

STATEMENT in the matter of:  
Inquest into deaths in 1998 Sydney to  
Hobart Yacht Race

Place: FSC LAC  
Local Area Command

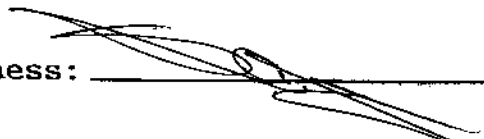
Date : 5 August 1999

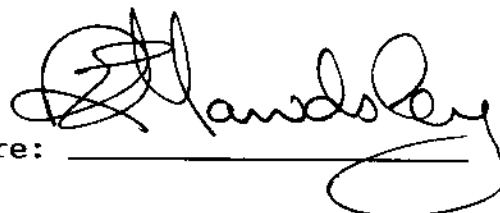
Name: Richard Edward MAWDSLEY  
Address: Far South Coast Local Area Command Tel. No.: (02)44720000  
Occupation: Inspector of Police STATES:-

1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence which I would be prepared, if necessary, to give in court as a witness. The statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable for prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

2. I am 45 years of age.

3. About 6.10am on Monday, 28 December, 1998 I had a conversation with the Commander for Far South Coast Local Area Police Command, Superintendent John AMBLER at Batemans Bay Police Station. He told me that he had received several telephone calls during the night from Eden Police informing him of severe weather and ocean conditions leading to many yachts in the Sydney to Hobart race being damaged and crews needing to be rescued. As a result of our discussions I drove to Eden Police Station, arriving about 10.50am that date and spoke to the police officer on duty, Senior Constable Nick MARKULIN. He provided me with a copy of the log recorded overnight (copy attached to my statement 'A'), with regard to activities involving distressed yachts and crew in the Sydney to Hobart Race. He also provided an oral briefing of events as known at that stage including his belief that approximately 42 yachts were moored in Eden Harbour having sought refuge from the severe conditions.

Witness: 

Signature: 

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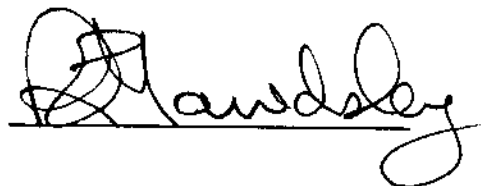
4. I formed the opinion that due to the large number of telephone calls and people at Eden Police Station there was a need to establish an operations centre away from the Police Station. I then proceeded to make telephone calls to a number of people to discuss requirements in regard to establishing such a centre. (Amongst these people were: the District Emergency Management Officer, (DEMO), Tony CALLAN; Sydney Water Police Co-ordinator Sergeant Larry MALONE; Department of Community Services, (DOCS), Senior Field Officer David SHEPHERD; Doug MEIN from Bega Valley Shire). I also discussed the situation with Mr. Greg Halls, member of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia (CYCA), in person at the Police Station and invited him to be present and assist at the operations centre once established.

5. I then spoke by telephone to Sergeant Mark WELSBY from Bega Police Station who was at Merimbula Airport where air rescue craft were based. He informed me that a large number of media people were present along with general spectators. I tasked him with gaining assistance of State Emergency Service personnel to establish a perimeter at the airport, restricting access of media and other people not directly involved in rescue. I also asked him to establish a forward post with other police at the airport in order to establish status of the rescue attempts, sightings of and positions for distressed yachts, list of persons rescued and other relevant information.

6. About 1pm on 28 December, 1998 I spoke to Sergeant Greg WILSON, (Bega Highway Patrol), and a number of State Emergency Service personnel at Eden Police Station. I requested them to attempt to begin the process of Disaster Victim Registration (DVR)

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



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at Eden Harbour and Pambula Hospital. This task, whilst attempted, eventually proved to be futile in terms of accuracy. Whilst records at Pambula Hospital were readily available, many crews were not with the yachts in the harbour and indeed Sergeant Wilson informed me he had discovered some crew members had left Eden and returned home, whilst some yachts were believed to have already left the harbour and rejoined the race without notification to the Volunteer Coastal Patrol.

7. About 1.35pm I spoke to Ms. Cath SHANDS, Health Service Manager at Pambula Hospital, by telephone. I inquired whether the hospital had sufficient resources to cope with injured at this stage. She informed me that whilst they had been busy throughout the night and morning treating minor through to serious wounds suffered by yacht crew members, sufficient staff and other resources were available. She told me that she had arranged for extra medications to be supplied from Bega Hospital and dry clothing for crew members had also been arranged.

8. After several unsuccessful attempts were made by me and other police from Eden to contact the Eden Harbour Master, Max SAUNDERS, he was eventually spoken to by me in the yard of his house in Eden. I requested the use of the Public Works Office block at Eden wharf, where his office is located, as an operations centre. He suggested we contact Glen VARDY, public works engineer, who had control of the main part of the building. Arrangements were subsequently made with Mr. Vardy to meet us at the building.

9. About 3pm I spoke in person to Superintendent Ambler, the Commander for the Far South Coast Local Area Command, at Eden

Witness: 

Signature: 

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Police Station and briefed him on events. About 3.30pm Superintendent Ambler and myself established an operations centre at the Public Works building in Eden with assistance from Mr. VARDY. Senior Constable Craig BAKER from Eden Police Station was also at the operations centre and he continued recording the log of events (copy attached to my statement 'B'). Also at the operations centre assisting were, Mr. Greg HALLS on behalf of CYCA and Mr. David SHEPHERD (DOCS). About 3.45pm that date Senior Constable David UPSTON from Police Launch Nemesis attended the operations centre and I provided an oral briefing to him on events. Also present was Sergeant BUCKLEY from Nemesis, who later assisted at the operations centre. Sergeant Buckley, Senior Constable Upston, Superintendent Ambler and myself then discussed the recovery of the yacht Business Post Naiad by launch Nemesis. It was agreed that if conditions allowed, an attempt would be made early the next morning to recover the yacht and two deceased crew believed to be on board.

10. About 10pm that evening I left the operations centre for rest. I returned to the operations centre about 4.30am the next morning, Tuesday, 29 December, 1998 and Superintendent Ambler briefed me on events. About 6am that day Superintendent Ambler left the operations centre for rest and returned about 9.40am. The attached log ('B') outlines the significant events throughout that day. About 4.10pm that day I prepared a situation report on behalf of the Commander, Superintendent Ambler and it was transmitted to the Police Commander, South Eastern Region by facsimile machine (copy attached 'C'). At 5pm that day the operations centre was terminated.

Witness: Signature: 

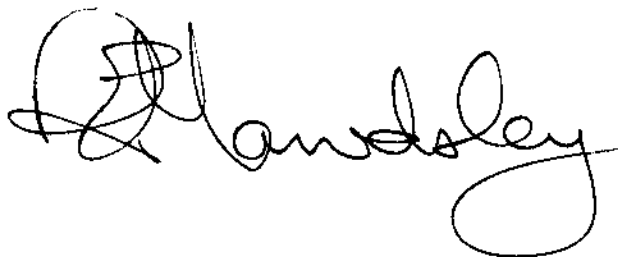
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11. About 9am on Wednesday, 30 December, 1998 I was at Eden Police Station when a radio message was received from Police Launch Nemesis to advise it was in Eden harbour with the Yacht Business Post Niaid in tow. Shortly after I attended the Eden Court where a de-briefing was chaired by Tony CALLAN, DEMO. A copy of the minutes from that de-briefing is attached to my statement ('D'). I departed Eden later in the afternoon and returned to Batemans Bay.

