

# Mushroom News.

The official Newsletter of the Ops Room Association of Australia Inc.

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Dr David Shackleton, AO  
Vice Admiral RAN (Retired)  
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Rear Admiral RAN (Retired)



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Gordon Lowe.

**SECRETARY/TREASURER:**

Chris Mitchell.

Email : [Secretary](mailto:Secretary@opsroomassociation.org.au)

<https://www.opsroomassociation.org.au>

## From the President:

Hello 2024!

As we embark on a new year, it's important we take the time to look back on some of our own personal accomplishments and milestones throughout 2023 and reflect on the memories of our recently departed shipmates.

I must thank all our members, committee, and external military partners. Your ongoing trust and partnership with the Operations Room Association of Australia have been the cornerstone of our commitment to deliver exceptional association membership outcomes.

Our sustained achievements would also not be possible without our extraordinary team of Patrons & Committee Members, and I extend my sincere gratitude to each one. My personal BZ congratulations for the month go to Bill our resolute webmaster and our WA Reunion Co-Ordinator Nicola & her WA Based Team.

Looking ahead, I anticipate another year of considerable developments and delivery of membership-founded projects.

I look forward to connecting with you this year at the Reunion in WA and continuing our pursuit of friendship, mateship, and excellence.

Kindest Regards,

Gordon Lowe—President.

## From the Secretary/Treasurer:

Hi Everyone,

Hope that all members are well.

The Association has lost 2 Members, David Tyrell-Clark and Eric Buckley.

David was a member of the Executive Team and his input will be sorely missed at our Executive Meetings. A volunteer from Western Australia, is required to fill David's Position, until the AGM in October. Obituary for Bill Ritchie is in this newsletter.

Updated information for the reunion will be on the website.

If you change email addresses and phone numbers, please let me know.

Take care all and see you in WA in October.

Chris Mitchell

Secretary- Treasurer.

### Dhobying clothes the old way



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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### POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Bill Ritchie Story.
- 2024 Reunion News.
- ORA Shop.
- Photos.
- DVA Assistance.
- "Dits" from the Past.

# 2024 ORA Reunion News—Western Australia

## ORA 2024 REUNION NEWS – FREMANTLE WA

This reunion is open to ALL Past & Present RDF, RP & CSO Personnel.



### ORA Membership:

Members are reminded that ORA Membership renewals are due on 30 June on any given year.

Membership costs only \$10 a year and you can pay for a max of 5 years for only \$45.

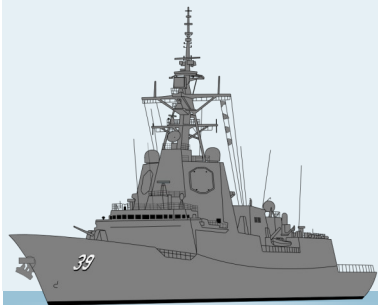
A list of ORA Members can be found in the Members Only section of our website. This list clearly indicates your Membership status.

Reminders are also sent out to all members...if you are unsure of your financials, please contact the webmaster.

The Joining Fee and lost badge replacement for Members is \$35.

Thank you.

Chris Mitchell—Secretary/Treasurer



### Dates:

18th - 20th October 2024.

### Venue:

Esplanade Hotel Fremantle - Refer below to the rewards program.

Friday Night - 18 OCT 24

### The ORA Program & Information:

**MEET & GREET** : 1900 to 2200.

Includes: Canapes & 2 drinks on arrival... then cash bar.

Saturday Morning - 19 OCT 24

**AGM**: 1000 to 1200.

Saturday Evening - 19 OCT 24

**FORMAL DINNER**: 1900 to 2300.

Includes: Buffet style Dinner & Drinks Package.

Sunday (All day) - 20 OCT 24

Own Arrangements for Individual Day Trips and Tours.

Sunday Afternoon - 20 OCT 24

**CLOSING DRINKS** - Venue & Times TBA closer to the Reunion.

Buy your own drinks. (BYOD)

### Dress Codes:

Friday Night & Saturday Morning – Neat Casual.

Saturday Evening: Ladies & Gentlemen Formal Attire.

### Travel to Reunion:

Own Arrangements – Airlines, Trains, Driving, Shanks's Pony.

### Accommodation:

Own Arrangements : - Lists of various accommodations will be posted on our website closer to the reunion dates.

### Costings Per Person:

**ORA Financial Members:** \$310

**Partner of Member:** \$310

Friday & Saturday Nights

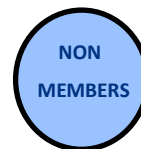
**NON-ORA Members:** \$350

**Partner of NON-ORA Member:** \$350

Friday & Saturday Nights

### REUNION REGISTRATIONS: NOW OPEN

Please click the buttons below to register for the Reunion.



Please note: The **Expression of Interest** forms are **NOT** classed as a Reunion Registration applications.

