

IVO IGNATIUS BIBBY

I would like to write about my father, Ivo Ignatius Bibby, who was the Engine Room Artificer 1st Class as a crew member of the HMAS Sydney II.

Dad was born on 17th July, 1899 in Ballarat, Victoria, and was big brother to Patrick and Thelma Bibby. He spent some earlier years in Western Australia, where he helped start the surf club at Cottlesloe. He joined the Army just after the 1st World War, and then in 1926, joined the Navy and was sent to England to train for two years to bring back to Australia the first Australian Submarines, the HMAS Otway, Ovens and the Oberon. Dad joined the crew of the HMAS Sydney in 1938. He was known as Bill to all his mates in the Navy.

Bill was stationed in Weymouth, Dorset, in England, where he met and married my Mum, Violet Mahoney, in 1928. They had four children – Patricia, the twins Pamela and Jill (myself) and young Roger. In 1930 they returned to Australia, Mum leaving her parents and nine brothers and sisters in Weymouth for a new life in Australia. Both Dad and Mum were very keen on all sports, with Bill being a strong swimmer and playing water polo, as well as rugby, wrestling and weight lifting. Violet, who became known as Birdie, was a champion swimmer.

Dad was usually away for six months at a time, but when he came home it was wonderful. He was a great athlete, a joker and very well loved in the local community. He was a very popular character at our local beach at Mona Vale, and I remember him making us do 16 laps of the pool there, then it was playtime. I was filled with immense pride when Dad would come home and come up to the school in his white Navy uniform, we remember him looking extremely handsome and official.

In the eight months leading up to her sinking, the HMAS Sydney was mainly engaged in convoy duties following a stint in the Mediterranean. My Dad was one of the crew featured in the photo of 6 crew members looking out the damaged funnel of the HMAS Sydney (2nd from right wearing naval hat).

I can clearly remember the day I was told that Dad wouldn't be coming home – I was ten years old and at school when some family friends came and took us home. It was a time of great sorrow for my Mum Violet and all of us, and we felt a great mixture of sadness and disbelief. As there were never any survivors from the battle from the HMAS Sydney or remains, my Mum always held a faint hope that one day Dad would arrive home after the war.

PHOTOGRAPHS:

1. Ivo Ignatius Bibby – Engine Room Artificer 1st Class
2. Photograph on HMAS Sydney – damage to funnel – Ivo second from right wearing white hat
3. A young photo of Ivo wearing naval uniform
4. 1928 – Marriage to Violet Mahoney in Weymouth, England
5. On Mona Vale Beach with son Roger
6. As a Surf Lifesaver at Cottlesloe Beach, West Australia (far left)
7. Weightlifting – a favourite hobby (left)
8. Violet (left) and children Pat, Jill, Pamela and Roger
9. Myself, Jill Townend, at the HMAS Sydney Memorial Service on 24 April at St Andrews Cathedral, Sydney, admiring photo of my Dad and his crewmates
10. Daughters Julie and Sharon at the HMAS Sydney Memorial at Sea at the site where the ship is on 19 November, 2008



















