

Mushroom News.

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

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Gordon Lowe.

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From the President:

VALE : William (Bill) Ritchie

Firstly, some very sad news, I must inform all our Membership that our ORA #1 Member, William (Bill) Ritchie, passed away at 97, on the 27/11/2023. Bill was the father of the Australian Radar Branch and a good friend to us all. RIP "Uncle Bill", you will be sadly missed by the RDF, RP & CSO Association.

Welcome to our ORA Newsletter:

It has felt like a long time in the making this year, but summer is finally here and hopefully the warm weather will soon be upon us. As we start to think about the holiday season and our plans and goals for the new year to come, it's often the time when we reflect on the year we've had.

For me it was a challenging year both professionally and personally on numerous levels. On a positive note, I have watched the ORA grow and expand into new areas, and seen many members achieve their goals.

Sadly, over 2023 we have had to say goodbye to a few of our members & friends. Our thoughts are with their families and everyone else who will be missing someone this Christmas. It is a time to appreciate those around us and continue to make memories that will last throughout the years.

I look to 2024 with great optimism. The WA reunion is in full swing which I hope you can attend. In the meantime, I would like to wish all our members, friends, and family a wonderful holiday season. I hope you enjoy our summer ORA newsletter, and if you would like to offer any information for our Autumn edition, please don't hesitate to contact me.

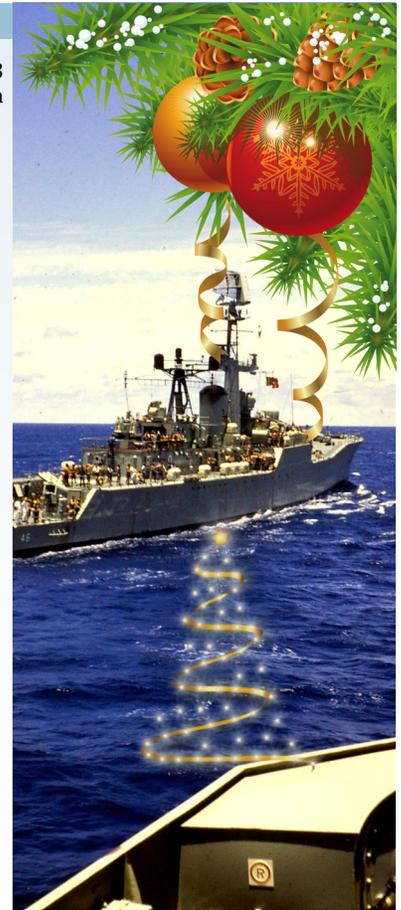
Kind Regards,
Gordon Lowe.

Notes from the Secretary/Treasurer:

Hi Members,
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all Members and partners.
It is less than 10 months before we gather again in WA for our next reunion. Looking forward to catching up with all attending.
The webmaster has put together another Newsletter for the summer months. Thanks for all the contributors for this edition. I have recently attended the NAA Executive meeting held in Launceston in early November as an Observer.
More details will come out in the next newsletters. Please note that the 2022/2023 "Auditors Report", can be found on our website. For all our Members that are on the "Sick List", please get well soon.

Kind Regards,
Mitch

Added Note from Mitch: - VALE & RIP - Bill Ritchie.



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POINTS OF INTEREST:

- David Shackleton Life & Times.
- 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.



Dates: 18th - 20th October 2024.
Venue: Esplanade Hotel Fremantle - Refer below to the rewards program.
Friday Night - 18 OCT 24
Saturday Morning - 19 OCT 24
Saturday Evening - 19 OCT 24
Sunday (All day) - 20 OCT 24
Sunday Afternoon - 20 OCT 24

Dress Codes:

18th - 20th October 2024.
Esplanade Hotel Fremantle - Refer below to the rewards program.

The ORA Program & Information:

MEET & GREET : 1900 to 2200.

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

AGM: 1000 to 1200.

FORMAL DINNER: 1900 to 2300.

Includes: Buffet style Dinner & Drinks Package.

Own Arrangements for Individual Day Trips and Tours.

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

Buy your own drinks. (BYOD)

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.

David Shackleton: His Life and Times in and around the Bat Cave: 1966-1979 - Plus a Bit.

I was asked by Bill Furey to put together a piece for the Mushroom News. He said it didn't matter if it was a bit long, so if you go to sleep you can blame him.

After completing the fourth, and final year at Croydon Boys High School in Adelaide, in early 1966 I took up a job as a trainee technician working on analogue business machines. Sooner or later, I would have worked out that such a skill didn't have much of a future in the emerging digital era. It seemed like a good idea at the time and in late 1965 I had applied to join the Navy as a trainee junior officer. We had no history of naval service in any part of our family history, much less anybody aspiring to gold braid. I didn't have much of a clue either.

It turned out that if I hadn't joined the Navy, my birthdate meant that I would have been conscripted to become a national serviceman, and lost access to all that decent food, hot water and clean sheets that come with ships. Life can be kind sometimes, even if you aren't aware of it.

