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

Herald Sun

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1998

NEWS PICTORIAL

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Summer
TOP FICTION
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NEW YEAR'S EVE
HOT SPOTS
PAGE 100

WIN A CAR

PLUS: FLY FISHING JUMBO CROSSWORD • SHORT STORIES

■ **37 yachts out of race**

■ **Crew member missing overboard**

■ **Fears for lost yacht**

SEA PERIL

BY REGINA TITELIUS
AND AMANDA LULHAM

Sydney-Hobart race became a battle for survival last night as battered boats fought ferocious seas and force winds. One man was missing, as the navy searched with helicopters and weather-visioning equipment. Two crew members were washed overboard and saved. Crews were held for nine hours aboard the 56-year-old timber yacht *Winston Churchill*, which failed to make an emergency rendezvous. A 12 crew from *VC Offshore Stand Aside* were taken to safety after their mast and cabin were in hospital at dawn last night — one severed fingers, one with injuries and another unspecified injuries. One of the injured, Mike Moran, said "one monolithic wave" clipped the boat's stern. "The sea was big but it was absolutely monstrous. It was one bastard hit — it was big," he said. "It got us at the wrong end and rolled us. It rolled completely over. It did a 360deg. turn. We came up the mast. And we were in a trouble with half the crew on the boat."



Adrift in the open sea, the crew of *VC Offshore Stand Aside* wait for rescue late yesterday. (Picture: ABC TV NEWS)

The veteran yacht *Winston Churchill* was crippled and in danger of sinking but could not be found. The yacht, which competed in the first Sydney-Hobart in 1945, failed to make a rendezvous with the yacht. Maritime safety authorities said they feared for the *Winston Churchill* and its crew. Another yacht, *B52*, lost its mast and sent a distress signal. A Sea King helicopter found the boat and said it. The navy was also searching for *Winston Churchill*. Yacht masts cracked and cabins shattered as 70-knot wind hammered the race fleet down the NSW coast to the eastern tip of Victoria. A crew member was washed overboard but was saved by a safety harness. The spinnaker pole snapped and went under its keel. A crew member was washed overboard but was saved by a safety harness.

Peril at sea

fight to stay alive

By PHILLIP CULLEN and GEOFF EASDOWN

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

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

"They're not racing any more. It's a fight to stay alive out there," said Lacey, telling of seas that had the 20-metre boat surfing off wave crests at a unheard of 21.9 knots.

Throughout the night the yacht raced at motor speed, averaging 18 knots, a big south-easter.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Police copter pilot on-call, Darryl Jones, said that American John Campbell from the sea.

Campbell had been washed overboard, the injuries and was suffering severe hypothermia and head injuries when led from the water, about 800m from the vessel.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Charles Alsop, 27, was competing in his first Syd-

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

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

"It blew up to about 60 knots within a couple of minutes. We were quite prepared for it, but as I said it was one of those freak waves that turned the boat over."

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

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

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

"In the end there was



Abandoned: a life-raft from the Inkeeper.

only a couple of feet of water inside."

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

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

Many of the crew were being cared for by com-

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

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

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

High wind delays starts

By JACK TAYLOR

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

The race starts were scheduled to 3pm today.

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

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

"The only other time the race starts were postponed was in 1991."

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

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

Some of the 47 Melbourne to Devonport and 22 Melbourne to Hobart crews had already decided not to start yesterday.

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

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

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

WEATHER REPORT

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

Duty meteorologist Dean Stewart said wind of 45 knots — about 85kmh — was whipping into squalls of 55 knots (100kmh).

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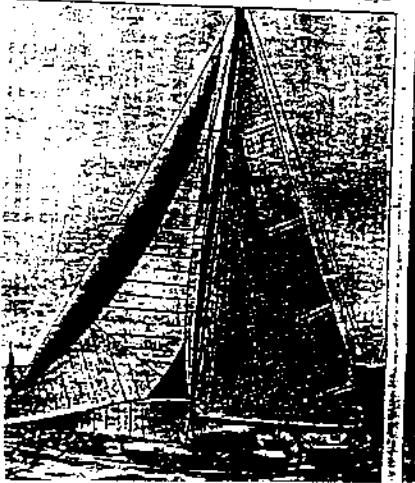
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How a yacht came to grief

Gales

By SIMON BENSON and MICHELLE POUNTNEY

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

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

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

What no one could have known was an intense, low-pressure system was starting to develop in the Tasman Sea. With the race almost under way, an update was issued at 9.26am, upgrading the strong wind warning to gale force, with winds of 30-40 knots.

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

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

"They are very difficult to forecast." It was at 2.14pm that a severe storm warning was issued with wind of more than 50 knots and seas of 5-7m.

"This was forecast well before any of the fleet hit it," the meteorologist said. Sydney regional director of the weather bureau Pat Sullivan said the sailors were forewarned.

"They had to make a judgment," Mr Sullivan said. "Even before the race started there was a warning of gales." In Melbourne, experts said weather of such ferocity happens only about once every 25 years.

MIDNIGHT SPECIAL

By John Hamilton



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

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

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

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

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

The last of her crew members were winched to safety by members of Victoria Police Air Wing hovering over the boat just before 8am as it went down beneath them.

As survivors, eyes glistening with tears, said their rescuers were "the bravest of the brave".

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

Their faces were blistered and eyes were crusted with salt and their hands shook with stress and shock.

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

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

The nine-man crew are Peter Baynes, 50, Peter Carter, 50, Ian Griffith, 49, David Leslie, 50, Trevor McDonagh, 60, Roger Barnett, 50, Neil Dickson, 49, Kev Foran, 53, and Bill Butler, 51.

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

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

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

"We were 37th in the fleet, leaving the heads and were improving steadily, running 18th near Gabo Island.

WHAT HAPPENED *Midnight Special*



1 Huge wave smashes over the boat's mast. 2 Nine crew winched to safety as their yacht sinks and takes on water. 3 Yacht sinks as last of crew boards helicopter.

was for wind gusting up to 40 to 50 knots, "something we could handle quite easily".

But about 1pm on Sunday, "it started to get nasty".

The *Midnight Special* had heard a message from *Sword of Orion*, 10 nautical miles away. It said: "We are experiencing 60 to 65-knot winds with gusts reaching 70 to 78 knots."

The crew jumped to action. Soon the sails were reduced from a full mainsail set to just a storm jib as the fury of the tempest hit.

The crew was thrown around the boat. Peter Carter hurt his back and ribs and Ian Griffith tore ligaments in his knee.

"We were skidding down the face of these enormous waves with the tip of the mast in the water," said Kev Foran.

The crew decided to turn back and head to Gabo Island.

"We were halfway back when we had a serious knockdown and were all thrown across the boat again.

"Then she rolled right over — 360deg. — coming out right side up with the mast and all the rigging gone and the cabin top partly crushed.

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

Stan Zemanek, Titan Ford Foxtel crew member.

the *Midnight Special* upside down.

While the rest of the crew were sheltering beneath the shattered deck, Bill Butler was at the bow, now trapped underwater by his safety harness.

"I thought my time was up," he said.

But, miraculously, another wave hit the boat's keel and it righted itself again.

Neil Dickson crept forward and with his knife cut Bill free.

This wave took away what was left of the boat's cabin. The *Midnight Special* was now sinking as the Merimbula helicopter winched three more crew to safety as they jumped into the huge seas.

"There were now four of us left in the boat — we sat there like stunned mulets," Bill Butler said.

"Our boat was rapidly filling up with water and we didn't know what we were going to do next."

THEN the Victoria Police helicopter appeared "like a guardian angel overhead".

"One more wave and we would have gone down with the boat," said Kev Foran.

The police helicopter winched them up. "They told us it was their first yacht rescue in the worst conditions — they were absolutely brilliant," said Bill Butler.

