



## VICTORIA POLICE

6 January, 1999

**David KEY Senior Constable 24404**  
**Air Observer, Police Air Wing**

**STATES:** At approximately 3.50 p.m on Sunday the 27th of December, 1998 the Victoria Police Air Wing Flight Co-ordination Centre received a telephone request from The Australian Search and Rescue Centre (AUS-SAR) in Canberra. AUS-SAR requested the Police Helicopter to attend off Gabo Island near Mallacoota for a 406 megahertz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB). These Marine Distress Beacons (EPIRB) are located on each yacht in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. At this stage AUS-SAR was dispatching HELIMED 1 the Latrobe Valley Air Ambulance and three (3) fixed wing search aircraft to the search area approximately 60 nautical miles off shore from Mallacoota. AUS-SAR required all available resources to attend to this area.

At approximately 4.02 p.m further information was received from AUS-SAR that there were fifteen (15) yacht crewmembers in the water and required urgent rescuing as their yacht "V.C Offshore Stand Aside" was taking water and sinking. At approximately 4.20 p.m the police helicopter was dispatched from Essendon Airport to Mallacoota with Senior Constable Darryl JONES 21590 (pilot), Senior Constable Barry BARCLAY 26056 (winch operator) and Senior Constable David KEY 24404 (rescue crewman). At approximately 6.11 p.m the police helicopter landed at Mallacoota Airport, refuelled, unloaded the aircraft and the crew were briefed by AUS-SAR to winch/rescue four (4) crewmembers off the yacht "V.C Offshore Stand-Aside". To complete this rescue we were required to fly approximately 65 nautical miles (130 kilometres) south east into Bass Strait in 70-80 knot (140-150 kilometres per hour) winds, driving rain, low cloud and huge seas to locate and rescue the yacht crewmembers.

Whilst enroute to the "V.C Offshore Stand-Aside" the weather conditions were the worst I have ever encountered in any rescue mission because of the mountainous seas and ferocious winds. Just prior to reaching the "V.C Offshore Stand-Aside" yacht AUS-SAR diverted the police helicopter to search for "Sea Anna" and "Business Post-Naiad" which were sending out "MAY-DAY" calls. The SOUTH CARE helicopter had been diverted to the "V.C Offshore Stand-Aside" and then had to divert to a "MAY-DAY" call from the yacht "Winston Churchill". At this stage HELIMED 1 had rescued eight (8) injured yacht crewmembers off the "V.C Offshore Stand-Aside. At this time up to twenty 20 (EPIRB) marine distress signals and "MAY-DAY" calls were being received at AUS-SAR.

Whilst flying to the "Sea-Anna" and "Business Post-Naiad's" last known locations AUS-SAR re-directed the police helicopter to a man overboard from the yacht "Kingurra". A crewmember had been washed off the yacht when it was hit by a large wave. He was dressed only in black long-johns and a black tee-shirt and was not wearing a life-jacket. This person had been in the freezing water for approximately forty (40) minutes.

At approximately 7.30 p.m we arrived over the area of the "Kingurra's" last known position and we observed a red flare through the low cloud, sea mist and spray. The pilot flew to that yacht and identified it to be the Kingurra and spoke to the skipper on the marine distress radio to find out which location the missing crewmember was in relation to the yacht. The weather conditions were atrocious with 30 metre (90 feet) foam streaked waves with flat tops due to the strong winds, driving rain, sea spray, low dark cloud and black water. A search pattern was commenced and approximately 7.40 p.m I observed an orange safety ring in the water approximately 600 metres from the rear of the yacht. This orange ring was empty and at that time Senior Constable BARCLAY on the left side of the helicopter observed the crewmember off the Kingurra. This male was floundering in the water conditions. He appeared to be exhausted and was sapped of all strength as he slipped under the water surface as the pilot positioned the helicopter in readiness for a winch.

At this time I was ready to be winched down from the helicopter to rescue this male. I noticed that after a wave broke over this male he re-surfaced and waved at the helicopter. This male became submerged a number of times whilst I was being winched toward him. I was placed into the water and I was immediately pushed under the water which was freezing cold. When I managed to break the surface I was in a trough and saw a solid vertical wall of water in front of me. I was hit by this 90 foot wave and as I was washed up the front of this wave I started to tumble back down the face due to being buoyant in my wet suit, this was a terrifying situation. The water spray was hitting me in the face like being poked with a fork due to the high winds wiping the water off the waves. The noise of the wind sounded like a screaming shrieking which I have never experienced before and was deafening. I felt I was driven under the water for 10-15 seconds before coming out the back section of the wave. I was completely disorientated and had swallowed a large amount of sea water. I was in a situation similar to that of being thrown around like a rag doll. I was becoming concerned for my own life as I could not hear or see the police helicopter or see the male I was rescuing.

After what felt like an eternity of being battered by these waves I found myself ready to inflate my life jacket to save my own life. I was hit by another wave and driven under the water and as I came to the surface I was looking straight at the male who had been washed off the yacht "Kingurra" approximately 3 metres (10 feet) in front of me. This male had a blank look and was ashen faced and then he appeared to realise I was there with him and we started to swim toward each other. I grabbed him as we were hit by another wall of water and I held on to him as hard as I could as we were both pushed under the water. He was a 'dead weight' due to not having any buoyancy vest on and no strength left and this made holding onto him extremely difficult. When we re-surfaced again I placed the rescue harness over his head and had to place his arms through the strap as he was unable to assist me. We were hit by another wave and I felt the winch cable wrap around my left leg. I untangled myself and held the male above the water at the same time.

I indicated to the winch operator we were ready to be pulled out of the water and winched up to the helicopter. As we approached the doorway of the helicopter the winch froze and we were unable to enter the doorway. Senior Constable BARCLAY attempted to recycle the power to the winch but was unsuccessful in doing so. Senior Constable BARCLAY could see that the person I was holding was extremely exhausted and he placed him in a bear hug then dragged him into the helicopter still attached to the rescue harness. After a short period of time the power was restored to the winch and I was able to be pulled into the helicopter. The rescue took approximately 5-10 minutes.

AUS-SAR and the yacht "Kingurra" were notified that the male John CAMPBELL had been rescued. He was suffering from a broken nose, broken jaw, facial cuts and lacerations and severe hypothermia. Senior Constable BARCLAY and myself treated CAMPBELL's injuries and treated his hypothermia by lying down on each side of him to transfer our body heat to him to prevent shock setting in. CAMPBELL went into shock on the flight back to Mallacoota and due to Senior Constable BARCLAY's and my medical training we were able to assess and treat CAMPBELL.

At approximately 8.15 p.m. we landed at the Red Cross Command Post at the Mallacoota football oval and whilst CAMPBELL was being transferred from the helicopter to the road ambulance he burst into tears. CAMPBELL was transferred to a fixed wing Air Ambulance at the Mallacoota Airport and flown to the Traralgon Hospital for treatment.

In my opinion CAMPBELL was only moments away from drowning due to hypothermia and the water conditions. I believe if we had not rescued him at the time we did, he would be dead. There was no other rescue helicopters or yachts in the area, therefore the Police Air Wing helicopter crew saved his life.

The helicopter was taken to the Mallacoota Airport and secured for the night. Senior Constable BARCLAY and myself assisted police at the command post until 11 p.m.

At approximately 5 a.m. on Monday the 28th of December, 1998 the police helicopter crew consisting of Senior Constable Darryl JONES 21590 (pilot), Senior Constable Barry BARCLAY 26056 (winch operator) and Senior Constable David KEY 24404 (rescue crewman) were briefed by Sergeant MOSTARD (Gippsland Water Police) and AUS-SAR in relation to rescue tasks to be completed in the search area in conjunction with HELIMED 1. The search area was now 4,000 square nautical miles (8,000 square kilometres) and involved 38 fixed wing aircraft and 5 rescue helicopters as well as a number of civilian cargo ships and a navy ship. HELIMED 1 was tasked to search for the yacht "Winston Churchill" and the police helicopter was tasked to search for the yacht "B52" as both these yachts had been listed as missing and presumed sunk. Both helicopters were dispatched to their respective search areas at 6.55 a.m. approximately 60 nautical miles (120 kilometres) south east off the coast of Mallacoota. These search areas were the last known (EPIRB) distress signal location. Both (EPIRB's) were now inactive due to the possibility both yachts had sunk.

At approximately 7.50 a.m. the police helicopter was redirected to an area 55 nautical (110 kilometres) east off Mallacoota to assist the SOUTH CARE RESCUE helicopter locate and rescue 12 crewmembers off a sinking yacht "Midnight Special". The crew of SOUTH CARE RESCUE had winched 8 crewmembers from the disabled yacht and returned to Merimbula. At 8 a.m. the police helicopter located this yacht and commenced to winch 4 males aged between 50 and 60 years from this sinking yacht. The waves and sea swell was

approximately 25 metres (45-50 feet) and the wind speed was still 70-80 knots (140-160 kilometres per hour). I was lowered from the helicopter by Senior Constable BARCLAY near the stern of the yacht. Due to the yacht being dismasted there was a large amount of rope and steel cable on top of the yacht and trailing in the water around the yacht. This made for a dangerous winch operation so I was placed into the water approximately 10 metres behind the yacht.

When the male jumped into the water the yacht and myself were hit by a rogue wave which pushed me under the water and knocked the wind out of me. As I surfaced I grabbed the male who was in the water and placed the rescue harness over his head. Due to the fact that the yacht crewman had a very old ridged type foam life jacket I was unable to connect the safety strap up around his chest. Whilst I was waiting to be winched up to the helicopter I noticed that the yacht was very low in the water and appeared to be sinking. I was winched up to the helicopter and this yacht crewmember was secured inside. I then went back down to collect the second yacht crewmember and as I was placed into the water the second crewmember jumped into the water before I signalled him to do so. As I was still approximately 15 metres from the rear of the yacht I was not ready to receive him to be rescued. This male jumped into the water on the crest of a wave and due to the wave height, the wind strength and the fact he had a life jacket on he was swept straight past me. Senior Constable BARCLAY was required to lift me out of the water and reposition me in front of this male. As I swam toward this male I could see he was in a state of panic and as I placed the rescue harness over his head he seemed to regain his composure, however, as we were lifted from the water we were hit by a wave and the male started to panic again. As we were being lifted toward the helicopter I was having a struggle to bring him under control. This male was placed inside the helicopter and secured where he stopped panicking and settled down.

I was again winched back down to rescue the third yacht crewmember. This winch was more structured as the crewmember obeyed my hand signal commands as to when to jump into the water. We were winched up to the helicopter and he was secured in the aircraft. When I was inside the helicopter door I informed Senior Constable BARCLAY I needed a short break as I was exhausted and vomiting up large amounts of sea water from the last 3 winches. Once I had recovered enough I was winched back down to rescue the last yacht crewmember. When I reached the water the last crewmember jumped into the water and I noticed the sea was flowing out of the cabin area of the yacht and flowing out over the back deck into the ocean. As we were being lifted back to the helicopter I watched the yacht sink without a trace.

Once the last crewmember from the "Midnight Special" was secured to the helicopter AUS-SAR was informed and we started to fly back to Mallacoota. All of the 4 yacht crewmembers were suffering from hypothermia, minor injuries, facial, cut hands and abrasions. Senior Constable BARCLAY and myself treated these men's injuries during the return trip back to Mallacoota. At approximately 8.25 a.m we landed at the Mallacoota football oval and all 4 yacht crewmembers were treated by ambulance officers.

Whilst refuelling at the Mallacoota Airport AUS-SAR directed the police helicopter to proceed to a search area to look for the missing yacht "B52" as an (EPIRB) distress beacon signal had been picked up by a Navy Orion aircraft approximately 40 nautical miles (80 kilometres) east off shore from Mallacoota. At approximately 9.58 a.m we departed to that search area and on arrival we were assisted by the Sydney Channel 2 helicopter to search for any signs of this yacht. Senior Constable JONES and the pilot of the Channel 2 helicopter used the aircraft emergency distress beacon indicators in a search pattern for this (EPIRB). Senior Constable BARCLAY and myself positioned ourselves on opposite sides of the helicopter and continued to look for the yacht/debris/persons. The aircraft instrument indicator showed that the transmitting (EPIRB) was under the water surface and no sign of life of the 12 crewmembers or the "B52" yacht could be found. At this time I was becoming more ill and vomiting up straight sea water. I was not an effective crew member and we returned to Mallacoota so I could swap rescue crewman positions with Senior Constable Trevor RIM. At approximately 10.40 a.m we were notified by AUS-SAR that the "B52" yacht and crew had been located approximately 40 nautical miles (80 kilometres) north east of our search area safe and well.

On arrival at Mallacoota at approximately 10.44 a.m Senior Constable RIM and Senior Constable FISHER were briefed by Senior Constable BARCLAY and myself. After the briefing I continued to vomit up sea water. At approximately 11.15 a.m the police helicopter was directed to a search area near Eden for the missing yacht "Winston Churchill". I remained on the ground with Senior Constable FISHER and assisted at the Red Cross Centre with police and other duties.

In the area of the rescue operation the weather was nothing like any of us had seen before. I have been an aircrewman for a period of 8 years and it was the most terrifying conditions I have flown in. To put these weather conditions in perspective I have used the difference between our rescue and the most difficult rescue conducted by the Victoria Police Airwing in Bass Strait in May, 1996 by a crew of 3 in a police helicopter.

	<u>MAY 1996</u>	<u>27-28 DECEMBER 1998</u>
<b>WIND:</b>	40 knots (80 k.p.h)	70-80 knots (140-160 k.p.h)
<b>SEA HEIGHT:</b>	8 Metres (25 feet)	30 Metres (90 feet)
<b>DISTANCE OFF SHORE:</b>	26 N/miles (50 k.m)	65 N/Miles (130 k.m)
<b>RAIN:</b>	Nil	Heavy sheet rain
<b>CLOUD BASE:</b>	2,000 feet	600-2,000 feet
<b>WINCH HEIGHT:</b>	50-50 feet	100-120 feet
<b>PERSONS RESCUED:</b>	3	5

The waves during these rescues conducted on 27-28 December, 1998 were not waves but, near vertical solid walls of dark green/black water and up to 10-20 metres (30-60 feet) wide along the top and then a gaping void 90 feet down to the bottom of each trough between each wave. Our training is generally conducted in 1-2 metre (3-6 feet) swells in Port Phillip Bay and 15-20 knot (30-40 k.p.h) winds, not 30 metre waves and 70-80 knot winds. The training undertaken can only prepare crew for drills and procedures in winch rescues, not the type of weather conditions we encountered.

The five (5) rescue winches that were conducted were beyond the call of duty in every respect. None of the winches were routine and the police crew overcame and adapted to the situation due to training, professionalism and devotion to duty. The 5 yacht crewmembers were only minutes from drowning when they were rescued by us. Of the 6 yacht crewmembers washed overboard from their vessels the Police Air Wing rescued the only person who lived. During the height of the search and rescue mission there were 38 fixed wing and 5 rescue helicopters (one being the police helicopter) operating in the area. This was the largest marine rescue operation undertaken in Australian history.

Whilst a member of the Police Air Wing I have spent the last 4 years as a winch operator instructor and winch rescue crewmen instructor. I am also an accredited Civil Aviation Safety Authority (C.A.S.A) Winch Assessor/Instructor (a position normally held by Chief Pilots only). I have trained 8 winch operators and 14 winch rescue crewmen as well as conducting a vast number of winch training exercises during that period. I have been involved in numerous rescues as a winch operator and rescue crewman in areas of Port Phillip Bay, Western Port Bay and Bass Strait as well as many mountain rescues. The ocean and bay rescues have been off yachts, boats, oil/gas and container ships and water rescues with a maximum of 1 to 2 persons being rescued each occasion. The total number of winch operations I have completed is 801 with 644 as winch operator and 237 as a rescue crewman.

As a side line during one rescue the Australian Navy rescue crewman dropped the person he was rescuing from a height of 4-5 metres back into the water and he had to be rescued by him again. The rescue crewman was that tired and fatigued that after rescuing 7 persons from the water he did not have the strength to signal the winch operator to take him up to the helicopter. This shows that we were not the only crew to be suffering under these conditions. The 2 female paramedic rescue crewman from SOUTH CARE RESCUE have now resigned after conducting rescues in which one was struck on the side of the head by a gas cylinder from a life raft and a life raft became entangled in the winch wire.

Finally a quote from the skipper of the "Solo Globe Challenger" - "THE DEVIL TOOK ME BY THE HAND AND SHOWED ME THE EDGE OF HELL". This quotation is a very apt choice of words and possibly allows people who weren't there, to perhaps visualise for a moment what we went through.



David KEY  
Senior Constable 24404

## APPENDIX

- APPENDIX 1. Newspaper article on Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. Victoria Police Air Wing locating American John CAMPBELL.
- APPENDIX 2. Newspaper interview with Senior Constable JONES on John CAMPBELL- Police Air Wing winch rescue.
- APPENDIX 3. Newspaper article on the winch rescue of 4 crewmembers from the yacht "Midnight Special" by Police Air Wing.
- APPENDIX 4. Newspaper article on rescues carried out by Victoria Police Air Wing
- APPENDIX 5. Newspaper articles on John CAMPBELL winch rescues.
- APPENDIX 6. Newspaper article.
- APPENDIX 7. Newspaper article on winch rescues and interview by Senior Constable KEY.
- APPENDIX 8. Newspaper article on rescues from Bass Strait.
- APPENDIX 9. Newspaper article on rescues from Bass Strait.
- APPENDIX 10. A winch rescue crewman's perspective of the rescues in Bass Strait. (HELIMED 1.)
- APPENDIX 11. A winch rescue crewman's perspective of the rescues in Bass Strait. ( SOUTH CARE RESCUE)
- APPENDIX 12. A perspective of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race and the battle to survive in the storm.
- APPENDIX 13. Newspaper article on rescue effort in Bass Strait.
- APPENDIX 14. Picture of yacht in 50 knot winds. ( Our situation 70-80 knot winds)
- APPENDIX 15. Copy on inscription in book given to each police crew member by the crew of the yacht "Kingarra". Rescue of man overboard John CAMPBELL.

- APPENDIX 16. Copy of inscription in book given to each police crew member by John CAMPBELL. (rescued crewmember from yacht "Kingurra").
- APPENDIX 17. Police helicopter Duty Return for Sunday 27th December, 1998.
- APPENDIX 18. Police helicopter Duty Return for Monday 28th December, 1998.
- APPENDIX 19. Briefing Paper from Superintendent, Emergency Response Division on dates 27-28 December, 1998.
- APPENDIX 20. Briefing Paper from Sergeant MOSTARD (Gippsland Water Police) on 27-28 December, 1998.
- APPENDIX 21. Articles from Internet in relation to rescues from Bass Strait during Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race.

Video tape available of television interviews by Senior Constable JONES and Senior Constable KEY on 27-28 December, 1998 and 1st January, 1999.



# Herald Sun

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1998

NEWS PICTORIAL

CITY: SHOWERS. GUSTY WIND. MAX: 20. PAGE 26 80c

Summer  
**TOP FICTION**

PAGE 80-81

NEW YEAR'S EVE  
**HOT SPOTS**

PAGE 100

**WIN A CAR**

PAGE 17

PLUS: FLY FISHING

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■ **37 yachts out of race**

■ **Crew member missing overboard**

■ **Fears for lost yacht**

# SEA PERIL

REGINA TITELIUS  
AMANDA LULHAM

Sydney-Hobart race became a battle for survival last night as battered boats fought ferocious seas and force winds.

A man was missing, and as the navy searched for him, the yachts were left to their own devices. Two crew members were washed overboard and saved.

The crew were held for nine hours aboard the 56-year-old timber yacht *Winston Churchill*, which failed to make an early rendezvous.

12 crew from *VC Offshore Stand Aside* were rescued after their boat lost its mast and cabin.

Three crew members were in hospital at Hobart last night — one with severed fingers, one with injuries and another with unspecified injuries.

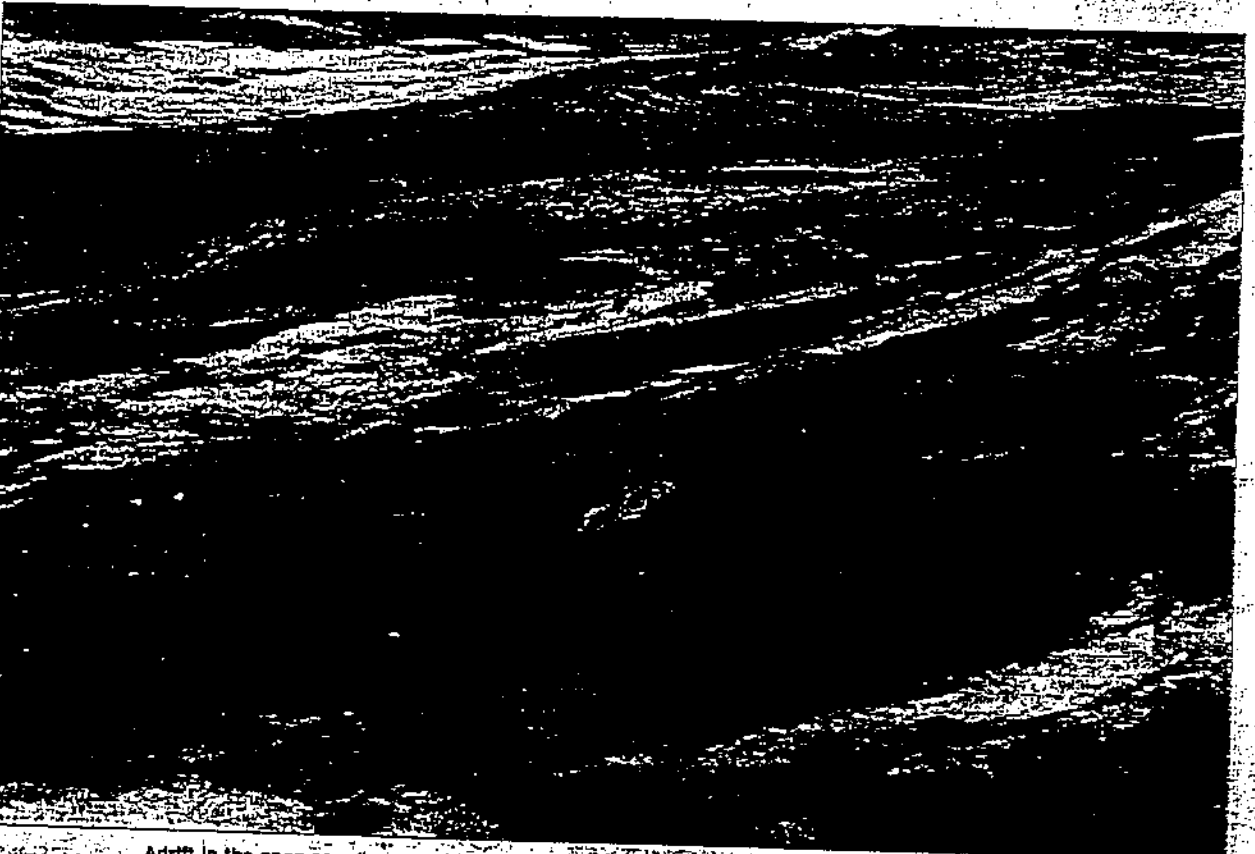
One of the injured, Mike Monaghan, said "one monolithic wave" clipped the stern.

