

# FATHOMS

**APRIL—MAY 2009**

**VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP**

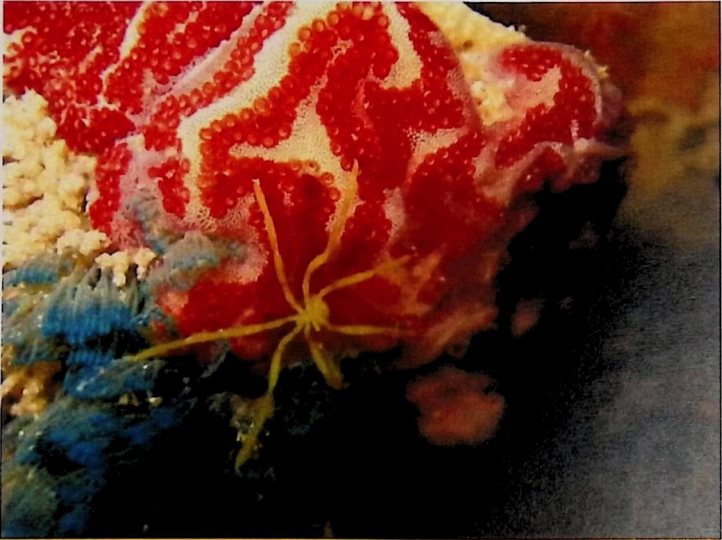


Cape Jaffa 2009 Trip—more photos inside

[www.vsag.org.au](http://www.vsag.org.au)

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More of Benita McDonough's photographic work



# FATHOMS



*Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group*

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**VSAG General Meetings**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday in the month

**Editorial Submissions to:**

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## Editorial

*With Easter upon us it is time to see how much we can fit in before the year disappears. VSAG has lots on the calendar so please try to book in on as many activities as possible. It's too late for Easter at the Prom but we have 'Anzac' weekend activities including an IMAX film (page 46 - contact Bridey) and local diving (see calendar on page 62); overseas trip to Sulawesi (contact Mick Jeanle); Queen's Birthday weekend at Queenscliff/Boarfish Lodge (contact John Lawler); Xmas in July (page 5 - contact Bridey), Melb Cup Weekend trip to the Prom, GBR trip to the Bunker group of Islands (page 7 - ring Alan Beckhurst); Annual Xmas function on 29 November (page 5); as well as the normal calendar of events - local diving, club general meetings, etc. My advice is BOOK EARLY!*



*As usual the committee has been working hard behind the scenes to arrange these but we would welcome your input and feedback on anything in the calendar or anything you would like to see included. Diving to JL, Social to Bridey, New members to GRR.*

*Many great articles this month and also a new 'author' - thanks Stewart (page 33). I was about to cut the edition to only 56 pages when print day approached but many articles hit the email and instead of cutting 4 pages I needed to add 4 pages. Great that so many of the club can contribute with articles from Peter Briggs, John Lawler, Jackie Storen, Andy Mastrowicz, Bridey Leggatt, Chris Llewellyn, Rob Kirk, Greg Richards, and the 'now expected' story from Mackenzie Gregory. Why not put pen to paper if you are not in the list - article and/or photos most welcome.*

*The Prom was over 50% burnt in the recent bushfires and it will be interesting to see the effects when we venture down at Easter. I am told some parts are already regenerating and Tidal River Camp was spared so we now only hope for good weather for diving and socialising.*

*Hope to see you in/under the water soon,  
Cheers  
Alan Storen*

# CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

## Christmas in July...

Back by popular demand, is **Christmas in July**. We have reserved a place for you at the Graduates Restaurant on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2009, from 6pm.

**Three courses** including a **hearty winter soup, turkey, ham and roast vegies followed by some Christmas pudding** for only \$24 a person. Reserve your place early! Drinks at bar prices. **Book in with the social secretary!**

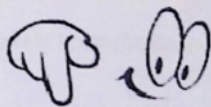


## VSAG Christmas Party

The proposed date for this years Christmas party is **Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> of November**.

This will be a catered event with roast meat, salads, potatoes and desserts, featuring the annual VSAG raffle among some new additions to the entertainment. It will be a BYO affair at the home of one of our esteemed members. **Put the date in your diary!** Any suggestions or questions? Let the social secretary know as soon as possible.

**This will be the event of the year. Don't miss it!**



**Reports on dives and other activities are urgently needed. Please submit to the editor. Photos also needed of club trips and social activities.**

**storens@bigpond.net.au**

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Committee meets 2nd Thursday of the month (except in January)

ALL MEMBERS WELCOME

Leighoah Hotel 1555 Dandenong Rd Oakleigh.

## GREAT BARRIER REEF / BUNKER GROUP TRIP SEPTEMBER '09



Board MV Venus 2 at Bundaberg on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2009 for 5 days of diving on Hoskyn, Fairfax, Lady Musgrave, and Lady Elliot islands. Mary and I did this trip in Sept '04 and saw pristine reefs, Mantas, and Humpback Whales (surface). Lady Musgrave Island and Lagoon is the perfect coral cay with a large millpond lagoon and spectacular fringing reefs.

MV Venus 2 is a 22 metre vessel which takes 14 divers in 4 cabins with both double and single options. Each cabin has its own ensuite and air conditioning. Tanks and weights are provided and hire gear is available.

### The Package!

Virgin return airfare from Melbourne to Hervey Bay is \$374 (incl taxes, charges, and baggage to 28 kg)

MV Venus 2 for 5 days, incl diving, meals, and accommodation (not incl alcohol & soft drinks) is \$881 (subject to filling the boat)

Accommodation at the Matilda Hotel (one night shared) for the 17<sup>th</sup> Sept is \$40 pp.

Bus transfers Hervey Bay Return \$40 pp

Package = \$1335 (subject to change prior to booking)

THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF INTEREST IN THIS TRIP SO FIRST IN WILL GET THE SPOTS! REGISTER YOUR NAME WITH **ALAN BECKHURST**, email [alanbeck@alphalink.com.au](mailto:alanbeck@alphalink.com.au).  
Or mobile 0403536508.

# Dive Report — Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb



## The crew:

**John Lawler, David Geckie, Pamela Dagley, Alan Storen, Adam Borge, Alex Ivamov, Peter Briggs, Jim Turner, Leo Maybus, Mick Jeacle, Frans Van Keeken, Benita McDonough, Steve Lamb, John Gladding and Darren Pearce**

*Today's dive proved very popular, all together we had 16 divers and 4 boats; at one stage we had 19 booked in, but then a few last minute cancellations. Weather at the ramp at 9.30 looked pretty good but we had a south east wind of around 15 knots but it didn't prove a problem.*

*Nepean wall outside the heads was agreed upon so all 4 boats took off for the heads. Unfortunately as we stopped to put on life jackets for the crossing, my boat refused to start. Mick kindly towed me to a place opposite Point Nepean and all the boats left us there to enjoy some outside diving. John Lawler returned to tow me back to Sorrento and after transferring divers and gear, I tried starting the motor a few times on the way back and after about the fourth go off it went (bugger, how frustrating).*





*As the boat wouldn't start and we were ready to dive, we just let out 85 mtr of rope, jumped in and had a good time in 5 mt of water, making sure we didn't drift too far from the line.*

*John Lawler returned to tow me back to Sorrento and after transferring divers and gear, I tried starting the motor a few times on the way back and after about the fourth go off it went (bugger, how frustrating).*

*I had Alan Storen with me and we decided to dive Blairgowrie pier and call out on the radio if we got stuck, John went on to the South Channel Fort to finish his dives.*



*We met back at the ramp around 4 with Mick and John Gladding nowhere to be seen. I don't know how they went but obviously quite well. Maybe they can furnish their own report.*

*Bloody Lawler caught the cray I had my eyes on and Greg Richards was on holiday in New Zealand so he couldn't finish his shout. I had a good day and I hope all the other divers did.*

*Peter Briggs*

Check out my near-disaster on YouTube.  
- Jim Turner  
P.S. Don't expect Maybus to help you if you are about to lose your nuts.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCLIPn7Hj-8>

# Member Profile: Jackie Storen

Year joined VSAG: 2003

How long have you been diving?: 8 yrs plus

First diving experience: Dad took us diving off Portsea beach as youngies. I remember gearing up at the boot of the car and walking across to the pier (contemplating that my Dad is trying to drown me with



the weight of this tank ?) and looking at the other crazy divers lugging their gear and thinking 'cool, this must be the thing to do down Portsea !'

Favorite diving location in Melbourne: That's a toss up - Awesome reef (introduced by dive buddy JL) or a lazy relaxing dive at Pope's eye. I enjoy the abundant fish life and never forget the dive where I was able to swim into the middle of a giant fish ball. But truthfully, I have enjoyed many dives in Melbourne including great dives at the Prom and Phillip Island pinnacle.

Most memorable diving experience: Without a shadow of doubt - Diving Palau. Every dive practically eclipsed my previous 'most memorable dive experience'. I particularly loved diving Blue Corner Wall and Blue Hole and hooking onto the reef on the shark and turtle dives. I also enjoyed my dive at Guam, purely because it was my deepest dive clocked to 40metres.

