SENIOR CONSTABLE UPSTON

Q1 This is an electronically recorded interview between Senior Constable David Upston of the New South Wales Water Police, and Paul Carpenter, on Thursday, the 22nd of the 4th, '99, at number 10 Squadron, RAAF base at Edinburgh. The time on my watch is now 2.30pm. Paul, for the purpose of the interview, could you please state your full name?

A My full name is Paul Copeland Carpenter.

Q2 And your date of birth?

A December the 12th, 1972.

Q3 And I understand you're moving tomorrow, if you could please give me that forwarding address?

A Forwarding address is to the Officers Mess, RAAF Base, East Sale, Victoria, 3852.

Q4 O.K. And could you please give me your occupation?

A I'm a pilot in the air force. Up until this week, I was a maritime captain at number 10 Squadron. Now I'm posted for instructional training duties.

Q5 O.K. Right, Paul. As I explained to you earlier, I'm making inquiries into the 1999 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race for the coroner, where six people have died, and two are still missing. And we, I am speaking to people either directly or indirectly involved in the race, and also rescue authorities. As part of that, I understand that you were involved in a search capabilities from this base to the search area off the east coast of Australia. Is that correct?

A That's correct, yes.

Q6 O.K. How long have you been a pilot?

A I completed pilots course in July, 1995.

Q7 And how long have you been with the RAAF?

A Since January, 1991.

Q8 O.K. And as part of those pilot duties, what, what sort of area of operation do you perform now, at this base?

A At this base I was a maritime captain, meaning the captain of a crew. Specifically, in the last six months, six to nine months, as crew 6 of 10 Squadron, and I'm responsible for getting the aircraft into the air, what we actually do in the air, and performing the tasks, whatever we get tasked with. And I've got other crew leads who are responsible for what happens on certain sections of the aircraft, but ultimately I get the responsibility for the whole show.

Q9 O.K. Let me take you back to the 27th of December of last year, and you were tasked by AUSSAT to perform certain things.

A M'mm.

Q10 Could you please explain what happened?

A Yes. A quick background is the 92 wing was maintaining one crew as standby over the Christmas period, and that was my, I was the captain of that crew, although it wasn't really designated crew such as crew 6. It was made up from members of 10 Squadron from different crews, it was like a, what we call a

gash crew, or people who were in the Adelaide area over Christmas. Received, I received a phone call at 11.00pm on the Sunday night. That was the night of the 27th, I think, and basically com in to work straightaway, you've been called out for search and rescue. I had friend over during the day. I hadn't listened to the radio and I knew there was storm and the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race was experiencing bad weather, but I didn't really realise that that many, or a large number of people were in trouble until I got the phone call and I realised that for us to be called out, it must have been serious because I would have expected civil authorities, civil rescue, search and rescue, would be tasked for that sort of thing, as we generally only get tasked for long distance search and rescue. Anyway, we were airborne by 2.30 on the Monday morning, arrived on task off the eastern coast of New South Wales at around about 4.30 in the morning, Adelaide time which is 5.00am, eastern time basically just as the sun was starting to come up. We, we got out into the area and it was still reasonably dark and there were only a few other aircraft out in the area, though as it got light, soon the radio frequency we were using, talking to Melbourne air traffic control, everything got very congested. Basically, everyone took off at first light, all the civilian aircraft, mostly, I think, twin-engine civil planes. And things got very busy, and we received our tasking through

Melbourne centre, this is the title of the Air Traffic Agency we were talking to. Although, actually, it might be Melbourne Flight Service rather than Melbourne centre. And they tasked us with a certain search. From memory, it was a north-east, south-west track search. We really had very little tasking. When we took off, all we really knew was a basic area, probably 60 by 100 miles or so where the fleet was scattered over. We knew that there were yachts in trouble and possibly some yachts were missing because they hadn't checked in on their radio schedules. The weather in the area was quite bad. The whitecaps from the waves were much, much larger than the size of any yacht down there, so a white yacht with white sails was impossible to see unless we happened to basically fly right on top of it. You'd get them visual of maybe one, one and a half nautical miles, and we found a couple of yachts that way, just by visual means. The radar, as far as I can understand, the radar was practically useless because it's such a high sea state, the yachts were just shielded by the, by the waves. We found a few yachts. Most of them just had their jury-rigs set up, just a small triangular sail at the front, and eventually we decided that if it's got a small triangular sail up, its mast is still there and it's heading towards the coast. We, we'll leave them alone, they, they obviously seem to be O.K. So we concentrated on looking for yachts that were dismasted.

