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Extract from the Magazine
"Digest of World Reading",
Issue No 5 of the 1. 1. 1947.

TOLL FOR THE BRAVE.

A noted sea writer reconstructs the sinking of H.M.A.S. Sydney
By Robert S. Close.

The Oberleutnant pressed a button set in a panel on the bridge. From every quarter of the German raider Kormoran, buzzers droned like giant bees. Feet rasped on the rungs of ladders, and thudded along iron decks as men rushed to battle stations. Gun breeches banged. Then order and calm. The only sounds were the throb of engines, the monsoon fluttering a canvas dodger on the bridge- and the hiss of air compression being tested at the torpedo tubes..... From the starboard wing the raider's commander stared through binoculars to the quarter where a blob of smoke smeared the clear sky. Away on the port beam sunset flared like a tiger's yawn. Its crimson tongue licked around the sea and burnished the bow wave of a racing ship. The Kormoran's Oberleutnant joined his commander in the bridge wing, and cupped glasses to his eyes. "She is certainly not a merchantman Herr Kapitän. Not with that speed," he said decisively..... In the swiftening twilight the vessel ~~etched~~ etched its shape on the rim of the sea. For a few moments longer the raider's commander stared at it before he answered. He lowered his binoculars.! "We are in for trouble, Herr Oberleutnant. It's a light cruiser, and it can only be an enemy", he said grimly..... He turned to the navigating officer. "Hoist Norwegian colours, Herr Leutnant. Keep the vessel to her present course and speed". Raising his binoculars again he caught the growing shape of the warship in the lenses. He swore savagely. "Verdammt. It looks to be of the 'Amphion' class. Our job is sinking merchantmen, not engaging cruisers." "Only that she has not sent up her spotting plane, I would say she was the 'Sydney'", said the Oberleutnant. "8 6" and 32,5 knots". "It's the Sydney, alright, Herr Oberleutnant. And perhaps they don't need to send up the plane. Maybe she knows". "Then Herr Kapitän we are certainly in trouble." Clearly now could be seen the creamy ruffle spreading from the cruiser's bow. The Kormoran's officers watched her tensely. Relayed from their disguised control tower came the steady intoning of the range finding operator. The raider's commander repeated the range in a voice burred with the strain. He was waiting for the sudden spurts of flame from the guns he knew were trained on his ship..... "Perhaps she is not yet sure of us. If only we can lure her a little closer, Herr Oberleutnant, and get in the first broadside. Ah., here it is. She is ~~signally~~ signalling."..... A string of flags soared up the Sydney's halliards. "Close to half a mile, and heave to", she signalled..... "Acknowledge," ordered the Kormoran's commander. "We will engage the enemy immediately we have closed to half a mile, Herr Oberleutnant"..... The officer saluted. "Under the flag of our Vaterland, Herr Kapitän?" "No. Under the Norwegian ensign, Herr Oberleutnant. The first to get in a broad side at that point blank range, will be the victor."..... "At your order, Herr Kapitän"..... The Sydney came tearing up through the dusk. The menacing bristles of her guns could be plainly seen pricking dead on the Kormoran. Her bearing raced around the compass... 35 degrees abaft the beam.... 20 degrees.... The voice in the control tower kept chanting the shortening range and deflection. With the suddenness of a thunderbolt action begun. The raider's gunports clanged. Her hidden broadside of 5,9's spat flame and smoke. But before she had even careened in recoil from the first salvo, a broadside from the Sydney tore a flaming weal along her water-side line. Shells burst in the engine room. The raider shuddered from truck to keelson. A geyser of greasy smoke belched from her torn plates. Her mangled engines ceased their wild throbbing. The dusk was acrid with the stench of cordite and hot oil. Below decks torrents of fire poured through alley-ways, darted through buckled plates, licked the wounded with hellish tongues The Kormoran's own first broadside smashed into the Sydney's bridge, silencing her main battery. But with independent firing her guns still roared like running thunder..... The raider floundered under the concussion of continuous shell bursts. The foremast buckled and thumped across the fo'c's'le in a snarl of flaying shrouds. The smoke stack folded up like crumpled lead. - On the main deck, plates belched. A broadside gun hurtled up. In the ghastly light of white hot metal, doors, stanchions, men, and folding sheets of steel all mingled in a debris of flying death. Men writhed and dragged their mangled bodies round and round, like kittens clawing in well of fire..... From the Kormoran's torn and smoking bridge, came the sudden order: "Cease fire". In the vacuum of stilled guns rose the grinding of metal on metal, the terrible cries and moaning of the wounded and dying. Somewhere a dangling, wrecked bridge ladder banged

