

“Sitrep, Over!”



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On this day. February 10th 1964

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Hard copies of this newsletter kindly printed by the Office of Senator Andrew McLachlan CSC MP
Senator for SA

The HMAS Melbourne/Voyager Disaster.

On the evening of 10 February 1964, the two ships were performing maneuvers off Jervis Bay. *Melbourne's* aircraft were performing flying exercises, and *Voyager* had been given the task of plane guard, and was positioned behind and to port (left) of the carrier in order to rescue the crew of any ditching or crashing aircraft. After a series of turns effected to reverse the courses of the two ships, *Voyager* ended up ahead and to starboard (right) of the carrier. The destroyer was ordered to resume plane guard position, which would involve turning to starboard, away from the carrier, then looping around behind. Instead, *Voyager* began a starboard turn, but then came around to port. The bridge crew on *Melbourne* correctly assumed that *Voyager* was zig-zagging to let the carrier overtake her, and would then assume her correct position behind *Melbourne*. It has been written that Senior personnel on *Voyager* were not paying attention to the maneuvers, however recent investigations have shown that an order to take up station had likely been given and that *Voyager's* officer of the watch was zig-zagging to get into station.

The story is continued on Page 3 - 5



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EDITORIAL

It seems like yesterday that we all heard of the “Voyager Disaster,” but it was actually 61 years ago on February 10th 1964. Through a series of miscalculations, poor communications and bad luck, the pride of the Australian naval fleet, the aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne plowed into the much smaller destroyer HMAS Voyager, causing one of Australia’s worst peacetime tragedies. The story is on Pages 3-5.

We had much pleasure in catering for the Battalion at their annual Force Preservation Awareness Training (FPAT) exercise at RAAF Base Edinburgh on Sunday 15th February 2026. All the pics are on Page 9-11.

To everyone who paid their annual fees since receiving the “threatening email” from me late last year, thank you for your efforts. The world goes around a lot faster when we can offer more support to the Battalion, and we can’t do it without your annual fees. Thank you again!

Editor of the SAMRAG newsletter (3rd/9th Light Horse SAMR) David Mercer OAM has kindly provided an article on the future replacement of the EF88 Steyr Assault Rifle. A number of options are being considered, including a larger caliber 6.8 mm. Interesting times ahead for our frontline soldiers, and you can read it on Page 17 & 18.

One of our Life Members, Malcolm Haynes, is also the President of the South Australian Mounted Rifles Association (SAMRA) and he recently wrote of his early life in the Baggy Green Skin and Shiny Black Feet as a member of 3rd/9th Light Horse SAMR. His memories bought back some of my own from the 70’s. I encourage you to log onto their website (www.samrainc.org) and check out his words.

Padre Stephen Albrecht has sent in some thoughts after a “holiday” to Darwin, the site of where the Second World War came to Australia. His words are on Page 12.

A number of our members are from the South East, predominantly Mt Gambier, and they are part of A Company of 10/27 Battalion RSAR. They’re a great bunch of men and women and hold an annual cabaret each year to raise funds for worthy causes. This year they have donated \$400 to the RSAR Association, to assist with our operational costs and to support the 10/27 Battalion Band. From all of us up here, thank you!

That’s it for this month. Stay safe and stay well.

David

The Voyager Disaster



How it Started

Voyager remained parallel to *Melbourne* until about 1 minute before the collision after which she turned too early to port and collision stations. Her move to port was so sudden that *Melbourne* gave the alert at about 40 seconds, but by then a collision was inevitable.

Melbourne struck *Voyager* at 20:56, with the carrier's bow striking just behind the bridge and cutting the destroyer in two. Of the 314 aboard *Voyager*, 82 were killed, most of whom died immediately or were trapped in the heavy bow section, which sank after 10 minutes. The rest of the ship sank after midnight. *Melbourne*, although damaged, suffered no fatalities, and was able to sail to Sydney the next morning with most of the *Voyager* survivors aboard – the rest had been taken to the naval base HMAS *Creswell*.

The RAN proposed a board of inquiry to investigate the collision, but a series of incidents during the 1950s and 1960s had led to a public mistrust of Navy-run investigations, and as proposals for an inquiry supervised by a federal judge were not acted upon, a full royal commission became the only avenue for an externally supervised inquiry. The four-month Royal Commission, headed by Sir John Spicer,^[note 1] concluded that *Voyager* was primarily at fault for failing to maintain effective situational awareness, but also criticised *Melbourne*'s captain, John Robertson, and his officers for not alerting the destroyer to the danger they were in. Despite extensive evidence to the contrary, both crews of *Melbourne* and *Voyager* were unfairly criticised at this first enquiry and Robertson was posted to a shore base; he resigned soon afterwards. Due to Sir John Spicer's rejection of witness evidence, in 1967 Mr Samuels QC likened Spicer's 1964^[3] report on the collision and royal commission as "a wrongful rejection of evidence leading to a miscarriage of justice." John Jess (MHR 1960-1972) who was one of the few Parliamentarians to speak out against the injustice of the royal commission described the handling of the enquiry and criticism of both crews as "a tragic situation." At the Censure Motion in 1964 in the Parliament he said, "at no time does it appear to me that an apology was ever made to the navy personnel for the treatment to which they have been subjected.



