

# 30th Anniversary Memorial Service



*Sydney, Australia  
3 June, 1999*

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3 JUNE, 1999 - Sydney, Australia

Today I have the distinct honor to represent all of the Frank E. Evans shipmates and officers who ever served aboard our ship during the three decades of the 40's, 50's and 60's. I felt an emotional and reflecting mood as I was thinking about what I would say today. We are recalling to our memories the many years in the life of two ships: The HMAS Melbourne and the U.S.S. Frank E. Evans. Two very, very proud ships of the line in both of our navies. In the case for the Frank E. Evans we are remembering twenty five years of a ship on active duty that proudly served her country in many ways when she was called upon. Today we are assembled thirty years after the sinking of the Frank E. Evans with the sorrow and heartaches that has touched the lives of both Australian and American sailors and their families. Were it not for the gallant effort of the sailors on the HMAS Melbourne, the cost in lives would have been far greater. For this, our association thanks you again! SO, let us remember that we are here today to show our respect to those lost on that fateful night thirty years ago, and the ultimate price that those 74 sailors paid!

This week the HMAS Melbourne Association has provided opportunities for all of us to renew friendships and make new acquaintances. Let us use these friendships to make "good memories" from this point forward. Life indeed MUST go on!

With your permission I would like to read a prayer that was given August 29, 1998 at the 7th annual U.S.S. Frank E. Evans Association Reunion in Alexandria, VA. It was written by Sister Dorothy Reilly, who is the sister of survivor Larry Reilly and Aunt of Fireman Lawrence John Reilly, Jr., who was lost with the ship.

**GOD OF THE OCEANS AND SEAS, WE COME TOGETHER THIS DAY TO REMEMBER AND HONOR ALL THOSE WHO SAILED THE SEAS IN THE U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS FROM HER COMMISSIONING IN 1944 TO HER DECOMMISSIONING IN JULY 1969.**

**WE REMEMBER AND HONOR THE OFFICERS AND MEN WHO SERVED THEIR COUNTRY ABOARD THE EVANS, A QUICK AND POWERFUL DESTROYER, NICKNAMED "THE FIGHTER" ... IN WORLD WAR II, AND IN THE POST WAR YEARS, IN THE KOREAN WAR AND THE VIETNAM CONFLICT.**

**GOD OF THE OCEANS AND SEAS, WE COME TOGETHER, OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE EVANS. THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS, AND INVITED GUESTS TO REMEMBER AND HONOR IN A SPECIAL WAY THE 74 OFFICERS AND MEN WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY ON THAT FATEFUL DAY OF JUNE 3, 1969. INDEED THERE IS NO GREATER LOVE THAN THIS...TO LAY DOWN ONES LIFE FOR OTHERS.**

**THESE MEN ARE PERHAPS THE UNSUNG HEROES OF THE "SEATO" TASK FORCE, BUT IN THE HEARTS OF THEIR FAMILY, FRIENDS, FELLOW OFFICERS AND MEN, THEY ARE INDEED HEROES. WE STILL FEEL THEIR LOSS BUT WE KNOW THAT THEY WILL ALWAYS BE A PART OF OUR LIVES AND THAT ALL THE GOOD THEY HAVE SHARED WILL LIVE ON IN OUR HEARTS.**

**GOD OF THE OCEANS AND SEAS, WE REMEMBER AND HONOR THESE 74 MEN AND ALL THOSE WHO SERVED IN THE U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS. MEN WHO UPHELD, LIVED AND EVEN DIED FOR THOSE IDEALS PROCLAIMED BY OUR ANCESTORS: JUSTICE; DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY; COMMON DEFENSE; GENERAL WELFARE; AND THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR POSTERITY.**

**IT IS NO WONDER THEN THAT ON THE DAY OF HER DECOMMISSIONING, IT WAS WITH A GREAT DEAL OF PRIDE THAT A TRIBUTE WAS PAID TO THOSE OFFICERS AND MEN, LIVING AND DEAD, WHO HAD SERVED HER SO WELL...THE U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS - "A FINE FIGHTING SHIP." AS WE REMEMBER AND HONOR THESE MEN, WE USE THE WORDS OF THE NAVY HYMN, PRAYING...**

**"ETERNAL FATHER, WHO IS STRONG TO SAVE AND  
WHOSE ARM HAS BOUND THE RESTLESS WAVE,"  
HEAR OUR PRAYERS AND THOUGHTS THIS DAY.**

**FOR THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US, THOSE WHO ARE STILL WITH US - THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS. FOR ALL THEY ARE, FOR ALL THEY HAVE BEEN, FOR ALL THEY HAVE DONE, WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD.**

AMEN

CAPTAIN SWAN, SPECIAL GUESTS, FRIENDS AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN ALL!