"The sea was big but it was absolutely monstrous. It was one bastard hit — it was big," he said.

"It got us at the wrong angle and rolled us. It rolled completely over."

"It did a 360-degree turn. We came up the mast. And we were in a bit of trouble with half the crew on the boat."

In another incident, a crew member from *Sword of Orion* was overboard when the yacht was called about 7.30pm. A Sea King helicopter had to land him late last night. Plans to send a helicopter to Newcastle today to pick up the crew members from the *Winston Churchill* were cancelled when Campbell was



Adrift in the open sea: the crew of *VC Offshore Stand Aside* wait for rescue late yesterday. Photo: ABC TV News

12 miles south of Gabo Island, eastern Victoria.

The veteran yacht *Winston Churchill* was crippled and in danger of sinking but could not be found. The yacht, which competed in the first Sydney-Hobart in 1945, failed to make a rendezvous with the yacht

Maritime safety authorities said they feared for the *Winston Churchill* and its crew. Another yacht, *BS2*, lost its mast and sent a distress signal. A Sea King helicopter found the boat and

The navy was also searching for *Winston Churchill*. Yacht masts cracked and cabins shattered as 70-knot wind hammered the race fleet down the NSW coast to the eastern tip of Victoria

summed-up conditions. Its spinnaker pole snapped and went under its keel. A crew member was washed overboard but was saved by a safety harness.

# fight to stay alive

By PHILLIP CULLEN and GEOFF EASDOWN

YACHTSMAN Kevin Lacey said Sydney Hobart crews were having a fight to stay alive in raging seas last night.

"Most of the crews are in survival pattern," said Lacey, a senior crew member and helmsman on the pocket maxi *Innkeeper*, which was out of the race and tied up at Eden.

"They're not racing any more. It's a fight to stay alive out there," said Lacey, telling of seas that had the 20-metre boat surging off wave crests at a unheard of 27.9 knots.

Throughout the night the yacht raced at motor cruise, averaging 18 knots, big north-easter.

*Innkeeper*, from the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia in Sydney, was running fifth when its mainsail started to tear.

Lacey said: "For a while it was a lot of fun. It was dark as ink out there, and the only light we had was the white caps breaking around us."

"We were going so hard that our bow wave would have stretched 15m out each side of the boat."

"It was pretty hard running. As we surfed down the waves, we could see lightning breaking all around us."

"All the time we wondered whether we would be struck."

Lacey said that apart from the torn sail, *Innkeeper* and its crew survived remarkably unscathed.

The decision to withdraw came after an attempted seal in the hi-tech mainsail wouldn't hold.

"We put the safety of the crew first and pulled out," Lacey said.

Police helicopter pilot en-C. Darryl ones he... which Amer... an John Campbell from the sea.

Campbell had been ashore overboard, the injuries and was suffering severe hypothermia and head injuries when led from the water, about 500m from the vessel.

"I think he's a very, very shy man to be alive today," Sen-Constable Jones said. "It was a very hard situation."

"We found one of those rings off the ship but wasn't with that."



Lost fingers: crewman Mike Marshmon was injured on *Stand Aside*. Picture: MICHAEL KLEIN

"He was in dark clothing in the dark sea out there. He's a very, very lucky man."

Sen-Constable Jones said the conditions were absolutely shocking and the gigantic waves were being fanned by 70 knot winds.

"I don't ever think I've seen Bass Strait as white as it is. There are so many white caps out there. It's just incredible," he said.

"The winching was very difficult. Without some really good teamwork from the other yachts we wouldn't have been able to pull that man out of the water. It was a very hard winch."

Aircraft search and rescue were called overnight but Sen-Constable Jones said they were likely to resume in the morning.

"They are really fighting for their lives out there, there's no other way to describe it."

Charles Alsop, 77, was competing in his first Syd-

ney to Hobart aboard *Stand Aside*. The 12.5m boat sent out distress calls after it was rolled by a freak wave mid-afternoon.

"I have been sailing since I was eight, the last 20 years, and it is certainly some of the worst conditions I have seen," he said.

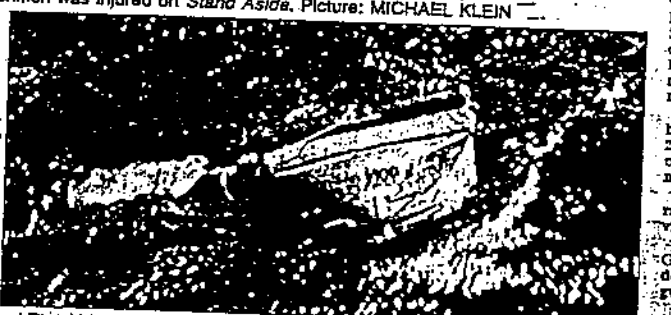
"It blew up to about 80 knots within a couple of minutes. We were quite prepared for it, but as I said, it was one of those freak waves that turned the boat over."

Alsop said the crew of 12 spent about two hours on the stricken boat before they were rescued.

Bevan Thompson, a part-owner of the yacht, was lying in the cabin when the wave hit.

"There was a lot of gear, bags and sails and ropes were out of place. I was a bit worried that I might get tangled up with that and not be able to get my head out," he said.

"In the end there was



Abandoned: a life-raft from the *Innkeeper*.

only a couple of feet of water inside."

After the crew scrambled on, they cut the mast off, let life-rafts out and waited for help.

One member of the crew had a suspected broken leg, another severed part of some fingers and one man suffered head injuries.

Many of the crew were being cared for by com-

munity groups and spent the night at the Mallaoola Mud Brick house.

The wife of *Secret Mens Business* owner Geoff Boettcher said she had not heard from her husband since he left Sydney.

Sue Boettcher said: "I have been in racing for 29 years and have got pretty hardened. But I've been getting worried — we don't know what's going on."

## High wind delays starts

By JACK TAYLOR

HIGH wind and heavy seas yesterday forced organisers to postpone the start of the Melbourne to Hobart and Melbourne to Devonport races for only the second time.

The race starts were rescheduled to 3pm today.

"The decision was made due to excess winds and their effect on the ability of some boats to get outside the heads," said organiser Phil Jackson.

"There are quite high seas and it makes it very difficult for the boats."

The only other time the race starts were postponed was in 1993.

The delay drew no complaints from crews, many of whom were grateful for the extra time to prepare.

Ocean Racing Club of Victoria commodore David Burton said some boats were damaged in Saturday's rugged Cook of the Bay race from St Kilda to Greensill and now had more time to make repairs.

Some of the 47 Melbourne to Devonport and Melbourne to Hobart crews had already decided not to start yesterday.

"The decision to start the races today would be reviewed this morning."

Melbourne launch owner Geoff Perry said he doubted the races would go as rescheduled today.

"I don't think they'll go. We've only seen the first front. The second front's coming," he said.

### WEATHER REPORT

THE wild coastal weather responsible for crippling several of the yachts occurs only once every five to 10 years and was expected to worsen last night, weather bureau experts warned.

Duty meteorologist Dean Stewart said wind of 45 knots — about 100km/h — was whipping into squalls of 55 knots (100km/h).

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# How a yacht came to grief

## Gales

By SIMON BENSON and MICHELLE POUNTNEY

IT wasn't until the Sydney-Hobart was well under way that weather forecasters had any hint of what they call "the bomb" developing in the path of the fleet.

Hours before the race, skippers were told they would face severe weather that night and the next day along the NSW southern coast.

But the severity was not apparent. Early on Saturday — before the race started — the weather bureau warned a strong southerly change would hit the NSW south coast near Merimbula that night with 30-knot wind.

What no one could have known was an intense, low-pressure system was starting to develop in the Tasman Sea.

With the race almost under way, an update was issued at 9.26am, upgrading the strong wind warning to gale force with winds of 30-40 knots.

But models running on weather bureau computers in Sydney were begin-

ning to show "high numbers" off Eden. "It was basically forecasting a bomb, where the pressure just drops right out of the system and it deepens," a meteorologist said.

"They are very difficult to forecast." It was at 2.14pm that a severe storm warning was issued with wind of more than 50 knots and seas of 5.7m.

"This was forecast well before any of the fleet hit it," the meteorologist said.

Sydney regional director of the weather bureau Pat Sullivan said the sailors were forewarned.

"They had to make a judgment," Mr Sullivan said. "Even before the race started there was a warning of gales."

In Melbourne, experts said weather of such ferocity happened only about once every 25 years.

### MIDNIGHT SPECIAL

By John Hamilton



Safe: skipper Roger Barnett calls home. Picture: RAY STRANGE. Rescued: a crew member is winched to safety.

THIS is the story of the nightmare last voyage of the *Midnight Special*.

On Boxing Day she was a spruce and gleaming 40-footer, powering down Sydney Harbor in the sun.

Aboard were nine middle-aged friends from Mooloolaba, on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, looking forward to an exhilarating yacht race and the party afterwards dockside in Hobart.

Yesterday, the *Midnight Special* — bashed, smashed and taking water — sank beneath an endless procession of grey-green, white-topped, monster waves off Gabo Island.

The last of her crew members were winched to safety by members of Victoria Police Air Wing hovering over the boat just before dawn as it went down beneath them.

The survivors, eyes watering with tears, said their rescuers were "the bravest of the brave."

Three of the crew — Neil Dickson, Kev Foran and Bill Butler — sat at lunchtime yesterday in the tiny community centre called the Mud Brick Pavilion at Malabacoota oval, where the rescue helicopter had set them down.

Their faces were blistered and by windburn, their red eyes were crusty with salt and their hands shook with stress and shock.

Around them bustled Pat Peel and her team of local Red Cross volunteers. They were feeding and clothing the men, washing their wet clothes and taking them into their homes for rest and to phone loved ones.

Neil, Kev and Bill sat in a circle sipping coffee, remembering the last hours of the *Midnight Special* and how they nearly lost their lives aboard the yacht nicknamed *Midlife Special* by others in the fleet before it left Sydney.

The nine-man crew are: Skipper, 50, Peter Carter, 50, Ian Griffith, 49, David Leslie, 50, Trevor McDonagh, 50, Roger Barnett, 50, Neil Dickson, 46, Kev Foran, 54, and Bill Butler, 51.

Their occupations range from solicitor and dermatologist to bus driver and brickie.

But their common bond is ocean racing, and all are experienced yachtsmen. They had spent 18 months preparing for the big race, and when the starter's gun sounded in Sydney on Boxing Day all was going well.

"We had a good start," said Kev Foran.

"We were 27th in the fleet leaving the heads and were improving steadily, running 18th near Gabo Island."

The weather forecast-

### WHAT HAPPENED

1. A huge wave smashed the yacht and took her mast.

2. Nine crew winched to safety as their yacht went down beneath them.

3. Yacht sinks as last of crew boards helicopter.

4. Helicopter hoists crew member to safety.

5. Helicopter hoists crew member to safety.

6. Helicopter hoists crew member to safety.

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19. Helicopter hoists crew member to safety.

### Eden is what sailing is all about

Eden is what sailing is all about. You go out there to fight the elements.

Stan Zemanek, Titan Ford Fxotel crew member

Eden is what sailing is all about. You go out there to fight the elements.

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# Thank you

Many of these men and women risked their lives to save the lives of yacht crews caught in Australia's biggest maritime rescue. Others gave their time and hospitality.



**Victoria Police Air Wing**  
 Ser-Constable David Keir  
 Ser-Constable Daryl Jones  
 Ser-Constable Barry Barclay

**Victorian Air Ambulance**  
 Air Ambulance co-ordinators:  
 Wendi Civelta  
 Helicopter ambulance observers:  
 Eddie Wright, John Slovan and  
 John Bailey

Ambulance helicopter paramedics:  
 Cam Robinson, Peter Davidson and  
 Terry Houge  
 Ambulance helicopter pilots:  
 Peter Leigh and Stevan Siroch  
 Ambulance helicopter crews:  
 Steven Collins, Steve-Simpson and  
 David Sullivan  
 Ambulance helicopter engineers:  
 Carl Gilmore and Russell Gallati

**Air Ambulance fixed-wing**  
 Paramedics: Jim Sams, Alan Cross,  
 Peter Kerr, Paul Woods, Peter Dogos,  
 Lindsay O'Brien, Peter Gull and  
 Ken Laycock  
 Pilots: Paul Van Vliet, Ron Gordon,  
 Rohan Waite and Jan Adcock

**On-road ambulance**  
 Mick Wenzel, Wolfgang Droebeck, Harry  
 Wragg, Dianne Branchley and Irene Miles

**Victorian State Emergency Services**  
 Crews from Craigburn, Sunbury,  
 Essendon, Footscray, Keilor, Northcote,  
 St Kilda and Broadmeadows acted as  
 observers aboard aircraft searching for  
 stricken yachts and missing crews.  
 SES members were: Peter Gray, Paul  
 Ledwith, Wayne Jordan, Ed Woyny,  
 Peter Schou, Paul Cantwell, Brian Lynch,  
 Duane Kirk, Alan Heatherton, Len  
 Bellman, Ray Dark, Tim Ebringer.

Ellyne Mulveena,  
 Graeme Smith,  
 Paul Wellford,  
 Glen Chambers and  
 Andrew McKenzie

**Victoria Police Water Squad**  
**Australian Red Cross**  
 Leader: Pat Peel  
 Team members: Mary Menke, Joanne  
 Peel, Launce Demstler, Eileen  
 Buckland, Anita Emmet, Robyn  
 Hunziker, Nancy Mason, Liz McKay,  
 Jackie Wilson and Melinda Peel

**Royal Australian Navy**  
 More than 150 staff carried out a range  
 of duties on land, at sea and in the air.

**Royal Australian Air Force**  
 More than 60 staff worked in the air and  
 on the ground during the search, helping  
 find stricken yachts and pluck stranded  
 sailors from the sea.

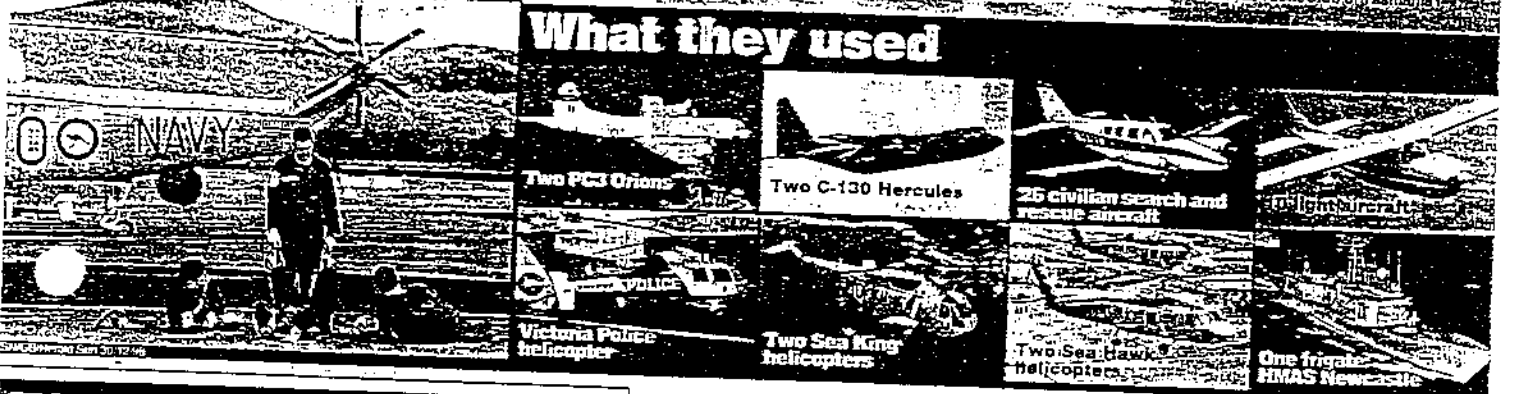
They came from a range of defence force  
 locations and resources, including:  
 Maritime Headquarters, Sydney  
 Headquarters, Air Command, Sydney  
 Headquarters, Australian Theatre,  
 Sydney  
 10 Squadron, South Australia  
 Maritime Patrol Group, South Australia  
 Australian Defence Headquarters,  
 Canberra  
 RAAF Base, Richmond, NSW

**Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)**  
 Dozens of staff at the search centre  
 worked through three shifts each to provide  
 information, data and knowledge to co-  
 ordinate the largest sea search and rescue  
 mission carried out in Australia.

## Also

- Sydney Water Police
- NSW State Coroner's Office
- Eden Ambulance
- Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol
- Eden Division
- Eden Police
- Eden trawler fleet
- Eden medical centres
- Eden Fishermen's Club
- Eden Lions Club
- Mulla Point town, offering hospitality
- Eden people offering hospitality
- Woyldon Yacht Club, Eden
- Woyldon Bus Service, Eden
- Merimbula Ambulance
- Merimbula Airport
- Bermagui Ambulance
- Eden Ambulance
- Eden Hospital
- Eden Community Health Services
- Pambula Hospital volunteer
- Pambula Hospital
- Eden Police
- Eden Hospital
- Eden Hospital
- Canberra South Coast helicopter rescue team
- Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania

## What they used



Two PC3 Orions

Two C-130 Hercules

25 civilian search and rescue aircraft

Light aircraft

Victoria Police helicopter

Two Sea King helicopters

Two Sea Hawk helicopters

One frigate HMAS Newcastle

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# Heroism marks rescue mission

AUSTRALIA has witnessed the biggest and most successful search and rescue mission ever mounted. It involved hundreds of men and women working in perilous conditions backed by the resources and equipment of dozens of professional and voluntary organisations. And from the tragedy of lives lost has emerged triumph in the tales of those saved.

The 1988 Sydney-Hobart will go down as the most tragic in history with four men dead and two feared drowned and many others injured. But it will be remembered too for the acts of heroism that led to more than 50 amazing rescues — and 10 unbelievable survival stories — carried out in the most hazardous conditions possible.

A three-man crew from the Victorian police air wing plucked five others from a yacht that sank as the last man was urged to the rescue.

By KELLY RYAN and DAVID LUFF

others from a yacht that sank as the last man was urged to the rescue. GUNNODDER NOVEMBER ABOVE.

Victorian air ambulance paramedic Cam Robertson was also winched from a chopper, his dangerous task to swim to the life raft from the sunken Winston Churchill to attach a harness to surviving crew.

He saved three lives.

Thoughts turn also to New South Wales police Sgt. Keith Gillman who was in charge at the seven-member Eden police station when the switchboard suddenly lit up.

He was swamped by simultaneous calls for help from the hulls of small boats suddenly brought up in the storm that began sweeping the east coast within hours of the start of the race.

His crucial response, to send out

town to help stricken sailors also saved lives. It was from his office that the massive rescue effort quickly swung into top gear.

Co-ordinating the unprecedented emergency response was the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

It was responsible for monitoring and moving the fleet of civilian and defence force air and sea craft sent to help stranded sailors clinging to stricken yachts or left floatering in mountainous seas.

It maintained the locations of the injured as they were ferried back to land for treatment in dozens of small coastal towns that looked like war zones by race end.

Federal Transport Minister John Anderson said the effort had revealed acts of pure heroism during the darkest chapter in Australian maritime history.

More than 50 rescues undertaken underlined the ability of Australians to rally when their

## Hail the rescuers

**O**UR maritime rescue services have earned the admiration of a grateful nation for the miracles performed in saving the lives of Sydney-Hobart yachtsmen and women.

More than 60 shipwrecked sailors adrift in life rafts in mountainous seas have been plucked to safety in feats of individual bravery few will ever know about.

As a maritime safety authority spokesman said last night: "Getting off a helicopter in strong winds and seas and being winched down to grab someone and then get back up is one of the most difficult things."

Mention should also be made of the hundreds of other men and women who gave their time willingly to participate in this mission of mercy.

One of the heroes was paramedic Cam Robertson, who plucked four survivors from the yacht *Winston Churchill* from their life raft after being lowered from a helicopter.

Petty Officer Shane Pashley also went into the sea on a cable and rescued two other survivors of *Churchill*.

The 18-year navy veteran did the job he had trained for and like so many others, he did it well.

HERALD SUN  
30/12/98

## 'I am the luckiest man alive'

AN American yachtsman winched to safety after 40 minutes adrift in churning Bass Strait waters believes he is the luckiest man alive.

Seattle sailor John Campbell was thrown off the *Kingurra* when it flipped 19 nautical miles south of Gabo Island.

"We each have our own safety harness, which is clipped on at all times," Campbell said yesterday.

By MICHELLE EDMUNDS

"I was in the process of moving it from one point in the cockpit to another and in that split second it takes to clip it we got hit by this fairly large wave."

Thrown into the sea without a lifejacket, Campbell feared for his life as the *Kingurra* sailed off.

"At first I thought I could see the boat and had not given up

hope but it was getting further and further away so it was becoming a bit more tense.

"It crossed my mind that my chances were pretty slim."

He was eventually found by a Victoria Police helicopter using heat-seeking equipment and plucked from the sea with a winch.

It was the third failed attempt at the Sydney-Hobart for Camp-

bell, who has 10 years of sailing experience.

"Maybe there are some changes to safety regulations that need to be put in place but you can't really tell, often, what the weather conditions will be like two days out," he told Channel Nine's *A Current Affair*.

Campbell was released from La Trobe Regional Hospital yesterday.

HERALD SUN 29/12/98

# Tragedy's unsung heroes

LET'S hear it for Victoria's volunteers. The army of quiet, unassuming, unsung heroes and heroines who turn out whenever there is an emergency in this state and just as quietly go back to their homes when the trouble is over.

This week I came across people who made you proud to be a Victorian.

They weren't just the volunteers spending hours in tiny fixed-wing aircraft, scanning the grey-green sea for survivors of the Sydney-Hobart yacht race disaster.

They weren't just the young men and women who risked their lives dangling at the end of helicopter winch ropes and plunging into gigantic waves to rescue desperate sailors.

(For those people and their pilots, Government House should be dusting off the cabinet of bravery medals right now.)

No, it was also the sort of people I came across when I touched down on a dusty airstrip at Mallacoota in the state's north-east corner on Monday.

There on the ground was a refuelling tanker and its crew, a couple of pilots, and

JOHN HAMILTON honors the quiet heroes of the Sydney-Hobart tragedy



some ambulance officers waiting for a rescue chopper.

And there in a tin shed were four blokes from the Mallacoota Lions Club.

I didn't catch all their names, but they'd set up a barbie at daybreak and were providing sausages and hot coffee for anybody who was passing through. They were also providing an unpaid taxi service for anyone needing a lift to town.

I got a lift with one of these blokes, who proudly pointed out the town's sights on the way to the community centre they call the Mud Brick Pavilion and said, "It's nothing", when I thanked him.

