

1  
REG & SHIRLEY FRY  
U30/77 COTTERILL AV  
BONGAREE  
@LAND 4507  
20.11.08

Iear Sir

In reply to your request for any information relating to the Virtual Memory to the Crew of the HMAS Sydney I have enclosed photos etc which may be of interest to you. I do not have access to a computer so I rely on the age old art of letter writing. Even that art seems to be diminishing. I am the last living member of my immediate family, parents, brothers and a sister all deceased, but my memory is still pretty good. Unfortunately there are still some things I now wish I knew but who is there to ask? For instance I would have liked to know the name of the ship that my brother Robert was first ordered to serve on. Being a young lad at the time, I wasn't really interested in names. Of course, I could have got the name years ago had I known I would want it in the future. I chose to begin this letter from the year of 1938, the year my eldest brother William joined the Navy. After serving on many ships Townsville, Hobart, Ballarat as a couple I remember, he was finally draughted on HMAS Sydney. Both he and the crew were enjoying peace time cruises round the Islands and when it became known that the next port of call was to be Bali, they couldn't wait. They imagined the beaches and the Balinese beauties (in bikinis?) But their thoughts were soon dashed. Orders from Canberra instructed the ship straight back to Australia. We were at war. Afterwards the ship soon found itself in a bit of a dust up with the Italian Navy, but you would know all about that. Not long after William was discharged from the Navy suffering a nervous condition. My other brother, Robert enlisted in the Navy in November

1940. He had received orders to join a ship his first draught and was quite excited about that. But he became ill and was sent to sick bay where he was diagnosed as having a severe dose of chicken pox. He was "off colour" for several days before he regained his health back. By then, he had missed his draught and instead was draughted on HMAS Sydney. He was thrilled to think he'd be serving on the same ship his brother had. I can remember his excitement.

The following is a profile of my brother. Born Robert Aubrey Day in Victoria on November 30th 1921, he enlisted in the Navy in December 1940 as Stokes. Before he joined the Navy Robert was employed by Andrew Jack Dyson, a wholesale merchant in the City of Melbourne. He was a dedicated and well respected employe, honest and trust worthy. A very athletic person of solid build a touch under six feet and a happy outlook on life itself. A very humorous and likeable person who made friends easy whether at work or at play. After the tragedy of HMAS Sydney, my parents received numerous letters of Condolence from families he had met in Sydney, Victoria and Western Australia, all expressing their grief at the loss of such a fine young man. That was the way Robert was. His personality touched so many people. My mother kept all those letters which I now have.

Robert was a very fine sportsman, played all sports, with distinction, a natural at any sport he chose to play. But it was cricket he excelled in. A very elegant and attacking R.H. batsman which opposing sides found difficult to dismiss. The cricket season prior to him joining the Navy, he won his club and the association batting average with a remarkable 52. Good judges predicted a bright future for him in the world of cricket but sadly he never got the chance to prove it. And my terrific brother was lost forever.

I've made a copy of his last letter written to mother.

and I'll identify for you names etc, he mentioned in the letter. He's made mention of me being sick in hospital. I was convalescing after recovering from the disease, meningitis. Alf was his mate back home, and had joined the Army. Betty was our sister, and mother was always billeting service men home for the weekend, when on leave. Andrew Jack Hysan was Robert's employe, and the newspaper clippings are out of a Melbourne newspaper. Mother was always cutting something out of a newspaper. I have taken copies of photos and other paper work so there's no need to return anything. Our family had lived in Victoria and for the record William died in a nursing home five months ago, age 90. For identification of the photos I have numbered them on the back.

Photo-1 My two sailor brothers William on left and Robert taken at Stindus Naval Depot Victoria

Photo-2 The new naval recruits Naval Depot Vic. 1940.

Photo-3 Robert at Botanical Gardens Melb. 1941

Photo-4 L to R Bill Baker, Hen Cooper and Robert on leave HMAS Sydney in West. Aust. They perished in the Sydney sinking.

Photo-13. Robert holidaying at Chelsea beach Vic. 1939.

I trust this information may be helpful to you and I appreciate the opportunity of contributing in some small way to the Virtual Memorial. If you are seeking any more information, and you think I may be able to help please contact me.

Regards

Reg. Day

P/S Has any thing happened about comfort funds yet

Same Address

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November.