12. Since the 30 December, 1998 I have been in regular contact with Detective Senior Constable GRAY and have been kept abreast of the course of his and Senior Constable UPSTON's investigations for this inquest.



Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

NSW POLICE - CONFIDENTIALRUNNING SHEETRESCUE OPERATION FOR VESSELS INVOLVED  
IN THE SYDNEY TO HOBART YACHT RACE.

POLICE: Sergeant TILLMAN  
Senior Constable ROSS  
Senior Constable BAKER (recalled @10.30pm)

27.12.98:

3.30PM Eden Police receive 'Pan Pan' distress call from Eden Coastal Patrol. This call has come from an unknown vessel in the vicinity of Cape Howell. Information was received that an EPIRB had been accidentally dropped and the incident was a false alarm.

4.40PM Information gathered from Mallacoota Police that the Yacht 'Jaguar', a 50 to 70ft Maxie Yacht with 17 persons on board had called Pan Pan and was in distress. Their position was about 60nm south east of Eden at position 37.51, 150.19.

5PM Confirmed 'Jaguar' is in distress. Yacht is immobile and has lost control of rudder and prop due to a rope tangled under the vessel.

5.10PM Attended Lochie MARSHALLS (Experienced Local Fishing fleet owner) Organisations made through water Police to have the fishing vessel 'Moira Elizabeth' who was fishing near Cape Howell to attend to the rescue of 'Jaguar'. The vessels were 22 nm apart with an expected eta of 4 hours expected. The 'Moira Elizabeth' is an 85ft Russian steel hulled vessel.

6PM At Eden Coastal Patrol. Yacht 'Winston Churchill' positioned at 37.46, 150.33, is reported to have capsized and the crew are in a life raft. No communication has been received from that vessel since 1500 hrs. Telstra race control informs Police that the vessel 'Young Endeavour' is making way to assist 'Winston Churchill'.

7.10PM At Eden Station. Updated eta for the rescue of 'Jaguar' is 8.10pm.

7.10PM Yacht 'Secret Mens Bussiness' has a crew member with a fractured leg. ETA to Eden @2200 hrs. Ambulance from Eden and Pambula Hospital contacted and placed on Stand by.

- 8.40PM Yacht 'Ruff n Tumble' enquired about a tow to Eden. He informed Coastal Patrol that his crew were safe and well. He has no motor but is making way under sail. When he was informed that he would have to pay for the tow he changed his mind and decided to anchor in Eden and did not require the tow. His position is 37.07, 150.04. 8 crew on Board.
- 9.15PM Rescue Vessel 'Moira Elizabeth' is in the area where 'Jaguar' was. The vessel cannot be located. A search pattern is commenced.
- 9.20PM A concerned member of the fleet attends the station and inquires in regards to the condition and position of yacht 'Bussiness Post Niad'. Information received via Coastal Patrol and Water Police that the vessel is at 37.52, 150.31 and is making way to Eden. AUSMAR is monitoring the vessels progress.
- 10PM Yacht 'Secret Mens Bussiness' arrived at Eden Wharf and one male crew is conveyed to Pambula Hospital via Ambulance for treatment of a fractured leg.
- 10.10PM Information received from Eden Coastal Patrol that the yacht 'Minpinta' (aka Me and Center - by Coastal Patrol) stated they were two miles out of Eden and required towing. The GPS co ordinates given as 36.57, 150.33. This position is 40 miles north east of Twofold Bay, Eden. After the yacht was requested to use flares for searching vessels it was accertained the position given was correct and the vessel was 40nm to sea. The yacht was located by the yacht 'Alafora and the commercial vessel 'Union Rotooma'. The yacht 'Minpinta' was then reported to be taking water up to the floor boards and the crew were in a dangerous position.
- 11.26PM Authorisation was given by C/Insp WELLINGS of Sydney Water Police to have the fishing vessel 'Josephine Jean' who was out at sea, attend the 'Minpinta' and rescue the crew and yacht. The 'Josephine Jean is 24nm from the 'Minpinta' at this time.
- 12.30AM The crew of 'Minpinta' report to the Coastal Patrol that their bilge pump has failed and they fear they cannot keep the vessel afloat. The 'Josephine Jean' still about 1.5 hrs away. The commercial vessel 'Union Rotooma' stays with the disabled yacht and uses search lights to assist crew.

- 2.05AM 'Josephine Jean' arrives at the 'Minpinta' at position 37.56, 150.37.
- 2.10AM Inquiries made with Water Police as to the whereabouts of 'Business Post Niad'. The location of this vessel could not be confirmed by AUSMAR.
- 2.30AM Greg HALLS from the CYCA arrives at Eden Police Station to act as a liason Officer on behalf of race officials.
- 2.45AM 'Moira Elizabeth continues search for 'Jaguar'.
- 3.05AM 'Josephine Jean' having difficulties hooking up with 'Minpinta' due to weather conditions.
- 3.20AM 'Josephine Jean' has 'Minpinta' in tow and on way to Eden. Current position 36.56, 150.42.
- 3.25AM Sutreps prepared.
- 3.45AM Ambulance contact Police. The yacht 'Renegade' is at an unknown location in the Eden area and requires urgent medical assistance for a crew member who has suffered an emersion. One other crew member also requires medical attention. Approval is given for the use of Police Launch Eden to commence a search of Twofold Bay for the vessel with Ambulance Officer on Board.
- 3.55AM Seahawk helicopter will be attending Pambula Hospital at 4.30am with three crew members on board from the yacht 'Sword of Orion'.
- 3.56AM Yacht 'Hawk 5' has 2 person injured on board has no sail or motor power. They are making way to Eden and Approval from Water Police to tow if required is granted.
- 4.00AM Senior Constable ROSS and O'BRIEN with ambulance officers in Police Launch Eden commence Saerch of Twofold Bay for the yacht 'Renegade'. Senior Constables BAKER and MARKULIN continue co ordination from Eden Station.
- 4.20AM 'Josphine Jean' experiencing difficulties with towing 'Minpinta'. 'Jaguar' and 'the rescue vessel 'Moira Elizabeth' are drifting together and will reassess the situation at daylight.
- 4.40AM Seahawk Helicopter arrives at Merimbula Airport with the crew from 'Sword of Orion'. Ambulance contacted and are in attendance.



