

AIR FORCE NEWS

Vital Pacific
freight delivery

In the heart
of RIMPAC

A109 fleet
milestone

#250

SEP | 22



**Operating
over the
horizon**

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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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Operating beyond the horizon

PHOTOGRAPHER:

CPL Dillon Anderson



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Photo of the month

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First Word



B | AIRMAN OF THE YEAR
Y | SERGEANT GARETH NEL

“Coming off the back of 2021 I was lucky enough to partake in the final P-3K2 operational deployment, attend the Air and Space Power Conference in Canberra, and now find myself in tropical Florida for part of the initial P-8A transition training.”

Tēnā koutou katoa from a hot and slightly crazy Florida!

It has been an interesting year thus far. We're working towards normality, undergoing sizeable Air Force transitions and battling organisational issues; three ingredients which generally don't sit well together.

As such, I would like to take a moment to share my perspective on the turbulence that has people considering making a break for it.

Like others in the Defence Force, I've found myself challenged by finances and curious about opportunities outside the Air Force. Financial security is a big one, and a pain point felt by many. It can be all too easy to focus on the negative but when I add up the non-monetary benefits the Air Force offer, there's no comparison.

These trips are great for meeting and engaging with new people, building on existing relationships with colleagues, and enjoying a change in scenery, which is good for the soul. I find it's these periods where I am away and engaging with more senior personnel that have lasting positive mentoring impacts.

While the Air Force has more to offer than just travel, one of the reasons I joined was simply to see new places and so far, I am more than content.

Yes, this is just my personal experience, but it is a positive one I'm sure many of you share – one which will continue to deliver as new capability comes online.

So, while things are challenging at the moment (both in and out of the Air Force), I can sit back and take measure of the positives; job security, especially when Covid was peaking, my funded studies with little return obligations, travel, new places and faces, and a flexible and understanding chain of command that has been supportive of my goals and aspirations.

What other institutions offer the same package? I recognise that everyone's experience is different, this is just mine, but my advice to anyone who will take it is to seek out opportunities that excite you and push for them.

The worst that can happen is someone says no but if you don't ask, you'll never know.

My chain of command throughout my Air Force career has been accommodating, motivating and more than that, the catalyst for building the confidence I have now. I for one am sticking around to see what the future holds for me and other aviators to which I can be a positive role model for too.





Vital Pacific freight delivery

A C-130 Hercules delivered critical freight to Kiribati and Fiji recently.

The aircraft delivered crucial water infrastructure in Kiribati to support the country's Government's response to their severe drought. A state of disaster was declared on 11 June, with the entire country of about 120,000 people affected by a lack of rainfall.

The aircraft then flew to Nadi Airport, Fiji, to deliver a steriliser destined for the new Ba Hospital.

Logan Currie, chief executive of medical solutions provider Cubro, said life-saving operations at Ba Hospital could not start until the steriliser was in place.

"We had exhausted all shipping options, and were concerned that life-saving surgeries would be delayed if we couldn't find a way of getting the steriliser to Fiji."

Air Component Commander Air Commodore Shaun Sexton said the flight to Fiji had been planned for some weeks.

"When the call came in to assist Kiribati, we organised the diversion to ensure they were able to receive what they needed. We're happy to have helped these consignments make it to Kiribati and Fiji where they will quite literally be life-saving."

Also on board the aircraft were 9,000 resource books for senior secondary school children, which had been gifted by the Fiji Association in Auckland and ESA Publications. The books covered a range of subjects including English, maths, economics, chemistry, science, physics and accounting.

President of the Fiji Association in Auckland, Dr Satendra Singh said the books would assist in much needed revision work after Covid-related problems faced by many schools across the country.

"The textbooks will be distributed by the Fijian Education Ministry to needy schools, especially in remote areas, in time for many senior students to prepare for exams."

On the return leg from Fiji, the Hercules returned equipment and stores back to Aotearoa New Zealand on completion of a bilateral military exercise involving 90 New Zealand Army Officer Cadets who had been undertaking their field training in Fiji with the Republic of Fiji Military Forces.

"With ongoing freight challenges, there was simply no other way to get essential health care equipment like this steriliser to our Pacific neighbours."

- Logan Currie, Cubro



In the heart of RIMPAC

B | PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
Y | SQUADRON LEADER KIRI OHLSON

A major international exercise involving more than two dozen nations and thousands of personnel has finished, with Group Captain Pete Gibson playing a key role in the United States-based event. He tells *Air Force News* what it was like to be involved in RIMPAC 2022.

Group Captain (GPCAPT) Pete Gibson was the deputy commander of Combined Task Force (CTF) 172 for this year's Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise. The CTF alone comprised of 18 maritime patrol aircraft and about 800 personnel.

Within the task force, American, Australian, British, Canadian, Indian, Japanese, Korean and New Zealand participants worked together to conduct maritime air patrols. RIMPAC is a multinational maritime exercise that takes place in and around the Hawaiian Islands and Southern California.

This year, 26 nations, 38 surface ships, three submarines, nine national land forces, more than 170 aircraft, and 25,000 personnel participated in the exercise.

"Strategic success is getting 26 nations on the island. It doesn't matter if it's one person or 10 aircraft the fact is you've got a flag here from that nation. Having eight nations as a part of CTF 172 here working together is just success full stop.

"There are so many different nations and their aircraft have different capabilities. Everyone has a slightly different way of doing things. But the fact that you can have an Australian aircraft being relieved by a Korean aircraft, being relieved by a US aircraft it all works just seamlessly. That's the real goal here and that's what RIMPAC's all about. If we have to go out and do this in the real world we've worked with these nations before, so we understand each other."

ABOVE
Combined Task Force 172 at RIMPAC



The plan is for the Air Force to return to RIMPAC in 2024 with a P-8A Poseidon. The exercise will be an important part of the transition plan for the aircraft, building on basic search and rescue capability to practise more advanced warfighting, GPCAPT Gibson said.

“Exercises such as RIMPAC will provide unique training opportunities for the P-8A crew. It’s an environment where crews can test themselves against ships and submarines and working in a big organisation with lots of other aircraft and complex airspace.”

This year there were more than 165 NZDF personnel participating in RIMPAC performing range of different roles, at sea and ashore, from all three Services.