My high school exam results were ok, and the recruiting interview indicated Navy was desperate. Five days after my 18th birthday, in the early hours of Monday 7 March 1966, six new South Australian friends and I arrived at Melbourne's Spencer Street Station onboard the Overlander train. Monday must have been a public holiday because we seemed to be the only people on the concourse. That silence was short lived because out of nowhere appeared 'the Chief' who joined us up with our fellow travellers from Sydney. At that very instant, we were introduced to those profound and immortal words: 'on the bus'.



Figure 1: 7th March 1966 MIDN David Shackleton circled.

CPOQMG Curly Hannaford saved me from myself on far more occasions than I can remember. Does anybody ever forget their training Chief?

How wise it was, and is, that Chiefs are so influential in training future naval officers. Many years later, I made sure the CPOs in my ships understood how important it was for them to train my junior officers, which would also help those officers come to understand how important Chiefs were. Simple law of the jungle.

I joined as a seaman Midshipman, with an expectation of serving for 9 years if I passed the exams and deemed to be of the right stuff. The scheme was known as the Supplementary List, which undertook a much shorter training program than those who went to the Naval College. Navy was gearing up for Vietnam and new ships and submarines (and aircraft) and needed bridge watchkeeping officers. The idea was to get us qualified, get us to sea, and keep us there. For the most part, that's what happened. Did I understand that? No.

I was born on the 2nd March 1948, in Leeds, Yorkshire UK. During WWII my mother worked in a munitions factory and my father served as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force, where he was a fitter fixing damaged aircraft. They married in 1946 and moved in with my mum's family. After being accepted for Australia's assisted migration program, they earned the honour of being known as 10 pound poms. My sister and me were about two shillings and six pence. After leaving UK in December 1957 onboard SS *Strathaird*, my first sea posting, we arrived in Adelaide in January 1958 so my dad could live in a stinking hot and dry climate to counter the Berrri-Berrri he acquired in Burma during the war, and we could learn to love being stinking hot. The migrant hostel was a disused army camp, constructed of the ubiquitous corrugated iron and with shared amenities for everything, and kept in a state of repair that encouraged its inmates to find alternative lodgings as quickly as possible. Life was hard for them, but they succeeded. I'm so lucky and grateful that they made that journey and took that risk, and I'm proud to be an Australian, with a piece of paper to prove it.

For my part, I survived being placed on Commodore's Report at *Cerberus*, then Quarterly Report; being a final warning to buck up or you are on your way. My staff course training helped me explain how, when in command of *Derwent*, she managed to clip *Swan* during a towing exercise and rip off a 20 man life raft over *Derwent's* sickbay, requiring the stokers to weld some plating back together. The life raft didn't inflate the right way up so the collision became a side issue. Oh yeah!! To help matters, some of my sailors had been ashore in Port Hedland, in a pub no less. My Commodore back in *Stirling* found himself dealing with media questions about a major naval catastrophe and loss of life. Of course, I thoroughly enjoyed the career shaping opportunity to talk this over with him. As the reader will know, any collision at sea is most definitely frowned upon, but not long after I left, *Derwent* did win the Gloucester Cup. My relief was Jim Stapleton and inevitably our names were confused by the locals.

Of the 18 young men in my Midshipman's entry, I was the last man standing. This is the short version of my journey through many interesting years in the bat cave, with a small conclusion on what came after. By September 1969 I had earned a full bridge watchkeeping certificate during *Perth's* second Vietnam deployment (Bill Ritchie was the D) and of course I then automatically knew all there was to know. This proved to be a temporary state of affairs. But I'd been 'up top' and had my 21st birthday in Da Nang while the ship was doing gunfire support. On return to Australia, where I noticed that the peace movement and long hair had become fashionable, I went from one of our most modern ships to the ancient *Queenborough*, and after about a year then to the clapped out minehunter *Curlew* as her navigator, where being part of a ship's company comprised mainly of bubblied was a priceless opportunity to experience a hidden world of culture that could never be believed if you hadn't been there.

These foundational experiences were an important prelude to my first formal association with the bat cave. In September 1971, I commenced the 16-week little D, or Operations Room Officer course at *Watson*. We learned about how to run an ops room, including instruction on who did what and why. Radar and other theories were taught, and tactics. We were only instructed on RN equipment's because *Watson* hadn't been told we had bought the DDGs. Moreso, the Navy didn't buy any training equipment for them either. Our course officer was an RN Long D on exchange who instilled in us how critical the CPORP was to our success and that we should have bought the British County class DDG instead of the Adams DDG - nah, but otherwise organised the weekly social program.

This was in the days when the old ND school was on the south side of *Watson*, near the Solartron; all now gone.

