NAMING NEW ZEALAND’S LARGEST SHIP

RECRUITS MARCH FORTH

WILLIAM SANDERS VC

TE TAU A MOANA - WARRIORS OF THE SEA
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Throughout my career the Navy has provided many challenging and rewarding postings, but none more so than Initial Training Officer. I am responsible to the Commander Leadership Development for the delivery of Induction Training in the RNZN, covering both JOCT and BCT courses. Posting opportunities like this continue to provide the motivation for me to proudly serve my country and influence the future leaders of our Navy.

Two key responsibilities of those working within the initial training environment include the delivery of respective course programmes and to provide a safe working and living environment for all trainees. The importance of the latter can never be overstated. Families have entrusted staff with this responsibility, and it is not taken lightly. Officer Training School and Recruit Training Squadron staff work tirelessly to ensure trainees are appropriately cared for, and their welfare remains a "top of the hoist" priority.

The RNZN is a values-based organisation that places high expectations on its people doing the right thing. Courage, Comradeship and Commitment are not just words, rather they represent many behaviours that someone in a professional military organisation should be displaying. JOCT and BCT come from all walks of life, so the challenge is not only to introduce the trainees to our values, but also ensure they live them.

Past and present sailors all have memories from their initial training irrespective of whether it was on JOCT or BCT. On occasion we can all be guilty of looking back over the years through “rose-coloured glasses” and forgetting that not everything was perfect. Today's Navy is significantly different from the one I joined, and rightly so. Change has needed to occur to reflect the Government's changing strategic direction, various platform designs within a modern fleet and the changing of social norms, to name a few. The second order effect of these changes is initial training has needed to change with them to prepare today's sailors for the challenges of tomorrow's Navy.

One significant change over the last few years has been the introduction of the NZDF Leadership Framework across Defence. JOCT and BCT have now successfully completed the Lead Self programme. This programme is one of seven Leadership programmes within the NZDF Leadership Framework that supports the leadership transition through the ranks of personnel serving in the NZDF. JOCT will soon complete the Lead Team programme also.

One thing I can assure past and present sailors is that like them, JOCT and BCT are proud of being in the service and are proud to wear the Navy uniform. This year's JOCT and BCT intakes have just commenced wearing their Navy uniforms. Up until then they were undertaking training in overalls. There is a very good reason for this. Trainees need to learn how to wash, iron and maintain their uniforms. No longer do they have a family member to undertake these arduous tasks. The trainees also need to learn and understand the responsibilities that come with wearing the uniform as well as understanding they are not only representing today's Navy but also those who have gone before them.

25 Junior Officers and 90 recruits are currently undertaking JOCT and BCT 17/01 intakes and are progressing towards a combined graduation on Friday 16 June 2017. I congratulate them all for having the courage to serve their country but just as importantly thank their families and friends for supporting their loved one's decision.

As I noted at the beginning of this “Yours Aye”, I continue to proudly serve my country and from what I see on a daily basis JOCT and BCT 17/01 have commenced doing the same. I have no doubt that with continued dedication, these future leaders will hold the RNZN in good stead for years to come.

“Safety is Paramount”
Tradition and global reputation have combined in the choice of name for the largest naval vessel New Zealand has ever operated.

Chief of Navy Rear Admiral John Martin said he was proud to record another chapter in the history of the Royal New Zealand Navy in declaring the name of the Navy’s Maritime Sustainment Capability fleet replenishment tanker as HMNZS AOTEAROA on 10 April.

The $493m, 24,000-tonne ship is the replacement for the 30-year-old HMNZS ENDEAVOUR, which will be decommissioned next year. South Korean firm Hyundai Heavy Industries, the world’s biggest
shipbuilder, will start building AOTEAROA next year, for delivery in January 2020.

Five members of a Navy panel, chaired by Deputy Chief of Navy Commodore David Gibbs, considered a range of names, with a shortlist of six presented to RADM Martin for his final choice. He says the name reflects the importance of the ship to New Zealand. “It’s a big name for a big ship,” he says. “AOTEAROA will represent us as a nation on the international stage whether conducting operational support, maritime sustainment or providing humanitarian aid and disaster relief. AOTEAROA will be recognisable within the Pacific region and identifiable with all New Zealanders.”

He says AOTEAROA, while replacing ENDEAVOUR, offers more than just a replenishment role. “AOTEAROA will have the ability to deploy anywhere in the world to support maritime operations and enhance our combat force. It has the ability to conduct embarked helicopter operations and will be capable of carrying a significant tonnage of operational supplies. And it will provide an important Antarctic support capability to assist with our Southern Ocean monitoring.”

HMNZS AOTEAROA will be a world-first naval “Environship”, with Hyundai using the Rolls-Royce Environship concept design under licence. The design incorporates a new wave-piercing
hull form which reduces resistance and lowers fuel burn, while its Combined Diesel Electric and Diesel propulsion plant has lower fuel emissions than older vessels.

The Ministry of Defence, in announcing the vessel’s design on 18 July, noted the “winterisation” capabilities of the vessel. They includes ice-strengthening for operations in Antarctica, including resupplying McMurdo Station and Scott Base.

The Defence White Paper 2016 has identified Antarctica as a “focus on increasing international interest” while noting New Zealand Defence Force’s “critical role” in supporting personnel in the Ross Dependency and monitoring activity in the Southern Ocean.

“AOTEAROA will be the type of purpose-built, technologically enhanced asset that will add real value to our combat operations, humanitarian relief functions and our operational and training support.”

New Plymouth, ENDEAVOUR’s home port, will become the home port for AOTEAROA. “This continues the long standing relationship the Navy have had with the wider Taranaki Region, and their link to the sea. It also recognises the connection between the area’s oil and gas industry and the role of AOTEAROA in providing fuel services.”

RADM Martin says Governor-General Dame Patsy Reddy will be the official patron of AOTEAROA. “As the representative of our Head of State, she is a fitting sponsor to the ship.”

The ship’s name is a deliberate nod to the famous battle cruiser HMS NEW ZEALAND, which took part in three maritime battles in WWI. “I’m proud that AOTEAROA acknowledges what has gone before but this time with a uniquely Kiwi flavour.”

A public competition will be held later in the year to produce a design for AOTEAROA’s ship’s badge. The winning design will become the enduring symbol of the ship, displayed on plaques, the ship itself and on crewmembers’ uniforms.

“I’m looking for a badge that reflects the importance of this ship to our fleet and our nation,” says RADM John Martin.

“The sort of elements we would expect to see in a ship badge would be illustrative of the name, its meaning and what it represents to New Zealand as well as New Zealand’s rich cultural heritage. It will be something simple yet striking.”

At time of going to print, the competition terms and conditions – and prizes – for the winner had not been finalised. Keep an eye on www.navy.mil.nz and the Navy Facebook page for updated details on the competition.
HMNZS AOTEAROA pays homage to her famous namesake, New Zealand’s “gift ship”, HMS NEW ZEALAND, an Indefatigable-class battle cruiser serving in the Royal Navy during WWI. Although a Royal Navy vessel, New Zealand paid for her, making NEW ZEALAND the largest and heaviest naval vessel directly connected with this country until now.

NEW ZEALAND’s origins lie with Prime Minister Sir Joseph Ward, a man of strong imperial sentiments and a long-held interest in naval defence. Alarmed over information in 1909 that Germany could build capital ships faster than Britain, he announced to his cabinet – without parliamentary approval or debate – that New Zealand would buy a battleship for Britain. The move created a sensation, as well as blindsiding the leader of the opposition, William Massey, who could hardly oppose such support for the Royal Navy. Ward travelled to England soon after and was feted, including honorary degrees from Cambridge and Edinburgh.

NEW ZEALAND was laid down in the company yard of Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Company, Glasgow in June 1910. She was launched on 1 July 1911 and completed on 12 November at a cost of £1,684,990, including £94,200 for her eight 12-inch guns. To pay for the ship, New Zealand took out a 30-year-loan, raised in London.

In 1913 NEW ZEALAND was detached for special service, to travel to New Zealand to allow the country to see the ship they had bought. Ironically, the Prime Minister was now William Massey, who had only half-heartedly endorsed the gift ship idea.
History records that Massey made no mention of Ward in his speeches. 376,086 visitors turned out to see the ship as it toured New Zealand, over a third of the country’s population.

In Wellington Captain Lionel Halsey RN was gifted with a piupiu and tiki and told if he wore them in action, no harm would come to the ship. Halsey was so impressed with seeing his first haka that he instituted haka parties into the ship’s culture. Every midshipman joining NEW ZEALAND had to learn the haka.

NEW ZEALAND saw action in the Battle of Heligoland Bight (August 1914), Battle of Dogger Bank (January 1915) and the Battle of Jutland (May 1916). In the first two actions, Captain Halsey conscientiously wore the piupiu and tiki, and indeed no harm came to NEW ZEALAND. During Jutland, Captain John Green wore the tiki but declared he was too stout to wear the piupiu, hanging it on the conning tower. NEW ZEALAND took a hit from an 11-inch shell fired from battlecruiser VON DER TANN, hitting X turret and blowing a hole in the upper deck.

