



Trafalgar 17.pdf

## NGAPONA EX MEMBERS ASSN – LONGCAST

6 October 17 – RNZN Communicators 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Navy Museum

13 – 15 October 17 – Service Women Reunion, Northcote, Auckland

20 October 17 – Trafalgar Day Lunch at Te Atatu RSA

20 October 17 - Old Salts Lunch at New Lynn RSA

10-12 November 17 - Armistice weekend at Cambridge

17 November 17 - Old Salts Lunch at Titirangi RSA

19 November 17 – Northland Xmas Function.

8 December 17 – Maritime Societies' Annual Dinner, Northern Club, Auckland

15 December 17 - Old Salts Lunch at Orakei RSA

Hi Folks

### REMINDER

The Memorial Service for Edward Levin will be held at the Pt Chevalier RSA on Saturday 30 September at 1130 hours.

If you have not registered for the Trafalgar Day Lunch at the Te Atatu RSA you must do so now. Registration form attached.

## **NEW DEPUTY CHIEF OF NAVY**

The exchange of a pounamu mere signified the handing over of a huge workload by Naval Support Commander and Deputy Chief of Navy, Commodore David Gibbs, to Commodore Mat Williams. CDRE Gibbs said it was a privilege to serve as DCN because of the opportunities it afforded and for the ability of the position to effect real and meaningful change, when he spoke at the Change of Command ceremony at Devonport Naval Base last month.

Speaking at the ceremony, Chief of Navy, Rear Admiral John Martin said:

“Over the last 20 months, David Gibbs has led the Naval Support Command and wider Naval family with a great skill and fine judgment,” he said. “As our DCN he has led it through significant challenges and at times he has executed his role above and beyond what we normally expect.

CDRE Gibbs was awarded a Chief of Navy commendation at the parade, reflecting his exceptional performance as the DCN.

## **SERVICE WOMEN REUNION 2017**

This Reunion will celebrate 75 years and is open to all women who have served in the Royal New Zealand Navy, the Royal New Zealand Naval Volunteer Reserve and Commonwealth Naval Forces. The reunion will be held 13th – 15th October 2017 at the Netball North Harbour Clubrooms, 44 Northcote Road, Northcote, Auckland. Please note this is not Labour Weekend. Please contact Donna Russell [donna23680@gmail.com](mailto:donna23680@gmail.com) or Carrie Hodson [carant@paradise.net.nz](mailto:carant@paradise.net.nz) for Registration Forms and further information on the Reunion.

## **HMNZS AOTEAROA CREST DESIGN**

The Navy has been getting heaps of great badge design entries for their newest, biggest ship, but have they got one from you?

Send in a design, which could be the one chosen for HMNZS Aotearoa and her crew throughout her career, and you'll also go into the monthly draw to win one of five Navy branded coffee mugs with your name printed on it. And that would be something to raise your glass to.

Visit [AOTEAROA.MIL.NZ](http://AOTEAROA.MIL.NZ) for details

## **CNS #14**

Rear Admiral John McKenzie, CB, CBE, RNZN

Chief of Naval Staff: December 1975 – December 1977

John Foster McKenzie was born on 24 June 1923 in Waiuku,. He was educated at Timaru Boys High School and St. Andrews College in Christchurch. He joined the Royal Navy as a special entry cadet in 1941 aged 17.

### **Special Entry Cadet**

Special Entry Cadets were established by the Royal Navy in 1914, to supplement the Dartmouth officer entry. Special Entry Cadets were open to the Dominions and between 1914 and end of the Second World War 23 cadets entered the Royal Navy from New Zealand, after selection by a board that included the Officer Commanding the New Zealand Squadron and often had the Governor-General as President. Following selection successful candidates would travel at their own expense to Britain. By the late 1930s training was undertaken in older warships moored at Portsmouth. But with the outbreak of the war Special Entry training moved to Dartmouth.

At that time a young man with professional ambition as a naval officer was more likely to see a full career in the RN, than in the New Zealand Naval Forces [which up until the Second World War had been in essence a cadre navy, focussed on ratings' training]. John McKenzie recorded later that he really felt that he had served his ties with New Zealand and did not expect to have the chance to return for a very long time, if ever. He had joined to be an Engineer, however on arrival in Britain in 1942 he found that the Royal Navy had no record of this and entered him into the Executive Branch.

After training, Midshipman McKenzie was sent to East Africa to join the cruiser HMS *Devonshire*; to join her he took passage in the flagship, the battleship HMS *Warspite*, and learning among other things to make naval Kye. He then served in the cruiser HMS *Hawkins* and in 1943 joined HMS *Quadrant* for his destroyer time. In *Quadrant* he took part in a U-boat hunt off Aden, and another off Zanzibar. He returned to *Hawkins* which in February 1944 was escorting a convoy including the troop ship *Khedive Ismail*. The Japanese submarine attacked and sank *Khedive Ismail*, with heavy loss of life including a large number of Wrens who were being sent to Ceylon. Two escorting destroyers detected and sank the *I-27*.