Darling Abun,

I received your letter with dad's when we arrived back in Tisbury today so you see I'm not wasting any time in answering it. I'm I wrote to you last we have visited Albany but we only had about 2 hrs leave there although it was enough to look the place over. Yes Abun you certainly guessed it when you said that I'd rather be at Frankston or Chelsea than any of the other beaches and I'm hoping it won't be too long before I'm down there again.

Yes Abun I'm certainly very sorry to hear Reg is sick again but I hope he's soon better again you've certainly had a bad spin last week and!

Abun I don't think I'll write to him for by the time the letter reaches me and by the time I write to him he might be out of hospital however when you write again and Reg is still in hospital give me an idea how much longer he's likely to be there and I'll write to him. Hoping he's better very soon.

I'm glad to hear Alf looks in now and then and as I've always said a uniform makes you look better but just the same I'd rather be back in civvies.

Glad to hear those two sailors are good blokes and I hope they keep that way but tell Betty to take my tip and keep well away from sailors or any other

P/S What news I haven't told you

I've told Dad so you can read his letter if you like  
of course knowing you like I do I know you do.  
uninformed person unless you know them. but of course  
there's good and bad in everything.  
Mum dear thanks very much for the badge which  
I received also today it is a beaut and by all means  
take the money out of my allotment if in fact if your  
short. take the lot. In a couple of pay's time I will  
be giving you a present so as I've said before take out  
what you want and bank the rest.

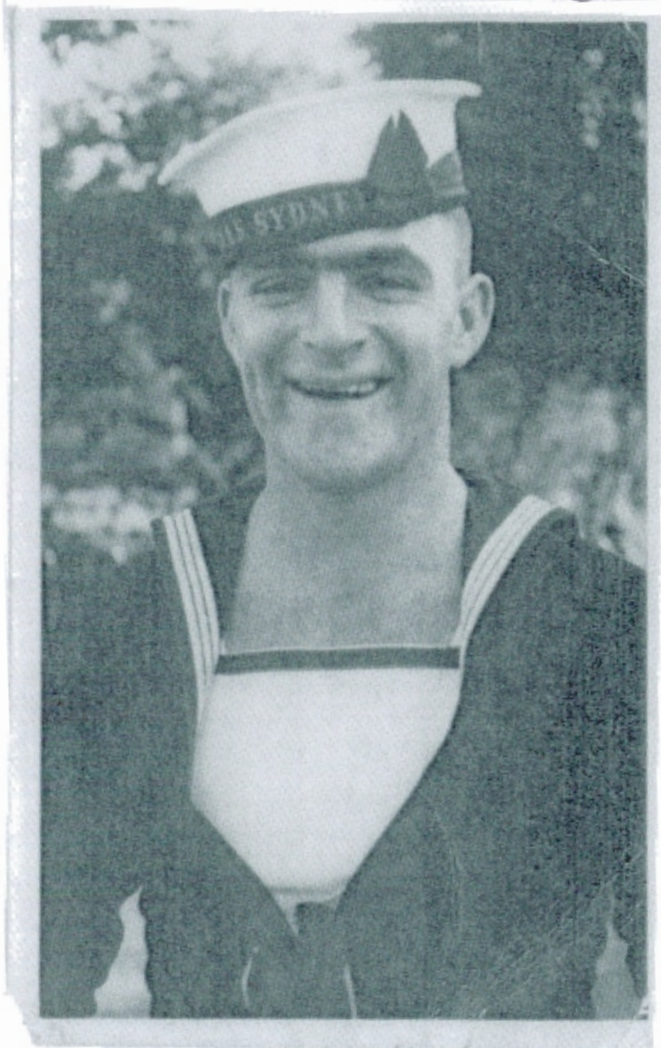
Yes Mum send the swimming trunks as soon as you  
can and they'll do me as a birthday present that's  
all I want. I received a letter from the managing  
director of Andrew Jack Dixon & Co (Walter Jack) and he  
and the staff wished me all the best and they are going  
to send me a caution order for £5.00.00 that's very good  
of them and I'll appreciate very much. You need not  
tell that I'm first class now as that will probably  
put out the top of a week in getting from them. but  
I'll tell them when I come home again.

It is a lovely day here today and I was going to  
go for a walk but a Westsasi asked me for a set so  
I did him one however as I've told Dad I'll be  
having a game of cricket tomorrow. so I go to the picture  
here on board tonight and have a good sleep too.

Will you send me those photos as soon as you can  
as I want them and what did you send me that good  
one for have you got one of them yourself.

