

A copy of a letter written by Mrs Mary Gibson to Dr. I. Brodziak 10-11-1986.

(054 845201)

L.A.& K.M Gibson
RMB 520
Graham Road
Nanneella
Vic. 3561

“Brookdale”
Nanneella 3561
Via Rochester
Victoria
10/11/86

Dear Dr. Brodziak,

My husband, Lance Gibson, was the only Australian officer to survive the sinking of the Tamahako Maru off Nagasaki – June 24 th 1944.

Lance made up lists of those saved and those missing, smuggled them through searches, and the War Crimes returned them to him when they finished with them. He really doesn't know what happened to Captain McNamara.

They were sleeping close together in the hold, but the ship went down in 2 minutes and there was so much confusion.

There was a terrific blast from a torpedo and 80 men on the hatch cover died.

Lance says there were a number of Dutch doctors and some British doctors on the draft and thinks Captain McNamara was the Australian doctor, and says he was a 'beaut bloke'.

It was the most successful American submarine raid of the war, and was commanded by Commander Richard O'Kane, of the United States submarine '*Tang*'. He got 3 ships in 3 minutes and thought he got the 4 th, and Lance said he did.

There were 8 ships in the convoy and 4 escorts.

Retired Admiral O'Kane has written a book called '*Clear the Bridge*' which fascinated Lance, so I wrote to him and now he and his wife and Lance and I are good friends, and find we have a lot in common (trout fishing and farming, hand crafts etc etc.)

Yes – I do the letter writing as Lance won't take pen in hand. We are farmers and live 15 miles south east of Echuca on a lovely property, irrigation and always green. Dairying and beef and hay.

| <u>Statistics</u> | | <u>Survived</u> |
|-------------------|-----|-----------------|
| English | 200 | 42 |
| Dutch | 273 | 85 |
| Australian | 257 | 72 |
| American | 42 | 12 |

Of the Australians 12 died of pneumonia in Nagasaki and at end of war 42 survived

There were 24 Australians in Nagasaki when the bomb fell and all survived and there are still some alive today, and one lives 10 miles from us.

Lance was sent to Mulden in Manchuria 3 months before the bomb

Regards and any more information necessary – let me know

Mary Gibson