

Elsvey Janel Simpson Bains 4-9-41

Father

R. A. Simpson



"Lost at Sea"

Nov. 1941.



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.

LOST - BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

A Sweet Victory

LOST - BUT NOT FORGOTTEN



HMAS SYDNEY II

in Memory of the 645

KEITH SHEGOG



A Memorial Book with over 200 personal pages
lives and families of the crew lost on HMAS Sydney II



Thelma says, "My elder sister was Arthur's girl friend. The horror was too much to bear in our home. My poor Mum, having terrible nightmares, my sister overcame with grief on losing both Ken and Arthur. He was so close to us it seemed that we lost two much loved young men. My sister was 19 at the time, she had the unenviable task of answering the door when the telegram arrived and had to give it to Mum.

The last time I saw Ken and Arthur, was the day before on Mt. Ferle Station on the way back to the ship."

Thelma Gale (sister).

*Arthur was living at Henley Beach before he joined the navy. Nothing is known of his family, but he did have some happiness in his short life.

Right: A.B. A.E. Shiers



~*~

SHIPSTONE, Henry Buccleuch, Petty Officer, No.B.972 (QLD)

Henry was born in 1913 and educated at Norman Park School, South Brisbane. He was employed at C.P.S as an office worker, played tennis, won trophies for wrestling and enjoyed Athletics.

He enlisted at the outbreak of war in 1939. He served in the *Adelaide* before joining the *Sydney* in March 1941, and had advised his mother he was coming home on leave soon.

~*~

SHORT, Harry Kenneth, Able Seaman, No.24051 (WA)

SIEVEY, Richard Thomas, Ordinary Seaman, No.S.5252 (NSW)

SILK, Stanley George, Chief Petty Officer Engineer, No.15018 (UK)

SIMPSON, Benjamin, Petty Officer Telegraphist, No.17402 (NSW)

SIMPSON, Charles Henry, Able Seaman, No.13928 (VIC)

+ **SIMPSON, Reginald Austin**, Ordinary Telegraphist, No.PA.1260 (SA)

His mother was Alma M. Simpson. Reg had one sister Aileen (who married Randel Templar in Adelaide). He married Elsie Joyce (nee Lee) on the 20th April 1940; they had a daughter, Elsie Janet. Reg played the banjo and mandolin, which he had on the ship for entertainment.

Its not known when he joined up but went to *Cerberus*, served some time in the *MV Yandra* before joining the *Sydney*. News clippings suggest he was in the *Sydney* when it engaged the *Bartolomeo Colleoni* off Crete.

PIECE APPEARING IN KEITH SHEGGS BOOK
LOST BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Reg's daughter Elsie says that:

My mother told me a lot about my father (he was a bit of a scallywag etc.), but not his birth date, or what his interests were, or what his civil occupation was I didn't know my poppy Simpson's names either. I never had a lot to do with my grandparents. Mum married again when I was 4 yrs old.

I can barely remember my auntie Aileen and Uncle Randel Templar (Dad's sister and brother-in-law.) My mother was informed of the tragedy by telegram. I know she never gave up hope. For years she wrote to different places like Red Cross, hoping he was a POW somewhere. I think when she died she still believed he was alive somewhere. I thought the world of my stepfather, but in my heart, there has always been an ache for my 'Daddy Reg'. At the time of *Sydney's* last action he knew of me; I was born 4th September 1941, only 2 1/2 mths old and he never had the chance to see me.

By some of the photographs taken when he was on leave, he spent time at the beach, camping, etc. He liked to go to Victor Harbor, Semaphore, Largs Bay and Kadina Racecourse. He and Mum got about quite a bit. When he was courting my mother he would climb up a verandah post and come over the balcony to meet her.

When Mum and Dad married it was in the Depression days, and things were bought with coupons. Mum had had 6 sisters and a brother; she was in the middle, and times were tough.

Mrs Elsie Gale (daughter).



Left: Reg Simpson
Right: Reg and his mates
on M.V. YANDRA
Below left: Joyce, Nan
and Pop Simpson with
Reg, Xmas 1940.
Below right: Reg
Simpson, Indian Ocean



TRIBUTE TO H.M.A.S. SYDNEY II

Sydney, Sydney, where art thou Sydney?
So deep beneath the waves.
Searching off Carnarvon found no sign.
The cruel sea, left none to save.

