

21 CULGOA CRESCENT  
PAMBULA BEACH  
N.S.W. 2549

8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2008

H.M.A.S. SYDNEY VIRTUAL MEMORIAL  
P.O. BOX 614, YANDINA, QLD 4561

DEAR SIRS,

I SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION REGARDING ALBERT  
RICHARD MARSON, MECHANICIAN II, SERVICE NO. 19475,  
FOR INCLUSION IN THE PLANNED VIRTUAL MEMORIAL TO  
THE MEN OF H.M.A.S. SYDNEY II.

MY UNCLE, ALBERT RICHARD MARSON, WAS BORN AT RILLINGTON  
IN YORKSHIRE ON 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 1909 TO GEORGE AND FLORENCE  
MARSON. HE WAS THE THIRD OF THEIR FOUR SONS. THEY ALSO  
HAD ONE DAUGHTER.

MY FATHER AND MY UNCLE JACK MIGRATED TO AUSTRALIA IN  
1925 AND MY UNCLE DICK SOON FOLLOWED, ARRIVING  
ON 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1928 ABOARD THE S.S. JERVIS BAY.

HE JOINED THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY ON 4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 1929  
AND DURING HIS TWELVE YEAR NAVAL CAREER SERVED ON  
H.M.A.S.<sup>S</sup> CERBERUS, ALBATROSS, VAMPIRE, PENGUIN, WATERHEN,  
VENDETTA AND HOBART BEFORE FINALLY JOINING H.M.A.S.  
SYDNEY ON 7<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1941.

2

HE ROSE THROUGH THE RANKS FROM STOKER II TO STOKER P.O. BEFORE CHANGING JOBS TO MECHANICIAN II ON 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1941. SHORTLY AFTER THIS HE QUALIFIED FOR THE RANK OF CHIEF PETTY OFFICER.

ALTHOUGH I WAS ONLY 5½ YEARS OLD WHEN HE WAS LOST I HAVE VIVID MEMORIES OF MY UNCLE AND CAN CLEARLY REMEMBER THE DAY OUR LAST PHOTOGRAPH OF HIM (WHICH I ENCLOSE) WAS TAKEN IN OUR BACK YARD AT PRESTON IN MELBOURNE. FROM ENTRIES IN MY LATE MOTHER'S DIARY OF 1942 AND FROM RECORDS OF H.M.A.S. SYDNEY'S MOVEMENTS AT THAT TIME, CONTAINED IN MICHAEL MONTGOMERY'S BOOK "H.M.A.S. SYDNEY - FACT, FANTASY AND FRAUD", I BELIEVE THIS PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN ON, OR ABOUT, 13<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 1941. THIS WAS THE LAST TIME WE SAW HIM.

MY UNCLE DICK MARRIED JEAN ADAMS MARTIN ON 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 1934. THEY HAD NO CHILDREN. JEAN PASSED AWAY ON 2<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER 1991, AGED 80. SHE NEVER RE-MARRIED.

DICK'S YOUNGER BROTHER CHARLIE WHO HAD NOT MIGRATED TO AUSTRALIA, SUBSEQUENTLY JOINED EITHER THE ROYAL NAVY OR THE MERCHANT NAVY (I'M NOT SURE WHICH) CAME TO VISIT MY PARENTS DURING A TRIP TO AUSTRALIA IN 1945. WE TOOK HIM TO MEET MY AUNTY JEAN WHO LIVED CLOSE BY IN PRESTON. BY NOW I WAS NINE YEARS OLD AND DURING OUR WALK TO MY AUNT'S HOUSE I WAS ALLOWED

TO WEAR CHARLIE'S NAVAL CAP. I RAN AHEAD TO TELL MY AUNT WHO WAS COMING TO SEE HER AND I WILL NEVER FORGET THE LOOK ON HER FACE WHEN SHE OPENED THE DOOR AND SAW THAT CAP. I AM SURE SHE THOUGHT DICK HAD COME HOME TO HER.

SHORTLY AFTER THE LOSS OF SYDNEY MY FAMILY SUFFERED ANOTHER BLOW WHEN MY MOTHER'S COUSIN, ERIC CROISDALE WAS ALSO LOST, THIS TIME ON H.M.A.S. PERTH (A SISTER SHIP OF SYDNEY) ON 28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 1942. AGAIN, THIS CAUSED A LOT OF GRIEF.

IN JANUARY 1992 I WAS SURPRISED AND DEEPLY TOUCHED TO RECEIVE, IN THE MAIL, MY UNCLE'S SERVICE MEDALS, A LETTER HE WROTE TO MY PARENTS IN AUGUST 1941 AND SOME PHOTOGRAPHS OF MY UNCLE WITH MY MOTHER AND FATHER. THESE WERE SENT TO ME BY ONE OF MY AUNT'S NIECES WHO FELT I SHOULD HAVE THEM AND I AM VERY GRATEFUL TO HER FOR HER KIND THOUGHTS.

I IMMEDIATELY DEVELOPED A RENEWED INTEREST IN THE STORY OF H.M.A.S. SYDNEY AND OVER THE PAST 16 YEARS HAVE COLLECTED EVERY BIT OF INFORMATION I COULD ON THE SUBJECT. THIS HAS BEEN POSSIBLE THROUGH THE HELP OF MANY PEOPLE WHO, LIKE MYSELF, HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR ANSWERS AS TO HOW THIS TERRIBLE TRAGEDY COULD HAVE OCCURED.

WE ALL OWE A GREAT DEBT TO THE WONDERFUL PEOPLE OF THE "FINDING SYDNEY FOUNDATION", DAVID MEARNS AND HIS TEAM WHO FOUND THE WRECKS, THE NAVY AND THE MANY OTHERS WHO HAVE KEPT THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH ALIVE BY THEIR PERSISTENCE AND HARD WORK.

THE EVIDENCE GATHERED FROM THE WRECK SITES WILL BE EXAMINED DURING THE CURRENT INQUIRY BEING CONDUCTED BY MR TERRANCE COLE AND HOPEFULLY THEIR CONCLUSIONS WILL PROVIDE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED ON 19<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 1941. THE ONLY QUESTION REMAINING WILL ALWAYS BE - WHY?

*K Marson*

KEITH MARSON

PHONE (02) 6495 7884