We didn't find anything of significance on that north-east, south-west the first search. We then got re-tasked to do a search further to the north, east-west, about 120 nautical miles for the search legs. It took us to within about five miles of the coast. In fact, I think our area actually went over the land but we just went straight into the coast there. We did a few legs of that. We did the search at 1,000 feet, primarily visual, but this time we really started to suffer from fatigue, myself personally, and that I'd been awake for most of the Sunday. We got called out Sunday night, we were now airborne, we flew through the dead time of 3.00 in the morning, through to 5.00 in the morning, and the sun came up which let us, you know, we felt a little bit better, but by the time the sun was up and we were establishing a second search, we'd been airborne for probably at least four to five hours, we were feeling pretty tired. We probably flew to the north of all the other, most other aircraft in the area, and all the ships that were in distress, so we weren't finding anything there. We, I was out, out of my pilot's seat when we were at 1200 feet, when one of the spare flight engineers, someone who actually wasn't in his seat, spotted an aircraft in front of us and we had to manoeuvre to avoid him, just like, he came head-on to us. And we tried to get some information out of air traffic as to where he was, but air traffic was simply passing on tasking, and

accepting everyone's flight guard, and basically wanted 30 minutes operational normal calls from all the aircraft. They weren't actually regulating the aircraft in the sky, they were only passing on tasking, receiving any reports and just checking that each aircraft made its ops normal call every 30 minutes or so. So we didn't have much luck there. We virtually were able to talk to the other aircraft and we found out what he was doing. He was tasked to be just to the north of us, also tracking east-west legs at 1,000 feet. We managed to get him on radar and we completed the rest of our search with this guy on our radar screen and we managed to avoid him by, when our paths converged again as we were going out and in simultaneously in opposite directions, the next few times when we converged, we'd climb up to a safe altitude and let him pass below us. Once we completed that east-west search, I was so tired and I had other crew members hallucinating things in the water, falling asleep, fatigue just got too much, and we had to knock it off and track back to East Sale, where we spent the night there and had a decent rest before we could go out the following morning. It was, I think, a Tuesday morning take-off at around about 6.00 in the morning. What I have since found out from the, our new mess or our incident, was that we were supposed to have been past altitude instructions, we were supposed to be at 500 feet so that the aircraft that were operating

alongside us, they were at 1,000, we were at 500 and so we had the necessary separation. We didn't get that message. And another thing is, we work on inertial navigation systems which certainly are a lot older than GPS which all the civil aircraft use. GPS is accurate to within a few hundred metres. Inertial navigation systems can be up to four nautical miles our, or seven, seven or eight kilometres, that's their normal mode, and we often fly around with a little four nautical mile bubble in our, in our minds, saying, O.K, the inertial navigation system says we're here, but I know we could be three or four miles within that point. We use the radar to update the inertial, so we'll get a radar fix from on a point of land. And that's how we keep it as accurate as possible, but generally never within less than one or two miles. Because of that, our areas were overlapping. The aircraft to the north of us was on his, I have no doubt that he was in the right place, 'cause he was tracking by GPS, but we had a bit of drift in the system, and so we were a little bit northerly of where we, where we thought we were, but we were still inside our original task area. When we started that search, we would have been to the north of our task area, but at the time of the incident we were actually inside our area. That was pretty much, no, no significant events in the first sortie really.

Q11 Yeah.

A We saw a lot of water and no vessels that were really

in distress. The second serial, 6.00am take-off, our briefing consisted of, go to this position, well actually, our briefing consisted of, they wanted us to try and locate two yachts. One of them was Solo Globe Challenger, and the other yacht, I can't remember the name now, might have been Vengeance, Vendetta, something like that.

Q12 Does Winston Churchill ring a bell?

A Winston Churchill rang a bell, it was whether they were missing. We were never, I can't remember being actually specifically tasked to look for Winston Churchill, 'cause on that first day a Hercules from Richmond was operating close into the coast. I understand their tasking was to look for Winston Churchill.

Q13 O.K.