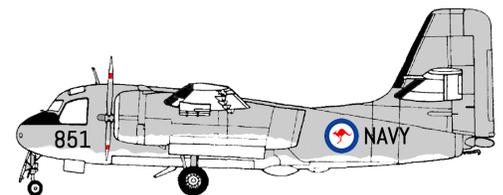
My previous DDG experience must have counted because I was then posted to *Hobart* as assistant Direction Officer, meaning that I kept watches as an ORO with another officer who we still called the Evaluator, and bridge watches otherwise. Mike Taylor was the D and then Ken Clements. I'm reasonably sure Bob Morris was the CPORP. We did the Vietnam workup and in August 1971, a week before deploying, the government decided *Brisbane* would not be relieved and cancelled the war. *Hobart's* Captain found out on the TV news. We won the jackpot though and became *Melbourne's* air defence escort. We went everywhere and did everything, including to the very first RIMPAC, of which I eventually did four. It was really busy, and there's a few dits better not told. We accumulated 13 months away from Sydney in those 18 months, and as *Hobart* sailed from Sydney to the US in June 1972 for her first gun mount update, I caught the ferry to join *Melbourne* at Cockatoo Island. This was the fourth time I had joined a ship at that tourist resort. I had decided to try and make Navy a more permanent career, but it required a firm recommendation on my personal reports. To put it tactfully, *Hobart's* XO and I had not bonded, probably because I had queried as to why only the Lieutenants and not Lieutenant Commanders were doing the weekend duties while we did a reasonable stint of weekly running. In my ignorance I obviously didn't understand the perquisites of seniority. The penalty was that my performance report was an acceptable average, but not the standard required for transfer, and I stayed on the waiting list to be offered a permanent commission. I later remembered this lesson of fairness when I became the senior watchkeeper and wrote the watchbill.

Mike Taylor was *Melbourne's* D, and I again became one of his team. Tim O'Sullivan, Paul Boddington, Bob Hall, Bruce (Bopper) Swain, and Peter Eveille were amongst the names I can dredge up. There was always a D on watch when *Melbourne* was flying and an ORO whenever in company, which was usually the case. Jim Durrant and WO Bob Morris were in my watchbill. Ralph MacDonald was the PORP ASAC. I was also a part of ship officer and Ron Fisher was one of my cheerful Petty Officers always feuding over who was right or wrong.

For a short period, we also had a USN Master Chief in the ORO watchbill. He had a broad New Jersey accent, and we figured that with the volume at which he normally spoke he was the equivalent of sound powered UHF, so radio silence with consorts would not be a problem. On one occasion the admiral appeared and asked where

Torrens was. The duty Fleet Staff officer became flustered and for some reason the plastic token representing *Torrens* had been knocked off the clunky plotting table. Our American mate saw it, and in a loud clear voice said, "admiral, I've found her, she's here on the deck," and put the chip back on the plot. The RP sailors bit their tongues to avoid laughing but smirks and sniggers were noted, and the Yank became a legend.

On another occasion, during the wee-small hours, the officer of the watch wondered why a Tracker (S2G) was flying past at deck level flashing its lights and orbiting the ship. It had returned early and wanted to land on but hadn't been able to get the air traffic control section on the radio. That part of the story might not have been precise. But what was proven to be the case was that the team in the Air Direction Room were watching an 'adult' movie supplied by the duty Cook, and nobody was properly listening out for the aircraft; and the door to the ADR was locked. Guy Griffiths was the Captain and not known for his sense of humour when high standards were not being met.



He was far from amused about not being able to get into the ADR. Bill Ritchie eventually did, and there was quite a degree of glumness all-round as the riot act was being read.

Melbourne was truly an antique ship and renovator's delight, but it was also an interesting ship to serve in. My cabin was on 2-deck aft, directly underneath the flight deck and number 2 arrestor wire. It was impossible not to hear a recovering aircraft approaching the ship and powering up momentarily in case they missed the wire. Then the smack-bang of hard tyres and hook on the deck came, instantly followed by the screech and rumble as the arrestor cable pulled out after it had been caught. Then the boots of the flight deck chain gang running to catch and then tie it down. The wire was then dragged back into place accompanied by the hissing and groaning of the hydraulic rams and re-set for the next recovery, making almost the same noise as when it was wrenched out. On one occasion I heard a Tracker making its approach but wondered about not hearing its power going up, or the noise of the hook scraping the deck and connecting with the wire. Then came the officer of the watch over the main broadcast piping 'crash on deck' because the Tracker had gone over the side into the sea, but fortunately was not run over by the ship. The aircrew were saved but one later recounted his concern when he found that the nose of the plane had been pushed inwards on contact with the sea, which had trapped his booted foot between the aircraft's skin and the pedal.

The ship's catapult was also prone to misbehaving, and on a later occasion an A4 suffered a 'soft shot', meaning that the piston that pushed the shuttle, which dragged the aircraft along the catapult track, lost its steam supply and the plane couldn't get flying speed. The aircraft ditched in front of *Melbourne* and the pilot chose not to eject. Fortunately, the plane sank quickly, and he could see *Melbourne* going over the top, and then he escaped. A flight safety meeting was later held in Singapore to review such matters. It was attended by aircrew and air controllers and conducted around a temporary bar, accompanied by the compulsory beer and sausages. At some point, a nameless Direction Officer made the profound observation that it was important that the number of aircraft recovered was the same as the number it had launched. A lengthy discussion then followed as to the importance of whether the aircraft which had been recovered had also taken off from the same ship! Fortunately, no minutes were taken of the meeting and Australia was still safe.

