

# AIR FORCE NEWS

Training  
over new  
ground

Bluebirds  
in the  
Mountains

Flying  
with the  
Army

#236

JUN|21

## Aircrew looking forward to the P-8A Poseidon



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### OUR MISSION

The RNZAF will provide New Zealand with relevant, responsive and effective Air Power to meet its security interests.

### OUR VISION

An agile and adaptive Air Force with the versatility essential for NZDF operations.

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Aircrew looking to the future

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# First Word



**B** | DEPUTY CHIEF OF AIR FORCE  
**Y** | AIR COMMODORE IAN MOWER

**“The central and enduring theme throughout our history is the requirement to change; to evolve to meet contemporary need, to successfully adjust to meet either government policy or shifts in technology; to accept that standing still is simply not an option.”**

**F**or the First Word this month I'd like to touch upon a topic that looms large for all us regardless of rank, trade, branch or location and that's "change".

There's absolutely nothing surprising regarding the fact that an organisation such as ours is changing, it happens constantly as the impacts of technology, society and the financial landscape are catered for and adjustments made. However, it's the magnitude of change at the moment that appears to set the current environment apart from our recent past. But the past can also provide a sound benchmark and sense of perspective when considering our current change agenda.

Over the last few weeks as we've celebrated our 84<sup>th</sup> anniversary and commemorated Anzac Day, I've been reflecting on the various stages of our history and the change component inherent at each and every step.

It was clearly evident in the pioneering days of military aviation through to our formation in 1937, closely followed by our rapid expansion to meet the demands of the Second World War. Change on a truly grand scale appeared to typify our early years.

Following WWII, demobilisation, a focus on the Pacific and the needs of the Cold War saw us reconfigure not only aircraft and personnel numbers but also roles and responsibilities.

Next came the introduction of engine turbine technology, shepherding a whole new livery of aircraft and a very different RNZAF to the one that preceded the 1960s and 70s. The disbandment of the air combat force, upgrades to our current fleets and the replacement of our entire rotary capability are more recent changes that remain etched in the minds of many who continue to serve.

So as we find ourselves, once again, immersed in an environment of change, I'd contest we've got the pedigree and smarts to meet these challenges head on.

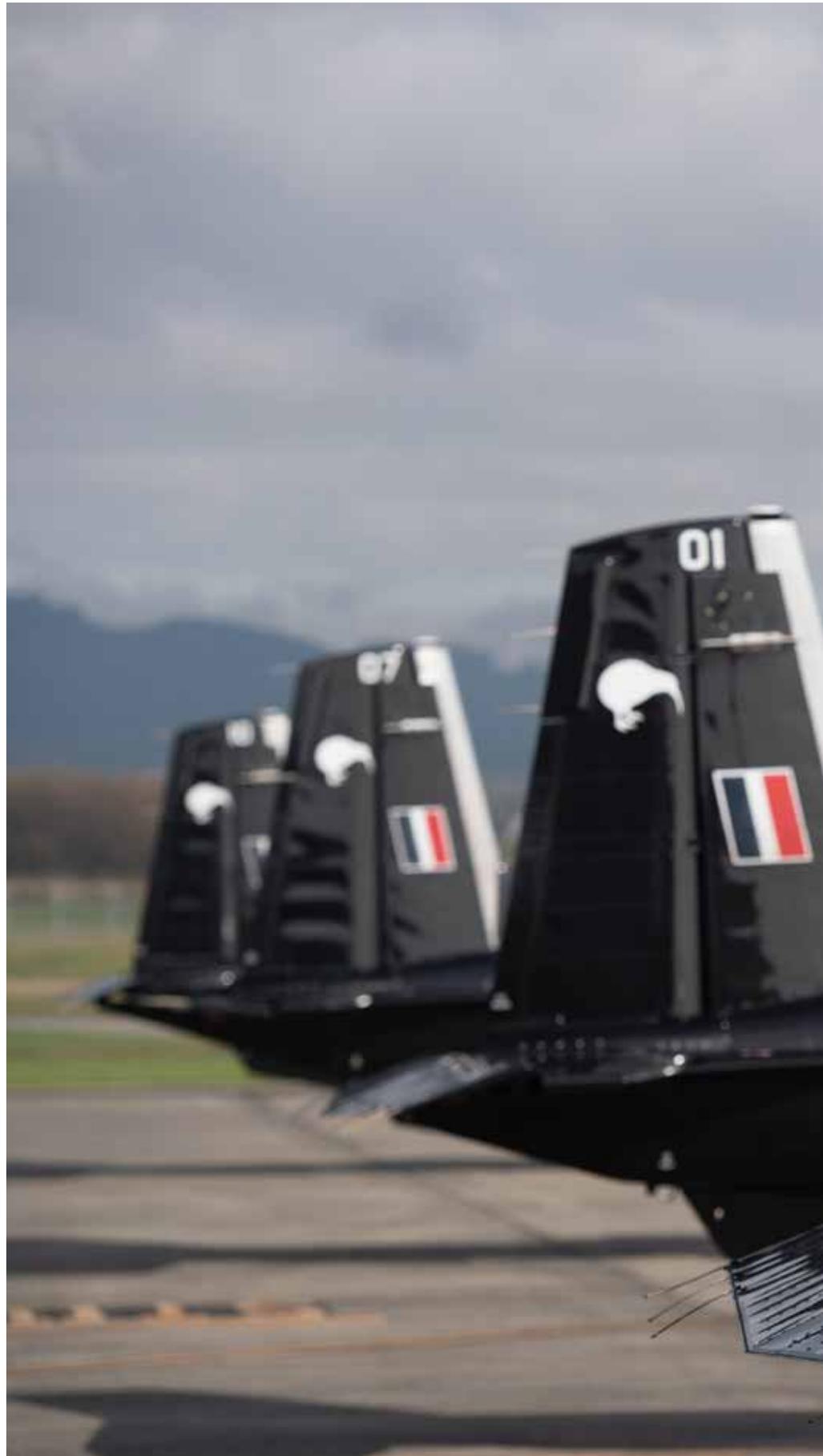
We've committed a significant amount of intellect and resource to the change at hand and have our sights firmly fixed on the prize at the end of the journey. I'm confident that those who'll look back on this phase of our history will see an Air Force emerge that has modern fleets, supported by a highly skilled and contemporary workforce, operating within an airworthiness framework that's fit for purpose.

Simply put, we're no stranger to change, it's in our DNA, always has been, always will be.

