

To HMAS Sydney Virtual Memorial

Re Leslie Sterling S/4301.

Les Sterling was my mother Mary's older brother. He grew up in Mowbray road, Lane Cove, Sydney. Apparently he was a bit of a larrikin and well liked. He used to play cricket with my father, Ron Brown. The two of them joined the navy in July 1940. After their basic training at Flinders, Les was drafted to the "Sydney". My father was drafted to the "Kanimbla". They used to correspond by mail, however, they never saw each other again.

Les joined the "Sydney" in September, 1941. I.e. approximately 7 weeks before the last action and subsequent sinking of the "Sydney". According to information given me by my late father, Les's action station was in "A" Turret on the "Sydney". I think he was an ammunition rating? My understanding of the accounts of the battle is that A turret never fired a shot and that it was disabled during the first few moments of the battle. Hopefully he never knew what hit him when his last moment came.

Les was engaged to be married to Mary Maher (I'm not sure of the spelling of the surname). Naturally she was absolutely desolate when news of the Sydney finally broke. Ironically, Mary later married Bernie Shervington (?spelling) – now of course Matt Shervington's grandparents.

Finally, a word must be said for Les's mother Vera Sterling, my grandmother. Like so many others, she was inconsolable at his loss and never got over it. She used to say for months even years that "maybe he's on a desert island somewhere."

Sincerely, Ann M Brown