### THE ESPLANADE HOTEL: THE REUNION VENUE

The Esplanade Hotel, is part of the Rydges Group and provides discounts on accommodation via their Priority Guest Rewards program. This program provides:

- Discounts of their best accommodation rates online.
- Discounts of food and drinks.
- Earn and Redeem points, and VIP Benefits & extras.

Join online at: <https://www.rydges.com/priority-guest-rewards/>

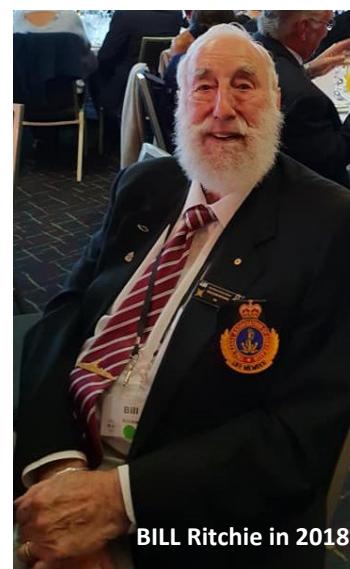


If you have a preferred accommodation website, please compare prices before you book.

## BILL RITCHIE STORY

### Ranks / Rating

Ord Seaman	25 Jul 1944
Able Seaman	25 Jun 1945
Act Leading Seaman	01 Jun 1947
Leading Seaman	01 Jan 1948
Act Petty Officer (RP II)	01 Oct 1948
Petty Officer	01 Oct 1949
Chief Petty Officer	01 Apr 1953
Act Commissioned Boatswain (PR)	01 Oct 1956
SBLT	01 Jan 1957
LEUT	01 Apr 1961
LCDR	01 Apr 1967
CMDR	31 Dec 1975



### Ships and Establishments

HMAS Cerberus 25 JUL 44	HMS Heron 13 DEC 63 (RNAS Yeovilton)
HMAS Penguin for Radar 06 JAN 45	HMAS Leeuwin 06 JAN 65
HMAS Yandra 12MAR 45	HMAS Melbourne 15 FEB 65
HMAS Penguin 28 MAR 45	HMAS Stuart 07 OCT 65
HMAS Moreton for Headquarters 11 APR 45	HMAS Watson 30 OCT 65 to 26 Nov 67 with short term postings to:-
HMAS Gerard 18APR-17JUN 45	HMAS Stuart (4 x Times)
HMAS Madang 18 JUN 45	HMAS Sydney (Twice)
HMAS Broome for (HMAS Platypus) 6-20 JUL 45	HMAS Yarra (Once)
HMAS Platypus 21JUL -10AUG 45	HMAS Queenborough (Twice)
HMAS Bathurst 11AUG-2OCT 45	HMAS Cerberus 26 NOV 67
HMAS Platypus 03 OCT 45	HMAS Watson 29 NOV 67
HMAS Fremantle 13 NOV 45	HMAS Tarangau 04 APR 68
HMAS Lonsdale 25 JAN 46	HMAS Perth 05 APR 68
HMAS Leeuwin 12 FEB 46	HMAS Watson 10 APR 68
HMAS Watson 15 MAR 46	HMAS Perth 17 JUN 68
HMAS Rushcutter for (HMAS Watson) 31 MAY 46	HMAS Watson 26 MAY 69
HMAS Kuttabal for (HMAS Murchison) 31 AUG 46	HMAS Melbourne 01 SEP 69
HMAS Rushcutter for (HMAS Watson) 02 DEC 46	HMAS Sydney 09 NOV 69
HMAS Kuttabal for (HMAS Bataan) 29 JUL 47	Navy Headquarters 14 DEC 70
HMAS Penguin for (HMAS Bataan) 01 OCT 47	HMAS Melbourne 08 APR 74
HMAS Albatross 28 JAN 49	HMAS Watson 21 APR 75
HMAS Sydney 16 JUL 49	Navy Headquarters 15 DEC 75
HMAS Platypus for (HMAS Watson) OCT 52	HMAS Leeuwin 15 MAR 77
HMAS Vengeance 01 SEP 53	HMAS Stirling 28 JUL 78
HMS Dryad (Course) 06 AUG 55	HMAS Stirling (Naval Officer Commanding H. E. HOLT) 19 DEC 79
London Depot 27 OCT 56	Transfer to the Royal Australian Naval Emergency Reserve 28 FEB 81
HMS Tumult 18 DEC 56	HMAS Stirling 28 FEB 81
HMS Sheffield 17 JUN 57	SHORE 01 SEP 83
HMAS Watson 22 APR 59	
HMS Ark Royal 07 JAN 63	

As well as progressing from Junior sailor to the rank of Commander, Bill was awarded an impressive set of medals and honours during his long career.