## Training over new ground

B | PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER  
Y | SQUADRON LEADER DEANE WILSON

**The ever-changing skies above Rotorua set the scene for Air Force pilot trainees as they flew out of their Ohakea comfort zone to fly in unfamiliar territory. Exercise Wise Owl not only showed the pilots some new sights, but locals were also treated to a rare Air Force show.**







**ABOVE**  
Trainee pilots learning to fly  
in unfamiliar skies

**BOTTOM RIGHT**  
A T-6C Texan is fuelled up  
before a training flight



**“A**s the saying goes – ‘a plan is only good up until first contact,’” Officer Commanding No. 14 Squadron, and exercise Detachment Commander Squadron Leader (SQNLDR) Nathan Barrack says, as he reflects on an eventful start to the week.

Exercise Wise Owl, based out of Rotorua Airport, involved up to 70 personnel at its peak and five T-6C Texan aircraft.

No. 14 Squadron had planned to start the exercise with a five-ship formation flight to Rotorua, but due to the weather conditions on the day, had to depart at five minute intervals under Instrument Flight Rules to land with minimum weather conditions at Rotorua.

The team then gathered and formulated a new plan which they quickly adjusted to and within hours the first sorties commenced. This included local area familiarisation and air consolidation in preparation for the upcoming air formation and tail chase flights.

“A highlight for me is seeing the plan come together and the hard work of everyone come to fruition. It’s great seeing the students’ learning being displayed in a tangible manner during formation flying,” SQNLDR Barrack said.

Within the first five days the students had seen a wide range of environmental conditions from maximum cross wind limits, rain and fog to perfect sunny days.

The exercise provides two important opportunities for the squadron – primarily it is the student’s first exposure to an unfamiliar airspace environment. It is conducted in a controllable manner in preparation for various deployed activities in their future careers as military aviators.

It also allows the squadron to represent and promote the Air Force within a region that does not get much exposure to military flying.



The squadron welcomed interested locals who came specifically to the airport to see what the team was doing. This included a targeted recruiting day where students from local schools and Cadet Force units came along and were shown around by the personnel.

During the day the squadron flew a five-ship formation flight over Lake Rotorua's front to say thank you to the local community.

The students also made the most of the opportunities in the region and conducted some physical training by hitting the local mountain bike trails, going for a run around the scenic Lake Tikitapu (Blue Lake) or heading to the luge during their downtime.

No. 14 Squadron is working towards making the exercises more operationally-focused when they head to Invercargill later in the year for a second Wise Owl exercise. It will operate out of the Invercargill airfield and will allow more opportunities for mission support trades to be involved and run a deployed camp.



# Bluebirds in the Mountains

B | NAVY TODAY EDITOR  
Y | ANDREW BONALLACK

**A SH-2G(I) Seasprite in a mountain valley is like a seagull in the alps. It's not the most natural fit, but sometimes it's necessary. We recently met all the moving parts of Exercise Bluebird, No. 6 Squadron's training exercise for operating in the mountains.**



It could not be a more perfect day at Dip Flat in the Wairau Valley, Marlborough. Rainbow Road and the valley seems almost non-stop, and if you were in the right mood (and in a very robust 4x4), you could drive to Hanmer Springs.

An Air Force fuel truck and utility vehicle come to a dusty halt on either side of the gravel road, in a wide open plain of grass. A Holden Colorado Rapid Intervention Vehicle neatly bisects them, pulling up ahead. A little further on, two large communication masts can just be seen in front of the collection of basic cabins and facilities that make up the Air Force property.

Somewhere in the mountains a Seasprite helicopter, on its way from Woodbourne, is traversing the ranges. On board is a Navy helicopter loadmaster, instructor pilot and a student pilot, the latter learning about the vagaries of wind direction around mountains and valleys, and the new, tighter limits on power when you're operating over peaks that are 2,000 metres high.

Leading Aircraftman (LAC) Jacob Hensley and LAC James Meulenbroek, from the Base Auckland's Fuel Unit, have driven down for the week-long exercise and are commuting every day, from Base Woodbourne, to Dip Flat. They walk the fuel hose out to the expected landing site, and get the earthing cables ready so that all elements of the operation – truck, helicopter and fuel hoses – will be appropriately earthed against any static sparks.

The fuel truck can take 11,000 litres of aviation fuel, and it's got about 7,500 litres in the tank. LAC Hensley and LAC Meulenbroek prepare for a "hot fuelling" process, meaning the Seasprite will land, refuel and swap out crew without shutting down the aircraft. It's efficient, but precautions have to be made. The pair are covered from head to foot in uniform, face coverings, goggles and helmet, all protection against fuel splashes and fire – and a respite from the sandflies.

The pair have brought their own cylinder containing 50 litres of AFFF fire-fighting foam, but that's trumped by the Rapid Intervention Vehicle. Woodbourne-based firefighters Aircraftman (AC) Sara Farrell and Corporal Anton Riefler unroll their firehoses and suit up, waiting for the Seasprite to arrive.

"We're full-time 'firies'," says AC Farrell. "We're here in case anything sparks up. We would normally have an Air Flight rescue truck, but this Rapid Intervention Vehicle provides fire cover. We have 200 litres of pressurised AFFF foam, and a 9kg dry powder extinguisher." She drops to one knee, fire hose ready, as the Seasprite appears above the bushline.

