

# HMNZS NGAPONA ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

## LONGCAST

16 March 18 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Waiheke RSA

24 March 18 - Navy Open Day, DNB

13 – 16 April 18 - HMNZS Otago and All ships Reunion, Poenamo Hotel, Auckland

14 April 18 – Book launch, ‘Sailors Against the Odds’ Ngataringa Sports Complex

20 April 18 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Onehunga RSA

15 – 18 June 18 – Greenies Weapons Electrical Reunion at Napier

Hi Folks

### **EX HMNZS PAEA HAULOUT**

I went up to Whangarei with Peter Goodwin for the weekend to give a hand with Paea's haulout. Considering that it is 7 years since she was last on the hard she is in surprisingly good shape. Most of the sanding and scraping has now been done, ready for the boat-builder to do some minor repairs before painting and antifoul. If you could spare a bit of time to give a hand reply to this email and I will give you Heather's number, or just call into the Norsand Boatyard in Fraser Road, Whangarei and have a look. (She now has two rudders - but that is another story!)



### **NGAPONA ASSN LUNCH - MANUREWA**

Our lunch last Friday was an enjoyable occasion although our numbers were down a bit. Two unexpected guests were Reece Golding and Doug Rowe, it was good to see them.

The next lunch is at the Waiheke RSA on Friday 16 March. This is always a good run, make sure you don't miss it.

### **NORTHLAND LUNCH**

I understand that the Northland Lunch on Sunday, organised by Jill Thompson and Margaret Mitchell was an outstanding success. The attendance was the best to date with 54 for lunch. It is likely that the next lunch will be held at a venue where Jill and Margaret can do the cooking.

### **FROM THE SICKBAY**

Ray Neithe, who is a staunch supporter of the HMNZS Ngapona Assn, recently had an accident and now has 3 broken ribs. All the best Ray, (and try not to laugh!)

## **REQUEST FROM EX HMNZS KUPARU**

Scott Perry, owner of Kuparu, is looking for some original life rings that he can put on Kuparu. Not after new, some pre loved ones would look more original.

## **THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF ARTIFICERS IN THE ROYAL NAVY**

An event to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Artificers in the Royal Navy is being held at the Guildhall in London on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The event is being organized by the Royal Navy Engineers Benevolent Society, the Fisgard Association and the Old Caledonia Artificer Apprentices Association. All artificer apprentices who did their training at HMS Caledonia and HMS Collingwood are eligible to attend, and at this stage with 650 attending, the event is fully booked.

8 ex-RNZN artificers are registered to attend the event, Basil Bainbridge, Jim Bremner, Boyne Drummond, Humphrey Ewens, Andy Francis, Bill Ingram, Dale Paretovich, and Bob Urlich, a good balance of steamies and greenies.

Humphrey, being the class of 1945 will be honoured with a seat at the top table, and Bob, now an Anglican Minister in Northland, has been asked to say grace at the beginning of dinner, so the Kiwis will be well represented during the proceedings.

The royal wedding and the FA Cup final are happening on the same day so it is going to be a very busy weekend in London. More information is on the website

[www.artificer150.co.uk](http://www.artificer150.co.uk)



## **MURUROA TEST VETERANS**

Calling all serving and ex RNZ Navy personnel.

The RNZRSA, Mururoa Test Veterans Association and Veterans' Affairs are conducting a pilot of forums. The purpose is to inform and enlighten Mururoa test Veterans of the progress being made towards research and entitlements available, and to discuss possible genetic defects and likely resolution to this possible outcome. They are also interested in learning of your possible exposure to toxic substances during service.

An RNZRSA Advisor/Advocate, Mururoa Test Veterans Association Officers, a Veterans Affairs Senior Case manager and RSA District Presidents and Support Advisors will be in attendance at each location.

The program is as follows:

- Napier RSA - 1pm Monday 26th February
- Gisborne Emerald Hotel - 1pm Tuesday 27th
- Tauranga RSA - 1pm Thursday 1st March
- Taupo RSA - 1pm Friday 2nd March

Everyone is welcome!

Please let your family members and friends know of these events.



## SAILORS AGAINST THE ODDS

"SAILORS AGAINST THE ODDS"  
(Memoirs of New Zealand Navy sport 1941-1980.)