That included HMNZS Aotearoa at sea, a team from HMNZS Matataua – the Naval Littoral Warfare specialists in Southern California, Royal New Zealand Air Force personnel embedded in the Combined Air Operations Centre and the NZ Army Joint Fires Team that worked alongside the United States Marine Corps.

“Having individuals as augmentees embedded in the organisation, performing a range of roles across a number of trades and getting experience they never would have had, is important to developing partner interoperability,” GPCAPT Gibson said.

“New Zealand is well regarded in RIMPAC and they know we’ve got people who can do this job well, that’s really important and it sets us up for the future.”

“We have smart people, they’re pretty quick on their feet and they can pick things up and run with it. And generally Kiwis make a massive contribution, not necessarily in numbers but just in the quality of what we do.”

- Group Captain Pete Gibson

New Command for Base Auckland

B | SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR
Y | SIMONE MILLAR



A parade to mark the formal handover of the Queen's Colour from Base Ohakea to Base Auckland and the Change of Command of Base Auckland took place in Whenuapai recently.

Group Captain (GPCAPT) Mike Cannon has taken command of the air base after 31 years of service to the Air Force.

"This is a chance to get back to my roots. I started my Air Force career at Base Auckland while serving on No. 3 Squadron at Hobsonville, so coming back to Auckland feels very familiar.

"The opportunity to be part of a very high-performing team is a real honour. I believe that you never stop learning, so the opportunity to lead and manage a major Defence establishment is exciting. It's the people that give it life, and so they will always be uppermost in my mind," he said.

GPCAPT Cannon joined the Air Force from the Royal Air Force in 1991, as a Corporal aircraft technician working on Iroquois and Wasp helicopters. In 1994 he remustered to helicopter loadmaster and qualified on the Iroquois helicopter. He has served throughout the South Pacific, Australia and completed operational tours in Bougainville and East Timor.

Since then, GPCAPT Cannon has held the positions of Director of Operations at Headquarters No 488 Wing and Air Advisor in the New Zealand Defence Staff London, including being accredited as the New Zealand Defence Attaché to Italy.

In 2017 he was appointed Commanding Officer No. 3 Squadron and on completion of this tour he was promoted to Group Captain and appointed Assistant Chief of Air Force Training and Support.

"For the past two and a half years I have been the Assistant Chief of Air Force Training and Support. This is a very broad role that covers RNZAF ground training, a range of key enabling functions and people and culture. It was a hugely challenging role, but I worked with some amazing people who gave me a very good grounding in life in a strategic headquarters," GPCAPT Cannon said.

Base Auckland supports tactical and strategic air mobility capability to Antarctica and across the globe and air surveillance and response in the South Pacific and Southern Ocean.

It was established in 1937 and is home to No. 5 Squadron, No. 6 Squadron and No. 40 Squadron, which operate Seasprite helicopters, and Orion, Hercules and Boeing aircraft.



GPCAPT Cannon is taking over the Base Commander reins from GPCAPT Andy Scott, who started the role in 2019. GPCAPT Scott said his priority was to deliver safe military air operations for Aotearoa New Zealand and create a positive environment for personnel to reach their potential.

“Coming into the role in that time meant managing the base through the Covid-19 pandemic, which meant that although the goal was still the same, the delivery had to be quite different. I feel I have been incredibly lucky to have had the opportunity to command the base through the pandemic, because it has provided the opportunity to see just how amazing our people are in facing adversity.

“Having been part of everything the base has achieved over the past three years, still delivering military air operations around the world, but doing so under these conditions is something I will always be proud to say I was part of,” he said.

GPCAPT Scott departed last month to the United Kingdom to complete the Global Strategy Programme at the Royal College of Defence Studies in London and will return to Aotearoa New Zealand next year as the Air Component Commander on promotion to Air Commodore.

GPCAPT Cannon sees a bright future for Base Auckland with significant investment in capabilities and infrastructure, which will modernise the force to face the next challenge.

“We are in the process of conducting the largest upgrade to our capabilities since the 1960s and by 2025 we will have modernised the majority of our aircraft, in order to sustain military air operations in support of our nation's security in times of peace and in conflict,” GPCAPT Cannon said.

The Change of Command Parade and Queen's Colour handover included a special flypast, Formation Thunder. A Boeing 757 led NZ4204 Orion, on its last flight before retiring at Base Woodbourne.

“With growing threats of climate change and strategic competition being so significant in our region, Base Auckland will continue to be operationally focussed and will build upon our proud history of supporting our Pacific friends and neighbours.”

– Group Captain Mike Cannon

FAR LEFT
Group Captain Mike Cannon

TOP LEFT & RIGHT
Change of Command ceremony at Base Auckland

BOTTOM LEFT
Formation Thunder fly past

BOTTOM RIGHT
Handover of the Queen's Colour to Base Auckland



Operating over the horizon

B | EDITOR
Y | REBECCA QUILLIAM

The Air Force's maritime squadron, No. 6 Squadron, has a rich aviation history spanning 32 years, in two iterations over the past 80 years. We take a look at how integral the squadron is to air operations today.

The squadron is a bridge connecting the Air Force and Royal New Zealand Navy and undertakes vital maritime aviation work including anti-surface warfare, underwater warfare, maritime patrols and surveillance, search and rescue, and utility operations (winching and load lifting).

The team also uses its eight SH-2G(I) Seasprite helicopters for domestic tasks for Government agencies, including the Department of Conservation and Ministry of Primary Industries.

"I think that the hybrid nature of No. 6 Squadron makes us very unique," Lieutenant Commander (LTCDR) David Roderick said.

"Our personnel really enjoy the smaller squadron – how we are a bit tighter knit than some of the larger fixed wing squadrons. That connection makes a difference when we all go away together for months on a ship."

The primary mission of the aircraft is anti-surface warfare, which is the key difference from the other Air Force rotary squadron, he said.

"We've got anti-submarine warfare as well. So we have the ability to visually look for submarines, but also then drop weapons on them if that's required.

"Aside from the ability to launch weapons, another point of difference for the squadron is the ability to operate in a maritime environment and deploying on Navy ships for significant periods of time – you're looking at six to nine-month trips."