Most unusual or amusing diving experience: Possibly my most unusual diving experience is of Kathy Pedlow and myself, freshly qualified from IDC's 'How to catch a cray clinic' diving for the first time in South Australian waters at Cape Jaffa (in 2007)....with Jaw's shark music ringing in our ears, dolphins darting around, water looking super murky, many kilometers off shore and eyeballing each other under the water to ensure no sharks had crept up behind either of us and grinning basically till our regs fell out of our mouths. Yes, Kath and I are hunters and gatherers. Don't knock it till you try it.





My other most amusing experience was diving on a super swelly day off Phillip Island and seeing Mick Jea- cle's boat launch out of the water like a ski doo and divers in disarray tumbling off the back of the boat... Very serious in retrospect but gee.. we had a great safe vantage spot on JL's boat and sorry Mick it was funny as ! I think they call that 'a near miss'.

Most valued piece of diving equipment: ....ahhh my reg.....I like to breath...!!

Do you have a dive boat?: no boat yet, but have enjoyed a dive off a yacht and I am thinking I like that style ! combine the sailing and diving !

If you could dive anywhere in the world, where would you most like to dive?: Number 1 - Antarctica, Number 2 - Egyptian Red Sea just because it sounds rather extraordinary.

Any diving words of wisdom: Kwell, Kwell, Kwell !! They say no drugs in sport but hey it's the only way to still maintain the glamour and composure and not be hugging the side of the boat.

Any other comments: Well done on continuously putting together such a fine read in Fathoms ! From an external perspective, you could be mistaken and view VSAG as a bunch of grey nomad divers from the 60's, but on closer inspection you see a great bunch of people who really know their diving stuff and are prepared to pass on their knowl- edge..... and have a ball whenever and wherever they can !



# And So To Tokyo.

By Mackenzie Gregor y.

## Introduction.

After General Douglas MacArthur had made his triumphant return to the Philippines at Leyte in October of 1944, it was followed up by further landings at Lingayen Gulf the following January, the Japanese were then effectively beaten in this theatre by June 30th. 1945 when MacArthur declared that the islands of the Philippines were secure, but some fighting did continue until Japan surrendered on the 15th. of August.

## Iwo Jima invasion.

This small island squats between Tokyo and the Marianas, about 670 miles in either direction. Allied forces, the majority of them from the United States were closing relentlessly upon the Japanese mainland, and it was decided to invade Iwo Jima to provide a base for fighter aircraft so they could escort the long range bombers that were pounding the major cities of Japan.

This invasion would be the first Japanese owned and held territory to be attacked, all other Pacific campaigns were to retake islands or areas occupied by the Japanese in their mad rush southwards in WW2.

This tiny island, about 1/3 the size of Manhattan, for 36 days from the 19th. of February 1945 became the scene of one of the bloodiest and most costly battles of the Pacific war. 70,000 US Marines were involved, as 110 bombers added their bomb loads to the ever falling Naval bombardment. Lookouts in ships scanned the horizon for the approach of the dreaded Kamikaze which had made its debut at Leyte in October of 1944. Sailors skilled in radar were glued to their scopes for any sign of approaching Zombies, the nick name given to Kamikaze's by those in the Navy. Ashore, 21,000 Japanese had burrowed themselves below the volcanic rock into caves below ground. For each Marine carrying a 100 pound pack, the volcanic ash made any forward movement a nightmare, it was well nigh impossible to cope.

The burdened Marines above ground were fighting an unseen enemy hidden below ground, and it took flame throwers, napalm, hand grenades to prize the Japanese out, as inch by inch the Marines battled over 36 days.



**Flame throwers at work on Iwo Jima**

At sea, the Escort Carrier *Bismark Sea* was sunk after a Kamikaze attack, and the Carrier *Saratoga* collected a bomb, now the weather played a role, a violent storm left the cruiser *San Francisco* and five destroyers damaged.

Famous Photograph of Raising Old Glory on Iwo Jima.



This battle resulted in one of the most famous photographs to come out of WW2, the raising of OLD GLORY, it was taken by photographer JOE ROSENTHAL.

### **A Dreadful Death Toll.**

Death took a frightful toll at Iwo Jima, the Japanese suffered a 95% death rate here, of 21,000 defenders. only 1,083 became Prisoners of War. For the US, 6,821 dead, 19,213 wounded, thus almost 1/3 of US personnel involved in this invasion were to wind up dead or wounded.

What a dreadful price to pay for a small volcanic outcrop stuck out in the Western Pacific. One must ask "Was this invasion really worth the paid price?" and most likely respond with " NO!"

### **The Battle for Okinawa.**

Okinawa is the most important island in the Ryuku group, a scant 360 miles from Kyushu. If the US forces thought that Iwo Jima was a tough assignment, it was a mere Sunday School picnic when compared to Okinawa. The US Fleet lost 763 aircraft, and had 5,000 personnel killed, the Army lost almost 8,000 troops.

### **Sheer enormity of the Logistics.**

It was April Fool's Day 1945, when the Marines and their Army mates stormed ashore at Okinawa. 100,000 from the 32nd. Japanese Army awaited, dug into caves and tunnels mainly on the high ground where the Naval bombardment was largely ineffective. Here, it was more of everything that had obtained in any other Pacific engagement, troops used and landed, supplies provided, naval bombardment, bombs dropped, ships used ( 1,300 ) Japanese aircraft destroyed ( 7,800 ) ships sunk, and more people dead than from the two dropped atom bombs. Horrific statistics!

### **Japanese dead.**

From the Japanese and Okinawa conscripts, something of the order of 107,000 died, plus 100,000 civilians slain, the mind boggles at the scale of the death and destruction level. all in only 62 days of fighting from the 1st. of April.

### **The Kamikaze Campaign.**

Over the 6th./7th. of June, the first massed attacks from formations of hundreds of Japanese aircraft started, named KIKUSAI, or FLOATING CHRYSANTHEMUM, after the Imperial Symbol of Japan. The US Navy off Okinawa was surely in dire peril. The use of suicide aircraft to attack the bombarding and escorting Naval ships during a seaward invasion had its inception at Leyte Gulf in October of 1944, with the RAN heavy cruiser HMAS *Australia* their first victim.

**Damage to a US Navy ship at the invasion of Okinawa by Kamikaze aircraft**



In the following January, at the Lingayen Gulf landings, the Allied Fleet was to suffer many of these vicious attacks, over 6 weeks I saw 180 ships hit, and *Australia* was to have another five crash onboard her. HMAS *Shropshire* was the subject of attack on a number of occasions, it was a frightening experience, very sapping of morale, it became a matter of shooting down the attacking Kamikaze or collect it onboard. We despatched some 11 Japanese aircraft and shared 8 more, to fortunately remain immune from having any aircraft actually become unwelcome guests inboard. I can still vividly recall the sheer terror of seeing a Japanese aircraft diving out of the sun at the bridge of *Shropshire*, when I was her Officer of the Watch, diving on the deck and thinking my time had come. But the Captain of our port Pom Pom with a quick burst shot it in half, on the bridge some 60 feet above sea level I got wet from the wreck crashing alongside, I thought it was petrol, until I tasted only salt water, a very close run thing.

By the time the Okinawa campaign was over, 1,485 Kamikaze flights out of Kyushu had attacked the US Fleet, sinking 30 ships, and damaging 164 others.

**The cruiser HMAS *Shropshire* bombarding Japanese positions at Balikpapan, Borneo, on 30 June 1945**



### **Huge Japanese Battleship *Yamato* sunk.**

The huge 72,000 ton Japanese battleship *Yamato* on the 6th. of April was despatched to Okinawa on a one way ticket, not having enough fuel to return home, she was escorted by the light cruiser *Yahagi*, plus 8 destroyers. Her orders, beach yourself at Okinawa and fight to the finish. *Hackleback*, the US submarine tracked her movements, and alerted US carrier borne bombers.

Vice Admiral Marc Mitcher in his carrier Task Force at 1000 ( 10 AM ) on the 7th. of June, launched air strikes, and planes from USS Bennington claimed the first hits upon *Yamato*. Aircraft from USS *San Jancito* with both bombs and torpedoes accounted for the Japanese destroyer *Hamakze*, the light cruiser *Yahagi* was stopped dead in the water through bombing.

Over the next two hours, the Japanese Naval force was under constant attack, *Yamato* taking 12 bombs and 7 torpedoes, all this was too much, she blew up and sank. Three destroyers were too badly damaged to save, and were all scuttled, the remaining destroyers could not return to Japan. From the crew of 2,747 in *Yamato*, only 23 Officers and 246 sailors survive. The cruiser *Yuhagi* had 446 killed, *Asahgi* lost 330, and the other destroyers 391 men.