By this time, I had completed the ASAC course at *Watson* under the tutelage of John Whittaker and his team of WRAN RPs. They knew how to make students pay attention, sometimes responding to a controller's instruction about going harder in a way that left the 'pilot' and student giggling when they should have been more focussed on the task. That qualification enabled me to become leader of *Melbourne's* ASAC section, keeping ASAC watches with my team, which again included Ralph Macdonald, who I helped with his transfer to the Special Duties list. I had accumulated enough hours and did the exam for award of ASAC Grade A, and also had applied to do the air intercept controller's course. We knew the birdies flying around the blue yonder were bored when 'Groups 65' or some such number was decoded as "send for refreshments."

For reasons I can't remember, in addition to my air control and ORO duties, I had become the Commander's Assistant, responsible to the XO, Commander George Halley, for managing the ship's main watch bills, compiling daily orders and all kinds of administrative memoranda that contributed to making the ship run. Getting the stokers to provide members of a stores party was another cultural experience that had to be lived to be believed. My own assistant was CPOQMG Bert Kindelan, although I was probably more dispensable than Bert. What Bert didn't know about regulating didn't matter, and what I learned from him about regulating stood me in good stead ever afterwards.

Bert was the real power behind the throne and when my liaison with whoever didn't work, he and the other Chiefs fixed it. He was one of those marvellous Chiefs who took it upon himself to make sure I became a better officer, and a person I much respected.

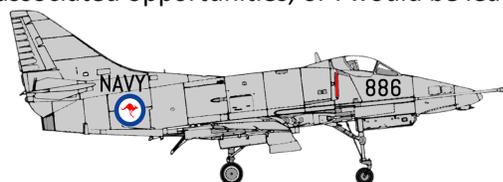
No story about *Melbourne* is complete without recounting that of the werewolf. When alongside in foreign ports, an aircrew officer (who was not on their mandatory 8 hour sleep cycle), was required to be duty on the forward gangway, where the sailors checked in their short leave cards and hoofed it for a run ashore. On one occasion in Pearl Harbour, a sailor wore a head mask looking like a werewolf, with a short leave card to match, and went ashore. The unfortunate officer had his own leave jammed. But the werewolf didn't know when to stop the act and jumped out of passageway corners during the middle watch when stokers were doing machinery space rounds, frightening them witless. The individual then made the mistake of giving the XO (Tos Dadswell) the same treatment, thereby instantaneously removing the remaining sense of humour of the ship's second in command. Not good. For either of them. On our approach to Sydney and as the air group was disembarking, a 'werewolf' was spotted sitting in the door space of a helicopter and waving at the ship. There's no such thing as a free ride and radio circuits were lit up, resulting in return of the helicopter and arrest of the individual. It was later found out that this individual was not the real culprit, who did fess up.

In January 1974 I received a letter from the US embassy in Canberra welcoming me to the Air Intercept Controller's course to be held in Dan Neck Virginia in March that year. Enclosed were the Orders (completed USN forms) I needed to verify my travel and approve on base accommodation. About a week later my posting came out from Navy confirming what the US told me. As we crossed the Pacific to collect replacement Trackers for those destroyed in the Nowra fire, Bob Hall and Peter 'Evil-eye' tutored me in fighter control techniques which proved really useful.

I left *Melbourne* in San Diego, and in Chicago had my first experience of navigating through massive American airports. At Norfolk airport, which serviced the Dam Neck area, I caught a US Navy bus and as I attempted to enter the base realised how important the USN's Orders were. The course was four weeks of theory, simulators connected to the ubiquitous SPA-4 displays, and then live control of F4s based at NAS Oceana. Our instructors were all Chiefs and senior POs who had accumulated lots of experience controlling fighters in Vietnam as part of the Tonkin Gulf Yacht club, and PIRAZ – Positive Identification Radar Zone. No dummies there.

There were two Iranian naval officers on the same course, and although Iran had bought the new F14 fighters, we were all excluded from F14 lectures. The instructors thought that 'Orstraalian' sounded similar to 'Irraineeyan' and teamed us up on simulators playing the role of pilot and controller. I sometimes made the simulator aircraft turn left when they ordered right, or instituted some other contravention of what was ordered, and it was fascinating to watch the reaction. Nuclear comes close. The instructors thought it was funny too but didn't want an international incident. I suggested we should meet some USN pilots and talk about air control stuff, but the low interest light came on brightly and it proved to be too difficult.

Navy birdies can always spot a mug and I became a paid up honorary member of each social club of *Melbourne's* squadrons. They did know how to party. In 1973, a year earlier, I had been offered a three year extension on my short service commission and I had turned it down. The Captain interviewed me, and I somewhat bluntly told him I wanted a permanent career and the associated opportunities, or I would be leaving. He understood what I meant.



I figured if the Navy's flag Captain recommendation did not work then nothing would. By September 1975, I had served in *Melbourne* for 3.5 years, had received a permanent commission at almost the end of my initial short service commitment, and I was on my way to UK to do the PWO course and two years exchange with the RN, all of which was at sea. I did the Above Water Advanced Warfare course before leaving UK, which in those days resulted in being qualified as a PWO(D).