HMAS *Melbourne* underway with the *Daring*-class destroyers *Vendetta* (D08, bottom) and *Voyager* (D04, top) in 1959

The Voyager Disaster



Increasing pressure over the results of the first Royal Commission, along with allegations by former *Voyager* executive officer Peter Cabban that Captain Duncan Stevens was unfit for command, prompted a second Royal Commission in 1967: the only time in Australian history that two Royal Commissions have been held to investigate the same incident. Although Cabban's claims revolved primarily around Stevens' drinking to excess, the second Royal Commission found that Stevens was unfit to command for medical reasons. Consequently, it was argued the findings of the first Royal Commission were based on incorrect assumptions, and Robertson and his officers were not to blame for the collision. Despite this assertion the two crews continued to experience responsibility for the collision based on false assumptions made by John Spicer in the face of legitimate evidence at both royal commissions that the collision was a freak accident, the reason for which had not been determined.

The Ships

HMAS Melbourne

HMAS *Melbourne* was the lead ship of the *Majestic*-class of light fleet aircraft carriers. She was laid down for the Royal Navy on 15 April 1943 at Vickers-Armstrongs' Naval Construction Yard in Barrow-in-Furness, England, and launched on 28 February 1945. Work was suspended at the end of World War II, and did not resume until the Australian government purchased her and sister ship HMAS *Sydney* in 1947. *Melbourne* was heavily upgraded to operate jet aircraft, and was only the third aircraft carrier in the world to be constructed with an angled flight deck. The carrier was commissioned into the RAN on 28 October 1955.

The carrier was 701 feet 5 inches (213.79 m) long, had a displacement of 15,740 tons, and could reach a speed of 24 knots (44 km/h; 28 mph). The carrier's air group consisted of de Havilland Sea Venom fighter-bombers, Fairey Gannet anti-submarine aircraft, and Westland Wessex helicopters. *Melbourne* underwent her annual refit from 16 September 1963 to 20 January 1964, with command handed over to Captain John Robertson in early January.

HMAS Voyager

HMAS *Voyager* was the first of three Australian-built *Daring*-class destroyers. The first all-welded ship built in Australia, *Voyager* was laid down by Cockatoo Island Dockyard in Sydney on 10 October 1949, launched on 1 May 1952, and commissioned into the RAN on 12 February 1957.

At 390 feet (120 m) in length, *Voyager* displaced 2,800 tons (standard), and had a maximum speed of 33 kn (61 km/h). After returning to Australia in August 1963, after a deployment to the Far East Strategic Reserve, *Voyager* was sent to Williamstown Naval Dockyard for refitting. Captain Duncan Stevens was appointed commanding officer at the end of that year. The refit was completed in late January 1964.



HMAS *Melbourne* en route to Sydney, immediately after the collision. The damage to the bow can be seen.

The Voyager Disaster



Collision

On 9 February 1964, both ships arrived at Jervis Bay for post-refit trials. During the day of 10 February the ships operated independently, or exercised with the British submarine HMS *Tabard*. That evening, while 20 nautical miles (37 km; 23 mi) south-east of Jervis Bay, *Melbourne* was performing night flying exercises, while *Voyager* was acting as the carrier's plane guard escort; tasked with rescuing the crew from any aircraft that crashed or ditched. This required *Voyager* to maintain a position astern of and to port of *Melbourne* at a distance of 1,500 to 2,000 yards (1,400 to 1,800 m). As aircraft carriers head into the wind to provide maximum assistance for takeoffs, their course can vary widely and on short notice; bridge teams aboard escorting destroyers must thus remain alert at all times.

During the early part of the evening, when both ships were maneuvering together, *Voyager* had no difficulty maintaining her position. After the series of course changes which began at 20:40, intended to reverse the courses of both ships onto a northerly heading of 020° for flight operations, *Voyager* ended up ahead and to starboard of *Melbourne*.

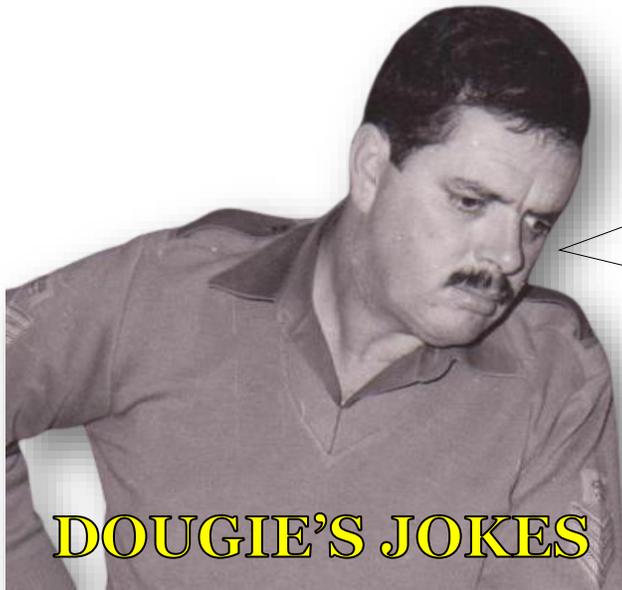
At 20:52, *Voyager* was ordered to resume her plane guard station. According to *Melbourne*'s ship log the order to resume plane guard, sent as Foxtrot Corpen 020 was sent at 20.54. *Voyager* acknowledged the order and began turning a minute later. It was expected that *Voyager* would turn away from *Melbourne*, make a large circle, cross the carrier's stern, then advance towards *Melbourne* on her port side. *Voyager* did turn to starboard, away from *Melbourne*, but then unexpectedly turned to port. It was initially assumed by *Melbourne*'s bridge crew that *Voyager* was "fishtailing", conducting a series of zig-zag turns to slow the ship before swinging behind *Melbourne*, but *Voyager* did not alter course again. Recent investigations have demonstrated *Melbourne*'s bridge crew correctly interpreted *Voyager*' action as a fishtail manoeuvre.