In mid-1944 John underwent his Sub-Lieutenant's Courses back in England. At the end of those, he volunteered for submarines, but with time to spare had three weeks at sea in Fairmile D MTBs in the Channel. Their primary role then was to use their high speed to create waves that would be directed over minefields where German 'oyster' mines [pressure mines] were laid; the boats would turn away at the last minute and the wave would roll ahead and cause the mines to detonate. After submarine training he joined HMS *Vitality*, which was a training boat for convoy Escort Groups. After VE Day he helped receive some 120 surrendered U-boats, before being posted to the still-building T-class submarine, HMS *Token*. With the end of the war in the Pacific work on the submarine slowed, but in 1946 *Token* was operational and sailed to Canada to work with the Royal Canadian Navy. However in 1947 the British government announced heavy defence cuts and *Token* went into reserve. The RNZN, however, was keen to recruit personnel and New Zealanders in the RN were an obvious target. The famous submariner Captain 'Shrimp' Simpson had just been appointed as CNS of the RNZN; John talked with him and decided to transfer to the RNZN.

### **RNZN Service**

He joined the RNZN as a Lieutenant on 21 July 1947. As a young officer his sea-going ships in the RNZN included HMNZ Ships *Arbutus*, *Hawea*, *Echuca* and *Bellona*. He was

First Lieutenant in *Arbutus* 4 October 1947 – 17 August 1948. He was then sent to Britain to commission the Loch-class frigate HMS *Lock Eck* as HMNZS *Hawea* 18 August 1948 – 31 January 1949. He then brought back *Hawea* to New Zealand 1 February 1949 – 20 September 1949. On 17 November 1949 he was posted to HMNZS *Maori* in London. He undertook the RN's Long Torpedo and Anti-Submarine Course in Britain from November 1949 to August 1951, this included sea time in the destroyer HMS *Crispin*. Given contemporary pronouncements from the USSR about massive Russian submarine building programmes, the RNZN—with six Loch-class frigates—placed a high priority on ASW.

On 19 September 1951 he was posted to the cruiser HMNZS *Bellona* as the TASO through to 22 January 1952 and he took eight months leave. On 6 September 1952 he was posted back to *Bellona* and served in her until 21 March 1953. On 22 March 1953 he was appointed the Commanding Officer of the Bathurst-class corvette HMNZS *Echuca* this was for a very brief period. He was then promoted to Lieutenant Commander and on 19 August 1953 he joined HMNZS *Pukaki* as First Lieutenant; he joined the ship in Singapore and served in Korea on patrols just south of the truce line, from 25 November 1953 to mid-February 1954. On 19 August 1953 he was posted to the Loch-class frigate HMNZS *Pukaki* as First Lieutenant [Executive Officer]. From 21 September 1953 to 28 September 1954 *Pukaki* was deployed in Southeast Asia during the Malayan Emergency for anti-submarine & anti-raider convoy escort if a serious war broke out as part of the ANZAM agreement. He was posted off the frigate on 31 January 1954 and returned to *Philomel*.

He qualified for the UN (Korea) medal for this service. He was then posted to Fiji as Director of Naval Operations with No. 5 Squadron RNZAF (Sunderland flying boats) based at Lauthala Bay. His job was to teach the RNZAF contemporary ASW tactics and procedures with the then new NATO-standard allied signal books. One of his tasks in this period was as the Liaison Officer to the conventionally powered aircraft carrier USS *Tarawa* [CV-40] and destroyer USS *O'Bannon* [DD-450] during their high-profile visit to Wellington to commemorate the Battle of the Coral Sea.

Subsequently he took command of HMNZS *Tui* on 1 March 1955, then HMNZS *Stawell* on 27 June 1955 (both *Tui* & *Stawell* were dedicated to the training of Compulsory Naval Reserves—the Navy's version of CMT). Posted to Navy Office as Director of Under Surface Warfare in March 1956, he had a key priority of establishing the requirements for the new generations of frigates, which were ordered the next year as HMNZ Ships *Otago* (F111) and *Taranaki* (F148). While in that post, he was appointed as an Honorary ADC to the Governor-General, July 1956 to June 1957. Promoted to Commander on 10 February 1959, he served for three years as the NZ Military Liaison Officer in Singapore. This was the final years of the Malayan Emergency, and Singapore was looking to independence, while tensions with Indonesia (and its Soviet-equipped armed forces) were growing. This period would have given him a clear understanding of the security issues across South East Asia at the time.