**MEDALS & COMMENDATIONS ATTAINED BY CMDR BILL RITCHIE:**

Member of the Order of Australia	1939-45 Star	Pacific Star	War Medal 1939-45
Australian Service Medal 1939-45	Active Service Medal 1945-75 with Clasps Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia	Korea Medal	United Nations Service Medal - Korea
General Service Medal 1962 with Clasp Malay Peninsula	Vietnam Medal	Australia Service Medal 1945-75 with Clasps: Japan, Southwest Pacific, Far East Strategic Reserve	Defence Force Service Medal with First, Second, Third & Fourth Clasps.
National Medal with First & Second Clasps	Australian Defence Medal	Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal	Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal

US Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation	South Korea Presidential Unit Citation	Australian Naval Board Commendation
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**Attending Tim Collins funeral  
Robert Ferguson, Bill Ritchie, Ken Clements, Cliff Raatz.**

## **UNCLE BILL and BILL'S WAY**

Born in Kalgoorlie WA on 01 March 1926 and was christened William Gray RITCHIE but was known as and went by "Bill" as was preferred by his mother. Had a brother Harry and Sister Jan.

About the age of 9-10 he wanted to be a sailor. When WW II broke out, he was too young to join but when 18 applied to join. His birth certificate had Bill having to change his name on the birth certificate so to be able to join the RAN.

### **Naval Reserve Time**

William Gray Ritchie and was finally accepted at the age of 20, joining the RAN on 25 July 1944 as Reservist with Fremantle Division. A mate suggested that they become radar ratings. Training at RAN Station 284 now known as HMAS Watson on 6 Jan 1945.

His first ship was HMAS Yandra (FY91) (b) a merchant vessel being used a coastal patrol craft on 12 March 1945. The ship was about to sail in darkness and was sent to the crow's nest as lookout. Found himself aloft in a wet, windy, and rough sea. Then followed postings to HMAS Penguin, Moreton before a posting to HMAS Gerard (FY62) an examination and stores carrier. Then followed posting to HMAS Broome, Bathurst, and Platypus, Lonsdale, and Watson. Then transferring to the permanent service on 31 May 1946.

### **Permanent Service.**

Service at HMAS Rushcutter (Watson), HMAS Murchinson, and HMAS Bataan. HMAS Penguin then HMAS Albatross before joining HMAS Sydney (III) 16 July 1949. Serving in Korea waters until posted to HMAS Watson in October 1952, then joined HMAS Vengeance on 01 September 1953 and returning her back to the UK. Commenced Special Duties training at HMS Dryad 6 Aug 1955 then HMS Tumult and HMS Sheffield.

During his "Knife & Fork" course (said to be the course that teaches sailors how to become officers) Bill was exposed to numerous RN traditions, many of which he followed throughout his career, but some he dropped as being, in his mind, too outrageous. Posted to the then RN flagship HMS SHEFFIELD, Bill took a leaf out of his traditional training and joined the ship in full uniform, complete with sword and medals. This caused a small stir as the gangway staff confused his approach as one of the Officer of the Guard and the Executive Officer of SHEFFIELD was not pleased. (the tradition of joining in this manner had almost ceased and, today, is no longer practiced but Bill was received as having joined correctly, as was Bill's way).

Shortly after settling in Bill was called to the Executive Officer who gave Bill the task of writing up the ship's seamanship procedures – the original book having been lost during the refit from which the ship was emerging. He was given eleven days to complete the task. Having specialised in Radar, Bill was short on experience but wisely visited other ships in the dockyard and, on the eleventh day, passed the completed document to the Executive Officer. Two days later Bill was again called by the Executive Officer who opened the discussion with, "I hate Australians! Bill, of course asked "Why?" only to be told that he had 'shown up' other junior officers by the way he had joined the ship and then held up Bill's book shaking it at Bill. Bill was somewhat taken aback and asked if there was a problem with the book only to be told, by the XO, that he had been unable to dot an 'i' or cross a 't'. Bill's reply was, "But Sir, I did tell you that although I spoke Australian, I could also read and understand English." Conversation ended with the XO still muttering, "I hate Australians!"! Bill's work in the ship continued in Bill's way.

Return to Australia 1959 then served at HMAS Watson and Albatross until going back to the UK for further training in 1961 Served in HMS Ark Royal from 07 January 1963 then at HMS Heron (The RN largest Naval Air Station also known as RNAS Yeovilton. from 13 Dec 1963 until late 1964 returning to Australia. Served in HMAS Melbourne from 15 Feb till 07 Oct 1965 joining HMAS Stuart.

Then a cycle of postings between Watson and Stuart. (Possibly OIC of the Air Control School) Then short posting to HMAS Sydney on 20 Nov 1967, back to Watson in Nov 1967. Transited via HMAS Tarangau to join HMAS Perth on her return from her first deployment to Sth Vietnam. Briefly at Watson 10 April 1968 then joined Perth for 2<sup>nd</sup> deployment to Vietnam on 17 June 1968.

Back again to Watson briefly in May 1969 before joining Melbourne on 1 Sep 1969 as Mate of the Upper Deck and D1.