monotonously to each roll of the sinking ship. Along the broken decks, tangled fire hoses curled like enormous viscera wrenched from the ship's broken bowles.The Kormoran's commander clung to a twisted bridge stanchion. As the victorious guns of the Sydney ceased into chivalrous silence, he stared at her with fanatical fury. He turned to the grimed figure beside him. "Herr Oberleutnant"....."Jawohl Herr Kapitaen?"....."You quite understand your orders?"....."Jawohl Herr Kapitaen." All able are to abandon ship in the remaining ~~ships~~ boats and pull towards the enemy cruiser as if seeking to be picked up by her. Immediately our boats are clear, I am to loose two torpedos at the Sydney from the undamaged tubes on the main deck. I am than to join you with the tube crews in the remaining boat"....."And quickly, Herr Oberleutnant. By the feel of her she will drop from under us at any moment"..... "Our wounded, Herr Kapitaen?"..... "They will have the honour of dying for the Vaterland and their Fuehrer," was the harsh reply. "Heil Hitler".. "Heil Hitler". The Oberleutnant acknowledged with up-flung arm..... From the sinking Kormoran ~~his~~ packed boats splashed into the water and pulled away in the flame-lit sea..... Across the narrow channel, the Sydney waited for her victims survivors. Her midships still glowed with the fire that destroyed her own boats and Carley floats..... Suddenly two bubbling tracks marked a treacherous errand from the raider's sea-lapped deck. Two terrific roars ~~merged~~ merged into one tremendous explosion. Half the ocean seemed to be in the tower that spouted into the night. Within its soaring blackness a great ship disintegrated. Gane was a brave ship and her crew of gallant men. "All sunk beneath the wave".....There remained only the monsoon murmuring an eternal requiem to a nation's immortal dead.... And the memory of Nazi perfidy writ forever in every wave upon the seas.....

*Fall for the brave!
The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave
Fast by their native shore!*
(W. Cooper)

1.12.1941.

Australischer Kreuzer "Sydney" (6830t) versenkt.

Von der "Sydney" liegen keine Meldungen vor, bis jetzt keine Ueberlebenden. Angeblich sollen Ueberlebende eines deutschen Hilfskreuzers einige Zeit nach dem Gefecht gerettet worden sein und gemeldet haben "Die "Sydney" im Kampf mit deutschem Hilfskreuzer diesen durch Geschuetzfeuer versenkt???"

3.12.1941.

Auszug aus Bericht des OKW.

Ein seit langer Zeit im Indischen Ozean operierender Hilfskreuzer "Kormoran" kam an der australischen Westkueste mit dem an Bestueckung und Geschwindigkeit weit ueberlegenen Kreuzer "Sydney" ins Gefecht. Durch das Artilleriefeuer des "Kormoran" wurde die "Sydney" bereits in den ersten Phasen des Kampfes so schwer getroffen, dass sie vollstaendig in Brand geriet und ohne Ueberlebende versank. Da durch die Beschaedigungen, welche der "Kormoran" in Gefecht davontrug, die Seetuechtigkeit des Schiffes in Frage gestellt war, wurde es von der Besatzung des Schiffes aufgegeben und versenkt. Der groesste Teil der Besatzung wurde gerettet. Auf den ausgedehnten Fahrten versenkte der "Kormoran" zahlreiche feindliche Handelsschiffe und beschaeftigte durch seine Anwesenheit in feindlichen Gewaessern die britische Flotte andauernd. Durch die Versenkung der "Sydney" wurden seine Erfolge, wenn er auch selbst dabei zugrunde ging, gekroent."

Eine andere deutsche Stimme.

"Der Kampf zwischen beiden Schiffen fand am 19.11.1941 bei teilweiser Dunkelheit etwa 300 Meilen westlich von Carnavon statt. Beide Schiffe eroeffneten gleichzeitig das Feuer. Die erste Salve des "Kormoran" schlug indie Bruecke der "Sydney" ein, eine weitere setzte die Hauptgefechtzentrale ausser Betrieb. Die "Sydney" ging dann auf kurze Entfernung an den "Kormoran" heran und schoss wahrscheinlich ohne zentrale Feuerleitung wieter. "Kormoran" feuerte einige Torpedos, die u.U. als ursaechlich fuer den Verlust der "Sydney" anzusehen sind. Der "Kormoran" erhielt einen Treffer in den Maschinenraum und musste daraufhin von der Besatzung aufgegeben werden. Die Besatzung ging in die ~~18~~ Boote. Aus der australischen Presse.

310 Deutschen und 2 Chinesen gelang es, die Kueste Westaustraliens zu erreichen, einige Boote landeten aus eigener Kraft ~~XXXX~~ andere wurden auf See aufgepickt.

In Carnavon hatte man die Nachricht, dass Ueberlebende an der Kueste gelandet waren, auf britische Seeleute bezogen und Vorkehrungen fuer deren Unterbringung in Privatquartieren getroffen. Spaeter klaerte sich der Irrtum auf, und das oertliche Volunteer Defence Corps wurde zur Bewachung herangezogen. Nachforschungen mit ~~18~~ Flugzeugen nach der "Sydney" fuehrten zu keinem Erfolg, nur 2 Rettungsringe und ein schwer beschaedigtes Carley Floss wurden gesichtet. Ein deutsches Rettungsboot wurde in den Staedten fuer die "Sydney"-Spende (Neubau) ausgestellt.