The aircraft will also be used by the ship as an "air spotter" when it deploys its own gun on targets beyond the horizon line, LTCDR Roderick said.

Alongside that capability is the search and rescue, medical evacuations, and humanitarian aid and disaster relief work performed by the crew.

Earlier this year, the squadron was called to help after a volcanic eruption and tsunami hit Tonga. They flew reconnaissance missions around the islands and reported back to command and Joint Forces Headquarters the extent of the damage.

Another major event the team was involved in was the 2019 Whakaari/ White Island eruption.

"One of our aircraft was on HMNZS Wellington and flying reconnaissance flights to the crater. The island was still in the phase where anything could happen. They flew into the crater a number of times to assess the suitability for landing," LTCDR Roderick said.

The operation was harrowing, with personnel still dealing with the emotion of the task, he said.



“But it’s something they can all be very proud of and it was great that the work was in conjunction with the Navy.”

Seasprite pilot LTCDR Sam Williams was the flight commander for the Whakaari/White Island mission and flew a Seasprite over the crater in the days after the tragic eruption that left 22 dead and 25 injured.

“We ended up being down there for the whole time, on the ship just off the coast a few kilometres from the islands. It was a case of assessing the conditions on the ground, seeing if there was anyone still there and looking for missing remains.”

The conditions were variable and the team had to often wait for the wind to blow the ash away from the route the helicopter needed to fly, he said.

“So we had to pick a moment when it was clear and flying in quite low to stay below the cloud to get to the crater and have a look. The loadmaster in the back had a decent camera and took probably hundreds of photos of the inside of the crater and the island that was covered in debris.”

The squadron trains for these types of missions by doing mountain-flying training in the South Island, LTCDR Williams said.

“In a practical sense we had those skills to fall back on and also general real-time risk assessment skills that you gain as professional aviators. But it was different to normal, especially flying amongst ash and other things in the atmosphere.”

Flying in No. 6 Squadron as a naval aviator is a unique experience where one of the hardest skills to learn was taking off and landing on a moving ship, he said.

“It’s core to our business and we do it in all sorts of different types of weather and sea conditions.”

He described it as a “team sport”.

“There’s the bridge team putting the ship in the right direction to give you the right winds. You’ve got the flight deck team who are waiting, ready to go out onto the pitching deck in the dark to chain the helicopter down as soon as you land.

“Then there’s the controller and the ops room talking to you on the radio and essentially guiding you – so it’s like a team sport,” LTCDR Williams said.

“When it comes to landing on the ship itself it’s a case of picking your moment really – waiting for the calm in between swells or waiting for the ship to settle down, as it can pitch and roll around quite a bit.”



“We like to think of the Seasprite as a jack of all trades with a focus on that warfare role being the sharp end. They have the extra eyes and ears and teeth for the ship that can go beyond the range of what the ships’ sensors and weapons can do.”

- Lieutenant Commander David Roderick

Working with the Navy made the job unique, he said.

“That’s the kind of thing that most of us want to do and what we trained for.”

Able helicopter loadmaster (AHLM) Tyson Turnbull said winching and working with underslung loads on a “moving runway” of a ship’s deck was a dynamic part of his job.

“I’m operating to a moving surface rather than a fixed forest floor, sand dune or top of a mountain. We’re always looking for changes to that environment like the tide coming in the front of the ship or the movement of personnel on the deck.

“We are also listening to the communications that the ship is sending us, giving us clearance to land and briefing us on what the relative wind to the ship is.”

The sea-faring role also provided some special moments, AHLM Turnbull said.

“I’d have to say every time I crack the door and put my head in the wind I get a bit of a smile on my face. It’s pretty cool when you’re out there in the middle of nowhere and there’s just water. It’s a kind of surreal feeling.

“But I think one of the coolest things I’ve seen is the rising sun in the Pacific from the flight deck of HMNZS Aotearoa and seeing the silhouette of HMNZS Te Kaha on the horizon.”

LEFT

LTCDR Sam Williams flying a Seasprite to Whakaari/White Island
Photo: NZ Police

RIGHT

The SH-2G(I) Seasprite embarked on HMNZS Wellington, conducting Maritime Resource Border Control Operations in support of the Governments of Tonga, Samoa, Tokelau, Tuvalu and Fiji to ameliorate the threat of illegal fishing activities within their EEZs.

“We operate well over the horizon. And that’s the work we want to be involved with, being on the back of a ship transiting the South Sea, conducting warfare exercises in Southeast Asia or at RIMPAC, or looking for drug smuggling dhows in the Indian Ocean. That’s the kind of thing that most of us want to do and what we trained for.”

- Lieutenant Commander Sam Williams

Air Force Maintainer Corporal (CPL) Tobi Johnston-Officer hasn’t had many deployment opportunities yet, aside from a seven-day exercise on HMNZS Canterbury.

“You hear stories about the work being fairly tough or the tempo being fairly high. But then it’s funny, with all of the stories about what they went through and what they had to do always end with, ‘But it was so much fun and you’ll love it.’”

LEFT

Avionics technicians replace a Seasprite’s number one generator on board HMNZS Canterbury as it sails to Auckland and Campbell islands



The maintainers for the squadron have different challenges to those at No. 3 Squadron, with corrosion and wear and tear from spending time at sea being the major issues, he said.

“The environment is very harsh. The extra maintenance that goes into preventing corrosion of coatings and coverings is quite important.”

The squadron was a unique place where all personnel were trained to perform a number of tasks outside of their trade role, CPL Johnston-Officer said. They all undergo sea survival training as well as a damage control course that teaches firefighting skills in full breathing apparatus and protective clothing.

“If it comes down to it and helicopters are not flying, but the boat is sinking, everybody is involved in all of the emergency scenarios.”

The team works much in the same way as the Air Force’s land-based rotary squadron in term of dispatching and receiving aircraft, and dealing with winched loads.

“But we’re getting the load out on the deck while dealing with 35 knot winds, salt spray and during night or day. It’s a really dynamic experience that keeps you engaged.

“It’s an intense workload, which is what makes No. 6 Squadron interesting and unique.”

Rosie Hardacre operates the Seasprite simulator at Base Auckland. The simulator is a full-mission unit, housing a replica Seasprite cockpit, with all the controls, instruments and electronic equipment.



