

HMNZS NGAPONA ASSOCIATION INC

LONGCAST

11 June 21 - Navy Club Lunch – Remuera Club
18 June 21 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Prospect Hotel Howick (Howick RSA)
9 July 21 - Navy Club Lunch – Remuera Club
16 July 21 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at New Lynn RSA
24 July 21 – Ngapona Assn formal Dinner at Birkenhead RSA

Hi Folks

DEATH NOTICE

DINWIDDIE Michael Forrest (Dins, Mike) LRO RNZN X18536 crossed the bar 1 June 2021. Mike had unfortunately suffered ill health and pain for some time and is now at rest. A funeral service for Mike will be held at St Christopher Naval Base Chapel Friday 11 June at 1200 followed by an interment at Schapper Rock and retiring to the Birkenhead RSA for the wake on completion.

Mike joined the RNZN on 19 May 1965 and left on 2 December 1976. He served in TAMAKI, PHILOMEL, IRIRANGI, INVERELL, WAKEFIELD, COMAUCK, OTAGO and TUI.

Mike was an Associate Member of the HMNZS Ngapona Association.

MONTHLY LUNCH – 18 JUNE 21

The venue for the lunch this month has been changed to 'The Prospect of Howick' 78 Picton St, Howick. Large brick building in the main street.

The Howick RSA has temporarily relocated while the building on their current site is demolished and new club rooms are built.

NEW MEMBERS

A big welcome to our new members

Capt Phil O'Connell

Semi Tokaduadua

Teresa Cousins

Look forward to seeing you at our functions

NGAPONA ASSN FORMAL DINNER – 24 JULY 2021

Only a few places left – you will have to be quick

An invitation to attend the function is extended to all NGA Association members, this includes Associate Members, and all past and present members of HMNZS Ngapona and their partners/spouses.

The Ngapona Association is holding a formal dinner on Saturday 24 July 2021 at the Birkenhead RSA, Recreation Drive, Birkenhead, Auckland. The guest speaker will be RNZN's Chief of Navy, Rear Admiral David Proctor.

Tickets will be allocated on a first come first served basis. The cost of this function is \$50.00 per head. A cash bar will operate. There will be a buffet type meal of three courses. A highlight of the evening will be a performance by Able Musician Rebecca Nelson. It is also expected that a rum issue will be held.

As this is a formal occasion, appropriate dress with miniatures is expected.

For planning purposes, please advise Expressions of Interest by **replying to this email** giving the names of attendees and a contact phone number.

BATTLE FOR CRETE

This is the final of three parts of the experience of John Stuart Blackie ex Lt. RNVR in the Battle for Crete.

John Blackie is the father of Cdr Charles Blackie, past CO of HMNZS *Ngapona*.

“With Kipling's full company and two half ship's companies on board there was little room. The wounded were packed below, while the fit preferred to stay on the upper deck and fight the guns where possible. The next few hours were ones of miracles, horror, courage, sacrifice and supreme seamanship. Limited in speed and steerage, Kipling survived eighty-three bombs aimed at her. On many occasions she was enveloped in cascades of water from near misses, but the guns crews fought on although soaking wet and with eyes near closed with salt and cordite smoke. I watched in near disbelief as the black shapes of bombs fell around, some so close that I felt that I could catch one. The bombers screamed as they dived, the bombs whistled and as they exploded it sounded as though the side of the ship was being whacked with a giant drumstick. The ship lifted and lurched, throwing around those able to move and hastening the passing of the dying. Then there would be an almost uncanny quietness as the enemy aircraft left to refuel and rearm. Soon it would start all over again with a lookout reporting, " Aircraft in sight, Red 1600 Sir".

This time it must be the end, thought we all. But no, the time came when we were left alone, at last out of range. It was then that some semblance of clothing and food became the main concern. I was plodding around with gun "loading numbers" gloves on my feet and "flash gear" to keep me warm. I slept the night on the warm deck abreast the funnel. I awoke to find that the man I had slept next to was dead. I had wondered why my flippant question, "Quiet, isn't it?" was unanswered. He was the Second Engineer Officer of the Kelly. We spent much of the morning burying the dead. This was the traditional, body tied in a hammock with a practice shell at the feet, placed on a mess deck table, covered with the White Ensign and tipped over the stern into the sea to the plaintive call of the bosun's pipe and shipmates to attention.