Wednesday, Nineteenth of November,
early war years of Forty One.
Sad loss of ship and 645 men,
the day a trap was sprung.

What happened that fateful day?
They say you sailed too close.
What was your master thinking
When you were dealt that fatal dose?

So, from the Kormoran survivors
Comes the little that we know
What to believe?
When nothing left to show

Families and loved ones share memories
Which are never far from mind
Of a gallant and proud Australian
Who flew the "white ensign".

Keith Shegog 1994

Ode to Absent Friends

Parents, families, friends and relations,
have answered the call to action stations.
We lost them on land, in the air and on water,
right to the end, they gave no quarter.
Some of them, we loved to hate,
but never, were they called anything but mate.

All are remembered, for our hearts they stir,
even those that held the rank of str.
Their staunch courage, did never bend,
they stood by us, right to the end.
Their lives and honour, to be never forsaken,
you are reminded this toast, in silence is taken.
Ever marching the heavens, that has no end,
I give to you, Absent Friends.

KEITH SHEGOG

... trying to be a carpenter. She was making what turned out to be cradles for our dolls. I wasn't quite six years of age on Christmas Day, and we woke to find cradles with pretty pink satin drapes. I often wondered why mother's pink satin bedroom curtains went from floor length, to just under the window ledge!

Mother's War Gratuity claim number 6580, was £ 138 / 15 / (one hundred and thirty eight pounds and fifteen shillings). War pensions had not been sorted out and late in January, I remember mother being particularly upset and very indignant with it. The Navy had overpaid her by about £ 1 / 2 / 6. (one pound two shillings and six-pence). Mother had used her money, and was beside herself wondering how she was going to repay this amount, for repay it she must. They took it out but until it was paid back. It was like salt in a very raw wound. Mother had to seek employment before the gratuity ran out. This she did by cleaning the Infant section of the school where we went for six months, even with our help, it had become too heavy for her and she was headed for a breakdown in health. Cleaning equipment was primitive then and the floors were worn timber. The only timeloom was in the Staff room.

Mother met and became friends with another young mother at a Naval Association meeting, Joyce Simpson; her husband Reg was a telegrapher in the Sydney. Their daughter Janet was born after his last leave home. It is believed that Reg was also late to join the Sydney and like my father, might have also replaced someone coming off through illness. Janet was about three months old when the Sydney was 'lost'. Auntie Joyce (as we called her) was sure that Reg received his first photo of his little girl before they left, because it was never returned to her. This was small consolation, but never-the-less one that she cling to in the days following. Auntie Joyce later remarried and she and Noel Ash moved to Starling North near Port Augusta where they raised their children. Joyce Simpson lived at the new Kilburn Housing Trust suburb at the time of the tragedy. They only went to a few meetings but kept up a friendship that was to last until mother's death.

When my sister Rose and I visited the Plymouth Naval Memorial at Plymouth, England, in 1990, we were able to not only put a flower on our father's name there, but we remembered Reg Simpson with one too. It was the least we could do for Auntie Joyce and Janet.

At school we received our books first, because we were on the Repatriation List. It helped us to justify (and justify we had to) why we had no father. Our dad had become a war hero by paying the supreme sacrifice.

As we became the right age, we joined the Legacy Club of Adelaide. This helped us greatly. It was where we could openly honour our father with Legatees and their wives who were very kind to us, and understood our loss. It gave mother space for one evening a week and we were taught handicrafts such as felt, leather-work, raffia and wicker work, making sensible things like wallets and trays. We had games and were taught basic ball-room dancing steps. All activities were planned to help us take our place in society later, as the good citizens that our fathers would have wanted us to be. Meetings always ended with hot or cold milk, depending on the season, and sticky buns. We were mstered for kitchen duties, but the Legatees served us cheerfully. A formal farewell with the Ode of Remembrance followed.

