

# “Sitrep, Over!”



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1<sup>st</sup> March. Birthday of the Army.

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On 1 March 1901, following the federation of Australia on 1 January 1901, the naval and military forces of the six Australian states were officially transferred to the new Commonwealth government. This pivotal action brought into existence the Commonwealth Military Forces (later the Australian Army) and the Commonwealth Naval Forces (later the Royal Australian Navy), placing defense under federal control.

**Establishment:** The transfer was authorized under Section 51 of the Australian Constitution, with the Governor-General, the Earl of Hopetoun, becoming the Commander-in-Chief.

**Military (Army):** Colonial military units were combined into the Commonwealth Military Forces.

**Naval Force:** The Commonwealth Naval Forces (CNF) were formed from the existing, often outdated, ships and resources of the state navies, totaling 11 vessels and about 200 personnel.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY ARMY & NAVY**



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# EDITORIAL

**On ANZAC Day** this year we will again form up on Pulteney Street near the intersection of Grenfell Street. Look for our RSARA Banner! We anticipate stepping off around 1000 hrs for that casual stroll (?) down North Tce and King William Street. If you wish to march with us, please be in place NLT 1000 hrs. After the march we will pay respects to our fallen mates by toasting them at the Torrens Parade Ground.



**The Voyager Disaster**, started in last month's newsletter, features Part 2 this month, focusing on the cause of the accident and the Royal Commission into the situation that cost so many Australian lives. Part 2 is on Page 3-8.

**World War 2** was fought between 1939 and 1945, starting in Europe with the invasion of Poland by the Germans, under Adolf Hitler, and concluding in the Pacific region in 1945 with the surrender of the Imperial Japanese Forces in Tokyo Bay. Most of the personnel who fought and served went home after the war, but others fought on, some for more than 30 years. Over the next couple of months we'll feature the extraordinary stories of some Japanese soldiers who refused to believe the war was over, and continued fighting in the jungles of the Pacific islands. The story starts on Page 12 – 16.

I had reason to chat to a young mate of mine the other day, who was telling me his 14 year old daughter had been hospitalized after taking an overdose. My mate is strong willed, and has all the best intentions for his daughters' future, so I think she will be in better hands when she recovers, but there is no need for anyone with similar issues to suffer in silence. I've put a few words down on Page 17 which I think can help.

Finally, I was VERY impressed with the dress, bearing and attitude of the 10/27 Battalion soldiers who participated in the recent FPAT exercise at RAAF Base Edinburgh. My wife offered fruit kebabs and fruit slices to some troops and they were all so courteous and grateful for our efforts, and she was pleasantly surprised and impressed. WELL DONE!

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

*David*

# The Voyager Disaster Part 2



The port bridge lookout had come on duty while *Voyager* was turning to starboard, and raised the alarm when the swing back to port brought *Melbourne* back into view around 20:55. *Melbourne*'s navigation officer ordered the carrier's engines to half speed astern around the same time, which Captain Robertson increased to full astern a few seconds later. At the same time, Stevens gave the order "Full ahead both engines. Hard a-starboard," before instructing the destroyer's quartermaster to announce that a collision was imminent.<sup>1</sup> Both ships' measures were too late; at 54 seconds from impact, the ships were less than 600 metres (2,000 ft) apart and *in extremis* –physically unable to alter their speed or course enough to avoid a collision. Recent investigations have asserted the time of alert for both ships was 40 seconds. Captain Robertson himself was adamant that *Voyager* appeared to be doing a legitimate manoeuvre by fishtailing to get into station, that the arrival of danger was sudden and irreversible, and that *Melbourne*'s bridge crew did not see *Voyager*' port light till 20 seconds before the collision.

*Melbourne* struck *Voyager* at 20:56, with the carrier's bow cutting into the forward superstructure of the destroyer just aft of the bridge and operations room. The senior officers on the bridge were killed on impact. The mass of the oncoming carrier rolled *Voyager* to starboard before cutting the ship in two, with the bow passing down *Melbourne*'s port side, and the stern down the starboard. *Voyager*'s forward boiler exploded, briefly starting a fire in the open wreckage of the carrier's bow before it was extinguished by seawater. The destroyer's forward section sank in 10 minutes, due to the weight of the two 4.5-inch (110 mm) gun turrets. The aft section did not begin sinking until half an hour after the collision, and did not completely submerge until 00:18. In the messages that were sent immediately to the Fleet Headquarters in Sydney, Robertson underestimated the extent of the damage to *Voyager* and as a result the Captain Cook Graving Dock at Garden Island was ordered to clear the troopship HMAS *Sydney* from the dock to make room for *Voyager*, and the salvage ship, HMAS *Kimbla*, began sailing south to tow the destroyer to Sydney.