As Kipling approached Alexandria, she stopped dead in the water, out of fuel. Surely this was not to be the opportunity for some lurking U-Boat to claim the prize that had been denied the Luftwaffe? Then, a net layer waddled out of Alexandria and supplied enough oil to see Kipling into port under her own steam. The Mediterranean Fleet meanwhile had been listening to the radio signals of Kipling's plight and had marveled at her escape. The C in C had ordered the fleet to "Clear lower decks" which meant that every man available had to muster on the upper deck of his ship and cheer and salute. Kipling, with survivors on deck, steamed the length of Alexandria harbour, through the entire fleet of great and small warships, being cheered lustily. I did not know at the time, what a very solemn occasion and honour this was. It was not until years later that many photographs appeared accompanying accounts of the Navy in WW 2 and on seeing one of Kipling proudly entering Alex., that I thought, "Well I'm damned, I must be somewhere in that photo!"

The Commander in Chief's Staff were greatly concerned at the massive loss of ships from the Fleet. The Mediterranean Fleet had lost, either sunk or seriously damaged, thirty-three warships in fighting around Crete. The prospect of even more losses continuing the evacuation of troops from the island, was, in their opinion, unsustainable. They advised the C in C, Admiral Sir Andrew Brown Cunningham to abandon the evacuation of the remainder of the Army still marooned on Crete.

Further losses could allow the enemy to gain complete control of the Med. They also spoke of the likelihood of the war being prolonged and without a well-supplied navy, Britain and her Allies would be unacceptably vulnerable. After some contemplation, with the Staff awaiting what would be a momentous decision, the Admiral said: "Gentlemen, it will take the Navy three years to build a new warship, it takes three hundred to build a tradition., The evacuation will continue. "

With the arrival of Kipling in Alexandria so ended my Crete experience. I took part in another eight major battle zones in H M Destroyers, ending in Indonesia in 1946. Historians have said that the delay caused to the German war machine. in Greece and Crete,

overwhelming the stiff resistance of the Allied forces, set back the invasion of Russia by three weeks, thus causing them to be overcome by the winter snows, before reaching their objectives."

Thank you Charles for sharing this with us - Ed

GUESS THIS COULD HAPPEN ANYWHERE

While Sri Lanka braces itself for a possible oil spill from a sunken Singapore-registered container ship, the vessel operator's chief executive on Thursday (Jun 3) expressed "deep regrets and apologies" for the impact that the incident has caused on livelihoods and the environment. The container ship X-PRESS PEARL was carrying 1,486 containers, including 25 tonnes of nitric acid, when it caught fire on May 20 off the west coast of Sri Lanka. It burned for 13 days before the blaze was finally put out on Tuesday.



LIGHT HOUSE OF THE WEEK – GABLE END FORELAND

Position: 38.31.5S 178.17.4E

Characteristics: FI W 15s

Range: 19NM

Structure: White metal tower

Gable End Foreland is a prominent headland on the north-eastern coast of New Zealand's North Island. It is located 30 kilometres northeast of Tuaheni Point (Gisborne) and 20 kilometres south of Tolaga Bay.

The headland was named by Captain James Cook on his first voyage to New Zealand in 1769. The name reflects the similarity of the weathered cliff to a house gable.