A We, so we started the second day with, they asked us to try and find the two yachts which had missed their scheduled reports, and our briefing sheet consisted of, you have about 25 fixed-wing aircraft and three rotary-wing aircraft in your area, and of course they gave us a small map showing that the whole east coast had been divided up into east-west segments of a couple of miles wide and about 26 segments labelled from A through to Z. We were operating not to one of those sectors, we were sort of on top of them, and HMAS Newcastle had also been tasked with looking for the Solo Globe Challenger that night as well, but they didn't have any

luck. We picked up a beacon and a radar contact, 'cause the weather on that second day that we were out there was much better, a sea spate of only, say, two, which meant our radar had no problems picking up contacts. We found the vessel, his sail number. We radioed back to Newcastle when they said that was the Solo Globe Challenger. We flew over him a few times. We couldn't see any, we certainly had no luck with radios, they were holding something up at us, they were trying to show us a sign. I'm sure I saw the words "No", and we guessed, no radio, something like that. So we called Newcastle in and as Newcastle was tracking it, we dropped a small box to the crew, a cardboard box called a helibox, containing a bit of water and a, a radio, a VHF radio. They got hold of that, we were able to talk to them. We told them Newcastle was on the way, asked if they had any injuries, that sort of thing, and basically said that Newcastle was there to pick them up. And they subsequently liaised with Newcastle. They didn't want to abandon the ship, two people stayed on board. They had a couple of people with injuries, fractured ribs I think was the worst injury, and so two people sailed it home. That was the, the most significant event we had on that second sortie. We were tasked to look in the vicinity of where bodies had been recovered. I think they were from the Winston Churchill, so the second day we were looking for the missing persons off Winston Churchill.

We did that initially with ourselves and a navy Seahawk, operating low-level, close together, in close proximity. We used standard military procedures and we had ourselves sorted out and we were joined by a Sea King as well, navy Sea King. And then at one stage, about five civilian helicopters turned up on the scene all at once, they'd departed simultaneously. And when I saw about four or five helicopters all heading straight towards me, that's when I climbed up to basically get out of their way. The military helicopters stayed at about 200 feet or 100 feet, several choppers at 300 feet, and we climbed up. We can't visually search as well as a helicopter 'cause we fly a lot faster, and we picked up a beacon, a distress beacon, by that stage, so we went down to the south to investigate that. We eventually found a small yellow object floating in the water by itself, and the signal appeared to be coming from that. And by that stage we were pretty much out of fuel. The first day, I think we, our tasking could have been better in that we were used as a search asset, but we, we fly a lot faster than civil aircraft or a helicopter and we can't really see the water all that well. Plus, we've got a blind spot on our nose, so looking over the nose of the aircraft is difficult. And another civilian aircraft was used to relay ops normal calls and things like that. I mean, my recommendation would be for a P3 who can shut down two engines, climb to 10,000 feet and we

could have sat up there for 14 hours and acted as a radio relay aircraft. We've got the capacity to do that, because we've got four crew members on board with access to all the radios, so we could have, say, two crew members dedicated for radio communications, operating separate frequencies and managing, all those sort of things. On the second day, they had several aircraft doing that job and they, while we were on task they had two of them. One did it for the first four hours and then another one took over. That's the narrative of what we did.

Q14 O.K.

A Yeah.

Q15 Prior to leaving the air force base here, did you obtain any weather briefings?

A Yeah, we got a weather briefing which basically indicated pretty rough weather, a high sea state and strong winds, around, from memory, 50 knots, is what I recall, which was pretty close to what we experienced out there. And we also had weather observations passed to us that the reason why the fleet was in trouble was they'd had wind gusts up, you know, in excess of 60-odd knots, and a very high sea state.

Q16 Do you have wind measuring instruments on board the aircraft?

A We're able to tell what the wind is by using our inertial navigation system and a Doppler radar, so the Doppler measures our ground speed over the, over the

water and the inertials work out a wind for us, which I don't actually, I can't actually read that instrument, the navigator has that, but I think we had around about 40 to 50 knots of wind at its highest.

Q17 Right. Was that the mean wind and, which would blow for a period greater than 10 minutes?

A From memory, fairly steady, yeah. However, it certainly didn't seem extreme, and it was not a rough ride for us. It was a fairly smooth ride, not much turbulence, so we could have dropped off to 30 knots fairly soon after we got out there, I think.