**NO. 6 SQUADRON:
A BRIEF HISTORY**

The squadron was created during World War II as an Army co-operation unit flying Vickers Vildebeest and Hawker Hind aircraft. They were joined by other maritime patrol flying boats including the Consolidated Catalinas.

A base in Tonga followed to protect shipping and later the detachment moved to Vanuatu and then to Halavo Bay, just north of Guadalcanal, where they stayed for the rest of the war.

The squadron had successes with rescue tasks, dubbed Dumbo missions, where they saved dozens of servicemen in 25 missions.

Following the war, the squadron flew Short Sunderland flying boats and Auster light aircraft. But by August 1957 the squadron was disbanded, with the Sunderlands moving to No. 5 Squadron.

Nearly 50 years later in 2005, No. 6 Squadron was re-formed and based at Whenuapai where they flew SH-2G(NZ) Seasprite helicopters, replaced in 2015 by eight SH-2G(I) versions.

The helicopters can embark on HMNZ ships Te Kaha, Te Mana, Aotearoa, Canterbury, Wellington and Otago. They can be equipped with Penguin anti-ship missiles, Mk 46 torpedoes and the Mag 58 General Purpose Machine Gun.

It also has the same sensors as the helicopter, including its radar, forward-looking infra-red camera, weapons and electronic surveillance equipment.

“The training tool is fully capable and can simulate pretty much everything the helicopters can do, which makes it a lot easier to train people on,” Ms Hardacre said.

“Instead of getting a newbie pilot to try to land on a ship that’s tilting all over the place, they get to do it in the safety of the simulator.

“It saves a huge amount of money in terms of fuel costs and maintenance of the aircraft itself.”

The machine can simulate all kinds of weather and day or night modes with a “click of a button”. They can also throw all kinds of ship movement at the crew, she said.

“It’s pretty cool to see the kit move with the ships’ motion – it’s so realistic.”

During simulator training the team of pilots and loadmasters take part in the simulated sorties.

“It always helps to take the load off with the full crew on board.”

LEFT

The Seasprite simulator at Base Auckland

TOP RIGHT

Vickers Vildebeest at Hobsonville
Photo: Air Force Museum of NZ

BOTTOM RIGHT

The Seasprite simulator at Base Auckland

Fleet milestone

B | EDITOR
Y | REBECCA QUILLIAM



No. 3 Squadron's A109 helicopter fleet has recently ticked over its 10,000th flying hour, with a flight from NZ3401. That's equivalent to the helicopter flying roughly two hours every day since the fleet landed at Base Ohakea 11 years ago.

The success of flying that number of hours safely is a significant achievement with pilots and loadmasters trained and prepared to deliver operations in the NH90 and Seasprite helicopters.

Beyond training, the A109 helicopter delivers light utility tasks within the Defence Force and with other government agencies.

Since their arrival in 2011, about 40 pilots and 40 helicopter loadmasters have begun their helicopter flying careers after training in the A109s, Flight Commander Squadron Leader (SQLDR) Hayden Sheard said.

"It's important to recognise the fleet has achieved 10,000 hours without any major incident, which is pretty significant."

While the bulk of the unit's work is training-focussed, it is also used to assist in operations with outside agencies, SQLDR Sheard said.

"Ministry for Primary Industries is probably the most prolific agency that we work with. We can whip along the coast, helping them with monitoring fisheries around New Zealand. We've also done some work with them around wilding pines, which are a particular problem in the South Island.

"We fit in a lot of our tasking and support work around our training requirements. Once the crews have learned initial skills with instructors they can expand on those through actual missions on the A109, which is really great as well."

Reaching the milestone was a special moment for SQLDR Sheard, who was part of the team who introduced the rotary frame into service.

"So it's been pretty cool for me to be the flight commander when we tipped over 10,000 flying hours."

**LEFT**

NZ3401 on a test flight in Italy on 12 Feb 2010, before joining No. 3 Squadron

MIDDLE

A109 maintenance and aircrew teams in front of NZ3401 after hitting 10,000 flying hours

RIGHT

A109 fleet in formation flight



Senior Non-Commissioned Officer in charge of Flight Line Team B, Flight Sergeant (F/S) Ian Toms was also on hand when the A109s arrived on the base.

“When the 10,000th hour was hit I wasn’t sure if the team would care too much, but everyone was pretty proud of it. It was especially relevant for me because I was one of the ones to help bring them into service.”

The aircraft were straightforward to maintain and in the years they have been with No. 3 Squadron, they hadn’t suffered any catastrophic issues that have grounded them for any significant length of time, he said.

The helicopter was a “massive step up” in terms of technology compared with its predecessor, the Sioux.

“We went from very traditional gauges to a modern integrated aircraft – it’s one of the more modern aircraft in the Air Force fleet.”

The A109 fleet was brought from Italian manufacturers, who didn’t believe F/S Toms when he explained which helicopter they were replacing.

“So it went back and forth a few times and they just thought it was a translation error because there was no way we could go from the Sioux to the A109. Eventually they gave up and thought we just didn’t understand the question.

“I guess it just shows how long we keep aircraft going for – we keep them flying right to the very end. The A109s have theoretically got a 30-year life so it will be interesting to see what we do in 20 years’ time with them.”

“We train new helicopter pilots and loadmasters and provide experience for new aircraft and avionics technicians to kick off their careers at the frontline of the Air Force.”

– Squadron Leader Hayden Sheard

85

YEARS OF SERVICE



PHOTO
The Queen Mother waving from the door of No. 42 Squadron Dakota.



Very Important Flights

B | EDITOR
Y | REBECCA QUILLIAM

No. 40 Squadron was first tasked with flying national and international VIPs at the the end of World War II in the Douglas C-47 Dakotas. Following their retirement Andovers picked up the flights, then the Boeing 727 and most recently the Boeing 757 aircraft. The missions are no ordinary flying.

The past two years have seen a dramatic decrease in VIP flights due to the Covid pandemic, however, as international travel reopens, these tasks are now returning.

Boeing Flight Commander Squadron Leader (SQNLDR) Tom Tuke said passengers included prime ministers, royalty, government officials and other dignitaries. Media and business delegates also often accompany the flights.

