2 8 **Peter John GARDINER**  
b.25Mar1925 WA  
d.26Mar1925 WA
- 2 9 **Bernard John Raynesford GARDINER**  
b.12Feb1929 WA

## Olive May Margaret Herbert



- Olive May Margaret HERBERT  
b.17Jun1894 Albany WA  
d.5Jul1979 Bridgetown WA  
m. 17Jul1911 Perth WA
- George Pearcing TOOVEY  
b.10Jul1879 WA  
d.27Oct1960 WA



Olive (Ollie) married George Pearcing Toovey. George Toovey, born 10<sup>th</sup> July, 1879 was the son of Emma Toovey. Emma was the daughter of Lomas Toovey, born 27<sup>th</sup> February, 1828, Abbots Langley, England son of Henry Benjamin and Ann Toovey. Lomas arrived