HMAS Voyager in 1962



# The Voyager Disaster



*Melbourne* launched her boats almost immediately after the collision to recover survivors, and the carrier's wardroom and C Hangar were prepared for casualties. One cutter was able to rescue 40 people before beginning to take on water. The cutter was commanded by Leading Seaman M. A. W. Riseley, who rescued as many survivors as he could despite the weight limit of the rescue boat. The admiral's barge was damaged by debris. Eight helicopters were also launched, but it was then deemed too dangerous to have so many active in such a small area, and they were limited to two at a time. Most of the sailors in the water were unable or unwilling to be rescued with the helicopters' winches, so the helicopters were reassigned to provide illumination of the site with their landing lights. At 21:58, *Melbourne* was informed that five minesweepers (HMA Ships *Snipe*, *Teal*, *Hawk*, *Ibis*, and *Curlew*), two search-and-rescue (SAR) boats from HMAS *Creswell* (*Air Nymph* and *Air Sprite*), and helicopters from Naval Air Station Nowra, had been dispatched. The destroyer escort HMAS *Stuart* was also being prepared to sail. Arriving just before 22:00, *Air Nymph* collected 34 survivors and attempted to transfer them to *Melbourne*, but swells pushed the boat up under the carrier's flight deck and damaged two communications aerials, and the SAR boat was sent back to *Creswell* to offload the survivors. Another 36 were recovered by *Air Sprite* and transported ashore. Sea searches continued until 12 February, and aircraft made occasional passes over the area until 14 February, looking for bodies.



HMAS Melbourne steams into Sydney prior to the disaster

# The Voyager Disaster



From the 314 personnel aboard *Voyager* at the time of the collision, 14 officers, 67 sailors, and one civilian dockyard worker were killed, including Stevens and all but two sailors of the bridge crew. The majority of those killed had been in the forward section of *Voyager* when the collision occurred, off duty and relaxing or sleeping. Only three bodies were recovered, one of them being that of Stevens. They were buried on 14 February, and the missing were declared dead on 17 February. Memorial services were held around Australia on 21 February. There were no casualties aboard *Melbourne*.

## Repairs and replacement

At 03:00, after the *Voyager* survivors were bedded down and the forward collision bulkheads had been inspected and shored up, Robertson handed command of the search operation to *Stuart* and began to make for Sydney. *Melbourne* was docked at Cockatoo Island Dockyard for repairs to her bow, which were completed by May 1964. She remained in service with the RAN until 1982, and was sold for scrap to China in 1985.

Following the collision, both the United Kingdom and the United States of America offered to lend ships to the RAN as a replacement; the Royal Navy offered *Daring* class destroyer HMS *Duchess*, while the United States Navy offered two *Fletcher*-class destroyers: USS *The Sullivans* and USS *Twining*. *Duchess* was accepted and modernised, and as she was only intended to be in RAN service for four years (although she was later sold to the RAN and served until 1977), the RAN ordered the construction of two improved River-class destroyer escorts (British Type 12 frigates), based on the *Leander*-class frigate design. *Swan* and *Torrens* entered service in 1970 and 1971 respectively.

## Investigations

### First Royal Commission

Although a naval Board of Inquiry was suggested by senior RAN officers as the best way to investigate the incident, a series of incidents and accidents during the 1950s and early 1960s had left the general public with a mistrust of navy-run investigations, and prime minister Sir Robert Menzies made it clear that an inquiry supervised by a federal judge would be the only acceptable route: anything else would be seen as a cover up. Regulations for such an externally supervised inquiry were supposed to have been drafted following an explosion aboard HMAS *Tarakan* in 1950, but they were never enacted, so Menzies' only option was to call for a royal commission. The commission, to be headed by former attorney-general Sir John Spicer, was announced by Menzies on 13 February 1964. This commission was directed primarily to investigate the immediate causes of the collision, and the circumstances which led up to it. Secondary considerations included the suitability of both ships for the exercise, and the rescue and treatment of survivors. These instructions were prepared without the consultation of the RAN. The high number of competing arguments slowed the investigation, and it was not until 25 June that the inquiry was ended and the report begun. The Spicer Report was released publicly on 26 August 1964.

The report had a disjointed narrative and repeatedly failed to cite the relevant evidence. Despite the three survivors from *Voyager*' bridge stating the contrary, Spicer concluded that the collision was primarily the fault

# The Voyager Disaster



of *Voyager's* bridge crew, in that they neglected to maintain an effective lookout and lost awareness of the carrier's location, although he did not blame individual officers. Direct evidence from *Voyager's* tactical officer demonstrated that *Voyager's* officer of the watch did not neglect his duty at all and was watching *Melbourne* right up to the collision, but this evidence was rejected by Spicer primarily because "it was rejected by counsel assisting the royal commissioner and has been rejected by the Government ever since." When reporting on the contribution of *Melbourne* and those aboard her to the collision, Spicer specifically indicated failures of Robertson and two other bridge officers, as they did not alert *Voyager* to the danger she was in, and appeared to not take measures to prevent *Melbourne* from colliding. Recent investigations demonstrate that Sir John Spicer in his report in 1964 set back *Melbourne's* ship log times by two minutes to make it look like *Melbourne's* bridge crew just stood there watching *Voyager* come onto a collision course. Captain Robertson maintained *Voyager's* turn into the path of *Melbourne* was sudden, creating a perilous situation over which he had no control. History however was made by Spicer's report, not by the real evidence given by the naval men who were there.

Robertson was marked for transfer to HMAS *Watson*, a training base in Sydney, Robertson submitted his resignation from the Navy on 10 September 1964, two days after receiving official notice of his new posting, which he saw as a demotion. The media and the general public considered that Robertson had been made a scapegoat for the incident. The people and the Parliament were sceptical that a proper investigation had been undertaken.

