

Ronald 'Ron' Packer was born in Capetown, South Africa on 7 December 1950 to Peter and Glendyr Packer. With brothers Christopher, Anthony, William and his parents, Ron arrived in Perth in 1961 aboard the Dominion Monarch. Perhaps it was this voyage that gave Ron his love of the sea. Ron completed his secondary education at Christ Church Grammar School, WA. He went on to university from where he entered the Army as a National Serviceman 5718090 on 28 January 1971. Ron commenced OTU on 15 February with Class 1/71 as a member of 8 Section, 4 Platoon, Monash Company. His 'Father' was a Lance Corporal Rizzuto, while his 'Brothers' were Cadets Price, Ridgway, Smith J and Williams 845. In his Senior Term, Ron was the Section Commander of 8 Section. Ron graduated with his class on 14 July 1971, was allocated to the Infantry Corps and posted to 5 RAR. Ron discharged from the Army at the end of his 'Nasho' on 27 July 1972. However, while working in London as a Lawyer he joined Honourable Artillery Company as part of the British Army Reserve.



Ron was also an avid sailor, one of sailing's "rock star" Navigators in the golden era of sailing back in the sixties and seventies. He sailed his first Sydney to Hobart in 1968 on Neil McAllister's Starfire and from 1969 did several more 'Hobarts' on the family boat Hotspur. He sailed his first Fastnet Race on Alan Bond's Apollo in 1971, guiding them to second place. Then in 1973 he was on Bondy's Apollo II as part of the Australian Admiral's Cup team, which finished second.

Ron was a Navigator on Bond's Southern Cross in the 1974 America's Cup, won the 1975 Sydney to Hobart on his father's Ben Lexcen-designed Rampage, the only WA boat to achieve this win, and was aboard Police Car with his brother Chris on the winning team in the 1979 Admiral's Cup.

When he returned home to Perth Ron joined the family property business and remained an active sailor in the Etchells, Flying Fifteen and Dragon classes at Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club.

With wife Phillipa, also a competitive sailor, they had three daughters, Kirsty, Tory and Susannah, of whom he was immensely proud.

The family lived in a magnificent four storey house in Mosman Park, where even the top floor garage 'had a beautiful view' overlooking the Swan River.

Right: Ron Packer on left with the crew on Police Car.

Ron was a Life Patron of Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club and a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron. After a long battle with cancer, Ron passed away on 29 November 2022, and it was at the Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club on 8 December 2022 that some 800 friends and relatives met to remember Ron.



OTU classmate Colin Hill wrote:

What sad news during the week to read that Ron's courageous battle with cancer was over. Unlike many addressees, I did not know Ron well from our OTU days or his life's story, which I read about in our 50+1 Reunion booklet - so many remarkable highlights and accomplishments and, in many ways, so typical of the rich and varied life experiences of the band of brothers that made up our 1/71 graduating class. I'm so glad now that I took some time to sit and talk to Ron during our reunion and to appreciate his determined resolution to participate as fully as he was able in our reunion activities (caringly supported by his daughter Kirsty). It is a truism to conclude that he was taken too early but his contribution in so many fields and his mateship over the years with many of the 1/71 group

will surely be fondly remembered by us all as the years go by. RIP Ron Packer.