After the war NEW ZEALAND revisited New Zealand in 1919, with Admiral of the Fleet Lord John Jellicoe, possibly angling for a Governor-General position (he would later become New Zealand’s Governor-General in 1920).

NEW ZEALAND was decommissioned on 19 April 1922 and broken up in Rosyth, Scotland, in 1923, while her 30-year-loan may not have been paid off until 1944. The piupiu, which was gifted back to New Zealand by Halsey’s family, is in the Navy Museum at Devonport. A fine two-metre model of HMS NEW ZEALAND, by modelmaker Graham Beeson, is held at the museum.

Source: The Battlecruiser HMS New Zealand, Our Gift Ship, by Denis Fairfax.

Above: HMS NEW ZEALAND arrives in Lyttelton, described as “rather misty” in the notes.

Above: The battle cruiser rounds Miramar Peninsula in 1919, heading for its berth.

Below: HMS NEW ZEALAND in Lyttelton, 1919.

NOTE: These 1919 images have been recently obtained by the Navy Museum from England. This is the first time they have been published.
NEW DIRECTOR FOR NAVAL SAFETY

Commander Raymond McLaughlin is the new face behind a new title, the Director for Naval Safety and Health, taking over from Commander Lisa Hunn.

CDR McLaughlin has an extensive Marine Engineering background. He has served as MEO in both HMNZS TE MANA and TE KAHA along with a variety of shore support roles, culminating in the dual role of Logistics Command (Maritime) Fleet Engineer Current Operations and Fleet Marine Engineer Officer.

In addition to the changeover, the title of Director Navy Safety will be changed to Director Naval Safety and Health (DNSH). This is to better align with the comparative single service director roles and to ensure that Health and Safety is considered as a collective term for the practice of Health and Safety within Navy Occupational Safety and Health (NAVOSH).

CDR McLaughlin says he is looking forward to carrying on the good work CDR Hunn started as the inaugural DNS “while also continuing to enhance the relationships I have developed across the Fleet and Shore Support organisations as FECO and FMEO. I have really appreciated the opportunity during the handover period to commence developing relationships with the other single Service Safety and Health Directorates and the NZDF Safety Directorate”.

He says the Chief of Navy’s priorities are clear. “Regardless of how we contribute to the delivery of RNZN outputs, the safety of our personnel and contractors doing the business needs be at the very forefront of our minds. This was very powerfully expressed by the CN at the conclusion of the just-concluded Seaworthiness Board on NZDF Diving. “I am looking forward to working with the NAVOSH team to enhance the communication of the increasing focus on safety and health across the NZDF level where a number of significant work streams are under action.”

He says a key work stream element the Directorate of Safety has been working on is the development and introduction of a Safety Management System for use by all three Services, together with rationalising the number of tools currently used to manage safety event reporting.

“This is a significant challenge, but once we start to use a common language and understanding in Safety and Health, this will be a major step to demonstrating our commitment to continuous safety management improvement.

“In closing I commend to you all - ‘home from the sea, safe and sound’.

SAFETY FOR LIFE

Written by SLT Frank Francesco

For HMNZS CANTERBURY’s beloved Health and Safety Officer, “due diligence” is more than a mere buzzword and more than just a mantra; for Lieutenant Matthew Charles Turner (Royal Navy), due diligence is a lifestyle choice.

He’s the Jean Baptiste of Safety, and the SHEMS Register is his Bible. There’s only one thing he loves more than identifying hazards, and that is mitigating them.

As I entered his well-lit and adequately ventilated cabin to conduct an interview, I couldn’t help but be overwhelmed by the lack of tripping hazards. After sanitizing my hands with the hand-sanitiser provided, I took a seat. I took a second to appreciate exactly what it meant to be a Navy Safety Award nominee / winner. The room was secured for sea like you’ve never seen – I doubt as to whether Poseidon himself could shift its contents.

I acknowledged Matt’s award and hit him with my first and only question – “how important is Health and Safety to you?”

Keeping it both fun and safe, Matt proceeded to inform me that “he would die for Health and Safety”. He went on: “Health and Safety is important to all of us, not only as individuals but as an organisation; it’s one of the necessary foundations upon which we can build towards naval excellence. It’s not about being afraid of things; we are a military organisation and we have a job to do, and to do it well. It’s about being risk-aware, not risk-averse. Through working together towards a safer workplace, we will achieve a happier organisation and one which can better achieve its outputs”.

There is a calm passion in his words, and I sensed Matt could stir a sense of practical and risk-aware sentiment in even the most foolhardy of seafarers. More importantly, I realised he was absolutely right. Safe workplace, equals happy workplace, equals greater operational effectiveness.

HMNZS CANTERBURY’s motto is ‘kotahitangi’, meaning “unity”. LT Turner may not be able to pronounce it right, but he certainly lives it. He is the well-deserved winner of the Navy Safety Award.
A greenstone taonga embracing the culture of the Navy chaplains and the Navy itself has become a new part of the induction of the Principal Chaplain of the Navy.

Chaplain Peter Olds RNZN was confirmed as the Principal Chaplain of the Navy in a ceremony at St Christopher’s Chapel in Devonport Naval Base on 16 March.

Before the ceremony the chaplains sought permission from Chief of Navy Rear Admiral John Martin to approve the wearing of the taonga, He Tokatūmoana, as part of the Principal Chaplain’s dress uniform.

RADM Martin agreed it could happen at the ceremony, as Chaplain Olds took over from Chaplain Colin Mason.

He Tokatūmoana, meaning “A rock that stands in the midst of the sea”, is a taonga containing three traditional Maori forms: the Hei Matau (fish hook), representing strength and determination, and safe journeys over water; the Koru, meaning new beginnings; and the Manaia, the carrier of spiritual powers.

During the ceremony, He Tokatūmoana was blessed by the chaplains as it was held over the bell of HMNZS BELLONA. It was then passed to RADM Martin. “Sir, your taonga,” said Chaplain Chris Haines. RADM Martin, asking Principal Chaplain of the Defence Force Group Captain Ants Hawes to assist, placed it over Chaplain Olds.

Chaplain Haines said the idea of an appropriate taonga had been discussed for some years, and it was certainly not difficult to see strong inferences to the chaplains in the three tradition forms. “The graduation of colour, slightly different on each side and unusual for pounamu, speaks of the journey from turbulence to peace, or of the view from the shallows by the shore to the depths of the sea. Again, this is very chaplain and Navy-centric symbolism. Also, when looked at from the correct angle, it is not difficult to see the image of the hammerhead shark, mangōpare. To many Maori this is a representation of Tangaroa, a strong cultural symbol within the RNZN and depicted upon the Navy Chaplain’s stole.”

To the chaplains, He Tokatūmoana meant stalwart, supporter, centre-person, who is there for you “through thick and thin”, Chaplain Haines said.

Chaplain Olds has been a Navy chaplain since graduating Junior Officer Common Training in 2006, serving on base and on HMNZS WAKAKURA, RESOLUTION, ENDEAVOUR, CANTERBURY and TE MANA. He graduated from a senior staff course in 2013.
Chief of Defence Force Lieutenant General Tim Keating took in the capabilities of HMNZS TE KAHA and ENDEAVOUR during exercises off the coast of Western Australia during Exercise OCEAN EXPLORER 2017 last month.

OCEAN EXPLORER is a multi-national exercise run by the Royal Australian Navy, including the use of Royal Australian Air Force planes, a US Navy submarine, the Italian Navy and Spanish Navy.

During the final week of the exercise, LTGEN Keating came on board TE KAHA with Warrant Officer of the Defence Force WO1 Danny Broughton. The pair were there to see the capabilities of TE KAHA and ENDEAVOUR in a warfare environment, and how the Navy as a whole helps reach the aims of the New Zealand Defence Force.

Transported to TE KAHA in a Seasprite SH-2G(I) helicopter, LTGEN Keating and WO1 Broughton were greeted by CO TE KAHA Commander Stephen Lenik, who brought the ship to Action Stations soon after. The visitors saw TE KAHA at its highest state of readiness as it conducted a major Damage Control exercise within an anti-air warfare scenario. During this time TE KAHA’s 5-inch gun was fired, and its CIWS (Close In Weapons System) and Mini-Typhoon machine guns were engaged to simulate shooting down enemy missiles.

LTGEN Keating hosted a Clear Lower Deck of all Ship’s Company in the hanger to engage in a question and answer session with regards to NZDF’s aims for TE KAHA during her upcoming deployment in South East Asia.

