

Robert Winston

19 October 1994

Dear Sir

I am writing this on behalf of the crew of the HMAS Melbourne of 1969, in the hope that you could help us.

As you would be aware, back in 1969 on 3 June in the South China Sea, off the coast of Vietnam, SEATO exercises were taking place. At 3.10 am there was an accident between HMAS Melbourne (aircraft carrier) and USS Frank E Evans. This happened on a clear moonlit night, the Melbourne accidentally cut the USS Frank E Evans in half. When this happened, there were 74 lives lost, but 199 were rescued by the men of the Melbourne.

We know that 817 Sqd were presented with a commendation for their part in the rescue. We acknowledge this, but would like to see a Ship's Company commendation for the work that the whole crew did not night. For Captain Stevenson's good seamanship and the respect the men had for him, they responded without command or safety for themselves, which helped render the rescue as great as possible, otherwise there would have been a greater loss of life. No matter whether you were in the engine room sick bay or the cafeteria, it was a Ship's Company effort.

I have included copies of letters send home by the boys to their wives or loved ones at the time. As you can see by these letters, the Captain was well thought of by his crew. He is still the same today.

So, on these facts alone we base our request for a Ship's Company Commendation.

Yours sincerely



Bob Winston & Greg Ellis
for the Crew of the HMAS Melbourne