Due to Justice Spicers report in 1964 it has been written that on *Voyager*'s bridge, the officer of the watch and the navigator had become distracted, and Stevens was reading navigational charts, impairing his night vision. Recent investigations challenge this opinion by providing direct testimony of the three survivors from *Voyager*' bridge who gave evidence at the first royal commission. There was no such distraction; the officer of the watch and navigator on *Voyager* were maneuvering *Voyager* into position. The officer of the watch remained at the pelorus from the first to the last four signals and was watching *Melbourne* through the entire exercise with his binoculars. Captain Stevens was also seen by one witness to come out from the chart area at 20.54, several minutes before the collision, and was seen to return to his chair or near his chair before suddenly moving and giving the order "full ahead, hard a starboard" 20 seconds before the collision.



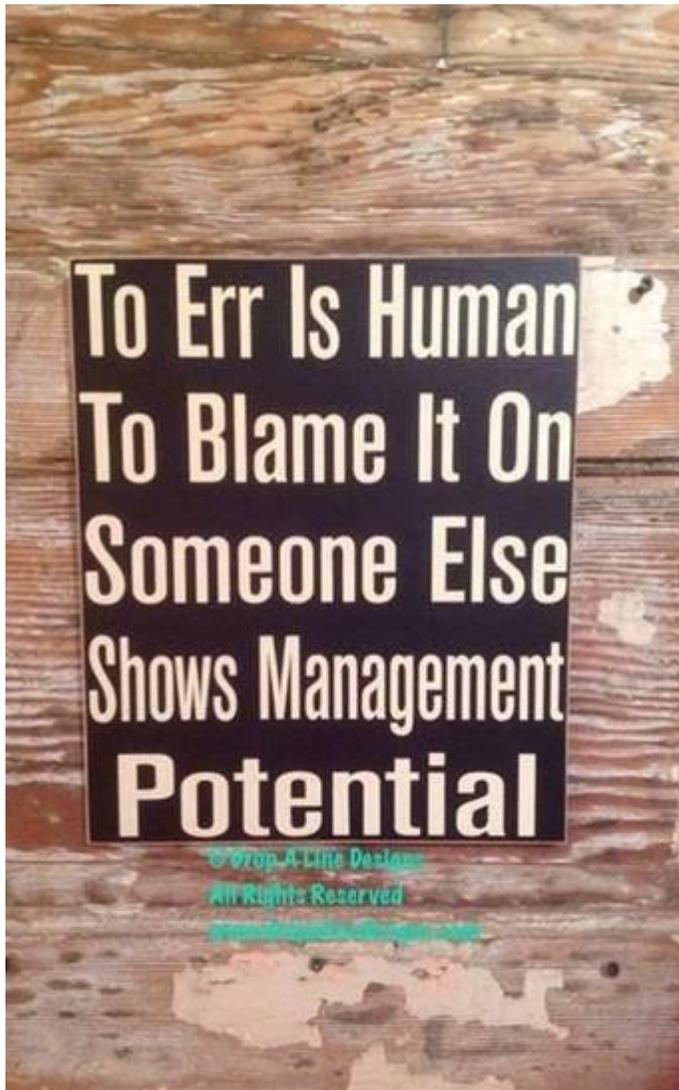
HMAS Voyager

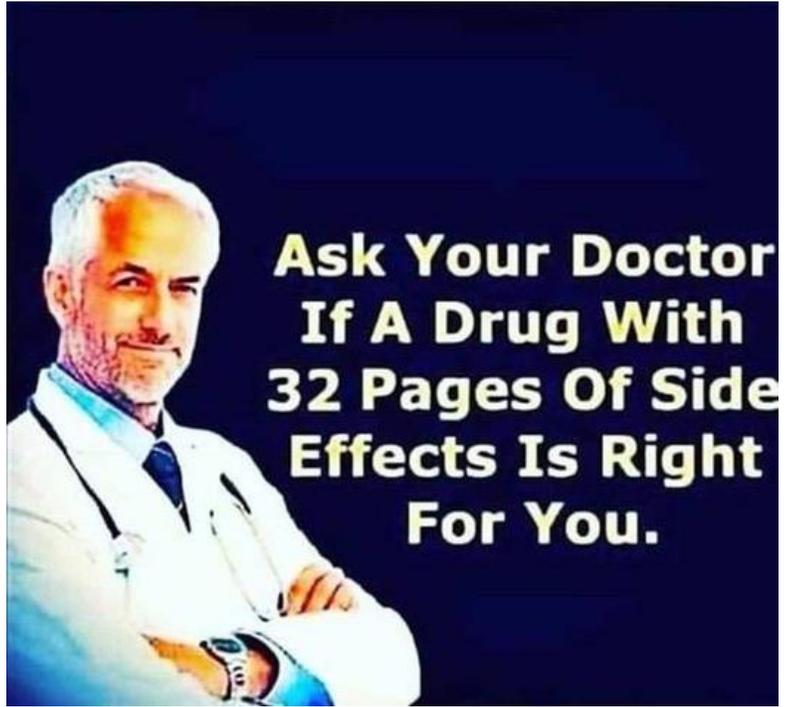
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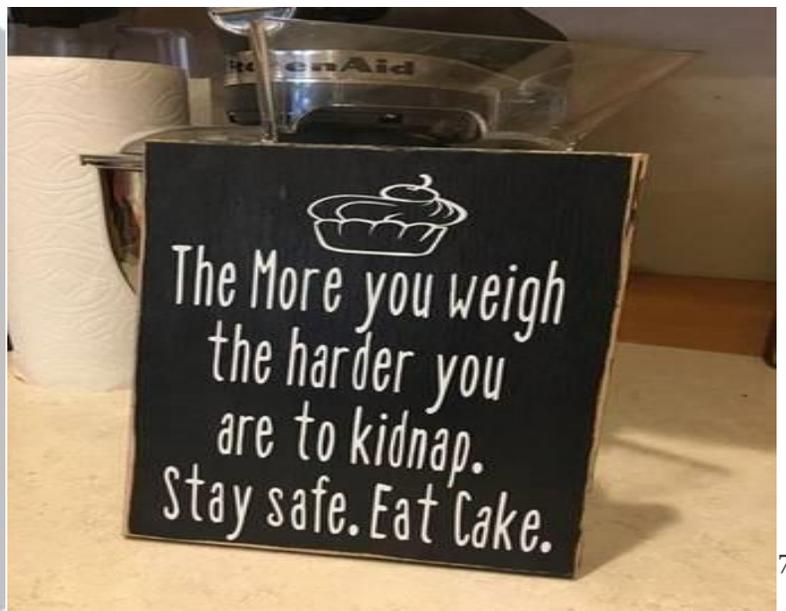
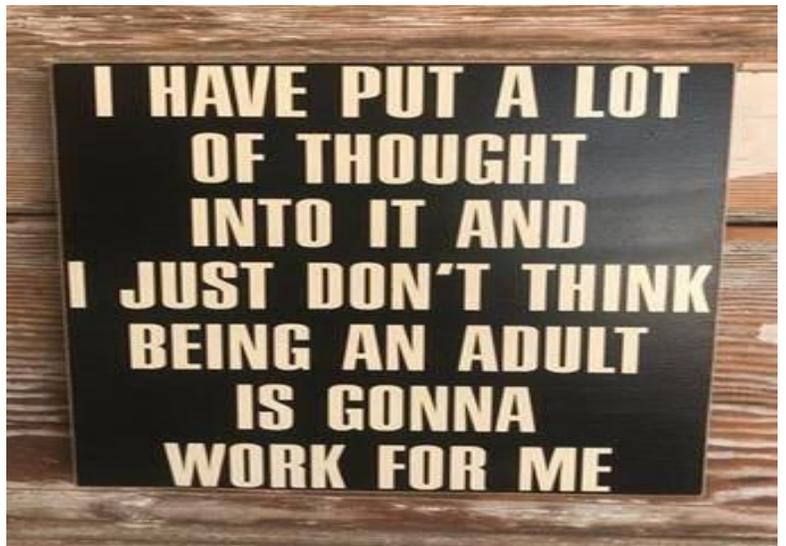
DOUGIE'S JOKES

In 1960 I fell off my push bike and grazed my knees!
I'm telling you this now
because we didn't have
Social Media back then!!





When I'm bored I go around putting these stickers on paper towel dispensers





**MOST PEOPLE
DON'T THINK I'M
AS OLD AS I AM
UNTIL THEY HEAR
ME STAND UP**



**EXERCISE
MAKES YOU LOOK
BETTER NAKED.
— ❖ ❖ ❖ —
SO DOES WINE.
YOUR CHOICE.**