Both LTGEN Keating and WO1 Broughton were presented with souvenirs of their visit: five-inch shell casings, recently expelled from TE KAHA’s turret during her exercise.
by Andrew Bonallack

Electronic Warfare Specialist Simon Hollingsworth says going to Gallipoli will be a once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage.

AEWS Hollingsworth, from Te Aroha and based in Wellington, applied to attend the Gallipoli 2017 service, believing it would be an honour to commemorate the service of his relatives, and one in particular. At Gallipoli he will carry the battered leather wallet he has carried to every Anzac Day service he has attended – the wallet of an ancestor killed on the first day he arrived in Turkey. He will also have with him the research on 12 ancestors who fought in, died in or survived World War I, World War II and beyond. “My ancestors are everywhere,” he says. “I could stand and point to 10 different locations.”

Three of his ancestors are associated with Gallipoli. He has complete — and tragically brief — service records for Waikato brothers Herbert and Edward Watson, his great-uncles. Herbert was killed on the first day of the Gallipoli assault, 25 April, 1915. Herbert’s leather wallet was returned to the family, and AEWS Hollingsworth will take it to Gallipoli. He also has a poignant last telegraph from Herbert to his mother, telling her he had sent her 50 pounds “and you receive everything if I get killed at the front”.

“You can hear his voice,” AEWS Hollingsworth says. “He signed up in August 1914, from rural Waikato, and almost immediately travelled halfway around the world, endured everything to get there, to be killed on the first day. It gives me goose bumps. It’s the courage.”

The other brother, Edward Watson, received a gunshot wound to his arm in August 1915 and died in a Cairo hospital from disease. At the time his brother Herbert was “missing” and AEWS Hollingsworth reflects on the tragedy of Edward dying not knowing if his brother was alive or dead.

“You then picture their mother. Family of 11 kids, one son is missing, another has just died in hospital, then you find out the first one died a long time earlier. It’s very hard to imagine how that feels.”

Above: AEWS Simon Hollingsworth places a poppy in the Hall of Memories at the Pukeahu National War Memorial, in memory of his great-uncles at Gallipoli.
In contrast, the third relative associated with Gallipoli was a survivor – and something of a celebrity. Sir John Henry Dacres Cunningham, AEWS Hollingsworth’s great-grandmother’s cousin, was a lieutenant commander and navigating officer on HMS RUSSELL during the evacuation of the Dardanelles. After serving as Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet in World War II, Sir John rose to become the First Sea Lord.

AEWS Hollingsworth started exploring his ancestors in detail when he joined the Navy in April 2015, having previously been on naval staff as a civilian and in the Army for four years before that. “It was coming up to the 100th [anniversary of Gallipoli]. I spent some time speaking to my grandmother and found a treasure trove of information from a dozen different relatives, from World War I to the Falklands.”

The realisation of their achievements is humbling, he says. “You really feel like you are walking in the shadows of giants. What these guys did, what they went through, you feel unworthy. They have done the ultimate. How do you live up to this?”

He is doing this research – and making the journey – as a way of honouring them, as they have honoured his family. The idea of going to Gallipoli has not sunk in yet. “I don’t think it will until I’m there. It’s like my Mecca, my pilgrimage. To be standing there, on sacred ground, it’s a once-in-a-lifetime moment.”

AEWS Hollingsworth, who was a Sailor of the Year nominee last year, will undertake catafalque duties while in Gallipoli, and he plans to read aloud his great-uncle’s last telegraph. He also hopes he’ll find the Watson name on a monument there.

He is pleased Herbert’s name features at the Great War Exhibition in Wellington. “He could have died on the beach or at the top of the hill. To imagine what they were going through on the day – it doesn’t have words.”
“It’s just like lego,” says Lieutenant Guillaume, describing the rare moment he watched the turret of the FNS VENDÉMIAIRE getting swapped over for a new one.

The chief engineer supervised the almost disappointingly swift changeover to VENDÉMIAIRE’s new 100mm gun turret, part of its three-year major refit in the drydock at Devonport Naval Base. The French Floreal-class light patrol frigate, based out of Chaleix Naval Base in New Caledonia, arrived in New Zealand on 13 January. Waiting on the edge of the drydock was a new 22-tonne turret, ready to be swapped out.

“We don’t have the facilities in New Caledonia,” says LT Guillaume. “The main contractor chose to subcontract and use the facilities here. The turret was freighted here on another ship.”

He says the changeover of a turret is an important moment in the life of a ship. “For such guns, there is a life span. It doesn’t happen often, and for a sailor, it’s a very important moment, you only see it happen once or twice. For me, it was one of the big moments, but the moment took only half an hour. It was a bit disappointing.”

The changeover was so quick that many of the crew did not see it. “We called them down, but by the time they had got here, they had missed it. We lifted it and in less than 10 minutes, it’s over. After a few checks, it is another 10 minutes to have the new one on board. Of course, after that, another job begins to get it combat-ready before the end of the refit. 22 tonnes of turret, swapped in half an hour.”

In any case, a lot of the 83-strong crew were able to take leave, enjoying a holiday in New Zealand before the ship departs in May. “We encourage it. If people take leave to visit the country, it’s good for morale. They come back sharper. And discovering new cultures is part of being in the Navy.”

VENDÉMIAIRE is familiar to RNZN ships engaged in fisheries patrols in the Western Pacific, as that is the frigate’s territory. VENDÉMIAIRE generally covers from Singapore to Vladivostock in Russia, while her sister ship FNS PRAIRIA looks after the eastern side of the Pacific. She is also a regular visitor to New Zealand, with four of her sailors embarked on WELLINGTON for an exchange. “We feel very welcome here.”

LT Guillaume’s family have travelled to Auckland to be with him during the refit, but it is a very busy time. He has managed to fit in Navy Today’s interview between meetings, but he is running late, prompting the editor to ask if he has missed lunch. LT Guillaume looks scandalised at the idea. “In France, lunch is sacred. We make time.”

Top of page: VENDÉMIAIRE’s old gun turret sits to one side.
Above: FNS VENDÉMIAIRE sits in Devonport’s drydock for its three-year refit.
Ordinary Medical Assistant Anna Kato froze at the door to her mess as she and her 11 "oppos" took in the devastation in front of them. Their barracks had been trashed. Freshly ironed clothes, bedding, handtowels, toilet paper, even the drawers, had been hurled across the room. The women were exhausted from a gruelling two-hour physical training session. Taking in the mess, because something, somewhere, had been a centimetre out of line, was heart-shattering.

Then one woman began to sing. “Lean On Me, when you’re not strong...” By the time of the chorus, all had joined in, as they cleaned up and made their mess shipshape.

“That's family, right there,” says Recruit (OMA) Kato, during her “reflection” address to families and friends of the 91 recruits of Basic Common Training intake 17/01 at their family church service at Devonport Naval Base on 19 March. “And never before had we known the importance of perfectly symmetrical towels!”

The BCT church service at St Christopher’s Chapel was the first time in five weeks families and friends were allowed to see the recruits of BCT 17/01 since being dropped off at the base’s gates. With no phone communication, families had relied on letters, and scanning the Navy Facebook pages for pictures. The recruits were marched through the tunnel from Narraweek and held for instructions from the drummer and the staff. “Look sharp, you’re seeing your families! Yes, you’re allowed to smile!” A crisp, short march to the chapel and the waiting families, and then the long minutes of hugs and tears – and plenty of smiles.

During the service, four recruits were invited to give reflections on their five weeks. OMA Kato described the first day as “deer in the headlights” moments. “From the nerves, excitement, anticipation and shock prior to entering the gates, to just straight shock in the space of about three minutes. Our eyes were as wide as dinner plates.”

Top of page: Recruits march to St Christopher’s Chapel.
Above: Recruit (OCSS) Shaun Jenkins hugs his family outside the chapel.
Recruit (OMA) Kesia Coutts says the church service was the day everyone looked forward to. “We’ve learnt a lot, ate a lot, done a lot, but not slept a lot. From 0515, wakey-wakey, to bed at 2200 – if we’re lucky.” She says the recruits learn to stay calm and keep going. “My favourite parts are watching everyone help each other, as a team. We could accomplish things we never could have done as individuals, and each time it brought us closer together. You know you always have your oppo’s back.”

Recruit (OWTR) Cory Lister says it was a very, very tough five weeks. “That first day was one of the hardest in my life, but it set me up for what was to come. It’s been my mates, my new military family, who supported me, who kept my chin up.”

Top of page and left: Recruits OSA Ripeka Te Pana, OMT Daniel Kauika, OET David Gilvray and OHSO Laura Blundell are the Colour Party, parading the White Ensign.

Above: Recruit (OMA) Kesia Coutts delivers her reflection.
Recruit (OCH) Kawana Marsden, his throat hoarse from his In Charge duties during the march, says everything that was new, was now routine.

“If you aren’t running, you’re marching. If you aren’t marching, you’re sprinting. Everything is done for a reason. It betters yourself, makes you more professional. We’ve pushed each other, driven each other, and learnt to have each other’s back.”