And now, here they were, in the Mud Brick Pavilion in Mallacoota, coming to grips with what had happened.

But the crew of the *Midnight Special* were far from being finished.

They were catching a bus to Melbourne to connect with a flight to Tasmania and the party in Hobart to welcome home what it left of the

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Hail the rescuers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HERALD SUN
30/12/98

'I am the luckiest man alive'

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

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

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

By MICHELLE EDMUNDS

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

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

"At first I thought I could see

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

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

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

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

bell, who has 10 years of sailing experience.

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

Campbell was released from La Trobe Regional Hospital yesterday.

HERALD SUN 29/12/98

Tragedy's unsung heroes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



some ambulance officers waiting for a rescue chopper.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

God bless them, every one.

JOHN HAMILTON is an associate editor.

HEARST SUN 30/12/9

How they did it: rescuers tell of triumph and tragedy

NO MARRIS
DRIAN WOODLEY
Staff reporters

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

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

Many of the rescued required hospital treatment. Forty were taken to Parnbula District, a small 30-bed hospital on the NSW south coast. One of the doctors working there, Geoffrey Thomas, managed just one hour of sleep between early Monday and last night as victims came in suffering rib and chest injuries, abrasions, bruising and cuts. "Basically they were thrown around with a lot of violence by the waves," he said. The disaster zone was relatively accessible to airborne emergency services. As rescue spokesman David Gray said: "I guess if it was going to happen it happened in pretty much the right place where we could get resources from as far as Melbourne, Latrobe Valley, Colton, Sydney South Coast and Canberra, and they are there in the right spot."

Of paramount importance in saving lives was making the most use of rescue resources. The right people, the right aircraft, the right deployment, the right priorities. This was where "the team" — the heart of AusSAR — the Australian Search and Rescue, a division of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority — came in.

The people of this unit, in a modern office block on the inner edge of Canberra's Civic District, know how it feels to be in trouble on the sea. Most of them are experienced sailors and more than 40 responded to a call. One was Scott Constable. His job was to co-ordinate the helicopters — seven, before Monday was over.

The first distress signals in the Winston Churchill came in soon after 3pm that day. Mr Constable was in control of the seven



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

Picture: AP



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

helicopters already called out and elements of nearly 20 aircraft that came into operation as the night progressed. By the peak of the rescue, 24 hours later, that number had risen to 38, with 23 fixed-wing aircraft and nine helicopters.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE NERVES



Anatomical

- 1 Identify the
 - 2 Maintain
 - 3 Monitor
 - 4 Main crew operator,
 - 5 Yachtsman cannot be
 - 6 Rescuer
 - 7 Pilot main
 - 8 After rescue he signals (both arms)
 - 9 Winch line 2 people on helicopter winched. Other day they are 100 knot.
 - 10 Survivors
- Live crew
Midnight
Solo, Glot
Business
Sword of
Winston
VC Drish

Salvage is a race for reward

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

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

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

Winning skipper says 'never again' to classic

From Page 1
maxi crossed the finish line

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



Hero tolerance

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

At their saddest, such follies descend into dramas of the absurd: to the level of Jessica Dubroff, the seven-year-old Californian girl who died in 1986, along with her father and a pilot instructor, during an

The struggle is no longer about absolutes, but about pointless refinements. If one cannot be the first to climb Mount Everest, one can at least be the first to climb it without oxygen or under the age of 15 or on wooden legs.

At their saddest, such follies descend into dramas of the absurd: to the level of Jessica Dubroff, the seven-year-old Californian girl who died in 1986, along with her father and a pilot instructor, during an

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



“The struggle is no longer about absolutes, but about pointless refinements. If one cannot be the first to climb Mount Everest, one can at least be the first to climb it without oxygen or under the age of 15 or on wooden legs.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Since then we have been regaled with stories of the bravery of crews facing impossible odds against mountainous seas and hostile winds.

Sadly, six of the sailors on the Sydney-Honolulu yacht race did not return from the sea. As their vessels were humiliated in pieces by the forces of nature, others were sent out to rescue the hapless seafarers.

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

risked life and limb to reach missions have been round praised. Here are the true heroes, such exploits those sent out round to the survivors and retrieve the bodies.

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

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

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

THE WIRE

BADLY out into the meandering of Bass Strait on a grey dawn of disaster, the three crew of the 412 helicopter were flying on only two hours of sleep. They were on the most hazardous and difficult rescue of their careers, flying into a 50-knot gale over impenetrable seas. Eleven patients were plummeting distress signals. One was missing, presumed dead.

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

"I'd never seen anything like it," said paramedic Murray Traynor, 34, a NSW ambulance officer for 12 years, sitting as a member of the Special Access Team (SAT), three years on helicopter rescue. This was the 70th "op" and his fourth over water. In the jargon of the rescue business, paramedics are called "the ball," and with good reason.

From this moment, Tyler flew with his attention focused on the horizon and the controls. Not once — not even for a split second — during the next 35 minutes did he dare remove his hands from the control stick. One slip and they would be in the water. Tyler called the big waves as they swept below with the noise and speed of an express train. "Big one ten seconds away."

The pilot was American Dan Tyler, 19, a Nebraska farm boy, veteran of 1902 sorties as a Huey pilot with the 1st Air Cavalry in Vietnam. A catch-and-rescue pilot since 1979, he was facing his second whiplash as the first had been in the 1997 Sydney to Hobart.

Beneath, the crippled Haldal was bucking, pitching and rolling. On deck were seven upright men, watching frantically. Another was stretched on the deck, lashed down. Tyler was flying blind, directed by Frontberg, who was hanging out the starboard hatch, maintaining an incessant chatter on their headset intercoms. "Survivor, two o'clock forward 15, eight 10. Standby Steady, Steady!"

Two hours later, they were up again, flying to Melbourne offshore, where the search-and-rescue flights were based. It was like a war-dance ship, planes and helicopter all over, skidding off into the churning sky. Finally, the aircraft flew under that

They were not going to winch the crew from the boat. The risk of fouling the winch cable was too great. That happens, the boat wins, we end up in the water," Tyler said. Hand-signalling, Frontberg and Traynor conveyed that they wanted one of the sailors to put on a safety harness, leap into the huge seas and swim clear of the boat. With relief, Traynor reported: "One's going in." "The ball!" Traynor was going down the wire. He would drop into the sea and pick the swimmer to safety.

A 150 metres visibility was good, but as Tyler thought the helicopter was 10 to 5 metres from their approach, it reversed immediately. The waves were to become hummers, and the 7-hull, gusting to 50 knots, lifted the air with streaks of white

The campers' headquarters of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, the duty staff of seven men, three and aviation rescue officers were plunged in to what would become the greatest crisis SAT had confronted. As weather got more diffi-

ty signals in quick succession. Relay calls were also coming in, voice transmissions on VHF yacht radio, dramatic calls for help relayed by three coastal reception stations and relayed to SAT.

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

By 6pm on Sunday, SAT had nine distressed yachts listed on its control board. As night fell over Bass Strait, the SAT was calling in all available staff and planning for a massive effort to begin at daylight. The RAAF sent a P-3 Orion from Adelaide, and HMAS Newcastle sailed from Sydney with only a third of its normal complement. RAAF Sea King and Sea Hawk helicopters, the only aircraft with capability for night vision, were engaged.

The emergency beacon signals kept coming in on the hour, giving the exact positions of the distressed yachts. The SAT officers mapped the locations, calculated the lifts, and prepared search grids, which they faxed to Melbourne. At dawn on Monday, the first of 55 aircraft began to take off with clear instructions of where to search and what to look for. The highest priority was the 46-year-old wooden yacht Yonston, Churchill. At 5.30pm, on Sunday, it had sent a mayday signal reporting it had rolled, lost its mast, was sinking and its crew of nine were being hoisted to life rafts. Nothing had been heard since.