Mallacoota's permanent population is about 1000 and the pavilion is the hub of the town — a building with a hall, a stage and a kitchen with offices alongside.

The pavilion is on the edge of an oval where helicopters were bringing in the survivors, all cold, shocked and bewildered, many with injuries.

There was Mrs Pat Peel ("as in orange peel") and 20 helpers from the local branch of the Red Cross. They wrapped the survivors in blankets and love.

They took away their wet clothes to wash and dry at home. They gave them fresh clothes from their own wardrobes. They fed the men and gave them tea and sympathy. They listened.

They took the survivors into their homes to rest and to ring their loved ones. They organised their transport home.

They were the true heroes of this week. The volunteers.

And you know? They'll turn out again next time they're needed.

God bless them, every one.

JOHN HAMILTON is an associate editor.

HERALD JUN 30/12/9

# How they did it: rescuers tell of triumph and tragedy

AND MARRIS  
BRIAN WOODLEY  
Staff reporters

WITHIN hours of scrambling the first crews and setting course for the north of Bass Strait, search and rescue authorities knew they were responding to the biggest and most challenging emergency in the nation's modern maritime history.

By the time operations were called off at 5pm yesterday, rescue services, responding to distress calls from 16 yachts, had picked up 80 sailors — 42 by naval or police helicopter, six by a fishing trawler and two by HMAS Newcastle. After a 50-hour operation run out of Canberra, four sailors were confirmed dead and two missing, presumed drowned.

Many of the rescued required hospital treatment. Forty were taken to Pambula District, a small 30-bed hospital on the NSW south coast. One of the doctors working here, Geoffrey Thomas, managed just one hour of sleep between early Monday and last night as victims came in suffering rib and chest injuries, abrasions, bruising and cuts. "Basically they were brown around with a lot of violence by the waves," he said. The disaster zone was relatively accessible to airborne emergency services. As rescue spokesman David Gray said:

"I guess if it was going to happen it happened in pretty much the right place where we could get resources from as far as Melbourne, Latrobe Valley, Colong, Sydney South Coast, Canberra, and they were there in the right spot." Of paramount importance in saving lives was making the most use of rescue resources. The right people, the right craft, the right deployment, the right priorities.

This was where "the team" — the heart of AusSAR — a division of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority — came in.

The people of this unit, in a modern office block on the outer edge of Canberra's Civic District, know how it feels to be trouble on the sea. Most of them are experienced sailors and more than 40 responded to a call.

One was Scott Constable. His job was to co-ordinate the operations — seven, before Monday was over. The first distress signals in the Winston Churchill came in soon after 3pm that day. Mr Constable was allocated control of the seven



Coming up: A winchman from a rescue helicopter pulls a yachtsman from the sea on Monday.

Picture: AP



Rescuers: Michelle Blewitt, Kristy McAllister, Brian Lee, Ianzi Lea

helicopters already called out, and elements of nearly 20 aircraft that came into operation as the night progressed. By the peak of the rescue, 24 hours later, that number had risen to 38, with 28 fixed-wing aircraft and nine helicopters.

The operation involving "multiple targets" heading in all directions, was unlike anything he had experienced.

The third-floor nerve centre of AusSAR is a large office without partitions. Whiteboards cover the walls, scrawled with ship and air-

craft — names. Computers linked to global positioning satellites and radar operations are positioned round the room. Everywhere are maps, pencils, rulers, telephones.

On Sunday night, with 16 yachts reporting trouble, priority search objectives were established. Sonar buoys were dropped into the water to test the drift for the maritime rescuers to compute the size of the search area — an area of up to 4000 nautical square miles in a long rectangle off the south coast.

Rescue crews brought back harrowing stories of the dangers they had encountered and the ordeals of the sailors.

The workload put in by the crews was heavy and constant, as in the case of a Victorian police helicopter. This was sent to search for VC Stand Aside, which had rolled with 12 crew on board, but was diverted to find an American sailor washed overboard from the Kingarra.

John Campbell, dressed in longjohns and a T-shirt, had been in the water for 40 min-

utes without lifesaving equipment. A crewman from the police helicopter, Senior Constable David Key, said somehow Campbell was spotted in the rolling ocean.

"It was like finding a needle in a haystack," he said. "The water was black, he was in black clothing and his head was face down."

Early next morning the police crew — which included pilot Senior Constable Darryl Jones and winch operator Barry Barclay — were briefed to search for the Winston Churchill but were diverted to find Midnight Special, which was reported sinking. With the help of another helicopter, they located the boat and five crew members were winched to safety.

But then the boat rolled, trapping four inside the cabin and another man in the rigging. It was some time before the vessel flipped upright.

"When I went to get the last fellow the water was flowing down the stern and the boat sank before my eyes. There was only a minute to spare," Constable Key said.

THE RESCUED



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## Salvage is a race for reward

McNICOLL  
CE the search for the miss- Sydney-Hobart race crew- is over, a new race will be to find the seven yachts

boats are not abandoned and not subject to salvage." Mr Wilson said some of the yachts would sink to a point of neutral buoyancy and then float just on the surface of the

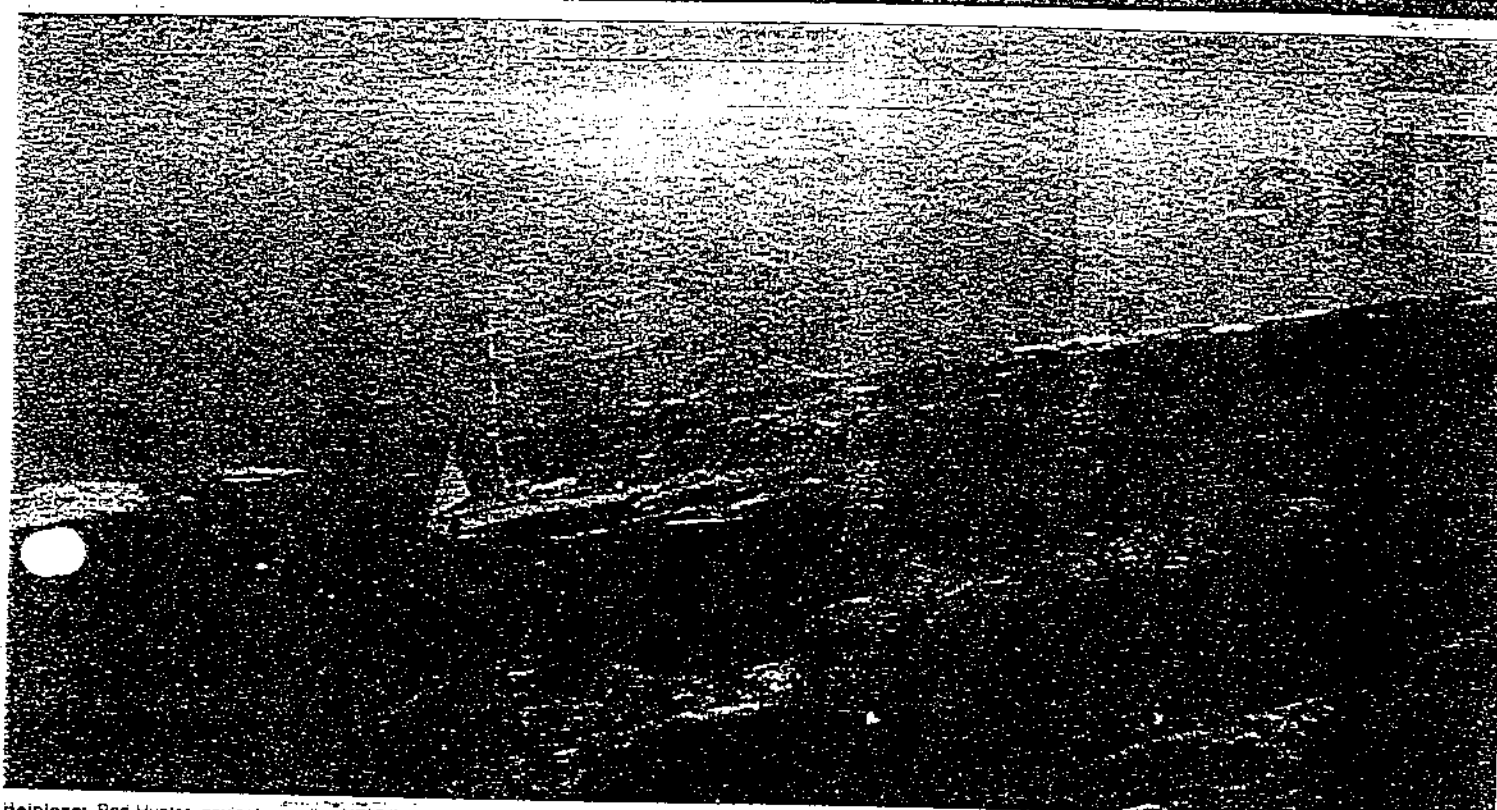
man of the maxi yacht Marchioness before it retired from the race on Saturday night, said most of the abandoned yachts would not be subject to

## Winning skipper says 'never again' to classic

From Page 1  
maxi crossed the finish line

ting back up and getting back to work. They kept doing what

# Weekend



Helpless: Red Hunter, navigator on the VC Offshore Stand Aside, took this photograph of the crippled yacht. The crew were rescued from their life raft and the boat sank hours later.

**BRIAN WALSH,  
JOHN BEVERIDGE  
and ANDREW  
STEVENSON** recall  
the tragedy, sadness  
and survival of the  
Sydney to Hobart  
yacht race.

# THE CRUEL SEA

IT was the confirmation, if any was needed, that this was going to be no ordinary storm.

Near the front of the fleet racing down through the Tasman Sea, *Sword of Orion* was one of the first to taste the fury that was to engulf the 115 yachts taking part in the 600-nautical-mile Sydney to Hobart race.

They all knew it was coming. On Boxing Day, less than an hour after swimmer Susie O'Neill sent the fleet on its way out of Sydney Harbour, the weather bureau upgraded its forecast from gale-force conditions to a severe storm. The only forecast danger is a cyclone.

But even that didn't sum up the conditions that sprang up on Sunday morning and devoured most of the fleet. Normally in a storm, wind will gust up to 45-55 knots (80-100km/h).

By just after 1pm on Sunday, a frantic message from the battered *Sword of Orion* set the experienced yachtsmen behind it on edge.

The wind monitoring equipment at the top of the 12.5m yacht had registered wind gusting up to 78 knots or 144km/h. Many say it got as high as 90 knots or 165km/h by the end of the day. Few of the yachtsmen in the Australian classic had experienced such fierce conditions.

Even George Snow, the veteran skipper of *Windigoella*, who had been sailing all his life, had never faced wind beyond 60 knots.

Scyoneer skipper, American millionaire Larry Ellison was more succinct: "We were sailing right through the eye of a hurricane."

But in a way they were the lucky ones. The big, powerful maxis were racing ahead, putting themselves ahead of the fleet and, more importantly, pulling away from the worst of the storm before nightfall.

So as the maxis powered south into the waters of Bass Strait, they left behind a second race. It was a contest where there were no line-honors at stake, only survival itself.

Faced with the tempest, many of the yachts turned towards the safety of Eden or the sanctuary of Gann Island. The skipper of *AFR Midnight Rambler*, Ed Pezalla, said his instructors told him to do the same. But he had one nagging doubt.

Before the race he read everything he could get his hands on about the 1979 Fastnet disaster in England where 19 yachtsmen had died and more than 100 were rescued after a severe depression erupted with little warning to swamp the fleet.

The conditions were the same. Similar wind speeds, wave size. And in the Fastnet, many of the boats that

sank were those which turned and ran for shore, exposing their sterns to the full fury of the 20m waves.

On Sunday, the same decision was to prove a fatal one for several of the boats.

"We saw a few boats going home and they were rolling around and waves were catching up and washing over them," Pezalla said. "We thought, no, let's not go for that, we'll just keep going, thanks very much."

At another yachtsman who also recognised the similarities with the fatal Fastnet. The commodore of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, Hugo van Kretschmar, had survived the 1979 race through the Irish Sea. "There too, they had been hit by what the weather bureau called a "bomb", a front where the pressure suddenly drops out of the system and it deepens, resulting in cyclonic wind and massive and unpredictable seas.

"The suddenness and unexpectedness of the weather systems and the severity was very similar. At Fastnet,

the wind intensity was not as great but the sea conditions were more difficult," van Kretschmar said.

Aboard the *Assassin*, he and his crewmates heard what was happening up ahead and headed for shore.

Just over an hour after *Sword of Orion*'s radio call, the *VC Offshore Stand Aside* was swamped by what crewman Mike Marschman described as "one monstrous rogue wave" which tore off the mast, trapped the cabin in half and injured three crew.

Just over three hours later, as the swell grew to 6m with waves peaking as high as 20m, the 12-strong crew were among the first of the 56 competitors to be rescued. The last one, crashed the arms of helicopter rescuer and paramedic Peter Johnson, who was 10 miles from the wreck. Efforts to cushion the air strike to signal for the yacht to turn back.

When orders were given by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority it was just beginning. By 3pm the 10th was in full swing, bringing in 30 of its nautical and aviation experts to oversee a massive operation, which would eventually cost about \$1 million and involve more than 40 planes and eight helicopters.

As the afternoon wore on, the mayday signals and piper from the EPIRB beacons gathered pace. At one stage, the authority was directing pilots and helicopters to fly rescue who urgently needed assistance.

By late afternoon, the storm was worse as American John Campbell became the first man to be separated from his boat, the *Kingfisher*.

"I was thrown overboard in the collision. It took 10 minutes to get to safety to move to another part of the cockpit. Campbell emerged as one of the rescue operation's luckiest survivors.

"Booping about 19 nautical miles south of Gago Island, he managed to move more than 40 minutes without a life jacket before being found by a Victoria Police helicopter.

"At first, I thought I could see the boat and had not given up hope but it was getting further and further away. It was happening a bit more, then it crossed my mind that my chances were pretty slim," Campbell said.

“You're scared, you've got to be scared, but it's no panic situation. But we knew we were in for a hard time.”

Helicopter pilot Sen-Constable Murray Jones agreed. "It was in fact, a cyclone in a dark sea out there. It's a very very scary time."

Spread out over several hundred square nautical miles were dozens of life and death struggles.

Nowhere was the struggle more desperate than on the 56-year-old resourced cutter *Winston Churchill*, a veteran of 16 Sydney to Hobart races.

The *Churchill* was about 40 nautical miles off the far south coast and running at about nine knots when the weather worsened on Sunday. Rogue waves, which had been battering the boat at a rate of one in every 30 began to pound at every 15th wave.

Then came the wave they had been dreading. Just after 5pm they were hit by all its breaking fury. Within the 25-tonne boat and throwing it through the air at a 45-degree angle, smashing against the near swell.

"It was like being thrown against a brick wall," said injured crewman John Stanley, who had sailed in the classic 31 times.

The craft was crippled and taking on water as the millionaire owner, skipper, Richard Winning, tried in vain to start the 3000 motor. After a few minutes the crew realised the futility of trying to save the yacht and brought the life rafts on deck.

Several minutes later as the crippled boat sank lower, Winning sent out a distress call.

"Mayday, Mayday, Mayday. We are taking on water and we cannot get the motor started. We are getting the life rafts on deck," the message crackled.

There was still no panic on the boat. All the crew, except youngster Michael Ryan, 19, had been across Bass Strait many times before.

"There was no panic, no arguments or conflicts of opinion on how to get things done; we just knew what we had to do and we did it," said Winning.

The nine men waited until the boat was almost submerged when the two rafts - inflated by nitrogen canisters - floated on to the water.





# Hero tolerance

is almost nothing left. Well-sponsored have to ages. All too often they rous — especially to up the pieces. It's time as John Schauble.

At their saddest, such follies descend into dramas of the absurd: to the level of Jessica Dubroff, the seven-year-old Californian girl who died in 1996, along with her father and a pilot instructor, during an abortive attempt to become the youngest pilot to fly an aircraft across the United States. The plane plunged into a residential area, narrowly missing houses. Jessica was at the controls. She was trying to batter a record set by a nine-year-old.

Recently, a young Melbourne lad, Jesse Martin, set sail alone through the Rio (beyond which he had never sailed alone before) in a bid to become the youngest solo yachtsman to circumnavigate the globe. Whatever misgivings one might have about his experience as a sailor or the wisdom of his venture, some simple unanswered questions remain. Where lies the worth in this quest? Who benefits from it if the attempt succeeds? Who might suffer if it fails? What is the point, if any, of the experiment?

Meanwhile, to the south, three adventurers are trekking 1400 kilometres across the Antarctic from the Scott Antarctic base to the South Pole and back. The great ice lanes hold some of the last challenges for modern-day adventurers. New Zealander Peter Hillary and Australians Eric Phillips and Jon Muir are pulling heavy sleds carrying their food, fuel and equipment. The first part of their journey



and Amunosen earlier this century. Their inter-month exploit is being sponsored by a phone company.

Much that has passed for adventure this century has centred on the application of new technology.

During the 1920s and 1930s there came a spate of aeronautical exploits revolving around being the "first" pilot to fly an aircraft from A to B or across an ocean or around

such as "single-engine", "solo", "female". Australians, including Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith, were prominent in such endeavors and, like Kingsford-Smith, several died in the process.

Now, decades after men abandoned the balloon in favor of more navigable and reliable aircraft, the race is on to see who can pilot a high-tech version around the globe first. The most recent of the repeated failed attempts of British millionaire Richard Branson ended on Christmas Day with his team being plucked from the Pacific by the US Coast Guard. Yet another crash-landing. The day after that crew plummeted back to earth, another was announcing its imminent departure from central Australia.

In recent days we have witnessed the tragic consequences that sometimes flow from the pursuit of adventure under conditions not normally equated with mortal danger. Yacht racing, even ocean-going, is hardly the stuff of recklessness. It becomes so only when those organising or participating choose to ignore warnings that the conditions they will encounter will be life threatening.

Since then we have been regaled with stories of the bravery of crews facing impossible odds against mountainous seas and nor'westerly winds.

Sadly, six of the balloon in the Sydney-Hobart yacht race did not return from the sea. As their messengers were plummeted to pieces by the forces of nature, others were sent out to rescue the hapless seafarers.

When disaster strikes in Australia there is usually a flood of public sentiment in favor of those who have suffered. This time there has been little public sympathy for those who perished.

risked life and limb in rescue missions have been roundly praised. Here are the true heroes, such exploits: those sent out to flog up the survivors and retrieve the bodies.

What does all of this tell us about the Age of Polly? What does it tell us about modern life? For one thing: for those fortunate enough to live in the comfort of a wealthy, peaceful Western democracy, the struggle to simply survive is no longer part of the daily imperative. Modern man no longer has to confront the perils of nature in order to garner enough food to eat. There are few wild animals prowling the suburbs, ferocious torrents to ford. The biggest danger is behind the wheel of an automobile, and even then death through idiosyncrasy often prevails. Instead, in order to bring meaning to their lives, some create artificial challenges. The only thing not fatal about such adventures are the mortal dangers attached.

The true age of physical adventure may be no more but, of course, there are intellectual and scientific frontiers yet to be conquered. This is not much consolation to those who us who are not especially profound thinkers or gifted technicians, even less so to those of whose talents are physical rather than intellectual. Perhaps that is why endeavors that value brain over brawn attract less public acclaim. Perhaps that is why our culture values the exploits of sportsmen and women so highly.

As to those who think, for the sake of it, that there is still some worth in being the first, the youngest, the fastest, the latest to attempt some physical or mechanical feat, perhaps it is time for reevaluation. The reasoning...

# The Wire

**RESCUE** — call sign Carcallin — were flying on only two hours sleep. They were on the most hazardous and difficult rescue of their careers, flying into a 50-hour fast over tumultuous seas. Eleven pilots were transmitting distress signals. One was missing, presumed dead.

"I'd never seen anything like it," said paramedic Murray Traynor, 34, a RAAF ambulance officer for 12 years, six as a member of the Special Access Team (SAT), three years on helicopter rescue. This was his 20th rescue op, and his fourth over water. In the jargon of the rescue business, paramedics are called "live bags," and with good reason.

The pilot was American Dan Tyler, 49, a Nebraska farm boy veteran of 1002 sorties as a Huey pilot with the first Air Cavalry in Vietnam. A search-and-rescue pilot since 1979, he was facing his second winch at sea the first had been in the 1997 rescue of a helicopter.

Next to him at the controls was light coordinator and winchman Jerome Fromberg, 35, who had been a helicopter rescue since 1985 and with Carcallin since 1990. This was his sixth ocean rescue.

Their duty hour had started at their Sydney base at 0700 the previous night, Sunday. They transferred to Canberra airport, banking down at 1300m.

Two hours later, they were up again, flying to Melinbuhla atfield, where the search-and-rescue flights were based. It was like a war-time ship; planes and helicopters all over, flying off into the dizzying sky. Aiding off to the left, they saw a thirty-five aircraft. They scouted that way.

Twilight. One went out for the sixth business host fatal, which had been transmitting distress signals all night. It had rolled twice, got both masts, and was taking water.

All 150 metres, visibility was good, but as Tyler, heading the helicopter team, saw the helicopter approach, it was clear that the waves were 10 metres in height, and the wind gusting to 50 knots. Briefed the air with several of some-

## The Bass Strait rescues merged technology and courage in equal measure, writes Phillip Cornford.

From this moment, Tyler flew with his attention focused on the horizon and the controls. Not once — not even for a split second — during the next 35 minutes did he dare remove his hands from the control stick. One slip and they would be in the water.

Tyler called the big waves as they swept below with the noise and speed of an express train. "Big one ten seconds away!"

Beneath, the clipped Haldal was backing, pitching and rolling. On deck were seven upright men, waving frantically. Another was stretched on the deck,ashed down. Was he dead or injured?

Tyler was flying blind, directed by Fromberg, who was hanging out the starboard hatch, maintaining an incessant patter on their headset intercoms: "Survivor two, o'clock forward 15, right 10. Standby, Steady!"

They were not going to winch the crew from the boat. The risk of fouling the winch cable was too great. "That happens, the boat will go end up in the water," Tyler said.

Head-signalling, Fromberg and Tyler conveyed that they wanted one of the survivors to put on a safety harness, leap into the huge seas and swim clear of the boat. With relief, Traynor reported: "One's going in."

The boat, Traynor was going down the wire. He would drop into the sea and pluck the swimmer to safety.

ress signals in quick succession. Mayday calls were also coming in, voice transmissions on VHF yacht radios, dramatic calls for help relayed by three coastal receiver stations and relayed to SAR.

Fortunately for those lost at sea, the SAR officers into whose hands these signals placed their fates were men who understood their plight, veterans of the sea and air, many recruited after leaving naval or merchant marine commands, others with careers as pilots and air safety control officers behind them.

By 0900 on Sunday, SAR had nine distressed yachts listed on its control board.

As night fell over Bass Strait, the SAR was calling in all available staff and planning for a massive effort to begin at daylight. The RAAF sent a PC-3 Orion from Adelaide, and HMAS Hewesdale sailed from Sydney with only a third of its normal complement. RAAF Sea King and Sea Hawk helicopters, the only aircraft with capability for night vision, were engaged.

