

# HMNZS NGAPONA ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

## LONGCAST

- 16 February 18 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Manurewa RSA
- 18 February 18 – Northland lunch at Bay of Islands - 1230 at Kerikeri RSA
- 9 February 18 – Navy Club Lunch at Remuera Club
- 16 March 18 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Waiheke RSA
- 13 – 16 April 18 - HMNZS Otago and All ships Reunion, Poenamo Hotel, Auckland
- 15 – 18 June 18 – Greenies Weapons Electrical Reunion at Napier

Hi Folks

### **NGAPONA ASSN - MONTHLY LUNCH**

Our lunch last Friday was held at the Swanson RSA. Although numbers were down a bit it was an enjoyable gathering. This RSA has got to be the best value for money - three course meal for \$18, and the food is really good. Our next lunch is on 16 February at Manurewa RSA.

### **ANZAC 18 - TOUR TO HAWAII**

There is one spare seat on this amazing tour to Hawaii for Anzac Day 2018, 21-28 April 2018.

We are looking for a male to attend to share with another male. The cost will be \$4100.00. We may be able to offer a small discount for someone who can come at short notice but they must be able to pay in full now.

It is an amazing trip, so please ask friends or family members, not necessarily ex-military. Please advise asap if you have someone we could talk with.

Contact: Jill Thompson 09 836 5191 or 021 2744426. Email: [jillt.nz49@gmail.com](mailto:jillt.nz49@gmail.com) or Keith Ingram 09 533 4336 or [keith@skipper.co.nz](mailto:keith@skipper.co.nz)

### **OLPHERT REUNION**

Just a reminder that registrations for the 90th close February 1st. (Next week!)  
If you require a registration form then please email [olphert.reunion@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:olphert.reunion@nzdf.mil.nz) or you can contact Peter Arnold on 04 529 6821 during normal business hours.



### **NORTHLAND LUNCHEON - VENUE CHANGE**

Northland Luncheon - Sunday 18 February 2018, 1230 at Kerikeri RSA. Further information contact Jill Thompson 09 826 5191 or 021 2744426, Email: [jillt.nz49@gmail.com](mailto:jillt.nz49@gmail.com) Need to know the numbers attending by 13 February 2018 please.

### **A NAVAL CAREER IN THE EYES OF COLIN ROSS - Pt. 13**

January 1973 was the start of a two-year Mechanics training course. This was as near to an adult apprenticeship I guess and now being more focused on a future plus family responsibilities I was determined to make the most of it. There were five members on the course, three Marine Engineering and two Radio Engineering. The first year all five attended all the same subjects and did workshops together. In the second year the two radio guys did school subjects with us however they went off and did radio subjects instead of workshop. David Llewellyn and I had briefly served together on TARANAKI and also had done the same Advanced Engineering Course so knew each other. Scouse Billington I had never run into before but provided most of the laughs on course.

The course was fairly intense, especially the schoolwork. The first year for me was almost school revision as I had done most of the schoolwork before either in the fifth form at school or joining as an apprentice. One of the things I learnt from the first year is that I was capable of doing and remembering subject matter and perhaps I should have put more effort in at Secondary School instead of just attending for sport and eat my lunch, however hindsight is a great thing.

The workshop was a bit of a grind in the first year. Most jobs consisted of taking a piece of metal and turning it into something with the use almost exclusively with hand tools. How well I remember the hammer and chisel. You would start off with light taps and as the confidence grew so would the length of swing and resulting impact. Then, darn it, the concentration would slip or over confidence would strike and hammer would meet hand, Ouch! It would be then back to light tapping and the whole procedure would repeat itself.

We also had Marine Engineering. This really was just a more in depth teaching of what we had already learnt on our Basic Course and the Advanced Engineering Course. It also was more leaning towards the maintenance side of machinery as opposed to the former courses which were very much aligned to plant operation.

We also had PT and a little parade type training. Having been promoted to temporary Petty Officers at the start of the course we were also required to take charge of platoons for Training Division morning divisions. I think these were once a week at the time and didn't really ride high on our list of requirements or achievements. I think we got quite a few of the GI's a bit wound up with our casual ways, but then we were the Engineering Branch and we wanted to be a bit different and laid back anyway.

Towards the end of the year I was selected as captain of the Navy cricket team. I had continued playing cricket after joining the navy however it was an intermittent cricket career interspersed as it was with sea postings. It was both a surprise and an honour and an experience I thoroughly enjoyed. We played in the One Day One competition, which was the top One Day Grade in Auckland.