Well Mum I'll close now. Your Loving Son  
P/S Give my love to family and I hope Reg is soon better  
Bob XXXX

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BUCKINGHAM PALACE

The Queen and I offer you our heartfelt sympathy in your great sorrow.

We pray that your country's gratitude for a life so nobly given in its service may bring you some measure of consolation.

*George R.I.*

T.G. 42 A.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA—POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

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This Telegram has been received subject to the Post and Telegraph Act and Regulations. The time received at this office is shown at the end of the message.

The date stamp indicates the date of reception and lodgment also, unless an earlier date is shown after the time of lodgment



Sch. C 2941 - 9/1940

Office of Origin: MELBOURNE 52 6-16P

No. of Words: 114. Pidge Part

Time of Lodgment:

No.

POSTAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT DELIVERY PERSONAL

MRS E FRY  
3 THROUGH RD  
BURWOOD VIC

0 1688

WITH DEEP REGRET I HAVE TO INFORM YOU YOUR SON ROBERT AUBREY FRY STOKER IS MISSING AS A RESULT OF ENEMY ACTION STOP MINISTER FOR THE NAVY AND THE NAVAL BOARD DESIRE TO EXPRESS TO YOU THEIR SINCERE SYMPATHY



# WAS SYDNEY SUNK BY JAPANESE POCKET-BATTLESHIP?

From Our Own Correspondent  
LONDON, Thursday.

German survivors of the *Kormoran*, who told their captors that the Australian cruiser *Sydney* was last seen on fire disappearing over the horizon, may, says *Daily Express* naval correspondent, have known more than they revealed.

It may appear one day that the cruiser's end was not caused by fire from the German armed merchant cruiser, but by one of Japan's powerful warships, possibly one of the 12in. gun pocket battleships specifically designed as Pacific convoy raiders.

This opinion, says the correspondent, would more readily explain *Sydney's* total disappearance than the suggestion that it was caused by 5.9 shells from *Kormoran*.



O/A. G. L. (Peter) A/S. G. D. Hobbs Str. J. Drake Str. R. Fry A/B. James V.  
Findlay. (Noble Park). Altona. Burwood. Kelly.  
Moonee Ponds. H.M.A.S. Sydney. H.M.A.S. Sydney. H.M.A.S. Sydney. Heidelberg.  
H.M.A.S. Sydney.

Stoker J. DRAKE joined the *Sydney* in April after serving on the *Hobart*. He was mentioned in despatches for special services rendered during the evacuation of Somaliland in August last year. He was 22, and joined the Navy five years ago. He was educated at Sunshine Technical School and was the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Theresa Drake, Esplanade, Altona (formerly of Sunshine).

Ordnance Artificer G. L. (Peter) FINDLAY, reported missing, was a member of the crew of H.M.A.S. *Sydney*. He was the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Alex Findlay, Vines-street, Moonee Ponds. He was 24, and before joining the Navy served his apprenticeship with H. V. McKay-Massey Harris Pty. Ltd. Later he worked at the ammunition works, and from there he joined the navy prior to the outbreak of war. He was an active member for Power House (Sopers) for 10 years.

Stoker Robert FRY was the second son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Fry, of Through-road, Burwood. He joined the R.A.N. as a rating in November, 1940, and served on H.M.A.S. *Sydney* since March, 1941. He was educated at Hartwell State School and took a prominent part in the sporting activities of Burwood and district. His elder brother also served on the *Sydney*, but returned in November, 1940, after many months on active service.

Able Seaman George James HOBBS, 22, youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Hobbs, Chandlers-road, Noble Park, was educated at Noble Park State School, and was for five years with the R.A.N. He served on the *Australia*, went to England on the *Albatross*, and came back on the *Hobart* to Australia. He served with the H.M.A.S. *Sydney* during her Mediterranean operations.

Able Seaman James Vincent KELLY was a son of Senior-Constable J. Kelly, of Heidelberg police station. He joined the navy about 15 months ago and was at Flinders naval base until he was transferred to the *Sydney* when she returned from the Mediterranean.

Sgt.-Pilot Duncan MCKENZIE (Echuca), previously reported missing, is now reported missing, believed killed in action. He was aged twenty-four years and was educated at Xavier College. He received his training at Broadfield Park and Narromine, and sailed for Canada in December, 1940. His brother, Sgt.-Pilot McKenzie, is also with the R.A.A.F. He is the second son of Mr. and Mrs. H. McKenzie, of Echuca.