The rescue of Business Post Haldal was under way. Traynor went down the wire. The lieutenant exited the galle tone at him. In 30 seconds, Frontberg, the winchman, dropped him into a wave trough the inches from the man in the sea. Traynor was wearing thermal underwear, a full-body wetsuit, lightweight helmet, thermal boots and gloves. He was, smoked and face mask. Attached was a rescue strop, a round collar like a harness for a horse, stuffed with carbide beans to provide flotation and lightness. As Traynor reached the survivor, a wave drove them under. On the



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

winched out more cable and then, as Traynor emerged on the other side of the wave, winched it in again. Traynor had to support his own body weight plus the drag of more than 25 metres of the half-centimetre-diameter steel cable streaming on the wind. Three times the parachute was dragged under, but the biggest threat from the Helme was entanglement. Driven by the wind and sea, a sudden jerk could tear off a limb. Twice, the cable stretched beneath Traynor's legs and he had to go under to clear it.

Spinalling. Traynor got the survivor to hold his arms in the air. The paramedic slipped, the rescue strop over his neck and beneath his arms. Traynor spun the survivor around and once more went under, reporting it had rolled, lost its mast, was sinking and its crew of nine were being hoisted to life rafts. Nothing had been heard since.

Once more, Traynor went down. Above them, the helicopter danced in the air, its rotors blurring out fire streams of downward. Using a

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

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

With Frontberg calling the directions, Tyler blindly manoeuvred the Bell until it was directly overhead. Now the waves posed even more of a threat. If the sea caught Traynor and his human cargo while they were suspended in the air, the water would slam them under vicious force. Frontberg waited until a big wave swept over them and spat them out the other side. He wanted the man in the sea before the next wave hit. Frontberg hit the button and pulled them both out at top speed. On board, Traynor was exhausted.

But he barely had time to recover breath before descending on the wire again. The crew learnt the man on deck was dead and the skipper was also dead in his bunk. Seven times Traynor went into the killer seas and lifted men to safety.

THE SAR operations room in Canberra, hope was dwindling. Late in the afternoon, a helicopter had lifted four of the Yonston Churchill crew from a life raft. They had been adrift since 8pm the previous day, when they lost sight of five crewmates in a second life raft.

At 9pm, with only 20 minutes of light left, a P-3C Orion on its way back to Melbourne at the end of its search mission saw a torch flashing from the sea. How began what was the most intricate, difficult and dangerous rescue.

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

In a few seconds, Neville reset the Haldal. But it continued to malfunction. Later checks revealed that the conditions were so severe they were beyond the Haldal's operational limits. With Pashley and Gibson safely on board, Neville faced a difficult decision. "It was too dangerous to send Pashley down again. There was a grave risk we'd lose him."

Instead, with a little flying, they dropped the rescue strop into the life raft. John Stanley's life vest in his own hands. Incredibly, after all he had been through, Stanley had sufficient physical and mental reserves to know what to do. Stanley climbed into the strop and signalled. They hauled him to safety. With the rescue of Gibson and Stanley by Monday night the SAR and their magnificent flyers had conducted one of the most amazing and successful mass rescues in maritime history. Fifty-three yachtmen



As a wave drove the pair under, Traynor thought: Let's get out. Photo by [unreadable]

LIVES ON A LINE

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

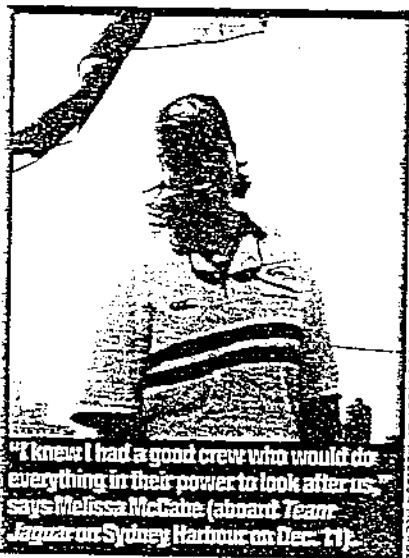
"They were so exhausted there wasn't much conversation in the chopper until we landed in Malla-coota," says McAlister. But once safe on land, "one guy in particular said, 'how do you say thank you for something like this? I just want to give you a kiss and a cuddle,' which he then proceeded to do. Another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

■ PAUL CONNOLLY

TRAGEDY

THE MOST DIRE STRAIT

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



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

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

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

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

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

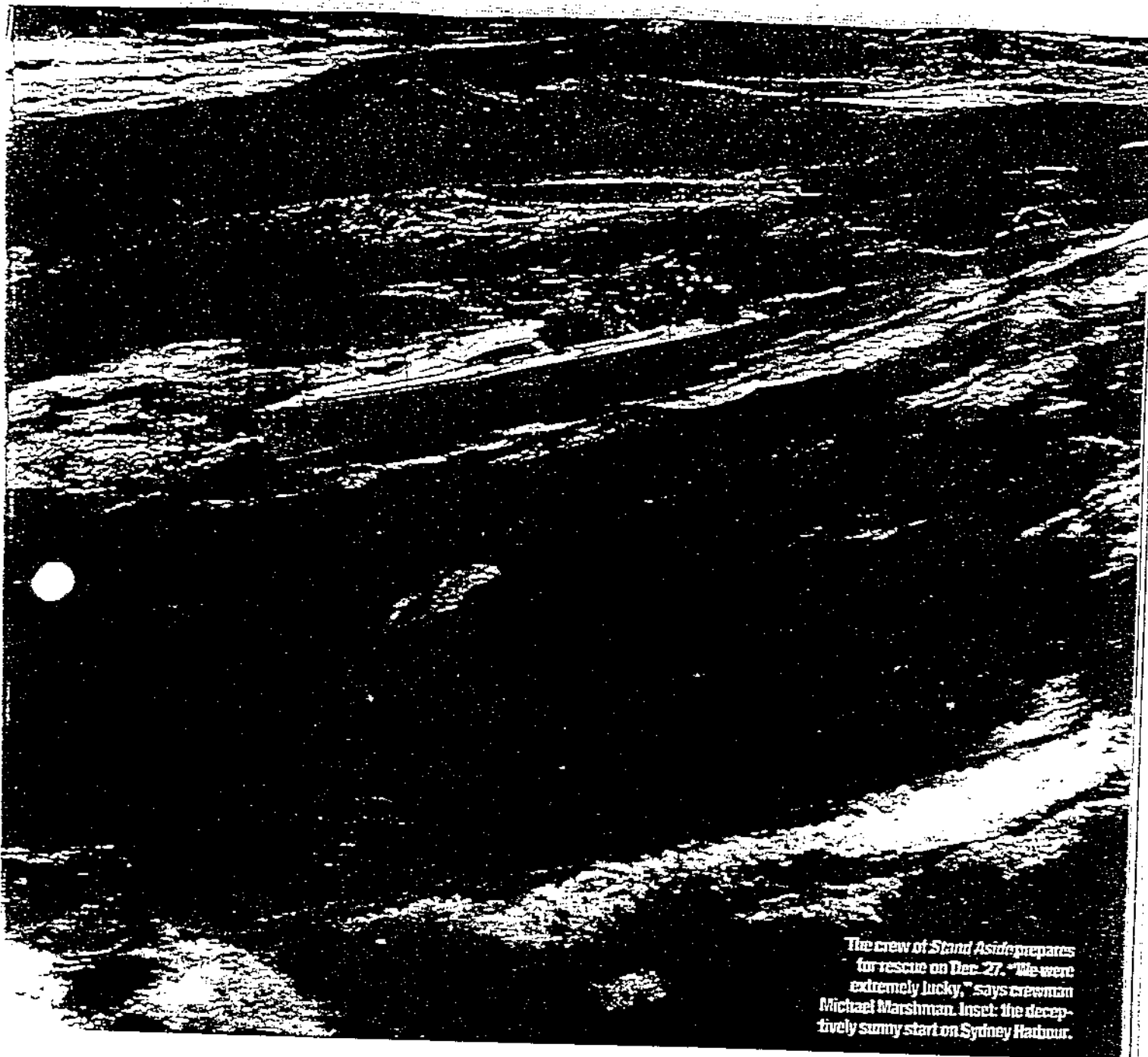
I only arrived in Sydney from Eden the morning of the race, after having Christmas at home. I was pretty excited. It was a really good start. We were one of the first boats



ARITH PHOTO; PETER SHICLAIR/AGENCY; INSEF; DAVID GUY/REUTERS

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

the top edge of the hull] and then two hours below to sleep. By the time you're on the rails, it's four hours of rain, waves, pouring wet and cold.