## Second Royal Commission

Over the next few years there was increasing pressure from the public, the media, and politicians of the government and opposition over the handling of the first Royal Commission, as well as claims made by Lieutenant Commander Peter Cabban, the former executive officer of *Voyager*, that Captain Stevens frequently drank to excess and was unfit for command. On 18 May 1967, Prime minister Harold Holt announced a second Royal Commission into the *Melbourne-Voyager* collision, with Sir Stanley Burbury, The Hon. Mr Justice Kenneth Asprey, and the Hon. Mr Justice Geoffrey Lucas as presiding commissioners investigating the claims made by Cabban. It was the only time in Australian history that two Royal Commissions have been held on the same incident, although it was emphasised that the second enquiry was to focus on Cabban's allegations, not the accident itself. The commission opened on 13 June 1967, and hearings commenced on 18 July.



# The Voyager Disaster



The commission looked at the proposition that Stevens was unfit for command on the evening of the incident due to illness (a duodenal ulcer), drunkenness or a combination of the two, and that the description of the collision in Spicer's report and the conclusions drawn from it were inconsistent with events. Stevens' ulcer had previously hospitalised him, and he had concealed its recurrence from the RAN. There was evidence that Stevens had been served a triple brandy earlier in the night, and a post-mortem conducted on Stevens' body showed a blood alcohol level of 0.025%, though the significance of this figure was challenged by expert witnesses. The hearings lasted 85 days, and the Burbury Report was released publicly on 25 February 1968. It found that Stevens was medically unfit for command, although not impaired by alcohol at the time of the collision. Consequently, some of the findings of the first commission— those based on the assumption that *Voyager* was under appropriate command—required reevaluation. Robertson and the other officers of *Melbourne* were absolved of blame for the incident. However, for the last 60 years, both crews were attributed responsibility for the collision in general by most media and general reports, repeating Spicer's unjust conclusions from the first enquiry.

## Additional evidence

On condition of anonymity, a doctor informed the first Royal Commission that he had been confidentially prescribing amphetamine to Captain Stevens prior to the collision. This was a legal drug at the time and was carried in RAN ships' medical lockers. Navy Minister Don Chipp suggested this as an explanation for the contradictory impressions created in the minds of witnesses who reported on Captain Stevens' apparent state of health and demeanour prior to the collision. This evidence was only made public after both enquiries were completed.

## Analysis

The most recent investigation in 2023 into the collision demonstrates the crews of both ships did their jobs correctly on the night of the collision - in other words, that according to the investigation, two navy ships can collide with significant loss of life without any mistake by their commanders or crews. The three survivors on *Voyager*'s bridge, who gave substantial evidence at both enquiries as well as the testimony of *Melbourne*'s bridge crew has narrowed the cause of the collision down to the impact *Melbourne*'s new flying lights had on *Voyager*'s bridge crew. The cause of the collision had not been previously determined because the collision had not been investigated by experienced naval men at a board of enquiry. Prior to 2023, and in the immediate aftermath of the collision, five possible causes were put forward:

1. communications between the two vessels did not reflect the ships' intentions,
2. those aboard *Voyager* had an incorrect idea of where they were in relation to *Melbourne*,
3. the sea room required for the destroyer to manoeuvre was miscalculated,
4. the level of training aboard one or both ships was deficient, or
5. an equipment failure occurred aboard one or both ships.

The equipment failure, inadequate training, and miscalculated sea room theories were disproven by the two Royal Commissions, leaving the suggestion that either a communication error aboard one of the ships caused *Voyager* to manoeuvre in an undesired manner, or the officers aboard *Voyager* were unaware of their vessel's position in relation to the much larger aircraft carrier.

