

Warrant Officer Class One William John (Bill) Degenaro, OAM

Warrant Officer Class One Darren Callaghan

On Saturday the 27th of August at 1630 hours, the world lost a very special man. As deeply as he will be missed by his friends, the loss is even greater for his family. His love for his wife, children and grand children was obvious in the way he spoke of them, and bragged about their every accomplishment.

Bill and I shared many milestones together. We saw each others children grow into fine young adults. He stood beside me when Jo and I got married. I watched him grin from ear to ear as he walked Katherine down the aisle. He spoke proudly of his beloved grandkids.

When he met Heather he told me she was smoking hot, and mates being mates I couldn't wait to check her out. And in November last year I watched admirably as Bill and Heather declared their love for each other and married in a beautiful and moving ceremony.

Bill was not only my friend, he was a fantastic mentor and a damn good mate. I was pleased that Bill and I could separate our professional and private lives. He would be proud to know the most magnificent dressing down I ever received was from him.

Bill would often say to me - it must mean something to somebody but it doesn't mean anything to me. Well Bill you meant something to all of us and especially to me you were my mate.

There's a fine and dandy custom,
And I'm with it all the way,
It's the greatest Australian mateship
I encounter every day.

Not a thing on earth can beat it
Nothing else can quite compare
With the sense of loyal mateship
That's Australian's special ware.

It embodies love and friendship
Yes indeed. . .but something more. . .
'Tis a creed for worthy living
And it opens every door.

Do not ask me to define it
It is something quite apart
But it warms with fellow feelings
All the cockles of my heart.

You maybe sick and saddened
But no matter what your state,
Let me greet you as a cobber,
With a "How ya goin', mate?"