Initial Training Officer Lieutenant Commander Dean Bloor agreed it had been a “nervous and diverse” group of trainees who arrived five weeks ago. He says the recruits have now completed the “Lead Self” programme, one of seven programmes in their course. “Lead Self requires the individual to accept responsibility of self leadership. Leadership is 24/7, whether socialising, on leave, or outside of work hours.” Today they wore their ceremonial uniform for the first time. As well as learning how to wash, iron and maintain it, “they need to understand the responsibilities that come with the uniform. It not only represents today’s Navy, but those who have gone before them.” He told the recruits there were many more challenges to come. “Wake up in the morning ready and focused to tackle the next stage.”
1. TE KAHA’s XO, LTCDR Tuijo Thompson explains to CDF what happens at the “DC Huddle” during a major DC Exercise. 2. TE MANA sailor OCSS Sian Davis is promoted to an Able rating with ACSS Anaheirerewini and Operations officer LTCDR Paddy Baker doing the honours. 3. Trust is all around during a Trust Falls evolution with the BCT 17/01 intake, as they catch recruit (OSCS) Blake Hansen. 4. TE KAHA’s Command Warrant Officer Lionel Jamieson with Warrant Officer of the Defence Force Danny Broughton aboard TE KAHA during a visit by Chief of Defence Force Lieutenant General Tim Keating during Exercise OCEAN EXPLORER. 5. BCT 17/01 recruit (ODR) Israel Davis, New Plymouth, smiles as he takes in instructions from the staff at Tamaki Leadership Centre during Shakedown week. 6. TE MANA sailor OET Nathan Thompson breaks into a smile as he is promoted to an Able rating by acting Commanding Officer CDR Jon Beadsmoore and CPOET Andrew Drysdale. 7. POET Ihaka Matairangi practises his archery during a 2017 Invictus Games training camp at Burnham Military Camp. 8.
ACSS Mihai Vasile stands with other recipients of the Royal New Zealand Navy Long Service and Good Conduct Medal during a presentation by the Deputy Chief of Navy at HMNZS PHILOMEL. 9. CDR Simon Rooke, CO of HMNZS CANTERBURY, hosts General Tom Middendorp, Netherlands Chief of Defence, in March. 10. POMT(L) O’Neil, POMT(P) Lusty and POMT(L) Rowley being awarded their Systems Management Certificates on board HMNZS WELLINGTON. In attendance are CDR Metcalf (Fleet Marine Engineer Officer), the Engineer Officers of OTAGO and WELLINGTON; LT Owen and LT Ogle, and CPOMT(P) Dunn (WGN). 11. More promotions to Able rates on TE MANA, in the front row, ACSS Javier Doorbar, ACSS Elenoa Tabudravu and ACSS Nicole Bancroft. Joining them for the photo are ACSS Trent Ogden and ACSS Erin Apii.
This month we commemorate the centenary of the award of the Victoria Cross to Lieutenant Commander William Sanders, the only New Zealander to have been awarded this highest honour for valour in a naval action.

Sanders was born in Auckland in 1883 and grew up desiring a life at sea. He got his chance in 1899, joining the coastal steamer, KAPANUI as a cabin boy. In 1902 he joined the Union Steam Ship Company’s APARIMA. There he gained his first ocean-going experience. He then served for a time in a government steamer before joining sailing ships involved in the trans-Tasman timber trade.

At the outbreak of the First World War he volunteered for the Navy but for reasons not clear he was not accepted. In April 1916 he was in London and volunteered for naval service and was commissioned a Sub Lieutenant in the RNR. After officer training, he volunteered for service in the Q-ships. In 1916 the Royal Navy was desperate to combat the attacks by U-boats on Allied merchant shipping and sending out armed decoy vessels codenamed Q-ships was their
response. Sanders joined the sailing vessel HMS HELGOLAND (Q7) as both First Lieutenant and Gunnery Officer.

While serving in HELGOLAND he took part in two actions against U-boats and soon gained a reputation for his coolness under fire. Sanders was then given command of his own ship, the schooner HMS FIRST PRIZE (Q21), a captured German merchant ship. FIRST PRIZE was commissioned on 25 April 1917, and left port for her first operation that very night.

In the evening of 30 April PRIZE encountered U-93, which was headed back to Germany. The U-boat was at least twice the size of the PRIZE, she had a top speed of 17 knots, and even submerged she was faster than the schooner was on the surface. The U-boat’s two 100mm guns had a greater range than the PRIZE’s pair of 12-pounders. Sighting what he thought was a defenceless merchant ship the U-boat commander chose to open fire and close on what appeared to be a sitting duck.

The German captain was in for a rude shock. Showing matchless courage, Sanders held his fire for 20 minutes, all the time enduring the continuous German shelling, and at the same time encouraging his men to stay calm. Not until the U-boat was less than the length of a football field away, did he give the order to open fire. The schooner engaged her foe virtually at point blank range and shell after shell struck the German. During the action, the U-boat commander and two of his men were blown overboard and taken prisoner.

It was almost dark by the time the PRIZE ceased fire, and the U-boat appeared to be sinking and on fire. Both Sanders and his captive agreed that the U-93 had sunk. They were wrong. With skilful damage control and seamanship, the boat’s first lieutenant managed to get the badly damaged U-boat back to Wilhelmshaven despite the fact that it could not submerge. The U-93’s safe arrival was the beginning of the end for the PRIZE, for all on board had a good description of the British Q-ship.

As for the PRIZE, she was also in danger of sinking after the firefight with, amongst other damage, one of her diesel engines shot to pieces and the second would not start. By a stroke of luck, one of the German prisoners was a diesel mechanic and he managed to get the good motor running. Slowly the PRIZE got under way, and she made slowly for Queenstown, in southern Ireland.

While PRIZE was being repaired Sanders was called to the headquarters of the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, who offered him command of a destroyer, a patrol boat or any other suitable ship. For reasons he apparently kept to himself, Sanders declined, a decision that almost certainly sealed his fate. Unknown to him, the Germans knew his ship and were out to get her.

By 27 May, the PRIZE was back on patrol and on June 12 in action again, exchanging fire with an unidentified U-boat. It was an inconclusive scrap but during the action Sanders’ right wrist was hit by shell splinters. Although he made light of his wounds, there were signs the strains of combat were beginning to tell. Letters home to his father make it plain that constant patrols, little time in harbour and the fact that he had a bout of pneumonia were making life almost intolerable. But there was some joy, for the London Gazette of 22 June announced he had been awarded the Victoria Cross. Early in August, Sanders applied to the Admiralty to be relieved of his command, “owing to overstrain, the result of special service in which he is engaged”. His request, sent on 3 August, got a good hearing and the reply, “A relief will be sent”.

Before this news reached Milford Haven, the PRIZE was on patrol again, and on 13 August encountered the UB-48. Once more there was an opening flurry of gunfire with neither side suffering serious damage. The commander of the U-boat submerged his boat and bided his time. Early the following morning, he fired one torpedo at the Q-ship and missed. His second shot, 20 minutes later, found its mark, and the PRIZE blew up in a sheet of flame. There were no survivors.

The sinking ended a short but brilliant naval career. In fifteen months Sanders rose from Sub-Lieutenant to Lieutenant-Commander, and awarded the Victoria Cross and the Distinguished Service Order. Sadly he did not live to receive his decorations.

The Victoria Cross (VC)

Instituted in 1856 by Queen Victoria as the premier award for gallantry, the British Victoria Cross was awarded to all ranks. Replaced in NZ in 1999 by the Victoria Cross for New Zealand.

Below: Sanders poses besides damage to PRIZE, after her victory over U-93.
A woman on target to join the Navy has used a competition prize to confirm she’s on the right track.

In November Kelsey O’Brien, 27, Auckland, won the NZDF’s International Naval Review social media competition, with her “selfie” judged the best sent in during the Ships’ Open Day. Her choice of prize was to have a tour at Devonport Naval Base last month, focusing on supply and logistics, and warfare officer training.

Miss O’Brien, an executive assistant, says she applied to join the Navy last year for an officer intake, and was in the final stages of selection when she was told she had won the social media prize. She had been doing the Force Fit training with other officer hopefuls, and they had decided to spend the INR Ships’ Open Day together. “I wanted to learn more about the fleet. I read a lot, but hadn’t had the opportunity to see it. I had never been on a ship.”

When Defence Public Affairs told her she could choose her prize, she jumped at the chance to see how the trades and professions she was eyeing up worked at the base. “The Navy has always stood out for me. The trade I’m interested in is supply and logistics. The coordination of the disaster relief at Kaikoura was interesting to me. It happened all at once, and it really came together.”

She likes the fact the Navy has a significant fleet, and one that is about to improve with the Government’s commitment to new ships and equipment.