Stoker Thomas Arthur WALDRON (missing), was the youngest son of Mr. and the late Mrs. T. W. Waldron, of Chinkapook. He joined the R.A.N. last February and was on a mine sweeper for about six weeks and was recently transferred to the H.M.A.S. *Sydney*. He was 19 years of age and went to the Eureka and Chinkapook schools. He played football with the Yarraby team for years.

## Naval Base Leave Ticket N<sup>o</sup> 41709

Ship or Establishment *Box* .....

The Bearer *John Kelly* .....

has leave, subject to recall, from ..... m.\* **21 APR 1941**

to *0.715* m.\* on **25 APR 1941** .....

*John Kelly*  
Signature of the Executive Officer

\* The hour to be inserted.  
GIVE UP ON RETURN

## UNION JACK CLUB SINGAPORE.

Date *21.4.41* .....

Bed No. *6* .....

**"Welcome" Cafe & Restaurant.**

No. 264, *111* Road, Singapore.

Opening daily from 11 a.m. to 2a. m.

1. We are supplying good and delicious European meals of various kinds besides hot & cold drinks, Ice Cream, etc. etc.
2. We have private rooms for private parties.
3. We are engaging a good lady to take orders from patrons.
4. Our prices have been revised and greatly reduced.
5. Hygienic and good services guaranteed.
6. A trial is cordially solicited by the above.

A.S. 247a (Adopted May, 1934).  
(Reprinted Oct., 1937).

*2nd Part, Port*

H.M.A.S. *SYDNEY*

Name *FRY* PART

Division *ENG.* Mess *H1*

Rating *Sto. II* Religion \_\_\_\_\_

12,000-1498/10,37-DPS-D7-2.

DEALERS IN ALL KINDS OF READY  
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122,  
MIDDLE ROAD,  
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# "Welcome" Cafe & Restaurant.

JAN 1941		APRIL 1941		JULY 1941		OCT 1941	
S	5 12 19 26	S	6 13 20 27	S	6 13 20 27	S	5 12 19 26
M	6 13 20 27	M	7 14 21 28	M	7 14 21 28	M	6 13 20 27
T	7 14 21 28	T	1 8 15 22 29	T	1 8 15 22 29	T	7 14 21 28
W	1 8 15 22 29	W	2 9 16 23 30	W	2 9 16 23 30	W	1 8 15 22 29
T	2 9 16 23 30	T	3 10 17 24 ..	T	3 10 17 24 31	T	2 9 16 23 30
F	3 10 17 24 31	F	4 11 18 25 ..	F	4 11 18 25 ..	F	3 10 17 24 31
S	4 11 18 25 ..	S	5 12 19 26 ..	S	5 12 19 26 ..	S	4 11 18 25 ..
FEB 1941		MAY 1941		AUGUST 1941		NOVE 1941	
S	2 9 16 23	S	4 11 18 25	S	3 10 17 24 31	S	2 9 16 23 30
M	3 10 17 24	M	5 12 19 26	M	4 11 18 25	M	3 10 17 24
T	4 11 18 25	T	6 13 20 27	T	5 12 19 26	T	4 11 18 25
W	5 12 19 26	W	7 14 21 28	W	6 13 20 27	W	5 12 19 26
T	6 13 20 27	T	1 8 15 22 29	T	7 14 21 28	T	6 13 20 27
F	7 14 21 28	F	2 9 16 23 30	F	1 8 15 22 29	F	7 14 21 28
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MARCH 1941		JUNE 1941		SEPT 1941		DEC 1941	
S	2 9 16 23 30	S	1 8 15 22 29	S	7 14 21 28	S	7 14 21 28
M	3 10 17 24 31	M	2 9 16 23 30	M	1 8 15 22 29	M	1 8 15 22 29
T	4 11 18 25 ..	T	3 10 17 24 ..	T	2 9 16 23 30	T	2 9 16 23 30
W	5 12 19 26 ..	W	4 11 18 25 ..	W	3 10 17 24 ..	W	3 10 17 24 31
T	6 13 20 27 ..	T	5 12 19 26 ..	T	4 11 18 25 ..	T	4 11 18 25 ..
F	7 14 21 28 ..	F	6 13 20 27 ..	F	5 12 19 26 ..	F	5 12 19 26 ..
S	1 8 15 22 29 ..	S	7 14 21 28 ..	S	6 13 20 27 ..	S	6 13 20 27 ..