FPAT 2026

On Sunday February 15th we travelled to RAAF Base Edinburgh to support our soldiers who were participating in the Force Preservation Awareness Training exercise. This is an obligatory weekend that brings everyone up to required qualifications. We catered for around 200 soldiers and provided them with BBQ sausages on bread and onions, and a mixed fruit platter for dessert. We also offered a range of ice cold soft drinks to quench their thirst. We took the chance to chat with some soldiers during the lunch break and handed out some Application Forms to prospective members. Our thanks go to Graham & Julie Elliott, Geoff Tattersall, Des Hawkins, Selina Laing, Nat Cooke, Max Hill and Colin Phillips for their hard work on the day. Thanks also to WO2 Phil Stuart for providing the BBQ gear, cooler boxes and gazebos. It made our task much easier. Thanks to June Laing for the photos and to Captain Emma Viggers for organizing security access passes for RAAF Base Edinburgh.



FPAT 2026



FPAT 2026



Padres Ponderings!

From Padre Stephen Albrecht Chaplain 10th/27th Battalion RSAR

While on holidays in Darwin, I was reminded that this city carries history in its bones. It is beautiful, relaxed, and welcoming, but it is also one of Australia's most strategically significant locations. When walking along the foreshore, visiting the aviation museum, or simply standing and looking north across the Timor Sea, you are reminded that Australia's security has never been accidental. It has always required vigilance, sacrifice, and people willing to stand in the gap.