At one stage during the night I nearly went overboard. When you're on the rails you're sort of curled up in a ball to keep as dry as you can and to hang on. One time we tacked, I was half dozing and I didn't move to the other side quick enough. Suddenly I was heading into the water. Somebody pulled me up and I crawled up to the high side. Phew.

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

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

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

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

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

that, you know it's something bad.

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

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

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

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

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



HEIKKI JOKINEN

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



DICK CLIBBING/REUTERS

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



"It was a terrific feeling to be standing on the dock in Eden," says McCabe (being greeted there by grandmother Joan Mould on Dec. 23). "Pure relief that we made it."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

About 4 PM they called us and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Andrew Thiesz, Mornington

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

Abandoned, Berwick

It always disgusts me to read of people complaining about their taxes being used to save people lost at sea, self-inflicted or not.

What if you were lost at sea? Thank you to all the brave rescuers.

Lives Before Money, Castlemaine

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

Roll With The Punches, Kew

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

Laurie, Campbellfield

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

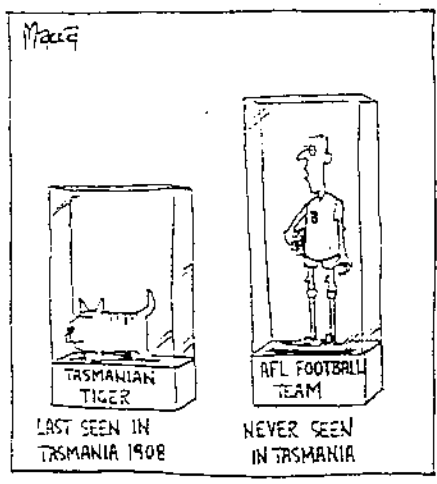
Dennis Parker, East Bentleigh

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

Be Thankful, Heathmont

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

Sniffer, East Altona



TO J.C., of Launceston (Herald Sun, December 29). Yes, the AFL thrives and survives everywhere else, except Tasmania. You are last on the list of AFL membership.

Another team in Brisbane, Darwin and Canberra come first. See you in the 22nd century.

Living in AFL Wonderland, Upwey

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

True me of Chris

JEREMY C. Head (Hera

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

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

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

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

Philip Lynch, Bayswater

Race critics mean-minded

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

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

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

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

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

Lionel Swift, Oak Park

Forecast warning enough

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



Scandal: Bill Clinton with former intern

Clinton claims unco

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

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

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

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

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

for his cov why we shc fleeing a si

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

Unlike th I remembe ple being a

But wha Gray's imr was dedic Vietnam.

and the ou were the r reduction.

Nixon, y broadened Cambodia saturation

Mr Gray Mr Clinton don't use truths to John Brigh Hawthorn

take their crews into account.

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

Professional Fisherman, Lakes Entrance

Our bridge a true icon

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

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

pact of th nine Statu

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

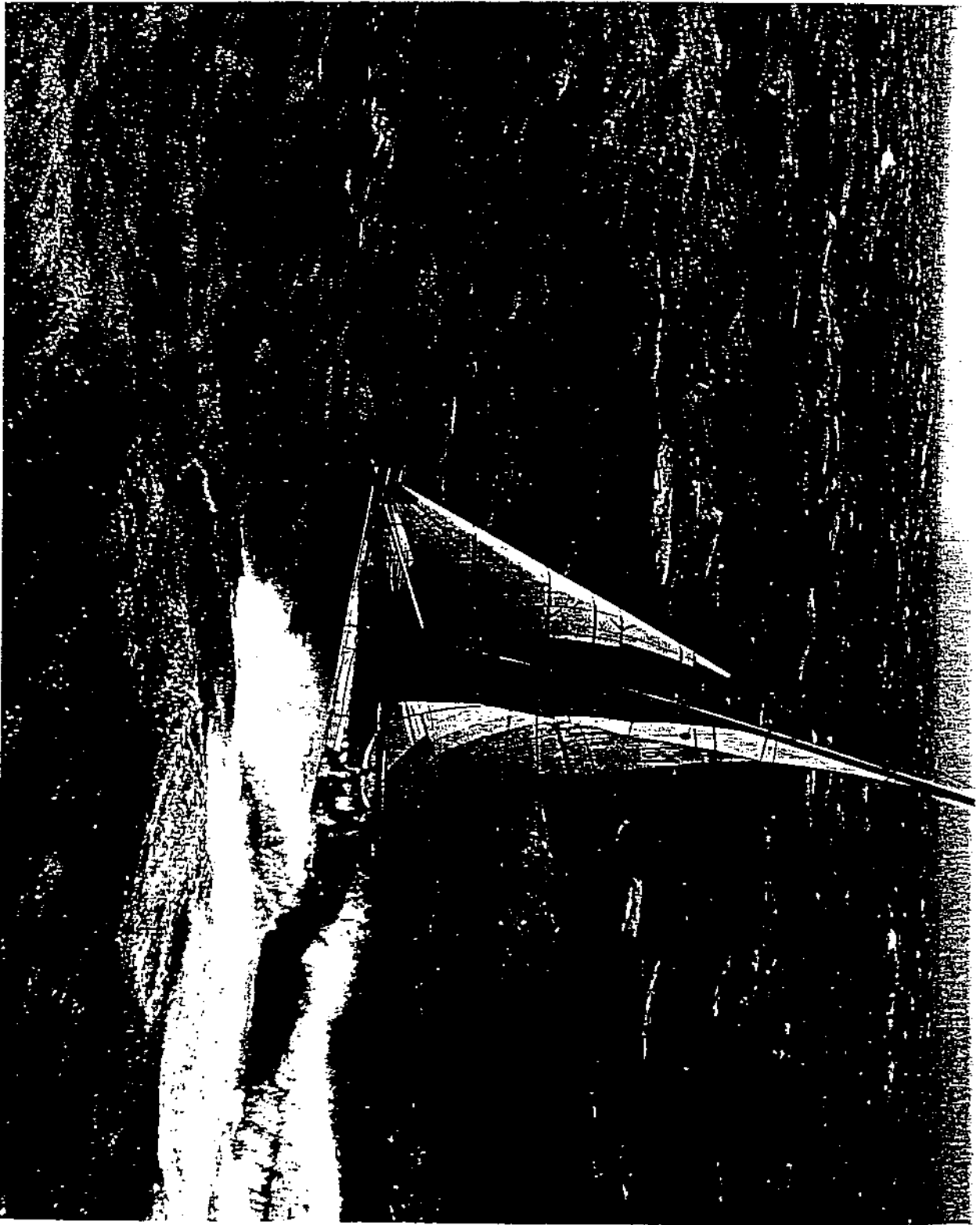
Howeve our own quite so: whether s ing water ted at su magic by

