

June Bickle
8 Jindalee St
Toronto, NSW, 2283

Re; The Virtual Memorial in honour of H.M.A.S Sydney II and it's complement of 643 men who were all lost with the ship on the 19th of November 1941.

I was invited to take part in the mission to serve the interests of the public in their plans to develop a virtual memorial in recognition of the awesome loss of the H.M.A.S Sydney II and the tremendous waste of human resources. Now the location of the battle area is known and we are aware of the resting places of our boys and men, the burden is much easier to carry. I wear my brother's medals with great pride and have done so since the ship disappeared, however the mystery caused many tears to flow.

My brother Charles William Patrick aged 18 years + 1 month was named after his two grandfathers and was a very much devoted son in the family group. He had grown into a loving caring son and brother, always aware of the need to care for his two sisters and brother – all younger than him. To us he was just so clever having taught himself to play the accordion and tennis. So imagine how much we loved and admired this young youth growing into his manhood. We lived on a dairy farm and Charles never shirked his fair share of the chores. So when he joined the Royal Australian Navy he was certainly missed for many reasons.

His early school life was most interesting. Here was this little tot riding on a pony two and a half miles to school. I had to ride sitting behind Charles and holding onto him. He would have been five years old and I was four. One day I asked Mother why did I have to go with him and she said to look after him because it was a lonely road to the one teacher school.

He was always well mannered and polite and had lots of friends during his teen years. His naval officer (superior) had assessed his character between 19-04-1940 to 11-02-1941 and recorded a result of very good.

When he entered the R.A.N he had signed on for twelve years. His papers show his entry date 'as a boy' 19-04-1940. On 14-04-1941 after assessments were done Lifebelt and Cover "Sydney" were issued. On his first and only leave pass he came home to visit the family. He was wearing his white uniform and I kept a photo of him in his "whites." It was his first sea deployment and I could imagine his excitement as that was all he wanted in life to be a sailor.

During this one and only leave, he told us he would be home for Christmas, naturally we were very excited waiting and counting down the days. We all went to the railway station

to farewell him and that was our last sighting of him. I was sixteen at the time and I was devastated when I heard the news of the missing ship and all hands.

However I managed to keep my mind through prayer and studying for a teacher's scholarship. I tried not to show how much I was grieving so stopped talking about the Sydney II so not to be upsetting father or mother. Dad was very angry but it was a situation outside of his control, an experience he had never had before. Basically all our close knit family suffered, my younger sister Daphne grieved very much for her special brother. His birthday was on the 14th of October but she was unable to recognize it. My younger brother never recovered from the trauma of losing his older brother. He became difficult to handle and completely uncontrollable as he grew up.

The Christmas of 1941 was not on our calendar. We did our farm chores as usual, milking the cows and the housework, and then went to service at the church. Our celebration was quiet and subdued. The essence and love of Christmas was meeting with friends and experiencing our prayers with Jesus Christ.

My eighteen year old brother with official number 24276 and Rank of Ordinary Seaman 2, was named Charles William Patrick and was in service of the Royal Australian Navy.

Date of death 20-11-1941 at sea.

Place of residence Eumundi N.C.L QLD, Australia

Birthplace Gympie QLD

Father Victor Henry Patrick

Mother Ivy Patrick

Connection Sister June Isobel Bickle nee Patrick

Roll of Honour Nambour QLD

N.O.K V.H. Patrick, Eumundi QLD

Date of First Entry in RAN – 19-04-1940 passed assessments easily

- 14-04-1941 Lifebelt and cover "Sydney"

Medals – Government Issue 3

Medalion – of the memorial at Mt Scott, Geraldton, Made from pure silver

60th Anniversary Medallion of H.M.A.S Sydney II 19th November 2001 Carnarvon

Lapel Stick Pin H.M.A.S Sydney II 60th anniversary

The Navy Bereavement Pin (N.B.P) commemorating the life and service of a relative issued by Commander A.C. Schroder R.A.N.

Complete silence followed the loss of the H.M.A.S Sydney until it's discovery on the ocean floor some 67 years later.

LEST WE FORGET.

Yours Sincerely

June Bickle

I would like to apologize for being so late with my entry and for losing the submission form. I have been ill for almost the year on and off and am still not very well.

If my submission is too long please edit it as needed. I did not understand exactly what you required but did not want to let my brother down.

I am now 84 and a lot of water has gone under the bridge since I was sixteen.

Happy days to you and your associates with all you do for the "Sydney" Association.

Kind regards June Bickle