Darwin's past tells that story clearly. From the bombing of Darwin in 1942 to its ongoing role as a key Defence hub, this part of the country reminds us that threats can feel distant, until they aren't. The peace and freedom we enjoy today exist because generations before us understood the cost of complacency and chose preparedness instead.

As members of 10/27 RSAR, our role fits squarely into this legacy. While much of our service occurs away from public view, our readiness, training, and commitment are essential threads in the broader fabric of Australia's defence. The work we do in barracks and on exercise matters far more than we sometimes realize. As readiness is often inconvenient, but it is always necessary.

Standing in Darwin, it struck me again that defence is not just about responding to crisis, it is about deterrence, presence, and responsibility. It is about ensuring that those who might threaten our nation know that Australia is prepared, capable, and united. That preparation rests on ordinary people choosing to serve with professionalism and integrity, even when the urgency isn't obvious.

There is also something grounding about being reminded of why we serve. Defence is ultimately about people, protecting families, communities, and a way of life that values freedom, fairness, and peace. Our service allows others to go about their lives without having to think daily about security.

For many of us, service is balanced alongside family, civilian work, and other responsibilities. That can be demanding, and at times costly. Yet moments like this, standing in a place shaped by sacrifice and strategic importance helped me reconnect me to the bigger picture.

As we continue to train and serve together, may we not lose sight of the importance of our role. Our commitment, discipline, and willingness to step forward when needed contribute directly to the defence of this nation. Whether our service is called upon in times of crisis or remains a steady presence in the background, it matters.

Darwin serves as a reminder: Australia's security is not guaranteed. It is entrusted to those willing to serve and stand ready. It is a responsibility we carry with pride and one worth remembering, even while on holidays.

Padre *Stephen Albrecht*

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"One thing more – Goodbye!"



Flying Officer Athol Snook was a survivor. In 1942, he spent 47 days at sea in a lifeboat sailing from Java to Australia with 11 comrades to escape from the Japanese. Then, on a fateful night in New Guinea later that year, his plane was grounded while the rest of the squadron went to attack Japanese shipping

Some years later, Athol Snook wrote an article in remembrance of his mates in New Guinea. His memory was triggered by a chance conversation about a radio program that was popular during the war. Like many programs of their day, there were a number of catch phrases which always brought roars of laughter from the audience. Athol Snook takes up the story.

"Funny thing how memory works. A scent, an old tune or sometimes a taste can start your mind throwing up pictures that you thought you'd forgotten forever," he wrote.

"I don't suppose there are many people today who remember Harry Tate and his wonderful radio sketch '*Running an Office*' all about Tootles the office boy, the mad inventor and the mousetrap.

"Well, the other night I heard Harry Tate's name mentioned at a party. We were all very much of an age, somewhere in our 50s - what might be called 'older boys and girls'. That's if one were being kind that is. Standing there in a mild alcoholic haze, well fed and at peace with the world, I was suddenly whisked out of that lounge, plucked from my friends and transported over the Indian Ocean, across the shallow Timor Sea, through the Torres Straits and straight into Milne Bay at the most eastern tip of New Guinea. Not only was this instantaneous, or nearly so, but there was a neat little bit of time wangling as well. Without any fuss or nonsense the clock was turned back and suddenly it was 1942.

"If you look at a map of New Guinea you'll notice that there's something about its shape that reminds you of some crouching primitive animal. What used to be called Dutch New Guinea is the head with gaping mouth; at the other end, with forked tail, is where we were. Between these two points is the almost virgin world of this huge island. Dramatic, mountainous, jungle covered. Dangerous. Peopled by ochre-painted, sometimes warlike natives. A land where salt is a form of currency and where the plumes of the Bird of Paradise crown heads with exotic beauty.

"This was the last link in the chain of island conquests which the Japanese had to secure before they turned south for the greatest prize of all - Australia.

"That they never achieved their goal can only be called a miracle. They were beaten in the Battle of the Coral Sea and on land were stopped when only a handful of miles from Moresby. The battles along the Kokoda Trail were bitter, bloody and heroic.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

ART 28968

"Milne Bay was the end of the line for the Japs; they were beaten there too and withdrew and that's how our squadron came to be stationed there. We flew Beaufort torpedo bombers, operated from a strip cut out of a coconut plantation and lived in a village of brown-coloured tents. Mud, sweat, mildew, rain and the thud of failing coconuts were the elements of our domestic life. Mosquitoes enlivened the nights with their whining flight and now and again the Japs brightened things up with their unwelcome and noisy visits. It is against this backdrop that the scene is played.

"Don Leigh, a gunner, was little, untidy and wore badly fitting false teeth. He nearly always sported a filthy, battered topee and his shorts were too long. In civilian life he had been a radio announcer in Hobart. He had a wonderful, wicked sense of humour. I thought he was the funniest thing since Charlie Chaplin.

"Bill Young was just the opposite. Good looking, pipe smoking, he exuded an atmosphere of calm control. He even managed to look clean. Both he and I were navigators. All of us treasured a battered portable gramophone; our greatest joy was to play a very noisy and scratchy recording of Colonel Corn. Vera Lynn brought emotional lumps to our throats and we wallowed in colourful and no doubt erotic memories of life 'down south'. Harry Tate, with his *'Running an Office'* sketch was the perfect 'middle of the road' distraction. It neither enraged our neighbours nor reduced us to emotional wrecks.

