



H.M.A.S. Sydney  
Colombo  
16<sup>th</sup> November 1914

Dear Mum & all,  
Just a line to let you know  
I am still alive & kicking in spite of the  
"Emden". I have nothing to write about except  
our scrap with the "Emden". We got a wireless  
message from Coes Island about 7 o'clock on the  
9<sup>th</sup> inst. saying that there was a German warship  
lying there with a collier. We were about 50 or  
60 miles away from here and we altered course  
and made for Coes at full speed. We came up  
with the "Emden" about 9.30 a.m. and she let go a  
shot at us at 11,000 yards. We let go a ranging shot  
immediately after and then both ships went at it  
hammer & tongs. We were superior to them in  
every way. Our shots told far more than  
theirs as we were only slightly damaged and  
our shots carried away her bridge foremast  
3 funnels in quick succession.  
Early in the fight the "Emden" caught fire after  
the mainmast and continued to burn throughout.  
One of their shots wrecked our rangefinder and

killed the man who was working it. The action lasted one hour 36 minutes. The Emden got an awful doing and the captain beached her on S. Keeling Island. He still continued to fire <sup>for a short time</sup> after he was aground but we soon silenced her. We left her then and went after the collier which was clearing out when they saw the Emden was getting diked up. We soon caught her and put a shot across her bows. We sent a party aboard and brought off the German prize crew and some Chinamen who were doing the ~~stoking~~ stoking. The collier was the "Buresk" which the Germans had captured 6 weeks before full of Welsh coal. We put 4 shots into her and sunk her. We then went back to the Emden. She was still flying the German flag and when we signalled her ~~she did not reply~~ so we put another broadside into her and she fired another couple of shots. However they did not want any more as they pulled the flag down. Before we had sighted the Emden she had landed 35 men and 2 officers at Cocos Island to destroy the wireless station and cut the cables. It was late in the afternoon when the Emden hauled down her flag and we went out to sea and cruised about outside till morning. We landed an armed party at Cocos and found out that the German landing party had cleared out in a schooner they commandeered. We then went back to the Emden to see what we could do for the wounded. We were there all the remainder of that day fetching off German wounded and prisoners. There were about 180 saved out of a crew of over 400.

PRO 5198



The Emden is a perfect wreck. From the mainmast to stern she is just a shell there being only the deck and ~~the~~ hull left, all the rest being burnt out. Her 3 funnels are lying over on top of one another. Her ~~foremast~~ foremast is down and her bridge blown away. The starboard side of her deck is full of great holes and is torn up everywhere and there are holes in the side you could walk through.

The prisoners told us that one of our shells killed 60 men and another ~~the~~ burst under a gun and blew the gun and gun crew right over the side. Of the upper deck hands there are only 15 left ~~whole~~ and only one <sup>(we mainly engine room ratings)</sup> uninjured. The rest Prince Franz Joseph (?) of Hohenzollern was aboard the Emden and is now also a prisoner. He and the captain were uninjured.

We fired one torpedo but she missed. During the action we made the best speed the "Sydney" ever did. We got just on 30 knots out of her. Pretty good going. That is about as fast as Hans shoes his old locos along.

When we had finished with the Emden wounded we came on to Colombo arriving here last Sunday. We go on to

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Malta from here, the Melbourne and Sydney having  
been ordered here. Lord only knows when we will  
get back to Australia.

You can show this letter to Jack Courroy and  
Harry Deuter. It will save me writing to them.  
You know how I love writing letters.

I haven't got any ~~the~~ letters at all yet. Have  
you written?

Remember me to all a d sundry and  
write soon.

Hoping you are all O.K. as yours truly is  
I will close.

I remain  
Yours affectionately  
Choo K

Address

A. Nielsen  
Stoker  
10 Mess.

A. Mas. Sydney  
Malta

PRO 5198

## AN EMDEN ECHO

By Niels Peter Henry Nielsen ( Chook)

Writing home from the H.M.A.S. Sydney, from Colombo on November 16, 1914, Mr H. Nielsen, who was a stoker on the cruiser Sydney. Mr Nielsen stated;

Just a line to let you know that I am still alive and kicking in spite of the Emden. I have nothing to write about except our scrap with the Emden. We got a wireless message from Cocos Island about 7 o'clock on the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup> instant, saying that there was a German warship lying there with a collier. We were about 50 or 60 miles away from there and we altered course and made for Cocos at full speed.

We came up with the Emden about 9.10 a.m. and she let go a salvo at us at about 11,000 yards. We let go a ranging shot immediately after, and then both ships went at it hammer and tongs.

We were superior to them in every way. Our shots told far more than theirs, as we were only slightly damaged and our shots carried away her bridge, foremast and funnels in quick succession. Early in the fight the Emden caught fire after the mainmast had been demolished and continued to burn throughout. One of their shots wrecked our rangefinder and killed the man who was working it, (A. B. Hoy).

The action lasted one hour 36 minutes. The Emden got an awful doing and the captain beached her on S. Keeling Island. (This was involuntary). He still continued to fire for a short time after he was aground, but we soon silenced her. We left her then and went after the collier, which was clearing out when they saw the Emden was getting dished up. We soon caught her and put a shot across her bows. We sent a party aboard and brought off the German prize crew and some chinamen who were doing the stoking. The collier was the Buresk, which the Germans had captured six weeks before full of Welsh coal. We put four shots into her and sank her. We then went back to the Emden. She was still flying the German flag and when signalled would not reply, so we put another broadside into her and fired another couple of shots. However they did not want anymore, as they pulled the flag down.

Before we had sighted the Emden she had landed 35 men and two officers at Cocos Island to destroy the wireless station and cut the cables. It was late in the afternoon when the Emden hauled down her flag and we went out to sea and cruised about till morning. We landed an armed party at Cocos and found that the German landing party had cleared out in a schooner (Ayesha) they had commandeered. We then went

back to the Emden to see what we could do for the wounded. We were there all the remainder of the day fetching off German wounded and prisoners.

The Emden is a perfect wreck. From the mainmast to stern she is just a shell, there being only the deck and the hull left. All the rest was burnt out. Her three funnels are lying over on top of one another. Her foremast is down and her bridge blown away. The starboard side of her deck is full of great holes and is torn up everywhere and there are holes in the side you could walk through. The prisoners told us that one of our shells killed 60 men and another burst under a gun and blew the gun and gun's crew right over the side.

Of the upper deck hands there are only 15 left and only one uninjured. The rest are mainly engine room ratings. Prince Franz Joseph (?) of Hohenzollern was aboard the Emden and was now also a prisoner. He and the captain were uninjured.

We fired one torpedo, but she missed. During the action we made the best speed the Sydney ever did. We got just on 30 knots out of her. Pretty good going!

When we had finished with the Emden we came on to Colombo, arriving here last Sunday. We go on to Malta from here, the Melbourne and Sydney having been ordered there.