Miss O’Brien was able to bring three other Force Fit friends, Rebekah Stevens, Brittany Glanfield, and Leon Cooper, who were also on the recruitment track.

“It was an awesome day. At the start of the day, I saw a lot to give me more to think about in terms of a warfare officer role. But as soon as I got to the Navy supply depot, I started buzzing like a kid in a candy store. I saw how it really delivered on the Navy purpose. Seeing how that worked, in the flesh, was the best part of the day.” She was able to see how it worked on the ships, with a visit to HMNZS OTAGO. “Talking to a supply officer there, and seeing what she did on a day-to-day basis. By the end, I knew I was on the right track.”

The day had one more upside: she received a phone call to say she had been accepted to go before the Officer Selection Board, the last step before being confirmed for an officer intake.

“This was a great build on the recruitment programme I’ve been on. Seeing the trade was invaluable. This wasn’t about social media; it was filling a need for me as a recruit, finding out what was right for me.”
Cadet Warrant Officer Tayla Wong-Lithgow is the 2017 recipient of the Chief of Navy Scholarship. The scholarship was established in 2001 to support serving Sea Cadets in their first year of study. In WO Wong-Lithgow’s case, this means $5000 towards her first year of engineering studies at the University of Auckland.

WO Wong-Lithgow, who serves out of TS BELLONA in North Shore, Auckland, was out sailing with her unit as part of the Auckland Anniversary celebrations when she got the news. “I was really excited to hear,” she says. “I told my unit CO and my previous unit commander.” Now 18, formerly of Carmel College and based in Dairy Flat, she has been with the unit for six years.

Asked what it was about Cadet Forces that prompted her join, she says she had been looking around for another extra-curricular activity to do. “Something where I could meet a lot of people, and get involved in something interesting. I wasn’t particularly outgoing.” She says joining the Cadet Forces has helped her become a lot more confident. “As well as meeting lots of people, it’s being put into leadership positions, and the courses you go on, to learn leadership skills. And it’s being surrounded by other people who are leaders, and you can follow their example.”

Above: Cadet WO Tayla Wong-Lithgow outside the Navy chapel in Devonport with Warrant Officer of the Navy WO Steve Bourke, Chief of Navy RADM John Martin, Deputy Chief of Navy CDRE David Gibbs and Maritime Component Commander CDRE Jim Gilmour.

Clockwise from top left: Kelsey O’Brien gets an important phone call regarding her recruitment hopes. From left, Rebekah Stevens, Brittany Glanfield, Kelsey O’Brien and Leon Cooper. LT Troy Gordon, CO of HMNZS ROTOITI, shows his guests around his ship.

Miss O’Brien says her family thinks she will be good in a navy career. “If she’s going to do something, why not something exciting, is their view. There’s leadership potential, skills, it’s potentially a life-long career. So they’re excited. That, and I’m not moving far away.”
Getting made redundant in a foreign country and having to sing on the streets for money. You’d hope things get better from there.

It did for Able Musician Rebecca Nelson, singer with the Royal New Zealand Navy Band, who will lend her voice this year to the solemnity and emotion of the commemorations at Passchendaele in Belgium, having previously sung at the Somme and twice at Gallipoli. This year also marks her third album, Poppies and Pohutukawa.

In 2009 the Christchurch-born singer went to the UK and Ireland with her boyfriend Todd (now husband), as a “normal New Zealand thing” of seeing the world and temping for funds. “But we hit the recession. We literally got off the plane in Ireland and the customs officer said: ‘What are you doing here?’” The pair got administration jobs, but three months later they got a phone call. All the temps were axed. So Nelson hit the streets and got singing.

“I had dabbled in busking when I was in Christchurch,” she says. “I kind of knew what to do. And it’s a profession in Europe.” The manager of classical musical group The Priests spotted her, and asked if she would like to be their guest soloist for a tour around Ireland. Singing Pokarekare Ana, she learned what it was like to perform with an orchestra.

The pair also tried their luck in London but found it “too cut-throat” to get a break. They returned to New Zealand when their visas ran out. Rebecca toured with New Zealand classical “crossover” singer Will Martin in 2010. They moved to Nelson after the Christchurch earthquake in 2011, where she recorded her first album, Pure Imagination. “That helped take me to my next step, seeing what worked.”

In 2013 they were living in Auckland and Nelson was busking again. She was trying her luck on Queen St when someone suggested she head over to Devonport. “My husband had got a job at a Devonport bank and I thought, well, I could go and annoy him.” It was a good move; custom was good, particularly the cruise ship passengers. What she didn’t realise was the Royal New Zealand Navy Band’s musical director at the time, Lieutenant Commander Owen Clarke, was among the crowd. “He had come down several times. He approached me, asked if the band could play while I was singing.” Afterwards, he asked if she would like to go on tour with the band, as a guest soloist. “I had no idea he was auditioning me. I was having heaps of fun.” She was hoping he would ask her to join. “It was never on my radar [singing in a military band], joining the Navy. As a kid
in Christchurch, I saw the army band and thought, wow, that’s pretty cool. But they were musicians. I was a singer. I never thought of the potential, until I was in front of them.”

LTCDR Clarke did ask her to join. “When I first walked in, I was so nervous. They are just incredible musicians. I’m very, very lucky to be with them. I’m a reservist, I get called in for any kind of work they require me to do.” She calls the band “her family”.

The following year, AMUS Nelson went to Gallipoli with the band, to sing the National Anthem. She had sung the anthem at All Black matches, and knew about pressure, but this was different. “I was worried about the emotion. Standing there, the historian telling us everything, I thought, holy crap, this is extremely intense. And then on the day, seeing a lot of grown men show emotion, seeing military people let their guard down. It was the hardest anthem I’ve had to sing.” She says she knew “how to put the wall up” when she repeated the journey in 2015. “You are there to do your job. There’s a time and a place to show emotion, and it’s after. It’s hard.” Her 2014 experience inspired her to produce Reflection, a self-produced and crowd-funded album.

Last year she performed at the Somme centenary commemorations. She will go to Belgium this year for the Battle of Passchendaele centenary. “That’s huge for me.” A relative on her side of the family lies over there. “I will be among where he walked.”

2016 was a particularly busy schedule, with her Ryman Healthcare National Tour of rest homes, which fitted well with her favourite song genres and her sense she should have been born in the fifties. “It’s so much fun. We just have a big party. We sing all the songs they grew up with, songs that are meaningful to me. Danny Boy, Ave Maria, my first ever busking song.” She then switches to war songs, including those of Dame Vera Lynn. “She’s a huge inspiration to me. It was such a tough time for people [in wartime]. The music helped them.”

And, in a 2016 year that ended with a collaboration with group Sol3 Mio and Hayley Westenra at festive concert Christmas in the Vines, she signed with Sony Music. Her latest album, Poppies and Pohutukawa, launched on April 7. The album’s title is the name of a poignant war song she sung at the Somme in 2015; in fact, all the songs in the album are ones she has done for commemorations. “The album is a tribute to war, a tribute to New Zealanders.”

AMUS Nelson says she has found her niche as a singer. “I’m very passionate about doing this work, representing New Zealand in the field, putting on the uniform – and understanding why you put it on. Being in the NZDF isn’t about holding a weapon. Everyone has a job, everyone is different, and we do it with respect and pride.” She says every musician is trying to work out who they are as a person. “This is what I’m meant to be doing. I’ve found my place in the world now.”
New Zealand’s 1955 defence posture underlined the importance of interoperability between the RNZN and RAN. Australia was at this time committed to its new carrier, HMAS MELBOURNE, with a modern, jet air group. MELBOURNE would need air defence support, and so the Admiralty had encouraged the NZNB to accept the recently modernised cruiser ROYALIST. The RAN’s own plan to modernise their cruiser, HMAS HOBART, was unaffordable – if the RNZN could operate ROYALIST it would be the ideal hot-war escort to MELBOURNE.

While some in the NZ naval staff wanted to acquire Type 12 ASW frigates as replacements for the Loch-class, the British argued that ROYALIST was the better option. ROYALIST had been modernised for operations in atomic war conditions and equipped with the latest air search and gunnery control radars, along with a new electronic fire control system. Even the Bofors guns were the new “STAAG” mountings, with individual fire control radars. ROYALIST was the only Dido-class cruiser to be so modernised, but the same radars and fire control were installed in the new Type 41 and Type 12 frigates, and similar radars in the Tiger-class cruisers. ROYALIST was, in fact, a first-rate modernisation.

BELLONA was sailed to the UK in late 1955, and in July 1956 ROYALIST was accepted by the RNZN. (There had been some weeks delay, as Captain Peter Phipps would not accept ROYALIST from Plymouth Dockyard until he was satisfied that everything had been set to work correctly.) ROYALIST worked up with the British Mediterranean Fleet, and so was on the spot as the 1956 Suez crisis developed. The RN wanted ROYALIST as the primary air defence ship ahead of its carrier task force, but at the last minute the New Zealand government refused permission for the ship to take part. ROYALIST was ordered back to escort the supporting tanker force, much to the disappointment of our sailors who were a well worked-up team and confident that theirs was the best cruiser in the fleet.