"There were endless ways of introducing catch phrases from the sketch into the general conversation and it became a sort of bond to our friendship, rather like belonging to a secret society which has some form of ritual known only to the initiated. Others not in the know would be puzzled by odd references to 'being back in the spring' or that we were 'closing the office'. The favourite, however, was to call someone back who was already some distance off and say, in a hesitating and vague way 'Oh - eh - one thing more - goodbye'. This had the satisfying effect of infuriating the victim. It was the last line of the sketch and we used it whenever possible. Childish? Perhaps; but it was a form of escape from the monotony and yes, the fears of those days so long ago.

"We were down at the strip when news came in that there was a Japanese naval force consisting of a cruiser and destroyers within striking distance of our planes. No one who has not experienced the chill which strikes when you know that you are going to risk your neck within the next few hours can imagine, fully, how it feels. Nine crews were put on immediate stand by. Aircraft were to be checked. Take off was to be just before dusk. It started to rain. A depressing half-light did nothing to brighten the atmosphere.

"Then our machine went U/S [unserviceable] with hydraulic trouble and we as a crew were withdrawn from the strike; we went to the briefing just the same, relieved to be out of what looked like being a very sticky 'do', yet carried along by the impetus of our near involvement.

"The Ops Room was a thatched hut, trestle tables end to end split the room in half down its length. Wall maps of the area showed the military situation. The enemy ships' position was almost due east of the bay. The room was crowded, it smelt of dampness, sweat and cigarette smoke. The hard light of pressure lamps seemed to intensify the late afternoon gloom. It was to be a classic torpedo attack with the planes coming in at the cruiser from three different directions. It was simple enough - fly out in formation, find the enemy in the half dark, split up, attack and destroy. Then come home independently. All one had to do was to do it.

"The briefing came to an end. The crews collected their belongings, nav. Bags, head-phones, survival kits. All the paraphernalia of bomber crews. Gradually the room cleared. My two friends moved towards the door; I stood watching. As if suddenly remembering something, Don turned. He came a few steps towards me and with a little smile said 'Oh - one thing more - goodbye'.

"One by one the planes racketed into life, taxied to the take-off point. Propellers hurled the streaming air behind and wheels crashed over the shining metal matting. They lifted into the weeping dusk heading towards the east. The sound of their motors faded and we were left with only the hissing of the lamp and the dripping rain.

"And so we waited, making conversation for the sake of appearing normal but our minds carried us out over a grey sea that swept so close beneath our wings and suddenly there they are; dark smudges wildly swinging in an agony of evasion. Split up - line astern. Now the leading plane banks, turning in towards the ship. Now line abreast. Steady at 120 knots and 120 feet. Not much to remember, just do it. Now the grey shapes show little flicks of light along their sides. What's that? They're firing at us, that's all. Get in close. Now the great shape seems to fill the windshield. Now is the moment. Bomb doors open. Press the tit. A slight jolt and the torpedo slices away from the plane. It is done, now nothing can change what is going to happen. The planes swerve and jink. The navigators spray madly with their twin Vickers. The pilots sweat with an agony of tension as they battle to avoid the other planes and now they are pulling back on the control column and the great ship is whipping beneath. Planes seem to be everywhere. The ships fire madly. Skidding and weaving the aircraft climb away. The cruiser explodes in a thundering, tearing spasm of tortured metal, Inrushing sea and screeching steam. It is all over. The planes turn towards the west and home. Now it is almost night and the rain beats against the wings.

"We sat in the tent waiting. Overhead the palms move their fronds restlessly like great living, questing hairy creatures, dark against the weeping night. Now the sound of engines filling the dripping sky with the sad, lonely throb of their beat. One by one they come in to land, their brilliant lights seeking the sodden strip. Great dark shapes moving against a hedge of palms. The tyres touch, kissing the metal, sobbing in a watery embrace. Four down, four more to come. Now once more the sound, the piercing light the mad careering shape - it goes on and on throwing up great gobs of water, It cannot stop in time. The pilot pulls up the undercart, the plane slithers obscenely in the mud like some poor broken bird. Rescue teams rush to help but there is no need, there is no fire and the crew climb out unhurt.

"Once more we wait and now the fear for our friends grows stronger, feeding on doubt, it spreads among the group of men who stand out in the rain straining their ears for the beat of propellers. The weather worsens, the palms bend to the rising wind. Squalls of rain lash obliquely at the planes, the flapping tents, the dripping jungle. Sheet lightning lights the world around like a series of false dawns, thunder rumbles, truculent, threatening. Suddenly we hear the plane. At first it is only a whisper, but quickly the sound grows stronger, as if gaining confidence. Now it is overhead drowning the other sounds with its pulsing beat. We can even see the navigation lights, red and green twin wandering stars, misted by the rain, sweeping in concentric orbits till they are lost to sight in the pounding rain. Again and again the scene is repeated. The plane is very low, circling and circling. Over the E/T the voice of the radio operator strained but controlled, his message, broken by static, tells the story. Visibility is so bad that they cannot see the strip lights well enough to attempt a landing. Fuel is getting very low.

"The CO makes the decision. They must gain height, set the machine on a course for the bay and bale out. It is the best chance they have.