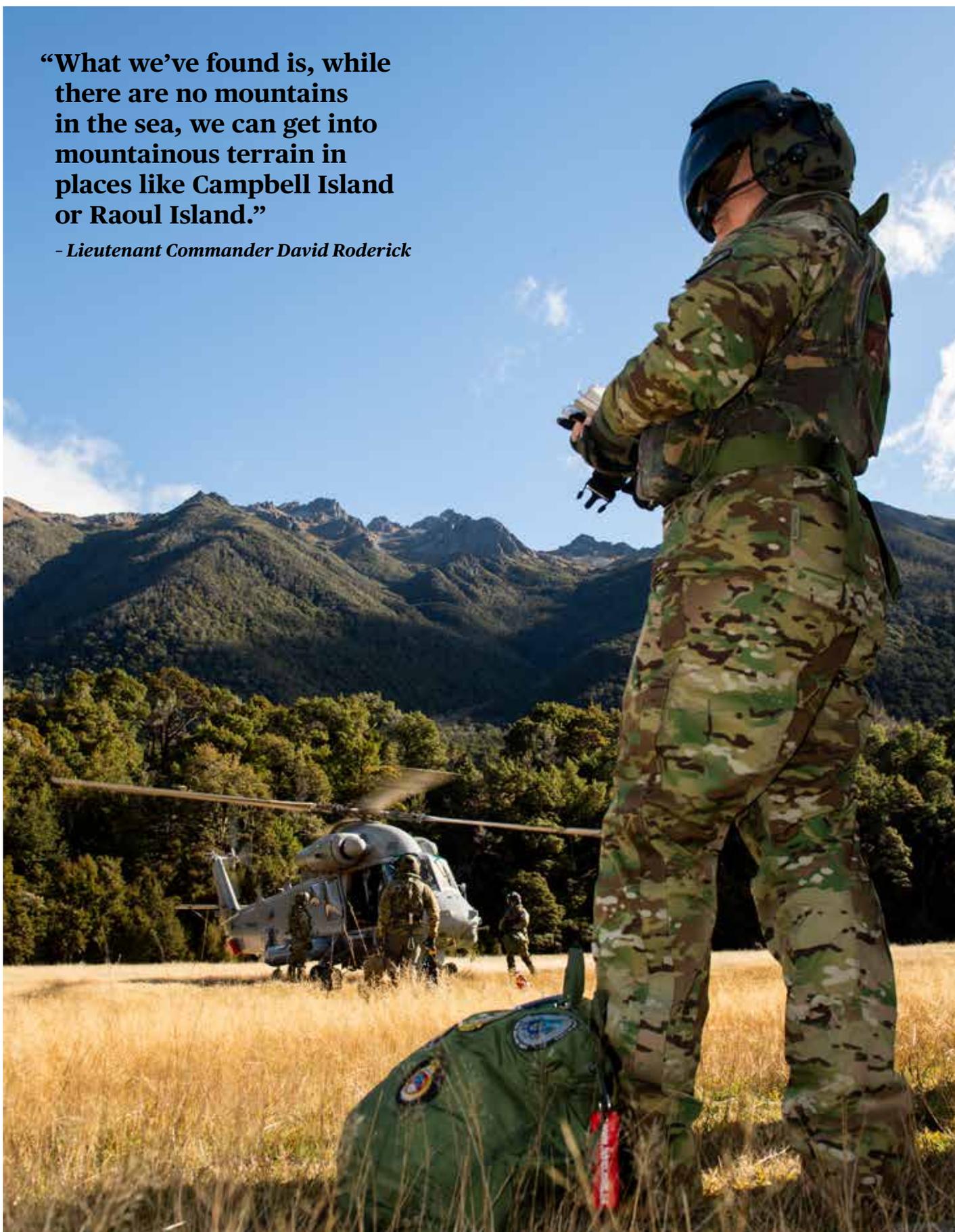
The din is incredible and ear-protection is mandatory. No-one can move sensibly against the downdraft, which eases once the Seasprite is on the ground. All movements to and from the aircraft, in a narrow corridor forward, are controlled by the pilot. The loadmaster holds her arm out, thumbs up, but doesn't move until the pilot acknowledges it. She retrieves the fuel hose and drags it down past the helicopter's side door, connecting into the fuel outlet.

It's the same with the crew change-over – walking forward, an arm held out, thumbs up, but they can't get close until the pilot repeats the gesture. As the crew crosses over, there's an obligatory fist-bump. The loadmaster checks the quantity, and alternates between a cut-off movement of her arm (stop flow) and a winding motion (resume flow). The fuelling team repeat it back.

The fuel truck's digital counter clicks over to 965 litres. The loadmaster gets the hose out of the way and then it's her turn to swap out. The departure is a repeat of the arrival – the ground teams brace themselves against the din and the downdraft, and then the helicopter is gone from sight. The sandflies begin biting again.

**“What we’ve found is, while there are no mountains in the sea, we can get into mountainous terrain in places like Campbell Island or Raoul Island.”**

*- Lieutenant Commander David Roderick*





**LEFT**  
L-R LTCDR David Roderick,  
CPOHLM Dougie Greig, LHLM Rick  
Gurnell and SGT Jade Washer (SERE)

**MIDDLE**  
A Seasprite during mountain flying training  
in the northern range of the Southern Alps

**RIGHT**  
Firefighters at the ready in case of an  
emergency as a Seasprite lands

There's more to explore. A team from No. 230 Squadron, has established a bespoke communication station 200 metres away as a means of maintaining contact with the helicopter. There's three eight-metre masts, a satellite dish, generator and a command centre – largely contained within a Pinzgauer truck and tent.

Corporal (CPL) Dion Hemmes says it takes about three hours to set up.

“We've got Very High Frequency, High Frequency, and use Near Vertical Incidence Skywave (NVIS).” The latter doesn't require line-of-sight, but sends signals upwards to bounce off the ionosphere and back to a receiver – a handy tool when you're deep in a valley.

The satellite dish utilises super high frequency and gives the team internet capability.

“In fact, this is a pretty small, basic setup for us. A bigger setup would involve two satellite dishes, and a full IT setup which can support up to 50 users,” CPL Hemmes said.



Back at the landing site, the personnel on the ground are filling in the time with a survival training refresher.

Sergeant (SGT) Jade Washer and Corporal Renee Thyne, from the Survival Training Centre, are specialists in SERE – survival, evasion, resistance, and escape. The team practise with PRC 112-G Combat Search and Rescue radios, a useful piece of kit with built-in satellite GPS communication with text messaging to satellites, as well as line-of-sight communication and a portable locator beacon.

The scenario is they've been sent coordinates of an airdrop of food and first aid gear, and they have to home in on it among the trees.

“It might have been a few years since they've touched this piece of kit,” says SGT Washer. “It's a great thing to do while they're on the ground. This kit is used all around the world, and gets used by anyone that could suddenly end up in a point of isolation. We give them the skills, the knowledge and the confidence.”



It's been a good week, says Lieutenant Commander (LTCDR) David Roderick, No. 6 Squadron Executive Officer and pilot instructor, and he acknowledges the support that makes Exercise Bluebird possible – the Air Force maintainers, communication specialists, fuellers, firefighters and the bonus of the Survival School.

“We can't do this alone,” he says. They expect to do another Bluebird later in the year. Normally it would be one large exercise.

“We're doing two smaller exercises because of Covid-19,” he says. “When we get sent to a different locality, we treat it like we're coming from Level 2 Auckland and we try and minimise our footprint. So we've only got 40 people involved.”

The training is valuable for aircrew who are used to flying at near-sea level, LTCDR Roderick said.

“We need our crews to know the techniques when they are flying in adverse, variable winds. You can have winds going from one direction

10 minutes ago to another, and this teaches the crews what to expect.”

In fact, the winds have been very light this time around, but that helps in other ways, he said.

“When the winds are light, you find out the limits of the aircraft in thin air. We're quite heavily loaded, and that's an issue at six or seven thousand feet. At sea level, life is pretty easy. Up at altitude, you run out of power. It's a heavy aircraft and you've got to be alert. But it's definitely fun, and we get quite good at it.”

**“We maintain location status for the aircraft, and we get an update every 30 minutes. They could communicate with Auckland, but once you're in the valleys you lose that. We can get better comms for them right here.”**

*- Corporal Dion Hemmes*

# Aircrew looks to the future

B | EDITOR  
Y | REBECCA QUILLIAM

**The trainees who have recently started learning their roles on the P-3K2 Orion will be the last crew to do so before the aircraft is retired. They will also be among the first to train on the new P-8A Poseidon aircraft when they arrive in 2023.**

**A**ir Warfare Training Officer Flight Lieutenant (FLTLT) Kate Galbraith said the 11 students, made up of pilots, air warfare officers and air warfare specialists, have just started on the conversion course at No. 5 Squadron.

