

THEO LAWRENCE GREEN – OFFICERS COOK

The last time I saw my cousin Theo was on the 10th May 1941, when the accompanying photo was taken. I was 13, my sister was 12 and we remember him as a laughing 19 year old red-headed boy, so happy to be assigned to HMAS Sydney II, the pride of the Australian Navy.

Little Theo, as he was known (his father was Big Theo), had my sister and I spellbound in adoration at this cousin of ours who looked so handsome in his uniform, of course, he played up to us, telling us stories of life on board ship.

He would only be a crew member for nine months before the HMAS Sydney II was sunk by the German auxiliary cruiser Kormoran.

I remember his father, Big Theo, coming to tell my father for his loss and the two brothers standing in our hall in each other's arms, crying.

Little Theo – I can think of him only by that name – was born on 28th February, 1922 in Paddington, NSW. He had a sister, Norma, and two step-brothers, Neville and Noel.

A baker by trade he joined the Navy on 19th March, 1940, signing up for four years. His description says he was 5ft 8½ins with ginger hair, blue eyed with scars on his chin, foot and arm.

He was assigned to HMAS Cerebus as Assistant Cook (g) on 19th March 1940 and his character marked as very good. On the 21st November 1940 he was rated Officers Cook and on 28th February 1941 he was assigned to HMAS Sydney II.

I have a memory of Big Theo telling my father Little Theo was assigned to the forward gun turret in action and that one of the first shells from Kormoran fell there. If this is so, I hope his end was quick.

I have attended the memorials at St. Andrews Cathedral and in Martin Place with my daughters and can only thank the Australian Navy for the way in which these were conducted and the information we have been receiving, it has given me a sense of closure.