The huge Japanese battleship *Yamato* blows up after being attacked by US carrier aircraft

### **The Big E collects a Kamikaze.**

On the 13th. of May, off Okinawa, the Big E, the carrier USS *Enterprise*, just after 0700 ( 7 AM ) was hit by a diving Japanese bomber on her flight deck, just aft of the forward elevator, the impact sent this 15 ton elevator skywards some 400 feet, killing 12, and wounding another 72 sailors. This carrier was withdrawn from service, never to fight again.

Two major events during the Okinawa struggle.

On the 12th. of April 1945, the US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt died, and the habadasher from Missouri Harry S. Truman succeeded him as President. On the 8th. of May the war in Europe came to an end, leaving the Allies to concentrate on the defeat of Japan.

### **Conclusion about the Okinawa campaign.**

Okinawa was the scene of death and destruction on a huge scale, in two short months the war was finally over, in hindsight was this costly campaign really necessary? The immense loss of life and property does appear to be all out of proportion to the gains, once more I suggest it was all hard to justify, but then, how does one justify WAR ANYWAY?

### **Australians at Borneo.**

MacArthur kept Australian land forces out of the limelight, namely in the Philippines operations, and I believe his decision to use Australian forces exclusively in the Borneo campaign of 1945 was largely for political reasons. It would make our Armed forces visible again as the Allies pushed onwards to Tokyo.

The Japanese had taken Borneo back in 1942, it had been mostly part of the Netherlands East Indies, but the North and North West had been British territory, and the oilfields there were important, but the US submarine force had sunk most of the Japanese tankers, and choked off any oil coming from the Borneo fields to the Japanese homeland.

During 1942/43 many POW'S including Australians had been sent off to Borneo, and in 1944, Australian Special troops from the Services Reconnaissance Department, Z Force were despatched to Borneo to prop up the Dyak villagers in their guerilla war against the Japanese invaders, and 2,000 Japanese died as a result of their actions.



**Disembarkation from HMAS *Manoora*, Douglas Watson, May 1945.**

**Troops of the 2/48th Battalion leaving the Landing Ship, Infantry (LSI) HMAS *Manoora* to enter a landing craft for the assault on Tarakan, Borneo.**

[Oil on artist board with some scratching in, 50.6 x 35.6cm.  
AWM ART22476]



### **Army Divisions.**

The well trained and tested 7th. and 9th. Divisions of the Australian Army were involved in Borneo. The RAAF 1st. Tactical Airforce was committed in support of the Army, and the Royal Australian Navy were there in force with naval ships and the three landing ships infantry *Manoora*, *Kanimbla* and *Westralia* lifted in the army.

### **Three landings in Borneo.**

Three distinct operations took place here, the first at Tarakan, off the NE coast of Borneo, with landings under way on the 1st. of May 1945. 200 Australians died here including the VC winner Lieutenant Diver Derrick.

One of the main objectives at Tarakan was to build and repair airfields here so that air cover for the two future landings might be provided. However the boggy terrain, and the badly damaged airstrips proved more difficult than was anticipated, and thus the full utilization of these facilities was never realized.

Fighter aircraft did start to provide cover at later landings from the airfields here from late June.

The second landing was made at Labuan Island in Brunei Bay on the 10th. of June when the 9th. Division swarmed ashore, and they went on to lose 100 troops killed. Finally, the operation at Balikpapan in the South East of Borneo where 33,000 troops landed on the 1st. of July was to be the largest amphibious assault by Australian forces in the Pacific, and when the war came to a sudden halt on the 15th. of August, all major objectives had been achieved.

A tragic footnote must be added to these Borneo operations, and that is the sad fate of many of the Australian and British POW's held at Sandakan in North Borneo. From 1942/43, 2,000 Australian and British POW's came here from Singapore, and by 1945 many had died from starvation or disease. 1,000 were ordered to march off into the mountains, to an isolated base at Ranau, nearly 300, too sick to march either died or were killed at Sandakan, of those who did march, only 6, all Australians survived, to escape and be rescued by Australian forces.

Serving in HMAS *Shropshire*, I was involved in both the Labuan and Balikpapan landings.

At the fag end of WW2, the Borneo campaigns really did little to advance the Allied cause in its push towards the Japanese mainland and the defeat of this enemy, we no doubt could have saved many of our servicemen's lives by not carrying out the three landings here in Borneo.

Bypassing this area would have proved equally effective in the long haul, but it is so easy to be tactically right in hindsight.

#### **The use of the Atomic Bomb.**

We must now turn to the deciding factor in ending the war in the Pacific, and that of course was President Truman's decision to use the devastating newly developed weapon: THE ATOMIC BOMB.

#### **The Potsdam meeting.**

On the 16th. of July 1945, Churchill, Truman, and Stalin met at Potsdam to formulate the Potsdam Declaration issued on the 2nd. of August, the Allies promised Japan if she did not surrender unconditionally she could expect "Prompt and utter destruction."

It was here at Potsdam that almost as an aside, President Truman sidled up to Stalin and casually confided that the US had developed a new weapon of unusual destructive force. ( he was of course referring to the Atom Bomb ) However the Russian Premier played out his hand cunningly, and seemed to show little interest, but did comment that he hoped the US would make good use of it against Japan. Stalin's spies in the US had made him well aware of the final tests the US had just conducted with this new and terrifying weapon.

#### **USS *Indianapolis* transports Little Boy from the US to Tinian.**

On the 15th. of July USS *Indianapolis* slipped out of San Francisco harbour bound for Tinian Island in the Pacific, she carried a secret 15 foot wooden crate on board, it contained the main section of Little Boy, an atomic bomb, less the second lump of uranium that B 29's later flew in.

*Indianapolis* sailing alone from Guam to Leyte, and not zigzagging was sighted by the Japanese submarine *I-58*, the Captain lined her up and fired his spread, the cruiser sank in only 12 minutes to give the Captain his one and only success in the war, which had but 2 weeks to run.

The ship was not missed, no search set up, and survivors fell prey to marauding sharks, it was not until the 2nd. of August that a patrolling aircraft sighted survivors and raised the alarm, it was almost too late, from a crew of 1,199 only 318 were rescued including Captain Charles B. McVay USN.

### **An unusual court martial.**

Admiral King Chief of Naval Operations decided to Court Martial Captain McVay for not zigzagging and endangering his command. Never in the history of the Western Navies had a Captain been so arraigned, and to add salt to the wound, King ordered that the enemy Japanese Submarine CO be found in Japan, and brought to the US as a witness for the prosecution.

What gall! I was appalled at such treatment, as were many Naval Officers at the time, the war was over, and this farce was drawn out, and McVay was found guilty.

He eventually committed suicide by shooting himself, his faithful dog at his side. In October of 2000, following years of effort by the survivors and their supporters, legislation was passed in Washington and signed by President Clinton expressing the sense of Congress, among other things, that Captain McVay's record should now reflect that he is exonerated for the loss of *Indianapolis* and for the death of her crew who were lost. In July of 2001, The Navy Department announced that Captain McVay's record had been amended to exonerate him for the loss of *Indianapolis* and the lives who perished as a result of her sinking. The action was taken by Secretary of the Navy Gordon R. England who was persuaded to do so by New Hampshire Senator Bob Smith, a strong advocate of McVay's innocence.

Unfortunately, the conviction for hazarding his ship by failing to zigzag remains on McVay's record. Never in the history of the US Military has the verdict of a Court Martial been overturned, and there is no known process for doing so.

### **Dropping of Atomic Bombs on Japan.**

On the 6th. of August 1945 the B-29 Enola Gay named after the pilot Lt Colonel Paul Tibbit's Mother rumbled down the runway at Tinian Island to stagger into the sky and head for Hiroshima Japan.



**B-29 Enola Gay, carried the first atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima on the 6th. of August 1945.**

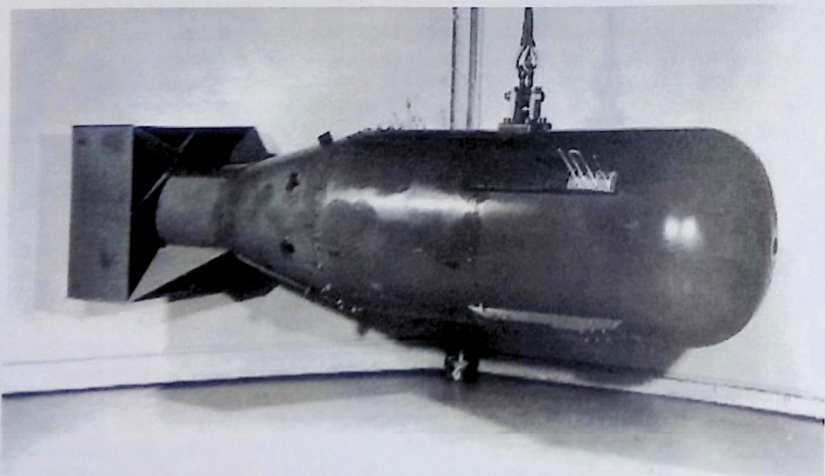
At 0815 ( 8.15AM ) the first atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima with devastating effect, it changed the world, making history.