The emergency beacon signals kept coming in on the hour, giving the exact positions of the distressed yachts. The SAR officers mapped the locations, calculated the drifts, and prepared search grids, which they faced to Melinbuhla.

At dawn on Monday, the first of 35 aircraft began to take off with clear instructions of where to search and what to look for. The highest priority was the 46-year-old wooden yacht Winston Churchill. At 5:30pm on Sunday, it had sent a mayday signal reporting it had rolled, lost its mast, was sinking and its crew of nine were taking to life-rats. Nothing had been heard since.

The rescue of business host fatal was underway. Traynor went down the wire. The moment he exited, the gate tore at him. In 30 seconds, Fromberg, the winchman, dropped him into a wave rough five metres from the man in the sea.

Taylor was wearing thermal underwear, a full-bodied wetsuit, lightweight helmet, thermal boots and gloves. He wore snorkel and face mask. Attached to his rescue strap, a round collar like a life preserver for a horse, stuffed with cork, came along to provide flotation and buoyancy. As Taylor reached the survivor, a wave from above under him. On the



Helping hand: a winchman lifts a helpless yachtsman from Bass Strait in one of the most successful mass rescues in maritime history.

winded out more cable and then, as Traynor emerged on the other side of the wave, winched it in again.

Taylor had to support his own body weight plus the drag of more than 25 metres of the half-centimetre-diameter steel cable streaming on the wind. Three times the paramedic was dragged under, but the biggest threat from the lifeline was entanglement. Driven by the wind and sea, a sudden jerk could tear off a limb. Twice, the cable stretched beneath Taylor's legs and he had to go under to clear it.

Signalling, Traynor got the survivor to hold his arms in the air. The paramedic slipped the rescue strap over his neck and beneath his arms. Traynor spun the survivor around and once more went under, this time to fasten the strap. The wire got tangled around the survivor. Once more, Taylor went down.

Above them, the helicopter danced in the air, the rotors blasting out five tonnes of downdraft. Using a



hand-held console, Fromberg winched frantically in, out, in, out, controlling the wire, sending instructions to Tyler: "Up 10, left 20, Steady!"

As another wave dove the paramedic, Traynor thought: "I've had enough of this. Let's get out of here." He gave the signal. Fromberg was waiting for: right arm extended, thumb up. They were coming out.

With Fromberg calling the directions, Tyler blindly manoeuvred the fell until it was directly overhead. Now the waves posed even more of a threat. If the sea caught Taylor and his human cargo while they were suspended in the air, they were world slant them under with tremendous force.

Fromberg waited until a big wave swept over them and spat them out the other side. He wanted the marksmen time before the next wave hit. Fromberg hit the button and pulled them them out at top speed.

On board, Traynor was exhausted.

**As a wave dove the pair under, Traynor thought: Let's get out of here.**

But he barely had time to recover breath before descending on the wire again. The crew learnt the man on deck was dead and the skipper was also dead in his bunk.

Seven times Traynor went into the killer seas and lifted men to safety.

**THE SAR operations room in Canberra, hope was dwindling late in the afternoon, a helicopter had lifted four of the Winston Churchill crew from the life-rat. They had been admitted since spin the previous day, when they lost sight of five crewmates in a second life-rat.**

At 9pm, with only 20 minutes of light left, a PC-3 Orion on its way back to Melinbuhla at the end of its search mission saw a torch flashing from the sea.

Now began what was the most intractous, difficult and dangerous rescue in the air, flying off HMAS Newcastle, was a Sea Hawk helicopter, the last remaining aircraft with night-vision capabilities. It was commanded by Lieutenant Commander Rick Neville, 41, and piloted by Lieutenant Nick Timmer, 29. The crew were Senior Operator Lieutenant Aaron Abbott, 28, and winchman Petty Officer Shane Pasley, 33.

It was pitch black when the Sea Hawk came over the life-rat. Switching the radar altimeter to Radar height-finder, Neville tuned the Sea Hawk over to Abbott's distress waves. Slashed instantaneously, the facial, sensitive to within half a metre of altitude, bounced the beam

back to the life-rat.

helicopter's lights throwing down a cone in the blackness. About 100 metres from the life-rat, Pasley swam across, clambered aboard and went under. The life-rat had no bottom. Recovering, he put the strap on the survivor who seemed to be the most injured.

As Abbott lifted Pasley and the survivor out of the raft, the Radalt failed, a big gust drove the helicopter sideways and down, dumping the two men into the water. For the few seconds it took to regain control, Pasley and survivor John Gilson were dragged across the waves. Then they were plucked out.

In a few seconds, Neville reset the Radalt. But it contributed to malfunction. Later checks revealed that the conditions were so severe they were beyond the Radalt's operational limits.

With Pasley and Gilson safely on board, Neville faced a difficult decision. "It was too dangerous to send Pasley down again. There was a grave risk we'd lose him."

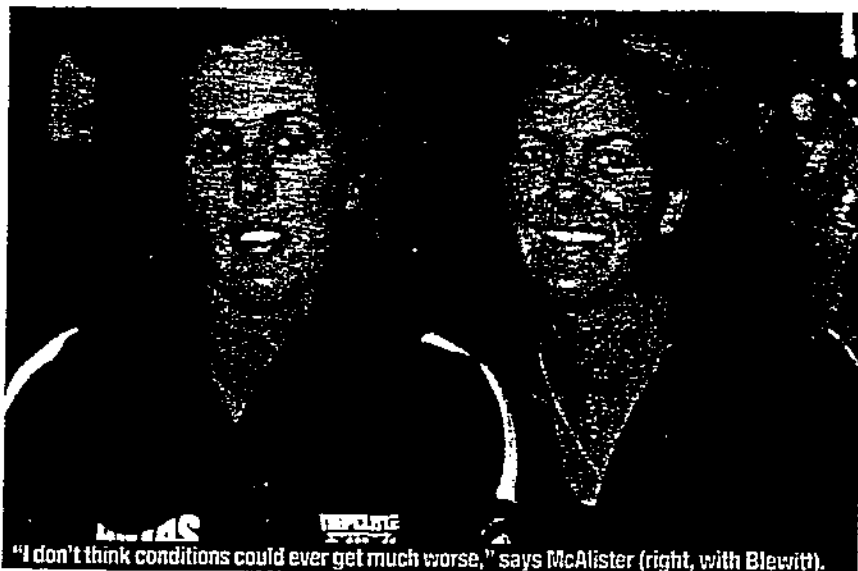
Instead, with skilled flying they dropped the rescue strap into the life-rat. John Stanley's life was in his own hands. Incredibly, after all he had been through, Stanley had sufficient physical and mental reserves to know what to do.

Stanley climbed onto the strap and signalled. They hauled him to safety. With the rescue of Gilson and Stanley by Kennedy night the SAR had conducted one of the most amazing and successful mass rescues in maritime history. Fifty-three yachtsmen

and their crews were rescued.

# LIVES ON A LINE

Helicopter paramedic **Kristy McAlister** is one of many heroes to emerge from the yacht race disaster



"I don't think conditions could ever get much worse," says McAlister (right, with Blewitt).

As the SouthCare rescue helicopter struggled to maintain position over one of four stranded crewmen from the stricken Sydney to Hobart yacht *VC Offshore Stand Aside* on Sunday evening, paramedic Kristy McAlister looked at the mountainous, white-tipped ocean beneath her and was afraid. "I was frightened, petrified," says McAlister, 30, who, until that day, like the fledgling SouthCare unit, had never performed a sea rescue. "I just took one look at the sea and thought, 'oh ... my ... God.'" Nevertheless, McAlister attached herself to a winch and was soon lowered through the tumult and into the sea, which instantly swallowed her whole.

While this year's race reinforced the awesome power of the ocean and the fragility of the people and yachts who sail it, it also demonstrated the bravery and professionalism of rescuers such as McAlister. Coordinated by AusSAR, a division of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), the massive search-and-rescue effort concentrated east of Eden, NSW, and the northern reaches of Bass Strait eventually plucked 50 sailors from the water. Civilian, naval and police aircraft as well as



A *Stand Aside* crewman is winched to safety. "It's exhausting work," says McAlister.

training ship *Young Endeavour*, a fishing trawler and HMAS *Newcastle* were all part of the rescue, which "went like clockwork," says AMSA spokesman David Gray. "Our crews put their lives on the line and didn't put a foot wrong," he says.

The SouthCare rescue helicopter unit, with McAlister, fellow paramedic Michelle Blewitt, pilot Ray Stone and crewman Mark Delf aboard, was flying back to Canberra from another mission when it was called to assist

in the rescue of 12 crew—some of whom were injured—aboard *Stand Aside*, a South Australian yacht demasted by monster waves earlier that day. When they reached the vessel, about 100km off Eden, a HeliMed rescue chopper unit was winching eight of the crew, including Adelaide's Michael Marshman, out of the water. "I'll never forget the face of the man who hauled me out," says Marshman, who lost the tip of his right ring finger in the drama. The SouthCare chopper was to rescue the remaining four crew, three of whom were clinging to a life raft, while the fourth was still aboard *Stand Aside*. All the while, huge waves continued to roll in. McAlister—who set foot inside a helicopter for the first time in September—says the conditions were "horrendous" and unlike anything she had ever experienced. "We actually did our training for water rescues at Lake Burley Griffin," she says with a wry laugh. "It was certainly very different in real life."

Upon dropping into the ocean the first time, McAlister was engulfed by a huge wave. "I was actually dumped under the water for quite some time before I came up," she says. Refusing to panic, the paramedic of eight years fought her way to the surface "after swallowing a fair bit of sea water." She eventually made her way to the crewman, attached him to the winch and rode with him into the chopper, while pilot Stone manoeuvred above the rising waves. McAlister, the daughter of wheat and sheep farmers from Quandialla in western NSW, again dropped into the ocean to rescue another crew member. Then Blewitt took over and plucked the last two men from the water.

"They were so exhausted there wasn't much conversation in the chopper until we landed in Malla-coota," says McAlister. But once safe on land, "one guy in particular said, 'how do you say thank you for something like this? I just want to give you a kiss and a cuddle,' which he then proceeded to do. Another gentleman said he was selling his yacht and never going to sea again." McAlister is modest about her life-risking heroics, preferring instead to talk of the *Stand Aside* crew: "They were a lovely bunch of men."

■ PAUL CONNOLLY

## TRAGEDY

# THE MOST DIRE STRAIT

The 54th Sydney to Hobart exacted a terrible toll; first-timer Melissa McCabe recalls her ordeal at sea

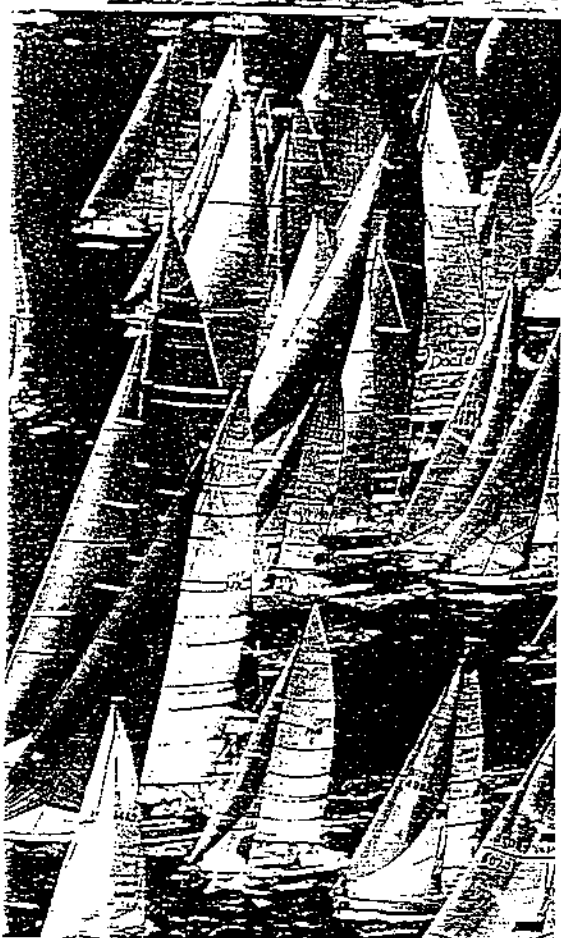


"I knew I had a good crew who would do everything in their power to look after us," says Melissa McCabe (aboard Team Jaguar in Sydney Harbour on Dec. 11).

seas rose up and crashed down like apartment blocks and the fleet was pummeled, battered and capsized, with 50 sailors requiring rescue. On the horror Sunday of Dec. 27, English Olympic yachtsman Glyn Charles was swept off Sword of Orion; Business Post Naiad crewmen Bruce Guy and Phillip Skeggs died when their yacht rolled and the crew of Winston Churchill—a 56-year-old timber yacht that sailed its first Sydney-Hobart in 1945—abandoned ship. Three of its nine crew, Jim Lawler, John Dean, and Mike Barrister, were lost to the boiling seas. "I let that man be the man he was. I would never have had it different," said Barrister's wife, Shirley. "He was doing what he loved."

More than half the fleet retired from the Cruising Yacht Club's blue-water classic, now the subject of an investigation by the NSW Coroner. Caught up in the drama was 18-year-old Melissa McCabe. The Eden High School of Marine Technology student scored a berth on pocket maxi Team Jaguar Infinity III by winning an essay competition. McCabe, who began sailing in 1995 after joining the CYC's youth training program, spoke to Craig Henderson at her home outside Eden last Tuesday.

I only arrived in Sydney from Eden the morning of the race, after having Christmas at home. I was pretty excited. It was a really good start. We were one of the first boats



MAIN PHOTO: PETER BIRCH/ABC-TV; INSET: DAVID GILBERT/EPIC

The traditional Boxing Day start to this year's Sydney to Hobart yacht race was picture perfect. The sun caught Sydney Harbour just right, the spectator craft milled excitedly and after the 115 race entrants cleared the Heads and headed for Hobart—630 nautical miles away—they blossomed into a legion of coloured spinnakers, pregnant with cherished wind. But it was an illusion. As a gloomy race spokesman predicted before the event: "When they encounter a series of southerly busters later, it will be like literally hitting a brick wall."

It was unimaginably worse. That American maxi Sayonara took line honours early on Tuesday hardly mattered to anyone, even its crew. The race had been sunk by the worst statistic in its 54-year history: six sailors were dead. The predicted southerly busters bordered on a cyclone. Winds reached up to 120km/h,

across the line. We made it to the Heads in about 20 minutes but we didn't put our spinnaker out until we were well away from the spectator craft. With the spinnaker up we were going along pretty good—averaging about 18 knots and at one stage we hit 20.25 knots—so we were really charging along.

We had a pretty tasty dinner—spirally pasta with vegies and meat, and plenty of carrots which reap-



The crew of *Stand Aside* prepares for rescue on Dec. 27. "We were extremely lucky," says crewman Michael Marshman. Inset: the deceptively sunny start on Sydney Harbour.

peared later on! It turned out that was the last good meal we'd have. We still had the kite up at Jervis Bay. It was sunny and nice but we were a bit apprehensive because we knew some bad weather was waiting for us. The southerly was forecast to come through about 10 PM.

Everyone was having a good time. We were all smiling and checking out the other boats. We'd been broadcasting as well because a Channel Ten cameraman, Jason Thompson, was on board too. I did two interviews from the deck. After a fair while of beautiful spinnaker run we were sitting up on the rails and could see a few storms developing to the south. It was still reasonably light, about 8 PM,

and we were past Jervis Bay. There was heaps of lightning. Not the southerlies—just local thunderstorms.

We still had the kite up as we were entering those storms but we dropped it because the wind was starting to come from the south and onto the bow. We put up a storm jib and put two reefs [folds that shorten the sail] in the mainsail. We were prepared. After all, they had forecast 50-knot southerlies.

We were still going fine under that rig, about 11 to 12 knots, but the night ended up getting pretty rough. We had 18 on board and they were broken up into three shifts of six crew. You did two hours working, two hours up on the rails [sitting on

the top edge of the hull] and then two hours below to sleep. By the time you're on the rails, it's four hours of rain, waves, pouring wet and cold. At one stage during the night I nearly went overboard. When you're on the rails you're sort of curled up in a ball to keep as dry as you can and to hang on. One time we tacked, I was half dozing and I didn't move to the other side quick enough. Suddenly I was heading into the water. Somebody pulled me up and I crawled up to the high side. Phew.

I was glad when my watch on the rails ended about 3.30 AM. I went below and bunked down for two hours. I had maybe 20 minutes' sleep. Down below you could feel

the weather getting worse—the waves were bigger but it still wasn't terrible at that point.

It's pretty hot and sweaty below deck and there's not much air down there. The bilges started overflowing and there was a rather gross smell. I was back up on deck about 5.30 AM [Sunday] and we were about an hour past Eden.

It was pretty windy but it seemed to have calmed down a bit. I was back on the rails and managed to scoff down a Snak Pak with nuts, sultanas and carob. We were flying down waves. It's always better in the daylight, so we were all chatting away and making good speed.

Those in front of us, *Sayonara* and *Brindabella*, were copping about 40-knot winds—it turns out they missed the storm. But because they were fine, we had no warning of what was coming. We were probably one of the first boats that got hit. After I finished on the rails everything was fine. I went below at 10.30 AM and slept for about an hour. We were woken by someone shouting, "all hands on deck." When you hear

that, you know it's something bad.

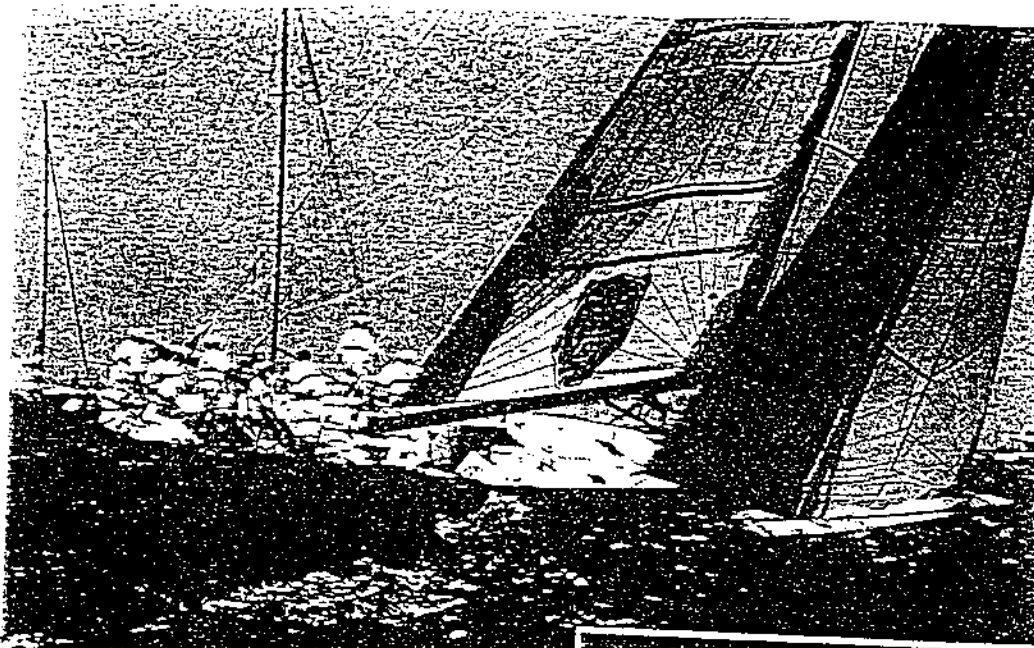
You could see from the hatch the sail was half in the water. The mast was falling down, waving around. Then it twisted. I remember thinking, "This can't be good." The crew was pretty calm but one of the other girls started getting a bit hysterical. I stayed below so as not to get in the way. I also got sick.

The guys on deck started to chop all the rigging off with whatever we could hand them—hacksaws, pliers,

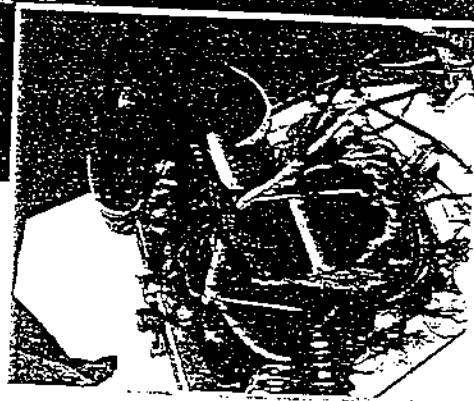
hammers. It didn't take them long. It went crashing right over the stern. They're pretty tough guys. It was about 11.30 AM. We weren't in too bad a shape and we still had a motor.

We were about 50 nautical miles past Eden on the edge of the Strait. There were 12 of us below and six guys stayed up top. We were trying to get communications going—we'd lost a lot of our communications gear off the stern when the mast went over. After we'd been motoring for a while, a large wave washed some ropes overboard and they fouled the propeller. So now we'd lost the motor. That's when we really had trouble. We were desperate for communications as we needed someone to know what was happening to us. At one stage we were even getting mobile phones out and seeing if we could contact anyone—ringing up home numbers to see if they could get in touch with Waterways—but nothing worked.

We finally rigged up an aerial and we could receive transmissions from other people. We were also able to transmit to a boat near us, I think it was *Business Post Naiad*,



Team Jaguar surges through Sydney Heads on Boxing Day. Within 26 hours they would lose their rigging, radio and motor. Right: the remains of the shattered mast.



A rescuer tells Winston Churchill crewmen (from left) Michael Ryan, Bruce Gould and Paul Lumbin that they have picked up the bodies of two of their shipmates.



"It was a terrific feeling to be standing on the dock in Eden," says McCabe (being greeted there by grandmother Joan Mould on Dec. 28). "Pure relief that we made it."

and they told us they had set off their EPIRB [emergency position indicating radio beacon]. About 2 PM a wave came over diagonally about 80ft [25m] and we went down it. We're a 68ft [20.7m] boat and Tim Messenger, who was steering us, told us later that as we went down it, three-quarters of the boat buried into the wave. He didn't think we'd come back up. We did.

People were being sick. When the wave hit, the deck above me cracked. It was like a waterfall in the middle of the boat. One of the girls told me to get up on deck ... but the guys on deck sent us straight back below. It was too dangerous.

Tony Egington had gone overboard and another guy, Craig Gurnell, had gone over too. Craig managed to pull himself back on. They were both wearing harnesses. Guys were trying to drag Tony back on deck. They got him back. Fortunately, the water didn't keep pouring into the cabin. It was just the huge pressure of the wave that had forced it in. It had probably been the scariest moment for us. I didn't think I was going to die but I

## "Knowing there were real people in as much trouble as us brought home how bad the situation was. It wasn't just us"

definitely wanted to be out of there. Just after that we set off our EPIRB.