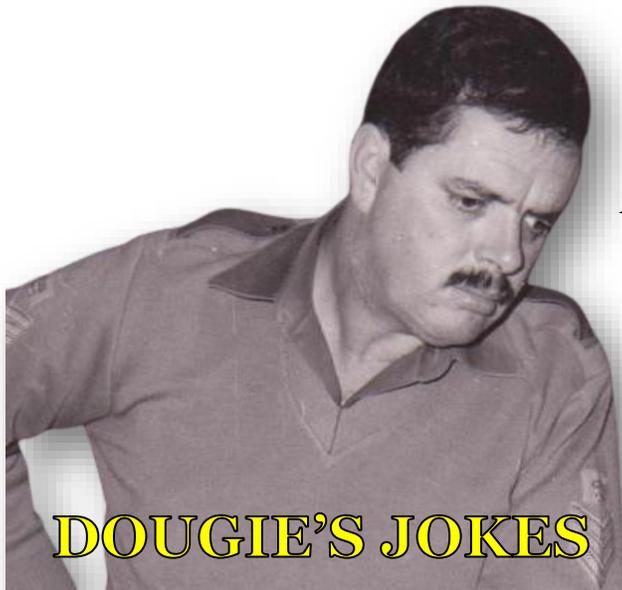
# The Voyager Disaster



Naval historian and ex-RAN officer Tom Frame, who studied the collision for his doctoral thesis, believes that the main cause of the collision was an error in communications: specifically that the instruction to turn to 020° and then assume the plane guard station was garbled on receipt by *Voyager*. The signal was "Foxtrot Corpen 020 22", meaning that *Melbourne* was about to commence flying operations on a heading of 020°, at a speed of 22 knots (41 km/h; 25 mph), and that *Voyager* was to<sup>[14][80]</sup> assume the plane guard station.<sup>[84][85]</sup> While the first Royal Commission considered the likelihood that the code phrase "foxtrot corpen" was reversed to become "corpen foxtrot" (an order to turn onto the given course), Frame states that it was more likely that the numbers given for the course were misheard or confused with other numbers in the signal as a turn to the south-west (various possibilities offered by Frame would have indicated a turn to the south-west instead of the north-east, with an incorrect heading between 200° and 220°, or of 270°), or that this happened in conjunction with the code phrase error. Former RAN Commodore David Ferry disagrees with Frame's conclusions, claiming that the coincidence of two errors in the same signal was unlikely, and that either error would be sufficient cause for Stevens or the other officers to query the signal. The most recent investigation into the collision sides with Ferry and sets out all of the signals sent by *Melbourne* to *Voyager* given in evidence at the first enquiry. This clearly demonstrated there was no signal error; *Voyager's* signalman himself stated that he had no doubt the final signal he received and passed to *Voyager's* officer of the watch was foxtrot corpen 020.



HMAS Melbourne after the collision



## DOUGIE'S JOKES

I find it ironic that the colours red, white and blue stand for freedom. Until they are flashing behind you.

I married  
my wife for her looks..  
but not the ones  
she's  
giving me lately.



### 3 Deadly Terms Used by Women

#### #1 **Fine**

THIS IS THE WORD WOMEN USE TO END AN ARGUMENT WHEN SHE KNOWS SHE IS RIGHT AND YOU NEED TO SHUT UP.

#### #2 **Nothing**

MEANS SOMETHING AND YOU NEED TO BE WORRIED.

#### #3 **Go Ahead**

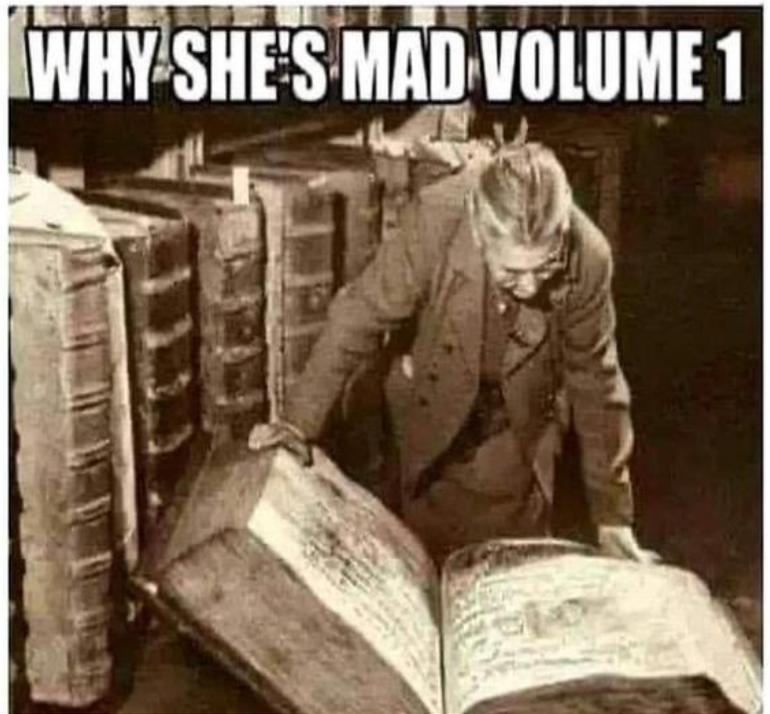
THIS IS A DARE, NOT PERMISSION. DO NOT DO IT.

### HUSBAND:

I want you to have this bracelet. It belonged to my Grandmother.

### WIFE:

Why does it say, "Do not resuscitate?"



**BEING KISSED  
WHILE YOU'RE  
ASLEEP IS ONE OF  
THE PUREST  
FORMS OF LOVE...  
UNLESS YOU'RE IN  
PRISON.**

**Husband Hack:  
Next time you're  
in a fight with  
your wife, start  
undressing.**

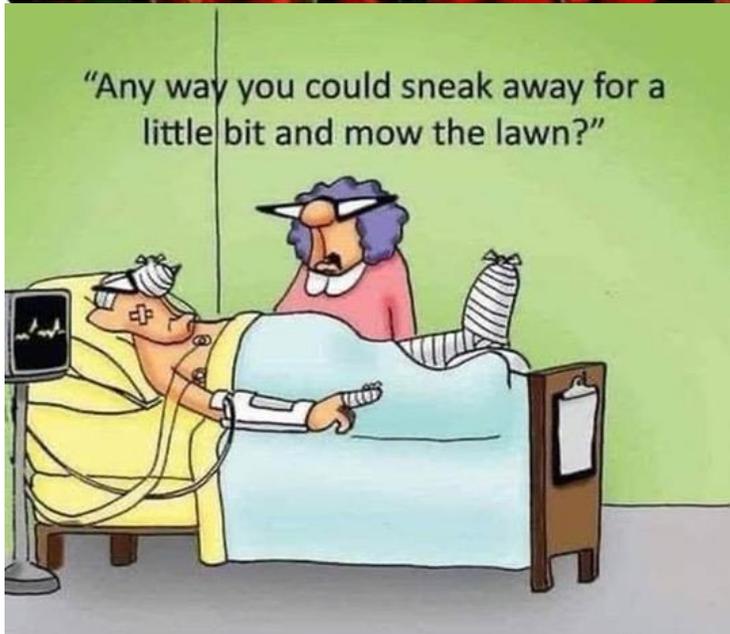
**She will instantly  
have a headache  
and fall asleep.**