Several C-54's had flown to Tinian to deliver Fat Boy, and the components for the second A Bomb which was dropped on Nakasaki on the 9th. of August. On this day, a fast moving Soviet invasion of Manchuria was under way, and Stalin declared war on Japan, he wanted to be in for his share of the spoils when Japan caved in.



**Tinian Island with its 4 runways. From this strip the aircraft carrying the two Atomic Bombs took off.**

Japan on the 14th. accepted the Allied terms of unconditional surrender, and the next day it was at last all over. and WW2 came to an end.



**Little Boy, the first atomic bomb, dropped on Hiroshima.**

Whatever may be argued about the moral rights or wrongs about the use of the Atom Bomb, in my ship at that time, the heavy cruiser *Shropshire*, we were aware that our next operation was to be against the mainland of Japan. We had been subjected to the horrors of the dreadful Kamikaze attacks, we had taken part in many landings as we pushed North towards Japan, we were both an efficient and lucky ship and company. To date, we had not lost one man to enemy action, but our morale was slipping, one asked oneself, how much longer can we fight without collecting a Kamikaze? Can I keep facing these dangers without cracking? In the final push how many men will the bombardment ships, the invading force and their escorts lose? I can assure you all, it was with a great deal of trepidation that we all faced that next and final operation. So, when two atom bombs dropped ending it all, I, and all my shipmates cheered and were most thankful that Harry Truman made the decision he did. I still feel the same way today, some 60 years on!!

### **Shropshire sails from Subic bay.**

My ship, *Shropshire* set off from Subic Bay for Tokyo Bay via Okinawa, to drop anchor in Japanese waters on the 31st. of August. we are here for the official surrender of Japan on Sunday. Other RAN ships here are: Hobart, Warramunga, Bataan, Napier, Nizam, Ballarat, Ipswich, Cessnock and Pirie.

On the day before the surrender was signed I went ashore in Yokohama and requisitioned a bicycle and rode south to Kamakura to visit the huge bronze Buddha there, cast in 1252, it stands 38 feet tall and weighs in at 93 tons. You can enter into the body of this statue, inside a feeling of space and immense peace, a serenity about the whole atmosphere I found quite unusual. I rode back to Yokohama, returned the bike, and went back on board my ship.

### **General Douglas MacArthur orchestrates the Japanese Surrender.**

On Sunday the 2nd. of September 1945, the day I had waited for just on 6 years at last dawned, on board the huge US battleship *Missouri* were gathered the representatives of the Allied powers. The Japanese delegates came on board before 9 AM, to their chagrin they were searched and left standing for some time. MacArthur controlled this historic ceremony as delegates signed the document bringing WW2 in the Pacific to an end.

450 Carrier borne aircraft roared overhead, to be followed by US Army B-29's, what a spectacle!, by 9. 30 AM it was all over as the Japanese were hustled ashore.

What a wonderful morning, a day I will never forget, a feeling of utter relief washed over me, the war was at last over, I had survived 6 years of it at sea or overseas, and NOW I WOULD BE GOING HOME.



Photo # SC 213700 Foreign Minister Shigemitsu signs Japanese surrender instrument

Here is the actual moment, all of us had fought and longed for, in the case of the Pacific war, since Pearl Harbor on Sunday the 7th. of December 1941. The signing of unconditional surrender by Mamoru Shigemitsu, the Japanese Foreign Minister ( he had a wooden leg ), on behalf of the Emperor and the Government of Japan.

It was 0904 on Sunday the 3rd. of September 1945, on the surrender deck of the Flagship of the US Third Fleet the battleship USS Missouri Tokyo Bay.

As a 23 year old Lieutenant RAN, I was there in the heavy cruiser HMAS Shropshire, a truly joyous moment, at last it was all over, and we would be going home.

#### **Bad weather in Tokyo Bay.**

Well into September we were hit by bad weather at our anchorage in Tokyo Bay, we had both anchors down, and our prudent Captain had ordered steam maintained on our boilers, so that in an emergency we might steam to our anchors. Some large US Navy ships who had shut down their boilers were caught as their anchors dragged, and off they went backwards in the violent storm.

Shropshire had acquired a US landing craft with a ramp that was used to ferry our sailors ashore, the next morning after the big blow it had sunk on its 6 inch grass line whilst moored astern, and had to be abandoned by cutting its mooring line.

The Commander told me to go ashore and obtain a replacement craft, I muttered "Not an easy order to carry out Sir!" to be admonished "To use my initiative" So I picked up two bottles of Scotch Whiskey from the Wardroom Wine Store, duty free at that time each worth about 45 cents, and took two Petty Officers with me and a boat to go ashore.

Finding a depot crammed with craft, we approached an Army Sergeant with our request for a Landing Craft, " Hard to come by are Landing craft Sir" was his response. Well I say, " How about a bottle of Scotch for one?"

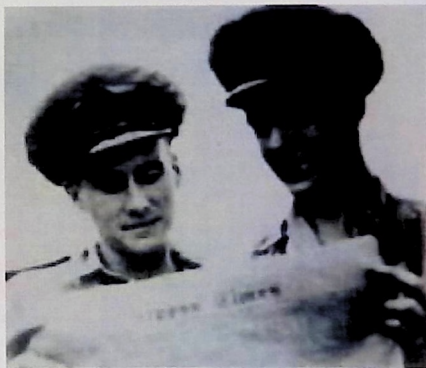
"My God! You can have one, and a spare engine too for a bottle of Scotch." is the reply.

" I don't want a spare engine, but I have a second bottle and want a Jeep for that."

"Well take the landing craft to the next bay, run up on the beach, drop the ramp, and when I drive in the Jeep, pull up the ramp, back off and do it in a hurry as the Jeep will be brand new and hot from an MP area."

And so it happened, we painted the Jeep Shropshire Blue, and both the craft and the Jeep came home to Sydney.

I share the Nippon Times with  
Wal Grant in Tokyo



### **Full Circle.**

Only last September, my wife Denise, and I were invited by the USS *Missouri* Memorial Association to be on board the *Might Mo* at Ford Island Honolulu, to attend the 60th. Anniversary of the signing of the Japanese Surrender in Tokyo on that day back on the 2nd. of September 1945.

With some 200 veterans in this battleship, and another 2,000 on the pier, we celebrated that great event, which came to an end, with the replaying of a recording of General Douglas MacArthur's final words, it was indeed eerie to hear that speech boom out again across the deck of this fine ship. A fitting end to a memorable and historic occasion.

Best regards,  
Mac.

### **“Polly” gets a new “Cracker” of a Home**

The Melbourne Times reports:

An extract from the Melbourne Times advises that the grand old dame Polly Woodside is patiently waiting now for her fabulous new home.

She has been painstakingly moved several hundred metres whilst the new Melbourne Convention Centre was constructed.

It seems the plan is to move Polly to the front of the Convention Centre in June. The bow of the ship will face the Yarra river and will be complimented by a maritime-themed precinct and visitors centre.

The Maritime precinct is part of the \$1.4 billion Convention Centre development.

The Polly Woodside was built in Belfast in 1885.

JL



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## Nudibranchs

Bridey Leggatt

*Nudibranchs, believe it or not, are a type of mollusc. I have not tried a nudibranch, and couldn't imagine ever wanting to, however they have some very tasty Mollusc relatives including abalone, mussels, scallops, octopus and squid.*

*Nudibranchs, at least the ones most commonly noticed are quite brightly coloured and are often a favourite subject for underwater photography. They resemble sea slugs (to whom they are not closely related) with their gills on the outside. This is the reason for their name - "nudibranch" comes from the Latin nudus, naked, and the Greek brankhia, gills.*



*Nudibranchs are a very diverse group of animals occurring worldwide with over 3,000 species and over 300 of these occurring in Australia.*



*The average nudibranch is between 3mm and 300mm in size and can be found in a wide range of habitats. Nudis are prevalent wherever they can find food, from shallow reefs to a few pelagic species. Favourite food of many nudibranchs include; sponges, algae, bryozoans, ascidians and cnidarians (jellies, hydroids, corals & anemones).*



*Given their small size, generally only the patient are rewarded with sightings of nudibranchs.*

*So next time you're out for a dive, take your time, go slow and take notice of the little things that make diving worthwhile. ☺*

## Cape Jaffa 2009

### Alan Storen

Four cabins were booked in Cape Jaffa, at the Caravan Park, and 12 VSAG desperates (for a cray that is!) left Melbourne just prior to the Labour Day Weekend. Mick Jeacle and his crew of BAZZA, Llewly and Finny left on the Wednesday and JL, Alan and Jackie Storen, Kathy Pedlow, Charlie Brincat, Peter Briggs, Mick Kakafikas, and his mate Stu left on the Thursday. Enough polly boxes were taken to bring back every cray in Jaffa.

