



Trafalgar 17.pdf



Comms 50th.htm

NGAPONA EX MEMBERS ASSN – LONGCAST

- 8 September 17 – Navy Club Lunch at the Remuera Club
- 15 September 17 - Old Salts Lunch at Birkenhead RSA
- 17 September 17 - Northland Lunch, Bay of Islands Yacht Club, Waitangi
- 24 September 17 – NZ National Armed Forces Day
- 6 October 17 – RNZN Communicators 50th Anniversary, Navy Museum
- 20 October 17 – Trafalgar Day Lunch at Te Atatu RSA
- 20 October 17 - Old Salts Lunch at New Lynn RSA
- 17 November 17 - Old Salts Lunch at Titirangi RSA
- 15 December 17 - Old Salts Lunch at Orakei RSA

Hi Folks

IMPORTANT

You need to register **now** for the Comms 50th Anniversary and the Trafalgar Day Lunch.

SHIPPING ACTIVITY

What is happening?

On 31 January 2017 the USS Antietam a guided-missile cruiser, ran aground off the coast of Japan, damaging its propellers and spilling around 1,100 gallons of oil into the waters near Tokyo Bay, a major anchorage for commercial shipping.

In May, the USS Lake Champlain, also a guided-missile cruiser, collided with a South Korean fishing boat in the Sea of Japan.

In June, another guided missile destroyer, the USS Fitzgerald, collided with a Philippine-flagged container ship, the MV ACX Crystal, off the coast of Yokosuka, Japan, a busy commercial shipping traffic region around which close to 400 ships pass daily.

On Monday, the US guided-missile destroyer USS John S McCain collided with the Liberian-flagged tanker Alnic MC in Singapore's territorial waters.

The reasons these collisions occurred will make interesting reading indeed.

Interesting facts:

Singapore is located along one of the world's busiest waterways, with close to 1,000 ships anchored there at any given time.

A ship calls at Singapore port every two or three minutes (24/365) — a total of around 130,000 ships a year.

This makes Auckland seem very quiet!

HOW BIG ARE THEY GOING TO GET?

Hong Kong's Oriental Overseas Container Line named the world's largest containership, **OOCL Hong Kong** on 12 May at a christening ceremony at Samsung Heavy Industries yard on Geoje Island. OOCL Hong Kong has a length overall of 399.87m, a breadth of 58.8m and a designed draught of 14.5m.

French shipping group CMA CGM plans to build nine of the world's largest container ships at two Chinese shipyards, the China Daily newspaper reported on Wednesday. Shanghai Waigaoqiao Shipbuilding Co confirmed that it and its sister yard HudongZhonghua Shipbuilding (Group) Co, had received a letter of intent from CMA CGM for the ships, which would be capable of carrying 22,000 20-foot equivalent unit containers (TEU), the newspaper said.

CNS #10

Rear Admiral Richard Everley Washbourn, C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E. – CNS June 1963 – September 1965

Royal New Zealand Navy - Chief of Naval Staff & First Naval Member

Richard Everley Washbourn was born at Nelson on 14 February 1910. He was educated at Nelson College and entered the RN by special entry from New Zealand in 1927. After spending eight years aboard HMS *Erebus*, HMS *London*, and HMS *Diomedea*, he spent 1936–37 specialising in gunnery. In 1938 he was posted to HMS *Excellent* and in 1939 to HMS *Achilles*. For his part in the engagement at the River Plate Rear Admiral Washbourn won the D.S.O. After three years' service on *Achilles* he transferred to HMS *Anson*. The final two years of the war he spent at the Admiralty Gunnery Establishment. In 1950 he became Executive Officer on HMNZS *Bellona* for two years, Commander Superintendent of HMNZ Dockyard, Devonport, and Deputy Director of Naval Ordnance, 1951–52. After a year in command of HMS *Manxman* he was appointed Chief Staff Officer to Flag Officer (Flotillas) in the Mediterranean, 1954–

55. He next spent two years as Director of Naval Ordnance and a year in command of HMS *Tiger* before taking up the position of Director-General of Weapons for the Admiralty (1960–62). In 1963 he was appointed Chief of Naval Staff, New Zealand. He died in 1988.

