

E. Geddes
40 Edith St.
Bardwell Park 2207
N.S.W.
Australia.
8th April 2009..

The President of the United States of America
The White House,
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W
Washington D.C. 20500
U.S.A.

Dear Sir,

It is very difficult for me to compose this communication in a form which in the first place will preclude it being consigned to the waste paper basket as useless material from some "Nutter Down Under" and secondly to create enough interest for those who first determine the direction in which my letter should proceed to direct it to a position on your desk where you, in spite of the burden of your national and international commitments, will find it in your heart to personally peruse the attached material and advise me of your conclusions.

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Eric Geddes aged 90 a retired member of the Royal Australian Air Force and a Veteran of World War II who at one stage was based with and flew missions in B24 Liberators with the USAAF 531st Squadron of the 380th Bomb Group in New Guinea during April of 1944 where I flew as a member of an RAAF crew attached to the 531st.

Prior to that in 1942, I had completed an operational tour, also in New Guinea, flying Hudsons and was a participant in the successful denial to the Japanese, of Milne Bay as a base for their aircraft to counter the successes which American forces were having in that theatre, with special regard to the struggle for Guadalcanal which had just commenced in August of 1942. This theatre, and the events which followed, on the 8th and 9th of that month created headline banners in the world press.

The year 1942, was very significant for our combined forces. It was a critical year for both our countries. We had our gains and we had our losses, but in all partnerships there are areas of grey where loyalties may be questioned. I refer here to the field of Historical Journalism where I believe responsible journalism should be based on credible sources and strict verification of facts. The real issue is not one of the right to free expression, but whether any government should tolerate malicious journalism and do nothing about it.

May I direct your thoughts to a part of American Naval History dated 8th and 9th August 1942 when a Japanese Naval Squadron caused your country to suffer it's worst blue water defeat in it's history with the loss in the battle of Savo of 3 American cruisers and 1 Royal Australian Navy Cruiser, HMAS Canberra, on which 10 officers and 74 ratings were killed, also 10 officers, 96 ratings and 3 civilians wounded.

Of the American ships the following applied.

Ship	Killed	Wounded
USS VINCENNES	332	258
USS QUINCY	370	167
USS ASTORIA	216	186
USS CHICAGO	2	21
USS RALPH TALBOT	11	11
USS PATTERSON	8	11

A total of 1023 killed and 763 wounded.

After 66 years I still honour all of those men and my prayers have always been for those left to mourn their passing and that in their family histories they will be forever heroes.

Mr President, the purpose of this letter is to appeal to the sense of justice which I know to be part of the American psyche else why would LIBERTY AND JUSTICE, two beautiful words of the English language, be embedded in your culture. We in our Democracy have Liberty in abundance but there are times when Justice comes in a shade of grey.

The attached summary defines the area of grey which led to a final determination of the cause of the Savo debacle and it will disclose the personal connection of Sergeants William Stutt, Eric Geddes, Wilbur Curtis and John Bell, all of whom were defamed by two American War Correspondents namely Samuel Morison and Richard Newcomb who, in their analysis of the battle, used the media and the official investigation of the event to convince the authorities and the American public that the RAAF crew were so derelict in their duties that the terrible loss of 1023 killed and 763 wounded rested with their actions when they sighted Admiral Mikawa's Naval Squadron. They reported that when we finally arrived back at Milne Bay we indulged in tea and apple pie before we proceeded to operations to verbally report our sighting. We were at a loss to understand what war those gentlemen were reporting. It sure as hell wasn't the one we were fighting. Perhaps apple pie was on the menu for them, but we were flying daily missions of up to 8 hours duration with in flight rations of 1 x 850gm tin of preserved pears shared between 4 and 1 packet each of 4 dog biscuits.

Sergeants Curtis and Bell are now deceased and Sergeant Stutt, due to illness, is a resident of a nursing home. Consequently it remains with me to make this audacious approach for you to confirm that the real history of that sighting is the one which is being taught in your schools, bearing in mind that for Justice to be served, the accused must be given the opportunity to present their case to the examining judiciary. To this day we have not enjoyed that luxury.

Books have been written on this subject to try and clarify the details and the only acknowledgement from America indicating acceptance of the Australian version of events comes from Captain Emile L Bonnot USNR (Ret) who forwarded all the relevant information to Dr Dean Allard (Senior Historian of the Naval Historical Centre), in Washington DC.

The attached summary is the true version of events authenticated and documented for the benefit of all concerned. It is my belief Mr President that your grandchildren would applaud you for appending your signature to a document, which would enshrine in your history, a truth so badly tarnished.

It is my fervent desire that before I become just a memory that I will be able to show my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren and the families of my crew mates that the President of the United States of America is prepared to whiten the grey area of Justice and have the true version of events recorded in your history books. We and your nation were comrades in arms in WW II. We shared the good and the bad so now after 66years let us polish the sword of Justice and get the history right.

This injustice to my comrades and I must not be perpetuated in your historical records nor through the media. Allow us to leave a legacy of honour and respect for dedication to duty in a combat situation shared with your country, then that proud symbol of LIBERTY and JUSTICE will remain untarnished and our descendents will bless you for it.

Yours Sincerely

Eric Geddes