As it happened, one night with the tankers ROYALIST detected some fast moving contacts, which may have been Egyptian torpedo boats. Our ship opened fire with starshell and the contacts quickly moved away. Diplomatically, the contacts were assessed as migrating flamingos!

The Suez Crisis led to the blocking of the Suez Canal, so ROYALIST sailed to New Zealand via South Africa, arriving in Auckland in time.
for Christmas. Subsequently the cruiser undertook six deployments to the Far East Fleet (under the ANZAM arrangements, but also in support of our SEATO commitments). She also made many New Zealand port visits and undertook Vice-Regal Pacific Island tours. As well, Royalist visited Pearl Harbour and ports along the US and Canadian west coast, undertaking “defence diplomacy” tasks with success.

ROYALIST had a high public profile; she was modern (“an atomic-age ship”) handsome and, tactically, a valuable fighting unit. The RNZN had retained the pale blue-grey paint scheme (adopted for the Coronation Fleet Review) and so was nick-named by the USN as the “baby blue battleship”. Tensions in South East Asia grew as Indonesia chose to “confront” the new nation of Malaysia – which linked the former British Borneo colonies with Malaya and Singapore. “Confrontation” became an undeclared war and the British and Commonwealth Far East Fleet was constantly on the alert for Indonesian naval incursions. ROYALIST played her part; the fleet was centred on British aircraft carriers and their defence against Indonesia’s Soviet-supplied aircraft was paramount.

ROYALIST’s last deployment was in 1965 and she sailed for New Zealand from Singapore on Trafalgar Day (21 October) that year. The ship was overdue for a major refit – her last had been in 1960, while talk of a replacement ship was already in the air (the frigate WAIKATO was under construction in the UK, but a fourth modern frigate would be needed to replace the cruiser).

On 1 November, as the ship passed the Solomon Islands, some corroded condenser tubes gave way and salt water contaminated the boiler feed water. The on-watch engine room crew failed to isolate the contamination and it spread throughout the plant. The boilers were shut down and the ship was forced to drift without power. A British survey ship took ROYALIST under tow to prevent the cruiser drifting towards land then HMNZS LACHLAN arrived with stores, mail and to take up the tow. A chartered tug finally took over the tow towards New Zealand.

All the while the ship’s company were hard at work, opening up the boilers and all the steam valves to clean out and decontaminate the plant. By 11 November they had steam up on one boiler; the cruiser dropped the tow and under her own power steamed into Auckland on 17 November.

For the ship’s company it was a proud achievement; they were the only ones who knew what an arduous task they had all shared in – to essentially refit the whole engineering plant at sea in the tropics with no assistance.

But in New Zealand there was a political storm; the international embarrassment of having the nation’s flagship breakdown was huge. The ship’s Engineer Officer was court-martialled, but subsequently found not guilty of dereliction of duty. The cruiser was decommissioned (only a few months earlier than planned). To fill the gap in front-line ships, arrangements were made with the RN for the loan of the frigate BLACKPOOL.

ROYALIST’s career had ended in public embarrassment, but that should not overshadow the ship’s real achievements. She was a valuable fighting unit and well equipped for her time; for nearly 10 years she represented the RNZN and our nation well both in tactical naval terms and in diplomatic profile. ROYALIST had served us and our allies well during a critical decade.
On 10 March, 1917, the New Zealand Shipping Company’s SS OTAKI refused to surrender to the armed merchant ship SMS MOEWE, firing on the German ship as it fled. Although OTAKI caused damage to MOEWE, she was eventually outgunned, and Captain Archibald Smith ordered the crew to abandon ship. The captain went down with OTAKI and five crewmen were killed in the engagement. The survivors were picked up by MOEWE and transported to a prisoner of war camp.

Captain Smith was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross, after being made a lieutenant in the Royal Naval Reserves in 1919 (see Navy Today March issue).

The ceremonial event at Ōtaki College on 10 March included a two-person naval catafalque guard in front of the sculpture, with a large Navy contingent present, including Chief of Navy Rear Admiral John Martin and Maritime Component Commander Commodore Jim Gilmour. Others to attend were Otaki MP Nathan Guy and representatives from the Returned Services Association, the Merchant Navy Association, New Zealand Shipping Federation, the British High Commission and the Germany Embassy.

About 12 hours later a commemoration was mirrored at Robert Gordon College in Aberdeen. Captain Smith was a former Gordonian, as was a 14-year-old crewman on OTAKI who was killed. The two colleges have a reciprocal scholarship agreement.

Above: The Royal New Zealand Navy contingent pose beside the SS OTAKI memorial. The sculptor, Matt Gauldie, is on the left.
Dame Patsy said the crew would have been well aware of the dangers they faced. “A ship in port is a safe ship, but that’s not what ships are built for,” she said. “Their worst fears were realised when they encountered MOEWE. We can only imagine what ensued: the fear, the chase, the despair as the OTAKI began to sink. Today we remember all those who risked their lives on ships in World War I. This memorial is a reminder of the links that bind us both to our past and our links across the seas.”

Ōtaki College principal Andy Fraser acknowledged the Merchant Navy as “New Zealand’s fourth service, forgotten by many and remembered by few”. He invited the guests to return to Ōtaki College annually. “Those violent sounds of gunfire have called us to Ōtaki College. This is a peace for which the cost has had to be paid from men and women willing to put themselves in harm’s way.” He said he hoped stories such as OTAKI’s would be insightful to his students, in demonstrating “the nature and character of being the best you could be”.

Former NZDF official artist Matt Gauldie, an Ōtaki resident, created the sculpture after being approached by former Chief of Navy David Ledson, also of Ōtaki. “David knew me, knew my work, so we got together with Andy Fraser,” Gauldie said. The bronze sculpture, weighing 90kg, comprises 20 pieces welded together. It represents SS OTAKI and those lost, but also represents a passage or journey through life for students of the college. “It’s always nerve-wracking when they unveil it – you’re thinking, ‘God, I hope it looks okay’,” Gauldie said. He said he felt tears welling when the students performed a haka shortly after the monument was revealed.
RESERVES STEP UP FOR CHRISTCHURCH

By CPOMT(P) R Comer, RNZN, HMNZS PEGASUS

Watching the fires rage out of control on the 6pm news brought back similar feelings of helplessness as yet again residents of Christchurch faced desperation and despair. When the state of emergency was declared and the Military was called into service there was no hesitation to provide assistance, no matter how small, to those affected.

HMNZS PEGASUS, a close and enthusiastic reserve unit, mustered and provided hands (including two RNZN regular force personnel) to the civil defence effort, under command of the police force. Our duties were clear: to maintain order and provide assistance and reassurance alongside the police to any affected residents on the hills.

Various cordons across the Port Hills were established with the combined military and police forces stationed on each. It must have brought back earthquake memories for so many of the locals, as the convoy of army trucks rolled down the roads.

With regular reassurance patrols of the residents close to the fires and managing the cordons themselves, all personnel were busy in some way, with just the odd stop for a coffee or a slice of cake baked from the appreciative locals to keep us going.

The Mobile command centres were a hive of activity and seeing the police and fire service working together and throughout the night gave us an appreciation on how tough their job really is.

Being so close to the damage the fires caused, and seeing it first hand, it was very lucky that even more houses weren’t affected. The men, women and pilots who battled these fires did an outstanding job and they should be all applauded for their mighty efforts. Our thoughts go out to fellow serviceman Steve Askin on his ultimate sacrifice doing what he could do to save his city.

Serving the people of Christchurch in their time of need was a proud moment for us, showing that we are always there for them, with not just experience in various trades but the courage, commitment and comradeship to step up, drop everything and be the best we can. The PEGASUS motto of “Not for one’s self but for one’s country” rings true in us all.

Above: The reserves of HMNZS PEGASUS stepped up for the civil defence effort during the Port Hills fires.

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Left: Fire fighter Lieutenant Oli Barnfather of the New Zealand Army fights an underground hotspot on the Port Hills of Christchurch.
Over the next few years, Defence personnel will start to see improvements to the places where they work, live and train as the biggest ever regeneration of our camps, bases and training areas gets underway.

In August 2016 the Government approved a $1.7 billion programme of investment to upgrade Defence buildings, infrastructure and facilities over the next 15 years.

Initially this investment will focus on health, safety and compliance measures, and some old accommodation facilities will start to be replaced at NZDF camps and bases. Planning for major works has started and around 2020 work will begin on some of the bigger projects in the pipeline.

Most of the capital investment will go to upgrading operational facilities in Auckland, Manawatu and Canterbury and, as a result, NZDF’s oldest buildings and facilities will be replaced with modern, high quality amenities that are safer, fit-for-purpose, multi-functional and able to support our future capability.