Q18 So the wind conditions certainly didn't affect the, the operation of the aircraft?

A Not for us, no.

Q19 What sort of wind conditions would you experience where the aircraft would have to, or you would have to alter the aircraft's position to, to maintain safety in strong wind conditions?

A Strong winds aren't so much of a problem because we can offset our heading to compensate for wind, so we still fly the track along the water if we want to. I suppose the main thing is with a high sea state and lots of wind whipping up the whitewater, you get salt spray in the air and our windscreen gets covered in salt fairly rapidly. So, if it was really bad, then I would climb up to a higher altitude, perhaps above 500 feet.

Q20 Right.

A But most of our searching was done at around, between

500 and 1,000 feet was the optimal search altitude.

Q21 Right. Now, you said to me earlier that you experienced, I suppose, a head-on situation with another aircraft. Have you made any recommendations, or has there been any other types of investigation in regards to that, that incident?

A Yeah, the director of flying safety for the air force, based in Canberra, is conducting an investigation. We raised a incident report, it's called a aircraft safety occurrence, report ASL and Squadron Leader Ian White, based at DFS in Canberra, is investigating the incident, liaising with civil authorities and things like that, and the Bureau of Air Safety Investigation. A number of factors are involved from what I understand, and I think it's mainly just a procedural thing with organising how you want your aircraft to do the search and organising how they're going to be separated and actually getting that information to the aircraft, 'cause there was, I think, essentially a breakdown in communications where Squadron Leader White told me that they've actually checked the tapes of the Air Traffic Control frequencies and we weren't passed, that we had to be at 500 feet.

Q22 What do you feel about that?

A I feel as if, it doesn't surprise me 'cause on that first day, the radio congestion was extreme, 'cause it was all on the one frequency, and it was basically, everyone was reacting to the situation as it developed.

On the first, on the Monday, on the first day, the air traffic controllers were doing a lot of the talking. Then on the second day, we were on a different frequency, the two radio relay aircraft were doing all the talking, passing information, receiving it, and then passing that on to Melbourne on a different frequency.

Q23 But do you feel where there's multiple aircraft ..... units, that a tighter control should be kept on the level and the types of aircraft that are flying those, those sorties?

A Yeah, that would definitely help, because Melbourne's primary role was to provide traffic information for all aircraft. On that first day, they weren't able to, they were predominantly doing search and rescue duties, but if another aircraft happened to be flying inland with absolutely nothing to do with that search, they also had to look after then. So I guess, if you could have, keep all the search aircraft over to another frequency which is what they did on the second day, so you have everyone on the one frequency and it's purely a search and rescue frequency.

Q24 But it took 24 hours for that to happen?

A It did in that, yeah, we were not out there for another 24 hours and by the time we got out there that did happen.

Q25 Mm.

A But that first morning when we got out there, there was

only a few aircraft airborne, it was all fairly, it was all running quite smoothly, but then there was just this sudden influx of dozens of other aircraft, other call signs reporting in saying they'd departed Mallacoota or Sale or something like that, and they were joining the search, and then I think Melbourne was handling it fine, but then just the volume of aircraft that had been called into the search, just overloaded the system.

Q26 But that could have provided fatal results?

A I guess the fact that it was a breakdown in communication and my aircraft went head-to-head with another aircraft at 1,000 feet, came out of, possible, we were at 1200 feet and not 1,000 feet, 'cause I was out of the seat, and we've got a standing order here that aircraft captains have to be in the seat below 1,000 feet, so I got my co-pilots just to bump up to 1200. So that gave us a little bit of displacement, and also the aircraft would have just gone down our left-hand side. If we had not have changed course, I doubt that we would have hit, but it would have been extremely close. As it was, that other aircraft had his lights on, he was doing all the right things. And I think he saw us a lot earlier, before we saw him, 'cause we're a lot bigger, and our engines are fairly dirty, they put out a lot of smoke. And so, he wasn't in slightest bit concerned, 'cause I spoke to him on the radio and he wasn't, he wasn't worried.

Q27 Right.

A 'Cause he had us visual a lot earlier than we had him visual.

Q28 So you in fact communicated with him at the time of the incident?