“It’s a nine-month-long course and it’s converting them specifically to P-3K2 flying operations. They are currently going through ground school, which lasts four months, before starting to fly together as a training crew.”

The aim was to have them proficient by Christmas and clock about 18 months flying on the P-3K2 before moving to the transition course in Florida to convert onto the P-8A, in mid-2023, she said.

They will be the second lot of transition crews to go through the training.

“By the time they get back from Florida, we should have our ones delivered here in New Zealand, so they should be good to jump straight on.”

Flying Officer Holly Graham is training to be an air warfare officer information manager, which involves navigation and fuel management

“I was attracted to the role because of the dynamic atmosphere – the fact that no two jobs will ever be the same. There will also be a bit of travel, getting to see some of the islands that a lot of people don’t get to go to.

“But mainly it was for the search and rescue aspect that the squadron has – I wanted to do something that really impacts other people,” she said.

“I always wanted to fly on the P-3K2 and I was a little worried that I was going to miss out on that chance. I’m super stoked to get to fly in the P-3K2 and then the P-8A further down the track.”

Corporal (CPL) Darion Ings is training to be an air warfare specialist.

“I’m looking forward to getting more hands-on with the training and operating the sensors in the P-3K2. Also, the search and rescue aspect at No. 5 Squadron is probably a big draw card for most of us here.”

The move later on to the P-8A was an exciting prospect, he said.

“I guess being one of the last to train on the P-3K2s and one of the first on the P-8As is quite exciting, getting experience on two different airframes. Most people just spent time on one.

CPL Jaymie Evans-Walsh is also learning the air warfare specialist role.

“I’m really looking forward to getting out on search and rescue missions – getting that phone call early in the morning and jumping to help people.

“The work is totally different to things I’d done before – I couldn’t really do that kind of thing in the civvy world, so it’s pretty special, especially to be aircrew and getting to travel at the same time.”

The change to a new aircraft from one that has had a successful 60-year career was a unique opportunity, she said.

“I’m quite new to the service as well, I joined at the end of last year, so it’s pretty cool to be involved in something so huge so soon.”

FLTLT James Robertson-Bickers is starting his conversion training as a pilot on the P-3K2.

“It’s a neat opportunity to be able to fly the aircraft as the last crew to do so – it’s such a historic, venerable plane flying in the Air Force for so long.

“Joining No.5 Squadron was my first choice when I was learning to fly in No. 14 Squadron. I had talked with other people in the squadron and it piqued my interest. The work benefits the country and fills an important role.”

Changing to the P-8A was still a few years away yet and while it was something to look forward to, FLTLT Robertson-Bickers was focussed on his immediate training.

“In the meantime, we’ll see the old Orion out in style.”



**“They seem very eager and keen to make the most of the limited time they have got to fly the P-3K2. They are also pretty excited to be some of the first crews to fly the P-8As.”**

*- Flight Lieutenant Kate Galbraith*

## Flying with the Army

**In complex and dynamic airspace at Waiouru, No. 3 Squadron will be training alongside a New Zealand Army exercise to practice battlefield operations. A couple of the aircrew tell *Air Force News* how they will work in with all the moving parts.**







**T**he two-week exercise will see NH90 helicopters flying in formation, and moving troops and equipment around the battlefields during live fire training. Alongside the flying will be ground training learning escape and evasion procedures with the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape team.

Flight Lieutenant (FLTLT) Hamish Park said the squadron will be working alongside the Army's Victor Company and 16<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment's High Readiness Task Unit, as well as some tasks with the territorial unit Wellington 5/7 RNZIR.

"There will be plenty of platoon moves in two and three ship formation flying and ammunition resupplies, where we will be underslinging ammunition to soldiers doing live firing training. There will also be some sniper infills by day and night – moving small sniper teams who need to get moved into the field covertly."

The squadron will also be flying the 16<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment's team, which operates an Unmanned Aerial System (drone) and their equipment to different areas around Waiouru.

"There will also be other equipment including motorbikes that we will be moving around," FLTLT Park said.

"There will be a fair bit on with lots of moving parts to consider. It's great working with the Army, we're a unit that's dedicated to working with customers. Without someone to support, it's just all imaginary.

"For this exercise, it's going to be challenging planning missions with Army units that are sleeping out in a hoochie out in the field."

The Joint Tactical Air Controllers are controlling the airspace, so it will be a reasonably busy and complex airspace with the day-to-day operations, he said.

**PHOTOS**

No. 3 Squadron training alongside the New Zealand Army in Waiouru



Helicopter loadmaster Sergeant (SGT) Kelvin Arthur said they undersling equipment for a number of reasons.

“It means loads can be prepared in advance, so we don’t have to land and spend time loading it into the cabin. We also use it for places where we might not be able to land, but can get close.”

The loads are prepared and waiting to be hooked onto strops lowered from the cabin of the helicopter, he said.

“There will be challenges with the motorbikes, but they will be put into a packing crate to ensure they’re not damaged when lowered to the ground. The crate will then go inside a net that will be attached to the hook.”

The fast turnaround means the helicopter and crew are exposed for a minimal amount of time in a vulnerable state, SGT Arthur said.

The night flying aspect would create some challenges, especially as the moon would be a sliver, he said.

“Night Vision Goggles don’t turn night into day, so there are limitations. It means you’ve just got to be a bit more conservative in how you fly. It doesn’t mean we can’t do stuff, we just have to be more deliberate because you don’t have the peripheral vision – it’s like looking through a pair of toilet paper rolls.

“There is a lot more deliberate scanning of the head to ensure you’re not close to obstacles,” he said.

The exercise was special for SGT Arthur as he spent 10 years in the Army before transferring to the Air Force.

“It’s always good to do the inter-service work. It introduces challenges of working with different people who have different levels of exposure to aviation work.”

**“It’s great working with the Army, we’re a unit that’s dedicated to working with customers. Without someone to support, it’s just all imaginary.”**

**– Flight Lieutenant Hamish Park**

# Students in the skies

B | EDITOR  
Y | REBECCA QUILLIAM



**The latest School to Skies programme gave 40 Year 13 female school students the opportunity to spend a week at Base Ohakea experiencing what a real-life career in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) looks like within the Air Force.**

**T**he programme let the participants explore their passion for STEM while educating them to the career possibilities that await them in those fields and within our ranks.

During the week, the students worked alongside our personnel to find out just what life is like in the Air Force. This included working in the hangar maintaining a Grumman aircraft, flying the A109 helicopter simulator and planning a search and rescue mission. The course culminated in flying the planned mission in an NH90 helicopter.

Flight Lieutenant (FLTLT) Emma Raven ran the event, which is part of Operation Tangata Kanorau, the scheme to encourage diversity in our Air Force.