4./

- 4.55AM 'Josephine Jean' and 'Minpinta' are back in tow. Water Police constantly updated and constant communication with rescue vessel maintained. The location of the 'Moiria Elizabeth' and the 'Jaguar' is given as 37.16, 150.45.
- 4.55AM Senior Constable O'BRIEN is relieved of his duties on Launch Eden by Senior Constable MARKULIN. One Ambulance Officer also has to attend to other duties. Launch Eden continues search for the yacht 'Renegade'.
- 5.20AM Launch Eden locates 'Renegade' off Aslings Beach, Eden. 3 Persons taken on board 2 are injured. 1 male person @53 old has suffered an emersion for over 2 minutes due to the vessel rolling over. The male suffered loss of heart beat and his safety harness was wrapped around his neck which caused him to stop breathing. CPR was performed by crew who successfully resusitated him. The crew members were taken to the wharf and conveyed to Pambula Hospital by Ambulance.
- 5.55AM 'Jaguar' taken into tow by 'Moria Elizabeth' with all crew on board. Same co ordinates as the position at 4.55am.
- 6.15AM Supt AMBLER briefed.
- 6.35AM The crew of 'Minpinta' is taken aboard the 'Josephine Jean'. The 'Minpinta' is continueing to take on water.
- 6.35AM Launch Eden makes a patrol of Twofold Bay and compiles a list of every vessel competing in the race who is in Eden for AUSMAR.
- 7.10AM ETA of the 'Moiria Elizabeth' is 1pm. ETA of the 'Josephine Jean' is after 1pm.
- 7.20AM Supt AMBLER is breifed by Sergeant TILLMAN.
- 7.30AM Launch Eden returns to wharf after completing required duties.
- 7.50AM Information received from Coastal Patrol that the yacht 'Minpinta' has broken free during tow and the 'Jospehine Jean' cannot complete a salvage of the vessel. The vessel is abandoned at position 36.54, 150.42 drifting n/ne at 1 to 1.5 knots.
- 8AM Sergeant TILLMAN, Senior Constables ROSS, BAKER and MARKULIN are stood down from duties. Senior Constable Nick MARKULIN continues with the co ordination.

5./

During the course of this evening Supervisors at Warrilla Radio, Water Police and the Far South Coast LAC were constantly kept updated in regards to the situation. Many local agencies and persons were also called upon to assist us in our duties. COPS Event Number E 7754784 relates to this operation.

Running sheets prepared by Senior Constable ROSS of Eden Police.



B.J. ROSS  
Senior Constable  
Eden Police Station  
28 December 1998.

28/12/98

8

- 8.55am Yacht "Business Post Nalad" 6 crew winched to chopper. 2 DECEASED persons on board vessel.
- 9.02am Water Police notified regarding "Business Post Nalad". Sgt MALONE informed.
- 9.10am Merimbula Police tasked via telephone to attend Merimbula Airport and speak with Survivors of yacht "Business Post Nalad"
- 9.56am Water Police updated – Sgt MALONE. "Business Post Nalad" afloat with 2 DECEASED.
- 10.12am Detectives to be recalled by S/Con McGOVERN at Bega Police Station
- 10.50am Inspector MAWDSLEY briefed of present position by S/Con N. MARKULIN.
- 12.40pm Trawler "Moir Elizabeth" towing yacht "Jaguar" docked at Eden. Crew all fine.
- 12.50pm S.E.S briefed at Eden Station regarding D.V.R. Taskings then given regarding same at Eden and Pambula Hospital.
- 1.00pm Sgt WILSON to Eden Wharf regarding D.V.R – Crews of "Jaguar and Minpinta"
- 1.12pm Yacht "Solo Challenger" disabled. No motor or sail. 5 persons on board. Nil person injured. Position 37.21 S , 150.43E
- 1.18pm Attempts made to contact Tony MARSHALL at AUSSAR.
- 1.40pm Trawler "Josephine Jean" towing yacht "Jaguar" docked at Eden. Minor injuries to Crew.
- 1.53pm Naval vessel "Newcastle" to rescue disabled yacht "Solo Challenger". AUSSAR coordinating rescue.
- 2.00pm Chamber Magistrate Paul HARE contacted and requested by Police to utilise Eden Court House as operation centre. Permission granted.
- Sam HUGHES – Race Control (CYCA) Fax No: 02 62241628
- 2.50pm Police vessel "Launch Nemesis" arrives at Eden Wharf and refuelling. Can be Contacted on mobile telephone 0414 692543.
- 3.00pm Superintendent AMBLER briefed at Eden Station by Duty Officer MAWDSLEY.
- 3.20pm Relocate Operation Centre from Eden Station to Public Works offices at Eden Wharf.
- 3.30pm Operation Centre established at Public Works Offices
- 3.40pm John WYMAN (Government Contractor) appraised by telephone of retrieval of Deceased persons from the yacht "Business Post Nalad"

- 3.45pm S/Con UPTON from Launch NEMESIS reported at Operation Centre. Briefed on present position by Duty Officer MAWDSLEY.
- 4.00pm Sergeant Larry MALONE Sydney Water Police Co-ordinator. Requested to FAX latest C.Y.C.A list of yacht and known whereabouts. Further more gave vessel "Business Post Nalad" latest AUSSAR position as at 2.15pm as being 45 nm S.E of Eden drifting due north. LONG. & LAT. 37.17 S and 150.44 E  
Beacon 9052 still activated.
- Incoming from Sgt WELSBY Forward Command at Merimbula Airport.  
Arranging for Sgt BOX from Bega Station to relieve him at Airport.
- 4.25pm From Sgt WELSBY information regarding man over board from the yacht "Sword of Orion" Opinion of rescue crews is little chance of recovery. Expanding Search for yacht "Winston Churchill" if not found by night fall, search will be scaled up on the A.M on the 29/12/98.
- 4.30pm Region Commander Mr JOHNSON briefed by telephone by LAC Commander Mr AMBLER.
- 4.35pm Sgt WELSBY reports that a sighting of a life raft. 1 person seen on board. Navy helicopter dispatched to area of sighting. Unknown how many persons on board raft or their condition.
- 5.05pm Duty Officer at Sydney Steve LIVERSIDGE rang for update. Stated Deputy State Coroner is ringing State Coroner at Victoria to claim jurisdiction for any Deaths on vessels which may occur in Victoria waters.
- 5.30pm Sgt WELSBY relieved by Sgt BOX at Forward Command post at Merimbula airport.
- 5.35pm From Ross DOBBIN at Eden Coastal Patrol yacht "Kingara" ETA to Eden Port will be around 0300 hrs on the 29/12/98. They will call when get closer to Eden they will need to be towed into Port by Launch NEMESIS. Has 3 persons injured 1 suffering rib and lung, 1 head injury and 1 with knee injury.
- 5.40pm From Sgt BOX at Merimbula Airport. Helicopter that was dispatched to life raft has returned due to low fuel. Another helicopter has been dispatched.
- 5.45pm Dave Shepherd from DOCS informed Hospital of ETA of injured crew from yacht "KINGARA"
- Further information from C.Y.C.A as at 1430 hrs yacht "Kingara" has radio Problems. Vessel has rolled over during evening. Co-ordinates:  
37.07 S , 151.10 E.
- 6.00pm From Sgt BOX 4 persons on liferaft retrieved by helicopter believed to be from yacht "Winston Churchill" . Persons suffering from hypothermia. Pambula Hospital notified by Sgt BOX.
- 6.10pm Region Commander JOHNSON briefed by LAC Commander AMBLER.