We heard people say they'd heard our EPIRB. The boats around us were still pretty good but as the afternoon and night wore on we could hear the radio calls getting worse and worse. Telstra Control [the fleet monitor] was getting call after call: "We've got a man overboard," "We've rolled," "We've got rafts out," "We're taking water." It was constant chaos.

We were finally able to transmit and receive Telstra Control. We'd lost our satellite navigation gear in the wave so we had to use a handheld GPS [global positioning system] which we later found out was giving a reading that was out by some 20 nautical miles. But at least we knew Telstra Control knew we were in trouble. Big relief.

About 4 PM they called us and

said they'd organised a trawler, the *Moira Elizabeth*, to tow us to Eden. It was going to take about four hours for them to arrive so we settled down to wait. It was rough, cold and people were sick. I was sick twice. The radio continued to clog up with distress calls. Some of the voices sounded pretty panicky.

One skipper said they'd lost a man overboard. Knowing there were real people in as much trouble as us really brought home how bad the situation was. It wasn't just us. The trawler was having trouble finding us because the position we'd given was out. We started to let off flares. We were seeing flares from other boats. It was confusing.

The trawler couldn't get us on radar. A chopper had been sent to look for a man overboard and saw us and corrected our position. We were drifting for 18 hours before they finally got to us. The trawler found us early in the morning. At one stage we had to tell the skipper to keep away from us because they were in danger of rolling into us in the swell. They left us for an hour

and came back when it was light. They threw a line and we got it.

By 9 AM we could see Eden. That made us all very cheery. We all got up on deck and were smiling and chatting—except some of the blokes were so sick and wasted they couldn't stand up. They were brilliant men. The wind had been 80 knots—enough to just blow you off the boat—and the salt was like a spray gun in their eyes. We broke out the Minties and I've never tasted anything better in my life—it's moments like these! One of the guys went downstairs and made scotch eggs. We were all very perky.

Looking back and thinking about the people who died, it's just a tragedy. But it's one of those sports where anything can happen. I feel that if I survived this race, it can only make me stronger. If I can get a berth next year, yes, I'll go. →

I NOTICED that Transurban can recover costs of \$40 against motorists who are proved guilty of avoiding a toll. Can motorists claim costs against Transurban if they are found innocent?

Andrew Thiesz, Morningside

THE Premier doesn't mind doing deals to help his mates in town, but did nothing to save Waverley Park for people in the east. Beware, Jeff, there are plenty of angry footy supporters come next election.

Abandoned, Berwick

IT always disgusts me to read of people complaining about their taxes being used to save people lost at sea, self-inflicted or not. What if you were lost at sea? Thank you to all the brave rescuers.

Lives Before Money, Castlemaine

FOUR dead, two missing in that horrible race, yet they want to ban boxing. Get it right.

Roll With The Punches, Kew

MILLIONAIRES with million-dollar yachts. Who is paying the millions for rescuing them? The poor taxpayer who cannot afford a row boat.

Laurie, Campbellfield

IN the aftermath of the tragic Sydney-to-Hobart yacht race, we must not forget the heroism of the helicopter pilots and crews who flew in appalling conditions, putting their own lives at risk to save others. Well done.

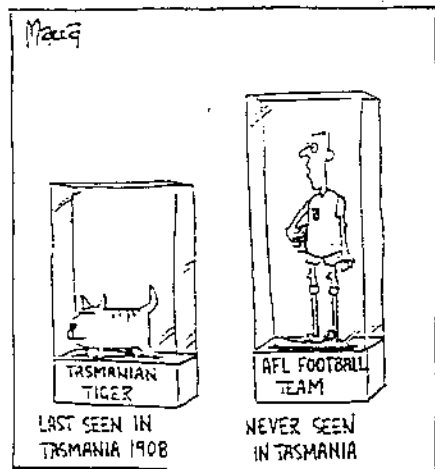
Dennis Parker, East Bentleigh

IS this how wars are started — with small-minded people sniping at each other about their cultural heritage? Italian, Scottish, and many other influences have given us a rich and colorful blend.

Be Thankful, Heathmont

R.B.'s suggestion (*Herald Sun*, December 30) of banning the sale of spray paint to anyone under 18 is a good idea. Not only to help against vandalism, but to prevent teens from inhaling the paint fumes. It's rampant in the western suburbs.

Sniffer, East Altona



TO J.C., of Launceston (*Herald Sun*, December 29). Yes, the AFL thrives and survives everywhere else, except Tasmania. You are last on the list of AFL membership. Another team in Brisbane, Darwin and Canberra come first. See you in the 22nd century.

Living in AFL-Wonderland, Upwey

OBVIOUSLY J.P. (*Herald Sun*, December 31)

## True me of Chris

JEREMY C. Head (*Hera*

31) must lead a sad life if he believes Christmas is "primarily a useful economic device".

I have been fortunate enough to experience Christmas for its true meaning from a very young age, and have now great joy in sharing this experience with my two young boys. They receive gifts from "Santa", but still remain focused on celebrating the birth of Christ.

His comments regarding "spending money on items that we wouldn't otherwise buy and that we never use" must originate from being led to believe Christmas is only spending money.

The marketing gurus have got Jeremy and many others like him sucked in, or more politely, cleverly manipulated. Yes, I have dealt with the commercial animal, I have turned him down and recycled him.

Philip Lynch, Bayswater

## Race critics mean-minded

TO S. Joseph, Greg and Jennifer McCallum (*Herald Sun*, December 30), and the dozens of carping critics certain to follow them. I strongly disagree with your mean-minded, parsimonious outlook and offer some thoughts to the contrary.

Since the cost of "taxpayers' money" worries you all so much, compare it with the staggering cost of the "taxpayers' employees" in Canberra granting themselves pay increases and gross superannuation pig-outs.

Regarding the risk to the very worthy volunteers, remember that they, unlike you, are not whingeing. By their nature, they have more of an affinity with those they save than you could have in two lifetimes.

Yachtsmen, like hunters and fishermen, are targeted in our society because they are independent, self-sufficient (usually) and, worst of all, they think for themselves. Modern government domination of people is advanced by team (read herd!) sports, to condition the participants.

Finally, if the "user-pays" principle is applied to rescue services then the media should pay, as it is, surely, the heaviest user.

Lionel Swift, Oak Park

## Forecast warning enough

HARSH judgment, maybe, but when are they going to learn? Loss of life, many dollars spent in rescue operations. Maybe some of these so-called skippers, instead of fuelling their egos, may



Scandal: Bill Clinton with former intern

## Clinton claims unco

PAUL Gray makes his stance on whether Bill Clinton should resign clear (*Herald Sun*, December 30). However, he also uses sleight of hand and questionable half-truths to support it.

First, regarding Mr Clinton's and Richard Nixon's popularity. According to polls, Mr Clinton is currently enjoying his highest popularity, whereas Paul Gray writes that Nixon was "strongly endorsed less than 12 months before Watergate broke".

OK, it took about another six months for Watergate's machinations and ramifications to develop, but Mr Gray tries to fob them off as comparable statistics.

A week is a long time in politics, Mr Gray, 18 months is an eternity.

Second, he says "Nixon never received much public credit for his resignation". It was obvious to most that Nixon would have been punished

for his cov why we shc fleeing a si

Mr Gray public was the Water: "huge poli: judges, jo gators, law cratic Part

Unlike th I remembe pie being c

But wha Gray's imp was dedic Vietnam.

and the ot were the r reduction:

Nixon, 7 broadened Cambodia saturation

Mr Gray Mr Clinton don't use truths to

John Brigh Hawthorn

take their crews into account.

Maybe they should learn to read a weather map or listen to a forecast. With the forecast given on Boxing Day, I went down and put extra lines on the boat.

Professional Fisherman, Lakes Entrance

## Our bridge a true icon

I REFER to the proposed Grollo Tower and other icons. It seems to me that the reason Sydney's two landmarks — the Harbor Bridge and Opera House — are so universally loved is because they are softly curved, dare I say, in a feminine sort of way.

New York, in spite of its lofty skyscrapers, will always be defined by the breathtaking im-

pect of th nine Star

On the tures of a seldom re: tic point rarely love

Howeve our own quite so: whether s ing water

ted at st magic by

Now, th proud of L.E. Clark

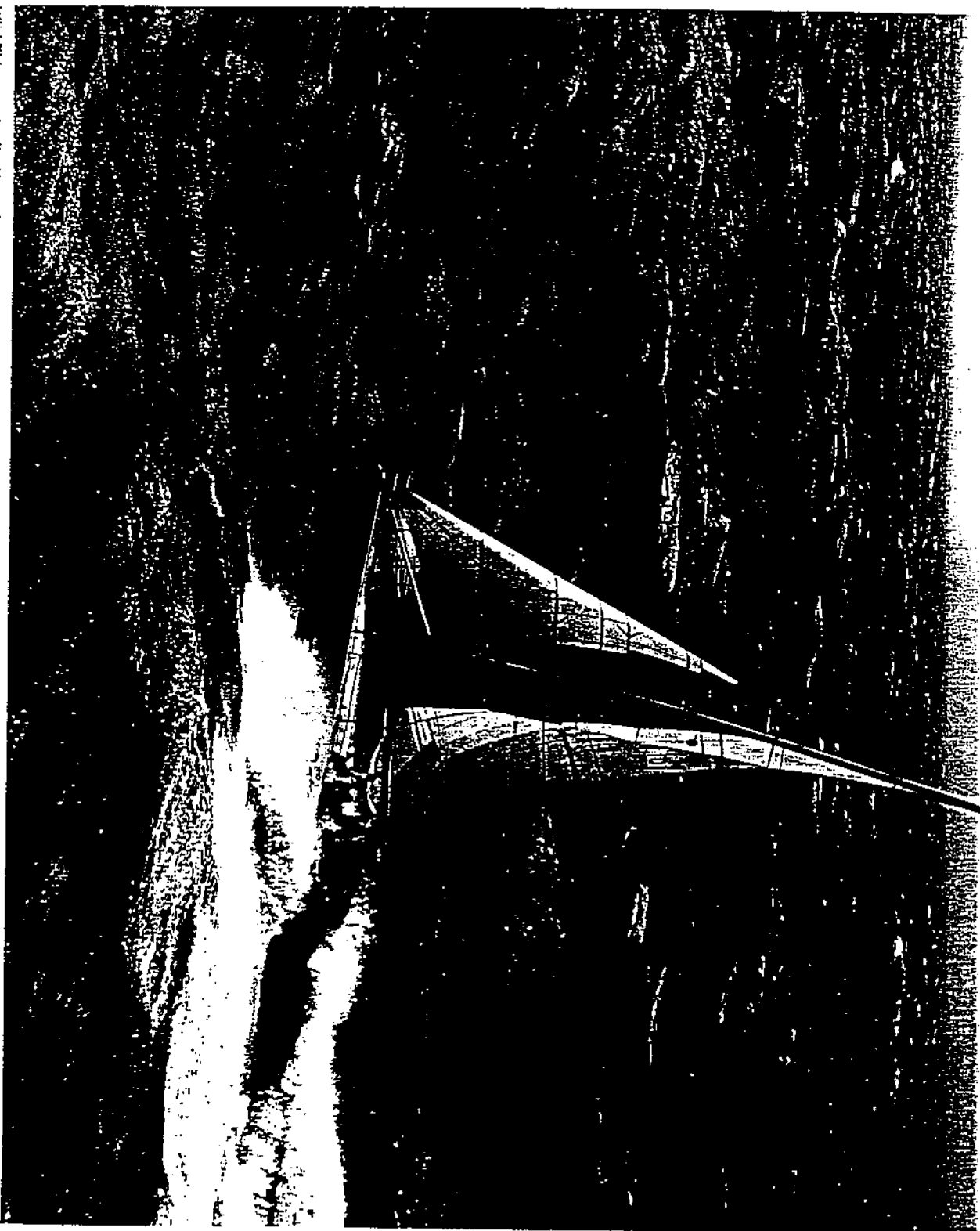
Alltona Nor

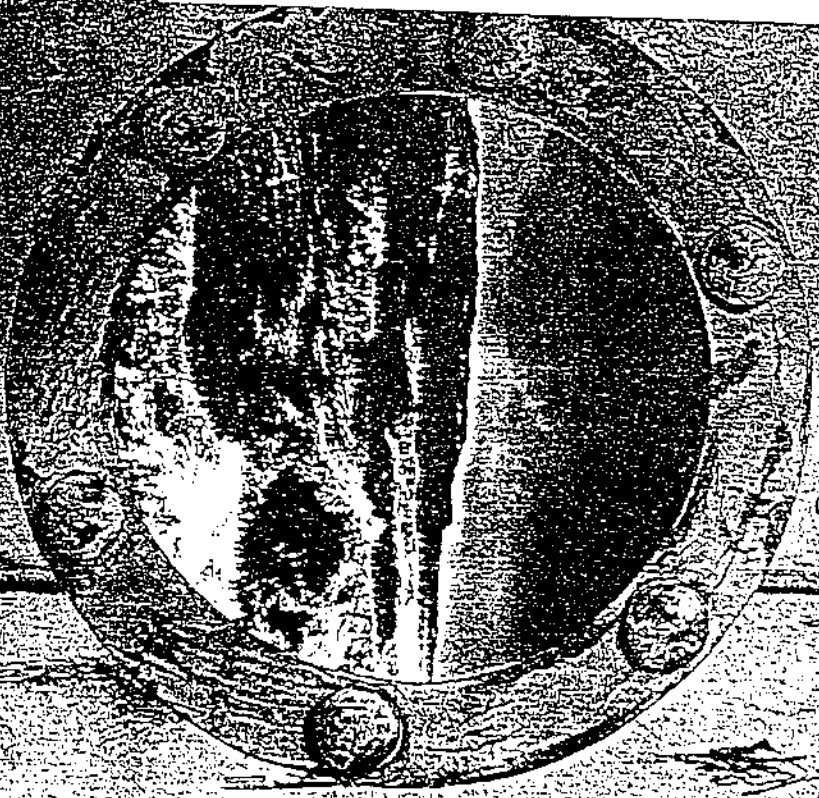
Medic more

AFTER



*Wild Thing, an hghls 47, on her record-breaking run near South Cape. "We could see all the white caps and there was this big white cap in the middle of it all, which was Wild Thing." (Richard Bennett). "In the 50-knot gale conditions, we were surfing down eight-metre waves at breathtaking speeds of at least 28 knots ... frankly, I was too scared to even look at the dial." (Owner/Skipper Grant Wharlington).*





TIME PERFECT

WALL AGA IS THE SEA

STORM

in June  
gratitude

has where it is  
with

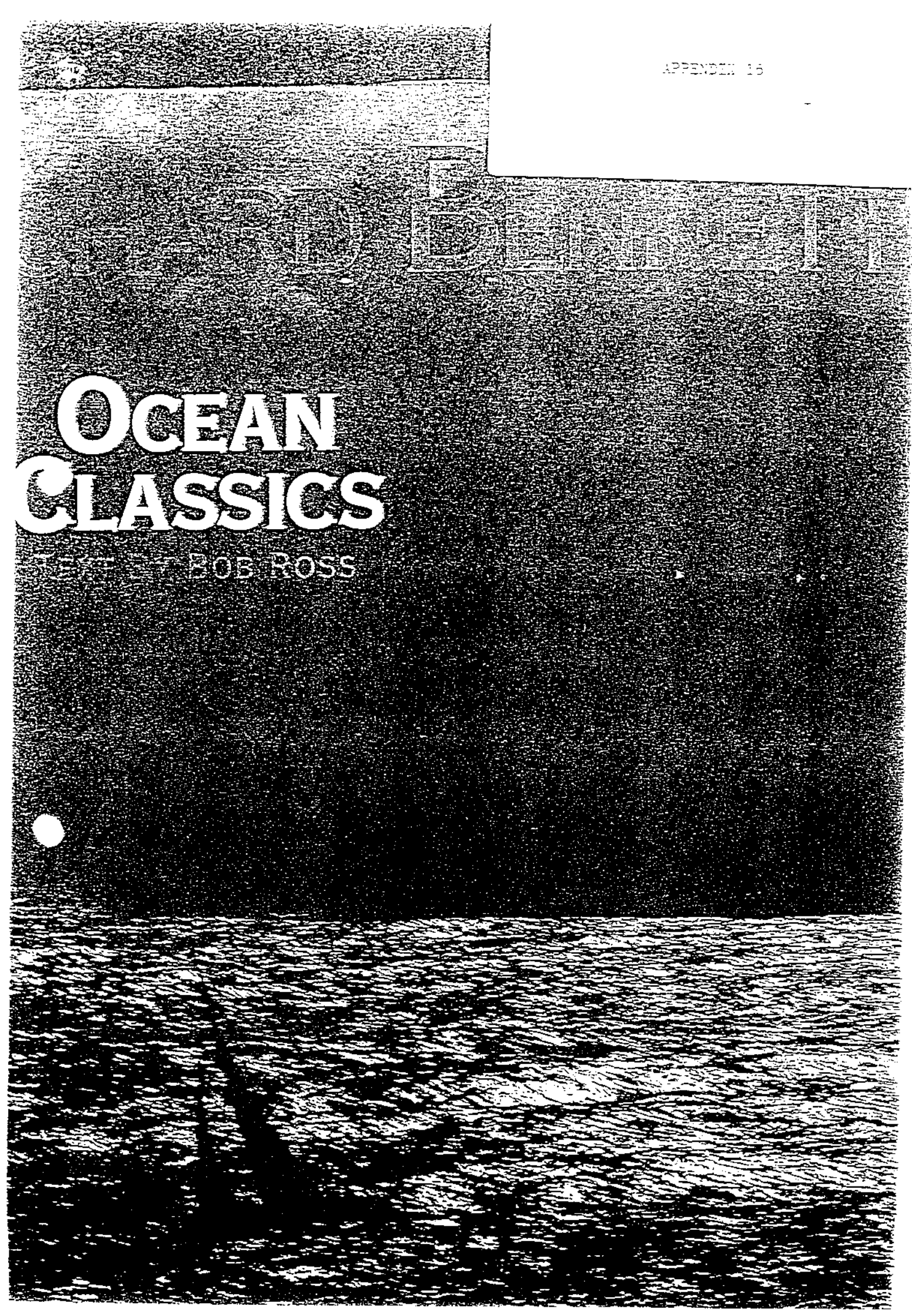
1973  
2000  
2001

This is but a small token  
of our appreciation for  
giving us our friend back.  
Thank you for saving  
Campbell.

Kayama Crew  
Spring to Hobart '38

# OCEAN CLASSICS

TEXT BY BOB ROSS



Dave,

I am forever grateful for all that you have done in saving my life. I hope this book will serve as a small reminder of my thanks. Maybe it will also provide some insight into why sailors do some of the crazy things they do.

Best Regards

John C. Hill

Jan 1, 1959

DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMB

Type of A/C	Reg of A/C	Call Sign - Air	Su <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mo <input type="checkbox"/> Tu <input type="checkbox"/> We <input type="checkbox"/> Th <input type="checkbox"/> Fr <input type="checkbox"/> Sa <input type="checkbox"/>	Date 27 / 12 / 98
SA 365 C1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PVF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PVK <input type="checkbox"/>	491 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 492 <input type="checkbox"/>	Police <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/>	Shift
AS 350 <input type="checkbox"/>	PVA <input type="checkbox"/> PVM <input type="checkbox"/>	495 <input type="checkbox"/> 474 <input type="checkbox"/>	Ambo <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/>	0900 - 1700
Cessna 182 <input type="checkbox"/>	JOE <input type="checkbox"/>	412 <input type="checkbox"/>	Fixed Wing <input type="checkbox"/>	
Observer	Observer	Observer	Pilot	
KEY	BARCLAY		JONES	

Diary of Duties Performed

Clock Time	Action	Task / Job No.
09:00	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	ON - DUTY EQUIPMENT CHECKED
:	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	A.A.C
:	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	BRIEF FOR WINCH 6 mtr
:	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	CHECK s/c BARCLAY
10:51	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	OP / CREWMAN
10:53	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	s/c LEFEBVRE o/B
11:31	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	WINCH - CHECKS 10 x CYCLES
11:33	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	DE - BRIEF
12:28	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	
12:30	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	CHECK NO. 10 TASK PATROL AAC
12:35	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	
12:40	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	CHECK NO. 11 TASK PATROL AAC
12:53	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	
12:55	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	CHECK 83 HOLDEN S/W
:	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	0 EN - 179 S/SERIAL
:	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	CRANKS NO ROCKBANK
:	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	JML - 307 TO AMBA
:	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	FOR REPORTS
:	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	S/C HOWLETT 30962 FOR
13:16	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	RECOVERY REPORTS JML 307
13:18	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	
13:25	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	CHECK TASK SHEET NO. 14
:	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	CHECK 85 HOLDEN SEQ OTM. 733
:	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	N/L AAC
:	SU OIG OHI AB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	CHECK ALC - 926 79 HOLDEN

# DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMBULANCE PATROLS

Type of A/C	Reg. of A/C	Call Sign - Air	Su <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mo <input type="checkbox"/> Tu <input type="checkbox"/> We <input type="checkbox"/> Th <input type="checkbox"/> Fr <input type="checkbox"/> Sa <input type="checkbox"/>	Date 27/12/98
SA 365 C1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AS 350 <input type="checkbox"/> Cessna 182 <input type="checkbox"/>	PVF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PVK <input type="checkbox"/> PVA <input type="checkbox"/> PVM <input type="checkbox"/> JQE <input type="checkbox"/>	491 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 492 <input type="checkbox"/> 495 <input type="checkbox"/> 474 <input type="checkbox"/> 412 <input type="checkbox"/>	Police <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/> Ambo <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> Fixed Wing <input type="checkbox"/>	Shift 0900 - 1700
Observer	Observer	Observer	Pilot	Ambo

KEY

BANCAY

JONES

Diary of Duties Performed

15

15

15

15:25

15:30

15:30

Clock Time	Action	Task / Job No.
13:30	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	PATROL TRAX SHEET 13
13:45	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	
13:50	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	PATROL KGL ANBA
14:06	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	SORRENTO
14:08	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	FUEL 475 LTR
14:36	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	
14:38	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	
14:48	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	PATROL DFK AIR STATION
:	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	AS PER TRAX SHEET AAC
14:50	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	ATTEND KGL FLWAY RES
:	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	WRITE FND P/WR 14 MACE
:	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	POINTING R/A AS OFF
15:00	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	DUTY MEMBER
:	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	CANCEL P1 SWB 251, JWN 307
:	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	SWB 650 HAVE OFFENDER IN
15:05	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	CUSTODY
:	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	ATTEND JENNIFER ST NOBLE
15:08	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	PARK RE: OFFENDER ON
:	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	12 DESCRIPTION ABTRISSO
:	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	OF 3 OFFENDERS LOCATED
:	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	SAME IN JACKSONS RD.
:	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	DIRECTED EDC 303, ESP 208
15:25	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	TO SUSPECTS N.O.O
15:30	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	CLEAR P2
:	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	CHECK IN TAMPE RD BOWVILLE
:	SU OIG OAI VB SD CA ATTEND CANCEL	69 FND

