

# HMNZS NGAPONA ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

## LONGCAST

13 April 18 - Navy Club Lunch, Remuera

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

25 April 18 – ANZAC Day

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

21 July 18 – HMNZS Ngapona Assn – Formal Dinner, Pt Chevalier RSA

Hi Folks

### **NAVY CLUB MONTHLY LUNCH**

This Friday at the Remuera Club. Starts at 1200.

### **ANZAC DAY PARADE 2018 - DNB**

You are invited to join with HMNZS NGAPONA on Anzac Day at HMNZS PHILOMEL memorial wall starting at 0730 through to 0830 to commemorate those who served. On completion there will be light refreshments served in the Vince McGlone Galley. Please advise your intention to attend by replying to this email so numbers can be finalised.

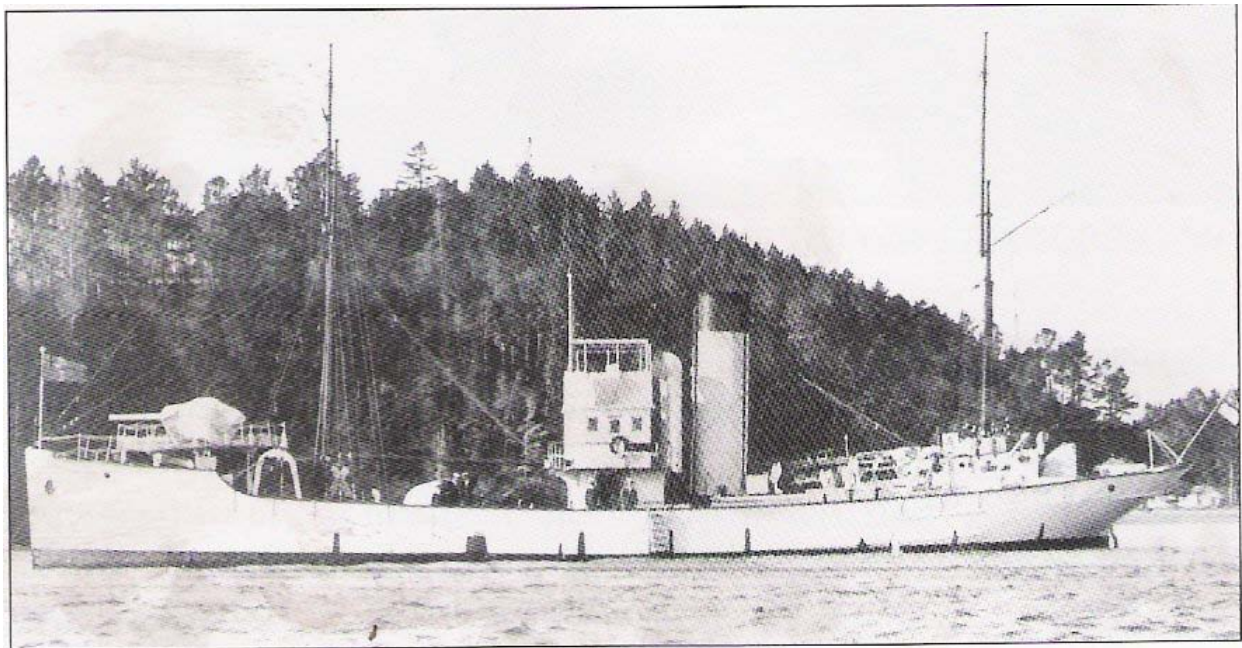
**I need names now so I can advise Ngapona!!**

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

On 8 April 1926 HM Trawler *Wakakura* (later HMS *Wakakura*) commissioned at Sheerness under the command of Lieutenant RA McDonald RN. Built in Canada in 1917 as the Castle-class minesweeper TR-1, she was transferred to Inverness after World War I and refitted for sale. TR-1 was sold to the New Zealand government for

£5,000 for use as a training ship for the new Volunteer Reserve Divisions at each main centre. Because of break-downs and sickness en route, the ship took nine months to reach New Zealand, and the cost had increased by another staggering £20,000 as a result.

Wakakura remained in commission throughout the Second World War and was sold to Tasman Steamship Co and converted to a refrigerated cargo vessel in 1947, and was scrapped early 1953. She displaced 530 tons standard, could manage 10 knots and was equipped with a 4-inch gun during World War II. Wakakura is a Mōri word which means "precious canoe" or "training boat".



HMS Wakakura

### **A NAVAL CAREER IN THE EYES OF COLIN ROSS - Pt. 24**

So at the beginning of September 1980 I boarded a plane for the flight to UK. Also on the course was Bulkhead McGibbon who had decided to take his wife. We flew by Qantas to Hong Kong and stayed there overnight before joining a British Airways flight from Hong Kong to London. This flight had one stop in Bombay for passengers and fuel. Unfortunately the transfer lounge in Bombay had burnt down so we had to remain on the plane while it was on the ground in Bombay, this made it a really long, uncomfortable flight and we arrived in London about 6am in the morning, pretty bleary eyed and tired.

We were met at London airport and taken to our hotel, this was a Friday morning and we were expected in NZ House for a briefing at about 10am from memory. We attended as detailed and met Edna who did all the bookings etc. and looked after our welfare whilst we were in UK. Also I think it was CDR Cootes who was the Defence Liaison Officer at the time. After the briefing we went to a local pub for a pub lunch and then the body clock was crying out for sleep so back to the hotel for some shuteye.