- 6.15pm Trawler "RUEBECON" was dispatched from Eden at request of insurance company of yacht "Solo Challenger" to retrieve yacht and return to Eden port.
- 7.00pm From Sgt MALONE at Sydney Water Police. Information from AUSSAR is that 2 or 3 persons have been picked up off the yacht "Solo Challenger". 5 or more crew members are still on board. HMAS Newcastle making way to yacht location ETA 0100 hrs 29/12/98.  
4 persons have been picked up off liferaft which belonged to yacht "Winston Churchill" by helicopter. Second life raft separated during the night further Search will be conducted.  
Sgt BOX returns from Forward Command post at Merimbula Airport. Briefing To LAC Commander and Duty Officer. In formation from AUSSAR Co-ordinator. 4 survivors being airlifted from life raft to Mallacoota. No Hospitalisation required. Fate of other 5 crew members from the yacht "Winston Churchill" unknown.
- 7.25pm Ambulance Control at Goulburn informed regarding arrival of yacht "KINGARA" at 0300 hrs at Eden wharf. Request made to have Ambulance in attendance.
- 7.45pm Brian HORNER from Greenseas Cannery contacted regarding mooring of yacht "Business Post Nalad" upon retrieval by Launch NEMESIS. Permission granted to Sgt TILLMAN.
- 7.50pm Bainsdale Police contacted and requested to take statements from survivors from the yacht "Winston Churchill".  
  
Arthur HEATHER for AUSSAR coordinator at Merimbula Airport. Has 17 aircraft organised for tomorrow morning. Briefing will be at 5am for search to commence at 6am . Will concentrate search efforts on the area where 4 persons rescued from liferaft from yacht "Winston Churchill". Informed to contact Operation centre and liase with Police.
- 8.07pm Sgt Richard MOSTARD from Victorian Water Police is going to take statements from 4 survivors on the AM of the 29/12/98. Request crew information and yacht description. Contact No: 03 51580280.  
FAX No: 03 51580576.
- 8.10pm From Greg HALL (CYCA Liaison Officer) the following yachts "Veto" and "Wide Load" have missed two previous radio position schedules and and a procedure prescribed in the sailing instructions for the said vessels to fire flares at 2230 hrs with all other yacht maintaining lookout. And report to radio relay vessel.
- 8.40pm From Acting Inspector GOOD at AUSSAR information regarding search area for AM on the 29/12/98 and information regarding the possible location of where yacht "Winston Churchill" went down.  
(12 nm east of Green Cape) (Search area 4 to 5nm from Cape Howell south 10nm out to 100nm)  
AUSSAR request that they be notified when Launch NEMESIS leave Eden Port to retrieve "Business Port Nalad". ( Crew taken off yacht 43nm east of

Green Cape possible bearings 37.2239 S, 150.4201 E.

- 8.50pm From Eden Coastal Patrol yacht "KICK A TIN ALONG" presently under sail, no motor. 9 crew on board no persons injured however crew suffering motion sickness. Present position 25nm N.E of Eden. Bearing: 36.57 S, 150.21 E. May possibly require a tow upon reaching Eden
- 9.10pm From Eden Coastal Patrol update on ETA of yacht "KINGARA" is now at 0100 hrs on the 29/12/98 at Eden. Will still require an Ambulance to attend to treat injured.
- 9.25pm Ambulance control Goulburn informed of updated ETA of yacht "KINGARA" now at 0100 hrs on 29/12/98
- 9.45pm Liferaft located after sighting flares 70nm from Eden by RAAF aircraft
- 9.50pm Ambulance control Goulburn informed regarding possible 5 survivors from liferaft from yacht "Winston Churchill".
- 9.55pm Pambula Hospital informed of possible survivors.
- 10.00pm Arthur Heather AUSSAR coordinator at Merimbula Airport spoken to verify report of liferaft located by aircraft. HEATHER confirmed that liferaft had been located after sighting of distress flare and a Seahawk helicopter was scene. With one Seahawk helicopter standing by to assist if necessary.
- 10.15pm From S/Con MILTON Forward Command at Merimbula Airport. Seahawk helicopter at location of liferaft. 2 person winched aboard. Unknown if any other persons are on board liferaft. Telephone No: 64953678. Mobile: 018 604183.
- 10.40pm From S/Con MILTON at Forward Command confirmation the 2 survivors in liferaft alive and in various states of health. 2 survivors winched on board Seahawk helicopter and being returned to Merimbula airport due to gear failure On helicopter. Another Seahawk helicopter dispatched to liferaft to check raft For other survivors.
- 10.50pm Outwards to Coastal Patrol. Request made to contact yachts "KINGARA" and "KICK A TIN ALONG" and establish present position and ETA to Eden.
- 11.05pm From Detective STEVENSON at Forward Control. Seahawk helicopter had landed 2 survivors in very poor health. Information 3 other survivors which had been in the raft had fallen from it at about 0500 hrs on the 28/12/98. Information from pilots of Seahawk helicopters.
- 11.10pm From Greg HALL CYCA Liaison Officer. Yacht "Wide Load" made position report to radio vessel Young Endeavour. Flare operation carried out without success. The matter is now being handed over to AUSSAR.
- 11.12pm From Coastal Patrol no response to calls to yachts "Kingara" and yacht "Kick a tin along"

- 11.22pm From Coastal Patrol yacht "Bin Rouge" had left Eden Port at PM on the 28/12/98 to continue in race. The yacht has returned to Eden Port and has now withdrawn.
- 11.40pm From Duty Officer in Sydney Brian GATELY requiring update on present position. Also requires SITREP prior to 4am. FAX No: 02 92654378.
- 11.45pm S/Con MILTON at Forward Command Merimbula they believe the 3 missing yachts men have been in water since either 2.30am or 5.00am this date. Each is wearing a life jacket but only one fitted with strobe light. Search helicopter is going to continue searching the general area for at Least another couple of hours.
- 11.48pm From Detective GRAY 2 survivors at Pambula Hospital. Names: John STANLEY DOB: 17/5/47, John GIBSON DOB: 20/2/34.
- 11.55pm From Detective STEVENSON names of crew members washed out of liferaft as follows:  
Michael BANNISTER, John DEAN, James LAWLER.

DATE: TUESDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 1998

- 12.05am From Coastal Patrol yacht "Kingara" still travelling under sail. ETA to Eden Port is 1 and half hours. Will make his own way to wharf will call for help If required. Advised to inform "Kingara" to utilise wharf of the CAT BALOU.
- 12.10am Sam HUGHES at Race Headquarters informed of names of 2 survivors and their condition. Informed of names of 3 missing crew members.  
Phone: 03 62241628. Mobile No: 018 622723
- 0135am From Coastal Patrol yacht "New Horizan" have four (4) injured on board due in about 0430hrs has mobile 0411555163 has no power etc requires assistance to berth and ambo.
- 0140am Ambulance informed.
- 0235am yacht kingara sighted in harbour ambulance attending and Launch Eden assisting. Hospital informed. Coastal Patrol informed.
- 0310am Arthur Heather AusSAR informed re Kingara. Sea King has returned without locating missing persons from Winston Churchill. Anticipate approx 30 aircraft undertaking search first light AM this date.
- 0355am Contact made with New Horizan via mobile phone, position 37.09 – 149.58 Launch Eden attending to expedite their arrival due to injured on board.
- 0400am Coastal Patrol informed as race control inquiring.
- 0430am From Coastal Patrol have we any info re yacht Morning Tide (Negative) and race control would like an update of what vessels in harbour. (They will have to wait for daylight and until we can arrange)

0435am From Coastal Patrol Morning Tide off Eden and heading back to Sydney.

0450am Launch Eden arrives Eden Harbour with yacht New Horizan.

