

STATEMENT in the matter of:

Place: Merimbula

Missing Persons

Police Station

Date : 29 December 1998

Name: Brian Joseph LEE

Address: C/O HMAS Albatross 817 Sqn

Tel. No.: 02 44 211465

Occupation: Helicopter Air Crewman

STATES:-

1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence which I would be prepared, if necessary, to give in court as a witness. The statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

2. I am 32 years of age.

3. I am currently attached to the 817 Sea King Helicopter Squadron attached to HMAS Albatross.

I have been a creman for the last ten years. My duties include sea rescues, navigation, utilities which includes all winching including external ^{HOVA lift} lifting ^{HOVA lift} radar operation.

4. Around 6.15am on Tuesday the 29th December, 1998 my crew and I left from merimbula Airport. We flew approximately 80 miles off the east coast and began a ^{HE} search for two missing sailors.

5. The first deceased was spotted by another aircraft. we then transitted to their position. I was lowered into the sea to recover this deceased. He was placed in a resuce net and and both myself and the net were raised and placed in the aircraft. THis persons head was below the water, the life jacket kept his body floating and he was face down.

Witness:

Dustin Kennedy

Signature:

Dustin Kennedy

STATEMENT (continued) in the matter of: Missing Persons
Name: Brian Joseph LEE

6. I checked his vitals. There was no sign of life. Lt HUTCHINSON double checked the persons vitals. A short time later I made a search of the deceased and ~~I~~^{we} located, he still had a yoke type life jacket on, he had a red sailing suit, underneath he had a blue travelodge rugby sailing top, and other ~~other~~^{other} garments. The life jacket had the words 'Winston Churchill' written on the front. We started to ~~move~~^{re} his ~~clothing~~^{clothing}. I noticed the word 'Mike' on the left hand side of the top, this was written under the manufactureres ~~emblem~~^{emblem}. That information was passed along with a description of the deceased. I found a strobe light in one of his jacket pockets. It was not activated. I didn't find anything else in his other pockets. I undid his jacket and I had a look inside. I saw the name 'Mike Bannister.' there were also some numbers under his name. I can't recall those numbers.

life jacket and

7. We resumed our search and the pilots spotted the second person. I was lowered into the sea. This persons head was above water sitting correctly in the yoke type lifejacket he was wearing. On contact with the person he was placed in the rescue net and his vitals checked. We were then both winched up into the aircraft. Hutchinson was then instructed to check the persons vitals and the person was confirmed deceased. The person was then moved further forward in the aircraft and an investigation for identification began. The person was wearing a yellow yoke type lifejacket with the words 'Winston Churchill' written in ink on the front of the jacket. The person was wearing a red sailing suit with no names visible on the outfit. The person's sailing suit pockets were then searched and a wallet was found in the left hand waist pocket. The wallet was then checked and the person's drivers license was discovered and the details of the person passed to the search coordinator. The

Witness: *L. J. Kennedy* Signature: *Brian J Lee*

Page No: 3

P.190A.

STATEMENT (continued) in the matter of: Missing Persons
Name: Brian Joseph LEE

name on the licence was James LAWLER. The wallet was then placed back in the same waist pocket. The aircraft then resumed the search for the remaining persons.

Witness: *Libby Kelly* - Signature: *Brian J Lee*