FIRST LET ME SAY WHAT AN HONOR IT IS TO BE HERE. TO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN YESTERDAY'S MEMORIAL SERVICE AND THEN YOU FURTHER HONOR ME AND THE U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS ASSOCIATION BY PRESENTING US WITH THIS 30TH ANNIVERSARY BANNER. WE ARE GRATEFULLY APPRECIATIVE OF NOT JUST THIS BUT OF ALL THE WAYS YOU HAVE ALL COME TO BE SPECIAL TO US! FROM REPRESENTATION AT EACH OF OUR REUNIONS THE LAST 5 YEARS TO YOUR HOSTING OUR VISIT HERE THIS YEAR.

IF YOU WILL PERMIT ME, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT TO SPEAK ABOUT THE CREW MEMBERS OF THE HMAS MELBOURNE AND THE U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS THAT FATEFUL MORNING 30 YEARS AGO AND WHAT HAS TRANSPRIRED SINCE. A CORRESPONDENT ON SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, A MR. ROBERT TRUMBULL WROTE, "MEMBERS OF THE MELBOURNE JUMPED ABOARD THE DESTROYER FROM THE FLIGHT DECK TO HELP RESCUE AMERICAN SAILORS." HE REPORTED, "THE STERN SECTION OF THE DESTROYER, WHICH REMAINED AFOAT, WAS SECURED ALONGSIDE MELBOURNE'S STARBOARD SIDE WITHIN THREE MINUTES." MR. TRUMBULL'S ARTICLE WENT ON TO PRAISE THE CONDUCT OF THE CREW OF THE MELBOURNE IN THE MOMENTS AFTER THE IMPACT BY QUOTING CAPTAIN STEVENSON'S BELIEF THAT BECAUSE OF THE SPEED OF RESPONSE MANY LIVES WERE SAVED. THE MELBOURNE'S EXECUTIVE OFFICER COMMANDER ERROL STEVENS PRAISED THE EVANS CREW. "THEY WERE COOL, THERE WAS NO PANIC THERE." HE SAID "THERE WERE NO RECRIMINATIONS BY THE AMERICAN BOYS EITHER. A LOT SHOOK ME BY THE HAND WHEN THEY WERE LEAVING THE MELBOURNE AND SAID THEY WERE SORRY WE HAD TO MEET UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES." NOW THAT I QUOTED THIS CORRESPONDENT ON HOW THE CREWS OF THESE TWO GALLANT SHIPS REACTED THAT NIGHT, LET ME MAKE A LITTLE OBSERVATION. THE AUSTRALIAN SAILORS WERE RESPONSIVE, QUICK, AND ENDANGERED THEMSELVES AT TIMES TO HELP OTHERS. THE AMERICAN BOYS WERE COOL--- NO PANIC, CASTING NO BLAME. PROFESSIONAL! FROM WHERE DOES SUCH PROFESSIONALISM COME? IT COMES FROM LEADERS!