In transit on Thursday the first bit of bad news broke – Mick had arrived Wednesday as planned but the weather prevented any diving on the Thursday. Those in transit hoped for an improvement on the Friday, while those already there had to drown their sorrows – and drown them they did! Llewly needed Friday as an alcohol/cigar free day to let his body recover. Mick, Bazza and Finny went 4 wheel driving.

On Friday the weather was not much better but JL and PB's crew went out to the fault line. Those that went north (JL and Kathy) got a cray each but those that went South (Jackie and I) came back with empty catch bags. My mask kept flooding due to a faulty clip and most of the dive was without any mask and Jackie leading me round on the buoy line. Our second dive that day was in much closer to shore and the viz was about 1m at best – we aborted after a few minutes – the only way I could see JL and Jackie was by looking for their torches. Mick the Greek and his mate Stu (a potential new member of the club) bagged one.



On Saturday the weather was better but the seas were still up. We dived North Margaret Brook reef and the terrain was great but underwater could best be described as a washing machine. When we found a cray it took all our efforts just to hang onto the reef – forget about catching the cray. Mick and Stu both had some success and the look on Stu's face as he bagged his first cray was worth the trip on its own.

Mick J and his crew dived another location and they had some success but not the Jaffa of old. Mick also had a problem with this boat – only firing on 2 cylinders and it limped back to the boat ramp with the crew hoping it would be better the next day as it often came good after a run. Saturday was the planned 'pub night' and the meal was great value for money and we were able to drown our sorrows. If we could not swim like a fish we could at least drink like one! The Sunday was a bit blowy but out we went to MB reef. Mick's boat had not improved so our plan was to beat him out to the reef, catch all the big crays and leave the small ones for his crew. When he did arrive he dropped two of his divers in the

water only to have the boat's steering cable break. With 11 experts to help with friendly advice – which made no difference – Bazza was able to ring up a temporary 'tiller' using Peter's cable ties and when their divers came up they limped back to the ramp, with poorly functioning motor and hand steered by Bazza. Fortunately Mick was able to contact Joe (tanks man) and through him get the steering fixed in Kingston – all it took was \$\$\$ – but still with a poorly functioning motor. (Can you imagine doing that on a holiday weekend/Sunday afternoon in Melbourne – I don't think so!)



Jackie and I found fair viz but after one fruitless dive JL's boat headed back to the ramp. (saw a couple, could not catch – too swelly!) Peter Briggs crew had some success but none pressured the catch or boat limits.

The Monday was our last chance and out the three boats went with high expectations. MJ had this secret spot (Kings Bommie I think it was called): but the water looked dirty and JL and PB headed out to the fault line. About half way we turned and headed for home – JL to the boat ramp and a day in Robe and PB and crew back to join Mick. A few small crays were bagged but nothing to rave about. The story of the day was aboard Mick's boat – determined to catch a cray he dropped into the water and had not surfaced 75 minutes later. The things you do for a cray! Those on board were not too worried about Mick only which of them would be able to claim title to his boat. Sorry Annie, salvage rights were determined to go to those that 'recovered' the boat. They almost had Mick's identifying plaque off the boat when he surfaced. (see Llew's story and photo on page 33)

*Other highlights.*

The food was fantastic, especially Mick the Greek's gourmet treats – squid/ octopus, abs, cutlets. We each prepared meals to share (actually Jude prepared mine – chicken cacciatore) and none one went hungry and no complaints were heard. Charlie's entrée's were also great – mine came out of a packet! There was a rumour that Peter's lasagne came from 'Coles' but I am told that it tasted far too good for a bought product and thanks should go to Carol. All meals that I saw were superb!

The wine was very drinkable – it must have been as we drank lots of it!

The boat ramp was spectacular – the new marina is almost at the stage of houses being built and looking good. The ramp is already in and we had effortless launch and retrievals. Vic authorities should take note!

The company, as always, was great. With Llew leading the entertainment (except on the Friday!) what else needs to be said. I did not hear any snoring so I was happy! Another good club trip, down on crays but we have left them there so that they will be bigger next year. If interested you must let JL know soon as booking need to made. There are already 4 cabins booked for 2010. It is not a closed shop as some think but will be if you do not get in now – with limited accommodation and boats.

## VSAG Comraderie and Initiative — LLewy

On the recent VSAG trip to Jaffa with growing concerns of big Micks 75 minute plus bottom time, his pre-dive computer failure and a building white capped sea, the following conversation highlighting VSAG comraderie and initiative took place amongst his vigilant support crew :

Llewey - "What are we gunna do with the boat if he doesn't make it back ?"

Bazza - " I've already got a boat"

Finn - " I ain't got a boat"

Llewey - " What about that launch plaque with Mick Jeacle printed on it ?"

A quick search for the right implement followed by a brief hand over ceremony and the obligatory happy snap took place to mark the occasion. Comraderie and initiative at its best !



One day, long, long ago, there lived a woman who did not whine, nag, or bitch.

But it was a long time ago, & it was just that one day.

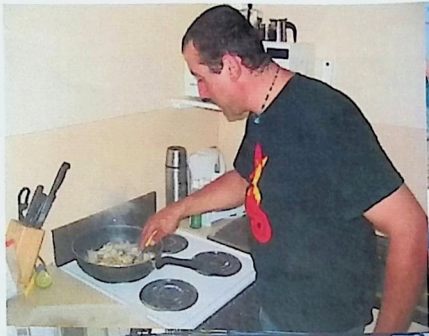
**The End**



In our dreams!!!!  
(unfortunately the  
left is a 2007 shot;  
the right photoshop)











## Cape Jaffa Report— Stewart Pailthorpe

We all met before the long drive in the west of Melbourne. Pete & Charlie were a tad late due to the rush hour traffic and from the scare of hearing an 'almighty bang/explosion' while travelling through the Eastlink Tunnel. Taking into account that they were carrying a boat, about 25 full air tanks, a fridge and freezer, this must have been a worrying time. Once out of tunnel they discovered it to be a buckle from a strap had worked loose and wrapped around the differential leaving it in tatters. This was the start of a unfortunate weekend for Pete, whom took in his stride with a smile. The drive down to Cape Jaffa is a long 7 hr journey which seemed to pass quickly with the excitement of the weekend. I travelled down with Mickey Kaka in his fully stocked mobile Dan Murphy's store, whom it seemed, had been looking forward to the weekend all year. We slipped streamed the back of Charlie and Pete's (Team A) vehicle all the way, while JL, Alan, Jackie and Cathy (Team B) were shortly behind us in the third vehicle. As we headed into Jaffa we notice something small fly off the back of Pete's boat, we stopped to retrieve what we thought was the boats petrol cap, but was actually the wheel bearing cover from the boat trailer that had just been serviced for this trip. The other one had already gone AWOL.

We arrived at a reasonable hour to be greeted by the advance party of Finney, Louie, Bazza & Big Mick (Team C). These guys arrived on Wednesday and it looked like they had made the most of not being able to get into to water. Not wanting to be left behind, we all tucked into a few beers and started to unpack. When removing the fridge from the back of Pete's Ute, we discovered what that funny noise myself and Mickey had heard for the past 100k was the plug from the fridge, which had dropped behind the cabin and dragged for all that time.

After some food & wine we all headed down to Team C cabin to watch the Louie show or to give it it's true title 'The Puppetry of the Penis'. After much hype the show was a bit of an anti-climax with it finishing too quickly and only the first row of the crowd getting the 'sprinkler effect'. Apparently he has been doing the circuit of camp sites for too long and was more of a crowd pleaser in his heyday. We all knew it was time to head to bed and call it a night when Bazza tucked into his evening nib of Yoghurt.

The conditions over the weekend were not the best with poor visibility and the wind picking up most afternoons. We headed out early Friday morning with great anticipation and expectation, however due to conditions we took a couple of safe dives inland on the fault line with more shelter from the wind.

Team A and Team B stuck together trough out the weekend as JL transducer for his depth finder was not working and Pete didn't have GPS for SA despite ordering over a month previous. I never saw a Cray the first day, but JL had bagged a good'un and Cathy had also done well. The rest of us headed back with empty catch bags and hungry stomachs.

Back on dry land it had become apparent that JL's boat had been taking on some serious amounts of water in the ballast where some sealant had popped out. This was

a job for handyman Charlie to plug. It had also become apparent that Team C after 2 days on the sauce decided that Friday was better for nursing hangovers than braving the seas. There were even cries of 'I'm never drinking or smoking another cigar again' echoing from their cabin - I'm sure it wasn't from the healthy BAZZA.

The Saturday brought a mix bag of fortune for the hunters. Although, conditions were better, the swell was too big to dive close to the main reef, so we dived just in from the Lighthouse. This dive was my favourite for the whole weekend. It had great ledges and drop offs and ground wall very underlay ting. I tried to snare 3 cays, but in my excitement, and the swell, I just couldn't finish the job off. Micky surfaced with a few cays as did Team C. Pete had been unlucky with a few cays, with nothing more then a few knuckles to show for his hard work.

