

# HMNZS NGAPONA ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

## LONGCAST

5 – 7 October 18 – RNZN Cooks & Stewards Reunion, Birkenhead RSA  
12 October 18 – Navy Club Lunch at the Remuera Club  
19 October 18 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at New Lynn RSA  
19 October 18 - Trafalgar Day Lunch at the Te Atatu RSA  
9 – 12 November 18 - Engine Room Branch Reunion, Rangiora  
16 November 18 – Ngapona Assn Lunch at Grey Lynn RSA  
17 November 18 – HMNZS Ngapona Wardroom Mess Dinner  
29 November 18 - Change of Chief of Navy  
7 December 18 - Weapons Electrical Reunion at SRFM  
21 December 18 - Ngapona Assn Lunch at Orakei RSA

Hi Folks

### **ARMISTICE COIN**

The Reserve Bank has issued a commemorative 50 cent coin honouring Armistice Day and is legal tender, starting today.

Two million copies of the coin have been minted to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice.

The coin features a splash of colour in the centre with the poppy, silver fern and a remembrance wreath featured to "remember the sacrifices made by service personnel and their families to bring peace to New Zealand and the world," the Reserve Bank said. "The printed silver ferns on the wreath represent the past, present, and future and also reflect the three armed forces in New Zealand.

"The engraved koru pattern represents new beginnings, and the engraved silver fern reflects New Zealand's national identity.

"A portrait of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II appears on the obverse."

The Reserve Bank said the coin can be used like a regular 50 cent coin and may be purchased from NZ Post Shops.



### **TRAFALGAR DAY LUNCH**

Reminder - have you registered for the Trafalgar Day Lunch at Te Atatu RSA on 19 October. See attached form.

**Applications close on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2018.**

### **2018 NGAPONA WARDROOM MESS DINNER**

The 2018 HMNZS Ngapona Wardroom Mess Dinner will be held on Saturday 17 November. Further details to follow.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

On 6 October 2000 the Governor-General, Sir Michael Hardie-Boys, unveiled the Millennium Statue on the promenade at Devonport Naval Base, colloquially called 'Wilson's Walk'. The statue was designed to honour all New Zealand's sailors of the 20th Century, and is called 'The Farewell'. Rear Admiral Wilson's vision was for another statue at the other end of the promenade entitled 'The Homecoming', to acknowledge naval families.



' The Farewell'

## **A NAVAL CAREER IN THE EYES OF COLIN ROSS - Pt. 48**

2004 brought the first of many trips overseas in support of TE MANA. The first was a trip to Dubai to meet the ship and prepare for its upcoming maintenance period on arrival home. The ship was deployed in the Arabian Gulf for about six months including a work up in Australia. Flying into Dubai was a real eye opener. It is a city built on the edge of a desert and bordering on the gateway to the Persian Gulf and a very important maritime port. The city itself is a mass of high-rise very new impressive structures with wide roads. With temperatures over 40° and often fine sand being blown around it was less than comfortable working conditions. We spent three days on-board putting together work specifications and also meeting with the different parts of ship to sort out any special requirements. Just when we had started to become acclimatised and get over jet lag it was time to climb back on a plane for the long flight home.

The maintenance packages on the two ANZAC frigates tended to be short and very intense. The normal maintenance was not too difficult to handle but we were consistently confronted at the last minute with configuration changes. These were regularly ill defined and if you had a proper drawing delivered then that was a plus.

Many well-defined schedules at start date were thrown out the window by the end of the first week. Coupled with that there was always the unknown delivery date of the equipment to be fitted. This seemed to be a consistent theme throughout my dealings with these two vessels. The other issue that consistently arose was Naval Staff visiting the vessel and would promise the addition of some system to make the ships time away more enjoyable. Things like communication upgrades, TV reception and better email connectivity. They would then leave and the expectation was that somehow we would achieve this new fit prior to the ship being deployed. This led to some very frustrated and heated discussion. However I must say I enjoyed the pressure and the sense of achievement when it was completed and I must take my hat off to the Dockyard project guys I dealt with. They really came to the party and most times delivered the goods. Some of these years seem to run together on reflection, as it seemed that I was deployed to Singapore almost annually. As the Ship Manager role grew we were not only tasked to visit the ship to prepare the next work package but we were also tasked to manage any contracts with local engineering firms required to support the ship. We were nearly always put up in one of the old dockyard houses of which the Navy had control of several, these were permanent accommodation for those posted to Singapore and there were a couple used for temporary accommodation for transit staff. We loved staying in them as they had good facilities. We could also walk to the ship in the Stores Basin plus they were only a two-minute walk to the patio in Sambewang. Singapore had changed dramatically from my first two visits in 1970 and 1975. The city was now all high rises and all the kampongs had gone. The first time I arrived the crew picked me up and we were in discussion about their trip the whole way out from Changi. When

they dropped me off at the accommodation they informed me I would have to take the van into Changi the next day to pick up a couple of crew members as the ship was in the process of shifting berth. I initially thought they were joking and was unsure if I could find my way back to Changi, however with a bit of memory and a lot of luck I managed to find the airport. Changi airport is huge but quite well laid out although I believe it has been extended again since my last visit.