0505am Inquiry re yacht Miintinta which was being towed by trawler Josephine Jean crew have been taken off. Any knowledge of whereabouts (Neg)  
Yacht 97 being towed into Eden by trawler Mark M. Not known if anyone Injured.

0520am Launch Eden at wharf with injured persons from New Horizan. Four injured by ambulance to Pambula Hospital.

0525am Sgt Bell contacts and confirms search underway for missing persons from Winston Churchill.

0530am Launch Nemesis departs to locate yacht Business Post Naiad.

0555am State Coroner briefed. Confirmed that investigations into the three confirmed deceased and the three missing from Winston Churchill will be investigated by Bega Dets – Det Sen Cst S. Grey in charge and PC Sen Cst Stevenson.

0600am Inspector Mawdsley relieved Superintendent Ambler at Operations Centre

0615am From Eden Coastal Patrol – Yacht '97 just entered being towed by trawler Mark M.

0640am From Coastal Patrol – Launch Nemesis location is 3707 and 15011

0706am From Launch NEMESIS location 37.08.2 S, 150 21 .14 E at 14 knots

0710am From Detective GRAY now at Merimbula Police Station be at Eden in approximately 1 hour.

0730am From Christopher NEILSEN at AUSSAR Canberra body in water sighted wearing red life jacket with name “Mike”. Request to contact survivors from yacht “Winston Churchill” and ascertain if description is familiar.

0736am Position from Launch NEMESIS 37.09 S , 150.28.2 E at 14knots 085 course Swell 1 to 1 and half metres.

0745am Pambula Hospital contacted and ascertained from survivor John STANLEY not aware of red life jacket believed all bright yellow with no personal names.

0750am NEILSEN at AUSSAR contacted by MAWDSLEY information from the Hospital relayed. Also ascertained from him that yacht “Veto” still missing With 5 persons on board. Search includes for this vessel. Also yacht “Solo Globe Challenger” has been located and HMAS Newcastle expected to make contact 1030 hrs this date.



0755am From S/Con O'NEIL from Narooma Police Station. Yacht "Loki" moored at Narooma after turning back from Bass Straight yesterday injured crew member taken by Ambulance to Narooma Hospital with suspected broken leg. Details being entered on COPS.

0800am From Sgt BELL at Forward Command at Merimbula body of deceased retrieved from water being returned to airport. Informed to contact Government contractor and Operations Centre would alert Detectives.

0805am Dave SHEPHERD from DOCS notified Pambula Hospital of deceased.

0815am From Commander of Water Police Gordon WELLINGS discussions regarding investigation for Coroner. Agreed a joint investigation with Water Police and FSC LAC Investigators with a Water Police Coordinator to be appointed. Requires update of investigation to date Later this date (29/12/98)

0830am From Race Control Hobart – Sam Hughes requested information of the whereabouts of the survivors of yacht "Winston Churchill" . Informed that 1 survivor is at Pambula Hospital, 1 other at Canberra Hospital. Location of other survivors unknown. Supplied with telephone number Pambula Hospital.

0830am Location of Launch NEMESIS 37.12 S, 150.46 E .

0845am 4 survivors from yacht "Business Post Niad" attended Operations Centre letters of authority obtained from each regarding the retrieval of personal property. Property to be given to Drew MURRAY.

0900am From Sgt MALONE at Water Police the yacht "Veto" located safe and travelling under dury rig. Location unknown at this stage.

0903am From Detective N. GREY information from Arthur Heather at Merimbula Airport a second deceased has been located and will be brought back to Merimbula by helicopter.

0910am Pambula Hospital notified by DO MAWDSLEY another deceased located.

0915am From Sgt MALONE Water Police informed Sgt BUCKLEY that one of the deceased has been identified as Michael BANNISTER.

0916am Scientific Officer Phil DANIELS from Queanbeyan arrives at Operations Centre and is briefed by DO MAWDSLEY and Sgt BUCKLEY.

0930am From Detective GRAY at Forward Command Merimbula. Helicopters have confirmed 2 deceased persons on board. Another 3<sup>rd</sup> deceased has possibly been sighted and helicopter has been dispatched to confirm. 2 deceased have been confirmed from the yacht "Winston Churchill".

0945am Request made to S/Con EVANS at Bega Station to contact the Local Coroner and have the Coroner contact the Operations Centre.

0945am Location for Launch NEMESIS 37.15.1 S, 151.07.2 E about 30nm from the yacht "Business Post Niad" ETA about 2 and quarter hours.

0950am From S/Con EVANS Coroner has been informed and will contact Operations Centre.

1005am Region Commander Mr JOHNSON briefed by LAC Commander Mr AMBLER.

1020am Coroner Paul HARE contacts Operation Centre and is briefed by LAC Commander Mr AMBLER.

1030am From Sam HUGHES Race Control request that as soon as the deceased are POSITIVELY identify could he be notified on his mobile phone No: 018 622723.

1035am S/Con GRAY contacted at Forward Command and requested when I.D has been made that he inform Operations Centre so as Race Control can be notified.

1037am Location of Launch NEMESIS 37.14.4 S, 151.25.1 E 17 miles from yacht "Business Post Niad" travelling at 17 to 18 knots. Probably be at yacht within 1 to 2 hours.

1105am From Dectective N GREY at Pambula Hospital the 2 deceased are believed to be that of Michael BANNISTER and James LAWLER and therefore the 3<sup>rd</sup> that has not yet been found would be John DEAN.

1115am To Sgt Herb SMITH at South Eastern Region unconfirmed ID of the 2 bodies recovered this morning Michael BANNISTER and James LAWLER for the information of the Regional Commander.

1120am Information from Sam HUGHES at Race Control. Contact numbers for family members of deceased and missing persons from yacht "Winston Churchill" are as follows:  
 Dean Family: Brother Warwick DEAN – Mobile 0419 632066  
 With victims wife and are at Richard WINNINGS  
 Residence. Phone: 02 93278052.

Bannister Family: Sister Dianne is with father  
 Phone No: 02 93375194

Lawler Family: Brother Bob Lawler Ph: 02 99053083  
 Wife with daughter and son in law Ph: 02 94500386.

1141am From Detective GRAY ringing Government Medical Officer to arrange plan for Post Mortem of all deceased persons will advise Operation Centre

1202pm DEMO Tony Callan spoken to re organisation of Debrief Eden Court House 9am Wednesday 30/12/98.

identified.