Navy Office called in Dec 1970 until rejoining Melbourne on 8 Apr 1974. He was the OOD on Christmas Eve when Cyclone Tracy struck Darwin. He served as Melbourne Disaster Co-ordinator assisting in setting a Shore Command to co-ordinate the various ships working parties during Navy Assist to Darwin. In April 1975 posted back to HMAS Watson as the Training Officer and OIC of the ND school. The Ritchie Building is named in honour of his service. Posted back to Navy Office on 15 Dec 1975 and being promoted to Commander. Continuing in the training role as the deputy Director of Naval Training. Retired In his final Naval years, Bill had two very professional and rewarding tasks.

First was his time as the Executive Officer of HMAS STIRLING and his role in the preparation and commissioning of the Base much of which is now common knowledge. The second was that of being the Deputy Commander at the joint RAN / USN Naval Communication Station, HAROLD E HOLT, in Exmouth Western Australia.

Bundegi Reef, a natural reef in the Gulf. During his time in Exmouth tourism was increasing exponentially and the town's population expanding rapidly. Bundegi Reef, which by now had become a prime "BCFing" site for Exmouth, could only be accessed by a lengthy, badly constructed, and poorly serviced bush track. The local population was now regularly attempting to force a track from the nearby VLF station to Bundegi reef through the salt water well field – a potentially disastrous situation.

With his thinking cap on, in his own inimitable way, convinced the RAN, the USN, the Australian and American security organisations, Federal and State governments and, of course, the Exmouth local government that a sealed road to, and parking area at, Bundegi Reef would greatly reduce any untoward accident in the salt water well field, and would likely benefit Exmouth in particular, and the WA tourist organisation in general.

And so, it came to pass, although he had left Exmouth by then, that a sealed road, including a large parking area, was delivered to Bundegi Reef. Now called "**Bill's Way**".

After leaving the Navy in 1983 (e) Interview with Matilda Price 23 April 2013.

He remembers his service time as though it was yesterday.

While still serving, he met his wife, Joan, the couple was married for 56 years before she died.

They had three sons Tony, Peter, Walter and a daughter Anne, three of whom work at Garden Island, and has 10 granddaughters and a grandson.

Before retiring, Mr Ritchie was made a Member of the Order of Australia for his service to the Navy, particularly at HMAS Stirling. When he retired in 1983 it was the first chance, he had to live a normal life.

One of his biggest achievements since leaving the navy has been setting up and operating the Rockingham Tourist Information Centre as a volunteer. He was even made a life member of the Rockingham and Districts Tour Authority.

"Anzac Day means a lot to me,"

"I remember all the friends I've had and those who have died, and particularly having served in HMAS Perth and HMAS Sydney I am very associated with those ship organisations and their history."

He said it was also important to him because his father was involved in the first landing at Gallipoli as a medic.

As well as his Anzac Day commitments, Mr Ritchie also attends the HMAS Perth and HMAS Sydney memorial services each year.

Other Naval organisation are the Fleet Air Arm Association, and the Naval Association of Australia. Served on the HMAS PERTH Assoc WA Chapter as Treasurer (Bill) and Secretary from its inception in 1991. Held the positions for about 20 years.

When Paul Nicholson was President of the Rockingham Navy Club and Rockingham Naval Assoc, he put Bill up for a Life Membership – it was granted and in April 2012, I bestowed upon him Life Membership of the Naval Association (National).....Paul stated, "it was an honour to do that." (e)



**Bill Ritchie receiving his life Membership award from Paul Nicholson in 2012**

**References:**

- RAN Statement of Service
- Australian & New Zealand Warships 1914-15
- CN Australia email.
- Family input and review.
- Mummery email 5 Dec 2023
- Nicholson email 5 Dec 2023
- "Long Navy life at sea," Sound Telegraph by Matilda Price 23 April 2013
- Google search HMAS Madang shore depot in PNG in WWII.

PHOTOS OF BILL RITCHIE



Bill Ritchie with Alan Shaw  
at the 2018 ORA Reunion in Hobart Tasmania.



Bill Ritchie touring  
whilst at the 2018 ORA Reunion in Hobart Tasmania  
Hobart Photos courtesy of Mike Fry



Bill attending the 1998 Sydney RP get together.  
Sydney Photos courtesy of Barney Hanson.