“There are certain barriers that young women have when it comes to joining the military or knowing about what they can do – not only in the military but in the STEM industry,” she said.

The students lived on base as if they had joined the Air Force, sleeping in barracks, eating in the mess and wearing uniforms.

“They built that sense of comradery through the week as well, which was special,” FLTLT Raven said.

“They come in and they are all wide-eyed and didn’t know anyone, but that first evening there was so much noise of everyone starting to get to know each other and by the end of the week it was just like what you would see on a recruit course, they were all really close.”

If the young women looked to take up careers in other STEM industries, that would also be a positive outcome, FLTLT Raven said.

“We work closely with our industry partners, so it also boosts us as a whole to have more women in these careers.”



**“It was a really unique transition for them and we got a lot of feedback from their parents saying their daughters have come home more confident in what their future career paths might look like.”**

**- Flight Lieutenant Emma Raven**



Nanotechnologist and science educator Dr Michelle Dickinson, known as Nanogirl, also spent time with the students during the week. She inspired the group to think about experiments they could do based on the work they had been doing on the base, including principles of flight.

Then, in teams they took part in a ‘Dragons’ Den’ style event and proposed their experiments, how they would work and how they could be taught to a younger audience and therefore becoming influencers in their community.

“The awesome part was that it actually got them wanting to take it back to their own communities. It was great to see these young women learning so much about aviation and wanting to go out to their local schools and teach what they had learnt with us to get more young kids excited about STEM.”

After the week finished, the special bond with the group continued, FLTLT Raven said.

“We’ve got a big Facebook community for all the girls, we’re all still talking, we check up on how they are going, how their pathways are going. There is an ongoing mentoring for our cohort, which I think is really unique and special.”

**LEFT**

Students in an NH90 preparing for their planned search and rescue mission

**MIDDLE**

The students check out the A109 simulation computer

**RIGHT**

Students plan out the search and rescue mission at No. 3 Squadron

**THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

- Learning from personal development and leadership experts
- Working on machinery to fix real aircraft
- Flying in the A109 helicopter simulator
- Experiencing unique military skills
- Planning a search and rescue flight alongside aviation experts
- Flying a simulated SAR in a NH90 helicopter



## A personnel perspective

**Personnel involved in the School to Skies programme say not only do the students get a lot out of the event, but they also finish the week on a high note.**

**C**orporal (CPL) Melanie Johns was a flight commander and spent the week with the young women, including staying in barracks with them.

“For me the experience was really positive. Leading up to the event I was a bit nervous and didn’t know what to expect.

“The girls were so enthusiastic about the Air Force and all the different trade and career options to potentially choose. There was a lot of excitement and laughter as they were getting involved in everything and it was really enjoyable to be a part of,” she said.

On the final evening of the week the students experienced a dining in where they received certificates for graduating.

“They were all really excited for each other. They wanted photos with us and other staff and they wrote a really sweet thank you card and left messages on it for me,” CPL Johns said.

“The highlight was knowing I had helped them to have a positive experience and we got along really well as a flight – they always had each other’s backs.”

Flight Sergeant (F/S) Kelly Menary was a sounding board for any of the students who wanted to ask questions about the Air Force.

“There was lots of face-to-face time and answering any questions they had about being a female in the Air Force and what that’s like.

“One of the big concerns was the physical training and what the fitness levels were that they needed to be at. They also asked about what educational requirements they needed to have and how we fit in the organisation as females when it’s heavily dominated by males,” she said.

“You grow with the people you join up with. There is a certain comradery that comes along with the people you join up with, but you also find your people within the organisation that you gravitate to, are inspired by. You seek out your people and just make your group, so as a female, you’re not treated like a minority.”

Being Māori also meant F/S Menary could also talk about how the Air Force supported Māori culture.



“There were a couple of young wāhine from Māori and Pasifika groups, who gravitated to me and a colleague who is Cook Island Māori. They were asking lots of questions around culture and how that fits into the Air Force.”

Helicopter loadmaster CPL Al Kennedy was part of the team to take the group through a search and rescue exercise.

“They came in and got a briefing from us about what No. 3 Squadron’s capabilities were and how we provide that to the Government.

“We laid out a search and rescue plan for them, gave them different flight profiles, different search patterns and then a location of where the lost party was. They went through and did the rest of it from there.”

The students were required to plan out how far to send the helicopter, work out what speed it would be flying and how much fuel the aircraft would burn by studying fuel burn charts.

“They did really well,” CPL Kennedy said.

“We pretty much left it open to them – we didn’t say if there was a right or wrong answer because it’s a planning tool. They all came out with pretty similar answers.”

They were also hard working. When given the opportunity to take a break, the young women decided instead to continue to finish the planning.

“It was cool to see how motivated they were to stay on the task even though they were given an opportunity to stop.”

It was a positive experience to be part of the programme, CPL Kennedy said.

“We’re in a position to offer this experience, I know if my mates in high school had the same opportunity, they would have loved to have been part of it. So while we are in a position to offer it, why not make it the best experience possible.”

**“I’ve been here 16-plus years and it gave me some time to stop and reflect on my own journey. I hope they got some good information from my story.”**

**– Flight Sergeant Kelly Menary**

**LEFT**

Students learning the basics of mechanics during their week at Base Ohakea

**RIGHT**

The group prepare for their search and rescue flight on an NH90

## A Career of a Lifetime

B | EDITOR  
Y | REBECCA QUILLIAM

**Jim Jennings was a central figure in a dramatic moment in the Air Force's history when he fired shots from an A-4 Skyhawk across the bow of a Taiwanese squid boat that was fishing illegally in New Zealand waters. It was the only time the Skyhawk had ever fired in anger, during peacetime.**



**W**hile that moment in 1976 captured the public's imagination, it was not a moment that defined Mr Jennings' extraordinary Air Force career that spanned more than 60 years, and took him around the world.

Growing up on a North Canterbury farm, Mr Jennings decided that wasn't going to be his future. So, armed with an interest in aviation, on January 17, 1961, aged 18, he enlisted and started his training as a mechanic and engine fitter at Wigram Air Base.

"In 1964 I decided to change to become a pilot. I had been working on Canberra aircraft at Ohakea and started looking ahead in my career and wondered if I wanted to keep working on aircraft or to fly them."

He returned to Wigram and started his training on Harvard and Devon aircraft before being posted to Ohakea to fly Vampires.

"The old Vampire that sits outside of the main gate of Ohakea is one I've flown many times. It was also the last one I flew when I finished on Vampires and went

to Skyhawks in the late 1960s – so it has personal significance for me," Mr Jennings said.

The backdrop to his career at the time was the Vietnam War and Mr Jennings was getting ready to be posted as the next forward air controller, when New Zealand pulled out of the conflict.