For any Executive-branch officer, a major sea command is always a goal; on 9 February 1962 he took command of HMNZS *Otago*, the new frigate's second Commanding Officer. He took part in JET62, a major naval exercise in the South China Sea before *Otago* became the Royal Guard ship for HMY *Britannia* during the 1962/63 Royal Tour. *Otago* steamed 4,000 miles from Lautoka to Port Chalmers. He recalled his pride on

being presented to Her Majesty the Queen, while *Britannia* was in Picton. However the Royal Yacht began to get underway while he was still on board; he then had a hasty motorboat trip to rejoin *Otago* even as his frigate was already weighing anchor to catch up with the rapidly departing Royal Yacht! Subsequently *Otago* sailed for Singapore via Pearl Harbour, where they undertook the RNZN's first frigate workup with the USN. He then relinquished command to return to the Navy Office.

On 30 November 1964, he was promoted and appointed Captain of HMNZS *Philomel*, the RNZN's shore establishment in Devonport, Auckland. On 1 January 1966, he was posted as Deputy Head of the New Zealand Defence Liaison Staff in London, and was subsequently appointed Head. This was an important posting as John had to oversee the tendering process for a new frigate (HMNZS *Canterbury* F421) and the loan of HMS *Blackpool*. His previous time in the RN and on his TAS course ensured he had a wide professional network. He spent 1969 studying at the Imperial Defence College in London (today known as RCDS) and returned to New Zealand in December 1969 to be the first Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Policy) under the new (joint) Defence Headquarters reorganisation. He was promoted to Commodore on 1 January 1970. As ACDS (Pol) he had to lead the background work for the 1972 Defence White Paper. That paper was important because New Zealand, along with the other allies, had pulled out of the Vietnam War while the British, after 'Confrontation', had withdrawn from Southeast Asia, leaving the new framework of the Five Power Defence Arrangements as our principal defence link with Malaysia and Singapore. The 1972 White Paper had to address the underlying reasons for New Zealand's professional peace-time armed forces and it was intended to explain New Zealand's defence policy and structure to the wider population. In 1972, he was appointed Deputy Chief of Naval Staff then after a year moved to Auckland as the Commodore Auckland (COMAUCK—today that role is filled by the MCC at HQ JFNZ). As COMAUCK he oversaw the despatch of the frigates on the protests against French atmospheric nuclear weapons testing at Mururoa Atoll. On 13 December 1975 [the anniversary of the Battle of the River Plate] he was promoted to Rear Admiral and became Chief of Naval Staff; he relieved Rear Admiral Edward Thorne. As CNS he had to grapple with significant personnel and pay issues, at a time when oil prices were rising and inflation was crippling the defence budget. He also initiated studies into what became the frigate replacement project; his immediate concern was to counter suggestions that all New Zealand needed was a Coastguard. During 1976 he was in the chain of command for the *Kin Nan* incident, when the IPC HMNZS *Taupo* was attempting to stop the Taiwanese fishing vessel. It was CNS who alerted the Air Force, while briefing the CDS to consult the Government. Ultimately Skyhawk cannon fire stopped the fleeing vessel. "Perhaps the best thing to come out of it was in fact that it demonstrated our willingness to act over foreign fishing infringements," he said in a subsequent interview. After two years in the post, the 'standard' posting in that role, he was relieved by Rear Admiral Neil Anderson and retired from the RNZN on 13 December 1977.

His naval career spanned the transition of the New Zealand Naval Forces from a small component of the empire's Navy to the distinctive national navy that the RNZN became in the post-war years. As an ASW specialist he was well fitted for command of our (then) new Type 12 frigates; with his experience in Singapore and the UK he was well prepared for the development of the 1972 Defence White Paper. By the time he was

promoted as CNS he had an extensive and well-rounded career, in which he had contributed extensively to the capabilities and standards of the RNZN. He died aged 89 in Auckland on 28 March 2013.

### **Royal Honours**

The OBE [Queen's Birthday Honours, 1962] as a Commander

Upgraded to CBE [Queen's Birthday Honours 1974] as Commodore

Awarded CB [Queen's Birthday Honours 1977] as Rear Admiral and CNS

### **WW2 Medals**

The 1939-45 Star

Atlantic Star with France and Germany Clasp

Burma Star with Pacific Clasp

Defence Medal

War Medal 1939-45

### **Post-WW2 Awards**

United Nations Medal – Korea

Korean War Service Medal

New Zealand Operational Service Medal

The Silver Jubilee Medal 1977

New Zealand Armed Forces Award and clasp

New Zealand Defence Service Medal (Regular clasp)

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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