ARTICLE EDITORS: Chris Mitchell & Bill Furey



PHOTOS FROM THE PAST



TTB Crew 1980 Photos compliments of Sherri Shakespeare



Basic RP Course — NOV 1978

PHOTOS FROM THE PAST

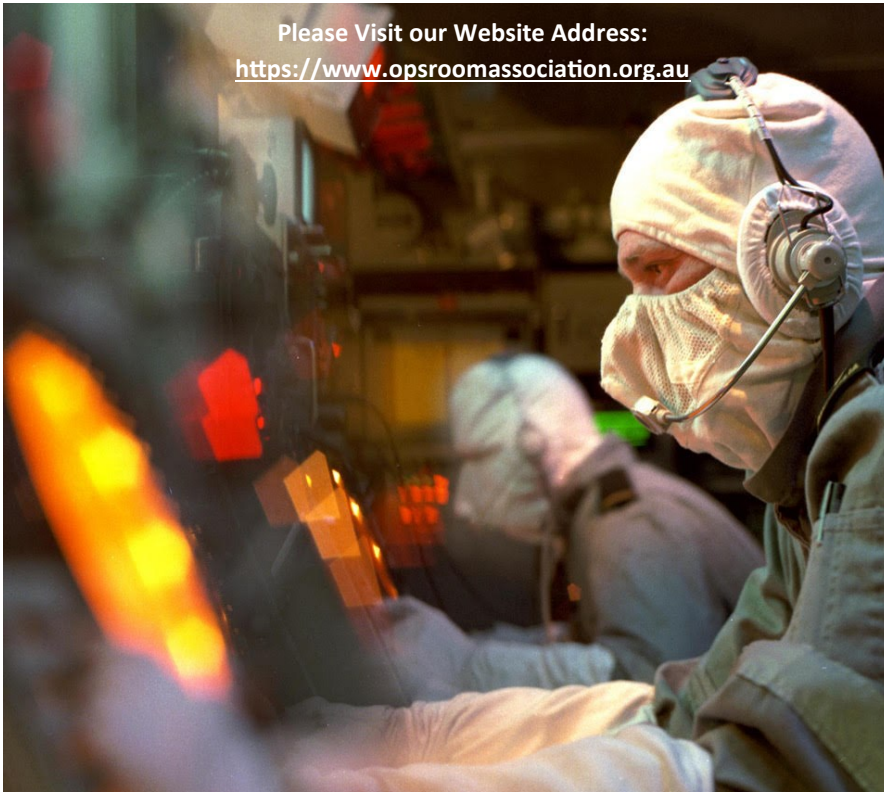


Rory Munn with his daughter Stacey.



ABRP's "Speed" Heazlewood and "Ferret" Jones on HMAS Stuart—15th May 1969 "Somewhere Up Top"

Please Visit our Website Address:  
<https://www.opsroomassociation.org.au>



### ORA HISTORY:

Nick McCarthy (historian) is continuing the project. But welcomes any contribution on any subject on radar, equipment, personnel, ships, and exercises. Especially the early days in the 40's to the present.

Contact Nick by email:  
[carlingford59@hotmail.com](mailto:carlingford59@hotmail.com)

### RADAR PHOTOS:

If Members have any new or old photos or Radar related images, please consider sending them to the Association so they can be preserved for posterity.

If possible it would be great to have names and dates associated with the photo.

Refer to the galleries area on the Members website and if you can identify any of the unknown photos, please contact the webmaster.

Many Thanks to all those Members that have already sent photos to us.

Cheers

Bill Furey  
Webmaster

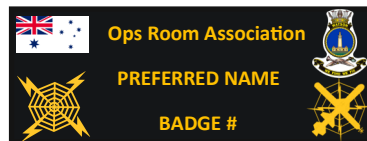
## WEBSITE NEWS:



Please click on the buttons above to Join, Renew or Request Access to the Members Area.

The easiest way to find out your Membership status, is to go to the members area and check out the Members List...it gives you the information required.

### ORA Name Badges:



If you require a new ORA Name Badge—please complete the application.  
Pay \$35 to the account on the application form.

Your new badge will then be sent to your nominated postal address when we have enough orders.

[Click Here](#)

### FREE ORA MEMBERSHIP

Turning 80 years young and have been an ORA Member for at least five (5) years.

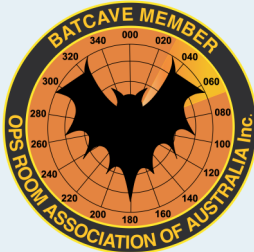
Then please **APPLY NOW** by sending your Date of Birth to the webmaster and receive **Free ORA Membership** to the Association.

Please Note—No Refunds on any existing fees already paid.



## Shop Items:

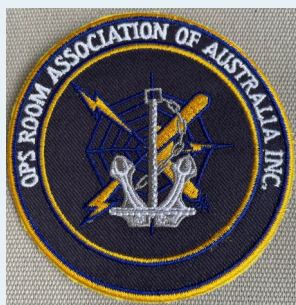
### Lapel Badge:



### Challenge Coin:



### ORA Patch:



## ORA Shop

The "ORA Shop", in the Members Area is open. Presently there are three (3) items available for sale....

### 1. Batcave Lapel Badges.

\$10 each plus postage.

### 2. Batcave Challenge Coins.

\$20 each plus postage.

### 3. ORA Patches.

\$5.00 each plus postage.

### Postage Rates from:

\$1.50 - \$12.00 depending on the order and size.

Select your required items on the order form... then pay directly with your bank account to our ORA Merchandise account.

Refer to the Members shop for more information.

### OUR BANK DETAILS:

**ORA Merchandise Account:**

**Westpac:**

**BSB: 037 604**

**Account No: 362909**

In the reference field of your bank deposit... please put your **Surname and ORA Member Number** as this makes it easier for our Treasurer to track payments...just in-case things go belly-up. If you have any questions or thoughts... please let me know.