The following is an excerpt from a letter from Lieutenant Richard Washbourn to a friend in England shortly after the Battle of the River Plate on December 13, 1939.

“My Dear Bill,

The Hun was under the usual delusion of the decadence of the Royal Navy and came on at us for the first 10 minutes, which was just what we wanted to get into good effective fighting range within our cannon. Thereafter, when we showed no sign of conforming to his expectations and bolting from his undoubtedly superior force, he turned around and bolted himself, and never again showed any inclination for a fight. We engaged him hotly, having the superior speed, for nearly an hour and a half. Poor old Exeter, having the bigger guns and therefore being the more dangerous foe, received the benefit of his attention mostly for the first three-quarters of an hour, and she was unlucky. It was gratifying to hear that she was still afloat at the end. I didn't for a moment expect to see her alive.

There was something of a thrill of excitement. I think that is only natural. She [Graf Spee] looked very fierce and most menacing through my optical instruments. I have a very clear picture of her fixed in my memory.

Her hull is just above the horizon, waterline still down - a great grey shape twisting and turning and making smoke and surrounded by the white columns of water thrown up by our broadsides. Her great 11-inch guns belching forth a brilliant red flash followed by a thick opaque black cloud of smoke. It is all very interesting and impersonal. There is no hatred of the other fellow at all. It is a game of great skill, for high stakes, and one in which courage and resolution play a big part. About 20 minutes after fire had been opened we were straddled by the 11-inch and the short shells burst on the surface of the water and peppered this ship pretty thoroughly from truck to waterline.

There were a few casualties ... on the upper deck, the AA [anti-aircraft] guns crew ... and the bridge was penetrated by a splinter or two. One made a couple of holes in the captain's legs and then went on and shattered the knee of the Chief Yeoman of Signals. Up in my little box, we were unlucky. We had more than our share. There was a hellish din, and I remember crouching down and nursing a head streaming with blood. An undamaged officer ... passed me up a bandage which permitted me to make running repairs. I wasn't as dead as I had first surmised. A couple of light scalp wounds, and a small hole in the left shoulder. I didn't notice this latter until sometime later when it dawned upon me that the growing stiffness in that part of my anatomy might be worth looking into. Looking round me, I found the right side of the control tower was a shambles. It resembled a slaughterhouse on a particularly busy day ... Five of my crew were out, three for keeps. Two who were actually in physical contact with me were very dead. Two within a couple of feet of me were shockingly wounded. Six splinters in all had come inside. We are packed so closely in that compartment that we have to go inside in the right order or it is impossible to find one's own position ... It is comforting to realise there is no suffering whatsoever. The dead were dead before they knew anything had happened. The suddenness is merciful and so is the shock.

One youngster, just turned 18, found that the dead and very mutilated body of his predecessor was in the way and there wasn't room to shift him, so he sat on top of this unpleasantness and operated ... for the remaining hour of the action without batting an eyelid."

Later, a wounded Graf Spee disengaged from the battle. Washbourn wrote:
"She was utterly defeated, morally, and, probably materially too. It didn't look like that at the time and we were full of conjecture as to why she was bolting from us and what her plan was. We went in to polish her off but were disappointed. She blew herself up . We cleared lower deck and everyone came up and clambered upon every point of vantage to see the last of the old enemy. There was then the most amazing spontaneous expression of feeling, and relief, I ever hope to hear."

The CO of HMS *Achilles* was Capt Edward Parry who became CNS (NZ) in 1941.

An extensive collection of letters, diaries, documents, scrapbooks and photographs which belonged to Rear Admiral Washbourn is held by the Navy Museum.

Take care

Jerry Payne

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President

HMNZS Ngapona Ex Members Assn Inc

"There are good ships, and there are wood ships, the ships that sail the sea."

"But the best ships are friendships, and may they always be."

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