A No. Only after the incident. This is, we tried calling up, we didn't have much luck and eventually when we came across him a second time, we called out to the aircraft that was maintaining this track of this position of this altitude and he came up and said, "Yeah, that's me, I've got you vision, got you visual, no worries", but I think he was wondering what we were doing there and likewise, 'cause we, not only were we not given the 1,000 foot altitude, or sorry, the 500 foot altitude, we were not even aware that we had aircraft either side of us.

Q29 Mm.

A So we were not passed traffic information on that aircraft, 'cause if we had have, we would have known to pay more attention to looking out for it. So that would have helped, if we had information that he was out there.

Q30 Right. And it was your call that you made the, the 1,000 foot search height as a result of the conditions that, being experienced at the time?

A Yeah. At the conditions, we were going a little higher for, I guess, two reasons. Getting down too low, all we saw was whitewater, so we had to try a bit higher,

because of the sea state, and we had a little table of altitudes to fly according to sea state, but there was also the flight safety thing that I was feeling very tired. I knew my crew was tired, and 1,000 feet's better than 500 feet when you're tired, it gives you more time to react.

Q31 M'mm.

A And just that, it's a bit of a safety buffer as well.

Q32 Mm.

A I wasn't very confident that we would do, I had zero confidence in finding a body in the water, that's for sure. For us, a P3, finding a body in the water, is a waste of time unless conditions are excellent, practically smooth, glassy water.

Q33 Mm.

A So all we could do really was look for yachts and at 1,000 feet, looking for a yacht above the water, or a life raft, should be O.K.

Q34 Mm.

A But I was compromising there. Optimum altitude probably would have been a little lower - - -

Q35 Mm.

A - - - seven to 800 feet, but I sort of made that command decision to go up to 1,000 for our own flight safety as well.

Q36 Do you think the fatigue that you were experiencing and also the crew, do you think that would have hampered your abilities to conduct a thorough search?

A Absolutely, yes. It was a real struggle to keep your eyes, not only looking out the window, plus you'd have to fly as well as you have to check that you still had the right altitude and speed, and have autopilot to help us with that, but it's a very basic primitive autopilot. It won't track you to a point in space.

Q37 M'mm.

A So you have to keep checking it to make, it'll simply hold your wings level in the one direction, but you've got to make sure that you don't drift off.

Q38 O.K.

A So, the, it's a bit higher workload than on a civilian commercial autopilot where you just hit the button and it will take you to where you want to go.

Q39 Mm.

A So we had to, looking inside and outside, and also looking outside it's just very easy, after a long time looking at nothing but the same thing, your eyes get very fatigued. You're only really good for 20 minutes or so, of looking out the window.

Q40 Mm.

A The guys down the back were rotating every 10 to 15 minutes, I think. Towards the end there, they were doing very quick rotations. And up the front, we have a pretty good view, but it was very hard to stay focussed and we were well aware that there were people in the water, or people in life rafts - - -

Q41 Mm.

A - - - and dismasted yachts out there, and that's why I pushed it for as long as I did. I forget my exact sortie duration. I think it was around seven and a half to eight hours.

Q42 Mm.

A If that had have been a training sortie, I would have gone home a long, a lot earlier.

Q43 Mm.

A If I did that sortie again, I would go home earlier.

Q44 Mm.

A So, it was my experience with that, we weren't achieving a great deal because we were so tired.

Q45 Your tiredness didn't affect the way that you could safely fly the aircraft, and then land it safely?

A Yes, it would for normal operations. We had nothing go wrong with that flight.

Q46 Mm.

A But the other aircraft that followed us, they lost, they had to shut down an engine. If that had have happened to us, I can't guarantee that we would have handled that as properly as we should have because quite often with fatigue, your ability to fly the aircraft in a normal operation, a normal manner, normal procedures, take-off, land, fly around, even if you're really fatigued, you're not affected 'cause skills are the last, are the last thing to be affected.

Q47 Mm.

A I've just been doing an aviation medicine refresher

course at the moment - - -

Q48 Right.

A - - - and that would, today we've just been talking about your mood and you lose your mood, you lose your sense of humour.

Q49 M'mm.

A And then skills are the last to go. So you don't really realise that you're fatigued. And it's only when an emergency will occur that you would really suffer from your fatigue.