Bill Furey

Webmaster

[webmaster@opsroomassociation.org.au](mailto:webmaster@opsroomassociation.org.au)



## ORA Donations:

We have placed a link on our website for anyone who may wish to donate to the Ops Room Association...The Donation Form is on the front page of the public website. Instructions are on the Donation form : [ORA Donation Form](#)

**Thank you in advance, for considering to donate to our Association.**



## Khameleon Tsunami by Mike Fry

Stepping back into the world of espionage and MI6 was not what Nicholas Hood had intended. He thought that helping out his old KGB/FSB pal Dimitry with a problem could be a useful distraction. The problem was a 585ft hybrid warship. Singapore seemed like a relaxing place to start a new adventure with his wife Doctor Dianne Hood, living her dream of providing humanitarian aid to impoverished communities in south east Asia, and joined by Nick's ex CIA pal Tom Jordan. Then the call came from MI6 to do a job in Thailand. The CIA weren't going to leave Tom alone either. Life became complicated and sailing into unfriendly waters with pirates, rogue military officials, a world-wide pandemic and geological disturbances tested everyone on the Khameleon.

Many thanks to Nicho, who did the final read through for me on the book, a big thank you from me.

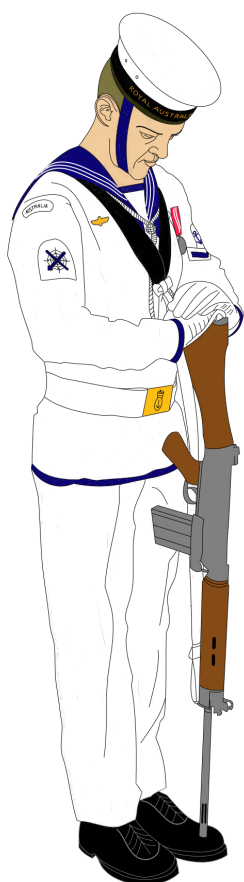
Khameleon Tsunami is now available on eBook with Amazon. Paperback will be available in a few weeks after proof reading. The Amazon link is:

[https://www.amazon.com.au/gp/product/B0CF8QQDJT/ref=dbs\\_a\\_def\\_rwt\\_hsch\\_vapi\\_tkin\\_p1\\_i0](https://www.amazon.com.au/gp/product/B0CF8QQDJT/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_hsch_vapi_tkin_p1_i0)

The paperback is available or you can email Mike on [mikefry7249@gmail.com](mailto:mikefry7249@gmail.com) to order a signed copy.



*“Please visit the Commemorative Wall in the members Area of our Website.”*



### ORA Commemorative Wall:

Recently Crossed the Bar: -



**SWRRP Ruth Milstead**

Served 1970 - 1976

Not an ORA Member

**LSRP David Tyrell-Clarke**

R95835

ORA Member 157

**CPORP Eric Buckley**

R57022

ORA Member 238

They have no grave but the cruel sea  
No flowers lay at their head  
A rusting hulk is their tombstone  
A fast on the ocean bed.

They shall grow not old,  
as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them,  
nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun  
and in the morning  
We will remember them.

**Lest We Forget**

To view our lists of who have crossed the bar.  
Please visit the our Commemorative Pages in the  
Members Area.

If you know of any other of our Radar family,  
who don't appear on our Memorial Walls, don't  
hesitate to contact us.

To Contact Us.

**If Possible: Please list... Full Names,  
Ranks, Official Numbers,  
Age & Date Crossed the Bar.**

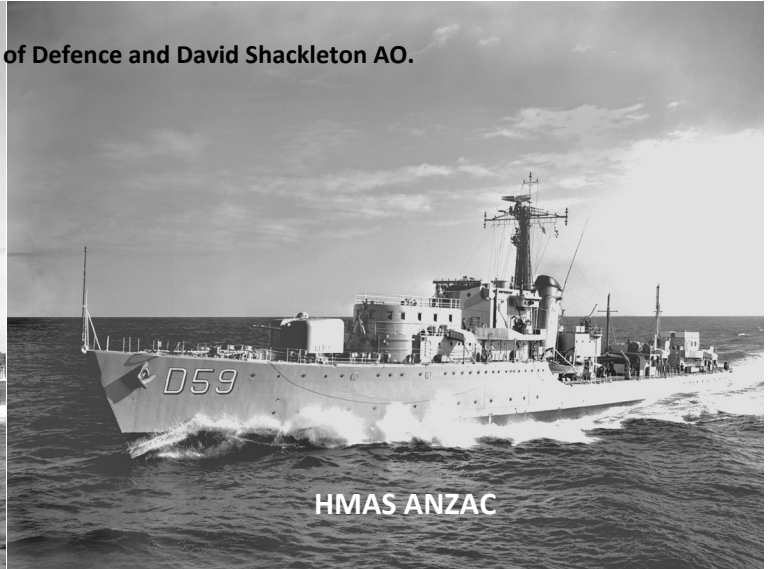
**THANKING YOU IN ADVANCE.**

Photos: various

Photo compliments of the Department of Defence and David Shackleton AO.