Most recently the crews have flown to Australia, Japan, Pacific islands, Singapore and the United States.

A major trip with Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and a contingent to the United States recently included extra crew in case anyone caught Covid and back-ups were needed.



“I remember a flight where I had to make 100 tomato roses and 100 cucumber fans. It was my first introduction to VIP flying - I think the VIP was a dignitary from Sweden.”

- Warrant Officer Lynda Garrod

ABOVE

Flight Steward Sergeant Gaylene Ganrooy with a platter of sweet treats inside a No. 42 Squadron VIP Andover

The aircraft, nicknamed Old Faithful Betty by media on board, was delayed leaving the country at the end of the trip with a maintenance fault on the final leg of the trip, SQNLDR Tuke said.

“We nearly made it all the way. We got the Prime Minister to the meeting with the President of the United States, but we couldn’t depart on time out of Washington. We did all those legs without writing one thing in the maintenance log. There were 14 sectors for the trip, with the aircraft crossing the US twice – it was faultless for the first 10 sectors.”

Flight Steward Leader Warrant Officer (W/O) Lynda Garrod has worked on numerous VIP flights, starting in 1994 on the Boeing 727.

“I was a chef originally so my first encounters with VIP flights was in the Base Auckland in-flight kitchen.”

After remustering to the Flight Steward trade in 1994, many of W/O Garrod’s VIP trips were initially on board the Boeing 727.

“At the time Jim Bolger was the prime minister so I had a number of flights during that time with him on board.”

She also helped to look after Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip when they visited Aotearoa New Zealand in 1996.

“I love VIP flying. It’s very rewarding to be able to provide excellent customer service to the passengers, including silver service.”

“Logistically it makes sense the VIP flights are with the Air Force rather than a commercial airline due to our flexibility. We can adapt very quickly and that often does happen – the VIP on the day might need to make a meeting where the timing has changed by a number of hours. We can do that, whereas you can’t do that when you have plane full of members of the public. If a VIP needs to return to New Zealand quickly we can generally achieve that as well.”

W/O Garrod referred to a flight, that she was unfortunately not on with former Prime Minister John Key, who was visiting the Taj Mahal and invited all the crew to join him. The famous attraction was closed to the public for the visit, so the crew was able to enjoy the building without the usual crowds.

“I love this job, it’s exciting and rewarding. One day, we could be flying Her Majesty the Queen and two days later its back flying normal non-VIP operations to Australia. VIP flying is where my passion is.”

Boeing pilot Flight Lieutenant (FLTLT) Matt West said one of the main aspects of the job to deal with is the time management.

“We try to make things really efficient so the aircraft is completely good to go when the VIPs arrive – the minute they’re on board, we’re starting the engines and on our way,” he said.

“One of the biggest things we deal with on these tasks is working to hard times. We might be turning up somewhere with an official party meeting the aircraft and if we suddenly show up 20 minutes early, it can throw the whole plan into disarray.”

Over the past two years during the pandemic the team has had to deal more regularly with last minute changes, which can result in major upheavals to flights, FLTLT West said.

“VIPs are usually fairly well set in terms of what they’re doing, but Covid has definitely added that extra element of change to things.”

Flying long-distance flights means the aircrew has time to show passengers around the cockpit. For about 18 months the pandemic put a pause to the visits to ensure the crew weren’t put at risk, however, the visits to the front of the aircraft are returning, FLTLT West said.

“The most recent VIP flight I had was to Australia and [Minister of Economic Development] Stuart Nash came up to say gidday for a bit. It’s neat to have the opportunity to meet the people we are carrying and show them what we do.”

FLTLT West piloted the Boeing to the United States with Prime Minister Ardern and he said the task was one of the best in a long time.

“Going back into places like Los Angeles International, flying into New York, Boston, Washington DC and San Francisco – these were places we haven’t been in a really long time.

“We also had some junior crew members who joined the squadron during the pandemic and flying schedules have been quiet for a couple of years, so the opportunity to take the jet back to some of those big locations was really exciting.”



“Sometimes on the task and in between flying we need to work out how we can change the schedule to deal with requested changes. We’ve got to get the new paperwork and requests through under urgency, which we would usually have weeks or months in advance to do.”

- Flight Lieutenant Matt West



ONE

The Boeing 757 undergoes a role change where the seats inside the aircraft are taken out and the layout is re-configured

TWO

Queen Elizabeth arriving by No. 42 Squadron Andover at RNZAF Base Wigram during her Royal Tour

THREE

Visit of Prince Charles and Princess Diana to Whenuapai, Base Auckland. Their Royal Highnesses descending the steps from a No. 40 Squadron Boeing 727

FOUR

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Prince William and Kate Middleton arriving to Base Auckland on a Boeing 757

FIVE

Duke and Duchess of Sussex, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle arriving in Aotearoa New Zealand on a Boeing 757



Visiting Sofia

B | SPACE OPERATIONS INSTRUCTOR
Y | FLIGHT SERGEANT DAVID CRESSWELL

NASA's Boeing 747SP Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) was operating out of Christchurch recently, conducting deep space observation missions from within the South Pacific region.

The NZDF Space Program and No. 42 Squadron visited SOFIA during a break in its busy flying schedule. Meeting with Edward Harmon, the NASA Mission Operations Development Lead for SOFIA, the NZDF Space Program team had the opportunity to discuss the SOFIA program, its observation capabilities, flight operations, and Mr Harmon's extensive work with NASA.

The team was given a guided tour around the aircraft while it was on the ground, getting an in-depth look at the observatory equipment and instrument operation. SOFIA was undergoing dispatch and pre-flight prior to its flight in the South Pacific, allowing the team to observe the flurry of activity required to get the aircraft ready for its mission and ask some of the observatory and flight operations personnel about their roles.

For Flying Officer Dan Robinson (a Sub Lieutenant at the time), the visit was a connection back to his time living in the Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve, only a few hours' drive from SOFIA's temporary home in Christchurch.

He worked there as an astronomy and stargazing guide in 2018 and 2019 before joining the NZDF.

"SOFIA sits near the peak of some aspects of space observation, so to have the opportunity to visit such a pioneering project and learn from world-leading experts on only day two of the job was an exceptional experience," he said.