- 1440pm Nowra Funerals government contractors (Long haulage) contacted at Nowra and is leaving now to collect 2 deceased
- 1442pm From Dee Why Police S/Con Jackie HENDERSON is friends of the BANNISTER family and has requested that she be the one to deliver the message.
- 1455pm From Sgt BELL at Forward Command Merimbula Airport rang reporting fixed wing planes returning to base. Directed to remain there until decision made with regards to continuation of search.
- 1535pm From S/Con JURY after hours contact number for Greenseas Cannery for access to wharf. Alan BELSHAW Ph: 64961934 Mobile: 041 18611185.
- 1600pm Arthur Heather contacted by Detective GRAY regarding retrieval of life raft belong to survivors of "Winston Churchill" this is unable to be done. However Sea Hawk helicopter has located a life harness and retrieved it. Sgt BELL at Forward Command informed of this and instructed to take possession of harness and convey to Merimbula Police Station.
- Detective WOODS at Queanbeyan requested to attend Canberra Hospital And inform the survivor of "Winston Churchill" John GIBSON that 2 other crew members being BANNISTER and LAWLER have been located Deceased. Detective WOODS requested also to interview GIBSON by way Of ERISP.
- 1605pm Andrea ROGERS contacted at CIB Hobart to assist in obtaining tapes and logs off communication vessels "Young Endeavour" through Commodore of CYCA Hugo VAN KRETSCHMAR.
- 1610pm Trevor KOSS present with the LAWLER family. Enquiring with regards to movements of the deceased James LAWLER body.
- 1615pm Kass MARSHALL attended Operation Centre. Stated that she had received a call from the trawler "Huon Petrol" via mobile phone that the vessel had allegedly trawled up two bodies. Locky MARSHALL owner of vessel contacted and requested that he contact crew of vessel and verify same.
- 1630pm From Arthur HEATHER AUSSAR controller at Merimbula Airport is that they are standing down.
- 1632pm Lockie MARSHALL attends Operation Centre and confirmed that his crew from trawler "Huon Petrol" did not make call would appear to be hoax.
- 1635pm From S/Con HENDERSON at Dee Why Police Station is that BANNISTER family have been informed of death of Michael BANNISTER

1645pm

From Queanbeyan Police is that survivor at Canberra Hospital John GIBSON informed of deaths of crew members BANNISTER and LAWLER. GIBSON unable to be interview due to health and is being transferred to Royal North Shore Hospital this date.

5pm  
(1700)

Ops Centre closed down. Search suspended for missing 2 indefinitely

POLICE CONFIDENTIAL

MEDIA STATUS : FOR PRESS

\*\*\*\*\*NOTE: NAMES OF DECEASED NOT TO BE RELEASED\*\*\*\*\*

SOUTH EASTERN REGION - SITUATION REPORT

INITIATING LOC: EDEN POLICE STATION REF: 98/09  
 DISTRICT: FAR SOUTH COAST L.A.C.  
 SITREP NO: 5 4.10 PM, 29 DECEMBER, 1998

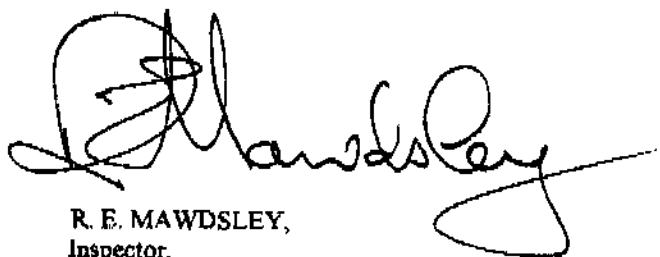
ISSUE: Rescue of persons involved in the 1998 Sydney/Hobart yacht race.

BACKGROUND: See previous SITREP 4.

CURRENT POSITION:

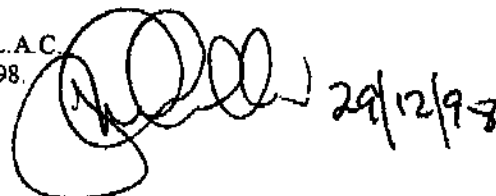
- Launch NEMESIS is approximately 160 kilometres east of Eden where it has yacht BUSINESS POST NAIAD in tow. Yacht has two deceased persons aboard who have not been officially identified but are believed to be the skipper - Bruce GUY and Phillip SKEGGS. E.T.A. to Eden 11 a.m. on 30.12.98.
- Navy helicopters, about 9.30 a.m. this date, recovered bodies of deceased persons who have been formally identified as Michael BANNISTER and James LAWLER from the missing yacht WINSTON CHURCHILL, believed to have sunk. Third missing person from this vessel, John DEAN, has not been sighted. All other crew from this vessel have been accounted for.
- Missing crew member, Glen CHARLES, from vessel SWORD OF ORION has not been sighted.
- Police from Eden Operations Centre are arranging for relatives of BANNISTER, LAWLER, DEAN and CHARLES to be notified.
- Detectives S. GRAY, N. GREY and STEVENSON from Bega Police along with Sergeant BUCKLEY from Sydney Water Police have commenced investigations and collecting evidence for a coronial inquest.
- Deputy State Coroner ABERNETHY has been personally contacted and apprised of the current situation.

FURTHER ACTION: Eden Operations Centre will close at 1630 hrs and arrangements have been made for the yacht BUSINESS POST NAIAD to be impounded at Eden and examined by Crime Scene Police. Arrangements have been made for deceased to be conveyed by contractors to Sydney morgue.



R. E. MAWDSLEY,  
 Inspector,  
 Crime Manager,  
 Far South Coast L.A.C.  
 29 December, 1998.

1. Commander, SOUTH EAST REGION.
2. Media Unit.
3. Deputy Commissioner's Office.
4. Duty Operations Inspector, SYDNEY.
5. Commander, SYDNEY WATER POLICE.



DEBRIEFING HELD AT EDEN COURT-HOUSE RELATING TO OPERATION INVOLVING THE RESCUE OF CREWS & RECOVERY OF DECEASEDS IN IN THE 1998 SYDNEY TO HOBBART YACHT RACE

PRESENT: Superintendent AMBLER, Inspector MAWDSLEY, A/Inspector SWILKS, D.E.M.O. Tony CALLAN, Sergeant TILLMAN (O.I.C. Eden Police), Andrew BARR (Nursing Manager Pambula Hospital), Arthur HEATHER (AUS S.A.R.), Catherine SHANDS (Pambula Hospital), Allan BOLTON (S.E.S. Eden), Tony CRIDDLE (S.E.S. Bega), Philip BROTHERTON (Ambulance Service), Greg HALLS (Cruising Yacht Club of Aust.), Ian BAKER & Ron FINNERAN (Merimbula Airport), George CHRYSS & Greg WHITER (Eden R.V.C.P.), Doug MEIN (L.E.M.O.), Glen VARDY (Public Works & Services) & David SHEPHERD (D.O.C.S.).

TIME COMMENCED: 9.05 A.M.

TONY CALLAN

Meeting chaired by D.E.M.O. Tony CALLAN who explained reasoning behind debrief & submitted apologies on behalf of Superintendent AMBLER & Sergeant BUCKLEY (Sydney Water Police) who were involved with receiving yacht BUSINESS POST NAIAD.

D.E.M.O. indicated that he was first notified of the operation AT 10.15 a.m. on Monday, 28.12.98 by Area Health Manager advising Pambula Hospital required some assistance. Appeared that there was a communication breakdown.

Each agency then requested to comment on involvement in operation. Questions allowed at the end of each presentation.

INSPECTOR MAWDSLEY - BATEMANS BAY POLICE (FAR SOUTH COAST CRIME MANAGER

From the outset management of the situation was difficult to determine the actual Police role, outside of its normal investigative function. The rescue co-ordination etc. was difficult to establish due to lack of knowledge of the magnitude of the situation and the numerous agencies involved with differing lines of communication.

Police involved initially with search and rescue. Sgt. TILLMAN of Eden Police relied on local vessels as there were limited vessels (including Police) available that were able to handle the conditions. Eden Police vessel used in Twofold Bay and worked with Ambulance.