Q50 Do you feel that going back to the GPS situation, do you feel that having a GPS coupled with your autopilot would have certainly increased your ability to maintain a correct search area that was given to you?

A Absolutely. Even just a GPS, because we'd have navigator, operating, and that's planned to be introduced to the aircraft over the next few years. But a GPS would have, give us search integrity. We'd be searching the area that we were told to search. We would be, 'cause we might do a very comprehensive search, cover 100 per cent of an area, that area might be displaced for four nautical miles north or south.

Q51 Mm.

A But with GPS we'd only, not only do that comprehensive search which we can do anyway, it'd also be in the right position, 'cause the way we work on now is, you do a comprehensive search, you come back, you back-track, look at what your nav error was, navigation

error, and then you can say, O.K, we had a few miles, we're a few miles out to the north or south or something. So we adjust that on the map and that's the area we actually search.

Q52 Mm.

A Obviously that's no good when you're flying with GPS equipped aircraft. And GPS coupled to an autopilot would not necessarily have made our search more effective in track integrity. However, it would have be, it'd be a workload saving device so we wouldn't have to concentrate so much on worrying about where the aircraft's going, and we could spend more time looking outside and less effort in monitoring and correcting the aircraft.

Q53 Have you flown with GPS-aided autopilot?

A No. I don't know it if even exists. I doubt whether GPS autopilot would exist in anything but expensive commercial aircraft.

Q54 O.K. Who, who regulated your after, after the following day on the 28th, then, who regulated your, your search height?

A Our tasking the second day was passed to us by the radio relay aircraft from ..... and the tasking was a lot more specific and I can't recall if we were given a height to fly at, but I don't think we had any problems on that second sortie with tasking details, it was all passed to us. And because initially we were doing a beacon search, we were a lot, bit higher than

everyone else. When I was flying up around 5,000 feet, I was happy because I knew all the civil aircraft and the helicopters were at 1,000 feet and below.

Q55 With the, O.K, with the EPIRBs, the beacons, do you have the ability to home in on those in the cockpit, or is that done through another crew member?

A We've got both, both cockpit and crew member.

Q56 M'mm.

A I'm not sure how much I can say about the, the other crew members' role, but for us we've got a, a UHF direction finding capability.

Q57 M'mm.

A So we can't track 121.5 but we can track 243.0. And if we're within a range, say, 10, 20 miles, then we can home in on it.

Q58 Was it, was it the case where there was a number of EPIRBs activated, either 121 or 243, in some cases the 406, did you find that that, that hampered your ability to, to home in on a particular beacon?

A Yes, it did. You can get two, if you get two different beacons, they'll, you have a little needle, it'll point to the left and then it will change its mind and point to the right. And that's if you've got two beacons which were a similar distance away. And that just sort of plays havoc with your direction finding. Once you get close enough to the beacon, its signal wave will override everything else and it won't be too bad. I guess another thing to point out is that for, we spent

something like 45 minutes trying to nail down this small yellow beacon at the end of the second sortie. Eventually we found it, there was nothing. We sort of wasted it, well, did we waste an hour searching, I don't know, 'cause we reported that there was a beacon there and there was no one there.

Q59 Mm.

A But that quite easily could be picked up earlier by someone. So the fact that you can't tell one beacon from another means that you will have duplication and people will spend time searching for beacons which people have already found.

Q60 Do you feel that your taskings could have been better organised as far as the type of aircraft you were operating?

A Yeah. I'd say that, I'd recommend the P3s, because of their, the nature of the aircraft. They're, they're a large aircraft, they're four engines. They can fly low, we can fly as low as 100 feet, as anyone else, but because we fly faster we can't see as much. We might, someone might see something in water, we'll have to fly over it three or four times to get a positive, or a near positive identification. With the flying up high, we can shut down one engine initially, and then maybe two engines later on as we get lighter, and P3s can have an endurance of up to 15, 15 hours with just loitering around on two engines. A low workload for most of the crew, so that we can stay out there for a

long time, and just work the radios. And we can also do direction finding for beacons. So, we could report beacons and tell other aircraft, you know, we have a beacon in the vicinity of this direction.

Q61 O.K.

A So I would say a radio relay and beacon search at high altitude for P3s when you're mixed in with lots of other civil aircraft.

Q62 Mm.

