

[Western Australia](#)

## Former Australian navy sailor 'admitted to three murders' before his death

WA police have launched a nationwide appeal for information amid reports Richard Dorrrough confessed to murdering three people in a suicide note

Australian Associated Press

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This article is over **2 years old**



□ Photograph: Tony Mcdonough/AAP

Western Australian police have launched a nationwide appeal for information amid reports a former Australian navy sailor confessed to three murders before his death.

Former crew member Richard Edward Dorrrough confessed to murdering three people in a suicide note found after his August 2014 death, the West Australian reported on Saturday.

“We are seeking public assistance regarding Dorrrough’s movements across Australia and even in New Zealand over the past 20 years,” WA state crime assistant commissioner Michelle Fyfe said on Saturday.

Dorrrough was a suspect in the 1997 disappearance of 21-year-old Kimberley woman Sara-Lee Davey from Broome.

He was charged with the 1998 murder of 29-year-old prostitute Rachael Campbell in Sydney, but was acquitted at trial.

Before Dorrrough took his own life in August 2014 at age 37, he is reported to have admitted in a handwritten note to murdering three people.

The note was found at his Byford home and did not identify the victims.

Police said the state coroner had directed them not to reveal, or confirm, the contents of the note.

An inquest into Sara-Lee Davey's death is due to be held in April.

Fyfe said the WA special crime squad had contacted police in other jurisdictions where Dorrough lived or visited.

So far they have been unable to link him to any unsolved serious crimes.

“It may well be that members of the public who associated with Dorrough have the information we seek, and we urge them to come forward now,” she said.

• *Readers seeking support and information about suicide prevention can contact Lifeline on 13 11 14.*

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# NEWS

## NEWS

### Police believe sailor Richard Dorrough behind Broome woman's death, inquest told

By [Natalie Jones](#)

Updated 6 Apr 2016, 9:32pm Wed 6 Apr 2016, 9:32pm



**PHOTO:** Richard Dorrough left a suicide note in which he admitted killing three people, the inquiry heard. (Supplied: WA Police)

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Police believe former Navy sailor Richard Dorrough was responsible for the death of 21-year-old Sara-Lee Davey in the Kimberley town of Broome 19 years ago, a coronial inquest into her suspected death has been told.

The one-day inquest looking into the circumstances of Ms Davey's suspected death was held in Broome on Wednesday.

Ms Davey was drinking at a bar with friends in Broome in January 1997 when she met Mr Dorrough, 19, who was on shore leave.

The inquest heard the pair caught a taxi to the wharf where HMAS Geelong was moored and Mr Dorrrough tried to bring Ms Davey on board.

The pair were stopped by Able Seaman Dean Mildenhall, who was on security duties and has since changed his name to Dean Fraser.

The court heard Mr Dorrrough then said he was going to take Ms Davey to the end of the wharf to have sex with her and the pair walked out of sight behind a building.

This was the last time Ms Davey was seen by a credible witness.

Her body has never been found.

Fisherman David Jones told the inquest he heard a woman screaming.

"She was saying 'what the hell are you doing?' and 'get off me'," Mr Jones said.

He also recalled hearing a splash which sounded like someone throwing a stone in the water and then saw a man pacing up and down the wharf.

Mr Fraser told the hearing when Mr Dorrrough returned to the ship, he questioned him about scratches on his face which were not there before.

Mr Dorrrough replied that Ms Davey would not have sex with him and she was gone.

Mr Fraser also said Mr Dorrrough, who was nicknamed Bambi by crew members, was not well liked, considered himself a ladies' man and was an impulsive liar.

In April that year, Mr Dorrrough was questioned about Ms Davey's disappearance, but there was not enough evidence to charge him with any offences.

At the time he was questioned, police had received reports of several sightings of Ms Davey after the night at the wharf and they believed she may still have been alive.

## SUICIDE NOTE CONFESSION

In January last year, police received new information that Mr Dorrrough had died and had confessed to killing three people in a suicide note.



**Photo:** Sara Lee Davey from Broome was last seen on January 14, 1997. (AFP: Missing persons website)

The inquest heard that in August 2014 Mr Dorrrough mailed his partner a parcel containing his computer, phone and an exercise book with the suicide note, which read: "I did kill three times ... it's the hardest thing to live with."

This led to the review of the Davey case, headed up by Detective Sergeant Darren Bethell.

Detective Bethell told the hearing the review revealed four witnesses who claimed they saw Ms Davey after January 14 were uncorroborated and one was falsified.

He said he could not go so far as to say there were shortcomings in the original investigation, but said in hindsight there were aspects of the case he would have done differently.

Detective Bethell said if Mr Dorrrough was alive today there may have been enough evidence to charge him with an offence, but possibly not enough to convict him.

## **INQUIRY MAY BRING 'CLOSURE' BUT NO 'JUSTICE' FOR FAMILY**

Coroner Barry King deferred his findings until later this year.

He said it was likely he would find that Ms Davey died on January 14, 1997, but unlikely he would be able to say Mr Dorrrough killed her.

Outside the court Ms Davey's brother Jeffrey Hunter said after a long wait, the inquest brought the family some relief.

"In our hearts and our minds we know she's left us and we know who's responsible," he said.

Mr Hunter said the process had not brought justice, but may lead to closure.

**Topics:** [courts-and-trials](#), [missing-person](#), [navy](#), [broome-6725](#)

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