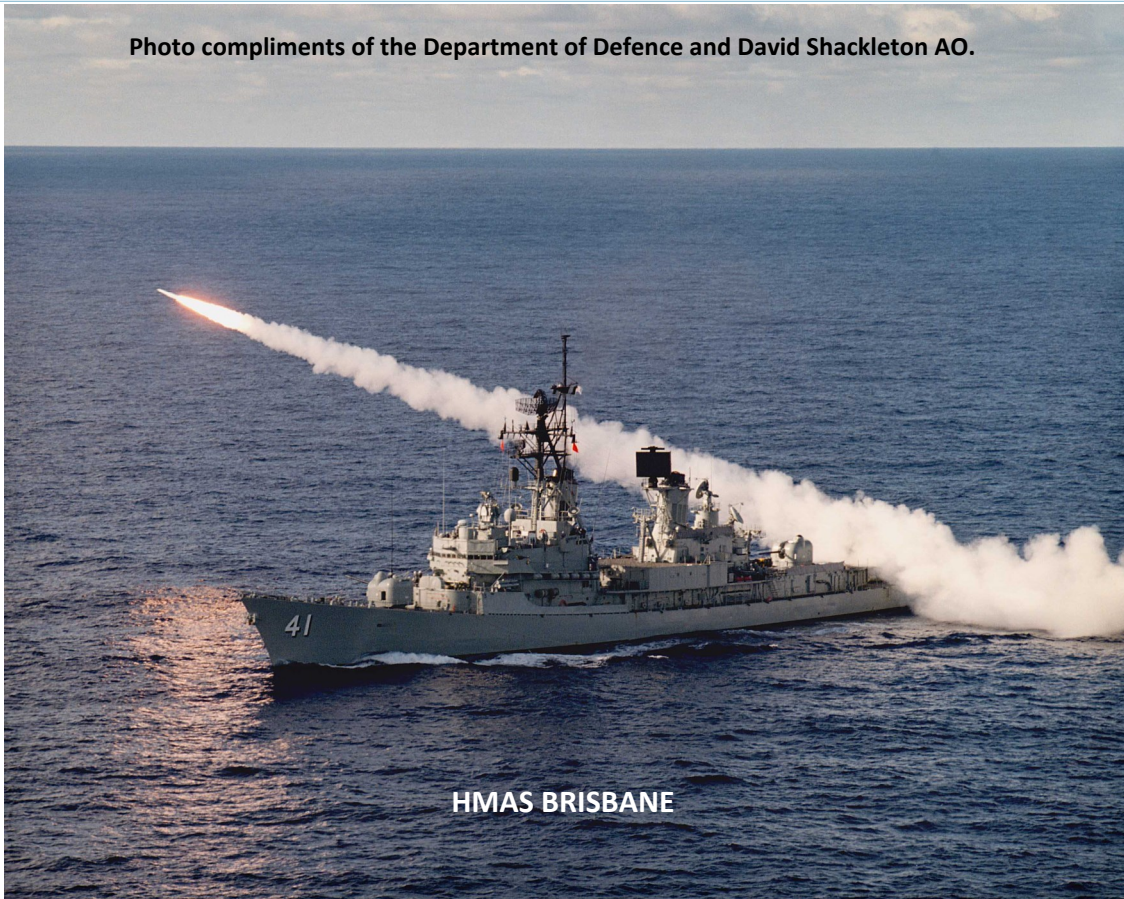
HMAS CURLEW



HMAS ANZAC

*“Have you any old Radar & Navy related photos, laying around in your shit hot drawers? Then send them in...for the website. Lets keep them for posterity”*

Photo compliments of the Department of Defence and David Shackleton AO.



HMAS BRISBANE

Photos: various

Photos compliments of the Department of Defence & David Shackleton AO.



HMAS DERWENT



HMAS DERWENT'S LAST MINUTES  
SAD END TO A MIGHTY SHIP

*“Have you any old Radar & Navy related photos, laying around in your shit hot drawers? Then send them in...for the website. Lets keep them for posterity.”*

Photo compliments of the Department of Defence & David Shackleton AO.



THREE DDG's AND AN FFG



## “Dits” from the Past: By Bob Thomas



### Grand Prix - HMAS Melbourne RIMPAC '78

I was strolling through Pearl Harbor Naval Base with POUW Rusty Ward when a Pontiac Grand Prix drives past. Upon noticing the badge on the car's boot Rusty exclaims “aha, grand pricks, must be an officer's car”!

### Pay Day - HMAS Hobart '81

ABQMG Brian Zubrinick (AKA Zubes) was the quintessential pig-pen. One of those sailors that you could dress up like a troubadour and five minutes later he would look like a stevedore. His pockets would always appear poking out from the bottom of his shorts weighted down with maccas and he was invariably adrift for everything. Despite these apparent shortcomings, Zubes displayed a pleasant demeanour and his mild manner was appreciated by the entire crew. As his surname would suggest, Zubes was always at the end of the line when falling in alphabetically, something he would often complain about. One such occasion happened to be a payday in the middle of the IO. When the Junior Sailors were assembled three deep in the pay-line on Mount 52 deck, the Chief Coxswain, in one of his rare gestures of kindness, ordered “about-turn” to enable Zubes to be paid first. Unfortunately for Zubes, this was yet another occasion when he was late and had to join the end of the line. Result - Zubes was still the last to get paid.