All of our games were played at Ngataranga Bay; this was some advantage as all teams enjoyed playing there. Unlike most other venues in Auckland there was only one game at the ground, so we weren't intermingling with fielders from other games. This helped the concentration and I believe made the cricket more enjoyable.

One of the teams we really enjoyed hosting was Cornwall. In their playing side they had one Wilson Whineray as well as a couple of former first class cricket players. When we knew they were the opposition we arranged a BBQ afterwards as we all enjoyed Sir Wilson regaling us with stories from the rugby past. As most people are probably aware as a former All Black Captain he was hugely admired and respected. Many the night we would be at the ground quite late all chin wagging with him and it was most noticeable that when Sir Wilson was in the talking chair the women would be paying attention.

During my time on course I also discovered the game of squash. Really enjoyed the short period of intense concentration and short explosive bursts of acceleration. Dave L and I played regularly and also were challenged by others. It was a really good lunchtime pursuit and certainly refreshed the brain before another period in the classroom. I always had the measure of Dave except after being in the mess for a couple of beers, I wondered why Dave was keen to shout and soon found out on the court, couldn't hit the darn ball and he cleaned me out.

At the end of the first year we sat five school certificate subjects, four of which I creamed but failed Tech Drawing. As you can imagine this could be disastrous for

completing the course. Unfortunately the other four class members had done tech drawing at school but I hadn't and I must admit I struggled. The instructor did not help this problem for me either. The Engineering Lieutenant spent a whole afternoon teaching third angle projection then came back the following week to inform us that wasn't third angle it was first angle.

The Schoolies we had for our school subjects were excellent. There was no reason for us to fail any of the school subjects, as it was virtually one on one teaching. I thoroughly enjoyed the schoolwork and their manner of teaching. It was rather ironic when in the second year one of the Schoolies taking us was actually a classmate from Secondary School. Was obvious that some went to school to learn and progress and others of us attended school but were there for reasons other than schoolwork.

In the second year we progressed onto machine tools, this made workshop far more interesting but it also meant that mistakes were not as forgiving. I had to go cap in hand at least once and start a machining exercise again after making a blunder, however that is the nature of life I have found, the best learning sometimes comes from a mistake whether it be yours or someone else's. The object is to learn from the mistakes and not make the same one again.

At the end of the second year we again entered exams. The most important one I guess was the trade exam. This was really challenging, as a combination of both fitting and turning with no help from Instructors and under a pretty tight timeframe. I was really pleased to get through this and not have to re do it as one of the other members had to. Also managed to pass Tech Drawing and three other school subjects so was pleased I was leaving the course with a completed tick.

We were promoted to Mechanician 3<sup>rd</sup> class, effectively a Temporary Petty Officer for a year to then be confirmed as a Petty Officer or a Mechanician 2<sup>nd</sup> class. There was an issue at the end of the course as we were going on leave early December but the top Engineering Mechanician had to come back to receive the prize at Fleet Divisions. To find out who would be required to come back we requested a meeting with our Divisional Officer.

Scouse Billington was sure he wasn't the man so it really was Dave Llewellyn or I. As soon as we asked the question at the meeting I knew it was going to be a short disappointing meeting as the Divisional Officer said straight away that it wasn't necessarily the person who had the top marks that received the award, I knew then that Dave was the person selected. I must admit I was deeply upset by this but took it on the chin and went on leave.

It was some years later that Tom Whutaira put me straight. He reckoned that some people were selected to succeed from the minute they walked through the entry gate. They would get the accolades and maybe the medals while the rest of us did the sea time and made the system work. I must admit it still rankles a little even forty-five years later.

So with the completion of the course we went on leave all knowing that we were going on the Petty Officers Command Course in January 1975. What was to happen after

that we were unsure but the three engineering types knew we would be posted to sea whilst the two radio guys were off to UK and courses for eight months.

During the two years on course the family of three became a family of four with the arrival of a baby boy in April 1974. As a side-line all three engineering types actually produced offspring so there is a lot to be said about spending time at home. Again it was a good time at Xmas, Kerry and I actually went to Wanganui for a couple of days to stay with friends and left both children in Thames with doting Grandparents. This was the first time we had been away on our own since our honeymoon so was a good break but we were both keen to get back to the children after an enjoyable week.

*To be continued*

Take care

**Jerry Payne**

[Editor@ngapona.org.nz](mailto:Editor@ngapona.org.nz)

021 486 013

Editor

HMNZS Ngapona 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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