On return from UK, I was posted as D of *Hobart* and to relieve Les Libbesson in May 1979, but prior to that event I had to complete the full suite of NCDS courses at CDSC, which would take about three months. Pussers expected people to spend that time away from home or pay for the travel. My friend Gerry McLennan was doing all the operator courses, so we carpoled from Sydney. CPORP Barry Conroy was also going to *Hobart* and did the same operator courses too. Barry had the annoying habit of being top of the class for all the progress tests, and he was a great guy to go with it. Chris Mitchell was his offsider in *Hobart*. The Systems Course was one of the best I have ever done anywhere. I found the Programming Course a whole new adventure into software concepts and gained a much better understanding why NCDS did some of the things it did. CDSC was a very professional outfit and I learned a lot just by interacting with Navy people, public servant experts and contractors. Much later it moved to Sydney and changed its character entirely.

Captain Tony Horton relieved Phil Kennedy in command of *Hobart* for his second command tour, and Les went to a staff job in Canberra. In those days *Hobart* had four warfare officers who had all done advanced training and a fully qualified navigator, and our senior sailors had experience coming out of their ears. Talk about a top-heavy ship. I'd venture to say that we knew what we were doing.

It was a busy posting. We accompanied *Melbourne* across the Tasman where its LWO2 literally fell off its mounting and we became the air defence commander controlling the 'war' and *Melbourne's* A4s after launch. On that same trip an A4 went over the side with a sailor in the cockpit, and *Hobart* rescued him via a swimmer in that really rough weather. The XO pretended to run in the rescued sailor for jumping ship. David Martin came over when we returned to Sydney and personally thanked the ABUW who had done the rescue. We found that using the missile fire control radars in horizon search was a great way to pick up F-111 as they came over the land, but I expect we were avoiding the fiction that with them having longer range missiles than we had it was just a bit of a game. *Hobart* won the Gloucester Cup that year and contributed again to the Adams Class being the most regular winners for many years. We did RIMPAC and again found that being on the Link meant we knew what was going on and acquitted ourselves fairly well. A *Brisbane* sailor had jumped over the side with the idea of escaping to one of the islands. RIMPAC came to a stop, and he was lucky to be found before being swept out into the deep Pacific Ocean or becoming shark bait. By July 1980 *Hobart* had stopped running and I went to the RAN Staff Course at *Penguin* before once again relieving Les Libbesson in Canberra.

The staff job in Canberra was my first shore posting other than courses, by which time I had served continuously in 12 sea-going postings over 11.5 years which means I moved around a lot. As I said, the idea was to get us qualified, send us to sea and keep us there. And 'they' did. As one ship stopped running, I went to another as a watchkeeper. I was later to become XO of *Perth*, and then had command of *Derwent* and *Brisbane*, taking my total to 15 sea-going postings. I featured occasionally in the Green Rub and Stiff... book, but I look back on those years with great fondness.

I had five postings to DDGs, and in my spare time after paying off I wrote a PhD thesis about how the RAN had changed from being British to more American, and more self-reliant because we had bought those ships.

You can get a free download at this site if you want something to put you to sleep – it has pictures.

<https://www.Navy.gov.au/media-room/publications/sea-power-series-impact-charles-f-adams-class-guided-missile-destroyers>

Toward the end of last century, the Navy was going through considerable change. In July 1999, at age 51, with nobody more surprised than me, I became the first PWO qualified officer and one of Navy's youngest Vice Admirals on promotion and assumed command of the RAN. Three years later, in 2002 I paid off and went looking for a new career, and with my wife Robyn spent 20 odd years running our own consulting business and me learning stuff I didn't know about in the Navy but wished I had. In one of life's quirks, Ron Fisher hired me when he was CEO of Raytheon Australia.

The experience I had in the bat cave and DDGs gave me impetus to make sure those ships were replaced in our Navy. Turning Anzac frigates into Aegis destroyers was never going to work. Along with my team, we convinced the government of that requirement. Having the USN provide an Aegis cruiser during our operation in East Timor helped demonstrate how weak our naval air defences had become. The year 2000 Defence Policy announced formation of a program that became the Hobart class, and I still think we need more of these kinds of ships. In what she regards as a great honour, Robyn became the launching lady of the new *Brisbane*.

Over all this time I learned many things. When others need to know we are going the right way you have to have the ability to give them confidence. Having a sense of humour can make all the difference. Knowing what you are talking about helps too.

The senior sailor of my four member retinue as Chief of Navy was PO Steward 'Scratcher' Neil, one of Navy's characters and a real pleasure to work with. When I went for my first official photos we had a real laugh with the photographers and decided he needed a formal photo as well. It still makes me laugh to think about it. Scratcher is the one on the left. Scratcher and the three Leading Seaman who stayed in the outfit all made Warrant Officer, and every day I worked with them it reminded me of why I was there.



Figure 2: Scratcher and the Admiral



ORA Member Profile: Leut Michele Chapman

NAVAL CAREER: - Continued Part 2 from Spring Edition



Administration Officer, Senior Warfare Officers Course, RANSWARS, HMAS WATSON

01 Jul 85 – 28 Jun 86

Lieutenant: Responsible to Training Commander. Administered all requirements needed for the effective conduct of the Senior Warfare Officers Course (the premier Course of the RAN) Duties included responsible for all classified publication held at the RANSWARS accommodation booking for all Officers on course both internal and external requirements responsible for booking all admin requirements needed by Officers on course arranging all course printing, notes and booklets; booking venues, facilities and transport requirements Graduation Function Mess Dinner on completion Arrange for ongoing travel to next course phase for all Officers to their various sea going units.

