

The MacKinnon Connection:

TO "THE HMAS SYDNEY II" VIRTUAL MEMORIAL

COMPILED BY: Mary Heremaia - New Zealand – Niece

NAME: MURDO MACKINNON
RANK: PETTY OFFICER
OFFICIAL NUMBER: 20310
BORN: 25 JANUARY 1918
PLACE: STORNOWAY, SCOTLAND

My Uncle Murdo MacKinnon was five years old in 1923 when my Grandparents decided to migrate the family of 4 girls and 6 boys from Caversta, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis in the far North of Scotland to Fremantle in Western Australia to settle on the "Peel Estate". They sailed on a ship called "Bendigo".

He attended Wellard School then on to Bunbury High School where he was recognised for his outstanding athletic ability over 880, 440, and 220 yards and a mile, by being named Junior Boy Champion at 14 years old. In September 1989, my cousin, Frank MacKinnon made a fleeting visit to the school, from New Zealand to specially return the pieces that date back to 1933, purely for sentimental reasons. Frank had the awards reconditioned and they now sit proudly among other past and present achievers accomplishments.

When he left school Murdo was 16 when he trained as an Ordinary Seaman at HMAS Cerberus from 22 August 1934 to 18 April 1935 and as follows:

19.04.1935 to 24.01.1936	HMAS CANBERRA	ORD SEA
25.01.1936 to 22.11.1936	HMAS CANBERRA	ORD SEA
23.11.1936 to 31.03.1938	HMAS CANBERRA	A.B.
01.04.1938 to 28.04.1938	HMAS CANBERRA	A/LDG SEA
29.04.1938 to 28.09.1938	HMAS CERBERUS	A/LDG SEA
29.09.1938 to 31.03.1939	HMAS VOYAGER	A/LDG SEA
01.04.1939 to 10.10.1939	HMAS VOYAGER	LDG SEA CONFIRMED 1.4.39
11.10.1939 to 22.04.1940	HMAS SYDNEY	A/PO
23.04.1940 to 29.08.1940	HMAS CERBERUS	A/PO
30.08.1940 to 30.09.1940	HMAS SYDNEY	A/PO
01.10.1940 to 20.11.1941	HMAS SYDNEY	PO CONFIRMED 1.10.40

2.

My Mother and two of her brothers, Louis and Johnny moved to New Zealand the rest stayed in Australia. Mum and Dad (also from Scotland) were married in Wellington, New Zealand and I am the youngest of three sisters, one who passed away November 2007. I was not born when the HMAS Sydney went down but we all grew up with Uncle Murdo's photograph on the wall (now on my wall) and were told the about how the HMAS Sydney was lost. I have newspaper cuttings from 1941 my Mother kept.

In September 2008 I found two letters from Uncle Murdo to my Mother one dated August 1941 and the other September 1941. He stated he was going to get married in November to a Jean Lewis from Sydney. We don't know anything about Jean except her Father and another Uncle of ours, John Morrison, Married to Christina Ann (sister of Murdo) were Friends, maybe that is how they met. I doubt if they did get married before HMAS Sydney was lost as his service record shows no time off to allow a marriage to take place, which is really sad. It would be lovely to make contact with Jean as there are so many things we do not know.

My sister, Janet and I were fortunate to be accepted to the AT SEA Memorial Service onboard HMAS Manoora on 19 November 2008. It was the most wonderful and moving experience anyone could ever have. I am eternally grateful to the efforts and consideration the Australian Navy have put towards not only this but everything that has happened since the Finding of Sydney.

My cousin Louis, in Auckland attended the Memorial Service on 24 April 2008 in Sydney, He too was also astounded at the Navy's efforts at helping relatives through this time.

For an Uncle I never really knew and now having completed great lengths of research with the extreme help of the Navy, Museums etc that we visited in Perth, I now feel really close to him but feel sad that my Mother and all her siblings had passed away before the HMAS Sydney was finally found.

We will never forget them.