Our second dive was in another spot and this is when Team C split and decided to follow the local knowledge and advice from Joe the tank filler and head to one of his recommended spots. I caught my first Cray of the weekend in the afternoon and even though it seemed a small one under the ledge, once out I saw the true size of it and it shocked me! After a struggle, a grab, a few tale swings and an almighty shove it was bagged. Or so I thought. In trying to retrieve my snare it had managed to get its legs on the end of the spring loaded bad and started to prize it open. A few punches later I clasped the bag closed, decided to leave the snare in the bag and surface before it could work its way free. Charlie was the first boat to spot me as Pete was picking up Mick. I handed the bag to him; he emptied it and returned the snare to me letting me know that she was a beauty - Job Done.

We headed back to the sanctuary of the new marina and got the pot boiling ready for the big cook. The guys from Team C arrived back late after they all bagged one at Joe Tanks spot. There were some real beauties that Big Mick, Finney, Louie & BAZZA had caught, with the biggest catch of the weekend going to a 4.2kg of BAZZAS haul. He may not jog anymore, but he's still catching big cays that's for sure. Normal service resumed for the Après Scuba and we headed into Kingston for dinner and a bargain \$12.50 Rump with all the side salad you can eat. Thanks to Joe for sorting out the Steak and Big Mick for spotting the all you can eat salad.

Despite Sunday morning having the serenity of a perfect calm morning, it didn't stay that way for long. On the way out Team A and Team B decided to tag onto the highly successful Team C. However, the guys were experiencing mechanical troubles and were only firing on 2 cylinders. The slow ride out to the site were compounded when their steering column snapped almost flipping the boat (maybe a slight exaggeration, but it sounded a good story over a few beers that night), but it not being for the calm head on Big Mick. After some makeshift repairs, those guys decided to call it a day after the first dive and head back. We were not far behind them with our second dive lasting about 5 minutes with visibility on a sandy bottom of only 0.6m! Pete endured even more bad luck during the day discovering he had lost the cage of his console and as a result his compass was broken.

*Back at the campsite I couldn't quite figure out if Big Mick was drowning his sorrows due his boat, or celebrating the fact that he managed to find father & son boat mechanics willing to work at 6pm on the Sunday of a long weekend and fix the damage for around \$500 inc. parts. Either way, celebrating or commiseration, he was drinking for sure.*

*On the last day we had average conditions in the morning and managed to squeeze in a couple of dives. Big Mick's boat had its steering back, although the engine was still firing between 2-4 cylinders, so we couldn't head too far out. We found a lovely spot which was like a nursery with lots & lots of cays. We all bagged at least one and were happy to finish the weekend on a high.*

*One of the main highlights of the weekend must have been the food. Everyone within each team cooked a dish and the quality and variety was excellent. From Italian to Indian, From Big Mick's forced fan Sunday Roast to Mickey's marvellous BBQ. Not forgetting Jackie & Cathy's lovely cheese, o'dives and nibbles. Sorry for not writing much about the diving topography, wildlife or coral, but the highlight on this trip isn't necessarily those aspects of the dive, but what happens throughout the whole weekend. A big thanks to everyone on the trip for making me feel so welcome and ensuring it was a really enjoyable trip. See you all next yr!!.....*

## **The Brothel Parrot.....**

**A woman went to a pet shop & immediately spotted a large, beautiful parrot. There was a sign on the cage that said \$5. 'Why so little,' she asked the pet store owner.**

**The owner looked at her and said, 'Look, I should tell you first that this bird used to live in a house of Prostitution and sometimes it says some pretty vulgar stuff.'**

**The woman thought about this, but decided she had to have the bird any way. She took it home and hung the bird's cage up in her living room and waited for it to say something. The bird looked around the room, then at her, and said, 'New house, new madam.'**

**The woman was a bit shocked at the implication, but then thought 'that's really not so bad.' When her 2 teenage daughters returned from school the bird saw and said, 'New house, new madam, new girls.'**

**The girls and the woman were a bit offended, but then began to laugh about the situation, considering how and where the parrot had been raised.**

**Moments later, the woman's husband Keith came home from work.**

**The bird looked at him and said, 'Hi Keith'**

# Geriatric lobster earns ticket to freedom

February 21, 2009

A Japanese restaurant in New York took pity on a 140-year-old lobster called Craig and said it would not end its days boiled in a pot but instead swim free in the Atlantic Ocean.

Craig has been exhibited to customers in an aquarium but its owners at Halu Japanese Restaurant & Grill in Brooklyn announced they would have the old, 10-kilogram crustacean shipped to Maine, where it is to be released into the sea today. Local law there forbids taking lobsters above a certain size.

"Kudos to Halu for allowing Craig to live out the rest of his days in his native habitat," Ingrid Newkirk, president of the animals rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, said.

PETA has organised a campaign to liberate restaurant lobsters and avoid them being thrown alive into boiling water.

According to invertebrate zoologist Jaren Horsley, lobsters have a "sophisticated nervous system" and feel "a great deal of pain" when cut or cooked alive.

AFP



## *DIVING INTO THE PAST.*

### *Byron Bay-Christmas Trip 1985*

Have you missed "Diving into the Past?" mmmm..thought so!!

Well here we go again for one of the great articles from the past editions of Fathoms.

Amazing to read all the stories from the mag when I go through each year and each edition to find a suitable article...so many contributors writing so many wonderful stories.

The one selected for this edition comes from Life Member Tony Tiping who, for many years, wrote "Tip's Tit-Bits"

Tony did a great job on writing the article on the Christmas Trip to Byron Bay in 1985.

Some of the names of members and friends will not be familiar to many of us today as they have moved on. But it is the overall story we are interested in so....please read on and enjoy some "diving into the past".

JL

## TIP'S TIT-BITS

by Tony Tipping

### Byron Bay - Christmas Trip 1985

The following personnel attended the trip:- Maureen & Gus Belanski with Beth, Danny, Gusti & Alexander; Marie, Barry & Sam Truscott; Liz, Sarah & Doug Catherall; Kerry Joyce, Pat Reynolds, His Worship Alex Talay, Marg & Marcus Tipping and myself, Pam & Peter Kamen with Anthony, Matthew & Christopher. We also had along Sheila & Tony John with Ruth, Rowena & Danny - they were last minute replacements for the Jeacle family who scratched along with Mick Jackiw and Igor Chernichov. Chris Bourrier popped in for a couple of days diving too, so all up we could boast a total of 29.

As usual we left Melbourne about a week before everyone else on 18th December - my company has this strange policy of finishing up a week prior to Christmas Day. We motelled it as Gilgandra the first night and Grafton on the second - I didn't fancy putting the tent up in the dark like last year. We soon arrived at Globetrotters, Byron Bay Beach Resort the next morning and were settled in by 11.00 a.m. This was not your average camping ground, it had fully sealed roads, flat sites, its own private surf beach, a pool, shop, snack bar, TV lounge, games room, plenty of amenities blocks and even bingo nights and discos. We all had powered sites with more shade than anyone else, about 300 metres from the beach or a five minute walk. The cost was probably higher than we'd previously encountered but I do think it was well worth it.

The first week we had a real holiday - plenty of sleep, good meals, swimming, jogging, tennis and two dives, The Cod Holes and Hugo's Trench both out at Julian Rocks. It was also great to get re-acquainted with Bill Sillvester and Greg Blackburn who I'd dived with a year ago. They honoured our handshake deal of a particularly good rate per dive despite the lack of numbers which I had tentatively guaranteed earlier on. One thing I am sure of is that there is no better or more efficiently run dive shop or dive charter on the N.S.W. coast than the Byron Bay Dive Centre in Lawson Street.

No real highlights before the mob arrived except for Christmas Eve dinner at the Julian Rocks Restaurant - excellent meal but too pricy, for a small coastal town, and of course Santas visit to our tent.

Marcus thought this was terrific, he even left our beer and biscuits for the old fat gutted bludger in the red suit who gets away with doing only one honest day's work per year!

The others arrived on Boxing Day and the 27th except the Kamens, New Years Day. Most timed it well because Boxing night we had a mini twister and a couple of inches of rain - most tents blew down but with 28 ropes hanging on, mine was safe - likewise Gus's. The rest of the time we had light winds, and tropical showers on only two evenings - the weather was close to excellent about 30° days and 20° nights. We didn't mind the lack of wind for diving - Peter Kamen complained, he had hoped to windsurf each afternoon and was disappointed when it didn't blow. He did get out a couple of times later on and stayed out six hours at a time. No doubt he deserved the beltings from Pam - another week and she would have divorced him.

We must all thank Peter for lining up all the divers for an ear clinic one morning, Pat still hasn't shut up about what a wonderful pair he has (ears that is!) Gus just happened to have an otoscope in his glove box. Most others were fairly good except Bazza and myself (two deafest in V.S.A.G.) so Peter took over casualty at the local hospital and syringed our ears. Note too, that he suggests all divers have their ears checked twice per year. You should have seen the rubbish that came out of Bazza!