"It was lucky for me because, while we were young and keen, looking back, Vietnam was never going to be a good thing to be involved in."

Instead, he deployed in the Skyhawks on exercises to Singapore, Malaysia and Australia and also did a stint on the Strikemaster as the operations flight commander.

All Air Force roads eventually lead to Headquarters in Wellington and soon it was Mr Jennings' turn to step away from the air base to be posted into a staff job in the capital.

"It was a nice break and I learnt a lot of other things and saw a lot more about how the system works. I started in Personnel Branch and towards the end of that was moved to Air Staff."



However, his travelling days weren't over yet. Before long, Mr Jennings, along with his wife and two sons, was posted to Malaysia in the Integrated Air Defence system, from 1981 until 1983.

"The kids probably had more fun than we did – it was a hard place to get used to with its totally different culture and no escape from the heat and humidity."

At the end of this posting, Mr Jennings returned to his old stomping ground at Ohakea where he served as the Strike Wing's Executive Officer before an "out of the blue" offer he couldn't refuse to take command of the Skyhawk training unit, No. 2 Squadron.

"I had two lovely years there training lots of pilots on the Skyhawk and having a real blast."

A career highlight occurred in 1989, when Mr Jennings was deployed to Iran as the Detachment Commander of the Air Unit providing the in-country air transport to the UN mission there.

"It was a very nice place and a lovely country and the mission itself worked quite well, but it did have its moments when dealing with Iranian Revolutionary Guards."

He described the country as being like "Central Otago on a grand scale".

"It had magnificent scenery, lovely people and snow. My tour was a winter one and at the back of Tehran, where we were based they had a very good ski field. It was a real highlight of my career."

His dedication to the Air Force did not go unnoticed and in 2010, he was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the Queen's Birthday Honours List, for services to the military.

"I was told that I couldn't tell anyone about it, so my poor wife didn't know until the day before when a local reporter called for an interview – she said, 'No, you've got the wrong guy'."

In 2011, after 50 years in uniform, Mr Jennings was caught in a Government cost-cutting exercise, making a swathe of personnel redundant and turning their positions into civilian roles.

The past 10 years has seen Mr Jennings looking after operational support matters, including the airline diversion capability to Ohakea – Project Alternate.

The 79-year-old is now ready for retirement and a "good sleep-in".

"I feel young, but the reality is, that's quite a few years on the clock. I think it was time to retire and give someone else a run at it.

"I think I will miss being on an air base with aircraft around, because I've been with aircraft nearly all my life, but it's been a lovely experience and I've worked with some excellent people over the years."

#### LEFT

Jim Jennings standing next to an old Skyhawk at Base Ohakea

#### MIDDLE

A Skyhawk that was flown by Jim Jennings

#### RIGHT

The moment a Taiwanese fishing boat surrendered to a New Zealand Navy vessel after Jim Jennings fired shots across its bow

# Andrea McNabb Perseverance Cup

B | SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR  
Y | CHARLENE WILLIAMSON



**An airman with terminal cancer is the inspiration for an award that depicts determination, compassion, honesty and resilience.**

**T**he inaugural Andrea McNabb Perseverance Cup was awarded to Aircraftman Sophie Aitken in April at the 21/01 recruit graduation at Base Woodbourne and Flight Sergeant (F/S) Andrea McNabb considers herself very fortunate to have been able to present it.

As a mother of three children under three years old, F/S McNabb joined the Air Force in January 2001 and for the past 20 years has consistently demonstrated the traits the Air Force works hard to develop in its members.

This has been particularly evident since her initial cancer diagnosis in 2016.

"I have terminal cancer, so I am just living out my time. The RNZAF/NZDF has been super supportive with this," she said.

"Death is a difficult subject for most, but I have no problems talking about it at all. In fact I encourage it. It's going to happen for everyone at some stage, mine's just a little sooner than I would like," F/S McNabb said.

The Andrea McNabb Perseverance Cup is awarded to the recruit who best demonstrates their ability to overcome challenges and persevere in the face of adversity.

The criteria is to be open to feedback, not afraid to show vulnerability and being able to adjust approaches to a task when required. The recipient must be determined, resilient, aware of their limitations, honest about their abilities, and have shown themselves to persist in spite of the circumstances.

F/S McNabb was the first corporal logistics trade instructor in the Air Force, was deployed to Antarctica, helped to develop the Air Force Creed and was selected for the United States Air Force Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Academy Leadership programme.

Now a mother of six children, F/S McNabb spoke at the recent recruit graduation dinner about her career with the Air Force, including the ups the downs, struggles and challenges which she has faced in her career and life.

To best describe what perseverance means for her she wrote a letter to herself as a recruit, explaining things she wishes she knew back then. She read this letter to the graduating recruits.

"As is life, it has its challenges, but there is a whole lot of greatness in there too. You may laugh, you may cry, it may not affect you at all.

"I do hope at some stage throughout your careers, aspects of this letter may come to light and will resonate with you," she told them.

At the end of 2020, F/S McNabb received news that her cancer was terminal and while she doesn't know how much time she has left, she is making the most of her life.

"One of the hardest things is preparing yourself to let go of the organisation that you love. The organisation that you have grown with. The organisation that you will always be part of.

"The New Zealand Defence Force's unwavering support is appreciated by me and my family. It really does make the process so much easier for me to deal with. I am really one lucky girl," she said.

F/S McNabb continues to persevere through and navigate what is to come.

# Air Intelligence School opens

**B** | SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR  
**Y** | CHARLENE WILLIAMSON



## The Air Intelligence School has officially opened at Base Woodbourne, with seven students embarking on their Intelligence careers.

**A**ir Intelligence specialists carry out a range of tasks to support Air Operations. These include generating intelligence mission data, processing data collected during a mission, and providing operational intelligence support prior to, during and after a mission so that it can be executed both safely and effectively.

Before the opening of our own school, personnel would attend the Air Intelligence Analyst Initial Employment Training, run by the Royal Australian Air Force Air Intelligence Training Unit based out of Adelaide.

Project Manager Squadron Leader (SQNLDR) Andrew Salt said the benefits of having a school in New Zealand were significant.

“We will now have a place where Air Intelligence specialists can learn and gain experience in becoming air intelligence instructors and develop future intelligence training.

“This is the first of many courses that we will be looking to the Air Intelligence School to develop and deliver over the coming years,” he said.

The Air Intelligence trade is now large enough to sustain training capability and is due to grow as a result of a range of new capabilities coming online.

“The new capabilities are extremely intelligence hungry and will also produce more information that needs to be processed into intelligence.

“In order for the RNZAF to realise the full spectrum of benefit of investing in new capability we need a comprehensive and coherent intelligence capability,” SQNLDR Salt said.

The initial training course is 13 weeks long, and the school will have the capacity to train 16 students per year over two courses.