P1

P2

# DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMBULANCE PATROLS

Type of A/C	Reg of A/C	Call Sign - Air	Su <input type="checkbox"/> Mo <input type="checkbox"/> Tu <input type="checkbox"/> We <input type="checkbox"/> Th <input type="checkbox"/> Fr <input type="checkbox"/> Sa <input type="checkbox"/>	Date 28/12/98
SA 365 C1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PVF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PVK <input type="checkbox"/>	491 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 492 <input type="checkbox"/>	Police <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/>	Shift -
AS 350 <input type="checkbox"/>	PVA <input type="checkbox"/> PVM <input type="checkbox"/>	495 <input type="checkbox"/> 474 <input type="checkbox"/>	Ambo <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/>	
Cessna 182 <input type="checkbox"/>	JOE <input type="checkbox"/>	412 <input type="checkbox"/>	Fixed Wing <input type="checkbox"/>	0900-1700
Observer	Observer	Observer	Pilot	Ambo

KEY

BANCAAT

JONES

Clock Time	Action	Task/Job No	Diary of Duties Performed
15:30	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL	(P3)	ATTEND LANUNDEC PLENTY
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		NOTED RE OFF. DECAPIED
15:35	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		P3 SEARCH FOR WHITE
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		HOLDEN 81 BGF-891 DECAPIED
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		PORT ON PLENTY RD.
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		CHECKED WITH F.I.L.I.R
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		7 WHITE HOLDEN SED.
15:40	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		NIC SIGHTINGS.
15:54	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL	EN	CUGAN P3
15:56	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		FUEL
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		VIA F.C.C AUSTRAL TASK
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		TO MALACOTA.
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		VIA O.C NOT TO ATTEND
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		SEE - LOG BOOK FOR
16:24	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		DETAILS (ATTACHED)
16:23	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		4x BOATS IN TROUBLE
17:02	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		TO LTV.
17:09	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		HOT REPAIR 284 LTR
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		TO MALACOTA GROUND
18:11	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		SPEED 205 KNOTS.
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		MAL. AIR PORT BRIEF
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		DE-K.T MACHINE TASK
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		TO RESCUE 4x PAX FROM
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		"STAND-A-SIDE" 37' 46 S
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		150' 83 E 209 LTR FUEL

# DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMBULANCE PATROLS

Type of A/C BA 365 C1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AS 350 <input type="checkbox"/> Cessna 182 <input type="checkbox"/>	Reg. of A/C PVF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PVK <input type="checkbox"/> PVA <input type="checkbox"/> PVM <input type="checkbox"/> JOE <input type="checkbox"/>	Call Sign - Air 491 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 492 <input type="checkbox"/> 495 <input type="checkbox"/> 474 <input type="checkbox"/> 412 <input type="checkbox"/>	Su <input type="checkbox"/> Mo <input type="checkbox"/> Tu <input type="checkbox"/> We <input type="checkbox"/> Th <input type="checkbox"/> Fr <input type="checkbox"/> Sa <input type="checkbox"/> Police <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/> Ambo <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> Fixed Wing <input type="checkbox"/>	Date <b>27/12/90</b> Shift - 0900-1700 Ambo
Observer	Observer	Observer	Pilot	

**KEY**

**BANCCAY**

**JONES**

Clock Time	Action	Task / Job No.	Diary of Duties Performed
18:30	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		
18:32	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		HECIMG 1 AT STAND A-SIDE
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		WINCH 4 - SOUTH COAST
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		RESCUE WINCH 4 -
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		POLAR 1 TO WINCH REMAINING
18:45	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		RE-DIRECTED TO BUSINESS
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		POST NAIAD BASTION
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		<del>POST</del> INWARD 38 05 S
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		150 32 E - SEA ANNA 37 42.7E
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		150.43.75 -
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		RE-DIRECTED TO MAN
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		OVER BOARD OFF KING-CACA
19:30	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		37 43.5 E 150 33 S
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		KING-CACA 60 N/M OFF
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		COAST SEARCH STARTED
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		IN WISER FOR 40 MIN
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		NO LIFE VEST ONLY LONG
19:40	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		JOHNS (BUACK) LOCATED
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		PERSON WINCHED TO
19:45	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		HECO. 90 FT WAVES / 70-80 KNOT WINDS
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		ASUS SAR NOTIFIED. JOHN
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		CAMPBELL FROM SEATTLE
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		WASHINGTON STATE U.S.A
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		HYPOTHERMIA, BROKEN NOSE
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		TEETH, JAW AND FACIAL
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		CUTS. TREATED BY S/C BANCCAY
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		AND S/C KEY FOR INJURIES AND



# DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMBULANCE PATROLS

Type of A/C	Reg. of A/C	Call Sign - Air	Su <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mo <input type="checkbox"/> Tu <input type="checkbox"/> We <input type="checkbox"/> Th <input type="checkbox"/> Fr <input type="checkbox"/> Sa <input type="checkbox"/>	Date 28/12/98
A 365 C1 <input type="checkbox"/>	PVF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PVK <input type="checkbox"/>	491 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 492 <input type="checkbox"/>	Police <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/>	Shift
AS 350 <input type="checkbox"/>	PVA <input type="checkbox"/> PVM <input type="checkbox"/>	495 <input type="checkbox"/> 474 <input type="checkbox"/>	Ambo <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/>	
Cessna 182 <input type="checkbox"/>	JOE <input type="checkbox"/>	412 <input type="checkbox"/>	Fixed Wing <input type="checkbox"/>	0700 - 1700

Observer	Observer	Observer	Pilot
KEY	BANCLAY		JONES

Clock Time	Action	Task/ Job No.	Diary of Duties Performed
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		HYPOTENMIA NOW IN DEEP SHOCK.
20:15	SU <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		COMM POST FOOTBALL
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		DUAL MACAROTA.
20:17	SU <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		PATIENT TO AMBULANCE FOR TREATMENT IPT TO AIRPORT FOR FIXED WING TO MELB.
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		400 US FUEL
20:50	SU <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		TO AIRPORT
20:52	SU <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		TO POLICE STATION
20:55	SU <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		DE-BRIEF TO SGT
20:57	SU <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		MOSTAND SEARCH CO-ADMINISTR
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		ASSIST WITH BRIEFING
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		PAPER AND PUSAN
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		DETAILS
23:00	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		CREW OFF DUTY - AS
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		PER BRIEFING PAPER.
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		FILE INFORMED
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C <input type="checkbox"/> O/H <input type="checkbox"/> A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D <input type="checkbox"/> C/A <input type="checkbox"/> ATTEND <input type="checkbox"/> CANCEL <input type="checkbox"/>		

DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMBULANCE PATROLS

Type of A/C	Reg. of A/C	Call Sign - Air	Su <input type="checkbox"/> Mo <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tu <input type="checkbox"/> We <input type="checkbox"/> Th <input type="checkbox"/> Fr <input type="checkbox"/> Sa <input type="checkbox"/>	Date 28/12/98
SA 365 C1 <input type="checkbox"/>	PVF <input type="checkbox"/> PVK <input type="checkbox"/>	491 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 492 <input type="checkbox"/>	Police <input type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/>	Shift
AS 350 <input type="checkbox"/>	PVA <input type="checkbox"/> PVM <input type="checkbox"/>	495 <input type="checkbox"/> 474 <input type="checkbox"/>	Ambo <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/>	0500 - 1300
Cessna 182 <input type="checkbox"/>	JOE <input type="checkbox"/>	412 <input type="checkbox"/>	Fixed Wing <input type="checkbox"/>	
Observer	Observer	Observer	Pilot	Ambo

KEY

BARCLAY

REM

JONES  
JAMERSON

Clock Time Action Task/Job No. Diary of Duties Performed

05:00	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		CREW ON DUTY AT
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		C/POST BRIEF BY SET
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		MOSTAND (AS PER BRIEFING
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		PAPER) AUS AIR TASKS
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		ALLOTTED TO HELICOPTER 1
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		AND POLAR 1.
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		SEARCH AREA FOR "B52"
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		37 53 S 75 D 38 E
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		HELICOPTER 1 TO WINSTON
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		CAMP HILL" BOTH BOATS
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		MISSING (E.P.T) LAST
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		LOCATIONS BOTH NOW
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		IN - ACTIVE BOTH LISTED AS
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		SUNK.
06:55	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		FUEL 386 LBS DAILY AIRCRAFT
06:57	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		CREW JONES, BARCLAY, KEY
07:50	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		RE-DIRECTED TO "MIDNITE
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		SPECIAL" 37 27.7 S 150.51.8 E
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		SINKING WITH 4 CREW
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		STILL O/B. SOUTH COAST
08:00	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		RESCUE TAKEN 5 CREW OFF.
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		LOCATED MIDNITE SPECIAL
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		WINNAGO 4 CREW OFF
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		BOAT AS LAST CREW MEMBER
:	S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		WINNAGO OFF BOAT SANK

50 FT WAVES / 70 KNOT WIND.

# DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMBULANCE PATROLS

Type of A/C	Reg. of A/C	Call Sign - Air	Su <input type="checkbox"/> Mo <input type="checkbox"/> Tu <input type="checkbox"/> We <input type="checkbox"/> Th <input type="checkbox"/> Fr <input type="checkbox"/> Sa <input type="checkbox"/>	Date 28 / 12 / 98
SA 365 C1 <input type="checkbox"/>	PVF <input type="checkbox"/> PVK <input type="checkbox"/>	491 <input type="checkbox"/> 492 <input type="checkbox"/>	Police <input type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/>	Shift
AS 350 <input type="checkbox"/>	PVA <input type="checkbox"/> PVM <input type="checkbox"/>	495 <input type="checkbox"/> 474 <input type="checkbox"/>	Ambo <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/>	
Cessna 182 <input type="checkbox"/>	JOE <input type="checkbox"/>	412 <input type="checkbox"/>	Fixed Wing <input type="checkbox"/>	0500 - 1300

Observer	Observer	Observer	Pilot	Ambo
KEY	BARCLAY	R.M	JONES JAMERSON	

Clock Time	Action	Task / Job No.	Diary of Duties Performed
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		(AS PER NEWS PAPER STORY
08:25	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		BRIEFING PAPER ATTACHED)
08:27	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		C/POST MALACOTA
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		FUEL 470 LIT 4x CREW AND
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		FROM "MIDNITE SPECIAL
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		TREATED FOR HYPOTHERMIA
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		AND MINOR INJURIES
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		① NEIL DICKSON 23
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		COOMAROO CREEK MINYAMA
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		QLD 4575 (P) 0754775775
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		② BILL BUTLER +/- CARLA
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		FLOWERS MS 16 MALENT
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		QLD 4552 (P) 0754944756
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		③ KEVIN FORAN 1 ALKINA
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		ST BUDDINA QLD (P)
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		54-448401
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		④ PETER BAINES 31
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		BARELLAN AVE BUDDINA
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		QLD (P) 075440115 (W)
09:56	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		07 5478-2811
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		DIRECTED BY AUSSAN TO
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		SEARCH AREA FOR "B52"
19:58	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		37 26 E 150 21 E
0:03	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		E.L.T SIGNAL FROM "B52"
0:10	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		MAL. AIRPORT HOT REFUEL
			FUEL 540 LIT

# DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMBULANCE PATROLS

Type of A/C	Reg. of A/C	Call Sign - Air	Su <input type="checkbox"/> Mo <input type="checkbox"/> Tu <input type="checkbox"/> We <input type="checkbox"/> Th <input type="checkbox"/> Fr <input type="checkbox"/> Sa <input type="checkbox"/>	Date 28/12/98
SA 365 C1 <input type="checkbox"/>	PVF <input type="checkbox"/> PVK <input type="checkbox"/>	491 <input type="checkbox"/> 492 <input type="checkbox"/>	Police <input type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/>	Shift -
AS 350 <input type="checkbox"/>	PVA <input type="checkbox"/> PVM <input type="checkbox"/>	495 <input type="checkbox"/> 474 <input type="checkbox"/>	Ambo <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/>	0500 - 1300
Cessna 182 <input type="checkbox"/>	JQE <input type="checkbox"/>	412 <input type="checkbox"/>	Fixed Wing <input type="checkbox"/>	
Observer	Observer	Observer	Pilot	Ambo
KEY	BARCLAY	RIM	JONES	
			JAMERSON	

Clock Time	Action	Task/Job No.	Diary of Duties Performed
10:30	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		IN SEARCH AREA WITH
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		CH. 2 HELICOPTER BEACON
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		AREA LOCATED WITH
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		STRONG SIGNAL - PATTERN
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		TO LOCATE - NIL SIGHTINGS
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		ON SURFACE - E.L.T
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		UNDER WATER
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		LOCATED BOAT "OVERHIRE REACH"
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		IN AREA - SPOKE TO CREW
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		ON MACHINE 16 O.K.
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		MAKING WAY TO SHORE.
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		BOAT DAMAGED AUS-SAN
10:44	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		NOTIFIED.
10:46	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		s/c KEY OFF DUE TO SICKNESS
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		(SALT WATER INTAKE) s/c RIM
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		ON - BRIEF RE: TASKS
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		VIA AUS-SAN MSG: "SOUTH
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		BOARDER" E.L.T 37 19 S
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		150.40 E
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		VIA AUS-SAN RE-CONNECTED
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		TO SEARCH FOR "WINSTON
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		CHURCHILL" 37 16 S 150.21.5 S
:	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		AND 37.16.5 S 150.46.5 E.
11:23	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		
11:25	SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		TO SEARCH AREA

DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMBULANCE PATROLS

Page 41  
Date 28/12/98

Reg. of A/C	Reg. of A/C	Call Sign - Air	Su <input type="checkbox"/> Mo <input type="checkbox"/> Tu <input type="checkbox"/> We <input type="checkbox"/> Th <input type="checkbox"/> Fr <input type="checkbox"/> Sa <input type="checkbox"/>
655 C1 <input type="checkbox"/>	PVF <input type="checkbox"/> PVK <input type="checkbox"/>	491 <input type="checkbox"/> 492 <input type="checkbox"/>	Police <input type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/>
6550 <input type="checkbox"/>	PVA <input type="checkbox"/> PVM <input type="checkbox"/>	495 <input type="checkbox"/> 474 <input type="checkbox"/>	Ambo <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/>
6551 <input type="checkbox"/>	JOE <input type="checkbox"/>	412 <input type="checkbox"/>	Fixed Wing <input type="checkbox"/>

Shift  
0500 - 1300  
Ambo

Observer	Observer	Observer	Pilot
KEY	BANCUAT	REM	JONES JAMERSON

Clock Time	Action	Task / Job No.	Diary of Duties Performed
13:16	SU <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		MERIMBUCA JONES OFF
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		C / JAMERSON O/B
13:18	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		FUEL
13:55	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		
14:57	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		TO SEARCH AREA
15:33	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		MENIMBUCA
15:36	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		FUEL S/C JONES O/B
16:08	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		
16:10	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		TO SEARCH AREA
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		37 20 S 150 25 E
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		37 01 S 150 52 E
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		NIL SIGHTINGS
16:35	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		MALACOOTA
16:37	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		VIA AUS-SAN POLAIR 1
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		TO ATN TO EN
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		RE-FUEL
16:55	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		
16:57	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		TO LTV
18:38	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		LTV
18:40	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		413 LTS.
18:52	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		
18:54	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		
19:41	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		
19:43	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		FUEL
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		WASH / CLEAN DE-KIT MACHINE
:	SU <input type="checkbox"/> O/C O/H A/B <input type="checkbox"/> S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL		AND EQUIPMENT
20:30			CANCEL OFF DUTY

BRIEFING PAPER

TO: Staff Officer to the  
Assistant Commissioner  
Traffic & Operations Support Department

FROM: Superintendent  
Emergency Response Division

SUBJECT: **Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race** - search & rescue  
operations involving specialist Victoria Police personnel  
in relation to incidents on Sunday 27 December 1998 and  
overnight to Monday 28 December 1998 due to very  
poor weather conditions

DATE: 28 December 1998

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Situation

At approximately 1500 hours on Sunday 27 December 1998 the Gippsland Water Police Squad and Mallacoota Police were notified of a marine search & rescue incident approximately 30 nautical miles south east of Gabo Island (between Mallacoota and the N.S.W. border) involving an EPIRB (emergency distress warning device using satellite transmission) activation.

That report came from AUSSAR Canberra. Several aircraft had already been despatched including Helimed 1 (Latrobe Valley Ambulance helicopter), a Care Safe helicopter from Canberra and a fixed wing aircraft from Merimbula.

Weather conditions were reported as gale force winds to 60 knots from the south west with seas to 8 metres.

The situation soon became worse with multiple EPIRB activations and "may day" calls being received by AUSSAR and the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race Control.

At 1552 hours the same day the Victoria Police Air Wing received a request from AUSSAR Canberra as to the availability of a police search & rescue helicopter to attend the same incident. The Officer in Charge of the Police Air Wing, Inspector McSolvin, was contacted and requested further information before he would authorise attendance of a police helicopter from Melbourne. Of particular concern was the delay time of 2 to 2.5 hours to reach the scene, no capability to conduct a winching operation at night over water and the need to keep the police helicopter within striking distance of the metropolitan area. On receiving updated additional advice from AUSSAR Canberra, i.e. now 4 yachts in distress, yacht crew with multiple fractures and 30 knot winds, attendance was immediately authorised.

### Victoria Police Co-Ordination

Sergeant Mostard is the Officer in Charge of the Gippsland Water Police Squad. He attended at Mallacoota and co-ordinated the Victoria Police response.

Sergeant Mostard notified the Rescue Co-Ordination Centre (R.C.C.) at the Water Police Squad Melbourne of the incident. Senior Constable Franklin was on duty at the R.C.C. and notified Superintendent Teather Emergency Response Division at approximately 1645 hours that day.

Part of the information being received was that some of the vessels in difficulty may be attempting to reach Eden (just north of the Victoria/N.S.W. border). A previous instruction from the former Assistant Commissioner (Traffic & Operations Support), Mr. Davis, was that his prior approval was to be obtained before a police helicopter was deployed interstate at the request of AUSSAR for a search & rescue operation.

Superintendent Teather contacted the Air Wing and advised Senior Constable Griffiths, on duty in the Flight Co-Ordination Centre, that in this particular incident, given the overall circumstances, there was no necessity to obtain that prior approval. The police helicopter had been requested to attend an immediate rescue from Mallacoota in Victoria, that rescue involved a yacht carrying 12 people (3 with injuries) in weather conditions of 50 knot winds and 7 metre waves. Although those weather conditions were forecast to improve over night it was conceivable that the police helicopter could be tasked to perform search & rescue operations across the Victoria/N.S.W. border into N.S.W. In all those circumstances I did not require the police helicopter to cease operations before first obtaining approval.

### Initial search & rescue task

The initial task requiring attention was to assist the Helimed 1 and Care Safe helicopters with the dismasted yacht "Stand Aside" from the Yacht Race. That yacht was some 51 nautical miles east of Gabo Island with 12 crew members who were all requesting winching from the vessel. At least 3 of those crew members were injured including a number of severed fingers of one crewman and several possible broken bones.

At approximately 1730 hours both the Helimed 1 and Care Safe helicopters attended at the scene and commenced winching. All persons were successfully extracted and conveyed to Mallacoota Airport.

### Police helicopter winch rescue

The police helicopter enroute to assist the Helimed 1 and Care Safe helicopters was diverted to another task involving a man overboard some 60 nautical miles east of Gabo Island from the vessel "King Gala".

Sergeant Mostard reported that the police helicopter located that person some distance behind his vessel, not wearing any flotation equipment and had been in the water for approximately 40 minutes.

The police helicopter reported at 1945 hours that one crewman had been rescued with a broken jaw, head injury and hypothermia. Conveyed to Mallacoota for hospital treatment.

Identified as John Campbell, Seattle, Washington State, U.S.A.

Police Air Wing personnel deployed

Police helicopter personnel deployed at 1625 hours 27.12.98:-

Pilot	Senior Constable D.A. Jones 21590
Winch Operator	Senior Constable B.S. Barclay 26056
Crewman	Senior Constable D.E. Key 24404

Personnel deployed with fuel truck at 1725 hours 27.12.98:-

Driver	Senior Constable T.G. Rim 23424
Relief Crewman	Senior Constable K. Fisher 25987

The fuel truck driver and relief crewman can be used to relieve the original winch operator and crewman. As a result the personnel currently deployed are self-sufficient with the only additional replacement required being a relieving pilot.

Situation update Monday morning 28 December 1998

Gale force wind conditions causing very rough south westerly seas expected to slowly abate in the early morning hours.

53 vessels have retired from the yacht race.

3 Navy helicopters and an R.A.A.F. Orion are also being utilised by AUSSAR Canberra who are co-ordinating this search & rescue operation.

Missing crewman off the vessel "Sword of Orion" - at 2030 hours on Sunday 27.12.98 the vessel rolled and a crewman was washed overboard, he remains missing.

Late at night on Sunday 27.12.98 the vessel "B 52" requested urgent assistance with several crew members, that vessel's location is not known.

4 EPIRB's have been activated - one of which is unidentified and is well east of the yacht race.

Further police helicopter winching rescue of 4 crewmen for the yacht "Midnight Express" - reported to the Police Air Wing Flight Co-Ordination Centre at approximately 0830 hours on Monday 28 December 1998.

Media reports at 1000 hours on Monday 28 December 1998 that 2 persons have been located deceased.



### Anticipated length of search & rescue operation

Inspector McSolvin contacted AUSSAR Canberra on Monday morning 28 December 1998. He was advised that the assistance of the Victoria Police helicopter was requested to continue into Tuesday 29 December 1998. That request was made because of the information provided previously in this Briefing Paper under the heading "Situation update Monday morning 28 December 1998" and advice from AUSSAR Canberra that 3 yachts from the race were still outstanding.

That request will be met.

### Relief police pilot

The only additional Air Wing personnel required to meet that request is a relieving police pilot. Constable C.J. Jameson 34190 was rostered for afternoon shift Air Ambulance helicopter pilot on Monday 28 December 1998. His shift was altered and he reported for duty immediately. Transportation was organised directly to Mallacoota by a fixed wing rescue aircraft at no cost to Victoria Police.

The morning shift Air Ambulance helicopter pilot for Monday 28 December 1998 will cover Constable Jameson's afternoon shift.

### Financial cost to the Victoria Police Force

Involvement in this search & rescue operation will result in minimal financial cost to the Victoria Police Force. AUSSAR Canberra will pay an hourly helicopter flying charge which is sufficient to meet the Force's hourly helicopter flying charge to the civilian outsourcing helicopter provider, Lloyd Helicopters.

Salary payments, however, will be met by the Victoria Police Force. The Police Air Wing operates as a separate budget work centre, the salaries component of that budget is well within the projected expenditure for the 1998/99 financial year.

The Victoria Police Force and Police Air Wing are and will continue to receive substantial favourable support and publicity for continuing to provide assistance in relation to this search & rescue operation. The function performed is one of the core functions expected from this specialist area and the minimum necessary commitment of resources is well worth the small financial cost involved.