The aim is to build an integrated estate that will accommodate a rapidly changing world and new equipment, giving us future options and choices.

Some of the projects are already underway but many are still in the development stage. For our Navy some of the larger projects planned include:

**DEVONPORT NAVAL BASE**

The immediate shortage of on-site car parks is a base-wide problem for personnel and also impacts on the local community. A low-rise multi-storey carpark will be built in the South Yard and over time more car parking will be provided in the North Yard. Parking will be provided for service and trade vehicles in areas where most needed.

A new facility will be constructed to enable the wash down and undercover storage of small boats like RHIBs close to the small boat training area on the Base.

Currently there is very little clear space on the waterfront adjacent to the wharves, and this constrains the temporary transfer of equipment and stores when ships are arriving or departing. A new dedicated ship loading area will be developed that will address this issue.

Calliope Wharf West and Calliope Wharf South will both be extended to the west and strengthened. A new mooring dolphin will be added near the east end of Calliope Wharf South.

Monowai Hill and Calliope Road will over time transform to be an accommodation and personnel support precinct, with existing houses, single living accommodation, medical centre, crèche and wellbeing centre.

A community engagement programme will ensure the local residents and businesses are aware of these developments and the on and off Base implications from their construction, especially regarding traffic movements and environmental issues.

The Defence Force is currently reviewing the impact of coastal sea level rises on future development opportunities at Devonport Naval Base. It is possible that the majority of functions in North Yard and Ngataringa Bay will be relocated to other locations at an appropriate time.
In stark contrast from a cold wintery experience last September, the current Limited Service Volunteer (LSV) Course got a reminder of how exhilarating and wild the New Zealand outdoors can be. 107 personnel from Youth Development Unit (South) including LSV Company and staff found themselves completely cut off in the middle of multiple SH7 road closures during the recent wildfires in the Canterbury high country, sparking HQ JFNZ emergency response activity to ensure the safe and timely extraction of the Company.

Officer Commanding YDU South, Lieutenant Commander Grant Boore, says these situations highlight the exciting and varied nature of YDU. He coordinated the emergency response established when the bush fires effectively isolated the LSV Company during the latter stages of their final field exercise, Exercise KIA KAHA. “For a brief but exciting time the Youth Development Unit (South) became the focus of attention at HQ JFZ as the Joint Forces operational support team swung into action. The fact that the entire Company of 107 personnel was safely evacuated under our own transport arrangements and safely deployed back to Burnham Military Camp during such an emergency is a testimony to the training and professionalism of the YDU(S) staff.”

Chief People Officer Debbie Francis, also a keen advocate of the work of YDU, noted her surprise and then pride in seeing one of her “Units” featuring so prominently in the daily HQ JFZ Operations Brief. Mrs Francis visited YDU(S) immediately following the Hanmer Springs fire and performed the duties of Reviewing Officer for Bluelight Course 01/17. Mrs Francis remarked to LTCDR Boore during her visit that “the professionalism and commitment of the YDU staff on the ground during a serious incident with over 100 personnel trapped within a major fire cordon is a great example of the core values of the NZDF”.

In support of youth development initiatives established in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Education, YDU operates to provide the life skills, motivation, learning, training and vocational options that will allow youth to confidently and successfully establish their place within and contribute to New Zealand society.

In order to carry out this mission YDU conducts three courses pitched to different demographics of NZ youth:

- The Bluelight youth life skills courses are a one-week motivational course for 14-18 year olds and operated on behalf of the Bluelight Community Organisation and in conjunction with NZ Police.
- Service Academy courses are run in support of the MoE School Service Academies who provide an alternative vocational path in the final year of schooling. Many of the students on these courses are seeking a career in the NZDF.
- Limited Service Volunteer courses provide a six-week NZDF-provided course for 17 to 25 year olds who are assessed by MSD as being at risk of long term unemployment. The objective of LSV are to enhance the self-discipline, confidence, cooperation and respect values in these young people in order for them to successfully enter the NZ work force or gain further education.

**THE HEAT IS ON FOR LIMITED SERVICE VOLUNTEERS**

While the Youth Development Unit is all about motivating young New Zealanders, its staff need motivation too. That was on the agenda for the YDU during their conference in Burnham over 23-27 January, the third conference in seven years. Command Warrant Officer Jason Keno said the intent of the conference was to bring the staff together to focus on their role and enhance unit identity. “One of the things we identified in the Census was people not being identified for their work,” he said. “We got them together to bring a bit of esprit de corps. The Chief People Officer [Debbie Francis] gave them a huge pat on the back.” The week included workshops, compliance training and team building activities. Retiring Commanding Officer, Commander Dave Casey, was farewelled after handing over to the new CO, Wing Commander Tua Atkinson. A formal dinner was held at RNZAF Wigram Museum, with gold medallist Dick Taylor as guest speaker.

WO1 Keno said 2017 would be a busy year for the YDU. “Our Auckland-based unit will deliver three LSV courses, five Blue Light courses and train 26 Service Academies. The Burnham-based unit will deliver five LSV courses, five Blue Light courses and train four Service Academies. Both units will positively influence approximately 1800 trainees.”

**THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT UNIT**
The Invictus Games is about strength, courage, comradeship, facing challenges and being the best you can be, no matter what you have been through. In fact there are many more words that can be used to describe the power that is the Invictus Games.

Following a number of selection camps over the past six months the 2017 Invictus Games team has been named. It comprises of 25 strong individuals who optimise what it is to be a sailor, soldier and airman in the New Zealand Defence Force, both currently serving and veterans. The wider training squad consists of close to 40 individuals, all very inspiring people.

The Invictus Games is will take place in Toronto, Canada this year from 23-30 September, the largest and longest Games yet. It will comprise of 600 wounded, injured and ill active duty and veteran men and women from around the world. In total 17 nations will compete in 12 adaptive sporting events.

NZDF Team captain Jason Pore (ex Army) said the Invictus Games is a place where everyone can be equal and where everyone shares common ground.

“The Invictus Games unites all three services with one common goal – the rehabilitation of its soldiers through adaptive sport.

“Adapted sport offers the opportunity to achieve success in a very short time period, to use this success to build self-confidence and focus on possibilities instead of dwelling on what can no longer be,” he said.

Pore said he is very proud to be the team captain and hopes to develop a strong sense of purpose within the team this year.

“The mana I feel at being chosen to lead this team is immense. We are all warriors, brave warriors and have come together to celebrate our strength and resilience, and to remind ourselves and the world that we will not be forgotten,” said Pore.

Royal New Zealand Navy Lieutenant Dan Crawford said to him the Invictus Games is about showing that no matter what you can still achieve your goals.

“I see competing in the Invictus Games as a way of proving that there shouldn’t be any restriction on somebody just because they have a medical diagnosis.

“The only change to my health is that it is now a known condition opposed to the unknown, and the only impact to my health is a great resilience and determination to succeed,” said LT Crawford.

The team is indebted to their families whose ongoing support has not only helped in their recovery, but allowed them to continue to work as valued colleagues who actively contribute to our Defence Force, and to those people we serve.

Pore said he “strongly believes that the road to recovery is within the biggest support group and that is Whanau”.

Our team could not participate without the generous support of so many, in particular that of our key sponsors – Auckland RSA, Christchurch Memorial RSA, Fulton Hogan, BLK, Offlimits Trust and the Fallen Heroes Trust. Fulton Hogan Workforce Development Manager Kenny Didham said “Our sponsorship of the Invictus Games Team is about supporting brave and courageous people who have served their country at home or abroad, and helping them to achieve their goals while working through their own personal challenges”.

The team’s journey can be followed on:

InvictusGamesNZ
NZDFInvictusTeam

Top left: POMED Aaron Gibbs practises his tennis swing.
Top right: POET Ihaka Matairangi gives Jason Pore support in his rowing training.
Below: Damien Nepata tries to get around ACWS Paulette Doctor.
THE NAVY SPORTS AWARDS FOR 2016 WERE ANNOUNCED AT A DINNER AT NGATARINGA SPORTS COMPLEX IN DEVONPORT ON 3 MARCH.

The awardees were:

**RNZN Sports Excellence – WODR Brendon Johnson**
Selected for the New Zealand Tag team which won 3rd at the Tag World Cup in 2016. His team placed third at the Nationals.

**RNZN Sports Person of the Year – ASTD Deena Puketapu (pictured)**
ASTD Puketapu was selected for the New Zealand Open Mixed Touch Team who later participated in the Trans Tasman series in April last year. She has represented NZDF in Netball and Basketball. ASTD Puketapu also represented Auckland at the National Rugby Seven’s Tournament.

**RNZN Team of the Year – RNZN Services Men’s Basketball**
The team won the inter-service final away from home; this was the first time in at least 20 years. All of the Navy men’s starting team were selected for NZDF team.