### Ship's Head - HMAS Hobart '81



ABQMG Geddes was an excellent Elvis impersonator who maintained his Elvis outfit as part of his steaming kit.

While overseas, we would invariably locate him appearing at some venue performing his Elvis act. Unfortunately, he was blessed with an unusually large head. One day while manoeuvring the ship in a tranquil North Arabian Sea, the OOW ordered the Helmsman to “call ship's head”. Upon overhearing this instruction, the QM immediately picked up 1MC (main broadcast) and made the pipe “Able Seaman Geddes, bridge”.

### DODGER GOES RN

Venue - RN Warship somewhere in the South China Sea in the mid 90's.

While working for me at the ASAC School, the then PORPAC Dodger Long was sent to the Five Power Defence Agreement (FPDA) Exercise STARFISH to perform Strike Safety duties embarked in a RN war canoe. Upon returning to Oz, his tales of the time spent aboard centred on meals. Chips with every meal and unidentified meals except for the chips. During one such meal, he confronted the Chef while scraping his dinner into the bin and declared “We'll call it a draw then shall we”. “A draw” the Chef asked? “Yes” said Dodger, “you couldn't cook it and I couldn't eat it.”

### SHEEPSHEAD FRONTS THE TABLE

As the duty Leading Hand at WATSON in the early 70's, it was my duty to ensure that the Junior Sailor's bar was shut by 2200. Upon clearing the mess, I noticed a raging argument on the other side of the bar between Lex (the civilian bar manager) and the then LSRP Bob McCloud (AKA Sheepshead) who worked behind the bar. Next day I discover that Lex had run Sheepshead in and that I had been summoned to attend the table as the only witness. So I front up and when questioned by the Chief Coxswain as to what I witnessed, I replied “that I saw Lex and Sheepshead...”. That's when the proceedings halted, the CMDR looked at the COXN who looked back at the CMDR, then they both looked at me and said “who's Sheepshead”. I relied “he is” pointing to LS McCloud. I never knew his real name then, only ever knew him as Sheepshead. Can't remember the result.

**IF YOU THINK YOUR “DITS” ARE WORTHY OF INCLUSION HERE, PLEASE SEND THEM TO THE EDITORS...**



## OUR ORGANISATION:

The Association is a formation or gathering of former and serving personnel of the Royal Australian Navy or other Navies, who have completed Radio Direction Find (RDF), Radar Plotters (RP) & Combat System Operators (CSO) Basic Course or equivalent Course. Former Special Duty Plot Radar (SDPR), Operations Room Officers (ORO) / Principal Warfare Officers (PWO [D]) Direction Officers (D) and Air Intercept Controllers (AIC) Radar Plot Air Control (RPAC) having served in naval ops room billets or in training and support roles of naval ops rooms; and other individuals who have an interest in naval operation rooms and the Fleet.

## ORA COMMITTEE:

### President:

Gordon Lowe. (NSW)

### Secretary/Treasurer:

Chris Mitchell. (TAS)

### Vice Presidents:

Christine Cameron (QLD)

Tony Kellerman (NSW)

Nicola Carson (WA)

### Committee Representatives:

Brian Mansell (ACT)

Peter Kalkman (NSW)

Neville Newsham (QLD)

Tania Beaumont (SA)

Barney Hanson (TAS)

Rory Munn (VIC)

David Tyrell-Clark (WA) - Deceased RIP

### Webmaster:

Bill Furey (VIC)



## DVA Assistance:

If members are needing assistance regarding dealing with DVA, entitlements, lump sum compensation, White to Gold Card, or just wanting to know where to start.

Alan Birkenhead a former RP has retired from RSL QLD as a Service Delivery Manager, but is still available to help out our members for DVA assistance. See the Website for contact details.

### DVA HOT TOPICS

State Concessions with DVA:

[Click Here](#)

Latest News from the DVA Minister:

[Click Here](#)

Veterans' Legislation Reform Consultation Pathway: [Click Here](#)

## ORA Members in Sick Bay:

No Members in Sickbay to report.

We are thinking of all our fellow crew Members whilst in sickbay.  
"Get well soon".



AGM

## Ops Room Association Annual General Meeting.

Date: To be held on Saturday 19th October 2024 at 1000

Venue: Esplanade Hotel Fremantle

Followed by a "General Meeting".

Minutes for meetings will be available in the next Winter Newsletter.

If any member has any items for inclusion in the Mushroom News, please email the secretary or webmaster. The opinions expressed in this Newsletter, are not necessarily those of the Association's Executive Committee. Articles and items are from many sources including the internet, various publications, and personal files and where possible will be acknowledged. The editors of the Mushroom News — Chris Mitchell and Bill Furey.