List of our dead.

(here follow 83 names)

Liste unserer Toten:

Hermann Stehr
 Egbert v. Gaza
 Friedrich Nagel
 Fritz Hoelzel
 Johann Duismann
 Alfons Storny
 Johann Hahn
 Willi Bolt
 Fritz Tiemann
 Wilhelm Hinkel
 Leonhard Treutler
 Alfred Ross
 Otto Lenz
 Heinrich Knupper
 Helmut Heinzemann
 Gerhard Gause
 Franz Heinze
 Willi Dobileit
 Franz Pastuschka
 Herbert Rickert
 Kurt Quednau
 Aleq Bartel
 Horst Schuster
 Berthold v. d. Twer
 Bruno Demandt
 Joachim Martin
 Rudolf Loesche
 Hermann Lange
 Siegfried Haase
 Wilhelm Havekost
 Josef Bednarek
 Erich Dembnicki
 Fritz Grabow
 Kurt Hufer
 Robert Kuemmel
 Hein ~~XXXX~~ Dhein
 Werner Berges
 Oskar Packosch
 Georg Salzgeber
 Hubert Pregler

Edu ard Eberhardt
 Eugen Heumann
 Hans Haase
 Kurt Waechter
 Theo Clander
 Karl Hudasch
 Erich Bruechig
 Herbert Prystuppa
 Hans Salinski
 Alfred Rennig
 Josef Tschanter
 Ernst Schoeneberg
 Heinz Feldmann
 Ernst Georg
 Albert Hille
 Gerd H aarnagell
 Heinz Mueller
 Alfred Bez
 Paul Mayer
 W illi Kreuzer
 Heinz A ron
 August Bilges
 Robert Wulf
 Erich L angenbach
 Dietrich Lohmann
 Ludwig Bussjäger
 Karl Zeitter
 Josef Hurter
 Franz Breidenstein
 H ermann Ebert
 Fritz Hemmerich
 Karl S eiler
 Franz L eger
 O tto Herstell
 Fritz Hoffmann
 P aul Brachvogel
 Fritz ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Mae rkel
 Willi Fischer
 A ugust Breer
 Hans H ofmann
 Reinhardt Czech
 Rudolf Ulbrich
 Erich Meyer

New York, March 3, 1943 (A.A.D.)

Victim Of Trickery.

L o s s O f T H e S Y D N E Y .

Details of the last battle of H.M.A.S. Sydney with the Nazi raider "Kormoran" on November 19, 1941 are revealed for the first time. Announcing this, a correspondent of the Associated Press of America, Mr. John Moroso, states that the story was pieced together from reports by the master of the "Kormoran", Captain Dettmers, and others of the 317 survivors of the raider.

The "Kormoran" was cruising at 10 knots 300 miles west of Carnavon, West Australia, at 4 p.m., when she sighted the "Sydney". The raider turned into the sun and increased her speed ~~to~~ to 15 knots. The "Sydney" approaching from the starboard, signalled the raider to hoist her signal letters. The raider hesitated, and then hoisted the letters P K Q ~~1~~, belonging to the Dutch steamer "Sraat Malakka", 6439 tons, which was built in 1939. The Nazis used apparent efficiency in signalling to lure the "Sydney" closer and the Australian cruiser came abeam 1200 to 1500 yards distant, and

ask-
ed for further ~~XXXX~~ identification..

Screen Dropped.

When the ships were parallel the raider dropped plates which concealed her guns, and hoisted the Nazi flag. 4 5.9 guns then fired without warning and struck the "Sydney" bridge, apparently killing most of the officers..

The "Sydney" responded furiously with a 6' gun salvo, hitting the raider's engine room and fuel tanks.

Fire spread over the "Kormoran" as the battle went on at point-blank range, and a torpedo hit the "Sydney" 20' from the bow, apparently crippling her forward guns. Shell fire blasted the "Sydney" scout plane. Four torpedoes from the "Sydney" missed the "Kormoran" and one from the "Kormoran" missed the "Sydney".

The dying "Kormoran" stopped as the "Sydney", burning amidships and settling by the bow, drifted to the south east and disappeared over the horizon at 11 p.m., never more to be seen. The "Kormoran" blew up at midnight. The battle had lasted half an hour.

Resembling a harmless Dutch merchantman the "Kormoran" sank 11 Allied ships before meeting the "Sydney". She carried six 5.9's, stowed in her holes and raised hydraulically, six torpedo tubes, six anti-aircraft guns, and also an Arado 196 plane.

The correspondent states that the United States Navy is using the lesson of the battle to teach sailors to be careful when investigating strange ships. Its policy is, "When in doubt shoot first and talk afterwards".