Another highlight was Bazza's hair cut, my, does he love to be pampered. Honestly between them, Marg with scissors and Pat with cut-throat razor (he loves to strop the razor) took three hours to do what Luigi the barber could do in ten minutes - have you had the damage repaired yet Bazza? But still, a gallery of about thirty people enjoyed the entertainment - reckon it was a six can performance, eh Alex! Now there's a bloke who really knows how to enjoy a holiday and slow down, our Supremo El Presidente Alex Talay, but the bastard never sleeps. Every time I had to get up to attend to a problem of an extremely personal nature during the "wee" small hours Alex would still be up reading one stick book after another. One other point, he was always so well attired the dark Speedos and the white singlet didn't he give those a helluva hammering!

New Years Eve was pretty good - we all went to the Razzle Club (R.S.L.) at six, had a huge meal, downed a few schooners, cultivated our N.S.W. beer drinking voices - some do it better than others - dropped a few dollars on the one armed bandits and got kicked out by nine o'clock the curfew for kids. Then it was back to camp for the

champers where Sheila John, a true bonnie Scots lassie showed us how to celebrate the arrival of the New Year just like they do in Scotland. I'll take this opportunity to apologise on Sheila's behalf to all those strange men who were attacked and to anyone who found cane toads in their beds or salt in their tea.

Poor old Marg did an excellent job arranging a day trip to Sea World and a finale night out at Il Duamos Restaurant just before the trip back. The day at Sea World was seven fun packed hours highlighted by rides on the Wild Wave, listening to a bird screaming in a male voice next to me on the Corkscrew (I sat next to Kerry), watching the sharks in the aquarium and most of all seeing Peter Kamen complete with pink shirt, pink board shorts, pink tennis shade and lime green zinc cream!

Apart from the diving, the remainder of the holiday consisted of surfing at the local beach, listening to Gus playing music or singing or whipping Alexander when he was naughty, having the legs run off us by Doug, playing cricket, both the young Danny's excelled here, an afternoon at Ninbin near the alternative lifestyle commune, and seeing Marcus charge out yelling applause to the four choo-choo trains per day that passed behind the camp. A select clique organised by Doug spent a night and, I believe heaps of money at the new Conrad Casino on the Gold Coast playing Roulette and Black Jack - with Marg gone for the night, I was quite content to have an early night with a few of Pat's magazines.

### The Diving

I managed to dive ten days out of 21 which was a good balance with plenty of lay days in between. Conditions and visibility varied somewhat - we had poor visibility about 10 feet deep on the bottom of the Pinnacle despite being in blue water around about 90 feet down. Kendrick's Reef gave us 120 feet visibility on the last dive and the Cod Hole close to it the previous day. We dived several spots more than once: Mackerel Bowl, Cod Hole, Kendrick's Reef and The Pinnacle. Alex seems to be a magical attraction for sharks - he saw four bronze whalers and two grey nurse on successive Pinnacle dives. Pat wasn't a bad sight either when an eight footer followed him up to his seven minute deco stop. The same day proved disaster for me my old Drager reg. finally gave up at 120 feet (with a strong current) not much fun when suddenly you've got no air. Disasterous not because of what could have happened but because I've since had to spend a fortune on a new Conshelf SE Reg. and the latest U.S. Divers B.C. He's a bloody smooth talker my old mate Russell Kit. Does anyone want to buy a Fenzy'

We did have heaps of fun diving, especially Doug where there are wobbies about - I preferred to play with Doug like pushing him head first into an eight footer. The fish were prolific - schools of kingies, jewfish (mulloway), red morwong, Douglas morwong, snapper as well as plenty of pretty little tropicals and moray eels etc. When conditions are right these spots are as good as anywhere along the N.S.W. coast particularly considering their close proximity to shore only about 10 minutes from the boat ramp.

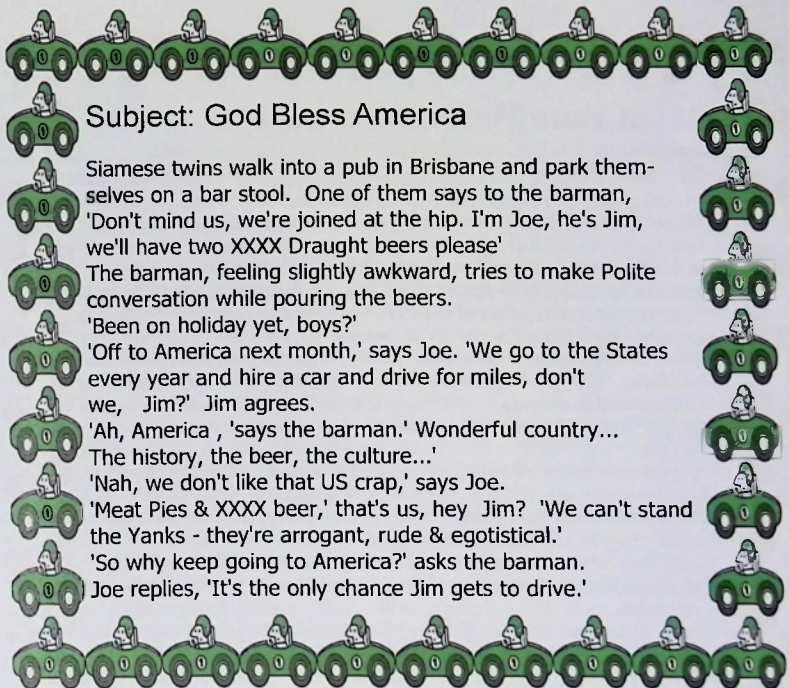
Greg & Penny Blackburn did a great job organising us to dive within our own group at the spots we selected and when and where we wanted to go, so thanks to them along with Bill, Hugo, Ross and Peter who was forever manning the compressor.

I would also like to thank all of you who drove over 1000 miles and made the Christmas 1985 V.S.A.G. holiday a beauty. I've been on ten of the fourteen trips since 1971 and I would really have to scratch my head to come up with one better. No doubt we'll get back to Byron Bay a few years from now after we've copped cold, southern, miserable weather like Eden last year. I'm now looking forward to Peter Kamen's underwater films together with spontaneous interviews from the likes of Doug and Gus (old Bazza's as camera shy as ever) along with slides at the V.S.A.G. meeting in February. \*



PETER KAMEN  
WITH PINK SHADE  
AND WAR PAINT.





## Subject: God Bless America

Siamese twins walk into a pub in Brisbane and park themselves on a bar stool. One of them says to the barman, 'Don't mind us, we're joined at the hip. I'm Joe, he's Jim, we'll have two XXXX Draught beers please'

The barman, feeling slightly awkward, tries to make Polite conversation while pouring the beers.

'Been on holiday yet, boys?'

'Off to America next month,' says Joe. 'We go to the States every year and hire a car and drive for miles, don't we, Jim?' Jim agrees.

'Ah, America , 'says the barman.' Wonderful country... The history, the beer, the culture...'

'Nah, we don't like that US crap,' says Joe.

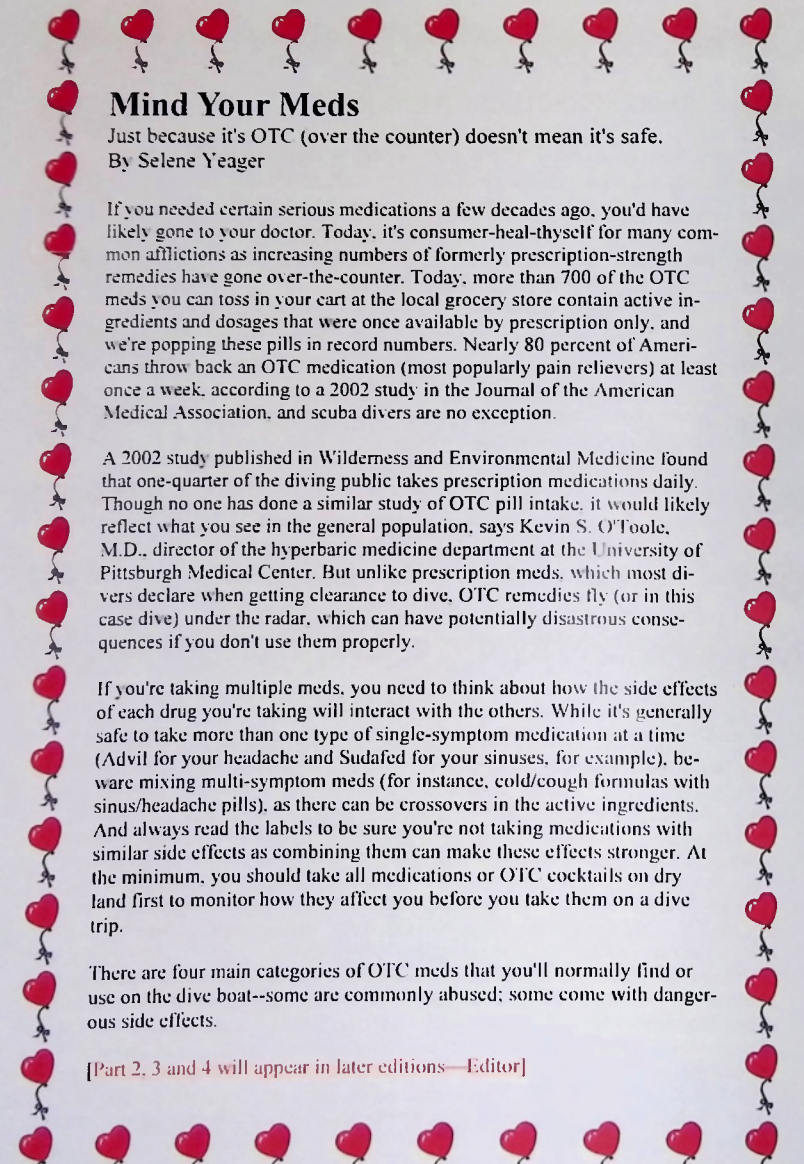
'Meat Pies & XXXX beer,' that's us, hey Jim? 'We can't stand the Yanks - they're arrogant, rude & egotistical.'

