

H.M.S. AUSTRALIA

February 6th 1945.

Dear Mrs. Utting,

I wish to convey to you my sincerest sympathy on the loss of your son who was killed in action at Lingayen Gulf in the Philippines.

Your son was at his action station (a four inch gun) and we were under air attack at the time. At about 6 p.m. on January 6th the gun was in action and firing at the enemy when it received an almost direct hit. He was picked up unconscious and taken to the dressing station where he was attended by Surgeon Lieutenant Dawson. He was found to be badly burnt and in a state of extreme shock and did not know what was happening at all. He was treated with morphia and plasma injections and his burns dressed but did not recover consciousness and died about four hours later.

He was buried at sea the following day in the approaches to Lingayen Gulf. We were still under air attack and it was not possible to hold a burial service with full naval honours but we were able to hold a memorial service later on.

I realise what a great loss it must be to you and how young he must seem to have taken on a man's responsibility. He gave his life for his country and the freedom of the world and no man can do more.

Knowing how much the men miss their shipmates I do extend to you their deepest sympathy and mine

Yours very sincerely

J. Armstrong. Captain