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Double tragedy for Devonport family

Brothers were shipmates in HMAS Sydney

By JULIAN BURGESS

DEVONPORT brothers Geoffrey and Lance Rosevear joined the Royal Australian Navy in different states but in late 1941 both found themselves aboard the ill-fated light cruiser HMAS Sydney.

Thelma Jacobs, 83, of Newnham, yesterday recalled the impact that the devastating news of the loss of her two cousins had on her family when the Sydney was sunk off the West Australian coast on November 19, 1941.

Geoffrey had been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for bravery in the Battle of Cape Spada in July 19, 1940, when the Sydney engaged the Italian 150mm gun cruiser Bartolomeo Colleoni.

Sydney was hit by shells from the faster Bartolomeo Colleoni, suffering one casualty, but later sank the enemy warship.

Mrs Jacobs said her cousins had enjoyed a visit home shortly before joining HMAS Sydney in late 1941.

"They were very dear cousins of mine. I grew up with them," she said.

Geoffrey had moved to Sydney before the war.

"He was born and brought up in Devonport but he married and lived in Sydney," Mrs Jacobs said.

"Lance was a Devonport boy. Their father was Thomas Rosevear, my mother's brother. Thomas was a merchant in Devonport for many years and he had a place right on the Esplanade opposite the

wharf. The boys went to school in Devonport.

"They both came home on leave (in late 1941). I think Geoffrey got married and brought his wife home to visit."

Geoffrey's wife Eileen was from Bondi and Lance's wife Olive was from Scottsdale.

"They went back on the old Tarooma and got the train to Sydney. Halfway between Melbourne and Sydney the train suddenly pulled up and all the sailors were taken off and they went on to the ship.

"They were never heard from again. It was very tragic, my uncle was devastated.

"And after that happened they wouldn't allow two brothers to go on ships together."

Thomas Rosevear had remarried and Mrs Jacobs thinks there may be other relatives of the lost sailors living in Southern Tasmania.



Thelma Jacobs reads about the finding of the Sydney in The Examiner yesterday.

Cameras will be flown in

CANBERRA — Specialist deep water camera equipment is to be flown in from Norway to examine the wreckage of HMAS Sydney and perhaps explain why the cruiser sank with no survivors.

It will be the first time the Sydney has been seen since she was sunk in a fierce battle with the German raider Kormoran on November 19, 1941.

All 645 crewmen on board

the Australian warship perished and she now lies in 2560 metres of water off the West Australian coast.

The Federal Government is also proceeding with plans for a variety of commemorative services following the discovery of the wrecks of both the Sydney and the Kormoran after 66 years.

A national memorial service would be held on April 24.