Now, th proud of. I.E. Clark

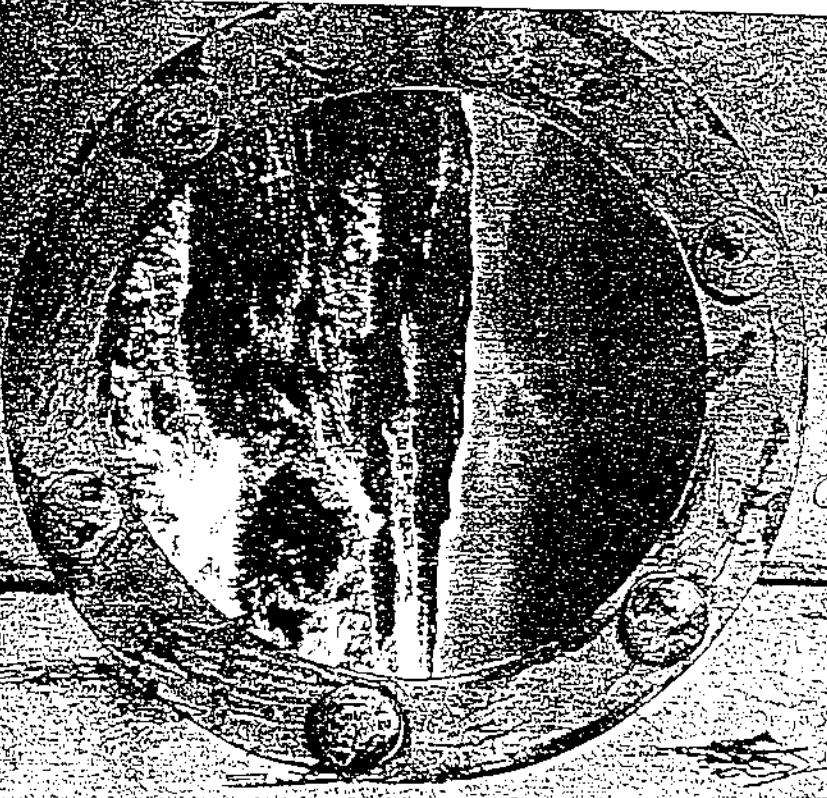
Allona Nor

Medic more AFTER

Blueprint for new cent



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



THE PERFECT

Main Agent for the Sea

STORM

In Room

James Watson & Co. Ltd.

100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200

This is but a small token
of our appreciation for
giving us our first book.

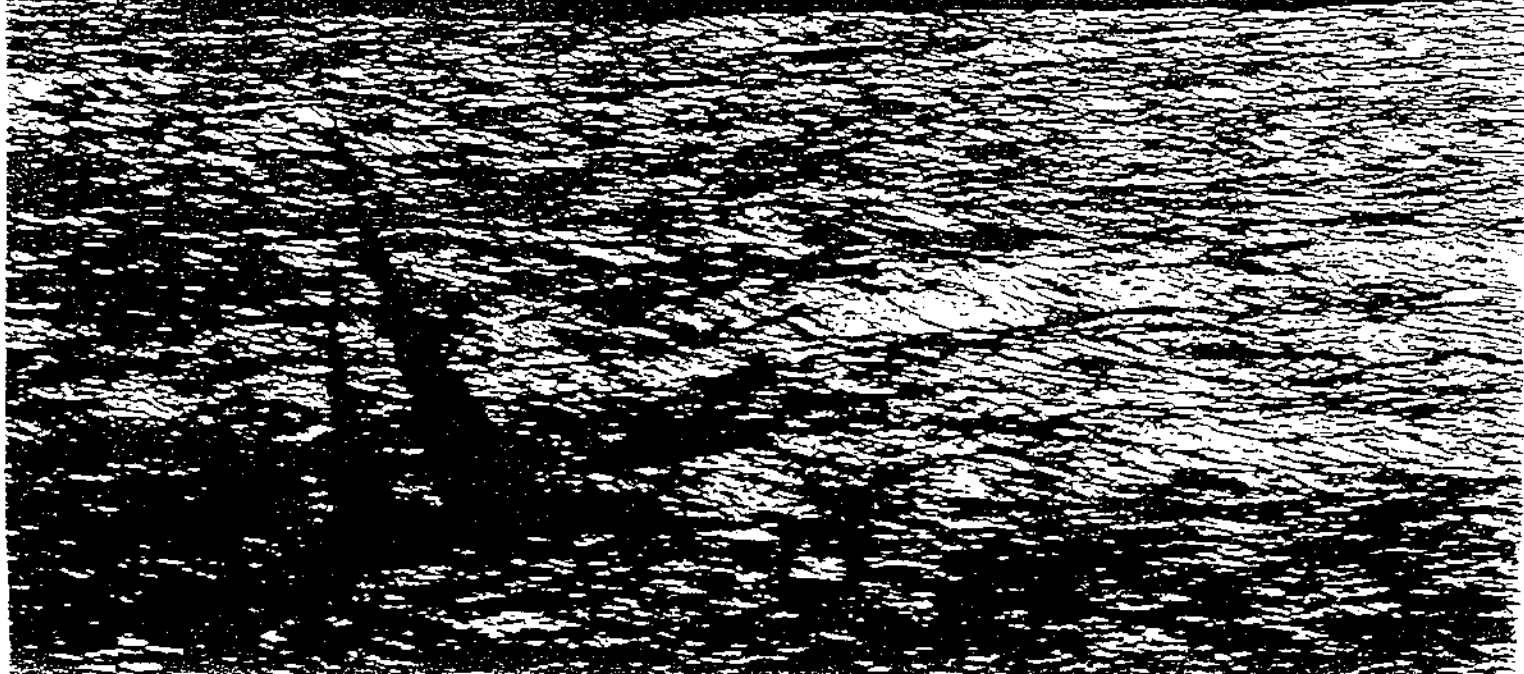
Thank you for saving
Campbell.
John

Kayama Co
Sydney 10 Hobart '38

THE BOB ROSS COLLECTION

OCEAN CLASSICS

TEXT BY BOB ROSS



Dave

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

Best Regards

John C. Hill

Jan 1, 1959

DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMB

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--------------------|
| Type of A/C | Reg of A/C | Call Sign - Air | Su <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mo <input type="checkbox"/> Tu <input type="checkbox"/> We <input type="checkbox"/> Th <input type="checkbox"/> Fr <input type="checkbox"/> Sa <input type="checkbox"/> | Date 29/12/98 |
| SA 365 C1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AS 350 <input type="checkbox"/> Cessna 182 <input type="checkbox"/> | PVF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PVK <input type="checkbox"/> PVA <input type="checkbox"/> PVM <input type="checkbox"/> JOE <input type="checkbox"/> | 491 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 492 <input type="checkbox"/> 495 <input type="checkbox"/> 474 <input type="checkbox"/> 412 <input type="checkbox"/> | Police <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/> Ambo <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> Fixed Wing <input type="checkbox"/> | Shift 0900-1700 |
| Observer | Observer | Observer | Pilot | Ambo |
| KEY | BARCLAY | | JONES | |