In 2006 I arrived in Singapore and was stuck into work. When I got back to the accommodation late at night I picked up a phone call from Kerry to sadly be informed that her mum had died. So that created a frantic night with the local Army Sergeant organising a flight home early on the Sunday plus I had to hand over a raft of information of contracted jobs that needed completing.

The flight home was long and lonely with a lot of reflecting on my years with my Mother in Law (Pat), it was very sad and I was so pleased to arrive in NZ to be met by Kerry at the airport. We had been extremely lucky in that Pat was the first of our parents to pass away and the fact that all four had been a big part of our lives for fifty plus years.

2006 was also the Golden Oldies in Wellington, which the Ancient Mariners attended. Again a well-organised festival, which was blessed with fine weather in Wellington. Wellington is a great place in good weather especially as every thing in the central city is within walking distance. We especially enjoyed all the bars along the waterfront.

In 2008 TE MANA was again deployed to the Gulf. It also was programmed to have a two-week maintenance period alongside in Dubai. To help with this period a mobile maintenance team was deployed to assist in this period. This required us to be accommodated in Camp Mirage. As the name implied it was a camp that officially didn't exist. It was a camp about forty minutes out of Dubai in the desert. We flew up via Singapore and arrived in Dubai late afternoon. We were whisked out to the camp. It was strictly no drinking and anyone caught smelling of alcohol would have us thrown out of the camp. At least twice we were ordered off the bus at the camp gate and inspected by guards, this included our person and also our bags. The Kiwi enclave was well organised and had been occupied for some years as it was from here the troops in Afghanistan were supported. There were also great numbers of other troops accommodated in the area and we were actually fed in the Canadian camp. Every deployment had added their own touches to Kiwi Corner to make it a bit like home. Every day we were bused into Dubai and the ship to spend a day of work. I found trying to arrange contractors here very frustrating. They were unreliable and all the promises came to nothing. The ship had an air conditioning unit down and I was trying to get a local contractor to pull the motor off and change the defective bearing. In the end I

enlisted the help and undertook the task. I had bought the spare bearings up in my luggage. It had been a while since I had basically got my hands dirty, so back to basics and prove that training was not a waste of time. I think the young guys were a bit horrified when I got a piece of pipe to drive the bearing onto the shaft. Some training sticks with you through life. Although it would have been nice to be hydraulically push the bearing on time was running out so out came the agricultural approach. It was great to demonstrate that sometimes the need requires some old time get stuck in an belt it. We put the motor back together and re-aligned it and put the system back in operation. It ran like a dream and it meant that the ship again had four air conditioning units running. In 40 plus degrees I think the whole ships company appreciated this success.

Another thing that happened during this deployment that had a profound effect on me was at the camp when a body was repatriated from Afghanistan the camp turned out when the flight arrived in on transit to their home country. A young Canadian soldier had been killed in action and we turned out with the rest of the camp when the flight arrived. Although we didn't know the person it was very moving when they landed and the casket was removed from the aircraft The casket was marched down the ramp off the aircraft by army pallbearers with the coffin on their shoulder accompanied by some of his own company still in their camouflage gear. It is something that still stands out vividly in my memory today, incredibly sad but I think also a huge reminder of the very dangerous world we now live in.

We flew from Dubai back to Singapore and had an overnight stop. It was great to be able to have a few cold beers but of course we were flying out early the next day for home and at 51 years of age I discovered the mind might be willing to stay up drinking all night the body was somewhat different so thankfully I was in bed early and woke up bright eyed and bushy tailed for the flight home. Soon after arrival home Kerry and I took off for UK. The Ancient Mariners were off to Edinburgh and another festival. We arrived in UK and then undertook a three-week Trafalgar Tour through Europe. This was a bus trip with hotel accommodation and visited Belgium, Germany, Czech Republic, Italy, Switzerland, France and back to London. We travelled with good friends Ali & Sue Blair. We had lots of laughs and a great time. One of the first decisions we had to make were we going to do any of the extra functions etc. that weren't part of our tour cost. We decided it was only money and we went for everything we could, as it turned out a great decision. Some of the highlights were things like in Brussels we had been to the square and enjoyed the carpet of flowers as part of the festival they were having and soaking up the history and atmosphere. It was very hot and we finally found a small place to have dinner. We looked at the menu and Ali & I immediately ordered what we could understand on the menu, BEER, or Bier. To our surprize Kerry ordered

one, Ali couldn't believe it and couldn't take a photo quick enough of Kerry drinking a beer. She is not normally a beer drinker.

From Prague we travelled to Italy, before we crossed the border out of the Czech Republic we stopped at Bruno. This was a town still trying to come out of the soviet era; it was grey and very depressed. We needed to make a toilet stop and there was a toilet in the square so down we went. There was a little old lady sitting in the passage and you had to buy this grey looking toilet paper from her. Kerry had a good Kiwi roll so tried to bye-pass the keeper of the gate. No way was she going to be allowed to use the toilet without purchasing the necessary. So she conceded. As a sideline to this, before we left Bruno we decided we needed a feed and we had spied McDonalds earlier, so we made a beeline for it knowing not only would they have some sort of quality control but also they would have a clean toilet!!!

Next week I will continue with this trip, as there were some other highlights on it apart from the wonderful castles, old churches and many enchanted evenings.

*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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