**If someone from  
Holland married a  
Filipino.  
Would their kids  
be Hollapinos?**



**Sometimes I get road rage walking behind people at the grocery store.**



**SAY WHAT YOU WILL ABOUT WOMEN BUT I THINK BEING ABLE TO TURN ONE SENTENCE INTO A SIX HOUR ARGUMENT TAKES TALENT.**

# They Fought On. And On!



The Japanese empire was a fine place for young Hiro Onoda. In 1939, at age 17, he hired on with a lacquerware company that posted him to Hankow (Wuhan) in Japanese-occupied China. There, he visited suppliers by day and danced the night away with obliging Chinese women.

His idyllic world, along with that of countless others, came to an abrupt end in December 1941.

Japan opened up a new front in her war against the rest of the world. The Army desperately needed manpower. Onoda was called up in May 1942, and after basic training he was accepted into officer's candidate school. Upon graduation, he was promoted to 2nd lieutenant and selected for special training in a pacification squad, a type of commando unit.

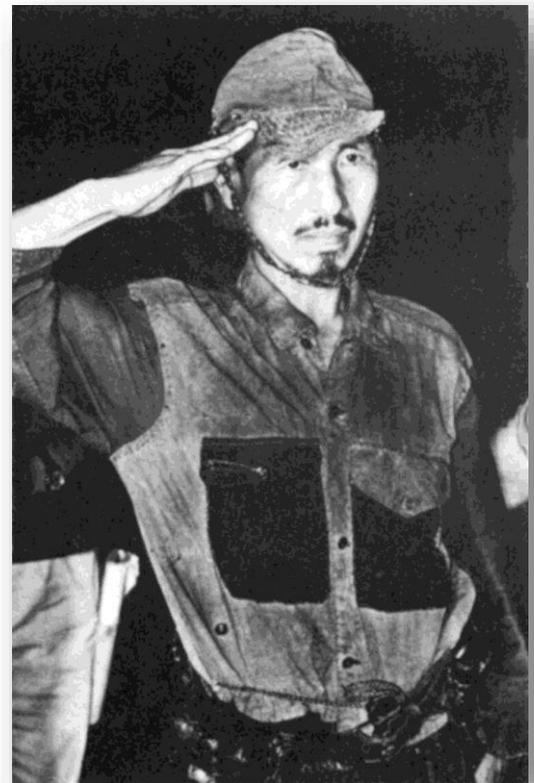
In December 1944, with the American enemy growing in strength and resolve, Onoda was sent to the Philippines. There, he was ordered to connect with a local Japanese garrison and conduct reconnaissance of enemy strength and dispositions. He was also instructed to conduct guerrilla warfare after the expected American invasion. Under no circumstances was he to give up or commit suicide. Of the millions of combatants of every nation in World War II, no soldier was more faithful to his orders than Lieutenant Hiro Onoda of the Imperial Japanese Army.

Onoda and 21 other newly minted commandos arrived by air at Clark Air Base. The Americans had already landed in Mindoro and were interfering with Japanese movements on Luzon with continuous strafing and bombing.

On December 26, Major Yoshimi Taniguchi gave assignments to the newly arrived commandos. They were expected to conduct guerrilla warfare against the enemy in different parts of the archipelago.

Onoda was the single operative assigned to the nearby island of Lubang, southwest of Manila. Before leaving for their assignments, the commandos were addressed by Lt. Gen. Akira Muto, chief of staff of the 14th Area Army. General Muto gave the guerrillas a pep talk.

Onoda remembered clearly that the general looked straight at him and said, "You are absolutely forbidden to die by your own hand. It may take three years, it may take five, but whatever happens we'll come back for you." Onoda would remain faithful to his general's orders for



*Second Lieutenant Hiro Onoda salutes upon his return to Japan in March 1974 after years of hiding in the jungles of the Philippines.*

the next 30 years. On December 30, a reluctant Filipino captain, traveling during the relative safety of night, ferried Onoda to his new home on the island of Lubang.

Lubang is about 30 kilometers long and 10 kilometers wide. Much of it is heavily forested with tropical vegetation. Onoda would come to know every inch of it. On his arrival, he found a Japanese garrison of 150 men divided into four commands (Army, Air, Navy, and Intelligence). He did not have authority over any of them. He could only advise and consult, but had little time for either.

On February 1, 1945, the Americans came. Most of the Japanese garrison died in futile charges or by their own hands. Not Onoda, because he was forbidden to die and had to live to prepare for the day when the Japanese Army would return victorious. The few survivors retreated into the mountainous jungle where Onoda had the foresight to cache rice and some rifles for a protracted guerrilla struggle. The little band of holdouts engaged in firefights with the Americans and Filipinos, but by January 1946 Onoda's command was down to four men. In 1949, one of them deserted and gave himself up. After that, Onoda's family in Japan knew that he was still alive.