Inspector MAWDSLEY arrived A.M. on Monday 28.12.98 and had to organise an Operations Centre with communications. Contact was made with the Bega Valley L.F.M.O. and arrangements made to utilise the Public Works Building, Main Wharf Eden. Access was arranged by the Harbour Master. Insp MAWDSLEY thanked Glenn Vardy for his co-operation and use of his facility.

Contact was made with Telstra to provide additional telephones to the Operations Centre. No response was received within 3.5 hours and as such the request was cancelled. Telstra HELPDESK contacted the Operations Centre A.M. on 29.12.98 to establish if the additional services had been provided and were advised that nothing had happened.

At no time was co-ordination obtained in relation to the local response. Difficulties experienced in Disaster Victim Registration. Yachts were entering and leaving the bay without notifying their movements with Coastal Patrol or any other agency. In this regard, Greg HALLS was thanked for his input and considered a tremendous asset in following up these yacht movements.

Little information was received from AUS S.A.R. and a Police liaison was established with them at Merimbula Airport. Problems identified with communications at this time that most of it was second or third hand and unreliable. Repercussions reflected in our ability to give timely/accurate information to other agencies and relatives.

Good co-operation between Health, D.O.C.S., Public Works and ongoing liaison with Region Commander and Local Area Commander.

It was not deemed necessary to have an Ambulance liaison at the Operations Centre, due to their limited staff, and information was given to them relating to injured crew etc as it became available.

Basically we fell down with the 'larger picture' in relation to communications. Planning was not possible due to the failure in communications and Police were constantly playing 'catch up.'

#### PHILIP BROTHERTON - AMBULANCE SERVICE

Problem highlighted where they did not know where the Operations Centre was located. They assumed that Merimbula Airport was the Operations Centre and they had limited access to information. They then relied on their own sources which proved to be unreliable.

Also expressed concerns regarding crowd control at the airport and control of the media. Perhaps a separate area should be set aside for a Command Post isolated from external influences.

INSPECTOR MAWDSLEY

Acknowledged there was a misunderstanding as to the location of the Operations Centre.

ARTHUR HEATHER - Aus SAR

Provided an outline of Aus SAR, which was formed 18 months ago as a result of the merging of the aviation and maritime operations centres. Their focus is purely on search and rescue and acknowledge the points raised by Inspector MAWDSLEY re the need to work closer with other agencies, in particular the Police who have greater responsibilities.

Arthur was not involved until Monday morning and when he arrived at Merimbula airport there was confusion at the site and break down in communications between aviators and mariners. Peter and Sue FISH (AIR SAPPHIRE) were particularly helpful and handed over their facilities etc to the detriment of their business.

Identified that forward field base should be established and Police Command should revolve around aviation Command Post where usually the first information becomes available. AUS S.A.R. communications were confused and often not being completed but improved as the operation progressed onto Tuesday.

Identified the need for regular briefings and debriefings as the operation continues.

Identified also the need for a formal handover from AUS S.A.R. to Police of vessels or aircraft, once AUS S.A.R. responsibility has ceased with a vessel, hand over details to Police for follow up and Disaster Victim Registration/Identification.

Identified difficulties with moving the Command Post once it has been established and the operation progresses. We must be flexible and use available resources.

INSPECTOR MAWDSLEY

Although AUS S.A.R. did their search and rescue function Police have other responsibilities which exceed these functions and should be considered by AUS S.A.R. These responsibilities include Disaster Victim Registration, welfare, preparation of coronial reports etc. It became apparent that the level of Police accountability was not appreciated and other agencies, although doing their roles, were interfering with the Police role. Once a yacht and crew was located AUS S.A.R. seemed to have



finished with their involvement with that yacht/crew but this was where Police needed to know who the crew was, their condition and the yacht's destination. Inspector MAWDSLEY explained Police responsibilities relating to coronial enquiries.

ARTHUR HEATHER AUS S.A.R.

Agreed with observations of Inspector MAWDSLEY and indicated that he would take back these for future planning and incorporation in S.O.P.S. Also identified a need to go further with Police to consolidate interaction and understanding of each other's roles/functions.

GEORGE CHRYS - R.V.C.P.

Indicated that a plan had been in place over the last 3 years and believed that this plan was not followed. Sgt. TILLMAN was the only officer to appear to follow the plan.

Indicated that Police liaison should be established at R.V.C.P.

Appeared that the preparation of this race was not as good as experienced in the past.

IAN BAKER & RON FINNERAN - MERIMBULA AIRPORT

Their first contact was 1.30 a.m. on Monday 28.12.98 from Police radio who requested them to open the airport for Navy aircrew. AUS S.A.R. or others did not contact airport authority re the magnitude of future aircraft (or other) operations. Identified the need for security, especially with media and onlookers. Communication as far as the airport was concerned was zero and they took their own initiative to activate S.O.P.S.

In future Police and other agencies should meet at least one week prior to the commencement of the race to update on developments and ensure preparations.

SGT. TILLMAN - O.I.C. EDEN POLICE STATION

Right from the start the first information he had of any yacht experiencing trouble was at 3.30 p.m. on Sunday, 27.12.98. This is not unusual for the area. He had no idea, or communication regarding any greater emergency occurring. This vessel, was not in trouble in fact and about 4 p.m. Sydney Water Police called for a vessel to assist yacht TEAM JAGUAR which was in trouble about 60 miles south of Eden, in Victorian waters. Victoria could not assist and by 4.30 p.m. assistance had been arranged. Then another call received regarding another vessel 40 miles south east in trouble. All this information was second hand and related to ONLY TWO YACHTS IN TROUBLE. No indication of magnitude of emergency.

Biggest problem was that communication was not fully passed on.

Further concern raised regarding Sgt. TILLMAN's lack of authority to arrange vessels to assist. Indicated that to go through Sydney Water Police is time consuming.

Indicated that the reason he went to the R.V.C.P. was to maintain communication with this second vessel in distress (40 miles south east).

**GREG HALLS - CRUISING YACHT CLUB**

Greg was the past race director from 1987 to 1994. He was not officially involved with this race's organisation. At 4 p.m. on Sunday 27.12.98 he contacted the C.Y.C. and told Peter BUSH that race was going to experience severe difficulties and was assured 'they'll be right'. BUSH called back 3 hours later and requested his assistance. Attended R.V.C.P. at 2.30 am 28.12.1998, where he had no background as to race documentation or competitors. In the past these details were supplied as were pre race briefings conducted with related agencies along the coast. He did foresee what would occur whereas the C.Y.C. apparently did not.

Experienced trouble in getting adequate information from the C.Y.C. in particular, the next of kin list only listed telephone numbers. At the time of this meeting, one of the missing crew's relatives has not been officially informed.

Also indicated that although S.O.P.S. existed for the notification of relatives in these types of circumstances, the C.Y.C. appeared to not follow same.

Should extend training to include Tasmanian and Victorian agencies.

**ACTING INSPECTOR SWILKS - BEGA - FAR SOUTH COAST DUTY OFFICER**

Indicated that the request for relatives to be notified was faxed to Interpol and awaiting reply.

Also highlighted need for crews to be briefed prior to departure regarding the release of information to the media and relatives. At this time one relative has been informed by a crew member that her husband had been located deceased and identified. When contacted by Police and told that he was still missing, this caused undue hardship to the relative and her family. Need for information to flow through one channel where it can be confirmed prior to release to interested parties.