*A reunion of past sportsmen and women of the RNZN.*

On Saturday April 14<sup>th</sup> at Ngataringa sports complex both Graeme Pearce (Ex-RP) and Jack Donnelly (Ex GI) will be launching their book. The book tells the story of sailors who participated in various sporting codes throughout the 1941–1980 era. They were a unique breed of human beings and so different from their civilian counterparts in that they were trained military personnel, highly motivated and knew the true value of “*esprit de corps*” Through their absence from family for long periods they became “*a family away from family*” and their ships were their “*home away from home*” They played sport around the world, pioneered sport in many countries in those early days, lived in cramped quarters and on a rolling platform, competed against highly rated state, city, towns, clubs, other navy and military teams.

The early history of sport in the RNZN has never been told and we believe that now is the time to ensure that those fine sportsmen and women are acknowledged and remembered before it is too late. In 1942 Navy sports clubs and teams began to be formed and from that year on they have always ‘*punched*’ above their weight, battled against the odds in a background of a never ending changing population in reference to drafts to and from sea.

Sport in the RNZN began at our shore establishments HMNZS Tamaki and Philomel where our dedicated Physical Training Instructors (PTI’s) instilled discipline, physical fitness, the importance of teamwork and sporting skills. At sea the PTI had to be innovative and ‘*think outside the square*’ in order to ensure that the ships companies were kept physically fit and motivated before they returned to harbour. Events such as volleyball, boxing, deck hockey, physical training circuits, organising ‘chub clubs’ and running around the upper-deck were just some of the daily activities carried out. The

navy sporting structure was also unique in that you had the opportunity to play for your division, then ship or establishment, club team, inter-services and if selected NZ Combined services.

The inspiration for both Graeme and I to write this book was the many ex and serving matelots who contributed articles, stories, anecdotes, photos and 'dits' they are the real authors of this book.

We are hoping that many of those who played, administered or were supporters of Navy sport during this period will attend. A full program of the evening will be promulgated in early March 2018.

If you would like to attend or would like to purchase our book just e mail Graeme Pearce, [pearcegc@xtra.com.nz](mailto:pearcegc@xtra.com.nz) Price of the book is \$29.95, registration closes on 20<sup>th</sup> March.

Jack Donnelly, WOGI (Rtd)  
Vice President Woronora RSL.

## **A NAVAL CAREER IN THE EYES OF COLIN ROSS - Pt. 17**

So ended 1975, a few short trips more about training and crew changes than deployments, then Xmas was upon us again. It had been a pretty full on year with a lot achieved. It was so good to get some leave in and wind down. Some people would not understand how difficult the first few days of leave are. Trying to sleep without the constant whine of air conditioning fans, people up and going on or off watch during the supposed silent hours, to go to bed and finally sleep for eight hours without being disturbed was bliss.

After Xmas leave the crew returned and as usual there were a lot of crew changes. All three Marine Engineering CPO's posted off and only two posted on, so very early on I was promoted to Temporary CPO. This was interesting, I had an on-board Unit Watch keeping Certificate, but what it meant in reality was I was actually watch keeping on the Warrant Mechanics Charge Ticket as he was the one that had authorised with the MEO my ability to watch keep on my own. I still had to sit the two three hour professional exams for ME Mechanician one and also pass an oral exam with the Fleet MEO.

So late January I sat the two exams and managed to pass that hurdle, then came the more daunting oral exam. I am not sure why oral exams always seem more daunting, maybe it is the face to face with a Senior Officer, however I managed to get through that. This meant that I now had my own Unit Watch Keeping Certificate but my CPO's

rate was not due to be confirmed until late 1976, I think it was December but can't remember if we had accelerated advancement.

The ship went into dock for its normal underwater refurbishment. The MEO, Lt Cdr Colin Dixon decided that as Mechanics were running the ship's engineering department then we needed to mark the occasion, so it was decided there would be a Mechanics Lunch, suitably held of course in the Engine room.

This was a good idea at the time until after a few beers one needed to go to the bathroom; it was a long trek from the Engine room to the dockside toilets.

Shortly after this celebration the MEO was posted to CANTERBURY so again the senior person changed at short notice, we also farewelled Yorkie, I must say that it was a privilege to serve with Yorkie, he was a mine of information and certainly was not afraid to challenge those of us under training. He had actually served on five different Y100 frigates so had a wealth of knowledge on the engineering plant and at times came up with novel shortcuts to get the plant operating efficiently again.