Senior Instructor Sergeants (SGT) Kat Mathie and Stacy Goldsmith have been developing the initial training course along with a colleague and said the training will involve mainly classroom based theory.

“Due to the nature of our role in supporting Air Operations, the majority of our work is computer-based,” SGT Mathie said.

“Intelligence specialists are expected to be exceptional communicators, so there will be a lot of report writing, briefing and team discussions throughout.

“We are aiming to mirror an operational environment as best we can, in order to best prepare our students for the real-world,” SGT Mathie said.

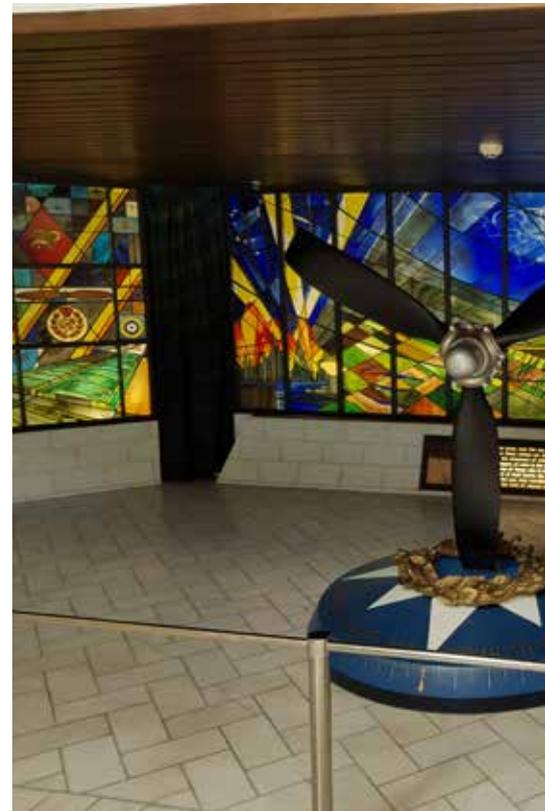
The course will be split into three parts – security, introduction into intelligence and how intelligence supports air operations.

SGT Goldsmith said being able to contribute to a milestone like this for the Air Force feels pretty good.

“Being able to contribute in such a major way in which Air Intelligence Training develops and evolves is hugely rewarding.

“I am most looking forward to putting it all into action. It’ll be good to see all our hard work put into practice and see how the students respond to it.

“I am also excited to see the students graduate at the end and be successful, qualified intelligence specialists,” he said.



## In celebration of our volunteers

B | AIR FORCE MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND  
Y | MICHELLE SIM

### FIND OUT MORE:

If you're interested in finding out more about volunteering at the Air Force Museum, contact the team on: [info@airforcemuseum.co.nz](mailto:info@airforcemuseum.co.nz)

**Volunteers have been an integral part of the RNZAF Museum since its beginning in the late 1970s. National Volunteer Week (20–26 June) offers an opportunity to shine a light on the dozens of men and women who give their time freely to help our museum. Like so many organisations around New Zealand, we would not be able to achieve all we do without the support of our volunteers.**

**T**oday, our team of about 30 paid staff is ably assisted by a pool of more than 70 volunteers. They are largely split between museum guides, who are responsible for greeting visitors and taking tours, and technical volunteers, who assist with large object restoration and conservation projects in our workshops. In addition, we have a small number of volunteers who help out in other areas of the museum, such as the archives and audio-visual department.

Our volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds, from ex-service personnel to technicians and tradespeople, school teachers and salesmen – to name a few! What unites them all is an enthusiasm for helping to preserve and share the history of our Air Force. Here are just a couple of the many amazing individuals who volunteer with us.



### SMOKEY DAWSON TECHNICAL VOLUNTEER

Smokey joined the Air Force as a boy entrant in 1963. He had an eventful career as an airframe fitter, working on the Bristol Freighter, DC-6 and Hastings, through to the C-130H Hercules.

Smokey received a Chief of Air Staff Commendation in 1987 and finished up in 1989 as a Warrant Officer at Pilot Training School at Wigram. He then did another 22 years' service with Air New Zealand.

Smokey's first contact with the museum was in the mid-1980s, when he worked on the original restoration-rebuild of the Catalina flying boat at Whenuapai. He says that a desire to reconnect with the museum and keep busy was behind his decision to volunteer with the technical team; being able to work on the Catalina once again was a bonus!

When asked what he enjoys most about volunteering here, he replied without hesitation – 'The people. It's a good group of people'.



### RAY SHERIDAN VOLUNTEER GUIDE

Ray Sheridan began volunteering with us in 2015, motivated in part by an interest in aircraft, but also a family association – he has a granddaughter who is a medic in the Air Force. Ray is no stranger to military ways himself, having done three years' compulsory military training with the Army in the early 1960s.

Most of his working life, however, has been spent in accounting and business administration, with the last 25 being in the IT sector.

Since his retirement, he has enjoyed finding new ways to keep busy and maintain social interaction with people. As well as volunteering with us, he also donates his time to Age Concern, as a driver.

Ray loves the social interaction and mental stimulation of volunteering and feels the fact that you're 'always learning' and 'get to meet people from all over the world' are the biggest highlights of being a guide.

### EVELYN ROBERTSON ARCHIVES VOLUNTEER

A librarian by trade, Evelyn spent most of her career working in university libraries in Otago and Canterbury before taking early retirement to go travelling with her husband. With her 'particular set of skills' and keen interest in genealogy, she was well placed to offer her services to our archives team back in 2009.

Most of the work Evelyn does for us involves indexing (recording the contents) of magazines and periodicals in the collection, but she has also lent her librarian expertise to various other projects in our reference library.

Evelyn loves the people at the Museum, but she also enjoys learning 'odd little snippets' about things, and with her father having been a bomber pilot during the War, she certainly has an affinity with our collection.

# Defence Force at the heart of historic Women's Super Rugby match

**B** | SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR  
**Y** | SIMONE MILLAR

**It's been a long time coming, but the first Women's Super Rugby match was finally held in Auckland recently and two New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) women had their hearts in the game.**

Air Force logistics specialist Corporal (CPL) Hayley Hutana and Navy Sub Lieutenant (SLT) Kate Williams, stepped out on to the pitch at Eden Park to represent the Blues.

The event was an historic, competitive contest and was the first time Women's Blues and Chiefs Super Rugby sides were formed.

Manager of the new Blues team, Dean Watkins, hopes the game will go professional for women, giving them more time to train and grow as players.

"It was such a fantastic experience and showcase for women's rugby at this level. And what an entertaining match with plenty of attacking flair and scoring opportunities," says Mr Watkins.

CPL Hutana, took the field as fullback, and agrees, saying people should know more about women's rugby.

"It's a surreal feeling being a part of both the lead up and the game itself. It's the first of its kind so it was pretty special to be directly involved. Being amongst a team of amazing athletes. It was pretty exciting and hopefully in the near future we will see a competition of the like," says CPL Hutana.