CAPTAIN STEVENSON WAS KNOW BY HIS CREW TO BE A SOFT SPOKEN MAN, WELL ORIENTED TO LIFE OUTSIDE SERVICE CIRCLES AND RESPECTED AMONG ENLISTED MEN. HE WAS SAID TO BE "MORE DEMOCRATIC". CAPTAIN STEVENSON WAS ALSO A "TIN CAN SAILOR". HE WAS SERVING ABOARD THE BRITISH DESTROYER "NESTOR" WHEN IT WAS SUNK WHILE ON CONVOY DUTY NEAR MALTA IN WORLD WAR II. IT MAY WELL HAVE BEEN THAT EXPERIENCE AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF HOW QUICKLY A DESTROYER CAN GO DOWN THAT MADE HIM SO RESPONSIVE TO HAVE THE STERN OF THE EVANS TIED UP ALONG- SIDE WITHIN THREE MINUTES. A FEAT HAILED BY HIS AUSTRALIAN NAVAL COLLEAGUES AS "INCREDIBLE SEAMANSHIP", AND OFFICERS OF THE EVANS DESCRIBED THE MELBOURNE'S PERFORMANCE AS "MAGNIFICENT." MRS. STEVENSON TOLD CORRESPONDENT TRUMBULL, "HE NEVER LOSES HIS COOL." SHE DESCRIBED HOW, WHEN THE NESTOR WENT DOWN, HER HUSBAND HAD A CHOICE OF SAVING HIS GOLF CLUBS OR A PRIZED PICTURE OF HIS SHIP. SHE SAID, HE ALWAYS THINKS OF THE RIGHT THING TO DO AT THE RIGHT TIME." HE LET THE GOLF CLUBS GO AND KEPT THE PICTURE." NOW I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU, BUT I WOULDN'T BELIEVE THAT WOULD TAKE A WHOLE LOT OF THINKING. I MEAN, PICTURE THIS....."OCEAN"....."KAPOK LIFE JACKET"....."PICTURE -12OZ'S ....."GOLF CLUBS , WEIGHT 55LBS WITH FILL ABLE BAG."

YES....., I THINK IN THIS CASE HE PROBABLY DID MAKE THE CORRECT CHOICE!

THE EVANS HAD A LEADER TOO! THERE IS NOT A WHOLE LOT I CAN TELL YOU ABOUT CAPTAIN McLEMORE. I DO KNOW THIS. HE STILL BLAMES HIMSELF! HE STILL FEELS RESPONSIBLE! BUT THE CAPTAIN HAD A REPUTATION FOR TRAINING, TRAINING AND MORE TRAINING. HE WAS KNOWN TO DO THINGS THE RIGHT WAY. HIS EXECUTIVE OFFICER CAPTAIN McMICHAEL SAID OF HIM, "ALBERT WAS A SENSITIVE, RESPONSIBLE OFFICER, AND THE NAVY WAS HIS LIFE. HE TOOK WHAT HAPPENED PERSONALLY." BUT I TELL YOU THIS, IN ALL OF THE CONVERSATIONS WE'VE HAD WITHIN THE U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS ASSOCIATION, WITH SHIPMATES FROM THE 40'S, 50'S, 60'S, AND YES, EVEN WITH THE SURVIVORS OF THAT FATEFUL MORNING, AND FAMILY MEMBERS OF THOSE LOST, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN, TO MY KNOWLEDGE, ANY BLAME OR RECRIMINATION CAST UPON CAPTAIN McLEMORE. YES, WE ALL RECOGNIZE THAT HE

WAS RESPONSIBLE, BUT HE WAS RESPONSIBLE IN THE POLITICAL SENSE, IN THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY CAME WITH THE JOB. RESPONSIBLE? YES..... BUT THERE IS A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RESPONSIBILITY AND BLAME. SO WHAT TWO THINGS DID THESE GALLANT SHIPS HAVE IN COMMON?

PROFESSIONALISM! AND LEADERSHIP!

WHAT HAS THAT LED TO TODAY? WE HAVE TODAY, THREE DECADES OF SAILORS, FROM TWO FRIENDLY NATIONS, SEPARATED BY THOUSANDS OF MILES OF OCEAN, WHO RECOGNIZE NOT ONLY LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONALISM, BUT WHO ARE SENSITIVE TO NATIONAL PRIDE, PATRIOTISM AND THE FRAILTY OF HUMAN LIFE.

ARTHUR DONNELLY PERHAPS, SAID IT BEST IN THE CIRCULAR CREST HE DESIGNED THAT YOU ALL SAW ON THE MEMORIAL SERVICE PROGRAM. CIRCULAR REPRESENTING THE WORLD, THIS GLOBE WE ALL RESIDE ON, THE LIGHT OF THE MOON REFLECTING ON THE OCEAN WAVES, A WHITE HAT FLOATING ON THE SEA AND HANDS CLASPED IN EFFORT OF RESCUE. ON TOP OF THE CIRCLE IS "U.S.S. FRANK E. EVANS" AND ARCHING BELOW IS "HMAS MELBOURNE", BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE PLAQUE THAT WAS PRESENTED TO OUR ASSOCIATION IS THE BANNER BELOW THE CIRCULAR CREST. IT SAYS SIMPLY..... "FRIENDSHIP"

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WE ARE INDEED BLESSED! WE'VE EXPERIENCED LEADERSHIP, AND WE'VE EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONALISM, AND WE ALL RESIDE TOGETHER, THOUGH OCEANS APART, IN "FRIENDSHIP."