**SUPERINTENDENT AMBLER - COMMANDER FAR SOUTH COAST LOCAL AREA COMMAND**

Identified the need for a media point to be established although we were suffering from a lack of information and were not aware of magnitude of problem until A.M. on Monday 28.12.98. Inspector MAWDSLEY requested to open an Emergency Operations Centre and the response from the

Local Emergency Management Officer was disappointing. Local Emergency Management response needs to be addressed by the Emergency Management Committee.

Communication was inadequate and it was not until later Monday afternoon 28.12.98 that sufficient information was available regarding the extent of the operation. We had no crew lists, what tactics yachts would adopt in these weather conditions in order to assist with rescue response. As it was launch NEMESIS was returning on one engine, in order to conserve fuel after commencing a tow 160 kilometres out to sea.

Yachts were not using communications responsibly and not informing the R.V.C.P. of their movements in or out of Twofold Bay.

Consideration was being given to winding down the operation P.M. on 28.12.98 and it was not until a Police liaison officer was established with AUS S.A.R. that appropriate information was available as to the extent of the emergency.

Local Emergency Management Committee to address the control of those who assist Police with D.V.R. as apparently there was confusion as to who had responsibility for this aspect. Control of D.V.R. was poor and should have been maintained at the airport and Twofold Bay.

TELSTRA should have boosted mobile network and S.O.P.S. and contingency plans will be in place for future races.

Cross border interaction has all ready commenced and meeting has been arranged with Bairnsdale managers at Eden in second week of January 1999.

#### PHILLIP BROTHERTON - AMBULANCE SERVICE

Managers should be involved in exercises to check their responses, plans etc. rather than focussing on the testing of assets.

#### CATHERINE SHANDS - PAMBULA HOSPITAL

Was first alerted late P.M. on 27.12.98 of this operation when they were requested to provide accommodation for pilots and aircrew. Ambulance notified hospital and declared DISPLAN and it was then that the magnitude of the operation was appreciated.

Acknowledge the information flow between Police, Ambulance and D.O.C.S. but unfortunately their sources were limited which affected how the hospital planned its response and availability of resources. They needed to know the number of injured so movement of patients (which is very time consuming) could be organised. Used patient transport vehicle to alleviate stress on Ambulance

Service.

Media was a problem and had to field numerous calls to the hospital and refer to the publicity officer at Queanbeyan.

Bega and Pambula Hospitals can only cater for two deceased at each location and local contractors had to be considered for use as temporary morgues.

Trouble encountered with determining which patients belonged to which yacht. Fortunate that injuries were relatively minor and the facilities could adequately cope with the demand.

**DAVE SHEPHERD - DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Notified by Police radio about 5 a.m. on Monday 28.12.98 to arrange accommodation for aircrews. Received call then from Navy and then commenced to organise accommodation. Did not receive any notification of the magnitude of the operation and used own initiative in beginning his S.O.P.S. Identified a need for proper callout protocol to be followed.

Identified apparent lack of appreciation of the scale of this emergency and appropriate resources not mobilised.

**BREAK FOR MORNING TEA** 10.45 A.M.  
**DEBRIEF RESUMED** 11.10 A.M.

**GEORGE CHRYSS - ROYAL VOLUNTEER COASTAL PATROL**

Identified problems with C.Y.C. using R.V.C.P. facilities in that they clogged the one telephone line with enquiries from relatives/family etc which affected R.V.C.P. operations.

Identified that there were 3 helicopter landing pads in the Eden area however some were being used by media helicopters.

**GREG WHITER - R.V.C.P. & LIAISON WITH C.Y.C.**

Identified problems with wharf space. Where yachts tied up outside trawlers, they had to be moved when the trawlers put to sea.

Commended Ambulance for their liaison at the R.V.C.P. and giving medical advice over the air prior to yacht arrivals at Twofold Bay.

Identified need to separate C.Y.C. operations from the day to day R.V.C.P. operations. Maintained constant contact with C.Y.C. radio relay ship, Young Endeavour.

**ARTHUR HEATHER - AUS S.A.R.**

Have detailed maps and co-ordinates of airfields.

GREG HALLS - C.Y.C.

In response to query from Phil BROTHERTON of the Ambulance Service regarding silent telephone lines at various agencies, indicated that pre-1994 the C.Y.C. used to put personnel into these locations with silent telephone numbers.

TONY CRIDDLE - STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES

Indicated that other incidents were also impacting on emergency services during this operation.

He was first called at 7 a.m. to feed approximately 1,000 persons at Eden. The S.E.S. does not have the facilities to cater for the size of this request which was in the area covered by D.O.C.S. S.E.S. personnel are available to assist in the Operations Centre.

BRUCE SUMMERILL - VOLUNTEER RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Called out 1.30 p.m. Monday 28.12.98 to assist as observers on rescue aircraft. Briefings by pilots were good. Training being organised for V.R.A. as drop masters.

SUPERINTENDENT AMBLER

Indicated that he was not aware of V.R.A. response to act as observers, and believed that they should have first consulted with Police prior to becoming involved in this activity as they are the primary rescue response for the Beqa area.

DOUG MEIN - LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICER

Believed he did not have much of a role to play in this operation. He was called at 1 p.m. on Monday 28.12.98 for assistance in establishing an operations centre and made suggestions in this regard.

Also made enquiries later in the day regarding the use of TELSTRA for extra lines.

TONY CALLAN - DISTRICT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICER

Indicated that the L.E.M.O. probably underestimated his response to this operation and could have been of greater use at the operations centre. (SENTIMENTS ECHOED BY SUP'T AMBLER & INSPECTOR MAWDSLEY.)

Highlighted factors that impacted on the operation:

- \* Initially no idea of scope/magnitude of incident or timely flow of information,
- \* Busy time of year and agencies were stretched responding to the increase in calls.

Summary of recommendations based on the debriefing are:

1. Clear understanding of control structure must be relayed to all involved in order to reduce confusion and assist in communications,
2. That the operations centre be isolated and a

dedicated facility,

3. Information needed regarding yachts, their crews and condition for Disaster Victim Registration,
4. Better communications between services,
5. Cruising Yacht Club to disseminate appropriate information and provide liaison to the operations centre,
6. Establish one media point of contact,
7. Improve systems and response with TELSTRA,
8. AUS S.A.R. - conduct field exercises with managers,
9. AUS S.A.R. - need to be mindful of emergency management arrangements that exist in each State,
10. Operations Centre staff to be selected and trained at the local level,
11. Prior to next yacht race conduct pre race briefing and operations briefing involving local agencies.

SUPERINTENDENT AMBLER, INSPECTOR MAWDSLEY & D.E.M.O.

Expressed acknowledgement and appreciation of professionalism and conduct of all personnel and agencies involved.

Although the debriefing focussed on the negatives, plans are now being prepared to improve systems, training and management of responses to future yacht races.

Superintendent AMBLER indicated that arrangements have been made to adopt these recommendations. First meeting planned to commence mid January, 1999.

Also recommendations will be carried forward for review by the next meeting of the Bega Valley Emergency Management Committee.

DEBRIEFING CONCLUDED - 11.50 A.M.

\* \* \* \* \*