'So why keep going to America?' asks the barman.

Joe replies, 'It's the only chance Jim gets to drive.'

## Port Phillip Bay Artificial Reef Naming Competition -

Members of the public are invited to enter into a competition to name three artificial reefs that are to be installed along the north-east corner of Port Phillip Bay. Not only will you be able to win great prizes that are up for grabs, you will also be able to officially name one of Victoria's newest landmarks. The Artificial Reef Project is one of a range of initiatives that the Victorian Government is undertaking to enhance recreational fishing opportunities and facilities under the Enhanced Recreational Fishing Program. This initiative involves the Department of Primary Industries trialling the deployment of artificial reefs to assess the potential to use such structures to provide better opportunities for recreational fishers. Based on a range of social, economic and environmental criteria, three locations have been selected offshore from Aspendale, Seaford and Frankston in approximately 11 metres of water depth. It is planned to deploy the reefs in April 2009 for a three-year trial. The reef areas and a buffer zone (approximately 1 km) would be closed to commercial fishing in order to assess the recreational use of the reefs and to maximise opportunities for recreational fishers to catch fish at these sites. The competition will be run during the week leading up to Easter. To find out more information about the initiative and rules for the competition, visit [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/fishing](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/fishing).



## Mind Your Meds

Just because it's OTC (over the counter) doesn't mean it's safe.

By Selene Yeager

If you needed certain serious medications a few decades ago, you'd have likely gone to your doctor. Today, it's consumer-heal-thyself for many common afflictions as increasing numbers of formerly prescription-strength remedies have gone over-the-counter. Today, more than 700 of the OTC meds you can toss in your cart at the local grocery store contain active ingredients and dosages that were once available by prescription only, and we're popping these pills in record numbers. Nearly 80 percent of Americans throw back an OTC medication (most popularly pain relievers) at least once a week, according to a 2002 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, and scuba divers are no exception.

A 2002 study published in *Wilderness and Environmental Medicine* found that one-quarter of the diving public takes prescription medications daily. Though no one has done a similar study of OTC pill intake, it would likely reflect what you see in the general population, says Kevin S. O'Toole, M.D., director of the hyperbaric medicine department at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. But unlike prescription meds, which most divers declare when getting clearance to dive, OTC remedies fly (or in this case dive) under the radar, which can have potentially disastrous consequences if you don't use them properly.

If you're taking multiple meds, you need to think about how the side effects of each drug you're taking will interact with the others. While it's generally safe to take more than one type of single-symptom medication at a time (Advil for your headache and Sudafed for your sinuses, for example), beware mixing multi-symptom meds (for instance, cold/cough formulas with sinus/headache pills), as there can be crossovers in the active ingredients. And always read the labels to be sure you're not taking medications with similar side effects as combining them can make these effects stronger. At the minimum, you should take all medications or OTC cocktails on dry land first to monitor how they affect you before you take them on a dive trip.

There are four main categories of OTC meds that you'll normally find or use on the dive boat—some are commonly abused; some come with dangerous side effects.

[Part 2, 3 and 4 will appear in later editions—Editor]



## Ear-Clearing "Meds"

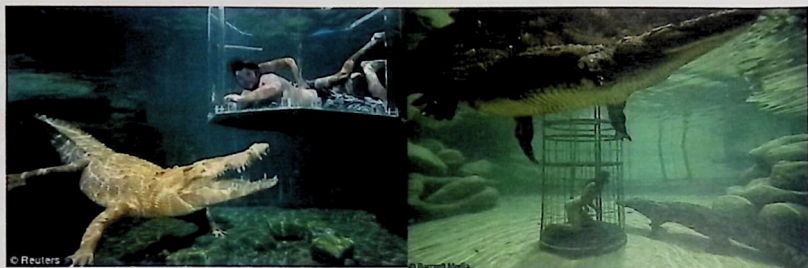
Anytime you use drugs to get past an ear-clearing problem, there's a risk of the drugs wearing off, possibly causing a painful reverse squeeze on ascent. However, chemical clearing assistance is widespread in the diving community, and this category comprises the common remedies divers use and abuse to ease their ear-clearing woes.

Decongestants generally come in two forms: pills and sprays. Usually, pills contain pseudoephedrine or phenylephrine, and nasal sprays come in phenylephrine or oxymetazoline formulas. Cough/cold medicines often contain these same decongestant drugs along with other active ingredients. Allergy medicines are antihistamines, which, unlike decongestants, don't unclog your sinus passages, but rather work preventatively to keep allergens from clogging them in the first place.

Taking combinations of these drugs and/or taking more than the recommended dosage in the fight against ear-clogging congestion can be bad news if you don't first check the labels. A 2001 Harris survey conducted for The National Council on Patient Information and Education found that only 34 percent of adults could identify the active ingredients in their usual OTC remedies. If you're taking more than one type, you could be overdosing--or at least increasing your odds of suffering side effects. For instance, if you take a multi-symptom cold medicine like Contac to help fight off some sniffles, then spoon down Robitussin to quell a cough, you've just taken a double dose of phenylephrine, which can cause dizziness, headache and nausea.

The same Harris survey also reported that about a third of adults actually "overdose" intentionally, taking more than the recommended amount in hopes of knocking out their symptoms sooner. Bad idea. Sudafed--one of the most commonly used decongestants--is considered a mild central-nervous-system stimulant (it's one of the ingredients in the stimulant scourge methamphetamine), and its side effects include excitability, restlessness, dizziness, weakness and insomnia. Large doses can lead to more dangerous side effects, including cardiovascular collapse and convulsions. "If you have underlying heart disease, it can be very risky to use more than you should before diving," O'Toole says.

"Stacking"--taking chemically different drugs that offer the same effect-- is another common dive-boat practice. If you're going to stack drugs to clear your ears, just make sure you don't double up on active ingredients. O'Toole cautions. One "safe stack" is Sudafed coupled with an OTC nasal spray because the spray works on the sinuses locally and isn't absorbed into the rest of the body. O'Toole recommends using regular Sudafed (taken as recommended) rather than the 12-hour extended-release tablets because the 12-hour meds take longer to kick in. Nasal sprays work fairly quickly, so it's best to take them just before gearing up. When stacking antihistamines and decongestants, take the allergy medicines the night before your dive; then take decongestants as you normally would on dive day. And of course, be sure to test drive any and all meds on land before you dive on them.



## Cage of Death - Australia—The theme park's 'cage of death' that drops tourists into a crocodile's lair

Without the cage you wouldn't stand a chance swimming with a massive saltwater crocodile. But for brave punters who still want to get cosy with a feisty croc, a new Australian tourist attraction is offering the chance for a close encounter in the safety of a clear acrylic box dubbed the 'cage of death'. Just 4cm of acrylic, a pair of goggles and a swimsuit, will separate thrill-seekers from the jaws of Choppa, a saltwater crocodile.

The cage has no bars, unlike cages used in shark dives, which prevents the reptiles from gripping on but deep teeth scratches are visible on the sides, deterring some hesitant participants. They then spend 15 minutes inside the 9ft high cage and watch Choppa, who lost both front feet while fighting other crocodiles, trying to take a bite out of them. The attraction at Crocosaurus Cove in the heart of the city of Darwin in the Northern Territory has been given high marks by adrenaline-junkies. 'This is it!' said self-confessed thrill-seeker Mark Clayton from Darwin after spending 20 minutes face-to-face with the crocodiles. 'I dive with sharks, large rays, moray eels ... but it's not this close. It's exhilarating to get that close to a crocodile of that size.' Saltwater crocodiles, known locally as "salties," are the largest crocodile species, with the males growing up to 19.6ft long and weighing up to 2,204lbs. They are found in across Southeast Asia but the highest numbers are found in northern Australia. Up to two people are allowed in the cage at the one time. The most famous crocodile to be housed at the park is Burt, who starred as the beast that nearly ate Linda Koslowski's character in *Crocodile Dundee*. Although saltwater crocodiles are dangerous, fatal attacks on humans are rare in Australia with only one or two reported a year.