Ito Masashi's fate was not too dissimilar. Drafted along with his boyhood friends from a small fishing village in January 1942, Masashi was sent to the Manchurian border. He was assigned to defend against Japan's longstanding European enemy, the Soviet Union.

## The Attack on Pearl Harbor Meant the Beginning of a 19-Year War for Ito Masashi

Japan had already fought three wars with Russia in the 20th century, and the Army's pre-war planning called for a strong presence on the Soviet border. Events in Europe changed all that. Japan's European ally, Nazi Germany, invaded Russia in the summer of 1941, and the Soviets quickly stripped their Siberian defenses in a desperate bid to stop the German onslaught. Suddenly, Japan had no Soviet enemy to worry about. In addition, by occupying Holland and France and locking England into a life-and-death struggle, Germany had created a power vacuum in the Far East where those countries had important but defenseless colonies.

The only force that could prevent Japan from filling that vacuum was the U.S. Navy, anchored menacingly in Hawaii. In



Some Japanese fought on in groups, but over the years many never returned home.

December 1941, Japan moved to eliminate that threat. The attack on Pearl Harbor changed everything. For Ito Masashi it meant the beginning of a 19-year war.

Masashi's initial posting to the Manchurian border to guard against Russians who were no longer there soon changed. He was transferred to a rear area in the war with China. In March 1944, now a lance corporal, Masashi got urgent new orders. He was assigned to a hastily assembled outfit and transferred again.

This time he was sent to the island of Guam (called Omiya-jima by the Japanese) to face the real enemy, the United States. Steaming across the ocean in a 13-ship convoy, he landed on the island to reinforce the existing Japanese garrison. Days were easy at first as the new troops settled in. They spent their time fishing in the abundant local waters to augment their meager military diet. It was the calm before the storm.

In early June, they witnessed a flight of American bombers overhead. Masashi soon lost count of their number. The Japanese garrison on Guam was safe for the moment; the countless planes they observed were on their way to bomb Saipan, 200 miles to the north. A few days later, Masashi and his mates heard the rumble of distant guns over the horizon. The noise came from American battleships pounding Saipan with their 16-inch guns in preparation for landing.

Guam's turn came on July 21. Masashi remembers that Japanese command and control broke down after the initial American bombardment, and local units had to act on their own. The invasion went smoothly for the Americans, and by August 8 organized resistance came to an end. Many Japanese, including Masashi, were bypassed by the rapidly advancing Americans. The surviving Japanese stragglers (as they were called by the Americans) had to be rooted out by patrols and hard fighting.

Masashi and his few surviving mates moved from place to place to avoid detection. He could hear other pockets of Japanese soldiers being killed by the Americans, or worse, by the patrols of local militia. The Chamorro natives of Guam had suffered cruelly under Japanese occupation and set upon the survivors with a savage fury.

Soon Masashi had only one remaining companion, Private Minakawa Bunzo. They were like hunted animals in the twisted jungles of the island. They were not alone. Unknown to Masashi, Sergeant Shoichi Yokoi was also hiding in the uncharted jungles.

Yokoi had also served in Manchuria and was assigned to a supply company on Guam. He did not expect to be involved in the fighting. When independent groups of Japanese soldiers made suicidal charges against the Americans, he did not participate and so lived. For 20 years, he and two others survived on the mountainous island. When they ran low on food, his two fellow holdouts moved their camp a short distance away to be less conspicuous (or because they did not get along). They visited each other occasionally. In 1964, Yokoi found the bodies of the others who had apparently died of starvation or food poisoning. He lived alone in a cave that he dug out himself for the next eight years.

## The Japanese Soldiers Feared the Disgrace, Dishonor, and Humiliation of Surrender

Long after World War I officially ended, Yokoi, Onoda, and Masashi held out. They were not the only ones. In every theater where Japanese soldiers fought there were those who continued to fight, or merely survive, long after their country's defeat.

In Manchuria, up to 20,000 Japanese soldiers held out in remote mountain areas until 1948. Hundreds of others joined the communist forces of Mao Tse-tung in the civil war with the Chinese Nationalists. Others became mercenaries for regional warlords or even the hated Russians. A common theme among them was the fear of disgrace at home and the humiliation that returning to Japan after personal surrender would mean to them and their families.

In the Pacific the numbers were smaller, but the motives were the same. On Saipan, 45 soldiers under the command of a Captain Oba continued fighting for three months after the official surrender on September 2, 1945, in Tokyo Bay. At last convinced that the war was truly over, Captain Oba surrendered his command on December 1, 1945.

On the bloodstained island of Peleliu, a group of 33 Japanese holdouts vexed the small American Marine garrison until March 1947.

On Tinian, Susumu Murata held out alone until he was captured in 1953.

Japanese holdouts continued to elude Allied patrols on Papua, New Guinea, Guadalcanal, the Solomon Islands, Indonesia, and Okinawa.

One of the more bizarre stories was that of the survivors on Anatahan Island. In June 1944, a group of about 30 Japanese merchant marines were stranded on this uninhabited and uninviting volcanic island 75 miles north of Saipan after their merchant ship was sunk. Among them was a lone woman, Kazuko Higa. Her husband had drowned when the ship was sunk. The survivors lived on coconuts, taro, sugar cane, fish, birds, and even lizards. They made huts of palm fronds and grass.