A combined German (DLR) and American (NASA) project that is primarily based in the USA, SOFIA specialises in the observation of electromagnetic radiation at wavelengths longer than that of visible light (infrared spectrum).

Infrared light can pass through dense regions of gas and dust in space and is subject to less scattering and absorption. Many light-emitting objects in space output the majority of their energy at these longer wavelengths, meaning that through SOFIA, astronomers are able to observe objects and events at distances and an apparent brightness that ground-based telescopes operating in the visible light range are unable to detect.



“New Zealand is in a prime location for the tracking of orbital objects, situated in a wider area that has little in the way of upwards-looking sensors - and with the advantage of clear skies to enable observation stations to assist with the global effort to track space debris.”

-Flight Sergeant David Cresswell

These observations provide detailed imagery and data, which form the basis of many scientific studies in astronomy and astrophysics. SOFIA missions fly at high altitudes to mitigate interference from the atmosphere that can hinder a telescope's ability to detect faint and distant objects.

SOFIA's telescope is located at the rear end of the aircraft, and its protective cover can be seen extending out from the fuselage. At 19,000kg, the telescope and support structure present a significant weight and balance challenge for designers and loading specialists; this is offset by forward ballast and the equipment required to run the various instruments that get attached to the telescope.

The opportunity to talk with Edward Harmon enabled the NZDF Space Program team to learn from a specialist in an organisation that was a pioneer of the space age and conducts missions in both the air and space domains.

Mr Harmon has been with the SOFIA Project since 2005; prior to that, he worked on the International Space Station (ISS) Payload Verifications. His experience with Space Operations was invaluable to the NZDF Space Program team as they initiate and contribute to a wider range of Space Operations projects.

The insights into mission planning and operation execution in air and space domains are invaluable to understanding the complexities that face the Air Force in maximizing the use of space as an enabler to our air operations, especially as the Space Program expands in scope.

Principles of operation and technical hurdles that the SOFIA project faces are similar to those of our own Space Domain Awareness (SDA) platforms and research. SDA is a critical foundation of space security, incorporating the identification, characterization, and understanding of objects in orbit such as functional satellites and debris.

The NZDF Space Program continues to engage with both domestic and international partner organisations that are operating in the Space Domain. Building and maintaining these relationships allows the NZDF to increase understanding of the Space Domain and how to be custodians for those who benefit from assured access and preserve it for future generations.

PHOTO
NZDF Space Program Team
in front of the telescope and
observation instrument



Facing the challenge on the field

B | EDITOR
Y | REBECCA QUILLIAM

Corporal Hayley Hutana has spent her Air Force career balancing her love of sport, especially rugby, with excelling at her job. She has now upped the stakes after being named co-captain of the North Harbour women's rugby team.

“I am very grateful for the opportunity to co-lead our team. I'm looking forward to the challenge this year in competing against some of the bigger provincial teams.”

The 26-year-old's role as captain was announced about mid-July and the first game of the season at the end of that month was a success.

“We got a win first up, which has been a refreshing way to start the season. We played against Taranaki and set a nice platform to build on for the season.”

The season goes for about two months, with the playoffs in September, Corporal (CPL) Hutana said.

“Some of our players are still at high school, which just goes to show there really is a pathway in women's rugby now. Our team is aged between 17 and mid-30s.”

CPL Hutana's long-term goal and “ultimate dream” is to wear the black jersey for the country's 15-aside squad.

“I'm looking forward to the challenge and extra duties this year. For me, I have got to set an example through my actions, perform well each week and lead through my performance. I prefer to be that sort of leader, as opposed to someone who talks all the time.”

CPL Hutana is posted to inventory management, more specifically in a purchasing role for the Hercules, Boeings and P-3K2s.

And even though her sport takes up a lot of her time, CPL Hutana is able to make time for work life as well.

“It's about being as prepared as I can be in doing the little things right each day. I like to ensure that I'm organised each evening for the following day so that I can be present during both work and training commitments, as well as travelling and playing each week.”

Deployment opportunities can be limited with the role, which can in ways be helpful, she said.

“Being in an office role and with the season on at the moment, things have aligned nicely.”

“We're a pretty small team, and have some very young players. But I like to think of it as a challenge. I want to make a statement this year.”

Ohakea rural water scheme opens



The New Zealand Defence Force is pleased to be playing a major part in the Ohakea Rural Water Scheme, which will ensure a safe supply of water for staff and operations.

Manawatū District Council, the Defence Force, the Ministry for the Environment, Horizons Regional Council and iwi Ngāti Parewahawaha all co-operated to fund and develop the community water scheme which will serve Base Ohakea and more than 90 local households and farms.

The Defence Force contributed \$5 million towards the water scheme and as the largest customer of the water scheme Base Ohakea will also cover a large proportion of its operational costs.

“We are very appreciative that Defence Force personnel will have access to the water flowing from the new bore, as well as the local community,” said Ohakea Base Commander, Group Captain (GPCAPT) Robert Shearer.

At Base Ohakea, \$250m worth of work is being carried out upgrading the base, including complex hangars for the arrival of the new Boeing P-8A Poseidon surveillance and maritime patrol aircraft.

Nearly 1,000 people work at Base Ohakea and when No. 5 Squadron shifts from Whenuapai to operate the Air Force’s new Boeing P-8As, that will increase to 1,200 by 2023 – providing a boost to local businesses, sports teams and community groups.

“Base Ohakea is an important part of Manawatū infrastructure and also the Defence Estate. With the expansions at the Base, the new water scheme will be welcome, as well as reinforcing our commitment to being good neighbours,” GPCAPT Shearer said.

Defence Force launches latest recruitment campaign “Run Deep”

A career in the Royal New Zealand Navy, New Zealand Army or Royal New Zealand Air Force offers an extraordinary experience for those who enlist.

Offering unrivaled bonds between mates, built by experiencing unique, intense, life-changing situations together. It's this deep connection that makes a career in the Defence Force so unlike any other vocation.

To celebrate and share these incredible career opportunities with rangatahi and potential recruits, the Defence Force has launched its new recruitment brand platform Run Deep, which tells the stories of the deep connections defence personnel create with their colleagues.