Contact personnel

The following contact personnel are relevant in relation to this search & rescue operation:-

AUSSAR	Tony Marshall, Canberra - telephone 1800815257.
Victoria Police Co-Ordinator	Sergeant Richard Mostard Gippsland Water Police Squad at Mallacoota Police Station - telephone (03) 51580280.
Police Air Wing	Inspector Phil McSolvín or duty member at the Flight Co-Ordination Centre - telephone (03) 9374 1311.
Water Police Squad Melbourne	Senior Sergeant Rex Brown or duty member at the Rescue Co-Ordination Centre - telephone (03) 9537 1827.
Emergency Response Division	Superintendent Peter Teather - telephone (03) 9247 5734.

This Briefing Paper has been compiled from the information provided by both Inspector McSolvín and Sergeant Mostard in their separate Briefing Papers submitted in the early morning of Monday 28 December 1998. As this Briefing Paper was completed by mid-day on that date substantial additional information will become available after that time.

P.J. Teather  
Superintendent

APPENDIX 20

**Briefing Paper**  
**re Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race**  
**Incident on 27.12.98**

Prepared by Sergeant Richard Mostard 19112  
Gippsland Water Police.

## Situation

At approximately 1500hrs on 27.12.98 the Gippsland Water Police and Mallacoota Police were notified of an incident occurring approximately 30 nautical miles South East of Gabo Island involving an EPIRB activation.

This report came via AUSSAR in Canberra. Several units had been dispatched to the area including Helimed 1, Care Safe Helicopter from Canberra and a fixed wing aircraft out of Merimbula.

The weather at time was gale force winds to 60 knots from the south west with seas to 8 metres.

The situation soon turned worse with multiple EPIRB activations and May Day calls being received by AUSAR and Race control.

## Response

The first EPIRB was accounted for as a false activation but other jobs continued.

The main job was from the vessel "Stand Aside" which had been dismasted some 51 nautical miles East of Gabo Island. There were several injuries on board including a severed finger and several possible broken bones. All crew were requesting winching from the vessel.

At this stage the Police Air wing were also activated.

At approximately 1730 Helimed 1 and South Care were on scene and commenced to winch. Vic Pol were en route to assist with the same winch.

Prior to their arrival Vic Pol were diverted to another job involving a man over board some 60 nautical miles east of Gabo involving the vessel "King- Gunra" or similar.

Vic Pol located the Man Overboard some distance behind his vessel. He was not wearing any flotation and had been in the water some forty minutes.

Helimed 1 and South Care successfully extracted all twelve persons from on board "Stand Aside" and returned them to Mallacoota Airport.

All persons injured were then placed into a fixed wing air ambulance which had been waiting at Mallacoota and they were transported to Traralgon Hospital. All other survivors were taken to the Mallacoota "Mud Brick" centre which was set up to accept them by the Red Cross. There were all fed, dried and clothed and spent the evening at same.

## Person's Rescued

At Traralgon Hospital  
Simon Clark

10 Shearer Court, Kilkenny SA 5009

Mike Marshman 16 McClean Ave, Grange SA  
Trevor Conyers 39 Neath Street, Dover Gardens Adelaide SA  
John Campbell (water Rescued) Off Vessel "King- Gurna" Seattle USA

**At Mallacoota**

John Cully 4/41 Military Road, Semaphore South Adelaide  
Charles Alsop 307 Carrington St, Adelaide  
Bevan Thonysans Rodney Street, Woodville  
Rod Hunter  
Andy Marriott  
Bob Briggs  
Hayden Jones  
Jim Hallion  
Laurie Hallion

All crews stood down at 2300hrs.

**Situation 28/12/98**

All crews on duty 0500hrs.

Helimed 1 and Vic Pol to assist re missing vessels "B52" and "Winston Churchill" both these vessel have activated EPIRBS but have not been sighted. All inciodnet approximately 50 to 60 nauticle miles east of Mallacoota.

The vessel "Sword of Orion" has a missing man overboard and the crew of six require winching. This job is being done by a Sea King Helicopter.

Weather conditions similar to yesterday. Wind has abated slightly but seas still the same.


Sgt Mostard coordinating Vic Pol response from Mallacoota. Senior Constables Behan and Collier assisting re persons being bought back to shore etc.

For further information contact Sgt Mostard at Mallacoota on 51580280.

Acting Inspector CAREY, 265 S/Sgt Blencoe, D24, Melbourne Water Police, Media Liaison notified.

Relatives notified where possible. NRIS system to be activated.

Signed:

  
Richard Mostard  
Sergeant 19112.



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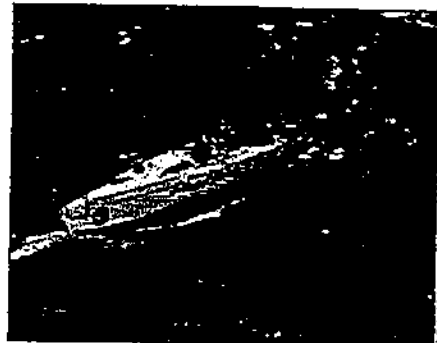


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# Search continues for missing crewman in Sydney-Hobart yachting race

December 27, 1998

Web posted at 9:07 p.m. EST (0207 GMT)



AP PHOTO

SYDNEY, Australia (Reuters) -- Two sailors have died and 10 are missing in the 54th Sydney-Hobart yacht race as mountainous seas and gales ravage the fleet off Australia's southeast coast, rescue officials told Reuters on Monday.

Two sailors from the 40 foot (12 meter) yacht Business Post Naiad have died, one suffering a heart attack and the other drowning, the officials said.

"The initial indication was that one had suffered a heart attack and the other had drowned," said a rescue helicopter spokesman, after seven crew members had been winched to safety from the stricken yacht.

The spokesman said the bodies had been left on the yacht with a radio device that would allow the vessel to be tracked so that the bodies could be recovered when weather conditions eased.

"It was just too wild and woolly to risk trying to winch out bodies from the boat...and our attention was focused on the seven survivors," he said.

Until now, only one sailor has died since the 630 nautical mile race down Australia's east coast started in 1945, despite often treacherous conditions.

Six meter (20 feet) seas and gales up to 78 knots hit the 115-boat fleet on Sunday, dismasting and tearing apart yachts, and forcing 53 boats to retire from the race.

On Monday, a massive search and rescue operation involving 30 civil and military aircraft was under way for a yachtsman washed overboard from Sword of Orion on Sunday night and for nine sailors aboard veteran cutter Winston Churchill, which has been out of contact for

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more than 12 hours.

"Things are not looking terribly wonderful," AMSA spokesman Brian Hill said by telephone from Canberra.

Two distress beacons were spotted overnight in the general search area near Gabo Island, 450 km (280 miles) east of Melbourne. Hill said it had not yet been determined if they were from yachts taking part in the race.

The unidentified crew member from Sword of Orion has been missing since the 13-meter (43 feet) Australian yacht was rolled at about 7:30 p.m. (0830 GMT) on Sunday.

An Australian navy helicopter fitted with night vision and heat-seeking equipment began looking for the man soon after rescue officials received a distress signal from the yacht.

The remaining 10 Sword of Orion crew members were winched to safety in the early hours of Monday and the yacht abandoned.

Race spokesman Peter Campbell said another man was washed overboard on Sunday from the Australian cruiser Kingarra.

The man, who Campbell said was a U.S. citizen named John Campbell, was plucked from the water by helicopter in a rescue Hill described as miraculous.

Rescue officials are also concerned for the nine crew aboard Winston Churchill, which missed a 9.30 p.m. (1030 GMT) rendezvous with race support vessel Young Endeavour after reports it had been holed and the crew were in life rafts.

Winston Churchill was built in 1942 and sailed in the inaugural 1945 Sydney-Hobart, which has become nicknamed "Hell on High Water" for the often treacherous weather conditions.

Hill said officials were also worried about the nine crew on board the 12.5 meter (41 feet) B52, which had not made contact since it was seen dismasted late on Sunday.

"The problem is that when yachts are dismasted, they often lose their communications," Hill said. "The conditions out there are very hard."

Twelve crew from the Australian 12.5 meter (41 feet) yacht VC Offshore Stand Aside were winched to safety after she was dismasted and part of her cabin torn away.

They suffered injuries ranging from severed fingers to a dislocated knee and Stand Aside was abandoned.

The conditions were the worst experienced since 1993, when huge seas and 75 knot winds hit the fleet, sinking two boats and forcing 66 of the

105 yachts to retire.

The race chaos overshadowed the performance of U.S. maxi Sayonara which could smash the race record. Computer executive Larry Ellison's Sayonara was averaging 12 knots and led Australian maxi Brindabella by 11 miles off the Tasmanian coast.

Ellison had given an estimated time of arrival of 6:00 p.m. (0700 GMT), nine-and-a-half hours inside German maxi Morning Glory's 1996 record of two days, 14 hours, seven minutes and 10 seconds. The crew on board Sayonara, which won in 1995, includes media magnate Rupert Murdoch's son, Lachlan.

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Local News : Friday, January 01, 1999

### Winners of yacht race grateful to be alive

by Florangela Davila  
Seattle Times staff reporter

Winning the 1998 Sydney-to-Hobart Yacht Race for the second time has not been cause for celebration for Seattle sailor T.A. McCann and fellow crew members of the *Sayonara*.

Instead, the overpowering feeling among the crew has been one of gratitude for one another and an even deeper respect for the forces of Mother Nature, says McCann, 31, a software developer and professional sailor.

McCann was just outside Sydney, Australia, last night, where a memorial was to be held for six competitors killed when a ferocious storm swept through the great ocean race.

McCann was one of two Seattle sailors who competed in the race. The other, **John Campbell**, survived 40 minutes in wild seas before being rescued. His injuries included a gash to the chin, a bruised cheek and a black eye.

Yesterday, McCann recounted his memories of the race. He praised the crew with whom he worked, the rescue efforts and the race officials. He also said he would not hesitate to participate in the race again next year.

A total of 115 boats gathered within sight of the famous Sydney Opera House on Dec. 26 for the start of the race.

The summer weather was beautiful. "We thought it would be a fairly good race because of the conditions," McCann said. "We didn't see too much that was extreme."



including confronting a low-pressure system. That was the worst-case scenario, McCann said.

Such a system would eventually overpower much of the race.

Winds up to 90 mph and 35-foot swells snapped masts, capsized boats and sent dozens of competitors into the water, triggering one of Australia's largest rescue efforts.

In the end, about 50 people were lifted to safety off Australia's southeastern coast, 250 miles south of Sydney. The bodies of five sailors were recovered; another is still missing and presumed drowned.

The storm, however, did not halt the 725-mile race. And the *Sayonara*, captained by American Larry Ellison and with McCann on board, went on to win.

The *Sayonara*, at 85 feet, was the largest of the competing yachts. Because of its size, it was able to travel at a faster speed. It was leading the race when the winds increased, so they were less affected by the elements.

McCann, who grew up outside Chicago, competed in the 1992 and 1995 America's Cup races. He sailed with Ellison, chairman of the Oracle Corp., on the *Sayonara* in the 1995 Sydney-to-Hobart race.

The race, he said, is a very difficult one. The *Sayonara* faced winds over 60 knots, roughly 75 mph. The yachts that trailed faced winds that reached 90 mph.

It was impossible to hear anyone talking, McCann said. "You couldn't stand up. Two, three, four-foot-high waves were washing people on the deck like they were rag dolls," he said.

All that the *Sayonara* crew focused on, he said, was heading in the right direction and keeping the yacht in one piece.

Over the next few days, the crew learned bits of the tragedy, McCann said, but it wasn't until they finished, as the crew hugged wives, girlfriends and family members, that the extent of the tragedy was learned.

"Everyone took a step back. It's very rare that someone dies in sailing," he said.

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Local News : Tuesday, December 29, 1998

### Seattle man survives yacht-race disaster

by Mike Lindblom  
Seattle Times Eastside bureau

MERCER ISLAND - Seattle sailor John Campbell is resting at a friend's house in Australia after he survived 40 minutes in wild seas Sunday night.

A rogue wave slammed the side of the Kingurra, a racing sloop in the Sydney-to-Hobart yacht race, at dusk Sunday. Campbell, 32, was knocked over the stern, and the lanyard that held him to the boat became tangled around his throat. He shoved the restraints away, over his head. Freeing himself meant separating himself from the boat.

"I was getting farther away. It was getting more tense. I started to think my chances were pretty slim," he told a television interviewer afterward. Campbell's injuries were a gash to the chin, a bruised cheek and a black eye.

Only 38 of the 115 boats that started Saturday were still racing today. Cabins and masts have snapped off several ships. Some boats rolled. Four crew members died and two remain missing.

As the Kingurra drifted, Campbell watched the sailboat bob in and out of view. Eventually, a police helicopter passed above, seemed to depart, then fixed on him with the help of heat-seeking sensors. News footage of another rescue showed a diver pulling a sailor's limp arms into a harness, then bear-hugging him as a winch pulled both aloft.

Campbell has spoken several times with his parents Wallace

and Sally Campbell of Mercer Island, who started taking him and two brothers sailing Puget sound when John was four. The family leased sailboats for Caribbean trips and keeps a small boat at Whidbey Island.

Wallace Campbell looked on in amazement this morning as he watched videotape of other Hobart-bound boats flung in the 35-foot waves. A large model sailboat sat next to the television.

Six years ago, John Campbell timed a tour of Australia so he'd be in Sydney when the race began. He walked the docks handing out a sailing resume and asking to join a crew. Campbell was accepted onto a boat called Fast Forward and proved a competent sailor. He was invited back in 1993. However, the sailboat didn't make it to Tasmania either year.

A friend from the Fast Forward crew, Peter Meikle, called Campbell this year and touted the 42-foot Kingarra, his father recalled.

"This is a very strong boat and they always finish," Meikle promised.

After finishing his master's degree in business and industrial engineering at the University of Washington this month, Campbell rewarded himself by joining the race.

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It was, his parents say, the first time Campbell has ever gotten seasick.

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Mike Lindblom's phone message number is 206-515-5631. His e-mail address is: [mlindblom@seattletimes.com](mailto:mlindblom@seattletimes.com)

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AP Headlines

Monday December 28 4:24 PM ET

**Two Die in Australia Yacht Race**By *TONY HARPER* Associated Press Writer

SYDNEY, Australia (AP) - Orange life rafts heaved in roiling seas Monday as a freak storm decimated the Sydney-to-Hobart yacht race. At least two sailors were killed as 90 mph winds and towering seas turned 40-foot yachts into tub toys, flipping them over, snapping their masts and swamping them with water.

Four other sailors were missing, including at least one presumed drowned, as Australia mounted one of its largest maritime rescue operations ever.

Military helicopters hovered over 35-foot swells to hoist about 50 other sailors to safety off Australia's southeast coast, 250 miles south of Sydney. Many of the sailors were injured - with broken bones, dislocated shoulders, cuts on the face and hands - from being struck by broken rigging or tossed upside down when their boats capsized.

Emergency flares sent streams of red smoke into the air to speed the rescue effort.

Winston Churchill skipper Richard Winning, who was rescued from a life raft, told of a frantic struggle to stay alive.

"After we got into the life raft and became separated from the others, the damned thing capsized twice on these great seas at night - which is bloody frightening, let me tell you," Winning said. "I wouldn't want to have spent another night out there."

American John Campbell was swept overboard when his yacht capsized. After less than an hour in the water, Campbell was so crippled by hypothermia that a helicopter dropped a policeman down on a line to scoop him up.

"There was a point I didn't think I was going to survive," Campbell said.

The 725-mile race continued despite the worst tragedy in its 54-year history. Of the 115 yachts that entered, 59 were forced to seek shelter and several boats were abandoned, race officials said.

Some 27 navy ships scoured the seas for survivors after the first call of "Mayday! Mayday! Mayday!" came over the radio.

Two Australian sailors were killed when their 40-foot boat, Business Post Naiad, capsized 60 miles off the New South Wales town of Merimbula: skipper Bruce Guy and crew member Phil Skeggs. Guy had an apparent heart attack during one of the boat's two rollovers and Skeggs drowned when he was unable to release his safety harness.

Their bodies were left on the boat but attempts were being made to recover them as soon as possible, rescue officials said.

"Dad loved sailing," said Guy's son, Mark. "He loved the competition. He also loved a beer and a talk after the race. Dad simply loved life."

British Olympic sailor Glyn Charles was washed off the Sword of Orion yacht Sunday night and presumed drowned.

Robin Poke, a spokesman for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, said it was unlikely the 33-year-old Charles could survive more than 24 hours in the wild seas.

Race officials said Charles had sailed in four Admiral's Cups and represented Britain in the Star Class at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, where he finished 11th.

Six crew members from the Winston Churchill yacht were hoisted to safety from two life rafts late Monday, but three others who had been with them were missing, apparently swept out.

Forty boats were holed up Monday in the small mainland port of Eden, surrounded by broken rigging, twisted masts and other damage. Ambulances ferried sailors to the local hospital.

"There's just many, many injuries on those yachts that got knocked down. A lot of them rolled over - one rolled over twice," maritime agency spokesman David Gray said. "They really got pounded."

The race, which began in 1945, saw its first fatality in 1984, when a 72-year-old yachtsman was washed overboard. In 1989, a 58-year-old man died from head injuries after a gale snapped his boat's mast.

Among the yachts that survived the storm, an American boat named Sayonara was narrowly ahead of last year's winner, Brindabella, and expected to cross the finish line Tuesday.

David Evelyn, owner of the Wheelhouse restaurant, which overlooks the Eden dock, said many of the sailors arrived in a state of shock.

"It was the worst seas anyone can remember here," he said. "We saw crews in tears from exhaustion and probably just from relief, really, to be on dry land."

Even the sailors themselves could not believe the toll.

"Everyone has been really quiet today since we heard about the deaths," racer Susie Graney said in Eden.

### Earlier Stories

- [Two Die, 4 Missing in Yacht Race](#) (December 28)
- [Three Said Dead in Yacht Race](#) (December 28)

# THE HOWLING

In just four hours disaster overtook one of our greatest sporting events

**T**he guys on *Kingma* are serious social sailors. First night out, they had a roast dinner, but since then there hasn't been much to lift them from a bumpy, wet sail down to Hobart.

One consolation is that the little old *Kingma*, way back in the pack, is still running 20 nautical miles ahead of the race record.

Their wind speed instrument only goes to 68 knots and that's where it sits as the wind just keeps building. The crew of 10 has more than 100 Hobarts between them. None of them have seen conditions like this Sunday afternoon. Words or pictures can't convey the magnitude of a 20-metre wave let alone 25 metres, 30 metres.

The noise is incredible. Crewman Peter Meikle excuses the cliché but he can't think of a better word than "howl". It isn't the noise of wind through wire. It is the wind itself. The helmsman, Anthony Schaiders, is wearing ski goggles. It's the only way to look into the long smoky trails of spume and spindrift which

blow down the waves like snakes. Snakes that bite savagely.

About every 15 minutes a good-sized wave floods the four crew in the cockpit, knocking them around, but they are comfortable, travelling at a steady four to five knots. They are in a heightened frame of mind. No fear. Completely unaware of the mayhem ripping the fleet apart.

Suddenly, Schaiders at the helm yells: "Watch out!" The other three simply bow their heads and brace, their major concern being a big soaking. The boat goes up the wave correctly at about 70 degrees, but the top four or five metres is foam. The breaking wave turns the boat side on. The rail on the lee side digs in.

Meikle thinks it is like being pummeled in a giant spa, like being dumped in the surf, only with large heavy objects swirling with him. Then it is quiet and dark. Meikle can't tell he is in the water, but why is it dark? Why can he breathe? He'd later realise he is in an air bubble in the upturned cockpit. Four or five seconds pass before there is light again. The boat has rolled 360 degrees. He is floundering in the cockpit on his back alone.

"Where is everybody?" The whole

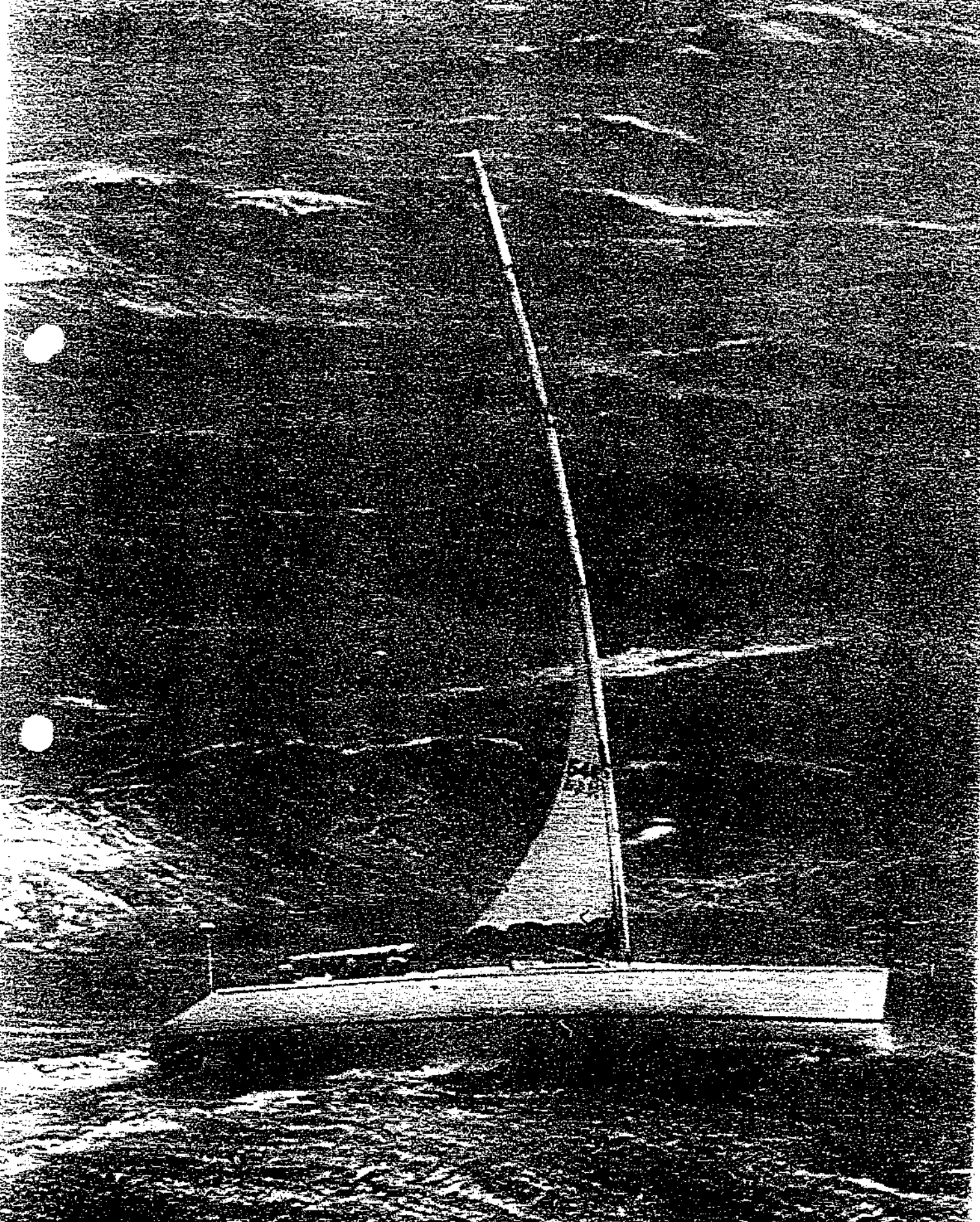
of his watch is gone. He stands and looks up the boat. No one. Then Damian Horrigan appears. Meikle turns and sees the other two hanging off the stern by their harnesses, both facing away. "Are you okay?" he yells.