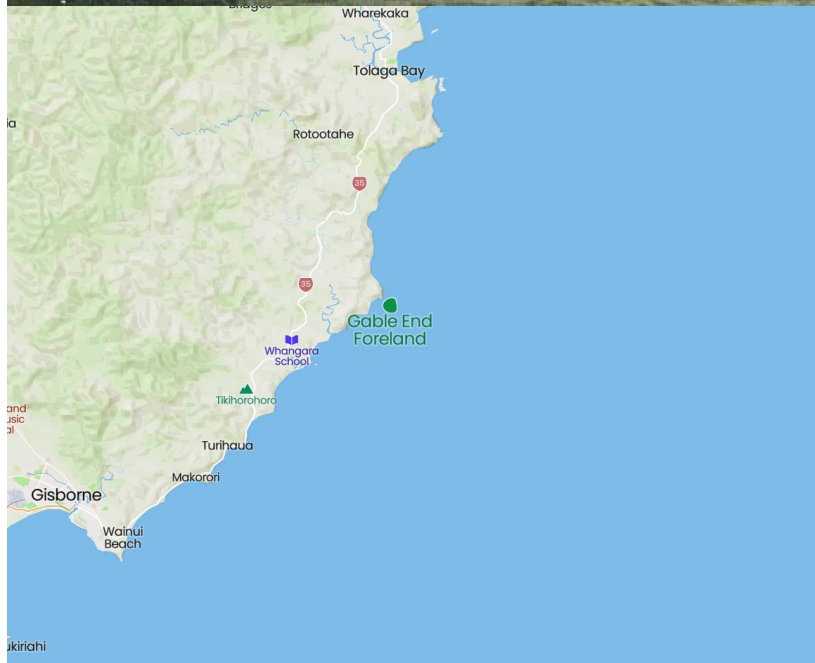
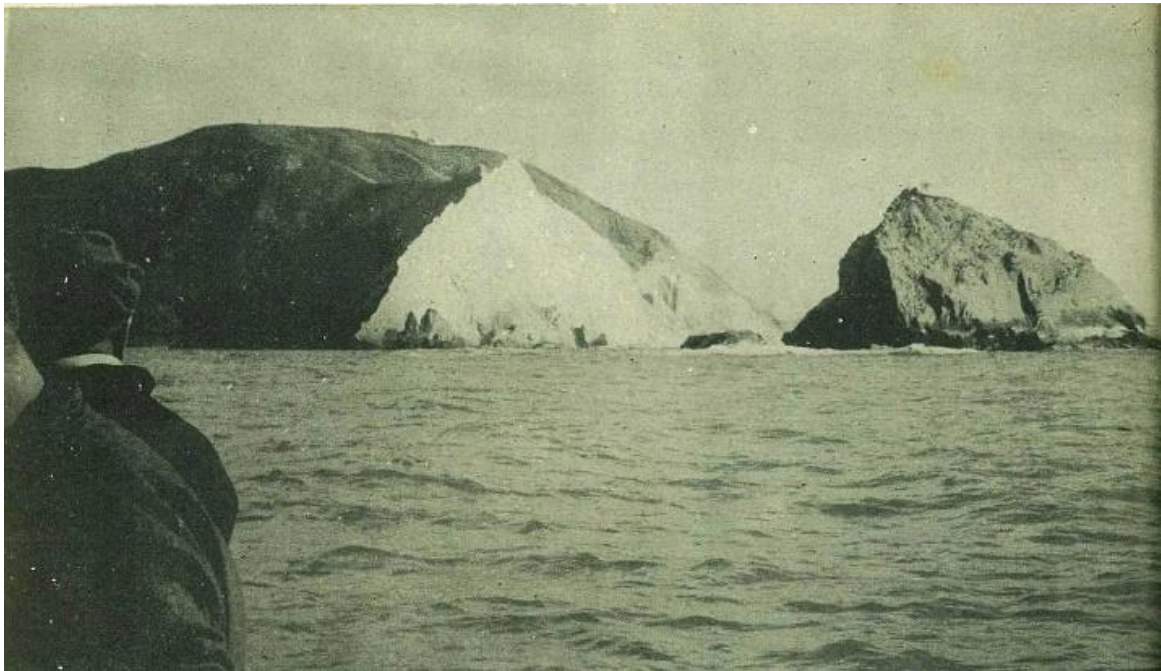
The Maori name for this ridge-backed east-facing cape is Pari-nui-te-ra ('great cliff of the sun'). In October 1769 on his first voyage Captain Cook named it Gable End 'on account of the very great resemblance the white cliff at the very point had to the gable end of a house'. It is made still more remarkable by a Spires Rock standing a little distance from it.' The cape presents an almost perfect off-white triangular clay face eroded by the sea, and the small, steep Gable Rock stands nearby offshore.

The site of the original light on Gable Islet, lying about half a mile offshore from the foreland, stood on the crest of a ridge of rocks running out for about 800 metres from the shore and drying about a metre at low tide. Gable Islet rises steeply almost 50 metres to a small flat area at the top with extremely difficult access.

Servicing problems dictated that the light be moved ashore to the foreland itself, although the only sites were well above the optimum height. The move took place in 1968 and, although difficult to reach in wet weather, the farm track up the hill was a significant improvement from the sea access to the rock, and the light's reliability improved.

The foreland site stood 141.5 metres above the sea with an excellent arc of visibility. The constant coastal erosion taking place on this cape resulted in a colossal slip that reached from the seashore to within one metre of the light - high time to move it again to its present

location. The light sits on the summit of the foreland, which is not ideal as it stands 210 metres above the sea, making it the highest light beacon in New Zealand.



Regards

Jerry Payne

Editor

HMNZS Ngapona Assn

021 486 013

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