These shared experiences have been expressed through the creation of a personal codeword that encapsulates that experience, and the Defence Force is inviting Kiwis to unlock these by watching over 30 personnel from the Navy, Army and Air Force sharing their story.

Their personal codeword is revealed in one-minute long videos, which showcase the bond created through active service. It gives potential recruits an insight to some of the rich experiences on offer in the Defence Force, from everyday life through to extraordinary events.

Director of Defence Recruiting, Lieutenant Colonel Sandra Patterson said deep bonds are the ones that are so finely tuned you only need to say a word to trigger a memory or story of the deepest connection.

“The bonds formed across the Royal New Zealand Navy, New Zealand Army and Royal New Zealand Air Force are deeper than almost anywhere and we invite people to unlock the codewords to find out just how deep these connections run.

“Our training is exceptional and our people are put in real, challenging and life-changing situations. Together, it's the depth of these shared experiences that creates unbreakable bonds between those in the Services. And what makes the NZDF so different to other career choices.”

People interested in finding out more about what career options are available after engaging with the codeword stories will be able to learn more about life in the Services, with over 100 exciting roles available.

“There are heart-warming, funny, charming and some crazy stories that come from a career in the Services and the codeword campaign gives you a taster of what positive, life changing experiences await you,” Lieutenant Colonel Patterson said.

“Our values of Tū Kaha (courage), Tū Tika (commitment), Tū Tira (comradeship) and Tū Māia (integrity) are woven through all of these stories and we can't wait to share them with New Zealanders thinking about their next career move.”

DANGER

ROASTGUN



SEE THE STORY

RUNDEEP



Air Force Museum online photo collection passes new milestone

B | AIR FORCE MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND
Y | MICHELLE SIM, COMMUNICATIONS MGR

It has now been two and a half years since the Museum released its online photo database as part of a strategic goal to make the collection more accessible.



After launching in February 2020 with just 5,000 images, more than 30,000 are now available to browse and download for free.

As reported previously in *Air Force News* (April 2020), this resource is the culmination of 25 years of behind-the-scenes planning and effort and has been a huge step forward for the Museum.

It is certainly delivering on its promise to revolutionise the way the public can access and engage with the collection, attracting an average of 1,200 users each month, with over 770,000 separate page (image) views since it went live.

The database consistently rates within the top three most visited pages on the Museum's website, and is also now linked to DigitalNZ, the central search site for New Zealand's digitised content, which means more people than ever before are connecting with our Air Force's history.

The images available (which still only represent an estimated 3% of the total collection) cover a broad range of New Zealand military aviation history, from World War I through to the early 2000s.

They include both official Air Force images as well as many personal collections, each of which offer different windows into the past. On average, 1,000 new images are uploaded each month.

All this is largely the work of one person, Keeper of Photographs Matthew O'Sullivan, who has been in this role at the Museum for almost 30 years. With hundreds of thousands of images to digitise and upload, each requiring captions and metadata, a balance must be struck between making the material available and providing detailed descriptions.

Without the luxury of being able to undertake detailed research on every image, Matthew draws from reliable primary sources to hand, such as the Air Force's official negative registers, as well as his own extensive knowledge on the subject, for the image captions.

As information such as individuals' names have not always been recorded, Matthew welcomes additional 'crowd sourced' details, and is always happy to add verified information like this to an image record.



2

ONE

A typical staged RNZAF publicity photo showing a group of airwomen feeding ducks on the banks of the Avon River in Christchurch in 1962

TWO

A group of Canterbury (NZ) Aviation Company trainees and staff with a Caudron aircraft at Sockburn Aerodrome (later, Wigram) in 1918. Image from the JH Davy personal collection

THREE

Snapshots like this can offer a different perspective to official photos and provide unique insights for researchers. This and shows a group of Air Force personnel eating a meal beside a road in Bougainville during World War II. Image from the Jasper Baldwin personal collection

FOUR

Many current and former Air Force personnel have enjoyed finding familiar faces amongst the hundreds of course photos that have been added to the database. This is recruit course R1/86 at Woodbourne, January 1986

FIVE

This image of four No. 75 Squadron Skyhawks performing a formation barrel roll over Ohakea in 1998 is among the many thousands of images of Air Force aircraft now available



3



4



5

VIEW THE COLLECTION

The Air Force Museum online collection can be accessed via the Museum's website: www.airforcemuseum.co.nz/photographs

FOR MORE INFO

If you have information to add, or further queries on the photographic collection, email: research@airforcemuseum.co.nz

NZDF helps son stick to study

Bachelor of Arts student Aiden Wilson has the NZDF to thank for helping him stick to his study.

While not a member himself, Aiden has been able to study at Massey University with the same benefits as a serving member, made possible through his dad, an Operational Watch Keeper in the Tactical Operations Centre at Base Ohakea.

NZDF members are able to access discounts on course fees through the Force4Families website. This opportunity extends to ex-serving personnel, veterans and the immediate dependants of NZDF members, like Aiden, as part of the NZDF/Massey partnership.

For the 21-year old, now in his third year of a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Media Studies and Creative Writing, the access to discounted course fees has made it easier for him to stick it out through the challenging days of university life.

“Of course, there’s the Government’s first year fees free to get you started. But after that, study is paid for out of your own pocket or a by getting a student loan. Knowing I could study with access to discounted course fees has been a big factor in me sticking around. It’s been such a help financially,” he says.

While surrounded by great memories of Air Force life, like the school holiday programmes at Ohakea, Aiden chose to pursue his love for music instead of a military career... or at least that was the plan.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Go to: <https://force4families.mil.nz/massey-university>



In 2020, Aiden moved from Palmerston North to Wellington to study Music Technology as part of a Bachelor of Commercial Music at Massey’s College of Creative Arts. Due to unforeseen circumstances and Covid-19, Aiden moved back to Palmerston North during his first year.

Unfortunately the Music Technology major wasn’t available as a distance course option so he switched to a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Media Studies – something else he discovered he really loves.

“In 2020 it was free fees for me because it was my first year. In 2021 I decided to pay the fees out of my own pocket because I didn’t want to have a huge student loan later on. The NZDF discount meant I was paying less upfront, financially it’s been a game changer.”