Once a year, we had an exhibition. This was a mini exhibition of our craftwork at Legacy and from home. Certificates were awarded. I remember a couple of holiday weekends spent at 'Holiday House' at Mount Lofty, when I was in the Rabius and Sunbeams group. I can look back now and see that the Legacy Club helped to mould positive things throughout my life, as many of the things experienced there, I continue to do today.

The local branch of the R.S.L. at Colonel Light Gardens called at our home. I remember a man and his wife come and promised to return each Christmas and Birthday with gifts for us. Mother was worried about charity, but they were very honourable to her and us. At Christmas, we received a gift, and I remember a red leather shoulder bag, and we also received five shillings in money. For Christmas and Easter we received a further five shillings each. This we saved for our annual Christmas holiday to Port Elliot, that mother saved hard for each year.

I remember continuing to make cards for father each birthday and father's day. Mother would take them and put them with all the rest in his low-boy wardrobe. They remained there until mother remarried. Mother never attempted to stop me, but it must have hurt her each time she quietly put a card away. Early in 1946, mother sought confirmation of father's death from the Navy. She had been corresponding with a family friend and soldier. He was returning from Borneo, and they were to be married. In the April, she married George Ellis Pallant. We girls kept our name of Freer in honour of our father.

A year later, our half-brother Brian John was born. Brian grew up with the mystery surrounding the sinking of the Sydney. He was always touched by it. We loved him very much; he died in 1996, aged 49 years. With the marriage came the inevitable changes. Some were for the better and some weren't. We were not allowed to speak of our dad openly, but had to wait for a private moment. There was now an element of jealousy in our home for the first time. We virtually lost touch with my father's relatives, so that now we had not only

lost our dad, but his family as well. It is only in recent years that we have been able to make contact with them again, but so much was lost along the way with the generation between.

We three girls grew up and married and had three children apiece. Most of the grandchildren have also married and have children as well. Father would have had nine grandchildren and sixteen great grandchildren to date (2001). Mother died in 1986, aged 77 years. Rose the second daughter, died in March 1997, aged 64 years. It is through Rose, as custodian of mother's private letters, that I have been able to bring out some information of the times. I was able to persuade her to let me research for the family. I hope that I have not only honoured her trust, but those of our parents as well.

For fifty years, we had no meeting place for relatives and friends of the H.M.A.S. Sydney, then at last a few people made it happen. This would be told in another chapter. It was a real concern that family, friends, former crew and other servicemen were still hurting. The 'Free' girls have attended these reunions along with our cousins Wally Freer and Ralph Averay, both returned Able Seamen mentioned before. Grand daughter Joanne, and five great-grandsons - Kevin, Mark, Brenton, Aaron and Nathan. W. E. A. Freer, A.B., O.N. 13781, Gunner and 'Captain of the Hold' was a true sailor of experience, but we lost more than that, we lost a very loving father and family man.

@ Barbara Crull 1997



Left: Walter Edward Albert Freer
Above: Walter's family in July 1941
R. to R: Barbara, Rose, Nancy and wife Alice

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FRIAR, Jack Allan, Engine Room Artificer 3rd Class, No.20809 (NSW)

FRISCH, Ernest Dudley, Able Seaman, No. 23570 (Q.L.D.)

FRITH, William Railton Oliver, Petty Officer, RN (UK)

FRY, Robert Aubrey, Stoker, No.W1847 (V.I.)

FRYER, Kenneth James, Ordinary Telegraphist, No.23888 (NSW)

Born on the 20th September 1919 at Warren NSW, the son of David and Madeline Lily Fryer (nee Corrick). There were three other children: Arthur David (RAAF), Tail Gunner, shot down over Germany and died in POW Hospital on 4th Nov.1944; and two sisters, Judy and Nancy Jean (now Mrs Orr). Ken went to the Warren Kindergarten (1924-6), attended Dubbo Primary School, and then went on to High School at Dubbo (1932-4). Before enlisting Ken was a Salesman for Men's Clothing with Western Stores Dubbo NSW, and enjoyed boxing and cycling.

Nancy Orr (sister) and Faye Lintern (2nd cousin)

Taken from the book written by Barbara to sail
(The Lieg Silence)
see freer