

Consul-General of Japan in Sydney's Newsletter

No. 62 80th anniversary of the attack on Sydney Harbour: Remembering for the future

17 June 2022



Observing the minute's silence following the wreath laying by
Commodore O'Grady and Ambassador Yamagami at Taylor Bay
(1 June 2022)

Have you seen [Vivid Sydney](#) now on in central Sydney? From 27 May through to 18 June, famous locations such as the Opera House and the Harbour Bridge are beautifully lit up, and no matter how cold the evenings are, every night the city is full of people.

During this time, there have also been a series of events that have quietly taken place to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the attack on Sydney Harbour by Japanese Imperial Navy midget submarines. Participants in the events renewed their commitment to peace for the future. In this issue of my newsletter, I would like to introduce this series of commemorative events and reflect with you on their significance.



**At the 80th Anniversary of the Defence of Sydney Commemorative Service
with NSW Minister for Environment and Heritage James Griffin and student
representatives from local schools
(27 May 2022)**

● **80th Anniversary of the Defence of Sydney Commemorative Service**

From late night on 31 May into the early hours of 1 June in 1942, Japanese Imperial Navy midget submarines attacked Sydney Harbour. On the Australian side, 21 sailors lost their lives, and on the Japanese side, 6 submariners lost theirs. I wrote about the background of this incident in a [newsletter two years ago](#). This year, it is 80 years since that attack on Sydney Harbour.

On 27 May, the local state member, NSW Minister for Environment and Heritage the Hon. James Griffin MP, organised the 80th Anniversary of the Defence of Sydney Commemorative Service at the Defence of Sydney Monument located at North Head on Sydney Harbour. The commemorative service came to be held at this location after the Defence of Sydney Monument was erected here on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Participants in this year's commemorative service included former prime minister Tony Abbott and representatives from various organisations - federal and state governments, the armed services, returned services leagues, and local city councils, police and schools. Following on from the previous year, I attended representing the Government of Japan and was warmly welcomed as a security partner of Australia.



The “Ken Done: Attack” exhibition at Mosman Art Gallery
(28 June 2022)

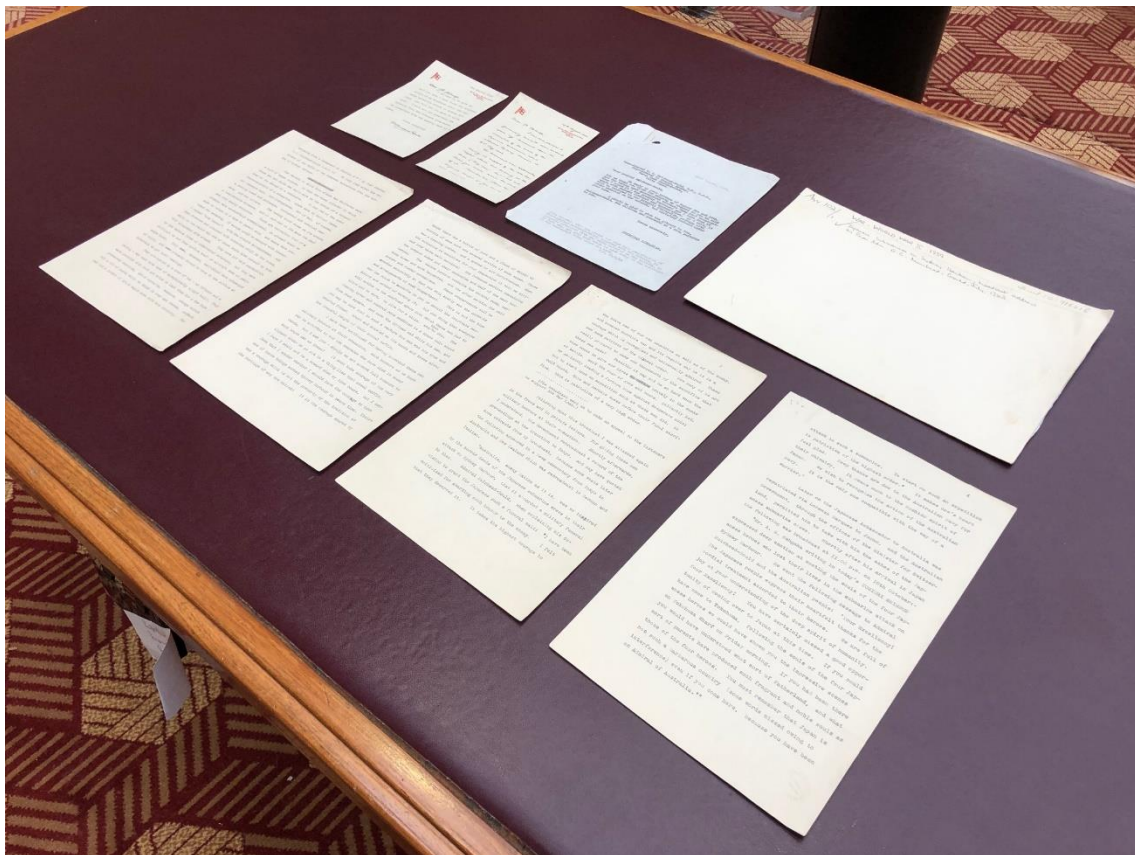
- **“Ken Done: Attack” exhibition**

On the following day, 28 May, the “Ken Done: Attack” exhibition opened at the Mosman Art Gallery. I was invited to attend and Ken Done himself gave the opening remarks.