Command Housing Officer/Acting Command Personnel Services Officer (Command Australian Naval Support) COMAUSNAVSUP Sydney

01 Jul 86 – 26 Sep 92

Lieutenant. Responsible to Flag Officer Commanding East Australian Area Responsible for the conduct of the various departments within Command Personnel Services Office (CPSO) Housing - Allocation of housing to Personnel.

*Temporary accommodation when leaving or arriving into Sydney area.

*1500 houses on CPSO register Maintenance – all repairs and required maintenance.

Removals—Arrivals—Funerals—Social Workers

Was Acting CPSO (Command Personal Services Officer) at the time the decision to despatch the

Australian Task Group to the Persian Gulf, August 1990. Introduced additional support features to enhance family support for deploying personnel.



Awarded Flag Officer Naval Support Command Commendation

08 Feb 91

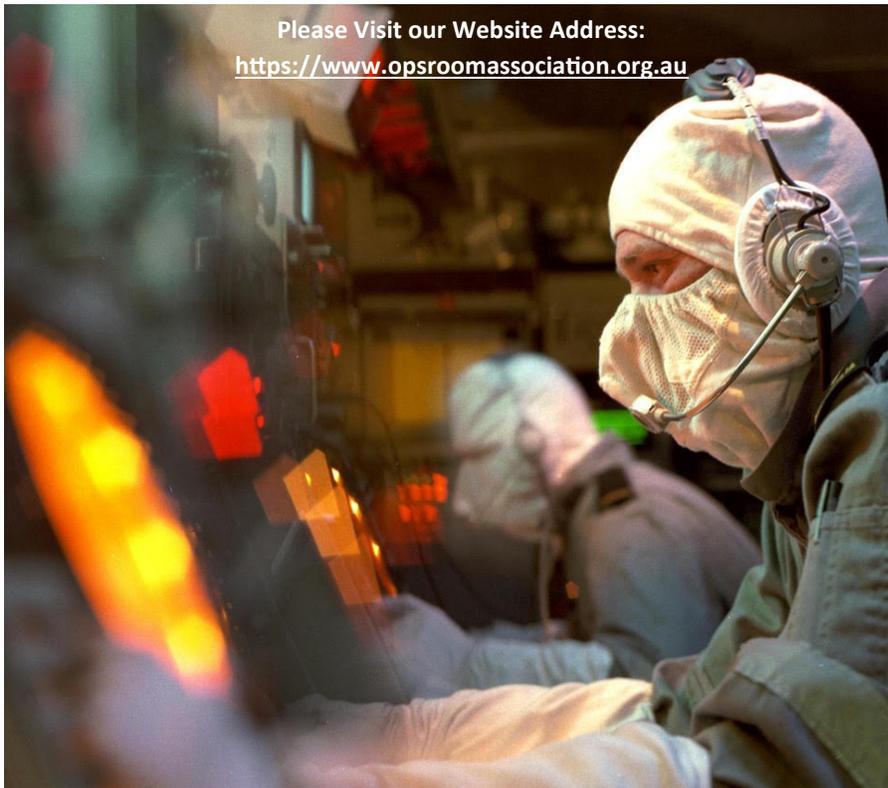
For performance of duties as Deputy Command Personnel Services Officer and Command Housing Officer, Naval Support Command.

*Transferred to Active Reserve Service.

Various positions - 27 Sep 92 - Nov 98

Present Day:

Currently I am residing in the picturesque Hinterland of the Gold Coast often referred to as the “Green behind the Gold”. My family consists of three children and twelve very active grand-children. At this moment we are eagerly awaiting the imminent arrival of our newest addition to the Chapman Clan and we are very blessed that all family members enjoy good health. With a diverse range of interests this means there is never a dull moment, they range from Ballroom Dancing, participating in the practice of Tai Chi and I hold a deep passion for Japanese Calligraphy (Shodo) where I achieved the distinguished rank of 7th Dan. Professionally, I derive great satisfaction from my work at Woolworths Supermarket and enjoy staying active and engaging with people. Needless to say, in my “spare” time my favourite hobby is getting lost in my garden and being outside; so, I will either be trimming, chopping, pruning, weeding or simply pushing my lawn mower. All in all, looking back at my time in the Navy it will always remain a cherished chapter of unforgettable memories and I would do it all again.



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

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 update your contact email addresses for the following ORA Committee personnel.

PRESIDENT : Gordon Lowe - president@opsroomassociation.org.au

SECRETARY: Chris Mitchell - secretary@opsroomassociation.org.au

WEBMASTER: Bill Furey - webmaster@opsroomassociation.org.au

The older email addresses, will be eventually phased out.

If **YOUR** contact information needs updating, please get in touch with the Secretary or Webmaster immediately.