Diary of Duties Performed

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

DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMBULANCE PATROLS

Page 215

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

KEY

BARCLAY

JONES

Diary of Duties Performed

15
1

5

2

| Clock Time | Action | Task / Job No. |
|------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 13:30 | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | PATROL TRAX SHEET 13 |
| 13:45 | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | |
| 13:50 | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | PATROL KGL ANSA |
| 14:06 | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | SORRENTO |
| 14:08 | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | FUEL 475 LIT |
| 14:26 | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | |
| 14:38 | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | |
| 14:45 | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | PATROL DFX AIR STATION |
| : | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | AS PER TRAX SHEET AAC |
| 14:50 | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | ATTEND KGL FLIGHT REG. |
| : | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | WHITE FORD P/VAN 1x MAKE |
| : | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | POINTING F/A AS OFF |
| : | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | DUTY MEMBER |
| 15:00 | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | CANCEL P1 SWB 251, JWN 307 |
| : | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | SWB 650 HAVE OFFENDER IN |
| : | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | CUSTODY |
| 15:05 | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | ATTEND JENNIFER ST NOBLE |
| : | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | PARK RE: OFFENDER ON |
| 15:08 | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | P2 DESCRIPTION 23TR1560 |
| : | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | OF 3 OFFENDERS LOCATED |
| : | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | SAME IN JACKSONS RD. |
| : | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | DIRECTED EDC 303, ESP 208 |
| : | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | TO SUSPECTS N.O.O |
| 15:25 | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | CLEAN P2 |
| 15:30 | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | CHECK IN TAMPE RD ROWVILLE |
| : | SU OIG OHI AB S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | 69 Ford s/w FON-861 n/c MAC |

P1

P2

DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMBULANCE PATROLS

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

| Clock Time | Action | Task / Job No. | Diary of Duties Performed |
|------------|--|----------------|----------------------------|
| 15:30 | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | (P3) | ATTEND LANUNOEL PLENTY |
| : | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | ROAD RE OFF. DECAMPEO |
| 15:35 | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | P3 | SEARCH FOR WHITE |
| : | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | HOLDEN 81 BGF-891 DECAMPEO |
| : | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | POAH ON PLENTY RD. |
| : | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | CHECKED WITH F.L.I.N |
| : | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | 7 WHITE HOLDEN SED. |
| 15:45 | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | NICE SIGHTINGS. |
| 15:54 | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | EN | CLASH P3 |
| 15:56 | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | FUEL |
| : | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | VIA F.C.C AUSSIAN TASK |
| : | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | TO MALACOTA. |
| : | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | VIA O-C NOT TO ATTEND |
| : | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | SEE - LOG BOOK FOR |
| 16:21 | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | DETAILS (ATTACHED) |
| 16:23 | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | 4x BOATS IN TROUBLE |
| 17:02 | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | TO LTV. |
| 17:09 | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | HOT REFUEL 284 LTR |
| : | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | TO MALACOTA GROUND |
| 18:11 | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | SPEED 205 KNOTS. |
| : | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | MAL. AIR PORT BRIEF |
| : | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | DE-KIT MACHINE TASK |
| : | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | TO RESCUE 4 x PAX FROM |
| : | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | "STAND-A-SIDE" 37' 46 S |
| : | SU O/C O/I A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | 150' 33 E 200 LTR FUEL |

DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMBULANCE PATROLS

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

| | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|-------|
| Observer | Observer | Observer | Pilot |
| KEY | BANCCAT | | JONES |

Diary of Duties Performed

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

DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMBULANCE PATROLS

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

K61

BANCART

JONES

Diary of Duties Performed

| Clock Time | Action | Task / Job No. |
|------------|--|-----------------------------|
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | HYPOTENMIA. NOW IN DEEP |
| 20:15 | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | SHOCK. |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | COMM PDST FOOTBALL |
| 20:17 | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | DUAL MACACROTA. |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | PATIENT TO AMBULANCE |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | FOR TREATMENT TP TO |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | AIRPORT FOR FIXED WING |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | TO MEBB. |
| 20:50 | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | 400 LBS FUEL |
| 20:52 | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | TO AIRPORT |
| 20:55 | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | TO POLICE STATION |
| 20:57 | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | DE-BRIEF TO SGT |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | MOSTAND SEARCH CD - SQUADRA |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | ASSIST WITH BRIEFING |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | PAPER AND PUSAN |
| 23:00 | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | DETAILS |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | CREW OFF DUTY - AS |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | PER BRIEFING PAPER. |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | FILE INFORMED |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | |

DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMBULANCE PATROLS

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

| Clock Time | Action | Task / Job No. | Diary of Duties Performed |
|------------|--|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 05:00 | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | CREW ON DUTY AT |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | C/POST BRIEF BY SGT |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | MOSTAND (AS PER BRIEFING |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | PAPER) AUGUST TASKS |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | ALLOTTED TO HELICOPTER 1 |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | AND POLAR 1. |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | SEARCH AREA FOR "B52" |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | 37 53 S 750 38 E |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | HELICOPTER 1 TO WINSTON |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | CANN CHILL" BOTH BOATS |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | MISSING (E.L.T) LAST |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | LOCATIONS BOTH NOW |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | IN - ACTIVE BOTH LISTED AT |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | SUNK. |
| 06:55 | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | FUEL 386 LBS DAILY AIRCRAFT |
| 06:57 | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | CREW JONES, BARCLAY, KEY |
| 07:50 | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | RE-DIRECTED TO "MIDNITE |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | SPECIAL" 37 27.7 S 150.51.8 E |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | SINKING WITH 4 x CREW |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | STILL O/B. SOUTH COAST |
| 08:00 | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | RESCUE TAKEN 5 x CREW OFF. |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | LOCATED MIDNITE SPECIAL |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | WINNAGO 4 x CREW OFF |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | BOAT AT LAST - CREW MEMBER |
| : | S/U O/C O/H A/B S/D CA ATTEND CANCEL | | WINNAGO 1st BOAT SANK |

50 FT WAVES / 70 KNOT WIND.

DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMBULANCE PATROLS

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|---------------|
| Type of A/C | Reg. of A/C | Call Sign - Air | Su <input type="checkbox"/> Mo <input type="checkbox"/> Tu <input type="checkbox"/> We <input type="checkbox"/> Th <input type="checkbox"/> Fr <input type="checkbox"/> Sa <input type="checkbox"/> | Date 25/12/98 |
| SA 365 C1 <input type="checkbox"/> | PVF <input type="checkbox"/> PVK <input type="checkbox"/> | 491 <input type="checkbox"/> 492 <input type="checkbox"/> | Police <input type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/> | Shift - |
| AS 350 <input type="checkbox"/> | PVA <input type="checkbox"/> PVM <input type="checkbox"/> | 495 <input type="checkbox"/> 474 <input type="checkbox"/> | Ambo <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Cessna 182 <input type="checkbox"/> | JOE <input type="checkbox"/> | 412 <input type="checkbox"/> | Fixed Wing <input type="checkbox"/> | 0500-1300 |

| | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|-------------------|
| Observer | Observer | Observer | Pilot |
| KEY | BARCLAY | R.M | JONES JAMERSON |

| Clock Time | Action | Task / Job No. | Diary of Duties Performed |
|------------|--|----------------|---------------------------|
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | (AS PER NEWS PAPER STORY |
| 08:25 | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | BRIEFING PAPER ATTACHED) |
| 08:27 | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | C/POST MALACOSTA |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | FUEL 470 LIT 4x CONVEYOR |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | FROM "MIDNITE SPECIAL |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | TREATED FOR HYPOTENSIONIA |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | AND MINOR INJURIES |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | ① NEIL DICKSON 23 |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | COOMAROO CRES. MINYAMA |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | QLD 4575 ② 0754775775 |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | ② BILL BUTLER c/- CARRA |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | FLOWERS MS 16 MALENT |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | QLD 4552 ③ 0754944756 |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | ③ KEVIN FORAN 1 ALKINA |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | ST BUDDINA QLD ④ |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | 54-448401 |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | ④ PETER BAYNES 31 |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | BARELLAN AVE BUDDINA |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | QLD ⑤ 075444115 ⑥ |
| 09:56 | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | 07 5478-2811 |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | DIRECTED BY AUSSAN TO |
| : | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | SEARCH AREA FOR "B52" |
| 19:52 | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | 37 26 E 150 21 E |
| 0:03 | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | E.L.T SIGNAL FROM "B52" |
| 2:10 | SU O/C O/H A/B S/D C/A ATTEND CANCEL | | MAL. AIRPORT HOT REFUEL |
| | | | FUEL 540 LIT |

DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMBULANCE PATROLS

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

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

DUTY RETURN - POLICE / AMBULANCE PATROLS

Page 41
Date 28/12/98

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|-------------|
| Reg. of A/C | Reg. of A/C | Call Sign - Air | Su <input type="checkbox"/> Mo <input type="checkbox"/> Tu <input type="checkbox"/> We <input type="checkbox"/> Th <input type="checkbox"/> Fr <input type="checkbox"/> Sa <input type="checkbox"/> | Date |
| 365 C1 <input type="checkbox"/> | PVF <input type="checkbox"/> PVK <input type="checkbox"/> | 491 <input type="checkbox"/> 492 <input type="checkbox"/> | Police <input type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/> | Shift |
| 350 <input type="checkbox"/> | PVA <input type="checkbox"/> PVM <input type="checkbox"/> | 495 <input type="checkbox"/> 474 <input type="checkbox"/> | Ambo <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 355na 182 <input type="checkbox"/> | JQE <input type="checkbox"/> | 412 <input type="checkbox"/> | Fixed Wing <input type="checkbox"/> | 0500 - 1300 |

| | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|-------------------|------|
| Observer | Observer | Observer | Pilot | Ambo |
| KEY | BANCUAT | REM | JONES JAMERSON | |

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

20.30

CREW OFF DUTY.

BRIEFING PAPER

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

FROM: Superintendent
Emergency Response Division

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

DATE: 28 December 1998

Situation

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

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

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

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

At 1552 hours the same day the Victoria Police Air Wing received a request from AUSSAR Canberra as to the availability of a police search & rescue helicopter to attend the same incident. The Officer in Charge of the Police Air Wing, Inspector McSolvin, was contacted and requested further information before he would authorise attendance of a police helicopter from Melbourne. Of particular concern was the delay time of 2 to 2.5 hours to reach the scene, no capability to conduct a winching operation at night over water and the need to keep the police helicopter within striking distance of the metropolitan area. On receiving updated additional advice from AUSSAR Canberra, i.e. now 4 yachts in distress, yacht crew with multiple fractures and 50 knot winds, attendance was immediately authorised.

Victoria Police Co-Ordination

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

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

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

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

Initial search & rescue task

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

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

Police helicopter winch rescue

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

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

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

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

Police Air Wing personnel deployed

Police helicopter personnel deployed at 1625 hours 27.12.98:-

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

Personnel deployed with fuel truck at 1725 hours 27.12.98:-

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

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

Situation update Monday morning 28 December 1998

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

53 vessels have retired from the yacht race.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Anticipated length of search & rescue operation

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

That request will be met.

Relief police pilot

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

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

Financial cost to the Victoria Police Force

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

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

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

Contact personnel

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

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| AUSSAR | Tony Marshall, Canberra - telephone 1800815237. |
| Victoria Police Co-Ordinator | Sergeant Richard Mostard Gippsland Water Police Squad at Mallacoota Police Station - telephone (03) 51580280. |
| Police Air Wing | Inspector Phil McSolvin or duty member at the Flight Co-Ordination Centre - telephone (03) 9374 1311. |
| Water Police Squad Melbourne | Senior Sergeant Rex Brown or duty member at the Rescue Co-Ordination Centre - telephone (03) 9537 1827. |
| Emergency Response Division | Superintendent Peter Teather - telephone (03) 9247 5734. |

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

P.J. Teather
Superintendent

Briefing Paper
re Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race
Incident on 27.12.98

Prepared by Sergeant Richard Mostard 19112
Gippsland Water Police.

Situation

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

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

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

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

Response

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

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

At this stage the Police Air wing were also activated.

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

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

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

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

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

Person's Rescued

At Traralgon Hospital
Simon Clark

10 Shearer Court, Kilkenny SA 5009

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

At Mallacoota

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

All crews stood down at 2300hrs.

Situation 28/12/98

All crews on duty 0500hrs.

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

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

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


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

For further information contact Sgt Mostard at Mallacoota on 51580280.

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

Relatives notified where possible. NRIS system to be activated.

Signed:


Richard Mostard
Sergeant 19112.



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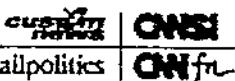
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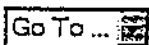
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Search continues for missing crewman in Sydney-Hobart yachting race

December 27, 1998

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

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



AP PHOTO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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more than 12 hours.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

105 yachts to retire.

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

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

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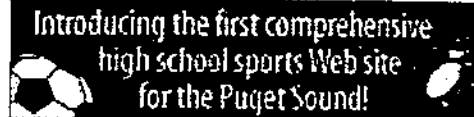
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Local News : Friday, January 01, 1999

Winners of yacht race grateful to be alive

by Florangela Davila
Seattle Times staff reporter

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Such a system would eventually overpower much of the race.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Local News : Tuesday, December 29, 1998

Seattle man survives yacht-race disaster

by Mike Lindblom
Seattle Times Eastside bureau

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

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

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

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

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

Campbell has spoken several times with his parents Wallace

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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AP Headlines

Monday December 28 4:24 PM ET

Two Die in Australia Yacht RaceBy *TONY HARPER* Associated Press Writer

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Even the sailors themselves could not believe the toll.

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

Earlier Stories

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

THE HOWLING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Meikle thinks it is like being pummeled in a giant spa, like being dumped in the surf, only with large heavy objects swirling with him. Then it is quiet and dark. Meikle can tell he is in the water, but why is it dark? Why can he breathe? He'd later realise he is in an air bubble in the upturned cockpit. Four or five seconds pass before there is light again. The boat has rolled 360 degrees. He is floundering in the cockpit on his back alone.

"Where is everybody?" The whole

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

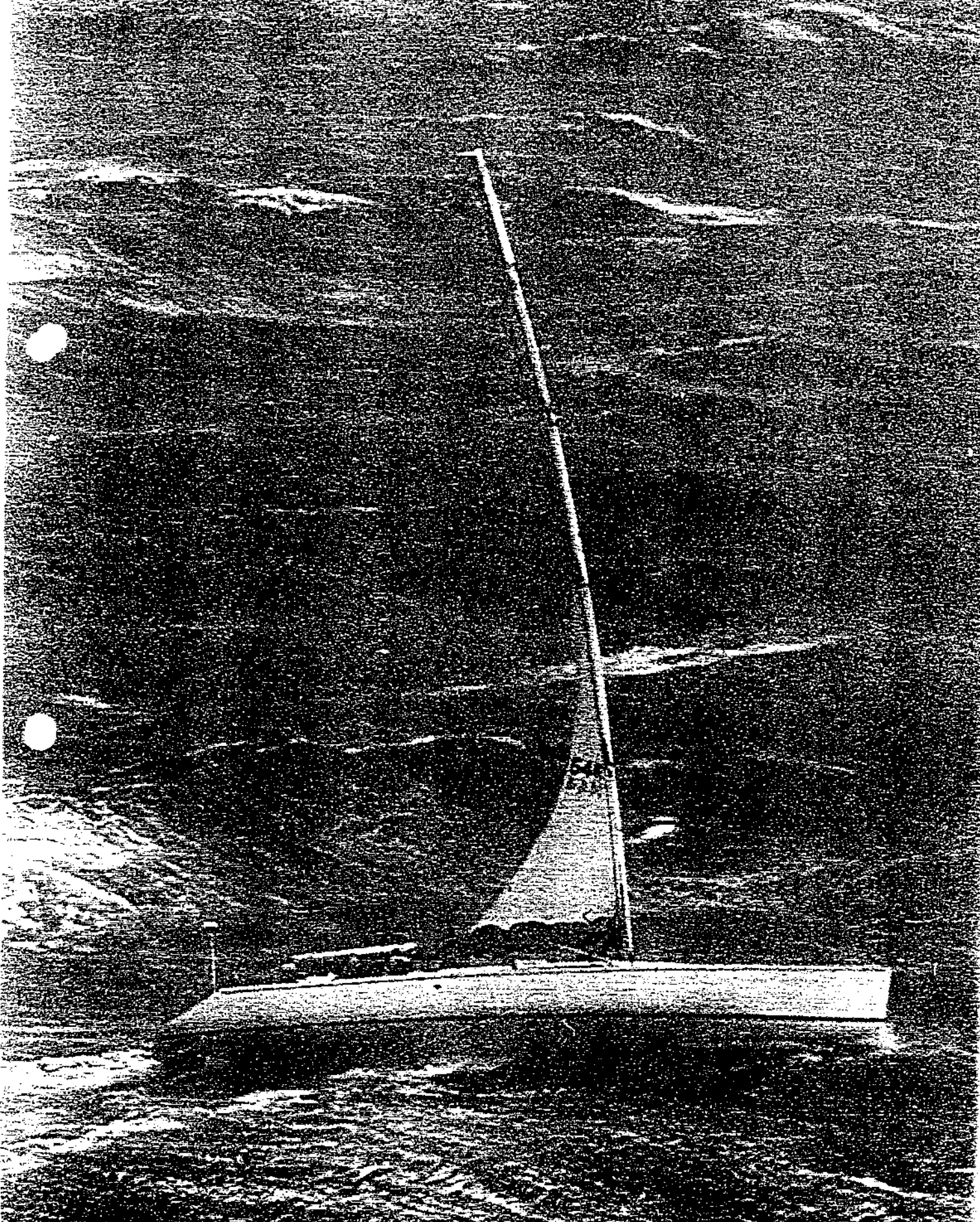
"Yep," says Schuiders, but Meikle's good friend from Seattle, John Campbell, doesn't respond. He is unconscious with his harness strap around his neck.

