

Capt Richard (Chris) Hart

July 4, 1949 – August 31, 2010



Captain Chris Hart, a Queensland Coastal Pilot serving with Australian Reef Pilots, was tragically killed when the charter aircraft in which he was travelling crashed on landing at the remote island of Misima PNG.

The accident occurred upon landing when the jet could not brake in time before the end of the runway, where it crashed into dense vegetation. Of the five on board there was only one survivor.

At the time of the accident Chris was being re-located to PNG to bring a ship south to Hay Point.

Chris was born in Singapore on July 4, 1949 the son of Major R.F.S. Hart of the British RASC. The family later moved back to England settling in Colchester, Essex.

Chris commenced his sea career with P&O after attending pre-sea training at HMS Worcester. He served for many years on P&O's well known passenger ships and saw service with the RNR as a submariner.

Chris met Hilary on the Himalaya and they had married in 1977 and settled in Sydney. Thereafter followed 12 months with the MSB ashore. Chris returned to sea joining Howard Smiths and rising through the ranks spent many years with them in command. He also continued his naval service with the RANR achieving the rank of Lt Cmdr. He was the proud recipient of the Australian Defence Medal and Australian Merchant Navy Service Cross.

Chris joined Australian Reef Pilots in 1997 and after many years became a Check & Training Pilot. Although his first name was Richard he went by his second Christian name Chris. He aptly acquired the nickname of "Dicky Hart", for which he was affectionately known amongst his pilot colleagues. He had a great love of country and western music, and knew every song Johnny Cash ever sang. His other great talent was cooking – he could have been a master chef instead of a master mariner.

His funeral, attended by family and friends and past and present colleagues was held at Hornsby on 24th September 2010. He was interned at Castle Hill cemetery. Chris leaves behind his wife Hilary and three adult children, Georgina, Tom & Anne-Marie.

A tribute from the Misima village ...

The women and children of our village came to pick us in full bloom. They talked of a great tragedy that befell visitors to our beautiful village. They picked us to help them show how heartfelt and sorry they were that people they called friends had suffered. Clutching us in their arms the entire village met their friends at the airport who came to bring them back to Port Moresby. At the hospital the staff placed us on each stretcher as it was borne solemnly out to the waiting ambulance. Children and women lined the route to the airport, holding us close to their hearts, crying and grieving even though they had known the visitors for such a short time. At the airport we were joined together on a rush mat to accompany the visitors back to Port Moresby. Our flight was uneventful and when we landed we were scattered on the floor of the hanger, to help everyone there bid a final farewell, as each stretcher was carried over us, by their friends, on route to the next stage of the journey home.

We can never hope to take away the pain of such a loss but we hope to show you how much sympathy our villagers and the friends that came to fetch them feel for your loss.

The Flowers of Misima