

The following is information concerning my late brother 24066 Ordinary Seaman James Herbert Greenwood. HMAS Sydney 11.

Let it be clearly understood that at the time of the loss of HMAS Sydney 11 my brother had completed and passed exams and moved to the Able Bodied Seaman's Mess of HMAS Sydney 11.

The last letter we received from him had sketches of the torpedo badges that he had sewn on to his uniform. Apparently the examination results were not forwarded to naval headquarters. Unfortunately letters to & from my brother must have been destroyed after he was killed in action.

Our father James Herbert Greenwood was born in England and migrated to Australia in 1913 aged 22 years. Prior to migrating he had served in the British Territorial Army. At the outbreak of WW1 He returned to England in 1915 and enlisted with the 22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion County of London. After the war our Father met and married, Bridget, Florence Denney. Bridget was a widow. Her husband had been killed in action in WW1. Florence had a son from her first marriage. His name was Stephen. Our Mother never knew where her first husband had been buried. A few years ago my wife & I found a virtual memory site in the U K which listed all War graves in Europe. On searching we found my mother's first husband & were able to add a photograph of him to his grave.

James Herbert returned to Australia on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 1919 and his wife Florence with son Stephen age 5 yrs a daughter Doris, Mary, age 6 months came to Australia on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1920. Sadly Stephen died in 1922.

James, Herbert jnr. was born at home in Perry Street, North Bundaberg, Queensland on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 1923. (Strangely the house he was born in was moved pre war and is now the site is a small War Memorial Garden, with a plaque listing the names of those born in North Bundaberg who paid the supreme sacrifice in WW2.)

Jim was a keen sportsman. He attended three schools, Bundaberg South State Primary School, Christian Brothers and Bundaberg State Intermediate. Whilst attending the Christian Brothers, he won the 100yard sprint and a Boxing Competition in his weight division.

Like a lot of lads in those days, Jim took on a newspaper run, delivering the papers on his bicycle in the early hours of the morning before attending school.

When he left school Jim learnt to drive our Father's car. Somehow he must have said he was older than he was as he received a driving licence. I still have the original licence.

He obtained a job as a milk delivery man with a local company that started a Pasteurised Milk Business and delivered milk in glass bottles. This caused quite a stir in Bundaberg as the only milk deliveries up to then was warm milk from a milk churn on the back of a truck. Sometimes on Friday nights I would help on the milk run, but I think I was more of a hindrance than a help. I was ten years old and I loved my Brother.

The Greenwood family had a naval history. Our Grandfather was a merchant seaman sailing from England to Australia in the 1800s. An Uncle had been a career sailor in the Royal Navy and served in

WW1. He retired as a Chief Petty Officer. At the outbreak of WW11 in 1939 he was recalled to active service where he was heavily involved with the evacuation of Dunkirk, which affected him greatly. He died soon after with pneumonia.

As soon as Jim turned 16 years of age in 1939 he applied to join the Royal Australian Navy, wishing to follow the family tradition. Whilst awaiting the acceptance into the RAN he was offered an apprenticeship as a carpenter with a Brisbane company who were contracted to build several large stores in Bundaberg. Before Jim signed the papers for the apprenticeship he was accepted for the Royal Australian Navy.

Jim was passed medically fit and sworn in at H.M.A.S. Moreton, Brisbane, Queensland, on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1940. He left the next day for H.M.A.S. Cerebus where he did his initial training. After a few days home leave he was recalled and shipped to the Mediterranean where he joined H.M.A.S. Sydney11 on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1940

These were very busy times for the Sydney, constantly on alert, even in Alexandria Harbour where Axis aircraft often attacked and the threat of attacks from submarines as soon as the ship left the harbour.

When H.M.A.S. Sydney11 returned to Australia, Jim was given 10 days leave, but after 7 days he was recalled. As Jim was the first Bundaberg Service man to return home after active service, the Bundaberg City Council had arranged to present him with a certificate. Unfortunately he was recalled before the event could take place. Our Father accepted the certificate on his behalf.

From then on, we received post cards from places around the Pacific where the "Sydney" was patrolling.

I will never forget that steamy night in November 1941. I can still see my Mother standing at the foot of my bed crying and my Father at the side of my bed also crying. All he could say, "READ THIS, IT'S JIMMY" and he handed me the pink telegram to read. I got out of bed and sat on the front steps of our house crying my heart out. Our Minister of Religion and a Police Constable had delivered the dreadful news. There was no counselling in those days. I went off to school the next day, my Father off to work and my Mother was at home with my married sister who lived out of town and had been given the sad news.

Both my Mother and Father went to their graves not knowing what had happened to their son. My sister, now 89 yrs and myself, soon to be 80 yrs thought we would never know, but-

Thank You "Finding Sydney Foundation" for your untiring efforts which culminated in discovering the H.M.A.S. Sydney11. Thank you to the Naval Association of Australia for joining in to launch the Virtual Memorial for all the crew members of H.M.A.S. Sydney 11

### ***Lest We Forget***

FOOT NOTE. My wife & I travelled to Geraldton for the Commemorative Service on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2008. The burial service was most moving as was the Memorial Service at sunset. We shall never forget it.

Stan Greenwood