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

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



2



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With the atmospheric plug pulled, Rob Kothe sat at his nav station for the 2pm "sched" - one of two compulsory call-ins for all Sydney-Hobart yachts. His *Sword of Orion*, a serious racing yacht, was coming eighth, well back from the leaders but at the front of a pack of boats about to go through hell. His America's Cup-standard computer showed a multitude of read outs but it was the wind speed graph that had his attention.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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dramatic pictures sent back by the ABC helicopter. After the most seriously injured crewman, Mike Marshman with missing fingers, was lifted up, a chilling call came over the radio at 5.18pm.

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

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

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

"Nature of your mayday? Over."

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

"Roger. How many on board?"

"One, nine."

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

were so many going off the direction finder was haywire.

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE WEATHER WAS QUITE PLEASANT AT Essendon airport when the Polair crew called out at 3.50pm. The crew knew it was serious when they made 205 knots. The chopper's top speed is 120 knots. That is a screaming tail wind. En route, they were chilled by the sound of Richard Winning's mayday on *Winston Churchill*.

Landing at Mallacoota to refuel at 6.1pm, they knew they were in for a tough time. They knew there were EPIRBs and distress calls going off all over the place. ABC pilot Garry Ticehurst, just arrived back from *Stand Aside*, would describe it as "communications crossfire" as messages were relayed back and forth, in and out of the chaos.

The Polair crew was still tasked to take the last four off *Stand Aside* as they took off, at 6.30pm but, shortly after, they were given orders to look for the *Winston Churchill*. They headed north towards the rather vague position given by Winning, 20 nautical miles south east of Twofold Bay. Normally, they could lock onto a beacon and have the direction finder guide them straight to it, but there

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

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

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

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

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

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

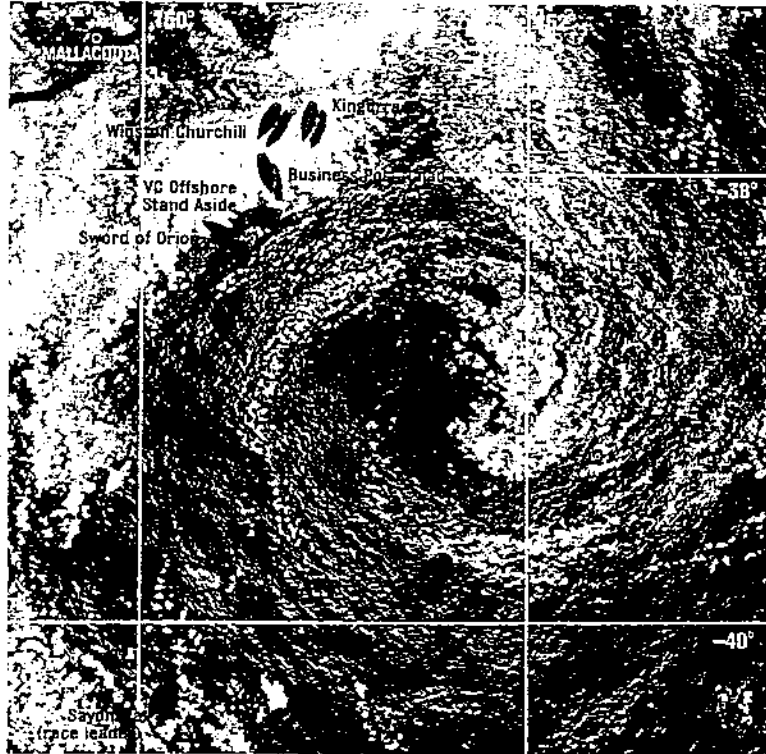
It appears to him that the boat is circling, looking for him. He assumes that they don't know where he is; that if he can just make them see him they will motor right on up. Every time he rises to the top of a wave, he waves his arms wildly. Seeing them heading in one direction, he tries to swim an intercept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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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



altimeter that the water passed three metres below. A 25 metre wave.

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

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

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

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

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

WHILE THE VERY WORST OF THE WIND was passing with only one dead, it was still howling for the blood of the wounded. The *Business Post* *Najad* had been rolled and dismantled at 5.30pm. She was rolled again at 11pm, but this time she did not come up. Water had burst the window and the seven crew below deck were standing on the cabin roof, waist deep. The engine had spewed diesel and covered everything, making it slippery as hell. They could hear Rob Matthews outside calling Phil Skeggs, who had been on deck. They heard no answer.

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

All the while the crew were amazed a

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Every chance he gets, he does a 260 but can't spot Campbell. Up above, the pilot sees a wall of water coming towards him, much higher than the other waves. He has to ask Barclay if there is enough cable to climb quickly.

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

you! Thank you!" He kisses and hugs them. He was in the water 20 minutes.

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

As Jones points the chopper into the gale, the computer shows that it will take 45 minutes to get to Mallacoota and they have 80 minutes of fuel. After half an hour, however, it says they still have 30 minutes to go, now with only 50 minutes of fuel. Land is nowhere to be seen. Twenty minutes out, they hit a squall of 110 knot winds and they go virtually nowhere for ten minutes. The two numbers are converging rapidly. They discuss the possibility of ditching while trying to hide their concern from their passenger.

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

the lack of emotion. Much later, it would hit them all hard, but as the councillor would explain, the adrenaline was blocking emotion. There was too much to be done. Another big wave would be the end of them. And so they bailed frantically from 11.30pm until the boat was half emptied at 2am.

Shortly after, three crew members of the *Winston Churchill* - Jim Lawler, Mike Bannister and John Dean - were washed off their disintegrating life raft. When the two left clinging to it came up for air, they saw two of their doomed mates way off in the white water. "John we can't do anything for those boys," said John Stanley, a 57-year-old insurance law specialist to John Gibson, a 62-year-old lawyer, as they blew quickly away.

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