A Obviously, like, with the Tony Bullimore, Thierry Dubois rescue, southern ocean, we were the only ones who could down there, so we did everything. For when you're close in, and I don't think anyone had really thought about it because I don't know if a P3's ever been called in to search so close to the coast before.

Q63 Were you involved in the, the other two rescues you've just mentioned?

A Yeah. I did one flight with the Bullimore/Dubois, one off south-west of Perth, and I also did a search and rescue recently for a yacht halfway between Tasmania and New Zealand, picked up by a Russian merchant vessel.

Q64 O.K. Paul, is there anything now you'd like to add that you can put to us, where we can, on your behalf, recommend ideas that will improve search and rescue techniques as far as the captain's concerned on an aircraft?

A I guess most, as much information as possible prior to,

prior to take-off. We had very little, but I don't think anyone had much to give us anyway. Maybe a standard performer, a sheet, which also have, which details what P3 crews in particular need, so they just tick the boxes, or fill in information according to whatever. Also, might be interested in having something like that, specific for P3 operations, and also an understanding of our capabilities and, yeah, appreciation of that we fly faster than other aircraft because we're bigger.

Q65 Mm.

A And that's, another, another thing would be if it looks like a P3 might be requested, I'd say put that request in early or at least give the authorities a heads-up. It goes for a Hercules as well, 'cause it's applicable as well.

Q66 Mm.

A So that they can say to the air force, things are hotting up, we might ask for a P3 in a few hours. If that message gets back to me, then I can get in touch with my crew and say, "Get some rest".

Q67 Mm.

A "Put your head down and try and get some rest before, 'cause we may be called out."

Q68 Mm.

A That sometimes happens, and that's good - - -

Q69 M'mm.

A - - - when it does. Or, the alternative is, instead of

calling someone out at midnight, so you know they're going to be awake for over 24 hours, then maybe leave it, call them up at 5.00 in the morning, 4.00 in the morning, get them airborne at first light.

Q70 Mm.

A And interesting topic we've covered in aviation medicine today was, if you're awake for 20 hours, you've got a blood alcohol level of .08. So I was, I could have been flying round with the equivalent blood alcohol level of .1.

Q71 Mm.

A 'Cause we were awake for around 26 hours or so.

Q72 Mm.

A So that's an important consideration.

Q73 Of course, being to impair your judgment.

A Yeah. Judgment reaction, decision-making, all that sort of thing.

Q74 Mm.

A And the worst thing about fatigue is you don't know you're fatigued when you are.

Q75 Mm.

A That, that's basically all I have and I think there's a few things sort of come out of the, the air force or, and the BASI inquiry just into that little incident itself. But I regard that incident as just an end result of the fact that things were fairly crazy out there.

Q76 Yeah. Are you aware, are you aware of the operations

of ..... in Canberra and how they operate?

A Only very vaguely.

Q77 Mm.

A I don't have a good understanding. I haven't seen the building or anything like that.

Q78 Do you think, as an aviator, as far as a P3 captain, that you would like to know more about the operations of .....

A That would definitely help, if they could get us to visit them or maybe they could come and visit us. We, every six months or so, we have safety stand-tos, where the whole squadron doesn't fly for a week.

Q79 Yeah.

A We have lectures on medical factors or flight safety things, and that would be the ideal opportunity for these guys to come down and talk to us, or get just a bit of paperwork generated that tells us what they do.

Q80 All right. Would you be surprised if I told you that employed now is civilians, P3 Orion air crew as far as ..... staff?

A Are they? O.K. I wasn't aware of anyone doing that.

Q81 What we'll do, we'll do is, I'll pass on those thoughts and maybe that something can be done to assist you with knowing more about search and rescue co-ordination and the authority .....

A I guess, yeah, letting them know what our capabilities are, as well as our limitations, 'cause at one stage when those five helicopters came out to join us, I was

asked to provide positive separation for those aircraft, which I can't do. I said I'll try but I'll take absolutely no responsibility for an air traffic control service which I can't provide.

Q82 Mm.

A So, yeah, just the, an understanding both ways.

Q83 O.K. All right. The time on my watch is, is there anything else you'd like to add?

A No, that's just what happened.

Q84 O.K. The time on my watch is now 3.12pm. This interview is now concluded.

INTERVIEW CONCLUDED