1976 was a different year with probably the highlight the ship being utilised as a troop transport to take the Army to Australia for an exercise. Whilst they were bashing around in the scrub for a fortnight we transited up to New Caledonia.

The Fwd. Chiefs Mess decided, as it was too expensive to go ashore we would organise a Banyan run to one of the beaches up harbour. We got permission to do this and off we went on the Ship's Whaler, weighed down by fifteen CPO's and food plus of course a few liquid refreshments. It was a great day, Cricket, Rounders, toss the caber, to name a few. BBQ lunch followed by swimming and of course a few bevs to correct the eyesight for sport.

All good days must come to an end, so we piled all our rubbish into the whaler and followed that with our tired sun soaked bodies. Off we go cruising back to the ship, we had to be back before sunset so we were pushing the envelope. Cruising along at full throttle, smoke billowing out the exhaust as usual and watching the engine temperature, as the old air-cooled Enfield engine didn't have a great reputation for reliability at the best of times. All of a sudden the boat ceased its forward motion, we picked ourselves up from the bilge and discovered we had run onto a reef. We still maintain to this day that the reef was uncharted and nothing to do with our slightly confused state.

Making sure we delivered the boat back to the 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant undamaged we decided we better have a look at the damage to the hull which of course would become very visible to all and sundry when the boat was raised. A quick discussion and it was decided that as John Pullin was a qualified diver then he deserved the job. So over the side goes JJ and comes up the other side to report that there were a couple of scratches but we could hurriedly repair them as soon as the boat was hoisted. So we had got away with a slight miscalculation in a course and the reef had only put a slight dent on our day.



The other thing discovered in Noumea was that you could buy demi-johns of rough red wine for chicken feed. So we took a collection and sent a representative ashore to buy up a few of the bargains. The Rep arrived back in a taxi and the Officer of the Day was on the brow so it was subtly suggested he may like to visit the opposite waist and we raced the demi-johns up to the mess. Rough red it was, very rough, but where there is a will there is a way. We discovered that if it was placed in the freezer it was almost palatable, so slowly it disappeared during the rest of the trip.

Whilst in Noumea we had found an issue with the main feed pump. The decision from NZ was that the pump rotor was to be flown home for repair whilst we were away. The only person that could be found to box it up was an Undertaker!! So we were all fired up to have a bit of a funeral farewell when it was removed from the ship. The MEO was obviously aware of this had arranged for it to be removed early in the morning so we were disappointed when we woke up to find the pump had already departed on its final journey.

We sailed from Noumea and as we had time still to wait before picking up the Army for return to NZ the Captain decided to have a couple of days anchored at The Isle of Pines, an expensive resort on one of the outer islands. This wasn't a bad idea until the crew discovered there was no leave but some of the Officers went ashore, talk about them and us.

We finally returned to Cairns I think to pick up the Army and sailed for NZ. This was pretty cramped condition for Ship Staff as the army bunked down in the Dining Halls at night and of course we struggled to keep up with the water consumption. Also on the way home we joined up mid Tasman with CANTERBURY and OTAGO whom were returning from an exercise off Sydney. There was a photo of the ships, which appeared in the Herald, and this was taken from an Orion aircraft.

Towards the end of 1976 it became really apparent that the RNZN was suffering a shortage of sea going personnel and TARANAKI was slowly losing their sailors to other ships in the fleet. We became really a training vessel for the latter half of the year. After Xmas 1976 this became really apparent as we were pared back to a bare steaming crew.

There were only two watch keeping CPO's left in the engineering branch. JJ Pullin and myself. These were long days of maintenance and when we went to sea for sea training one of us would flash up in the morning and then have the afternoon watch whilst the other would pick up the forenoon and then the dogs and the shut down on arrival back alongside. So this became a really challenging time for me and so I was quite pleased to be posted to OTAGO later in the year as at least she had a full crew.

Just before I posted, TARANAKI was all but tied up permanently tied up with lack of crew. We made a huge plywood padlock with YALE printed on the side and hoisted it up the side of the funnel. It was there for a couple of days before obviously someone in CAMAUKs office noticed it and the Duty Commanding Officer came motoring down the

jetty and in no uncertain terms demanded we remove it as the ship was not decommissioned.

So with heavy heart in a way I departed TARANAKI for the last time as part of Ships Company. Of all the ships I served on I always felt TARANAKI was special. It always seemed to have a happier closer-knit crew and was a pleasure to serve in.

*To be continued.*

Take care

**Jerry Payne**

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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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