"Now the engine note becomes stronger, more purposeful. They pass over us once more and the sound of their flight echoes from the crouching hills as they head for the sea. Suddenly, there is the dull boom of an explosion, then silence, only the wind and rain.

"The jungled arms of the bay have caught them in a wet embrace; the swaying trees and tangled vines ripped and torn by the violence of the union; the black wet earth layed bare by their metal plough. A self-dug grave for four young men. Ken Magregor, pilot. Bill Young, navigator. Frank Ewing, radio operator and Don Leigh, gunner.

"Over the years I have often thought of them and of the other two crews who were lost that night, lost in the awful blind, wandering till they too found some mountain peak or watery end. I can still see the hissing lamp, still smell the musty jungle damp, still see the little figure with the battered topee, the long shorts and from the past a ghostly, taunting voice calls me back, intoning 'One thing more - Goodbye'."

Sourced from <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/>



Time For a New Rifle??



A race is brewing behind closed doors as the Australian Defence Force searches for its next service rifle before the tried-and-true Enhanced F-88 Austeyr rifle approaches its planned withdrawal mid next decade.

While contracts have not been formalised, Australian leadership has confirmed interest in moving close combatant personnel to an up-gunned 6.8mm weapon system and ammunition during an Australian Army Land Environment Working Group meeting in June this year.

It's understood that support personnel would remain with the 5.56mm NATO ammunition they currently use, potentially utilising a new Armalite Rifle style standard configuration design.

The current EF88 rifle, chambered in 5.56mm NATO, is approaching a decade of service with the ADF since it was rolled out in mid-2016. The iconic bullpup-style rifle, with a 30-round magazine, is currently manufactured in Lithgow, NSW, by Thales Australia.



A soldier practices on the EF88 Austeyr rifle at the range on 6 August, during Exercise Borella Strike 22.

It's speculated that Thales Australia could potentially contend for a future 6.8mm contract with a system of their own, possibly based on their standard configuration platform, the Australian Combat Assault Rifle (ACAR). The ACAR has allegedly already seen testing by members of the Australian Federal Police and the ADF's 2nd Commando Regiment. Thales neither confirmed nor denied the speculation.

There is already considerable momentum for Australian troops to move to a 6.8mm calibre rifle with the United

States military currently transitioning the US Army to their new 6.8mm M7 rifle, produced by SIG Sauer. Such a rifle would almost certainly be considered a contender for any future rifle contract with the ADF, due to interoperability and joint force compatibility as well as historical preference for US-adopted military systems. Victorian defence company Aquaterro, which supplies SIG Sauer products in Australia, confirmed its interest in entering the race to find the next ADF service rifle.

“Aquaterro, as an existing supplier of SIG Sauer platforms, optics and ammunition to the Australian Defence Force, is keen to offer the M7 rifle in 6.8x51mm as the close combatant rifle,” said Greg Knowles, Aquaterro director of defence and strategic programs.

“Manufacture of M7 rifles and the associated common cartridge case/hybrid cartridge case ammunition in Australia is absolutely feasible.

“The common cartridge case/hybrid cartridge case, regardless of calibre, is central to outperforming legacy brass cartridges. Hybrid ammunition, a brass cartridge with a steel case head, allows the safe function of ammunition at operating pressures over 30 per cent higher than legacy.

“These higher pressures deliver greater kinetic energy, with a flatter trajectories, from shorter barrels than what legacy ammunition and weapons can deliver, enabling the 6.8mm projectile to defeat body armour, protected mobility vehicles and the reduction of cover.”

In addition, it’s speculated that those changes may provide Australian soldiers an advantage with higher impact against near peer soldiers equipped with body armour and possibly effectiveness against lightly armoured vehicles.

There has been widespread uptake of conventional rifle designs, like the AR-15, with international military partners such as the United Kingdom, Ukraine and Sweden. Within Australia there are already several domestic manufacturers, such as NSW firearms manufacturer Oceania Precision and its 6.8mm OP25 rifle, moving to standard configuration AR style designs.

Oceania Precision managing director Jeffrey Bacon confirmed there is a tangible advantage to using 6.8mm rounds in a standard configuration rifle, such as the 6.8mm OP25 or in a 7.62mm OP25.

“This particular rifle runs our proprietary incline radial locking bolt, which allows us to chamber 6.8mm in an AR10 or an AR308 platform,” he said.

“We are looking at around about a 40 percent increase in pressure from 7.62mm, which give you an increase in velocity and thus, more energy on target.”

Source: Defence Connect—October 2025



WHAT'S NEXT??
WATCH THIS SPACE!





Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP 2026

PLEASE PRINT AND ENSURE ALL BOXES ARE FILLED



Membership Category

Date of Application / /

<input type="checkbox"/> Full Membership \$30 (Former member of the RSAR)	<input type="checkbox"/> Current Serving Military Member Must be serving with the RSAR or a sub unit. FREE 1st year. \$10 thereafter while still serving
<input type="checkbox"/> Non Voting Associate Member \$15 (Spouses, non former members of RSAR)	<input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership (By invitation Only) <input type="checkbox"/> FULL Member \$300 <input type="checkbox"/> ASSOCIATE Member \$150

My Details - Please print clearly and fill out ALL sections

Full Name:	Address:
Date of Birth:	
Mobile No:	Post Code:
Regt No. or PMKeys No.	Email:
Period of Service / / to / / Unit Battalion Company	Can you assist the Committee? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Spouse/Partners name.	PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Method of Payment