"Yep," says Schaiders, but Meikle's good friend from Seattle, John Campbell, doesn't respond. He is unconscious with his harness strap around his neck.

"Get some people on deck!" Meikle yells below, surprised by the lack of response, unaware of the injuries and devastation inside. So Meikle—70kg—has a go at lifting Campbell—77kg plus soaking wet weather gear. He manages to drag him a good way up, but just isn't tall or strong enough to get the ganglier American over the life line.

He is, however, able to get the harness strap off his neck. The navigator, Tony Vauhin, appears on deck and together they grab Campbell and try to lift him out of the water. If anything, he seems more unconscious, getting floppier, and as they heave, his arms go above his head and he starts to slip out of his jacket. The jacket consists of an outer waterproof shell with an inner lining. Campbell has mounted his

2



harness between the lining and the shell. This is apparently within the manufacturer's guidelines. The problem is, the linings are designed to be slippery so you can get your arms in and out when wet.

One arm flops out and Meikle grabs the hand. Then the other arm comes out as the jacket turns inside out. Leaning off the back of the boat, Meikle squeezes his friend's hand as hard as he can, but there is a dreadful inevitability about it all. He knows he cannot hold him much longer. The hand is so lifeless. Already he is thinking: "What next? Do I follow him in?"

A wave hits and Campbell slips away into the raging sea. Meikle won't ever forget his mournful moan of protest as

pants bob up behind him. That gives them all hope, like he's shedding them so he can swim, but he doesn't swim.

Meikle is acutely aware that they have to do everything right or his friend will die, but he also knows that even if they do everything correctly, he will probably die anyway. And they might all still die with him. The guy on the helm maintains a course away from Campbell, but it is a straight course so they have a bearing on him. Then they turn the boat up into the wind as best they can with no sail. Schniders is assigned the task of not taking his eyes off the American. He doesn't realise he has shattered his knee, because he stands without pain.

in Seattle. But none of this is really happening to him is it?

It is dusk, on Sunday, December 27, 1998. The Sydney To Hobart Yacht Race has just experienced the most devastating four hours in its history. One sailor is already dead, nine men are in life rafts, more than a dozen emergency beacons are remotely calling for help. The day is being prematurely brought to a close by the low, dark clouds. Campbell, wearing only dark blue polypropylene long johns, is in deep trouble.

THE NEVER-ENDING EFFORTS OF THE ATMOSPHERE to balance the excess heat of the tropics with the cold at the poles had just

Trying to balance the equation, strong winds spiralled towards the centre of this low pressure system like a draining sink, but they could not match the speed with which air was sucked out, so the spiralling accelerated as the fleet approached.

With the atmospheric plug pulled, Rob Kothe sat at his nav station for the zpm "sched" - one of two compulsory call-ins for all Sydney-Hobart yachts. His *Sword of Orion*, a serious racing yacht, was coming eighth, well back from the leaders but at the front of a pack of boats about to go through hell. His America's Cup-standard computer showed a multitude of read outs but it was the wind speed graph that had his attention.

### Meikle is acutely aware that they have to do everything right or his friend will die, but he also knows that even if they do everything correctly, he will probably die anyway.

though he knows now what is happening even though still unconscious. As Campbell floats away face down, Meikle's first thought is to inflate his life jacket and jump, but basically that would just get two people in trouble. Everybody on deck thinks the same thing but they all come to the same conclusion.

The boat is blowing away from him quickly. The storm jib has been destroyed and the motor is about to be incapacitated by the water down below. They are powerless to get back to him.

Suddenly, Campbell's head pops up and he looks at the boat about ten metres away. Then his boots and wet weather

They have a choice: to throw their EPIRB (emergency position indicating radio beacon) in so it stays near Campbell, or to keep it with the boat where nine other people might soon need it. They take the second option, reasoning that they are reasonably close to him anyway.

Slowly, however, they are losing him, seeing him for maybe two out of every 30 seconds. Amid the hyperactivity, tiny bursts of negative thought enter Meikle's head. "What is a decent length of time to stay here? Another two hours? A day? A week?" He'd remember thinking he was going to have to get on a plane to visit Campbell's parents, Wally and Sally,

smashed smack bang into this thing that man has about taking on nature.

Early Sunday, a cold front had cleared the NSW coast, but had left behind a great dome of cold air high over Bass Strait. The temperature difference between the air under the dome and the warmer air to its north caused exceptionally strong winds 10km up, reaching 200km/h - a jet stream. It hooked around a track from the west turning right and heading south at the eastern end of Bass Strait. The jet stream was sucking air up out of the lower atmosphere, faster than it could be replaced, causing the air pressure at the surface to drop.

The Bureau of Meteorology had predicted 55 knots which was about what it was blowing when the sched began. You expect a good blow like 50 in a Hobart, but it kept graphing up, down a bit then up some more, like Wall Street in the '90s, until a gust hit 78 knots (144km/h). Seventy-eight blows dogs off chains. That's why he made an unusual announcement: "We are not experiencing wind as forecast ... we are experiencing 50 to 65 knots and it's been up to 78." On the radio vessel, *Young Endeavour*, Lew Carter rebroadcast the message to the fleet, then asked skippers to consider their position under rule 7.4 - that it is

Right: Crew member Simon Clark aboard *VC Offshore Stand Aside* took this photo of crew waiting to be winched to safety by the rescue helicopter.

Opposite page: Earlier in the day, a distress flare was set off from *VC Offshore Stand Aside*. It was the first boat to request help after it rolled and its emergency beacon began signalling.





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though he knows now what is happening even though still unconscious. As Campbell floats away face down, Meikle's first thought is to inflate his life jacket and jump, but basically that would just get two people in trouble. Everybody on deck thinks the same thing but they all come to the same conclusion.

The boat is blowing away from him quickly. The storm jib has been destroyed and the motor is about to be incapacitated by the water down below. They are powerless to get back to him.

Suddenly, Campbell's head pops up and he looks at the boat about ten metres away. Then his boots and wet weather

They have a choice: to throw their EPIRB (emergency position indicating radio beacon) in so it stays near Campbell, or to keep it with the boat where nine other people might soon need it. They take the second option, reasoning that they are reasonably close to him anyway.

Slowly, however, they are losing him, seeing him for maybe two out of every 30 seconds. Amid the hyperactivity, tiny bursts of negative thought enter Meikle's head. "What is a decent length of time to stay here? Another two hours? A day? A week?" He'd remember thinking he was going to have to get on a plane to visit Campbell's parents, Wally and Sally,

smashed smack bang into this thing that man has about taking on nature.

Early Sunday, a cold front had cleared the NSW coast, but had left behind a great dome of cold air high over Bass Strait. The temperature difference between the air under the dome and the warmer air to its north caused exceptionally strong winds 10km up, reaching 200km/h - a jet stream. It hooked around a track from the west turning right and heading south at the eastern end of Bass Strait. The jet stream was sucking air up out of the lower atmosphere, faster than it could be replaced, causing the air pressure at the surface to drop.

The Bureau of Meteorology had predicted 55 knots which was about what it was blowing when the sched began. You expect a good blow like 50 in a Hobart, but it kept graphing up, down a bit then up some more, like Wall Street in the '90s, until a gust hit 78 knots (144km/h). Seventy-eight blows dogs off chains. That's why he made an unusual announcement: "We are not experiencing wind as forecast ... we are experiencing 50 to 65 knots and it's been up to 78." On the radio vessel, *Young Endeavour*, Lew Carter rebroadcast the message to the fleet, then asked skippers to consider their position under rule 7.4 - that it is

Right: Crew member Simon Clark aboard *VC Offshore Stand Aside* took this photo of crew waiting to be winched to safety by the rescue helicopter. Opposite page: Earlier in the day, a distress flare was set off from *VC Offshore Stand Aside*. It was the first boat to request help after it rolled and its emergency beacon began signalling.



dramatic pictures sent back by the ABC helicopter. After the most seriously injured crewman, Mike Marshman with missing fingers, was lifted up, a chilling call came over the radio at 5:18pm.

"Mayday, mayday, mayday - here is Winston Churchill, Winston Churchill."

The ABC pilot Garry Ticehurst answered: "Winston Churchill, Winston Churchill. ABC chopper. Go ahead with your position, over."

"Twenty miles south east of Twofold Bay, over."

"Nature of your mayday? Over."

"Affirmative. We are getting life rafts on deck. ABC chopper, we are holed. We are taking water rapidly. We can't get the motor started to start the pumps."

"Roger. How many on board?"

"Five, nine."

Ticehurst relayed the message to Canberra and after he'd done that he tried to call the yacht back, but there was no response. He didn't have enough fuel to head towards *Winston Churchill*. It was immensely frustrating, something that would stay with him because the message had come through so clearly he was sure that the boat was close, much further south than the reported position.

were so many going off the direction finder was haywire.

At AusSAR in Canberra they were writing all the emergencies up on a white board as they came to hand. There were 15 up there - the most ever - each with a high, medium or low priority. Messages were coming in second, third and fourth hand. They had one call on a yacht called "Cam Cam". After a while on the board, someone realised it was a corruption of the distress call "Pan Pan".

With night descending, AusSAR had requested help from the military, the only people with choppers equipped to rescue in these conditions at night. A frigate, the *HMAS Newcastle*, in Sydney was calling in crew to get her going.

*Kingurra*, built in 1972, had fared better in its rollover than a lot of the racier shells already rolled this afternoon. The main steering compass was gone, as was a life ring and its brackets - right in front of where John Campbell had been sitting. He most probably took them out with his head.

The skipper, Professor Peter Joubert, 73, with broken ribs, punctured lung and ruptured spleen got on the radio, miraculously dry, and started calling mayday.

Unfortunately, the reality side starts to get the better of it. "I'm in deep trouble." But with this realisation the panic subsides and every ounce of his being becomes focused on *Kingurra*.

It appears to him that the boat is circling, looking for him. He assumes that they don't know where he is; that if he can just make them see him they will motor right on up. Every time he rises to the top of a wave, he waves his arms wildly. Seeing them heading in one direction, he tries to swim an intercept course, knowing he'll never reach them, but just trying to stay close. He has a purpose. He will not despair.

He has no idea he has a broken jaw, a broken cheek and broken bones around

the spot in 15 minutes. Even with a precise GPS position and a beacon to follow, it is difficult to spot a white boat in the foaming washing machine conditions. Pilot Darryl Jones begins flying an expanding circle outward, when winchman Barry Barclay spots a flare. He makes contact with the boat and is given a compass bearing for Campbell, estimated to be about 600 metres away.

It is raining sheet rain, and where the sea isn't white, it is black. They start a search pattern with the 80 knot winds buffeting the small helicopter so the pilot is too busy battling the conditions to do much looking.

Four hundred metres from the boat, David Key, kitted up in his wetsuit and

### "We are getting life rafts on deck ... we are holed ... we can't get the motor started to start the pumps ..."

Another plane, piloted by Neil Boag, was sent to look for *Winston Churchill*.

THE WEATHER WAS QUITE PLEASANT AT Essendon airport when the Polair crew called out at 3:50pm. The crew knew it was serious when they made 205 knots. The chopper's top speed is 120 knots. That is a screaming tail wind. En route, they were chilled by the sound of Richard Winning's mayday on *Winston Churchill*.

Landing at Mallacoota to refuel at 6:11pm, they knew they were in for a tough time. They knew there were EPIRBs and distress calls going off all over the place. ABC pilot Garry Ticehurst, just arrived back from *Stand Aside*, would describe it as "communications crossfire" as messages were relayed back and forth, in and out of the chaos.

The Polair crew was still tasked to take the last four off *Stand Aside* as they took off, at 6:30pm but, shortly after, they were given orders to look for the *Winston Churchill*. They headed north towards the rather vague position given by Winning, 20 nautical miles south east of Twofold Bay. Normally, they could lock onto a beacon and have the direction finder guide them straight to it, but there

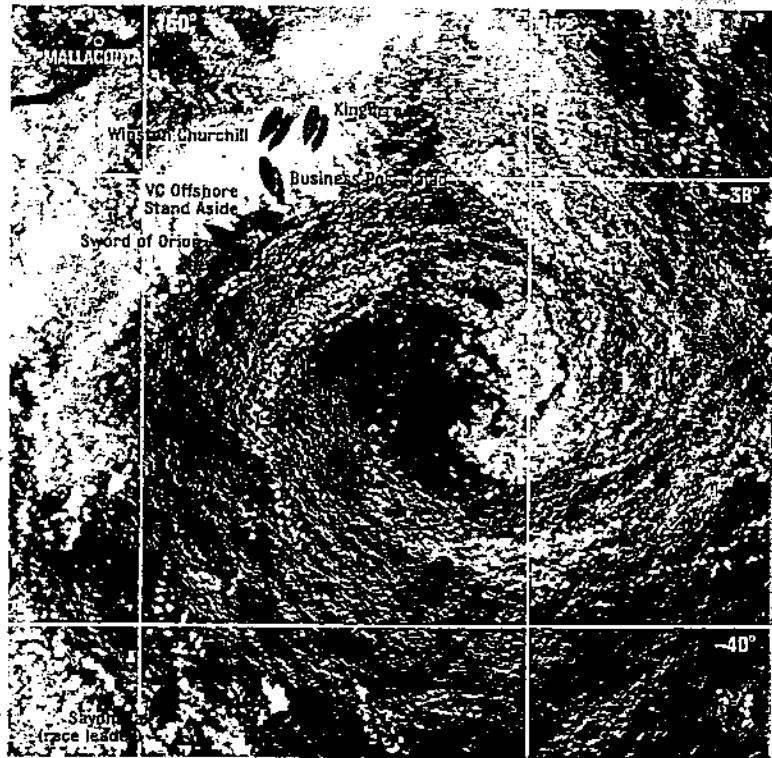
it was picked up by the *Young Endeavour* and the message went to Hobart, then on to Canberra.

The man in charge of maritime search and rescue, this shift, Rupert Lamming, went over to his aviation counterpart, Dick Jamison. "We've got a man overboard on *Kingurra*. What's the situation at the moment?"

"We can send a police helicopter now." "Go."

Until then, *Winston Churchill* had been the big priority, but because no-one was sure if they were in life rafts or still in the boat and because their position was so vague, Campbell's very specific emergency and exact location gave him precedence. Had Lamming sent the helicopter to *Winston Churchill* and it had been okay, he could never have forgiven himself.

OUT IN THE VIOLENT BLACK SEA, CAMPBELL becomes conscious about 400 to 800 metres from *Kingurra*. Wearing nothing but his long underwear, he is completely disorientated. Last thing he knew he was in full wet weather gear on a yacht. Doesn't know how he got here and he begins a panicked debate with himself. "Is this reality or is this a dream?"



Approximate position of the boats at 4pm, Sunday, overlaid on an American NDAA satellite image showing the storm cloud formation.

the eye socket. He doesn't feel cold or fatigue. He doesn't think of his life or family just: "There's the boat. Swim to it." Maybe towards the end some despair creeps in because the boat, his only means of survival, is slipping away. He sees a flare go up from the boat. "What are they doing?" He can't understand it.

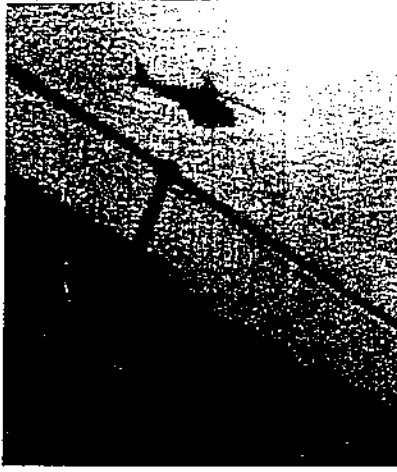
Around the same time, pilot Neil Boag has locked onto *Sword of Orion's* beacon, located the craft and been told that Glynn Charles had been washed off more than three hours earlier.

The Polair crew hears Boag's message but they've already been tasked to find *Kingurra*. Heading south and further out to sea towards it, they are once again pushed along by the gale and are over

flippers, sees orange out the right side door. It is a life ring and it looks like there is a person in it. "Got him."

As they manoeuvre towards it, a gust of wind picks the ring up and rolls it and they realise that the water spouting out the ring had looked like a person. While Barclay watches that, he sees at the top of his vision, "the top of the square", something out of place. He doesn't want to look straight up in case he loses it, so he slowly pans up and sees a pair of waving hands miraculously in the

REAR VIEW SECTION OF CHIRO DIVISION OF MARINE RESEARCH, HOBART



Right: The view from the sinking VC Offshore Stand. Below: John Campbell with his Polair rescuers, David Key, Barry Barclay and Darryl Jones.



altimeter that the water passed three metres below. A 45 metre wave.

Barclay had 60 metres of wire out. Normally if you had that out, it would sink and get wrapped around the legs and you didn't want that. It's about the thickness of a telephone cord and can cut a persons arm off, but the wind is keeping it taut like fishing line in a breeze. The chopper is in the same trough as Campbell but Key is in the trough behind so they pull him through. That's why he can't see them.

It is the most alone feeling Key has ever had. He's just about to pop his life vest. But as he bursts out of the third wave, a bloodless, blank face appears about 10 metres away. They swim towards each other. Key grabs him. They are tumbled by another wave as Key wrestles the survival ring over Campbell. He gives Barclay the thumbs up, but he still hasn't seen the helicopter. Still doesn't know for sure if they are attached. He just hangs on and hopes. It seems like an eternity but then, bang, they are out of the water.

Halfway up, Barclay can see Campbell slipping out of the harness. "We're going to lose this bloke," he says to the pilot on the intercom. Campbell's arms are slipping higher and higher, and then just as he is almost there, the winch freezes. Barclay sees his long Johns and thinks: "World's greatest wedgie coming up." He leans out against his harness and yanks him up and in, then bear hugs him down. Campbell is deliriously ecstatic. "Thank

They land short of the airfield on an oval with a couple of minutes' fuel to spare.

The three policemen get out and stand there looking at each other in silence shaking, pumped up on adrenaline, trying to come to terms with the other world they have just visited.

WHILE THE VERY WORST OF THE WIND WAS passing with only one dead, it was still howling for the blood of the wounded. The *Business Post Naiad* had been rolled and dismantled at 5.30pm. She was rolled again at 6pm, but this time she didn't come up. Water had burst the windows and the seven crew below deck were standing on the cabin roof, waist deep. The engine had spewed diesel and oil over everything, making it slippery as hell. They could hear Rob Matthews outside calling Phil Skeggs, who had been on deck. They heard no answer.

She righted herself after four or five minutes but as they went to go on deck, the skipper, Bruce Guy, slipped back into the boat and had a seizure. He died as Steve Walker tried to keep his head above the water. Those that made it on to deck found the boat barely above water and Skeggs unconscious. Someone thought they saw lights and they sent up three parachute flares and three handhelds, but got no response. Three guys worked on Skeggs for half an hour before giving up. His body was lashed to the deck. Guy's was secured into a bunk.

All the while the crew were amazed at

## Down the wire, the wind drives Key backwards from the chopper ... he doesn't know if he is still attached or whether they had to punch him off to save the craft.

same trough as the helicopter. "I got him."

He starts "conning" the pilot over and quickly does the safety checks on Key before sending him down the wire. Their jobs are interchangeable, but it is Key's turn to go down today. And as he descends Barclay sees the man go under twice, coming up both times. It looks like he doesn't have much time left.

With an instrument that measures the nearest mass below, Jones can see the sea ranging between 30 metres and three metres. He knows that one minor miscalculation will kill them all. It scares him, but he knows he has to overcome the fear to do the job. They are 65 nautical miles from land. Help is a long way away.

Down the wire, Key is holding his hand up to his exposed face as the wind stabs him with rain and drives him backwards from the chopper. The waves hadn't looked so bad from above, but they grow as he descends into them. He hits and it is freezing. A sudden inhalation. Spindrift biting into his face, he sees a

30-metre wall of water. The helicopter is nowhere to be seen or heard. The wind shrieks louder than any man-made engine. He doesn't know if he is still attached or whether they had to punch him off the wire to save the craft.

He goes up the wave and because he has a wetsuit on, he is extremely buoyant and so rolls down the face of it like a rag doll. Not in it, but on it. He hits bottom and starts to go up again, but this time he is pulled through it by the cable. He supposes the wave is 20 metres wide, but moving very quickly. He pops out disorientated and with a lot of salt water in his belly. Up and through the next wave. He still can't see or hear the helicopter.

Every chance he gets, he does a 360 but can't spot Campbell. Up above, the pilot sees a wall of water coming towards him, much higher than the other waves. He has to ask Barclay if there is enough cable to climb quickly.

"Go ahead," Barclay calls, and Jones rips it up 15 metres. He sees on the radio

you! Thank you!" He kisses and hugs them. He was in the water 40 minutes.

Key and Campbell both vomit large amounts of salt water as Campbell starts to go into shock and hypothermia. The heaters are turned on. The paramedics strip his clothes and lay down beside him - Barclay rubbing his legs and feet, Key his arms and torso.

As Jones points the chopper into the gale, the computer shows that it will take 45 minutes to get to Mallacoota and they have 80 minutes of fuel. After half an hour, however, it says they still have 30 minutes to go, now with only 50 minutes of fuel. Land is nowhere to be seen. Twenty minutes out, they hit a squall of 10 knot winds and they go virtually nowhere for ten minutes. The two numbers are converging rapidly. They discuss the possibility of ditching while trying to hide their concern from their passenger.

But they push through the squall and Jones reduces power as much as possible without trading off too much speed.

the lack of emotion. Much later, it would hit them all hard, but as the counsellors would explain, the adrenaline was blocking emotion. There was too much to be done. Another big wave would be the end of them. And so they bailed frantically from 1.30pm until the boat was half emptied at 2am.

Shortly after, three crew members of the *Winston Churchill* - Jim Lawler, Mike Bannister and John Dean - were washed off their disintegrating life raft. When the two left clinging to it came up for air, they saw two of their doomed mates way off in the white water. "John, we can't do anything for those boys," said John Stanley, a 51-year-old insurance law specialist to John Gibson, a 62-year-old lawyer, as they blew quickly away.

And like so many other cold and frightened sailors, alone on the sea this night, they waited until dawn when conditions would ease and one of the biggest rescue efforts in Australian history was being planned to take them home. ©