Ten years ago, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the midget submarine attack on Sydney Harbour, Mosman Art Gallery curated an exhibition about the attack comprising works by local artist Ken Done. It was the first time he had ever created a work about war, but with the attack being an important episode in the history of Sydney and him having a strong personal affinity with Japan, he willingly accepted the commission and 15 works were created for the exhibition. All works were donated to the Mosman Art Gallery.

This year being the 80th anniversary of the attack on Sydney Harbour, Mosman Art Gallery exhibited the complete works again and organised a talk and reception by Ken Done. It was a great success with some 80 attendees, who were largely local people, including the mayor of Mosman City Council.

In my speech, I told those gathered that Ken Done had made a great contribution to a deeper understanding of history through his works, which explain the historical facts in an easy to understand manner, by giving an overall depiction of what happened – including portraying the feelings of the submarine crew and the naval burial after the attack. I also stated that Japan and Australia are now partners working to achieve a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, and that the importance of cooperation between the two countries has increased following the war in Ukraine.



The manuscript of the radio broadcast by Rear Admiral Gerard Muirhead-Gould in the collection of the State Library of NSW
(31 May 2022)

- **Record from the State Library of NSW collection**

The following week on 31 May, I went to the State Library of NSW and looked up the [manuscript of the radio broadcast by Rear Admiral Gerard Muirhead-Gould](#), which I had been wanting to see for some time.

Rear Admiral Muirhead-Gould was the officer in command of the defense of Sydney Harbour at the time of the midget submarine attack, and on 9 June, he accorded the four Japanese submariners who perished in the attack a funeral with full military honours. In late July, he explained the reason for this in a broadcast on the national radio channel: the courage of the fallen servicemen was the courage shared by the brave men of all nations, a courage recognised and universally admired, and that they were patriots of the highest order.

Looking at the manuscript, there is a postscript added noting the reaction of the Japanese side after the radio broadcast: "Deep thanks are due to the Australian Navy for their chivalry. It means much to the Bushido spirit of Japan. We wish to recognize the action of the Australian Navy. It is the only one compatible with the way of a warrior." Reading this, I thought of the feelings of Rear Admiral Muirhead-Gould at the time.

On the evening of 31 May, I invited Rear Admiral Mark Hammond, Commander of the Australian Fleet, and his wife, as well as Ambassador and Madame Yamagami and Captain Aso, Defense Attaché, to dinner at my residence and we exchanged views about Japan-Australia defense and security cooperation.

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With representatives from Sydney Japanese International School at the Royal
Australian Navy Heritage Centre
(1 June 2022)

● HMAS Kuttabul 80th anniversary memorial service

On 1 June, the HMAS Kuttabul 80th anniversary memorial service was held at the HMAS Kuttabul Naval Base (at Garden Island, Sydney). First we travelled on the general boat *Hudson* to Taylor Bay where one of the three midget submarines, the M-22, sank. There, Commodore Paul O'Grady and Ambassador Yamagami laid wreaths from the stern of the boat and this was followed by a minute's silence.

Afterwards, the [memorial service](#) was held in front of the HMAS Kuttabul memorial which stands on the naval base. The service was attended by representatives of the government, military and diplomatic corps. The names and ranks of the Australian and British soldiers who died in the attack were read out by students from local schools, and the names and ranks of the six Japanese submarine crew were read out by students from the Sydney Japanese International School. Then, wreaths were laid.

After the memorial service, morning tea was held at the [Royal Australian Navy Heritage Centre](#) located within the base enabling the participants to meet one another. In front of the midget submarine conning tower on display at the Heritage Centre, there is a phrase spoken by the mother of Lieutenant Matsuo, who perished with the M-22 midget

submarine: “I can never forget the chivalrous attitude of those who mourned enemy’s war dead in the midst of war.”



The Mitchell Library Reading Room at the State Library of NSW (31 May 2022)

- **Remembering for the future**

Eighty years ago, Japanese Imperial Navy midget submarines attacked Sydney Harbour. It is now history from a time long past. What is important, however, is to keep memories alive for the future – remembering for the future.

What has happened can’t be changed, but we can learn lessons from it. As we remember times of war and feel the pain of sacrifices made, it is important that we are grateful for what we have today because of those very sacrifices. This reflection will enable us to overcome the challenges we face today and renew our resolve to work for future peace and prosperity.

Japan and Australia overcame the conflict of 80 years ago, fostered reconciliation, cooperation and exchange, and built a “Special Strategic Partnership”. Reflecting on this turning point in our history, I would like to make full use of its lessons for the future.

Kiya Masahiko, Consul-General of Japan in Sydney