<input type="checkbox"/> Cheque or Money Order - Payable to The Treasurer Christian Bennett RSAR Association Inc. PO Box 1133 Kensington Gardens SA 5068	<input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Funds Transfer Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc. BSB 633 000 Account 1616 585 88 Please include your <u>Surname</u> as an identifier								
<input type="checkbox"/> CASH (In person to a member of the Committee) Committee Members Name <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> I have paid my Fees to the Association Account listed below and posted/emailed my Application to The RSAR Association PO Box 5218 Murray Bridge South SA 5253 <table border="1"> <tr><td>Account Name:</td><td>RSAR Association Inc.</td></tr> <tr><td>Bank:</td><td>Bendigo Bank</td></tr> <tr><td>BSB:</td><td>633 000</td></tr> <tr><td>Acct #</td><td>1616 585 88</td></tr> </table>	Account Name:	RSAR Association Inc.	Bank:	Bendigo Bank	BSB:	633 000	Acct #	1616 585 88
Account Name:	RSAR Association Inc.								
Bank:	Bendigo Bank								
BSB:	633 000								
Acct #	1616 585 88								

NOTE: Please submit this Application WITH Proof of Service. You will be notified of the progress of your application.

I understand that receipt of this application constitutes my acceptance of the Associations Rules as set down in the Constitution found at the website address below. I also authorise the processing of my preferred method of payment and acknowledge that I may be required to provide proof of past or current military service as required.



Website: www.rsara.asn.au

Please send this completed application, with proof of service to the RSAR Association at davidlaing49@bigpond.com.com

FINANCIAL MEMBERS

Life Members		Members	A - G	Members	H-R	Members	S-Z
Acton	Chris	Abel	Colin	Hanson	Reece	Sailes	Adrian
Beckett	David	Abraham	Michael	Harrington	Malcolm	Sanders	Ashley
Benveniste	Sam	Albrecht	Stephen	Harrison	John	Sandhu	Zorawar
Blackmore	Bill	Allison	Robert	Harrison	Keith	Sando	Timothy
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Brookes	Phil	Angove	Derek	Hartshorne	Anthony	Scott	Rhys
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Carpenter	Ian	Bampton	Michael	Hewitt	Emily	Skapin	Corey
Cotton	Bob	Barry-Orcales	Dianeever	Higgins	Kevin	Slater	Ian
Dart	John	Beames	Paul	Hill	Max	Sniedze	Julie
Davey	Trevor	Bennett	Christian	Hudson	Rick	Sperling	Patrick
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Goodwin	Graham	Burton	Ray	Jones	Brett	Thomas	David
Harris	Lachlan	Buttars	Erik	Justin	Trent	Threlfall	Kev
Hawking	Don	Cardone	Rob	Kleinig	Jack	Tiller	Damion
Haynes	Malcolm	Carlisle	Lesley-Anne	Koop	Joshua	Tran	Andy
Higgins	Jonathan	Cartwright	Harrison	Kovacs	Philip	Treguis	Izaak
Hogan	Mark	Chamberlain	David	Laing	Selina	Treize	George
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Hope	David	Cram	Kevin	Larkins	Steve	Tucker	Belinda
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Hudson	Mick	Demosani	Tony	Lee	Nathan	Turner	Garry
Jackson	Aaron	Dennis	Emily	Lewis	James	Vozelj	Blaz
James	Grant	Dew	Trevor	Loveder	Peter	Waldon	David
Jeffrey	Scott	Djakovic	Livio	Matchett	William	Weepers	Nicole
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Johnson	Barry	Donald	Thomas	Mclver	Bill	Wilkinson	Charles
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Laing	David	Duncan	Coen	McMahon	Tyler	Williams	Janelle
Lakin	Bruce	Dunn	Bob	Migali	Michael	Williams	David
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Moore	Thomas	Faunt	Joshua	Normandale	Zachary	Bampton	Leslie
Paul	John	Flynn	Adrian	Oakley	Andrew	Carnachan	Dom
Pollard	Barry	Fortune	Nigel	O'Daly	Ryan	Dunn	Trish
Richter	Sean	Foy	Erin	Orrock	Alan	Eva	Gail
Salamon	Piotr	Gatley	Graham	Osborne	Isaac	Hawkins	Lynn
Stewart	Robin	Genovese	John	Papps	Bernard	Hook	Philippa
Stewien	Peter	Ghanem	Paul	Parslow	Howard	Hudson	Margaret
Vella	Joe	Gibson	Lindsay	Parsonage	James	Johnson	Margaret
Waters	Ian	Gill	Graham	Pascoe	Michael	Parsonage	Yvonne
Watters	Matthew	Gordon	Frank	Payne	Bob	Pollard	Kay
Westover	Rhys	Griffiths	Amanda	Pearce	Phillip	Toy	Jill
Wilson	Graham	Groffen	Renee	Pexton	Timothy	Winger	Kathleen
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Parkin	Audrey			Preece	Brian	WO1 Broadbent	Mark
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Sanderson	Lorraine			Ramm	Hank	Colour	Denotes
				Ranger	Denis	Serving Member	Serving Member
				Rijken	Paul	Life Member	Life Member
				Roberts	Tony	Ordinary Member	Ordinary Member
				Robertson	James		

Please welcome new
 Serving Member
 Jonathon Mitchell