**Manager of the Year – CPO Julie Campbell**
CPO Campbell was selected to manage the North Harbour Under 12s Elite Touch Representative team. She worked tirelessly to ensure these young men and parents were organised and ready for all tournament games.

**Coach of the Year – Mr Andrew Charnley**
Mr Charnley during 2016 coached the following teams; RNZN Inter-services Men’s and Women’s Softball Team, NZDF Women’s Softball Team, North Harbour under 15 Softball Team, East Coast Bays Senior Men’s Softball Team and NZ United Softball Men’s team.

**Civilian Sports Person of the Year – Mr Vic Weeks**
Mr Weeks won the Inter Service Individual Golf Championship tournament held at Waitetama Golf Club in April 2016. Additionally, he had various successful golf achievements through the RNZN Golf Society as a member of the Waitetama GC and individuals in the North Island.

**Civilian Administrator of the Year – Mrs Nicky Gibbs**
Mrs Gibbs has been the Treasurer for the RNZN RFC for several years. For the year of 2016, her husband could no longer play due to injury however; she stayed on as the Club Treasurer as no one else stepped forward.

**Administrator of the Year – POSCS Barrymore Waerea**
POCS Waerea is the RNZN Rugby Football Club (RFC) Vice President and involved with the managing and coaching the RNZN RFC Doggies.

**RNZN Living Without Limits: Adaptive Athlete of the Year – CPOMED Amy Baynes**
CPOMED Baynes was nominated as one of Navy’s representatives for the NZDF Invictus Team and was selected to attend the Invictus Games in Orlando 2016. Amy won the Silver Medal in the Road Cycling Time Trial, Silver Medal in Road Cycling Criterium, was the top female New Zealand Archer Open Division, she competed in wheelchair rugby and made the Shotput finals. These results meant Amy was one of the most successful NZDF athletes at the Invictus Games in 2016.

**KIWI BOOSTS BRIT HOCKEY TEAM**
Sub Lieutenant Maddy Win, currently serving at HMS SULTAN in Gosport, Hampshire, was selected for the Royal Navy Senior Women’s hockey team, representing the Royal Navy at this year’s UK Armed Forces Inter-Service Hockey Tournament at HMS TEMERAIRE, Portsmouth on 7-8 March. SLT Win attended several selection training camps where she represented the Royal Navy in a training match against a very competitive Fareham Ladies HC team, with the Navy eventual victors. SLT Win’s hard work, determination and good hockey skills led not only led to her selection but resulted in her making the starting XI at this year’s Inter-Services competition. Sadly, this year’s Inter-Services wasn’t to be the Navy’s year in what was a competition against players of a high calibre. SLT Win will remain at HMS SULTAN for another 18 months, and it is hoped that she will gain more Royal Navy Hockey caps before returning to New Zealand, with an Inter-Services win in her pocket.

**SOFTBALL RIVALS AND FRIENDS**
By MID Casey Allott
The annual Inter Service Softball Tournament was held in Trentham, Wellington on 14 – 16 February, hosted by NZ Police.
The first round started with both the Navy men and women playing the Air Force, but both teams were unfortunately defeated. Defeat seemed to be a recurring pattern during the week as both the Navy teams came very close, but never managed to win a game.

Tuesday, 14 February, was Rookie Night, when new players raced to complete the Police Force Obstacle Course. The Navy men tied in first place with the Police after a hilariously intense battle. At the end of tournament, the Army won both the Men’s and Women’s competition after consistently demonstrating fantastic softball skills.

Perhaps just as importantly, the Navy men won the Best Sportsmanship award, which is a reflection of the team’s positive attitude and friendly demeanour.

Overall, the Softball Inter Service Tournament was a fun week which allowed healthy competition between the services and encouraged people to create and strengthen friendships. Inter Service Sport is an opportunity that is unique to the NZDF, allowing you to create friendships and build teamwork, which will serve you well in the future. If you are interested in playing Softball and want to have a fun experience, I highly recommend you sign up for next year’s team.

TO FIND OUT MORE: Contact Coach Andrew Charnley, 0272920685.
A CRUCIAL DATE

Having joined the RNZN as a Seaman Boy 2nd class on 4 February 1954 (30th seaman boys), then promoted to Seaman Boy 1st class on 25 July 1954, I then had to wait out my time to be promoted to Ordinary Seaman at the age of 17 years and three months (3 months accelerated advancement). However, out of the blue on 1 January 1956 the Navy decided to change my rating from Seaman Boy to Junior Seaman and do away with the Seaman Boy rating altogether. At the same time as I can remember they did away with the officer rank of Warrant Officer (thin ring and addressed as “Mr”) and promoted lieutenants to lieutenant commanders. I made Ordinary Seaman on 17 April 1956, being the first person to be promoted in the ROYALIST.

The Seaman Boy rate had a long history in the Navy and was the foundation for many sailors who rose through the rates and ranks to become leaders of the RNZN. It was the rate I enjoyed most as you were always learning new skills from a long list of more senior rates who had many years of service.

How did I get the name of George? On our first day at Tamaki we were mustered outside the regulating office and RPO Savage was passing along the line asking each person their name. When I said my name was Bruce he looked at me and said in a loud voice, “you do not look like a Bruce, you look like George”. 29 other fellow seaman boys heard this comment and from then on everyone called me George.

Bruce Graham (George) Rogers, NZ 15031

READING THE ODE OF REMEMBRANCE

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE PART OF THE LAST POST SERVICE AT PUKEAHU WAR MEMORIAL IN WELLINGTON?

Every day at 5pm, a Last Post ceremony is conducted in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior at the Puakehu National War Memorial. The service, which lasts approximately 7 minutes, incorporates the lowering of the two New Zealand flags, the playing of the Last Post, the observation of one minute’s silence and recitation of the Ode of Remembrance in both te reo Māori and English.

The Last Post ceremony has been conducted daily since Anzac Day 2015, and will continue to Anzac Day, November 11, 2018.

Individuals and groups are encouraged to participate in these ceremonies, with the roles of the bugler and ode reciter open to any member of the public.

You can find out more at www.mch.govt.nz/last-post.

If you wish to read the Ode of Remembrance in either English or te reo Māori, please email commemorations@nzdf.mil.nz with your name, email address, contact phone number, available dates and whether you wish to recite the Ode of Remembrance in te reo Māori, English or both.

MAU RAKAU

Nominations for the Mau Rakau wananga (Level 1, 2 and 3) are now open to all male NZDF personnel for 2017. This is an opportunity to learn the Taiaha art style of Te Kore enabling the mana of Ngāti Tūmatauenga, Te Taaua Moana, Te Taaua a Rangi and Te Ope Kaatua to be maintained during ceremonial occasions. For more information contact Marae Educator Mr Steve Bethell (0276686419).

DO YOU HAVE A DATE?

A book is being compiled of when things happened in the RNZN as a 75th Anniversary project. It will record such events as when we wore khaki uniform, when wartime HMS Cap ribbons were phased out, when beds replaced hammocks in HMMNZS PHILOMEL, and the various incarnations of HMMNZS TASMAN and much much more. Perhaps you have a memory of a particular event in a ship in which you were serving. Like when OTAGO’s kapa haka party performed at a San Diego Padre’s baseball game; or when ENDEAVOUR played the USN at rugby in the snow at Scott Base. Please send details of your date in the history of the RNZN. Diary@gmail.com for consideration for inclusion.

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DIDO-CLASS HISTORY

Historian Gerry Wright is seeking personal stories from former crew of HMMNZS BLACK PRINCE, BELLONA and ROYALIST, to add to manuscripts being compiled on the three cruisers. Contact Gerry at gerrywright@xtra.co.nz.

RNZN ELECTRICAL, RADIO ELECTRICAL & WEAPONS ELECTRICAL REUNION

16-19 June at Tauranga RSA. Those wishing to attend please contact Maurice Mitchell, PO Box 9352 Newmarket, Auckland 1149 or email alarm@xtra.co.nz

ENGINEERING BRANCH REUNION

10-12 November 2018. Info Graeme Matheson Rangiora RSA 82 Victoria St Rangiora 7400 Phone 03 3137123 and 03 3136645 (Home) email rangiorarsa@xtra.co.nz and gmatho@xtra.co.nz or Bill Lochrie New Brighton RSA 21 Mafeking St New Brighton Christchurch, phone 03 3889059 email bill.lochrie@xtra.co.nz

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Getting the flu jab will keep all hands on deck.

A/POWTR Kylie Rains

The flu vaccine not only reduces your risk of getting sick, but also prevents you passing the flu on to work colleagues and course mates, your family/whanau, housemates, and even the locals in places you could deploy to.

It’s safe, effective and cannot give you the ‘flu’

So roll your sleeve up to protect yourself this winter.

Military personnel, get yours at your Defence Health Centre.

NZDF Civilian staff, keep an eye out on ILP for details of your onsite clinic location and timings.