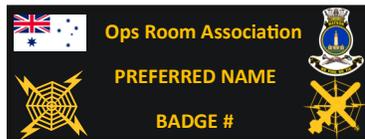


The easiest way to find out your Membership status, is to go to the members area and check out the Members List...it gives you the information required.



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

ORA Name Badges:



If you require a new ORA Name Badge—please complete the application.

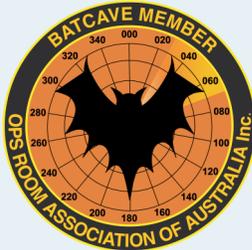
Pay \$35 to the account on the application form. [Click Here](#)

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



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....

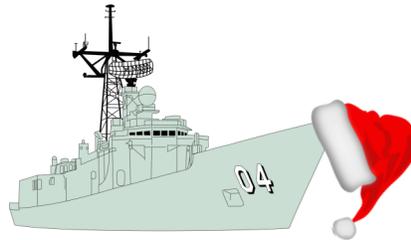
1. **Batcave Lapel Badges.**
\$10 each plus postage.
2. **Batcave Challenge Coins.**
\$20 each plus postage.
3. **ORA Patches.**
\$5.00 each plus postage.

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

VOLUNTEER WANTED OPS ROOM SHOP MANAGER

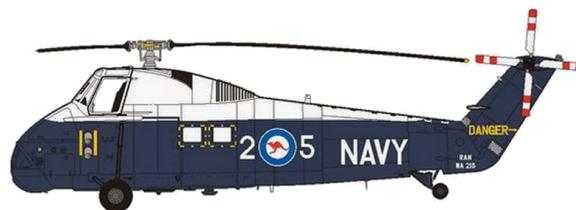
If you feel that you may have the desire to do this much needed task, then please contact our Secretary/Treasurer.
Chris Mitchell

Email: [click here](#)

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

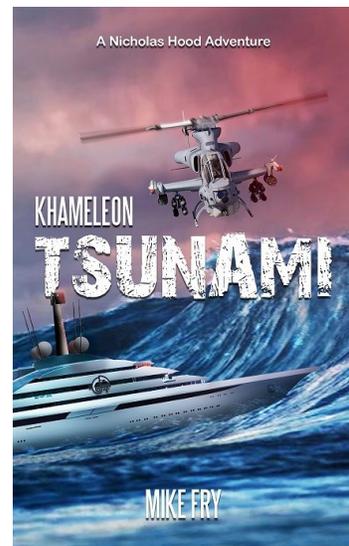
Stepping back into the world of espionage and MI6 was not what Nicholas Hood had intended. He thought that helping out his old KGB/FSB pal Dimitry with a problem could be a useful distraction. The problem was a 585ft hybrid warship. Singapore seemed like a relaxing place to start a new adventure with 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

The paperback is available or you can email Mike on 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: -



CMDR William Gray (Bill) Ritchie
AM RAN Rtd
ORA Member # 01
O1421
Served 1944 - 1983

VADM Robert Andrew Kevin
Walls AO RAN
O1216
Served 1955 - 1997

ABRP Peter Harold Banfield
R95806
Served 1967 - 1987

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

HMAS Melbourne entering Sydney Harbour



Courtesy Department of Defence

“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”

ABRP Class 1B/68 — Photo supplied by Royal Australian Navy



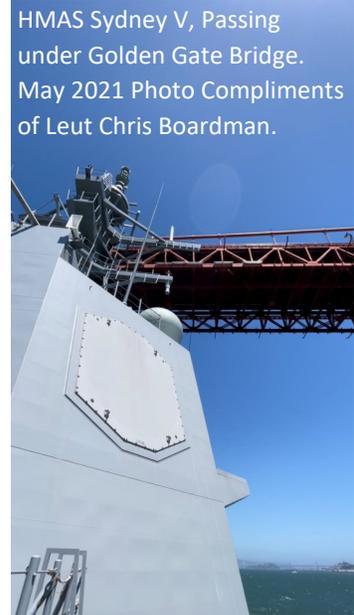
A.B.R.P. 1B/68

ORD KELLEY ORD WHEAT ORD STONE ORD KIMMINS ORD KRAUSE
ORD TOOKE ORD PIPER PORP EASTWOOD ORD WILLIAMS ORD IRRGANG

Photos: various



HMAS Brisbane III RASAP. Talisman Sabre 2023
Photo compliments of Leut Chris Boardman & RAN