SLT Williams said it was "unreal" running out onto the pitch.

"When our team ran out at the stadium the bar was set, I don't think I've ever been on a field with a crowd that has made that much noise before," says the openside flanker.

"The match is such a big opportunity because it's putting women's rugby in the spotlight – it's cool for all the young girls to see it as well. It's been a long-time coming, this match."

Both SLT Williams and CPL Hutana play in the Defence Ferns Women's Rugby team, which supports and promotes women's rugby across all services in the Defence Force, and say they couldn't have got this far without the team.

"When I first joined the Defence Force it was a big dream of lots of the women to form a rugby team. But it wasn't until 2018, with the hard work of manager, Joe, we started to get our first games and first camps," says SLT Williams.

Squadron Leader (SQNLDR) Joe Tasker pushed hard for women's rugby to be recognised and says the team is more than just about rugby.

"Rugby is the vehicle for promoting wāhine toa (strong women) leaders, focussing on being a professional unit and trying to remove barriers to support women to go on to higher honours. The team aims to create value for the NZDF and individuals alike," says SQNLDR Tasker.

The undefeated Defence Ferns team always includes community engagement in its programmes – like assisting to feed unhomed in Auckland, giving back to the community, engaging with the Pacific and promoting women leaders.

Women from all levels of the Defence Force have really welcomed having the team.

"They absolutely love the team environment and strive to be the best team they can be. They really are a role model team within the NZDF," he says.

The Chiefs ended up taking the game this time around, but they all hope players from the Defence Force will be part of a new tournament, featuring the Super Rugby Blues in the future.

"It definitely was a really physical match, but we expected that. I hope that we put on a spectacle for those who watched live and through social media across the world," says CPL Hutana.

"People do love to watch women's rugby and come to the games. The more matches there are, the more young girls get to see their future selves. It shows them a path way," says SLT Williams.

Until the team hears if there will be another Women's Super Rugby game, the Defence Ferns will be playing pre-season games against two prestigious Farah Palmer Cup teams, so watch this space.

## DEFENCE FERNS UPCOMING GAMES:

**Royal New Zealand Air Force Base Auckland**

**29 June 2021**

Defence Ferns vs North Harbour

**4 July 2021**

Defence Ferns vs Auckland



CPL Hayley Hutana during the Blues match against the Chiefs

## Entitled to support



**NZDF provides parental support to enable operational effectiveness and wellbeing to retain members of the NZDF (Regular Forces, Territorial Forces and Civil Staff) who are primary carers. Defence Human Resource (DHR) entitlements includes, but is not limited to:**

### LEAVE

#### **Parental Leave or Negotiated Carer Leave**

Up to 52 weeks of leave (unpaid). Inland Revenue facilitates parental leave payments.

#### **Special Parental Leave (Paid)**

Provided for reasons connected with pregnancy, birth or when assuming the permanent responsibility for the care of a child. Where an entitlement to special parental leave has been exhausted compassionate leave or sick leave provisions are to apply.

#### **For more information refer to:**

DFO 3, Part 8, Chapter 8 Leave (Military)

DFO 3, Part 8, Chapter 8A Leave (Civilian)

DFO 3, Part 12, Chapter 10 The Employment and Support during Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

Inland Revenue website

### ENGAGEMENT OR EMPLOYMENT

Keeping in touch days. Provided for members on parental leave to stay connected with their employer. Up to 64 hours will be paid.

Continuation of career, training, and promotion opportunities.

Protected seniority while pregnant, for periods of parental leave and during the breast feeding support period.

Job protection. A member returning from parental leave is entitled to resume work in the same or a similar position as held at the time of commencing parental leave.

### CHILDCARE

Early childcare facilities at camps and bases.

### FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Members can apply for varied hours, varied work location, and/or reduced hours.

### PARENTAL RETURNING INCENTIVE PAYMENT

Paid as one payment of up to six weeks salary. Applicable for members of the Armed Forces (Regular Forces or Territorial Forces).

### ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE

(Only applicable for members of the Regular Forces)

Continuation of NZDF accommodation assistance while on parental leave including Operational Enabling Allowance – Posting Readiness.

Members can apply for NZDF housing. This includes members that have a dependant child normally living with them for at least six months of any year.

## Notices

### VOLUNTARY EDUCATION STUDY ASSISTANCE (VESA)

**Semester Two, 2021 applications are now being accepted**

**You may submit your request for funding within 90 days of your study start date. Apply online at NZDC, Defence Learning Toolkit VESA Application (e-form)**

Applicants should be aware of their responsibilities prior to making an application IAW DFO 3/2016.

Prior to starting the application process, applicants are to:

- Confirm the level of study is right for them with NZDC DLearn
- Advise their 1-UP of their study intentions
- Provide supporting paperwork including study documentation from the official learning provider website (ready to attach to your e-form application)

Contact your local DLearn Adult Learning Tutor who can assist you with your application. If you have any further queries, please email our Tertiary Services & Support Advisor at [nzdclearnvesa@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:nzdclearnvesa@nzdf.mil.nz)

- POLICY (terms and conditions) SADFO 3/2016 VESA Policy SADFO 3/2016 VESA Policy (terms and conditions)
- Please note there are some changes to the policy to improve accessibility to VESA. The changes will be promulgated on ILP.



## Report serious wrongdoing

**Fraud**  
**Corruption**  
**Intimidation**  
**Breach of safety and hazardous material regulations**  
**Drug use**

 **0800 OUR NZDF**  
(0800 687 6933)

A FORCE FOR  
NEW ZEALAND



## BODYBUILDING COMPETITION

**The New Zealand Defence Force in association with ICN New Zealand Presents:**

The Armed Forces and Emergency Services Bodybuilding and Fitness Competition 2021.

For details and registration of interest please email: [BBComp@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:BBComp@nzdf.mil.nz).

In support of Te Kiwi Maia – The Courageous Kiwi  
[www.tekiwimaia.co.nz](http://www.tekiwimaia.co.nz)





**B** | CORPORAL  
**Y** | CHAD SHARMAN

Our Royal New Zealand Air Force T-6C Texan II displays are always a crowd pleaser and judging by the large crowds that formed to watch this five-ship formation flight over Lake Rotorua recently their latest show was no exception. The trick to aircraft photography is all in the shutter speed control. Not too slow to blur the aircraft frame but not too fast to freeze the propeller blades. Nothing is as easy as it looks in the movies, even in Rotovegas.



**WE  
WANT  
YOUR  
PASSION**

## Be part of the New Zealand Defence Force

There are over 109 roles available including IT, communications, engineering, logistics, aviation, medicine, and emergency response. Some roles require a degree and some don't. We also have university and graduate scholarships available.

**defencecareers.mil.nz 08001FORCE**