THANK YOU!

## **TOAST**

**What a privilege to toast your Queen! We are honored to do so. As a nation with Royalty and you her loyal subjects, we honor you and your loyalty as demonstrated in this traditional toast.**

**The United States, being a democracy, elects our Presidents. Some of these men have not only been great leaders of our nation, but the world also. However from time to time a man comes along who doesn't possess very high or excellent qualities!**

**Nevertheless, we the people believe the Office of the President, be entitled to our reverence and respect since it represents the finest and grandest ideals of our nation.**

**Therefore, being ever mindful of that most sacred trust, I ask you to raise your glasses in a toast to the Office of the President of the United States of America.**

GUEST LIST FOR MEMORIAL SERVICE  
3 JUNE 1999

IN WELCOMING EVERYONE HERE TODAY I WOULD LIKE TO RECOGNISE THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE:

THE MINISTER FOR DEFENCE WHO IS REPRESENTED BY SENATOR ABETZ

THE CHIEF OF NAVY VICE ADMIRAL DON CHALMERS

THE US CONSUL GENERAL MR RICHARD GREENE

MARITIME COMMANDER OF AUSTRALIA WHO IS REPRESENTED BY COMMODORE BRIAN ROBERTSON

THE NSW PRESIDENT OF THE RETURNED SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA WHO IS REPRESENTED BY MR JACK SCOTT

THE US NAVAL ATTACHE CAPTAIN CLEVELAND

REAR ADMIRAL ROSS SWAN PATRON OF THE HMAS MELBOURNE ASSOCIATION

REAR ADMIRAL TONY HORTON PAST PRESIDENT OF THE HMAS MELBOURNE ASSOCIATION

THE AUSTRALIAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION IS REPRESENTED BY

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF QANTAS AIRLINES OF AUSTRALIA WHO IS REPRESENTED BY MS DIANNE CRAIG

CAPTAIN JOHN STEVENSON FORMER COMMANDING OFFICER OF HMAS MELBOURNE

REGRETABLY, ADMIRAL MIKE HUDSON THE PRESIDENT OF THE NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA, WHO WAS SERVING IN MELBOURNE AT THE TIME OF THE COLLISION HAS BEEN DETAINED ON DUTIES IN CANBERRA AND ASKS THAT HIS APOLOGIES BE GIVEN.

CAPTAIN PETER BODEN, PRESIDENT OF THE HMAS MELBOURNE ASSOCIATION IS LIKEWISE ON DUTY IN CANBERRA AND IS UNABLE TO JOIN US TODAY.

ON HIS BEHALF AND ON BEHALF OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION I BID EVERYONE A WARM WELCOME TO THIS REMEMBRANCE SERVICE ON THE OCCASION OF THE 30 TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COLLISION OF HMAS MELBOURNE AND THE USS FRANK E EVANS.

MOST PARTICULARLY I WELCOME J C CAMPBELL THE PRESIDENT OF THE USS FRANK E EVANS ASSOCIATION TOGETHER WITH HIS MEMBERS, AND THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS. YOUR PRESENCE TOGETHER WITH ALL THOSE HERE TODAY ADDS TO THE SOLEMNITY OF THE OCCASION IN REMEMBERING THE TRADGIC LOSS OF 74 YOUNG MEN WHO WERE SERVING THEIR COUNTRY.

DURING THIS MORNINGS SERVICE THERE WILL ONLY BE TWO WREATHS LAID; ONE ON BEHALF OF THE MELBOURNE AND ONE ON BEHALF OF THE EVANS. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SERVICE I WOULD ASK ALL PRESENT TO FOLLOW ME UP THE STAIRS TO THE SANCTURY AND CAST A POPPY, THE FLOWER OF REMEMBRANCE, INTO THE SHRINE AS AN ACT OF PERSONAL REMEMBRANCE.

I NOW ASK J C CAMPBELL THE PRESIDENT OF THE USS FRANK E EVANS ASSOCIATION TO  
COME FORWARD AND ADD TO THESE WORDS OF WELCOME