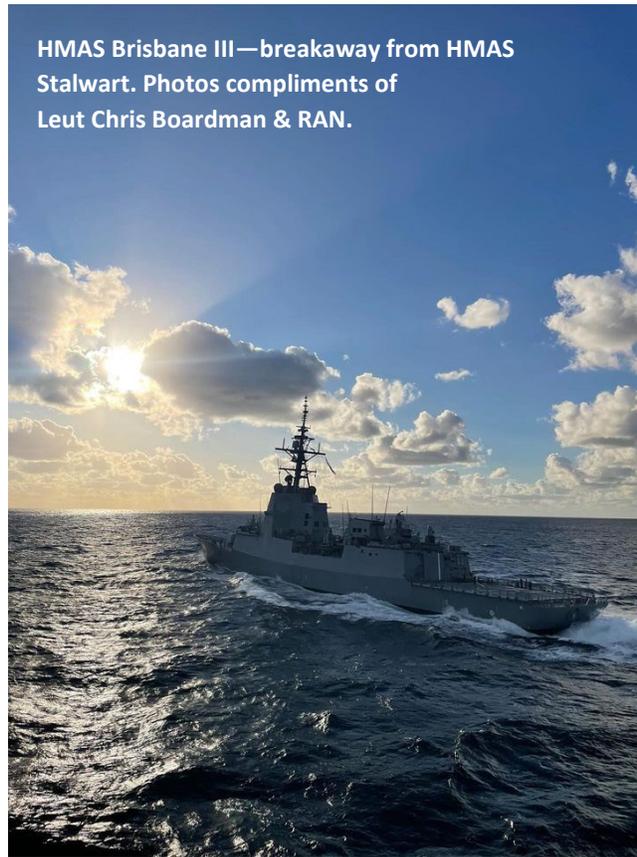
HMAS Sydney V, Passing under Golden Gate Bridge. May 2021 Photo Compliments of Leut Chris Boardman.

“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.”

HMAS Brisbane III conducting flight ops with USN MH60R during Talisman Sabre 2023. Photo taken from RAN MH60R flight 8 C/S (Chaos) photo compliments of the RAN.



HMAS Brisbane III—breakaway from HMAS Stalwart. Photos compliments of Leut Chris Boardman & RAN.





“Dits” from the Past: By Bob Thomas



The Deodorant Incident - HMAS Perth '74

Forward Ops and Coms mess somewhere in the Pacific getting ready for shore leave. Everyone was rotating through the two showers, coming back into the mess to get shifted into their civvies. As was customary, one would raise one's arms to receive a spray of under-arm'ers, from whoever was holding the can. I picked up a nearby can of fly spray and was confronted immediately with the armpits of ABRP Varo who appeared grateful for a squirt under each. No flies on him.

The Liberty Boat - HMAS Melbourne '77

Anchored out in Sydney Harbour we were relying on the boat routine to get ashore. My counterpart AIC, PO Greg (Bing) Dybing asks the OOD “what time does the BO AT GO AT”? The OOD replies “speak properly son”. Bing replies “okay, what time is the boat goat”.

The Gamlen Incident - HMAS Melbourne, Sri Lanka '77

Stopover in Colombo on the way to UK. Long skinny bum boats alongside trying to sell us their wares. The Bosun (LCDR dickhead) says “get rid of that boat”. Obeying the last order first, LSRP Punge Philips picks up a 20L drum of Gamlen and drops it over the side from the boat space on 3 deck. Being of wooden construction, the hull of the bum boat was no match for a full drum of Gamlen which went straight through the bottom of the boat.

Where is your President?

Year: 1977, Venue: 42 Commando Royal Marines, Bickleigh Barracks, Plymouth UK

Occasion: HMAS Melbourne's PO Seaman's Mess luncheon invitation to Sergeant's Mess.

Following lunch with 42 Commando, the president unbuckled his Sam Brown belt. This is an indication that we could start drinking shorts (for the uninitiated that's undiluted spirits) and commence playing darts and silly indoor games. Well into the afternoon, while Bob MacGregor and I were showing the marines how to drink rum, there was a bit of a commotion which led to PORP Vincent Henry (Ned) Kelly (AKA Angry Ant) being physically ejected from the mess by a couple of burly sergeants. During this incident, the RM mess president turned to Bob MacGregor and myself and asked “where is your President, I wish to speak to him”. Bob replied “that's him going out the door now”.

Nickname “Trollycat”

Year: 1977, Venue: Main Gate, HM Naval Base Devonport, Plymouth UK

Occasion: Arriving back onboard after lunch with 42 Commando.

After watching Bob MacGregor spending the ride back from Bickleigh Barracks throwing up out of the taxi window, I apologised profusely to the cab driver, paid him and helped Bob out of the cab. We crossed the road to the main gate of Devonport Naval Base (in our winter blues uniform) then, according to Bob Mac, this is where he took over as I collapsed at the front gate.

With the aid of a forthcoming dockyard worker, they secured a nearby four-wheeled trolley upon which they placed me and proceeded through the dockyard to our ship berthed alongside. As luck would have it, the route took us straight past the quarterdeck where Melbourne's Officers were assembled, starting to step off the brow on short leave. Somehow they managed to get me aboard where I crashed on POUW John Avery's (AKA Chumley Farquhar Junior) bunk as it was the first middle bunk inside the mess. I didn't wake up until midnight. Chumley was annoyed with me as he couldn't access his bunk and I was annoyed that everyone else (including MacGregor) had gone ashore without me. For the remainder of that deployment I was referred to as the Trollycat.

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)

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:

Mike Fry - Kingston, TAS

David Tyrell-Clark - Bentley, WA

Adrian Iverach - Mascot NSW

We are thinking of all our fellow crew Members whilst in sickbay.

"Get well soon".



**THE ORA COMMITTEE WISH ALL
MEMBERS & FAMILIES A VERY
MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR**

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.