Their standard of living improved after February 1945, when a B-29 Superfortress bomber crashed on the island, killing its crew. Now they had sheet metal to roof their huts, parachute silk for clothing, and cordage for fishing line. The dead crew's side arms and the .50-caliber machine guns were also recovered.

Theirs was not a homogeneous society. Jealous fighting broke out for the affections of Mrs. Higa, fueled by *tuba*, a fermented drink they made from coconut milk. Five different men would claim her as wife, and four would mysteriously disappear in fishing accidents. In all, six of the Anatahan survivors would die from violence. Others would endure severe knife wounds from fighting each other.

By July 1950, Mrs. Higa had had enough. She signaled a passing American ship and asked to be taken off the island. Back in Japan, she alerted authorities to the fate of the others. Relatives wrote letters, and leaflets were dropped on the island informing the survivors that the war was over and that they should surrender. They finally

gave up on June 30, 1951; they were picked up by an American Navy vessel and repatriated to Japan. The Japanese press sensationalized the story as one of sex and intrigue. In reality it was just bare survival under brutal conditions.

What kept the Emperor's soldiers so long in the jungle? Why would men go on fighting or merely surviving after years of grueling privation?

The answer lies in the ancient Samurai code of Bushido, honor in the face of death. So ingrained was the idea of equating surrender with dishonor that thousands of Japanese soldiers killed themselves to avoid capture. Over and over again, uncomprehending Allied soldiers watched helplessly as their enemies took their own lives.

Until World War II, Japan had never tasted defeat. Surrender to a foreign enemy was unknown and unfathomable. By the same token, an enemy who surrendered to the Japanese was considered to be beneath contempt. This accounts for the brutal treatment of Allied prisoners in Japanese hands. There was no honor in surrender, only shame. The Japanese did not ask for mercy and did not grant it.

Cut off from all civilization, the holdouts had to quickly learn survival skills. Essentially, all the Pacific island holdouts lived by their wits off the flora and fauna of the jungle. They ate roots, breadfruit, papaya, coconuts, insects, mice, bark, the occasional wild boar, and on Lubang at least, domestic cattle that might stray or be lured into the jungle.

They made their clothes from the bark or leaves of trees and shoes from abandoned truck tires. On Guam, Masashi made good use of the U.S. Army garbage dump. There, he and his lone companion found cans for storing water, pots for cooking, building materials, discarded clothing, and blankets. Occasionally, they dared venture to the ocean under cover of darkness to collect seawater, which they rendered down for salt.

Sergeant Yokoi had been a tailor's apprentice before the war, and he became expert at fashioning clothing from any material at hand. When he was captured, he was wearing a pair of pants sewed from burlap and a shirt made from hibiscus or pago bark complete with buttons.

On Lubang, Onoda and his diminishing number of colleagues simply stole what they needed from farm shacks built by islanders in the highlands for seasonal work. By this method, they obtained a transistor radio and batteries around 1958. With the radio, they were able to learn of the prosperity in their homeland. This was proof that Japan was winning the war. Later they learned of the American setbacks in Vietnam, more proof that the war was not going well for the enemy.

As conditions improved for the Pacific islanders after the war, their castoffs and trash became more useful to the Japanese survivors still living among them. Plastic containers became available, as did a growing number of discarded garments, shoes, knives, pans, and hats.



**Article continues next month.**

# ARE YOU OK MATE?

I was chatting to a good mate the other day, and he was telling me how his 14 year old daughter had taken a massive overdose of painkillers, 80 in fact, and was in an induced coma at the Women's & Childrens Hospital in Adelaide. She felt her life was no longer worth living and had decided to end it all. This is terrible news, not only because she'll be in a coma and recovering for many, many weeks, but because she had come to the end of her tether at only 14 years of age!

I think to myself, "what does she know at 14 years that causes her so much pain?" And "there must be more we can do for these folks who are suffering?" I fight to live on every day, so why should she go so early?

There are multiple organisations in Australia that are geared up to help those suffering mental anguish, and these groups can, and will help anyone who have nowhere else to turn. (Lifeline 13 11 14, Beyond Blue 1300 224 636)

They all encourage us to:

1. **ASK**
2. **LISTEN**
3. **ENCOURAGE ACTION**
4. **CHECK IN.**

Got a niggling feeling that someone you know or care about it isn't behaving as they normally would? Perhaps they seem out of sorts? More agitated or withdrawn? Or they're just not themselves. Trust that gut instinct and act on it.

By starting a conversation and commenting on the changes you've noticed, you could help that family member, friend or workmate open up. If they say they are not ok, you can follow our conversation steps to show them they're supported and help them find strategies to better manage the load. If they are ok, that person will know you're someone who cares enough to ask.

In late 2025 the RSAR Association engaged a Welfare Officer in Phil Stuart, and he has already reached out to a number of members who have been doing the "hard yards", either with their health or through trying family times. Phil is a Warrant Officer Class 2 and works as a Reservist with 10/27 Battalion RSAR as their Company Quarter Master Sergeant, and he's also a very nice bloke and easy to get on with.

Phil has indicated he can talk at any time on the phone, or is willing to take your emails, so if you have the need to reach out, please do!