Once he graduates, Aiden would love to land a job working for an alternative media outlet. He’s currently building up work experience for his CV as a staff writer for Massey’s student magazine, *Massive*.

In 2020, Massey and the NZDF signed a Relationship Agreement enabling NZDF personnel and their immediate dependants to access opportunities and benefits such as special tuition rates when enrolling in any qualification with Massey.

Aiden wants to help grow awareness of this great opportunity with other eligible NZDF family members, like himself, so they too can take advantage of it to pursue their passion.

“Thanks to the NZDF and Massey, it’s been such a big help to me. It’s a nice incentive to keep me pushing through the university hardship but also it’s such a fantastic programme to be on.”

Improving the NZDF mental health system one kōrero at a time

Squadron Leader Carsten Grimm talks about his current research into how service members have journeyed through the NZDF mental health system and what we hope to all learn from their stories.



I've always said that you don't need to be in Defence for very long before you start to come up against the reality of Service life: What we do can be both incredibly rich and rewarding – and also incredibly stressful and demanding. When life serves us with mental health challenges it can be hard to know what the right way through it is: Who should I talk to? What support is available? Will I feel like this forever?

Across western militaries a huge amount of research has gone into understanding how service members access mental health care. Findings from overseas suggest that while access to care options have generally improved over the last 10 years or so, many service members continue to under-utilise the care that is on offer.

Within Te Ope Kātua (Defence Force) we have seen in recent years increasing attention placed on accessing support and providing for diverse ways for service members to choose what is right for them; from 0800 NZDF 4 U, to the Defence Health website, to increasing the diversity of wellbeing providers.

Te Ope Kātua is a uniquely biculturally orientated force and while we can be informed about mental health care practices from overseas, we also have rich sources of wisdom and matauranga (knowledge) within our own tradition that fit our context and culture. So how do our people describe what it was like to seek mental health care in Te Ope Kātua?

In the infamous words of Winston Churchill; “no matter how beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally check the results”. I've always believed that if you want to know what people think you should just ask them, and sitting down to hear the journey-stories our people have taken through their mental health challenges is both humbling and inspiring.

We have incredibly brave humans in our ranks. The stories our people share are a taonga and should be celebrated as examples of Te Ara Poutama – journeys to one's own highest potential. These stories inform what is already working, and what we can do as a community to make things better.

The findings from this research will be reflected back to the Defence community in 2023 and published for other researchers to learn from. The intention is to share the lessons widely via reports and webinars, while respecting participant's confidentiality and protecting their identities and right to privacy.

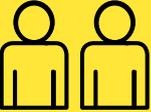
I would personally like to thank all the courageous warriors I have spoken to as part of this kaupapa. If you would like to share your story of a mental health journey through the NZDF system, you can contact me anytime. Recruiting for this research ends in December 2022, with results available from mid-2023.



HOW SHOULD I FUND MY RETIREMENT

Review your savings now

Discover how much you will need to save by the time you are 65, to supplement your NZ Super and fund a 25 Year Retirement. The following assumes that you will be Mortgage Free.

	FOR A "NO FRILLS" RETIREMENT:	FOR A "CHOICES" RETIREMENT:
 ONE PERSON HOUSEHOLD NZ Super: \$462.94 p/week ²	\$293,000¹ +NZ Super will give you \$726 p/week	\$600,000 +NZ Super will give you \$1029 p/week
PROVINCIAL	\$170,000 +NZ Super will give you \$605 p/week	\$688,000 +NZ Super will give you \$1116 p/week
 TWO PERSON HOUSEHOLD NZ Super: \$712.22 p/week ²	\$195,000 +NZ Super will give you \$865 p/week	\$809,000 +NZ Super will give you \$1,470 p/week
PROVINCIAL	\$75,000 +NZ Super will give you \$747 p/week	\$511,000 +NZ Super will give you \$1,176 p/week

HOW MANY YEARS SHOULD I BE SAVING FOR?

This data assumes a retirement that last 25 years. **What are your individual circumstances?**



If you are a healthy female, aged 30 today, you can expect to live to 91.³



If you are a healthy male, aged 30 today, you can expect to live to 89.³

1. Massey University and Retirement Commission retirement figures as of November, 2021. 2. April 1, 2022 figures from Stats, NZ. 3. Aging statistics from Stats, NZ.



Notices

VOLUNTARY EDUCATION STUDY ASSISTANCE (VESA)

Semester Three, 2022 applications are 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
- POLICY (terms and conditions) SADFO 3/2016 VESA Policy SADFO 3/2016 VESA Policy (terms and conditions)

AOS TRADE DISBANDMENT EVENT

Calling all retired “ORDs” including those still serving in various NZDF roles to register interest to attend an Air Ordnance Specialist (AOS) trade disbandment event early to mid-2023.

This trade was previously named Air Ordnanceman (AOM). This registration is non-comital however will help guide planning and identify those interested. Intent is for this event to occur as a stand-alone directly prior or after the main P-3K2 Orion retirement event in 2023. Please email Sgt Joe O'Malley at address JOSEPH.O'MALLEY@nzdf.mil.nz if interested. Level of interest will guide scale of event.



The AIR FORCE *In Concert*

Sunday 25 September, 2:30 pm
Michael Fowler Centre, Wellington

Tickets available from Ticketmaster. Booking fees apply.







**B | CORPORAL
Y | DILLON ANDERSON**

“This might be the only chance I ever get.” That’s what I was thinking when I told the officer I’d wait for the next flight in a US Air Force (USAF) KC-135 Stratotanker at RIMPAC. Already I had waited five hours due to an aircraft delay. The number of passengers had by now been whittled down from about 15 to just three during the wait. As it turned out, this was a good thing, because once we eventually boarded the KC-135, I was allowed as much time as I wanted in front of the small panel of glass under the rear of the aircraft, which offered the best views. While cruising above the ocean, F-18 Super Hornets lined up alongside our wing before taking turns refuelling under the aircraft through the tail-mounted refuelling boom. It was my favourite experience so far in the Air Force.”



INTERNATIONAL
DEFENCE
RUGBY
COMPETITION
NEW ZEALAND
2022

INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE RUGBY CHAMPIONSHIP 2022

3-27 OCTOBER
AUCKLAND