Kerry and I had friends that lived in Dartford, so I contacted them and on Saturday, Tom came in and I picked me up. Kerry had met Doreen when we first shifted to Glenfield. She had gone to catch a bus to Takapuna with the baby in the pram. The bus arrived but the driver was no help so she had to put the pushchair in the rack under the bus. Luckily Doreen was there with her two boys waiting for the bus and so Kerry gave Lydia to Doreen to hold while she sorted out the pram. And so on the trip in they struck up a conversation. Tom worked for Halls Refrigeration in Dartford and the parent company had just brought out a NZ firm and Tom had been sent out to oversee the company whilst it was in the throws of coming under the umbrella of the UK Company. So whilst they were here till 1974 the two families spent quite some time together.

Luckily as we were travelling out from the hotel we had to stop as a troop of Horse Guards were parading down the Mall, so that was a pretty good introduction to the ceremonial side of London, they were very impressive. We stopped off in Greenwich and had a look around the museum and a stroll around the park. Very relaxing and I can't say I was full of energy so really enjoyed the laid back day. Went out to Dartford and was great to catch up after six years. Doreen did extract a promise that the next time I was in UK I would bring Kerry. A promise that I broke as the future tale will expose.

On the Sunday we travelled down to Portsmouth. Bulkhead of course had to live ashore so effectively I was on my tod. Caught the ferry across to Gosforth and a bus out to HMS SULTAN the Engineering School where we were to be on course for six weeks. It was interesting to turn up there on a Sunday and nobody seemed aware I was coming, however found the CPO's Mess and the duty president arranged a room and all went well.

It was an interesting day, the mess was open for lunch and closed at 2pm and then reopened at 5pm. Of course because I talked funny they all made me welcome, I had trouble drinking the warm beer but over the next few weeks got used to it, I guess when in Rome do as the Romans do.

The first day on course was an eye opener. First off you go to breakfast and you are in a dining hall with about 150 Engineering Senior Rates. Unbelievable to sit with so many when you have come from a small Navy. Bulkhead & I also had our gold epaulets, the RN CPOs had red ones, so we were sort of an unknown level or rate. This became funny, Bulkhead bought a second hand car, Leading Hands and Stokers manned the main gate, so when we drove up they were unsure whether to salute us or what. So very early on we learnt that if we were going to the pub Bulkhead and I would sit in the

front and the RN Chiefs would get in the back, when we got to the gate the confused gate guards would just wave us through. The RN's thought it was great, they were off to the pub with no questions asked.

We found the right classroom in Watt Hangar, which was the diesel section. The Instructor was giving us the run down on the six week programme when one of the other Instructors came in and queried him as to had he returned one of the demonstration diesels to stores over their summer holidays. That created mayhem as it turned out that while everyone was on leave, someone had come in and disconnected the Perkins diesel engine and absconded with it.

The course was fairly intensive. One of the best things was they had a lot of teaching aids. They had a propulsion diesel set up in a module so you could carry out maintenance and then actually run and tune the engine after. One idiosyncrasy of the system was that because a lot of the course members lived up country as they said, they had a standing make and mend on a Friday so they could catch their transport home for the weekend. Also quite often on a Monday some of them returned late in the forenoon.

This was a bit disruptive, not so much on the Friday as we would retire for lunch in the mess and then visit one of the hotels later in the afternoon. But on a Monday when they were late although the course wasn't held up for them inevitably there would be a review of the material they had missed.

One of the other interesting things about HMS SULTAN was that the barracks were one side of a busy highway and the schools on the other side. There was a bridge over the highway, which everyone had to use, but CPO's could cross the highway. We felt that perhaps this rule meant we were expendable.

The other learning curve was there were a class of Submariners doing a welding course. They were regulars in the bar and it only took me one session to learn not to try and keep up with them. Man they drank like a fish out of water.

However the course was very interesting but as usual there was always an exam at the end of the course. We all were not looking forward to it as the notes we were issued made up one hugely thick book. However we managed to get through that. The six weeks went really quickly although I found the weekends could be long being on my own. I did manage to visit HMS VICTORY and one weekend with Bulkhead went down the coast and visited amongst other places the motor museum at Buellly.

Also one weekend I went back up to London and caught the train out to Dartford to stay with Doreen and Tom. David their eldest son was playing rugby for his school so we went and watched that. Everyone thought that me being a Kiwi I would be a rugby expert so cast my mind over the game and perhaps give them a few pointers. I must admit most of my rugby expertise was learnt in the stand, however you must front up and look or sound like you know what you are talking about and I did my best.

After the course it was a weekend in London then off we went up to Colchester. The plan was we were to be at the Paxman Training School for a month then off to ZF gearbox course in Friedrichshafen in Germany. While we were in London we caught up with Edna in NZ House. She informed us there was a problem with the course in Germany, which was a week later than the original planned date. NZ were planning to send us home early but Edna reckoned if we could come up with a plan for the week they may reconsider.

So Edna had made enquiries with Rolls Royce and we could have two days at Ansty with their gas turbine unit. This was at the time of the TARANAKI conversion project that was being discussed to convert her from steam to gas turbines, so it was really relevant at the time. This project was binned the following year. I suggested we could go down to Halls Refrigeration in Dartford and gave Edna Tom's details to get in touch. So that effectively filled in the week and NZ decided it was a worthwhile programme and so we were able to stay for the extra week and then complete the course in Germany.

So on the Sunday towards the end of October we caught the train up to Colchester and the next part of the Internal Combustion Engine experience.

*To be continued*



Divisions, HMS Sultan

It was announced last November that HMS Sultan in Gosport will close in 2025. Most of Sultan's functions will be transferred to HMS Collingwood in Fareham.

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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