You can contact Phil on the following:

**Phil Stuart**

**Mobile: 0421 543 869**

**Email: [stupy001@hotmail.com](mailto:stupy001@hotmail.com)**

**Email: [phillip.stuart1@defence.gov.au](mailto:phillip.stuart1@defence.gov.au)**

Cheers. *David Laing*



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

My Details - Please print clearly and fill out ALL sections

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

Method of Payment

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cheque or Money Order - Payable to</b> <b>The Treasurer Christian Bennett</b> <b>RSAR Association Inc.</b> <b>PO Box 1133</b> <b>Kensington Gardens SA 5068</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Electronic Funds Transfer</b> <b>Royal South Australia Regiment Association Inc.</b> <b>BSB 633 000</b> <b>Account 1616 585 88</b> Please include your <u>Surname</u> as an identifier								
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>CASH (In person to a member of the Committee)</b> 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](http://www.rsara.asn.au)

Please send this completed application, with proof of service to the RSAR Association at [davidlaing49@bigpond.com.com](mailto:davidlaing49@bigpond.com.com)

## Merchandise available **ONLY** to RSARA Members



- A. Regimental Tie \$25
- B. Stubby Holders \$6 each or 6 for \$30
- C. RSARA Nameplate \$30
- D. RSARA Lapel Badge \$15
- E. Laser-engraved timber shield w/- brass look plaque \$60
- F. Vinyl RSAR Sticker 70mm x 100mm  
**Only \$2 each or 6 for \$10 FREE Postage.**
- G. Hoodie w/- LOGO \$55

**Allow \$15 postage for each item**  
**Unless collected by member**



**POLO TOP \$50**

Order by contacting CPL Selina Laing via [lebanonsel@live.com.au](mailto:lebanonsel@live.com.au)

# MEMBERS LIST

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
Boscence	Bob	Andrews	Ronnie	Harrison	Nigel	Schuh	Simon
Brookes	Phil	Angove	Derek	Hartshorne	Anthony	Scott	Rhys
Burnard	Trent	Angus	Sebastian	Hawkins	Des	Sexton	Mark
Burns	Wayne	Attenborough	Geoff	Heath	Jonathon	Shephard	Daniel
Carnachan	Ian	Baker	Craig	Hewett	Ben	Shrive	Hayden
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
Elliott	Graham	Blondell	Mark	Hudson	Mick	Stuart	Phil
Ewens	Mimi	Brown	Bruce	Hume	Matthew	Tasker	David
Gaborit	Lyndon	Burnard	Saxon	Humphrys	Jesse	Tattersall	Geoff
Goodwin	Graham	Burton	Ray	Jones	Brett	Thomas	David
Harris	Lachlan	Buttars	Erik	Justin	Trent	Threlfall	Kevin
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	Trezise	George
Hook	Alan	Cooke	Nat	Langtry	Paul	Tsoulakis	Christos
Hope	David	Cram	Kevin	Larkins	Steve	Tucker	Belinda
Horseman	Ian	Dale	Andy	Leach	Thomas	Tucker	Paul
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
Johnson	Paul	Domanski	Glenn	McCulloch	Don	Wheeler	Chris
Johnson	Barry	Donald	Thomas	Mclver	Bill	Wilkinson	Charles
Klopf	Alex	Drew	Anton	McKenzie	Kain	Williams	Reg
Laing	David	Duncan	Coen	McMahon	Tyler	Williams	Janelle
Lakin	Bruce	Dunn	Bob	Migali	Michael	Williams	David
Marlin	Robin	Dunn	Peter	Mitchell	Barry	Zuromski	Paul
Meredith	Mike	Duras	Roman	Mitchell	Jonathon		
Miller	Nick	Etteridge	Hugh	Morony	Frank	Associate	Members
Moore	Peter	Eva	Keith	Mulroney	Dennis	Abel	Karen
Moore	Terry	Ewens	Mimi	New	Anthony	Angove	Leisel
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	Johnson	Margaret
Vella	Joe	Gibson	Lindsay	Parsonage	James	Parsonage	Yvonne
Waters	Ian	Gill	Graham	Pascoe	Michael	Pollard	Kay
Watters	Matthew	Gordon	Frank	Payne	Bob	Toy	Jill
Westover	Rhys	Griffiths	Amanda	Peachey	Michael	Winger	Kathleen
Wilson	Graham	Groffen	Renee	Pearce	Phillip		
Associate Life	Members	Guglielmi	Jermaine	Pexton	Timothy	Honorary	Members
Elliott	Julie			Phillips	Colin Rex	MAJGEN Wilson	Neil
Field	Shirley			Portakiewicz	Anthony	LTCOL Tyson	Darrin
Johnson	Sally			Portakiewicz	David	CAPT Jilbert	Charles
Laing	June			Portakiewicz	Richard	WO1 Broadbent	Mark
Parkin	Audrey			Powell	Gary		
Phillips	Heather			Preece	Brian	Colour	Denotes
Sanderson	Lorraine			Rado	Steven	Serving Member	Serving Member
				Ramm	Hank	Life Member	Life Member
				Ranger	Denis	Ordinary Member	Ordinary Member
				Rijken	Paul		
				Roberts	Tony		
				Robertson	James		

Please welcome new Serving Member **Michael Peachey**